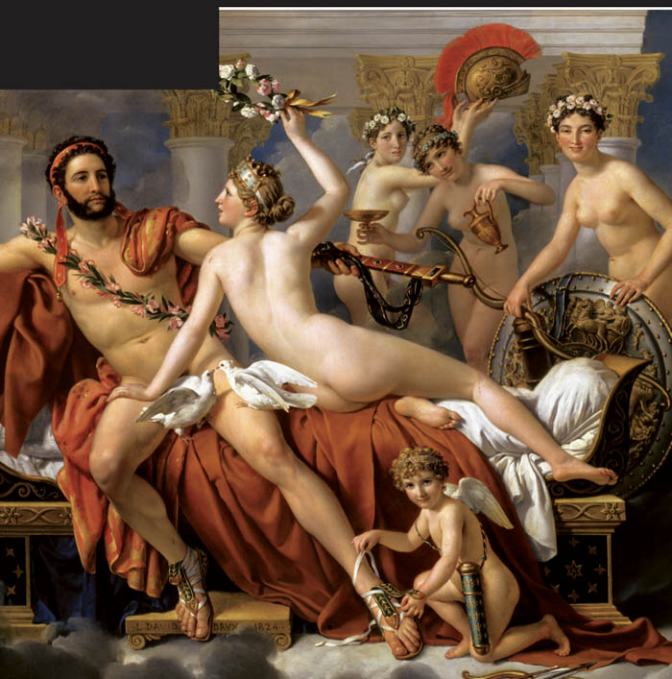


*Edited by*  
**Monica R. Gale**

*Oxford Readings in Classical Studies*

**Lucretius**



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# Lucretius

Edited by

MONICA R. GALE

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## Preface

My objective in assembling the articles that make up the present volume has been—in accordance with the aims of the ‘Oxford Readings’ series—to offer a representative sample of important and influential work on Lucretius, with a focus on the second half of the twentieth century. I have also attempted to give an idea of the range of approaches employed by Lucretian scholars over this period, though a degree of selectivity has inevitably been necessary here. In particular, the majority of the articles selected are concerned primarily with literary as opposed to philosophical aspects of the poem: this emphasis was largely determined by the fact that discussion of philosophical issues has tended to centre on Lucretius as a source for the reconstruction of Epicurean doctrine rather than on the *De rerum natura* as a work in its own right. The philosophical aspect of the poem is, however, ultimately inseparable from the poetic, and is given particular attention in the articles by Phillip de Lacy, David Furley, and Don Fowler (Chapters 6, 7, and 18).

With the exception of the Introduction, all the eighteen chapters have previously appeared in print, though three have been translated into English for the first time here (Chapters 4 and 10, translated by Bettina Reitz, and Chapter 11, translated by the editor). Some chapters have been lightly revised by the authors (W. J. Tatum, Chapter 5; David West, Chapter 12; E. J. Kenney, Chapter 13); in other cases a brief addendum has been appended. In addition, all quotations in Latin, Greek, and modern European languages have been translated (unless otherwise indicated, translations are the editor’s or the author’s own).

Warm thanks are due to Hilary O’Shea, who first proposed the project to me, and who has been remarkably patient during its long gestation. I am very grateful too to Peta Fowler and David Scourfield for helpful comments on drafts of the introduction; to Bettina Reitz for the enthusiasm and efficiency with which she produced her translations, and her good-humoured response to various subsequent queries; and to Susanne Gippert for help with the translation

of the quotation from Friedrich Rückert at the end of Chapter 15. Early stages of the editorial process were facilitated by my tenure of an Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences Senior Research Fellowship in 2003–4.

M. R. G.

*Dublin*

*May 2006*

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## Abbreviations

- ANRW H. Temporini and W. Haase (eds.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* (Berlin/New York, 1972–)
- Bailey C. Bailey, *T. Lucreti Cari De rerum natura*, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1947)
- Diels H. Diels, *T. Lucreti Cari De rerum natura libri sex*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1923)
- DK H. Diels and W. Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 6th edn., 3 vols. (Berlin, 1951–2)
- D.L. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers*
- Ep. Hdt.* Epicurus, *Letter to Herodotus* (= Diogenes Laertius 10.35–83)
- Ep. Men.* Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus* (= Diogenes Laertius 10.121–35)
- Ep. Pyth.* Epicurus, *Letter to Pythocles* (= Diogenes Laertius 10.84–116)
- Ernout/Robin A. Ernout and L. Robin, *Lucrèce, De rerum natura: Commentaire exégétique et critique*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1925–8)
- FGrH F. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, 3 vols. (Berlin/Leiden, 1923–58; Leiden, 1998–)
- FLP E. Courtney, *The Fragmentary Latin Poets* (Oxford, 1993)
- FPL W. Morel (ed.), *Fragmenta poetarum latinorum epicorum et lyricorum, praeter Ennium et Lucilium*, 2nd edn. (Leipzig, 1927)
- GP A. S. F. Gow and D. L. Page, *The Greek Anthology: The Garland of Philip, and Some Contemporary Epigrams* (Cambridge, 1968)
- Guissani C. Guissani, *T. Lucreti Cari De rerum natura libri sex*, 4 vols. (Turin, 1896–8)
- HE A. S. F. Gow and D. L. Page, *The Greek Anthology: Hellenistic Epigrams*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1965)

Heinze	R. Heinze, <i>T. Lucretius Carus: De rerum natura Buch III</i> (Leipzig, 1897)
KD	Epicurus, <i>Kuriai Doxai</i> (= Diogenes Laertius 10.139–54)
Leonard/Smith	W. E. Leonard and S. B. Smith, <i>T. Lucreti Cari De rerum natura libri sex</i> (Madison, 1942)
Munro	H. A. J. Munro, <i>T. Lucreti Cari De rerum natura libri sex</i> , 4th edn., 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1886)
N <sup>2</sup>	A. Nauck, <i>Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta</i> , 2nd edn. (Leipzig, 1889)
OCD <sup>3</sup>	S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth (eds.), <i>The Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> , 3rd edn. (Oxford, 1996)
OLD	P. G. W. Glare (ed.), <i>Oxford Latin Dictionary</i> (Oxford, 1982)
PG	J. P. Migne (ed.), <i>Patrologia Graeca</i>
RAC	T. Klauser (ed.), <i>Reallexicon für Antike und Christentum</i> (Stuttgart, 1950–)
RE	A. Pauly and G. Wissowa (eds.), <i>Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> (Stuttgart, 1894–)
ROL	E. H. Warmington, <i>Remains of Old Latin</i> , 4 vols. (London and Cambridge, MA, 1935–40)
SV	Epicurus, <i>Sententiae Vaticanae</i>
SVF	H. von Arnim, <i>Stoicorum veterum fragmenta</i> (Leipzig, 1903–24)
TLL	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Latinae</i> (Leipzig, 1900–)
TrGF	R. Kannicht and B. Snell (eds.), <i>Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta</i> , 5 vols. (Göttingen, 1971–2004)

Abbreviations for journal titles generally follow the system used in *L'Année Philologique*; lists of standard abbreviations for Greek and Latin authors and works can be found in Liddell and Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th edn. (Oxford, 1996) and *The Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford, 1982).

# Introduction

*Monica R. Gale*

Since its publication in c.55 BC,<sup>1</sup> the reception history of Lucretius' *De rerum natura* has been long, complex, and chequered. Though the earliest recorded response to the poem (that of Cicero, in a letter to his brother Quintus)<sup>2</sup> seems wholly, and rather surprisingly, positive, the much more extended engagement with the *DRN* embodied in the *Georgics* of Virgil already appears more ambivalent.<sup>3</sup> Virgil combines obvious admiration for his predecessor *as a poet* with a much more equivocal reaction to the Epicurean *ideas* which Lucretius seeks to promulgate. This pattern of qualified admiration was to resurface repeatedly over the centuries between the Virgilian era and our own. Lucretius' alleged atheism and the strongly anti-teleological world view advanced in his poem were particular grounds for suspicion and often for downright hostility: under Christianity, Epicurean rationalism and materialism were widely perceived as threatening and blasphemous. An early response to the threat was to dismiss the poet as—quite literally—insane: Jerome infamously reports in his *Chronicle* that Lucretius went mad after drinking a love potion and, having composed the *DRN* 'during the intervals between bouts of insanity', committed suicide. The story is memorably embodied in

<sup>1</sup> On the dating of the poem, see now G. O. Hutchinson, 'The Date of *De Rerum Natura*', *CQ* 51 (2001), 150–62 (proposing a date later than the traditional one).

<sup>2</sup> *QFr* 2.10.3: *Lucreti poemata, ut scribis, ita sunt, multis luminibus ingeni, multae tamen artis* ('Lucretius' poetry is, as you write, full of inspired brilliance, but also of great artistry').

<sup>3</sup> On Virgil's reception of Lucretius in the *Georgics*, see J. Farrell, *Virgil's Georgics and the Traditions of Ancient Epic* (New York/Oxford, 1991), esp. 84–104 and 167–206; and M. R. Gale, *Virgil on the Nature of Things: The Georgics, Lucretius and the Didactic Tradition* (Cambridge, 2000).

Tennyson's 'Lucretius', in which the poet is represented as a visionary, torn between commitment to Epicurus and the terrible pangs of guilt and frustrated desire that eventually lead him to take his own life.

This is not the place for a detailed discussion of the literary and scientific (as opposed to scholarly) reception of the poem;<sup>4</sup> but no survey of twentieth-century Lucretian scholarship can neglect three important trends whose roots reach back into the nineteenth century and even earlier. The first is Jerome's image of the mad poet, which continued to exert considerable influence until quite recent times (though virtually all scholars now agree that the report is based either on false deductions from the poem itself, or on anti-Epicurean propaganda, or a combination of the two).<sup>5</sup> Secondly, Lucretius began, especially from the Romantic period on, to come under fire from a different direction: in an era when poetry could be defined as 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings',<sup>6</sup> didactic poetry in general inevitably fell out of fashion, and a largely negative view (for which parallels exist already in antiquity)<sup>7</sup> of Lucretius' poem as little more than versified prose began to dominate critical thinking on the *DRN*. Though parts of the poem—especially the proems and conclusions of the six books—continued to excite admiration, a tendency to isolate these 'purple passages' from the intervening stretches of 'dry philosophy' was sufficiently widespread for Hugh Sykes Davies, writing in the early 1930s, to describe it as 'a critical commonplace'.<sup>8</sup> This neglect or dismissal of the expository parts of the poem was perhaps not unrelated to the hostility towards Epicurean ideas still evident in much nineteenth-century

<sup>4</sup> For a lively introduction to the poem's reception history, see W. R. Johnson, *Lucretius and the Modern World* (London, 2000), 79–133. The forthcoming *Cambridge Companion to Lucretius* (eds. P. R. Hardie and S. Gillespie) will also include several chapters on reception.

<sup>5</sup> See esp. K. Ziegler, 'Der Tod des Lucretius', *Hermes* 71 (1936), 421–40; cf. also L. P. Wilkinson, 'Lucretius and the Love-Philtre', *CR* 63 (1949), 47–8; and L. Canfora, *Vita di Lucrezio* (Palermo, 1993), 23–36.

<sup>6</sup> Wordsworth, Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*. On Lucretius specifically, Coleridge remarks dismissively in a letter to Wordsworth (quoted by Katharina Volk, *The Poetics of Latin Didactic: Lucretius, Vergil, Ovid, Manilius* (Oxford, 2002), 72): 'whatever in Lucretius is poetry is not philosophical, whatever is philosophical is not poetry'.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Aristotle, *Poet.* 1447<sup>b</sup> 17–20; and Plutarch, *De audiendis poetis* 16c, on the philosophical poem of Empedocles.

<sup>8</sup> H. S. Davies, 'Notes on Lucretius', *The Criterion* 11 (1931–2), 25–42, at 26 = C. J. Classen (ed.), *Probleme der Lukrezforschung* (Hildesheim, 1986), 273–90, at 274.

scholarship, to which we can also trace a third critical trend, embodied in M. Patin's infamous phrase *l'anti-Lucrèce chez Lucrèce*.

Patin's phrase, coined in a series of lectures delivered in 1859–60,<sup>9</sup> owed its origins to the eighteenth-century, neo-Latin poem of Cardinal Melchior de Polignac, *Anti-Lucretius, sive de Deo et Natura*.<sup>10</sup> Polignac's poem was a broadside against Epicureanism and materialism in general, which sought to reassert the divinity of the world and its creator. But Patin, more subtly, finds a forerunner of the anti-materialist Polignac in—paradoxically—Lucretius himself, arguing that the use of religious imagery in the *DRN* (particularly in such passages as the first proem, 1.1–49, and the excursus on the cult of the Magna Mater, 2.600–60) betrays an unconscious fascination with, even attraction to, the theism which the poet overtly rejects. For Patin, the poem is full of involuntary self-contradictions: Lucretius denies that the world and its atomic components are alive, argues explicitly that the universe has no purpose and is not under divine control, yet repeatedly personifies and even deifies nature and the world. For Patin, these tensions are fatal to the poet's anti-theological and anti-teleological argument; the *DRN* effectively deconstructs itself.

Variations on the themes of the mad poet and the self-contradictory thinker struggling against himself continued to resurface throughout the late nineteenth century and the earlier part of the twentieth, when the biographical fashion in criticism was at its height, and even as recently as the 1960s. A series of studies represents the poem as a work betraying anxiety, melancholy, and even mental instability on the part of its author.<sup>11</sup> But already in the 1930s and '40s a reaction had begun to set in.

The introduction to Cyril Bailey's monumental three-volume commentary, published in 1947, tackles the evidence for Lucretius' life and death at some length.<sup>12</sup> Though reluctant to dismiss Jerome

<sup>9</sup> Published as *Études sur la poésie latine* (5th edn., Paris, 1914).

<sup>10</sup> On Polignac's poem, see Johnson, *Lucretius* (n. 4), 89–94.

<sup>11</sup> e.g. O. Regenbogen, *Lukrez: seine Gestalt in seinem Gedicht* (Leipzig, 1932); M. Rozelaar, *Lukrez: Versuch einer Deutung* (Amsterdam, 1943); L. Perelli, *Lucrezio poeta dell'angoscia* (Florence, 1969).

<sup>12</sup> C. Bailey, *Titi Lucreti Cari De rerum natura* (Oxford, 1947), i.1–21 (and cf. 165–8 on 'suspension of thought'); cf. also id., 'The Mind of Lucretius', *AJP* 61 (1940), 278–91 = Classen, *Probleme der Lukrezforschung* (n. 8), 3–16. See also D. E. W. Wormell, 'Lucretius: the Personality of the Poet', *G&R* 7 (1960), 54–65 = Classen, *Probleme der Lukrezforschung* (n. 8), 17–28, for a critical response to Bailey.

(and Patin) altogether, Bailey protests against earlier critics' detection of incoherence in the poem's argument, and makes two important observations which were to have considerable influence in subsequent scholarship on the *DRN*. First, Bailey emphasizes the *visual* quality of Lucretius' imagination: the argument of the poem is based not so much on a process of logical deduction, as on a kind of coordination between different levels of reality, and more specifically between phenomena which are subject to observation and those which are not. Analogy is perhaps *the* key tool in Lucretius' argumentative armoury, as more recent scholars have comprehensively demonstrated.<sup>13</sup> Secondly, Bailey draws attention to a peculiarity of Lucretius' rhetorical technique, to which (following K. Büchner)<sup>14</sup> he gives the name 'suspension of thought'. As Bailey points out, the poet has a tendency to interrupt himself and subsequently return without warning to the point where his argument was 'suspended': a particularly clear-cut instance is 5.235, where we return with an abrupt *principio* ('in the first place') to the argument for the perishability of the earth introduced at 5.91–109 but put 'on hold' from lines 110 to 234 while the poet deals with the preliminary question whether the world was created by the gods for the benefit of its human inhabitants. Earlier editors of the poem had reacted to this characteristic feature of Lucretius' style by the wholesale rearrangement of lines, or by freely positing the existence of lacunae and interpolations. Bailey's realization that Lucretius has his own, characteristic methods of argument, which do not necessarily conform to modern notions of logical coherence or rhetorical propriety, has proved influential; its legacy can be observed both in more recent editors' handling of the text (generally far more conservative than was the case in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries)<sup>15</sup> and in studies of Lucretian rhetoric and methods of argument.

<sup>13</sup> See esp. P. H. Schrijvers, 'Seeing the Invisible' (1978), Ch. 11 of this volume; P. R. Hardie, *Virgil's Aeneid: Cosmos and Imperium* (Oxford, 1986), 219–33; and A. Schiesaro, *Simulacrum et imago: gli argomenti analogici nel De rerum natura* (Pisa, 1990).

<sup>14</sup> *Beobachtungen über Vers und Gedankengang bei Lukrez* (Berlin, 1936); cited by Bailey, 18 n. 1.

<sup>15</sup> The view that the text is subject to widespread corruption and heavy interpolation still persists in some quarters, however: see for example Gerhard Müller's incidental comments on textual matters in his essay 'The Conclusions of the Six

A series of important studies in this latter field appeared between the late 1960s and the early 1990s: the work of C. J. Classen, P. H. Schrijvers, and A. Schiesaro<sup>16</sup> has been particularly influential in demonstrating how Lucretius employs patterns of argumentation typical of his age, for which parallels can be found both in rhetorical theory and practice and in philosophical/scientific writing. Since the 1960s, too, the idea that the *poetry* of the *DRN* is in itself a kind of rhetorical tactic—that is, that the poem's language is designed not just to *explain* the principles of Epicurean philosophy, but to *persuade* the reader of the validity of the system and, ultimately, to make a convert of him or her—has become widely accepted. This view of the poem is elegantly presented, for example, in Pierre Boyancé's *Lucrèce et l'épicurisme* (Paris, 1963).<sup>17</sup> The notion that the *DRN* is to be read as a protreptic work, in which the poetry itself helps to draw the reader in and has a functional role to play in the process of conversion, has also been invoked by scholars addressing the problematic question of Epicurus' apparently negative attitude towards poetry:<sup>18</sup> if—as seems to be the case—Epicurus was himself dismissive

Books of Lucretius' (1978), Ch. 10 of this volume; and more recently the monograph by Marcus Deufert, *Pseudo-Lukrezisches im Lukrez: die unechten Verse in Lukrezens De rerum natura* (Berlin/New York, 1996).

<sup>16</sup> In addition to the works cited in n. 13 above, see C. J. Classen, 'Poetry and Rhetoric in Lucretius', *TAPA* 99 (1968), 77–118 = Classen, *Probleme der Lukrezforschung* (n. 8), 331–74; P. H. Schrijvers, *Horror ac divina voluptas: Etudes sur la poétique et la poésie de Lucrèce* (Amsterdam, 1970); E. Asmis, 'Rhetoric and Reason in Lucretius', *AJP* 104 (1983), 36–66; A. Schiesaro, 'Lucrezio, Cicerone, l'oratoria', *MD* 19 (1987), 29–61.

<sup>17</sup> See e.g. p. 4: 'only poetry permitted [Lucretius] to share with his reader the combats and victories of this long struggle for deliverance ... in order to win someone over, even with the aim of freeing them from their passions, it is necessary first to move them.' Cf. also A. Amory, 'Obscura de re lucida carmina: Science and Poetry in *De Rerum Natura*', *YCS* 21 (1969), 143–68; A. S. Cox, 'Didactic Poetry: Lucretius', in J. Higginbotham (ed.), *Greek and Latin Literature: A Comparative Study* (London, 1969), 134–45 = Classen, *Probleme der Lukrezforschung* (n. 8), 221–35; id., 'Lucretius and his Message: A Study in the Prologues of the *De Rerum Natura*', *G&R* 18 (1971), 1–16; and, for a more recent restatement of this view of the poem, A. Dalzell, *The Criticism of Didactic Poetry: Essays on Lucretius, Virgil, and Ovid* (Toronto, 1996), 35–71 (esp. 54–66). For a stimulating study of the *DRN* as philosophical 'therapy', see also M. C. Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton, 1994), 102–279.

<sup>18</sup> For the problem represented by the poetic format of the *DRN*, see Boyancé, *Lucrèce et l'épicurisme*, 57–68; id., 'Lucrèce et la poésie', *REA* 49 (1947), 88–102;



of poetry and the role it had traditionally played in the Greek (and was later to play in the Roman) educational system, Lucretius' decision to embody the master's teachings in the form of a didactic poem was, to say the least, unorthodox. The poetic programme of 1.926–50 (= 4.1–25), in which the poet represents himself as 'sweetening the cup' of philosophy with the 'honey' of the Muses, can be seen to embody Lucretius' response to this dilemma: the poet represents his work as an attempt to entice the reader, and to win us over to a philosophy which may seem superficially unattractive.

The emphasis laid by Bailey on the visual quality of Lucretius' imagination pointed the way for a reassessment of the division between exposition and 'purple passages'. A further important impetus in this direction came in the influential article by Davies mentioned above. Davies draws attention to the densely metaphorical texture of Lucretius' language, particularly his use of social metaphor: atomic configurations, he points out, are regularly referred to using metaphorical terminology (words such as *coetus*, 'meeting', *congressus*, 'gathering', *foedus*, 'pact' or 'treaty') drawn from the legal and political spheres. 'It is just possible' (he cautiously continues) 'that Lucretius may have attempted to represent the machinery of the universe... by symbols drawn from the legal and political machinery of the Republic'.<sup>19</sup> Epicurus, too, is represented in very Roman terms, as a triumphing general: Davies was the first to suggest the idea—fruitfully developed by Buchheit, Hardie, and others<sup>20</sup>—that the language of the hymnic lines in praise of the philosopher at 1.62–79 strongly suggests the raising of a siege, followed by a Roman triumph.

J. H. Waszink, 'Lucretius and Poetry', *Mededeelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen Afd. Letterkunde*, n.r. 17.8 (1954), 243–57; M. R. Gale, *Myth and Poetry in Lucretius* (Cambridge, 1994), esp. 14–18 and 129–55; for Epicurean views of poetry, see also E. Asmis, 'Epicurean Poetics', in D. Obbink (ed.), *Philodemus and Poetry: Poetic Theory and Practice in Lucretius, Philodemus and Horace* (Oxford/New York, 1995), 15–34.

<sup>19</sup> Davies, 'Notes on Lucretius' (n. 8), 37 (= Classen, *Probleme der Lukrezforschung* (n. 8), 285).

<sup>20</sup> V. Buchheit, 'Epicurus' Triumph of the Mind' (1971), Ch. 4 of this volume; Hardie, *Cosmos and Imperium* (n. 13), 194–5. On Lucretius' use of social metaphor, see also G. Cabisius, 'Social Metaphor and the Atomic Cycle in Lucretius', *CJ* 80 (1984–5), 109–20; and Gale, *Myth and Poetry* (n. 18), 122–4; and cf. J. D. Minyard, *Lucretius and the Late Republic* (Leiden, 1985), esp. 50–3.

In the wake of Davies' article followed a number of studies emphasizing the poetic qualities of the expository parts of Lucretius' poem. Notable amongst these is David West's *The Imagery and Poetry of Lucretius* (Edinburgh, 1969), which opens with an eloquent protest against earlier readings of the *DRN* which neglected or failed to appreciate fully the richness and precision of the poet's use of imagery. As New Critical methodology gained in popularity amongst classicists, a succession of articles and monographs sought to establish unity between poetry and philosophy in Lucretius' work: reacting against the image of the melancholy poet, divided against himself, as well as the artificial separation of 'purple' and expository passages, scholars drew attention to Lucretius' artful adaptation of traditional poetic techniques to the demands of his philosophical argument.<sup>21</sup> A particularly striking instance is the poet's use of repetition: what had once been regarded as an indication of the poem's unfinished state now came to be seen as a tool, based ultimately on the Homeric use of formulae and type scenes (and already exploited by Lucretius' didactic predecessor Empedocles,<sup>22</sup> who explicitly justifies his use of repetition in fr. 25), for impressing important axioms or passages of ideological significance on the reader.

An early exemplar of this critical tendency, and one which was to prove highly influential, was Paul Friedländer's 1941 article 'Pattern of Sound and Atomistic Theory in Lucretius'.<sup>23</sup> Taking his impetus from the dissertation of Rosamund E. Deutsch, *The Pattern of Sound in Lucretius*,<sup>24</sup> Friedländer connects Lucretius' pervasive use

<sup>21</sup> See esp. P. H. De Lacy, 'Distant Views: the Imagery of Lucretius 2' (1964), Ch. 6 of this volume; G. Townend, 'Imagery in Lucretius', in D. R. Dudley (ed.), *Lucretius* (London, 1965), 95–114; D. A. West, 'Virgilian Multiple-Correspondence Similes and their Antecedents', *Philologus* 114 (1970), 262–75; E. Pasoli, 'Ideologia nella poesia: lo stile di Lucrezio', *L&S* 5 (1970), 367–86 (= Classen, *Probleme der Lukrezforschung* (n. 8), 309–28); D. Clay, 'The Sources of Lucretius' Inspiration' (1976), Ch. 1 of this volume; Gale, *Myth and Poetry* (n. 18), 114–17; Dalzell, *Criticism of Didactic Poetry* (n. 17), 60–8; C. Schindler, *Untersuchungen zu den Gleichnissen im römischen Lehrgedicht: Lucrez, Vergil, Manilius* (Göttingen, 2000), 72–149; on Lucretius' use of formulae and repetition, see also W. B. Ingalls, 'Repetition in Lucretius', *Phoenix* 25 (1971), 227–36; D. Clay, *Lucretius and Epicurus* (Ithaca/London, 1983), 176–85; A. Schiesaro, 'The Palingenesis of *De rerum natura*', *PCPS* 40 (1994), 81–107, at 98–100.

<sup>22</sup> On Empedocles' importance as a model for Lucretius, see further p. 11 below.

<sup>23</sup> *AJP* 62 (1941), 16–34 = Ch. 15 of this volume.

<sup>24</sup> Bryn Mawr, 1939; repr. New York, 1978.

of alliteration, word play and verbal repetition with the linguistic theory set out in 5.1028–90 and with the repeated analogy between the particles which make up objects in the material world and the letters of the alphabet which make up the words of the poem (1.196–8, 823–9, 907–14; 2.688–99, 1013–22). He coins the term ‘atomology’ to designate the relationship between these two levels, arguing that—at least some of the time—Lucretius understands the relationship between words or sounds as a direct expression of the relationship between things. The *flamina* (‘gusts’) of the wind, for example, are shown in 1.271–94 to operate on the same principle as the currents of *flumina* (‘rivers’): the wind has a physical ‘body’ just as the river does, despite the fact that it is not visible to the eye, and thus the similarity between the words is—on Friedländer’s theory—more than mere coincidence.

Friedländer’s argument has been challenged on the grounds that it falsifies Epicurean linguistic theory;<sup>25</sup> but the atoms/letters analogy and Lucretius’ pervasive use of word play have continued to fascinate readers of the poem. Jane Snyder worked out a more detailed version of Friedländer’s thesis, laying particular emphasis on plays on the words *mater* (‘mother’), *materies* (‘matter’) and *terra* (‘earth’), which can be connected with the analogy between the earth and a human or animal mother repeatedly employed by Lucretius in Books 2 and 5,<sup>26</sup> and on words with the roots *cer-* and *cre-* (*cerno*, ‘perceive’, *cresco*, ‘grow’, *creo*, ‘create’, *certus*, ‘certain’, ‘regular’, and others).<sup>27</sup> The

<sup>25</sup> Against the notion that Lucretius’ use of word play and etymology reflects Epicurean linguistic theory, see David West’s review of Snyder’s *Puns and Poetry in Lucretius’ De Rerum Natura*, *CR* 32 (1981), 25–7; and A. Dalzell, ‘Language and Atomic Theory in Lucretius’, *Hermathena* 143 (1987), 19–28; cf. also Schrijvers’ remarks on pp. 263–4 below. More recent critics have developed Friedländer’s ideas in a slightly different direction, arguing that the atoms/letters analogy suggests that the poet represents his work as a kind of microcosm or *imago mundi*: see esp. Schiesaro, ‘Palingenesis’ (n. 21); D. P. Fowler, ‘From Epos to Cosmos: Lucretius, Ovid, and the Poetics of Segmentation’, in D. Innes, H. Hine, and C. Pelling (eds.), *Ethics and Rhetoric: Classical Essays for Donald Russell on his Seventy-Fifth Birthday* (Oxford, 1995), 1–18; D. Kennedy, ‘Making a Text of the Universe: Perspectives on Discursive Order in the *De Rerum Natura* of Lucretius’ (2000), Ch. 17 of this volume; and M. R. Gale, ‘The Story of Us: A Narratological Analysis of Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*’, in Gale (ed.), *Latin Epic and Didactic Poetry: Genre, Tradition and Individuality* (Swansea, 2004), 49–71.

<sup>26</sup> See esp. 2.581–660 and 5.783–836; on the earth/mother analogy, see also Schrijvers, ‘Seeing the Invisible’, Ch. 11 below.

<sup>27</sup> J. M. Snyder, *Puns and Poetry in Lucretius’ De Rerum Natura* (Amsterdam, 1980); see also ead., ‘The Significant Name in Lucretius’ (1978), Ch. 16 of this volume.

theory that verbal structures are intimately linked to the meaning of the poem was taken still further by Ivano Dionigi in *Lucrezio: le parole e le cose* (Bologna, 1988).

A more explicit stand against the biographical tradition and its image of a 'melancholy' Lucretius was taken in a series of studies by F. Giancotti,<sup>28</sup> who argues that the poem is in fact rather optimistic about the possibilities of human happiness. Parts of the poem, certainly, present a somewhat bleak outlook on the world around us (the Athenian plague and the anti-teleological arguments at the end of Book 2 and in Book 5 being the most obvious examples); but Epicureanism teaches us how to face our own death and to accept natural disasters with equanimity, and—more positively—holds out the possibility of attaining a life 'worthy of the gods' (3.322). Structural studies of the work led other scholars to a similar conclusion: the poem can be seen to reflect cycles of growth and decay which, according to Lucretius' theory, obtain in the natural world, so that 'dark' passages are succeeded by 'light' and vice versa, just as life is succeeded by death, which in turn releases the atoms needed for new growth (an idea memorably embodied in the tableau at 1.250–64; for the 'recycling' of atomic matter, see also 3.964–71 and 5.235–305). It was only by taking the 'dark' passages out of context, on this view, that earlier critics had formed an impression of the poet as an anxious, tortured soul.<sup>29</sup>

Debate about the optimism or pessimism of the poet's outlook focussed especially, in the 1960s and '70s, on the culture history at the end of Book 5. A flood of articles dedicated to this section of the *DRN* argued either that Lucretius represents early human history in terms of positive progress, or (more often) that he portrays technological advances as inevitably accompanied by moral decline. Others again propounded what has since come to be the dominant view: that the course of history has been, for Lucretius, neither one of steady progress, nor one of unbroken decline; many technological advances

<sup>28</sup> See especially *L'ottimismo relativo nel De rerum natura di Lucrezio* (Turin, 1960); and *Il preludio di Lucrezio e altri scritti lucreziani ed epicurei* (Messina/Florence, 1978).

<sup>29</sup> See esp. R. Minadeo, 'The Formal Design of *De Rerum Natura*', *Arion* 4 (1965), 444–61; and—in greater detail—*The Lyre of Science: Form and Meaning in Lucretius' De Rerum Natura* (Detroit, 1969); W. Liebeschuetz, 'The Cycle of Growth and Decay in Lucretius and Virgil', *PVS* 7 (1968), 30–40.

are depicted as (actually or potentially) beneficial in themselves, but human wilfulness and lack of understanding have led to the abuse of new discoveries for destructive or self-destructive purposes. This section of the poem, too, can be seen as protreptic, in the sense that—as Lucretius makes clear in the proem to Book 6—it is only understanding of the real goals of life (what Lucretius calls ‘the limits of possession and true pleasure’, 5.1432–3) that can enable human beings to use their material comforts wisely.<sup>30</sup>

Another focus of increasing interest in Lucretian studies—as in other areas of Latin literature—has been the relationship between the poet and earlier or contemporary writers. In the earlier part of the twentieth century, traditional principles of *Quellenforschung* determined that attention should be directed mainly towards the philosophical ‘sources’ of the poem. The degree of philosophical originality to be attributed to Lucretius remains a controversial issue: there is still no critical consensus as to how closely the argument of the *DRN* is based on Epicurus’ own writings (and, indeed, which work or works Lucretius used); whether Lucretius developed arguments of his own in support of Epicurean theory; or whether he took account of subsequent developments within and outside the Epicurean school.<sup>31</sup> The recent resurgence of interest in the contemporary Epicurean Philodemus has had some impact on these controversial questions, but perhaps less than might have been anticipated; if anything, new work on Philodemus’ literary and rhetorical theory

<sup>30</sup> See esp. M. Taylor, ‘Progress and Primitivism in Lucretius’, *AJP* 68 (1947), 180–97; B. Farrington, ‘Vita Prior in Lucretius’, *Hermathena* 81 (1953), 59–62; C. R. Beye, ‘Lucretius and Progress’, *CJ* 58 (1963), 160–9; D. J. Furley, ‘Lucretius the Epicurean: On the History of Man’ (1978), Ch. 7 of this volume; E. Bertoli, *Tempora rerum: modalità del progresso umano in Lucrezio* (Verona, 1980); D. R. Blickman, ‘Lucretius, Epicurus and Prehistory’, *HSCP* 92 (1989), 157–91; J. Farrell, ‘The Structure of Lucretius’ *Anthropology*, *MD* 33 (1994), 81–95.

<sup>31</sup> See, most recently, D. N. Sedley, *Lucretius and the Transformation of Greek Wisdom* (Cambridge, 1998), who argues that Lucretius was an Epicurean ‘fundamentalist’, who did not look beyond the master’s own writings. For different views, see P. H. De Lacy, ‘Lucretius and the History of Epicureanism’, *TAPA* 79 (1948), 12–23; Clay, *Lucretius and Epicurus* (n. 21), esp. 13–35 and 111–68; J. Schmidt, *Lukrez, der Kepos und die Stoiker* (Frankfurt am Main, 1990); and the articles collected in P. H. Schrijvers, *Lucrèce et les sciences de la vie* (Leiden, 1999). For Lucretius’ relationship with a range of earlier and contemporary thinkers, see also the papers collected in K. A. Algra, M. H. Koenen, and P. H. Schrijvers (eds.), *Lucretius and his Intellectual Background* (Amsterdam, 1997).

has tended to open up new areas of debate, rather than resolve existing questions.<sup>32</sup> Alongside this controversy, however, Lucretius has come increasingly to be seen as a highly allusive poet, who employs literary echoes in as self-conscious and sophisticated a manner as other writers of his era. The *DRN*'s most explicit inter-textual links are with other works in the epic and didactic traditions, especially the epics of Homer and Ennius and the philosophical poem of Empedocles, all three of whom Lucretius specifically singles out for (admittedly qualified) praise at an early stage in the poem (1.117–19, 124, 716–33; cf. also 3.1037–8). Jean Bollack's important work on Lucretius and Empedocles pointed the way for subsequent studies which have demonstrated how deeply Lucretius' poetics and rhetorical technique are indebted to Empedocles; once again, the relationship between the two writers in philosophical terms remains controversial.<sup>33</sup> The impact of Homeric and Ennian echoes has also been much discussed. David West's chapter on 'Lucretius and Epic' in *The Imagery and Poetry of Lucretius* explores Lucretius' exploitation of epic echoes for argumentative or polemical ends, and others have taken this line of argument further: allusion is used as a means of implicitly rejecting the Homeric world view, in particular the traditional 'divine machinery' of epic, by a process of what is sometimes known as *oppositio in imitando* or 'correction'.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> For a helpful survey of recent work on Philodemus, see David Armstrong's introduction (1–22) in D. Armstrong, J. Fish, P. A. Johnston, and M. B. Skinner (eds.), *Vergil, Philodemus, and the Augustans* (Austin, TX, 2004). The relationship between Philodemus' poetic and rhetorical theory (and poetic practice) and Lucretian poetics is explored from various perspectives in Obbink (ed.), *Philodemus and Poetry* (n. 18); see also A. Monet (ed.), *Le jardin romain: épicurisme et poésie à Rome* (Lille, 2003).

<sup>33</sup> J. Bollack, 'Lukrez und Empedokles', *Die Neue Rundschau* 70 (1959), 656–86; D. Furley, 'Variations on Themes from Empedocles in Lucretius' Proem', *BICS* 17 (1970), 55–64; Gale, *Myth and Poetry* (n. 18), 59–75; Sedley, *Lucretius and the Transformation of Greek Wisdom* (n. 31), 1–34 (= Ch. 2 of this volume); G. Campbell, *Lucretius on Creation and Evolution: A Commentary on De Rerum Natura 5.772–1104* (Oxford, 2003), esp. 2–4, 101–9. W. J. Tatum, 'The Presocratics in Book One of Lucretius' *De rerum natura*' (1984), Ch. 5 of this volume, argues that the doxographical survey at 1.635–920 constitutes an implicit programme for Empedoclean-style poetry.

<sup>34</sup> For the terminology, see G. Giangrande, "'Arte allusiva" and Alexandrian Epic Poetry', *CQ* 17 (1967), 85–97, at 85; and R. F. Thomas, 'Virgil's *Georgics* and the Art of Reference', *HSCP* 90 (1986), 171–98, at 185; for 'corrections' of Homer and Ennius, see esp. C. P. Segal, 'Dreams and Poets in Lucretius', *ICS* 15 (1990), 251–62; P. J. Aicher, 'Lucretian Revisions of Homer', *CJ* 87 (1992), 139–58; Gale, *Myth and*

Less obvious echoes of a wide range of other Greek and Roman authors have been detected in the poem, and shown in most cases to have ideological implications. Sappho, Thucydides, Callimachus, the tragedians and epigrammatists, philosophical writers from Parmenides to Cleanthes have all been shown to be invoked by Lucretius, often with a polemical agenda.<sup>35</sup> The most clear-cut case is perhaps the end of Book 4, which—as E. J. Kenney has shown—draws extensively on the imagery and vocabulary of love poetry (especially Greek epigram) precisely in order to *reject* the ideal of romantic love. Lucretius' contemporary Catullus is perhaps a target here, too, though the chronological relation between the two writers is uncertain: the cycle of idealization and disillusion satirized in *DRN* 4.1121–91 certainly seems highly reminiscent of Catullus' portrayal of his affair with Lesbia. The separation between philosophical and literary reception of literary texts has, indeed, increasingly come to seem artificial: as is now widely recognized, philosophical criticism of poetry 'fed back' into the work of poets from at least the Hellenistic period, and the citation of poetic texts in philosophical and scientific writing was a well-established practice.<sup>36</sup>

*Poetry* (n. 18), 106–14; S. J. Harrison, 'Ennius and the Prologue to Lucretius *DRN* 1 (1.1–148)', *LICS* 1.4 (2002), online at <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/classics/lics>.

<sup>35</sup> Sappho: E. A. Hahn, 'Lucretius' Prooemion with Reference to Sappho and Catullus', *CW* 60 (1966), 134–9; D. P. Fowler, 'Philosophy and Literature in Lucretian Intertextuality', in his *Roman Constructions: Readings in Postmodern Latin* (Oxford, 2000), 138–55, at 148–54; Thucydides: H. S. Commager, 'Lucretius' Interpretation of the Plague' (1957), Ch. 8 of this volume; Callimachus: R. D. Brown, 'Lucretius and Callimachus' (1982), Ch. 14 of this volume; tragedians: Schiesaro, *Simulacrum et imago* (n. 13), 111–22; Fowler, 'Philosophy and Literature in Lucretian Intertextuality', 141–8; Harrison, 'Ennius and Lucretius' (n. 34), 4–6; epigram: E. J. Kenney, 'Doctus Lucretius' (1970), Ch. 13 of this volume; R. D. Brown, *Lucretius on Love and Sex: A Commentary on De Rerum Natura IV, 1030–1287* (Leiden, 1987), 132–5; Parmenides: Gale, *Myth and Poetry* (n. 18), 50–8; L. Rumpf, 'Lukrez und Parmenides', *Philologus* 149 (2005), 78–95; Plato: P. H. De Lacy, 'Lucretius and Plato', in *ΕΥΖΗΤΗΣΙΣ: Studi sull' epicureismo greco e romano offerti a Marcello Gigante* (Naples, 1983), 291–307; T. Reinhardt, 'Readers in the Underworld: Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura* 3.912–1075', *JRS* 94 (2004), 27–46; Cleanthes (and Aratus): E. Asmis, 'Lucretius' Venus and Stoic Zeus' (1982), Ch. 3 of this volume.

<sup>36</sup> For poets' reaction to philosophical criticism, see esp. Hardie, *Cosmos and Imperium* (n. 13); and D. C. Feeney, *The Gods in Epic* (Oxford, 1991); Don Fowler presents strong arguments against imposing artificial barriers between literary and philosophical reception in his article 'Philosophy and Literature in Lucretian Intertextuality' (n. 35).

Lucretius has also been well served in recent years by a resurgence of interest in genre criticism. Systematic studies such as those of Pöhlmann and Effe,<sup>37</sup> which attempted to catalogue the characteristic features of the didactic genre, laid the foundation for more recent views of didactic as a genre highly conscious of its ambiguous status in relation to the narrative epic tradition.<sup>38</sup> From this perspective, the polemical echoes mentioned above can be seen to form part of a larger pattern of engagement with the ideology of narrative epic. It has been pointed out that warfare and the sea journey—the central themes, of course, of narrative epic—are very prominent amongst the recurring patterns of imagery which Lucretius employs both in describing the behaviour of atomic matter, and in exhorting his reader to turn aside from inherited values and follow the path laid out by Epicurus. The poem itself, too, is conceived as both a journey and a series of skirmishes between Lucretius/Epicurus and their philosophical opponents. Arguably, then, Lucretius represents himself both as a successor to Homer and Ennius, and as transcending their celebration of heroic achievement. The exploits of his own ‘heroes’, Epicurus and (personified) Nature, are far superior to those of historical or legendary heroes such as Hercules (whose labours are explicitly compared in the proem to Book 5 with Epicurus’ ‘conquest’ of vice and passion).

A further distinctive feature of didactic poetry which has been the focus of considerable attention in recent years is the role of the (usually named) addressee. Several studies of Lucretius’ relationship with Memmius/the reader, as represented within the poem, have appeared, complementing the work on Lucretian rhetoric discussed above.<sup>39</sup> The very frequent use of direct address in the *DRN* points to

<sup>37</sup> E. Pöhlmann, ‘Charakteristika des römischen Lehrgedichts’, *ANRW* 1.3 (1973), 813–901; B. Effe, *Dichtung und Lehre: Untersuchungen zur Typologie des antiken Lehrgedichts* (Munich, 1977). For more recent attempts to define the genre in terms of its formal characteristics, see Dalzell, *Criticism of Didactic Poetry* (n. 17), 21–34; and Volk, *Poetics of Latin Didactic* (n. 6), esp. 34–68.

<sup>38</sup> On Lucretius’ relation to the narrative epic tradition, see C. Murley, ‘Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, Viewed as Epic’, *TAPA* 78 (1947), 336–46; Hardie, *Cosmos and Imperium* (n. 13), 193–219; R. Mayer, ‘The Epic of Lucretius’, *PLLS* 6 (1990), 35–43; Gale, *Myth and Poetry* (n. 18), 99–128. Cf. also Reinhardt, ‘Readers in the Underworld’ (n. 35), 32–4. On didactic as a highly self-conscious genre, see Volk, *Poetics of Latin Didactic* (n. 6), 39, 44–58, and index s.v. ‘poetic self-consciousness’.

<sup>39</sup> R. Keen, ‘Lucretius and his Reader’, *Apeiron* 19 (1985), 1–10; P. Mitsis, ‘Committing Philosophy on the Reader: Didactic Coercion and Reader Autonomy in *De Rerum Natura*’, in A. Schiesaro, P. Mitsis, and J. S. Clay (eds.), *Mega nepios. Il*



the important role that the addressee has to play, as a kind of intermediary between the didactic speaker and the actual reader. Lucretius combines the traditional role of the pupil/addressee with conventions borrowed from diatribe literature, including apostrophe and the anticipation of challenges from the mouth of an 'anonymous objector' ('someone might say...').<sup>40</sup> In effect, the argument of the *DRN* becomes a kind of dialogue: the actual reader is drawn into the poem and invited to model his/her own reading on the addressee's active engagement with the speaker's discourse, while avoiding the foolish errors attributed to Memmius, the anonymous objector, or, more generally, Epicurus' philosophical rivals.

Recent interest in Lucretius' reader—both as a figure encoded within the text, and as the real individual encountering the work at a given moment in history—is symptomatic of what has been labelled 'the turn towards theory' in Classical studies over the last ten to twenty years. While not all the work mentioned above is equally engaged or self-aware at the theoretical level, a number of studies, such as Gian Biagio Conte's 'Instructions for a Sublime Reader', could fairly be described as fully informed by, and explicitly interested in, contemporary critical theory. Alongside 'reader-centred' theories of various kinds, narratology and theories of closure have each had some impact on the study of the *DRN*. Peta Fowler's 'Lucretian Conclusions',<sup>41</sup> notably, significantly advances the debate about the poem's (abrupt and startling) ending, by drawing on the theoretical treatment of closure in Barbara Herrnstein Smith's classic study, *Poetic Closure*.<sup>42</sup> Feminist theory, too, has provided the

*destinatario nell' epos didascalico* (Pisa, 1993 = MD 31), 111–28; G. B. Conte, 'Instructions for a Sublime Reader: Form of the Text and Form of the Addressee in Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*', in *Genres and Readers: Lucretius, Love Elegy, Pliny's Encyclopedia* (Baltimore/London, 1994), 1–34; Volk, *Poetics of Latin Didactic* (n. 6), 73–83; see also G. B. Townend, 'The Fading of Memmius', CQ 28 (1978), 267–83; and Clay, *Lucretius and Epicurus* (n. 21), 212–66.

<sup>40</sup> On Lucretius and diatribe, see B. P. Wallach, *Lucretius and the Diatribe against the Fear of Death: De Rerum Natura III 830–1094* (Leiden, 1976).

<sup>41</sup> (1997), Ch. 9 of this volume.

<sup>42</sup> *Poetic Closure: A Study of How Poems End* (Chicago/London, 1968). On the ending of the *DRN*, and Lucretian finales in general, see also Commager, 'Lucretius' Interpretation of the Plague' (n. 35); Minadeo, 'Formal Design' (n. 29) and *Lyre of Science* (n. 29), 33–48; Schrijvers, *Horror ac divina voluptas* (n. 16), 312–24; D. F. Bright, 'The Plague and the Structure of *De Rerum Natura*', *Latomus* 30 (1971), 607–32; Müller,

impetus for some interesting work on female figures—especially the female ‘heroes’ Venus and *Natura*—in Lucretius’ poem: Don Fowler argues that the centrality of such figures in the *DRN* constitutes a challenge to the traditional, patriarchal values of Roman society; others are more sceptical, pointing to Epicurus’ forcible ‘uncovering’ of Nature (3.29–30) as an instance of the transcultural metaphor of (male) ‘conquest’ of a natural world, gendered female.<sup>43</sup> Charles Segal’s *Lucretius on Death and Anxiety*,<sup>44</sup> finally, draws on psychoanalytic and anthropological theory in a rich and stimulating study of Lucretius’ handling of the themes of violence, death, and dissolution.

There are also some indications that the search for unity in Lucretius’ poem has come, under the influence of postmodern theory, to seem less important and indeed less intellectually valid a goal. Don and Peta Fowler close their entry on Lucretius in the third edition of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford, 1996) with the observation that ‘the old conception of a conflict between Lucretius the poet and Lucretius the philosopher was not perhaps wholly wrong’, pointing to a rift between Epicurean rationalism and the poet’s own ‘sustaining myths’ of Nature, Venus, and Mother Earth.<sup>45</sup> The notion that there is ‘discontinuity’ in the way that

‘Conclusions’ (n. 15); Clay, *Lucretius and Epicurus* (n. 21), 257–66; Brown, *Lucretius on Love and Sex* (n. 35), 47–60. For attempts to apply narratological theory to the *DRN*, see D. P. Fowler, ‘The Didactic Plot’, in M. Depew and D. Obbink (eds.), *Matrices of Genre: Authors, Canons, and Society* (Cambridge, MA, 2000), 205–19; and Gale, ‘The Story of Us’ (n. 25); cf. also Schiesaro, ‘Palingenesis’ (n. 21), esp. 81–2; and Kennedy, ‘Making a Text of the Universe’ (n. 25).

<sup>43</sup> D. P. Fowler, ‘The Feminine Principal: Gender in the *De Rerum Natura*’, in G. Giannantoni and M. Gigante (eds.), *Epicureismo greco e romano* (Naples, 1996), 813–22, reprinted as Appendix C in id., *Lucretius on Atomic Motion: A Commentary on De Rerum Natura 2. 1–332* (Oxford, 2002), 444–52; S. G. Nugent, ‘Mater Matters: The Female in Lucretius’ *De Rerum Natura*’, *Colby Quarterly* 30 (1994), 179–205; A. M. Keith, *Engendering Rome: Women in Latin Epic* (Cambridge, 2000), 36–41. See also P. Gordon, ‘Some Unseen Monster: Rereading Lucretius on Sex’, in D. Fredrick (ed.), *The Roman Gaze: Vision, Power and the Body* (Baltimore/London, 2002), 86–109 for a stimulating reading of the finale to Book 4, and the *DRN* as a whole, as a critique of Roman ideologies of masculinity and desire.

<sup>44</sup> *Lucretius on Death and Anxiety: Poetry and Philosophy in De Rerum Natura* (Princeton, 1990).

<sup>45</sup> See also J. G. Fitch, ‘Situated Knowledge: Responding to Lucretius’, *Arethusa* 34 (2001), 211–20; Kennedy, ‘Making a Text of the Universe’ (n. 25); and—for a wide-ranging study of scientific vocabulary and use of metaphor in general—id., *Rethinking Reality: Lucretius and the Textualization of Nature* (Ann Arbor, 2002). The Epicurean

Lucretius employs the imagery of—for example—light and darkness, the sea, or earth-as-mother goes back to an article by W. S. Anderson, published in 1960<sup>46</sup> (and ultimately to Patin); it may be that this view of the poem is ripe for a revival or at least a reevaluation. Moreover, the idea that any text can offer a direct and ‘iconic’ reflection of the world it represents has come to seem increasingly problematic: the rifts and slippages between word and world may become a focus of increased attention in future scholarship on the *DRN*.

What kind of poet, then, is ‘our’ Lucretius at the beginning of the twenty-first century? Certainly, a highly sophisticated writer, whose manipulation of generic convention and intertextual echoes is as much a part of the rhetoric of his text as the exhortations to the reader or the flattering words addressed to Memmius in the proem. ‘Our’ *DRN* is, too—like other poems of the late Republic—an extremely self-conscious work, which continually reflects, at both explicit and implicit levels, on its own poetics and its place in the literary canons and hierarchies of the ancient world. Arguably, too, we are coming to see Lucretius more and more as a writer of his age in cultural and ideological as well as literary terms: the isolated figure imagined by Tennyson and the biographical tradition has been replaced by a writer deeply engaged in the social and cultural debates of the first century BC, and conditioned by—as well as challenging—Roman Republican values.<sup>47</sup> It remains to be seen whether the idea,

notion of natural law might be seen as another such ‘sustaining myth’: Lucretius’ reliance on the concepts of law and limit, in combination with the notion that random chance is the governing principle of the universe, seems at least problematic (see A. A. Long, ‘Chance and Natural Law in Epicureanism’, *Phronesis* 22 (1977), 63–88; A. Gigandet, ‘*Natura gubernans* (Lucrece V, 77)’, in C. Lévy (ed.), *Le concept de nature à Rome* (Paris, 1996), 213–25).

<sup>46</sup> W. S. Anderson, ‘Discontinuity in Lucretian Symbolism’, *TAPA* 91 (1960), 1–29. Cf. also P. H. De Lacy, ‘Process and Value: an Epicurean Dilemma’, *TAPA* 88 (1957), 114–26.

<sup>47</sup> On the politics and ideology of the *DRN*, see (in addition to the bibliography on Lucretius and gender cited in n. 43 above) Buchheit, ‘Epicurus’ Triumph of the Mind’ (n. 20); J. H. Nichols, *Epicurean Political Philosophy: The De Rerum Natura of Lucretius* (Ithaca/London, 1976), esp. 179–210; Minyard, *Lucretius and the Late Republic* (n. 20); Hardie, *Cosmos and Imperium* (n. 13), 193–219, esp. 209–13; Fowler, ‘Lucretius and Politics’ (1989), Ch. 18 of this volume; and L. Morgan, ‘Escapes from Orthodoxy: Poetry of the Late Republic’, in O. Taplin (ed.), *Literature in the Greek and Roman Worlds: A New Perspective* (Oxford, 2000), 336–58 (339–49 on Lucretius).

which became so dominant in the 1980s and '90s, of a perfect integration between poetry and philosophy in the *DRN* has really had its day: there are, at least, hints in recent work on the poem of an increased interest in the problematics of (Lucretius') scientific language, and the ways in which the poetic form of the work conditions its representation of the natural world, as well as vice versa.

This brief survey of twentieth-century scholarship has inevitably barely touched on some areas of intense controversy. Some questions can, indeed, be regarded as, essentially, resolved: most Lucretian scholars would now agree, for instance, that the Venus of the poem is a symbolic figure, more or less directly related to Empedocles' *Philia* or Aphrodite, who stands either for pleasure (hence she is addressed in the opening line as *voluptas*), or for the creative forces of nature (hence sunshine and flowers greet her coming, and animals are inspired to reproduce their kind), or for a combination of the two.<sup>48</sup> Others remain open: there is still considerable dispute about the interpretation of the ending, and indeed about whether the poem should in fact end where it does in our manuscripts.<sup>49</sup> But perhaps the most striking change in attitudes over the course of the last century—both where old controversies have been abandoned, and where they still continue to be discussed—is that the lingering hostility to Lucretius, whether as a peddler of dangerous ideas or as a prosaic bore, which still left its traces on early twentieth-century scholarship, seems at last to have evaporated. It is perhaps ironic that, at a time when the whole issue of canonicity is under question, Lucretius is at last in a position to take the place amongst the literary 'greats' which he undoubtedly held amongst Roman readers; but we can nevertheless agree that it is a development to be welcomed.

<sup>48</sup> For a brief *historia quaestionis*, with bibliography, see Gale, *Myth and Poetry* (n. 18), 208 and 217–23.

<sup>49</sup> For bibliography on the ending, see n. 42 above. Commager's symbolic reading (Ch. 8 below) has been particularly influential; Diskin Clay's interpretation (*Lucretius and Epicurus* (n. 21), 257–66; cf. 'The Sources of Lucretius' Inspiration', Ch. 1 below), according to which the plague acts as a kind of final exam designed to challenge the reader's understanding and acceptance of the poem's Epicurean message, has also proved popular. Peta Fowler ('Lucretian Conclusions' (n. 41)) argues persuasively in favour of Bockemüller's transposition of 6.1237–51 to follow 1286, so that 6.1251 would be the final line of the poem. Sedley, *Lucretius and the Transformation of Greek Wisdom* (n. 31), 160–5, has recently revived the theory that the poem is incomplete, suggesting that Lucretius—had he lived—would have added a consolatory coda.

## The Sources of Lucretius' Inspiration\*

*Diskin Clay*

*Der Graben ist weiter und tiefer. Er ist vor allem deshalb so schwer zu überspringen, weil wir hart an seinem Rande stehen.*

Heidegger, 'Der Spruch des Anaximander', in *Holzwege* (Frankfurt am Main, 1950), 303

The distance that separates us from Lucretius is greater than we take it to be, and the gap, or abyss, between Lucretius and his reader is not to be measured by a span of two millennia. Across from us we can make out the remote and solitary figure of a poet making his way across the pathless slopes of Pieria to reach and drink from the sources of his inspiration (1.921–50; 4.1–25). Yet this remote figure of a poet, who works late into the quiet of the night seeking the nature of things and the language and poetry that will reveal it to his reader (1.140–5; cf. 969–70), seems familiar, for Lucretius seems to present himself as a poet among poets. It is Lucretius himself who has brought us to the edge of the gap.

At the beginning of his poem he invokes Venus (1.28); at its end, he will invoke Calliope (6.93). He represents himself as a poet: he is spurred on by the sharp blows of the thyrsus and the prospect of fame (1.922–3); he drinks from pure springs (1.927–8; 4.2–3); and he seeks on the slopes of Pieria the crown that Ennius was the first Roman poet to bring down from a mountain that was better known than Pieria (Helicon, 1.118, 928–30; 4.3–5; 6.95). Lucretius presents himself as a bee in a meadow of flowers (3.10–13); his verse as polished and an adornment of his argument (6.82–3), or as honey coating and disguising

\* For works referred to by date, see the Bibliography on pp. 46–7.

his argument (1.947 and 4.22). He compares his poetry to the song of swans (4.181, 910); and he speaks of himself as a swallow (3.6–7).

And finally, Lucretius speaks of himself as a prophet (5.110–13). At the end of the *De rerum natura*, as he nears the finish line his muse will mark out for him and bring him to (6.92–5), he mounts a venerable chariot that had carried at least two philosophical poets before him (6.47, 93). These familiar poetic attributes are all to be found in Lucretius' poem. And their very familiarity tempts us to mistake Lucretius and his poem. Lucretius does not mark off for his reader how far he moves away from his presentation of the familiar features of himself as a poet. But he does not need to, for his method is to let his reader arrive at his own conclusions about Lucretius' invocation to Venus and his evocation of spring, genesis, and the quickening breath of the west wind (1.11). As he approaches its end and his goal, he calls upon Calliope, his clever Muse (*callida musa*, 6.93), and he asks her to point out to him the finish line in his race to the conclusion of his poem. We come to this goal in the grim description of the death-bearing wave of disease that brought destruction to the highest pinnacle of human development, Athens (cf. 5.1148–6.6). Between the *genitabilis aura fauoni* of the proem ('the quickening breath of the west wind', 1.11) and the *mortifer aestus* ('death-bearing wave') of 6.1138, Lucretius has moved over a great distance.

This essay presents an attempt to recover some of this distance, along with the art of reading a philosophical poem which begins with the familiar, the appealing, and the traditional, in order to bring its reader over the gap that separates the lovely appearance of a spring day (the *uerna species* of 1.10) and the prospect of dissolution and destruction with which the *De rerum natura* ends.

#### WAYS TAKEN

In marked contrast to the shadowy group of philosophers which critics have seen, or have thought to see, in the background of the *De rerum natura*, stands the solitary figure whose name seems to sum up Lucretius' philosophical sources. He is named only once in the poem (3.1042–4), but as the argument of the poem develops, he does not need to be named to be recognized (3.3–13):

te sequor, o Graiae gentis decus, inque tuis nunc  
 ficta pedum pono pressis uestigia signis,  
 5 non ita certandi cupidus quam propter amorem  
 quod te imitari aueo; quid enim contendat hirundo  
 cycnis, aut quidnam tremulis facere artubus haedi  
 consimile in cursu possint et fortis equi uis?  
 tu pater es, rerum inuentor, tu patria nobis  
 10 suppeditas praecepta, tisque ex, inclute, chartis,  
 floriferis ut apes in saltibus omnia libant,  
 omnia nos itidem depascimur aurea dicta,  
 aurea, perpetua semper dignissima uita.

you I follow, glory of Greece and its people, planting my feet  
 firmly in the tracks you have left,  
 5 not out of eagerness to compete with you,  
 but out of my love for you I want to imitate you.  
 How, I ask, could a swallow compete with a swan?  
 How could young kids on their unsteady legs  
 match the power and speed of a horse?  
 You are our father, you are the discoverer of the truth.  
 10 It is you, who, in your glory, supply us  
 from your writings your paternal precepts,  
 and, as bees in a flowering meadow cull honey,  
 we cull from all your writings and feed on your golden sayings,  
 golden, forever most worthy of life eternal.

The *De rerum natura* proclaims itself the reiteration of a path already taken. Its very syntax suggests its relation to Epicurus: *inque tuis nunc | ficta pedum pono pressis uestigia signis*. The lines set the compass of Source Criticism.

Lucretius speaks of *signa*: marks, impressions. Epicurus had spoken of a way and the movement along it that led to the end of philosophy. Especially towards the end of his life he became more interested in establishing a clearly marked path for his disciples to follow, and the words *ὁδός* ('road') and *βαδίζω* ('go', 'walk') occur with significant frequency in the three major letters preserved in Diogenes Laertius.<sup>1</sup> From the Vatican collection of Epicurus'

<sup>1</sup> Schrijvers (1970), 21 n. 11, gives a list of examples. Kenney (1970), 369–70, connects the *auia Pieridum* ('pathless tracts of the muses') with the untrodden paths of Hellenistic poetry; and Bollack (1959), 658, makes a revealing connection between the *iter* ('path') of 1.1114–17 and the *πόρον ὕμνων* ('path of song') of Empedocles v 35.1–3 DK.

*Pronouncements* comes the exhortation (SV 48): *πειράσθαι τὴν ὑστέραν τῆς προτέρας κρείττω ποιεῖν, ἕως ἂν ἐν ὁδῷ ὦμεν· ἐπειδὰν δ' ἐπὶ πέρας ἔλθωμεν, ὁμαλῶς εὐφραίνεσθαι* ('we must attempt to make the next day better than the day before, until we are on the way; and once we have come to our goal, feel joy, steadily, calmly'). Later Epicureans recognized that Epicurus had discovered and marked a road, or better—a way, they were to follow. It seems that none saw this more clearly marked out before him than did Lucretius. In the apotheosis of Epicurus which begins Book 6, he speaks again of a road (6.26–8):

exposuit . . . bonum summum quo tendimus omnes  
quid foret, atque uiam monstrauit, tramite paruo  
qua possemus ad id recto contendere cursu.

he revealed . . . the highest good, an end  
towards which we all tend; he showed us the shortest way  
by which we can reach it on a path straight and narrow.

It is natural enough to see the language of this passage and the *aurea dicta* of the proem to Book 3 as centring on Epicurus' moral thought and his carefully formulated ethical maxims, or *patria praecepta*, some of which can be seen in the Latin of the *De rerum natura*.<sup>2</sup>

But this focus is too narrow. In Epicurus, the word *ὁδός* ('road') and questions of method are more prominent in his physiology than in his ethical writings.<sup>3</sup> When, in the proem to Book 5, Lucretius speaks again of following in Epicurus' footsteps, he is following a path marked by the fundamental principles of Epicurus' physiology (5.55–7):

cuius ego ingressus uestigia dum rationes  
persequor ac doceo dictis, quo quaeque creata  
foedere sint . . .

. . . as I follow in his steps and pursue the principles  
of his philosophy and in my writings I teach by what law  
everything comes into being.

<sup>2</sup> 1.44–9 (= 2.646–51) = *KD* 1; compare 3.830–46 with *KD* 2; 1.690–700 with *KD* 23; 5.1151–60 with *KD* 35; Boyancé (1936), 322, stresses the religious character of Epicurean society, and compares the *aurea dicta* of 2.12 with the golden sayings of Pythagoras.

<sup>3</sup> *Ep. Hdt.* 35.7, with 36.7; 37.1–3; 83.3 and 10.



Elsewhere it is clear that the route to a rational account of the world is not always the shortest and most direct. The best example of the circuitous approach to a problem is Lucretius' treatment of the magnet which poses the difficulty of explaining action over a distance. It is a problem which can be approached only by a review of the fundamental theoretical considerations which explain the working of the world. When Lucretius states that the problem is best approached by long detours (*nimum longis ambagibus est adeundum*, 6.919), he is following the principle and the path marked by Epicurus who insisted that his followers make the round (*περίοδος*) of the main principles of his physiology as they approach the particular problems posed by nature.<sup>4</sup> Passages like Lucretius' treatment of the magnet make all the clearer the method that stands behind a statement such as that which closes Book 1 (lines 1114–17):

haec sic pernosces parua perductus opella;  
 namque alid ex alio clarescet nec tibi caeca  
 nox iter eripiet quin ultima naturai  
 peruideas: ita res accendent lumina rebus.

And in this way you will recognize these truths,  
 led on with a little effort. One truth will illuminate another.  
 The dark of night will not rob you of the path  
 on which your eye will penetrate to nature's fundamental truths.  
 So one truth kindles a light to reveal still others.

## SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

For the ancients, sources were springs as well as the books we now speak of as *Quellen* and 'originals', forgetting entirely one of the meanings of *origo*.<sup>5</sup> By habit and inclination we speak of models, originals, debts, the 'sources', and more often the 'source', that lay open before Lucretius' eyes. But for the ancients some springs were sacred and the source of inspiration for those who drank from them. Lucretius speaks of such

<sup>4</sup> *Ep. Hdt.* 36.9; 83.10; *Ep. Pyth.* 85.6.

<sup>5</sup> '*Origo* means a spring of water. And, though it is generally a mere waste of ingenuity to tie the sense of a word down to its supposed derivation, I suspect that the most fruitful way of understanding the word "originality" may be to remember this meaning', Gilbert Murray, *The Rise of the Greek Epic* (Oxford, 1911), 263.

sources in a manner which is deceptively traditional and strikingly original. He first speaks of them in the *exordium* which introduces the difficult argument on the infinity of the universe (1.921–30):

nunc age quod superest cognosce et clarius audi.  
 nec me animi fallit quam sint obscura; sed acri  
 percussit thyrso laudis spes magna meum cor  
 et simul incussit suauem mi in pectus amorem  
 musarum, quo nunc instinctus mente uigenti 925  
 auia Pieridum peragro loca nullius ante  
 trita solo. iuvat integros accedere fontis  
 atque haurire, iuuatque nouos decerpere flores  
 insignemque meo capiti petere inde coronam  
 unde prius nulli uelarent tempora musae. 930

Now learn what remains. Listen more attentively.  
 I am well aware of how obscure these matters are,  
 but an intense hope of fame has struck my heart  
 and driven deep within my breast the sweet love  
 of the Muses. Now, inspired by this love and hope, with a  
 mind alert 925

I traverse the pathless tracts of the Muses of Pieria  
 that no human foot has touched before. It is a joy  
 to approach untouched springs and drink from them.  
 It is a joy to pick new flowers and to seek a noble crown.  
 The Muses have never shaded the brows of any poet before me  
 with such a wreath. 930

What stands out is the word *auia* ('pathless')—it is the first word of the proem to Book 4. Here and elsewhere in the poem Lucretius insists that his enterprise is novel. It is this sense of the novelty of his poetic theme that Lucretius presents as the well of his enthusiasm and love for the Muses. The great hope he has of glory stems from his perception of his place in the history of this world (5.335–7):

denique natura haec rerum ratioque repertast  
 nuper, et hanc primus cum primis ipse repertus  
 nunc ego sum in patrias qui possim uertere uoces.

... and, finally, the reality of the universe  
 and the philosophy that discloses it have been discovered  
 only recently, and I myself have been discovered,  
 among the first, who is capable of expressing it in Latin.

Given the theme the exordium of Book 1 announces, and the language Lucretius chooses to express it, the mindful reader is brought to think back on another breakthrough in the history of the world—that of the *Graius homo* ('man of Greece') of the proem (1.66, 75–7):

atque omne immensum *peragrauit mente* animoque,  
unde refert nobis uictor quid possit oriri,  
quid nequeat . . .

*In his mind's eye he traversed* all of infinity  
and as a conqueror brought back knowledge  
of what can come into being and what cannot . . .

Both Lucretius and Epicurus made their way through an infinite universe which is defined only by strict laws and a method (cf. 1.80–2). The deliberate parallelism drawn by Lucretius between himself and Epicurus leads to an explanation of how it is that Lucretius can portray himself as *following* in Epicurus' footsteps and at the same time striking out through a trackless region to the sources of his inspiration. The explanation lies in the words *auia Pieridum* ('pathless tracts of the Muses of Pieria'). The *ἄπειρον* ('infinity') of Epicurus and the *auia Pieridum* are one and the same. But the universe of Epicurus is delineated in the arid and technical prose, the *νήφων λογισμός* ('sober reasoning'), of a man who had little use for poetry and considered the Muses Sirens.<sup>6</sup> The universe of the *De rerum natura* is one presented in and seen through poetry. Its *ratio* is one that leads its reader to see through poetry.

One thing that is not traditional in what has been called Lucretius' 'apology' is his conspicuous failure to invoke his Muses as he had invoked Venus (1.28) and will invoke Calliope (6.92–5). In the *exordium* at the end of Book 1, Lucretius asks nothing of the Muses. Rather he evokes traditional themes to stress his originality. The wreath he seeks from the Muses brings to mind Ennius (1.117–19),

<sup>6</sup> *παιδείαν δὲ πᾶσαν, μακάριε, φεύγε τὰκάτιον ἀράμενος* ('Unfurl the sails of your little skiff and skirt every form of [traditional] education', D.L. 10.6 = fr. 163 Us.). Plutarch seems to have detected Epicurus' wry allusion to Odysseus and the Sirens in one of his letters to Pythocles (p. 150.12 Us.). [I have added substance to this aperçu in a study of the letter in its relation to Vergil in 'Vergil's Farewell to Education (*Catalepton* V) and Epicurus' letter to Pythocles', in D. Armstrong, J. Fish, P. A. Johnston, and M. B. Skinner (eds.), *Vergil, Philodemus, and the Augustans* (Austin, Texas, 2004), 25–36.]

qui primus amoeno  
detulit ex Helicone perenni fronde coronam,  
per gentis Italas hominum quae clara clueret.

[Ennius] . . . who was the first  
to bring down from lovely Helicon the crown of perennial leaf  
to become known to fame through the peoples of Italy.

And inevitably, the *auia Pieridum* bring Hesiod to mind; the *integros fontis* ('untouched springs') the springs of Helicon. Tacitly, it would seem, Lucretius has evoked a tradition stretching from Hesiod to Ennius to make his claim that *he* and not Hesiod or Ennius is the first truly philosophical poet.

Helicon is mentioned again in the *De rerum natura*: indirectly, when poets are called the *comites Heliconiadum* ('companions of the Muses', 3.1037). Lucretius is not a *Μουσάων θεράπων* ('servant of the Muses', Hesiod, *Theogony* 100). He is a follower of Epicurus. He is original in his bold attempt to properly express Epicurus' philosophy in Latin verse. And he was the first and last poet to expound his great theme in poetry. And thus Lucretius is permitted to speak of *himself*—*ego*. This emphatic 'I' breaks into the poem only when Lucretius is speaking of his poetry, and its limitations.<sup>7</sup>

Helicon rises in Boeotia; Mt Pieria, on the Macedonian side of Olympus. In Lucretius' references to poetry there seems to be a distinction between Helicon and Pieria, and possibly an opposition. The Muses of Pieria and their song are mentioned twice in the *De rerum natura* (1.926, 946 = 4.1, 21). Their song is Lucretius' song. But Helicon is a mountain frequented by other poets. It is the mountain from which Ennius brought down his crown (1.118); from which philosophers forced *harmonia* and improperly applied this musical term to the soul (3.130–5). It is the source of plaintive song (4.547). Poets accompany the Muses that dwell there (3.1037); and on its slopes grows a tree which is said to be deadly to men when in flower (6.786–7).

By contrast Lucretius traverses the trackless reaches of Pieria alone. The springs of this mountain have no name. The steps and song of dancing Muses cannot be heard there; on its slopes, no shepherds

<sup>7</sup> 1.25, 943 (= 4.18); 3.316; 5.55.

pasture their sheep. If there is a distance in the *De rerum natura* between Pieria and Helicon, and therefore a tacit distinction between Lucretius and other poets, its explanation might lie in the fact that the associations of Helicon are local and inextricably bound up with the *Ascraeum carmen* ('song of Ascra') of Hesiod, while Pieria is associated with the more universal Olympus.<sup>8</sup> Pieria is more on a level with the ἀπειρία ('infinity') of Epicurus' view of the universe than the less lofty Helicon.

### THE MUSES

Between Lucretius' description of his enthusiasm (1.921–30) and his 'apology' proper (1.931–50), there is a gap filled by a tacit question: why will the Muses crown the poet (1.931–50)?<sup>9</sup>

primum quod magnis doceo de rebus et artis  
 religionum animum nodis exsoluere pergo,  
 deinde quod obscura de re tam lucida pango  
 carmina, musaeo contingens cuncta lepore.  
 935 id quoque enim non ab nulla ratione uidetur:  
 sed ueluti pueris absinthia taetra medentes  
 cum dare conantur, prius oras pocula circum  
 contingunt mellis dulci flauoque liquore,  
 ut puerorum aetas improuida ludificetur  
 940 labrorum tenuis, interea perpotet amarum  
 absinthii laticem deceptaque non capiat,  
 sed potius tali pacto recreata ualescat,  
 sic ego nunc, quoniam haec ratio plerumque uidetur  
 tristior esse quibus non est tractata, retroque

<sup>8</sup> The Muses of Pieria have been seen as far south as Helicon, cf. Callimachus fr. 1 and 2 Pfeiffer (*AP* 7.42.5–6); but Pieria is the birthplace of the Olympian Muses, Hesiod, *Theogony* 53, with West's note; cf. fr. 7 Merkelbach and West, where Olympus and Pieria are associated, as they are in *Bacchae* 410 and *Scutum* 201–6.

<sup>9</sup> Schrijvers (1970), 30 n. 6, is right to sense a difficulty in the logic which moves from 1.930–1. The most obvious bridge between Lucretius' statement of the source of his inspiration and 1.931 is that of his merit and originality: *prius nulli uelarent tempora musae* ('the Muses have never shaded the brow of any poet before me', 930) and *primum quod* ('first because', 931).

uulgus abhorret ab hac, uolui tibi suauiloquenti 945  
 carmine Pierio rationem exponere nostram  
 et quasi musaeo dulci contingere melle,  
 si tibi forte animum tali ratione tenere  
 uersibus in nostris possem, dum perspicis omnem  
 naturam rerum qua constet compta figura. 950

First, because I teach of great matters and attempt  
 to liberate the mind from the painful bonds of religious dread,  
 and then because I am fashioning a poem so bright  
 on a theme so dark, as I coat all with the charm  
 of the Muses. I decided to write poetry for good reason. 935  
 When they want to administer bitter absinth to young children,  
 doctors coat the rims of cups with honey sweet and yellow  
 to deceive the unsuspecting children until they taste it  
 and swallow the bitter draught of absinth 940  
 and, though deceived, they find relief.  
 This is the method I adopt in this poem.  
 To most my philosophy seems a bitter dose,  
 if it has not been well prepared in advance. 945  
 Most people find it distasteful. I wanted to publish our philosophy  
 in Pierian song and coat it with the sweet honey of the Muses.  
 I wanted to captivate you by this verse to bring you finally  
 to see the shape of the entire universe. 950

Here we have Lucretius' answer to his tacit question. The Muses will crown the poet because of the great things which are his argument; because its surface, touched with their sweet honey, will attract the reader to the point where it becomes possible for Lucretius to release his mind and soul from the bonds of traditional religion of which the Muses themselves are a mirror and innocuous part. In part, because the bright surface of his poem will bring to light a dark theme.<sup>10</sup> Lucretius' poem is attractive and brilliant; its argument is bitter and dark. And this is the justification for Lucretius' decision to write poetry (*non ab nulla ratione uidetur*, 'I decided for good reason', 1.935). If taken on its own terms, Lucretius' poetry makes palatable, or approachable (*labrorum tenuis*, 'until they taste it', 1.940), an argument that seems grim and bitter to those who have not been exposed to it. In some sense, his poetry, and

<sup>10</sup> *Nec me animi fallit quam sint obscura* ('I am well aware of how obscure these matters are', 1.922); *obscura de re* ('a theme so dark', 1.933). Here Lucretius' theme is the infinity of the universe—an *adelon*.

even his presentation of it, is a deception (1.941). The significant repetition of the rare *contingere* makes clear that Lucretius considers, or represents, his poetry as a *coating*.<sup>11</sup>

It remains to determine if this, the most explicit statement Lucretius makes about his philosophical poem, is not itself deceptive, or only a partial statement of the relation between his argument (*ratio*) and its form (*carmen*) (2.655–60):

655      hic siquis mare Neptunum Cereremque uocare  
           constituet fruges et Bacchi nomine abuti  
           mauult quam laticis proprium proferre uocamen,  
           concedamus ut hic terrarum dictitet orbem  
           esse deum matrem, dum uera re tamen ipse  
           religione animum turpi contingere parcat.

655      In these matters if you choose to call the sea Neptune  
           and crops of grain Ceres and prefer to abuse the name Bacchus  
           rather than calling wine wine, this we will allow.  
           Call this earth the Mother of the Gods—on one condition:  
           in respect for the truth do not infect the mind  
           with the ugly taint of religion.

Lucretius' manner of treating poetry and its themes is seldom as explicit as this. And even then it is not so explicit an evocation and rejection of a tradition as was Eliot's calling up 'Thunder rolled by the rolling stars | Simulates triumphal cars' in his *Four Quartets*:

That was a way of putting it—not very satisfactory:  
 A periphrastic study in a worn-out poetical fashion.<sup>12</sup>

Lucretius' evocation of the rites of Cybele was no worn-out poetical fashion. Because his method is to attract his reader to the surface of his poem and then bring him to look through its surface to the argument that lies beneath, some readers have become so attached to his *musaeum mel* ('honey of the Muses') that they have failed to see

<sup>11</sup> 1.934, 938, 947; 2.670. Lucretius' simile, if it is taken seriously, has an important consequence. Poetry is something external to, and fundamentally unlike, the substance of Lucretius' argument. Cf. Plato, *Republic* 601b; 607a, and the term *fucata*, 1.644, and *multa . . . sunt ornanda politis uersibus*, 6.82–3. [I explore this background and function of the honey simile of 1.931–50 in 'Lucretius' Honeyed Muse: the History and Meaning of a Simile', in A. Monet (ed.), *Le Jardin Romain: Épicurisme et Poésie à Rome* (Lille, 2004), 183–96.]

<sup>12</sup> 'East Coker' II, in T. S. Eliot, *The Complete Poems and Plays* (New York, 1934), 125.

a method in his shifts from 'poetry' to its underlying *ratio*. One expression of Lucretius' method of evoking a traditional theme and reaffirming his reader's attachment to it, and then bringing him to a vantage from which he can both see through the surface of the poem and interpret it, is the first element of the verbs which describe the activity of the reader: *perpotet* ('swallow', 1.940); *perspicis* ('you see', 4.25); *pernosces perductus* ('you will recognize, led on...', 1.1114); *peruideas* ('your eye will penetrate', 1.1117).<sup>13</sup>

The failure to appreciate how the poem moves from the invocation of Venus at its beginning to the theology which asks nothing of gods who can be moved by neither anger nor a sense of gratitude to the Venus of Book 4—our *uoluptas* ('pleasure') and *muta cupido* ('mute desire', 4.1057)—has wrought havoc in the text of the *De rerum natura* and filled the poem with contradictions.<sup>14</sup> As men commonly conceive of them, the gods do not exist. Venus cannot be moved by Lucretius' prayer: *aeternum da dictis, diua, leporem* ('goddess, grant my poetry a charm eternal', 1.28). But the goddess, as most men think of her, can move Lucretius' reader: to the point where it becomes possible for him to realize that what is truly divine can be moved neither by a sense of gratitude, nor anger, nor precedent (1.49; 2.651; cf. 1.26–7). And that the goddess men call Venus has her origin in human passion and desire: *haec Venus est nobis* ('this is our Venus', 4.1058). Tityos too is no more than the worries and anxieties of the lover: *Tityos nobis hic est* ('Tityos is here among us', 3.992).<sup>15</sup>

If this is our Venus, and if Bacchus, Neptune, and Ceres are abusive descriptions of wine, the sea, and grain, Lucretius' reader is brought to ask: what then are our Muses? The Muses (or Muse) make other appearances in Lucretius' poem: the spring song of the shepherds, inspired by gusts of the west wind sounding through hollow reeds, is called a country Muse: *agrestis enim tum musa uigebat* ('for then the

<sup>13</sup> Here I disagree with Schrijvers' formulation of Lucretius' method as *per falsa ad uera*, 'through falsehood to truth', (1970), 41. The traditions Lucretius evokes (the *falsa*) have some basis in human experience and in reality. The Muses are one example. The tradition of Cupid's arrows is another. It is explained ultimately, as it was not at the beginning of the poem (*uulnere amoris*, 'by a wound of love', 1.34), by a theory of vision and love, 4.1048.

<sup>14</sup> So lines 1.44–9 do not appear in Bailey's Oxford text. They are the product of an interpolator *irrisor* (Isaac Vossius) or a *lector frustra curiosus* (Lachmann).

<sup>15</sup> I have attempted to write a sketch of the history of Venus in the *De rerum natura*, (1969), 33–9.



country Muse flourished', 5.1398), and editors do not capitalize the word. But *the* Lucretian commentary on the Muses of his 'apology' is his treatment of the echo and the beliefs it gives rise to (4.578–94):

ita colles collibus ipsi  
uerba repulsantes iterabant dicta referri.  
580 haec loca capripedes satyros nymphasque tenere  
finitimi fingunt et faunos esse loquuntur  
quorum noctiuago strepitu ludoque iocanti  
adfirmant uulgo taciturna silentia rumpi  
chordarumque sonos fieri dulcisque querelas,  
585 tibia quas fundit digitis pulsata canentum,  
et genus agricolum late sentiscere, cum Pan  
pineae semiferi capitis uelamina quassans  
unco saepe labro calamos percurrit hiantis,  
fistula siluestrem ne cesset fundere musam.  
590 cetera de genere hoc monstra ac portenta loquuntur  
ne loca deserta ab diuis quoque forte putentur  
sola tenere, ideo iactant miracula dictis  
aut aliqua ratione alia ducuntur, ut omne  
humanum genus est auidum nimis auricularum.  
579 *dicta* OQ : *docta* Lachmann.

So it is that one hillside echoed another,  
as words rebound from it and words are repeated.  
580 The country folk living nearby imagine that these mountains  
are the haunts of goat-footed satyrs and nymphs  
and they tell of fauns and are convinced that their noise  
and frolic are wont to shatter the stillness of the night;  
that they hear the sound of strings and sweet plaints;  
585 that a flute throbs out responding to the fingers of the players.  
And the farmers can make out in all the surrounding mountains  
the melodies of Pan as he tosses the pine tufts of his goatlike head  
and plays his reed flute with his twisted mouth and never ceases  
making the woods sound with the Muse of his pipe.  
590 They report other marvels and wonders like these,  
not wanting to believe that these places  
can possibly have been deserted by the gods  
and that they are their only inhabitants.  
And so they heap the marvellous on what they actually hear  
or are persuaded for some other reason. So it is.  
Human ears are too eager for hearing and hearsay.

*Querelae*, plaintive songs such as these, are also heard on Helicon (4.547; cf. 5.1384).<sup>16</sup> What the inhabitants of remote places hear is not the distant song of the Muses, or Pan, but the echoes of men calling out in the mountains (4.575–8). The larger context of Book 4 makes it clear that the Muses, if they are to be explained by the *ratio* they help disguise, are cases of *προσδοξαζόμενα* 'added opinions'; they are constructs the mind has added to real experience (*res | animus quas ab se protinus addit*, 4.468).<sup>17</sup>

In the company of Centaurs, Chimaeras, and Scyllas, the Muses have their origin in human experience. But they arise from sounds, not from things seen. In the long run of the poem, these goddesses of poetic tradition take their place with the gods as they are created by men, with Venus and *Veneres nostras* ('our Venuses', 4.1185), Cybele, Pan, and the gods of the country. They are the wonderful additions of the mind to its experience. These are our Muses. It is the art and the method of Lucretius' philosophical poem to move from what is appealing and traditional to a vantage which both comprehends and transcends tradition.

## PROPHECY

Epicurus, who was not a poet, called his philosophy prophecy (*SV* 29). It is clear that he had his reasons for making a claim often made by poets for their inspiration. When it has gotten a proper distance from the world it describes, physiology becomes a kind of prophecy:<sup>18</sup>

*Μέμνησο ὅτι θνητὸς ὢν τῆ φύσει καὶ λαβὼν χρόνον ὠρισμένον ἀνέβησ*

<sup>16</sup> The line is corrupt, but the association of Helicon and an anonymous plaint (*cum liquidam tollunt lugubri uoce querelam*, 'when they raise a liquid plaint in mournful voice') is sure. Cf. the close parallel in 5.1382–6.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *Ep. Hdt.* 50–1 and the *opinatus animi quos addimus ipsi* ('judgement of the mind which we add ourselves', 4.465), 4.386, 460–1, 816; 5.154.

<sup>18</sup> *SV* 10 (= Metrodorus fr. 37 Koerte). The attribution of this exhortation to Epicurus seems secure, given the language of the bishop Dionysios of Alexandria, in Eusebius, *Praep. Ev.* 14.27.8 (*PG* 21, col. 1288); Lucretius 3.14–30; and Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* 1.47–8. The prophetic character of Epicurean philosophy, and of Greek physiology, is recognized by Ovid, *Tristia* 2.425–6; cf. Empedocles *v* 15.1 DK; and Athenaeus, 187 b (p. 115.13 Us.).

τοῖς περὶ φύσεως διαλογισμοῖς ἐπὶ τὴν ἀπειρίαν καὶ τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ κατείδες τὰ τ' ἔόντα τὰ τ' ἔσσόμενα πρό τ' ἔόντα (ἔσσόμενα Körte, *Iliad* 1.70; ἔσόμενα V) ('Remember that although you are mortal and have received a limited span of time, you have ascended to infinity by means of the arguments concerning nature—and to all of time, and have looked upon "those things that are, that will be, and were before"').

Here is another element in Lucretius' presentation of his poetry and its inspiration. It is both Epicurean and poetic. It seems traditional, and can and has been compared to the conceptions of earlier poets who spoke of themselves as inspired 'prophets'.<sup>19</sup> But in Lucretius, the emphasis falls more on prophecy than on inspiration. In the *De rerum natura*, poetry, philosophy, and prophecy are first found together in Empedocles and his followers (1.731–3):

*carmina quin etiam diuini pectoris eius  
uociferantur et exponunt praeclara reperta,  
ut uix humana uideatur stirpe creatus.*

And, indeed, *his poetry is given voice  
in his divine breast* and it reveals his brilliant discoveries,  
so brilliant that he hardly seems to have been born of human  
parents.

This conception of physiology as prophecy is itself Empedoclean and carries over into Lucretius' judgement of those who held the theory of four elements (1.736–9):

*quamquam multa bene ac diuinitus inuenientes  
ex adyto tamquam cordis responsa dedere  
sanctius et multo certa ratione magis quam  
Pythia quae tripodi a Phoebi lauroque profatur.*

even though they make many inspired discoveries,  
and even though they have pronounced as if  
from the inner sanctum of their heart oracles more sacred  
and more confirmed by reason  
than the prophecies of the Pythia who speaks  
from Apollo's tripod and laurel.

<sup>19</sup> Kambylis (1965), 27–8, notes many of the passages in which poets speak of themselves as 'prophets'; cf. Bacchylides 9.3 Snell. Munro's note at 1.102 is valuable for his statement of the Roman conception of the *uates* ('prophet'/'poet').

It is language like this which Lucretius will use to prophesy the end of this world (2.1048–1174). In its free flight (*liber iactus*, 2.1047), the mind mounts to a point from which it can look down upon the infinity of the universe and the origin and impending destruction of this world and worlds like it. And this is the point of view of the end of Book 2 and the beginning of Book 5, where Lucretius takes up again the great theme of the perishability of the world (5.110–13):

qua prius aggrediar quam de re fundere fata  
 sanctius et multo certa ratione magis quam  
 Pythia quae tripode a Phoebi lauroque profatur,  
 multa tibi expediam doctis solacia dictis.

Before I approach this theme and utter prophecies  
 more sacred and more confirmed by reason  
 than the prophecies of the Pythia who speaks  
 from Apollo's tripod and laurel,  
 I will set out some consolations in my learned poem.

The language Lucretius had used to praise Empedocles and his followers now describes his own argument. One reader of the poem has properly asked: 'Is this not a way of proclaiming himself a new Empedocles?'<sup>20</sup> On reflection, no. Lucretius' proclamation is even more ambitious. In Book 5, Empedocles enters the poem as Lucretius attempts to convey the difficulty of reaching a conception of the perishability of this world. It is characteristic of Lucretius' view of the philosophical poets who came before him that he should adopt and adapt Empedocles' language on the impossibility of framing from the senses a conception of the divine, in order to bring before the mind the difficulty of imagining the death of a world which has lost all of its divinity (5.114–234; cf. 2.1090–1104). Empedocles' Greek finds its silent commentary in Lucretius' application of it. Three lines of his poem were known to Clement who gives a subject (31 B 133 DK):  
 τὸ . . . θεῖον, ὃ Ἀκραγατίνος φησι ποιήτης,

οὐκ ἔστιν πελάσασθαι ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἐφικτόν,  
 ἤμετέροις ἢ χερσὶ λαβεῖν, ἢ περ τε μεγίστη  
 πειθοῦς ἀνθρώποισιν ἀμαξιτὸς εἰς φρένα πίπτει.

<sup>20</sup> Boyancé (1963), 60.

The divine, says the poet from Acragas,

Cannot be approached or gotten to in the range of  
our eyes or grasped by our hands, which is the broadest  
way of persuading men that falls into the mind.

100

nec me animi fallit quam res noua miraque menti  
accidat exitium caeli terraeque futurum,  
et quam difficile id mihi sit peruincere dictis;  
ut fit ubi insolitam rem apportes auribus ante  
nec tamen hanc possis oculorum subdere uisu  
nec iacere indu manus, uia qua munita fidei  
proxima fert humanum in pectus templaue mentis.

(5.97–103)

I am quite aware that the future destruction of the earth  
and heaven comes into view as something amazing  
and unheard of and how difficult it will be to convince  
you with mere words.

100

This is the difficulty, when you bring forward a truth  
never heard before.

You cannot subdue it to the sight of our eyes  
nor can you lay hands upon it. Sight and touch are  
the wide road that lead to persuasion and most directly  
to the human heart and the spaces of the mind.

As often happens when one poet refers to another, the more things seem to remain the same, the more they change—an axiom especially true of the Roman poetry of allusion.<sup>21</sup> Lucretius is alluding to Empedocles, for the allusion behind lines 5.97–103 is not isolated and local, but it informs its context. At least one detail of Empedocles' language comes to be seen as valid for Epicurean theology: *οὐκ ἔστι χερσὶ λαβεῖν* ('it cannot be grasped by our hands') finds its echo

<sup>21</sup> In his 'Doctus Lucretius' (1970) [= Ch. 13 of this volume], Kenney has done much to show that Lucretius' poetry shares many of the distinctive characteristics of Hellenistic poetry, including its poetics of allusion. The subtlety of Lucretius' own allusions shows that he was not 'a peculiar throw-back or literary anachronism in his own time' (373). But for some of Lucretius' readers a wink is not as good as a nod. A. A. R. Henderson (1970), 742, cannot see that Lucretius 3.152–60 is a wink at Sappho's description of her emotions, fr. 31 Lobel and Page. Rather Lucretius 'found it in an Epicurean source in which it was already so applied [to fear]'. Once the allusion is seen, it is important to remember: 'One cannot, then, interpret one work on the basis of the other, but only specify the change of orientation in each case', Bollack (1959), 658.

in *manuum tactum suffugit et ictum* ('it escapes the touch and impact of the hands', 5.150). But the allusion seems to say still more, for it subordinates the impossibility of following sense experience to a conception of divinity to the difficulties of the poet who will convince his Roman reader of the perishability of a godless world. Here again, in the case of Empedocles, Lucretius evokes earlier philosophical poetry in order to assert the superiority of his own argument. Since the universe is now as it always was and always will be, the philosopher who understands its eternal laws becomes, like Calchas and the Muses, a prophet. And here again the ancient themes of poetry and inspiration are comprehended within a new philosophy and a new philosophical poetry.

## INVENTION

In antiquity, poets were makers, not finders. But invention figures importantly in Lucretius' conception of his own poetry and in his statements about the sources of his inspiration. One source of inspiration is the world revealed by Epicurus' discoveries—the *naturam rerum, diuina mente coortam* ('the nature of the world, revealed by your divine mind', 3.15).<sup>22</sup> Another is Lucretius' sense of being at once Epicurus' follower and the first to reveal adequately to the Roman reader Epicurus' discovery of the nature of things. His sense of originality derives from his sense of history. Cicero reproached the Epicureans who were his contemporaries for their lack of interest in history: *in uestris disputationibus uero historia muta est* ('but in your discussions history is mute', *Fin.* 2.67). Unfairly, and narrowly. In the vast conception of history that envisaged the simultaneous formation and destruction of worlds in infinite time and space and reduced the Roman conception of *res gestae* to *euenta . . . corporis atque loci* ('accidents of body and void', 1.478–82), Lucretius could look upon Epicurus as a *πρῶτος εὑρετής* ('first discoverer')—as the *rerum inuentor* ('discoverer of the truth', 3.9). His attachment to Epicurus was not ahistorical. It depended on a

<sup>22</sup> I accept the reading of the Oblongus (*coortam*) and Waszink's defense of it in *Mnemosyne* n.s. 2 (1949), 68–9. Cf. 1.732; 2.1051.

conception of history in which events two centuries old can be regarded as *recent* (5.335–7):

denique natura haec rerum ratioque repertast  
nuper, et hanc primus cum primis ipse repertus  
nunc ego sum in patrias qui possim uertere uoces.

... and, finally, the reality of the universe  
and the philosophy that discloses it have been discovered  
only recently, and I myself have been discovered,  
among the first, who is capable of expressing it in Latin.

By this conception of history, discoverers are themselves discovered. The same language which had described Lucretius' place in world history (*ipse repertus*, 'I myself have been discovered') comes to describe the greatest product of a city which is itself the pinnacle of civilization (cf. the *summum cacumen*, 5.1457 and 6.1–4). This product is Epicurus—*uirum tali corde repertum* ('a man of such wisdom was discovered', 6.5). Lucretius' description of himself as *discovered* in Book 3 might have dissuaded Bailey from his vacuous explanation of *repertum* in 5 as 'little more here than the participle of sum'.<sup>23</sup> As a part of the gradual discovery of the arts of improving life, the discoverer of the true account of the world is himself discovered. So Lucretius is himself discovered two centuries later, and this discovery makes possible the first adequate proclamation in Latin of the reason and nature of things. The inspiration of the discovery of the *maiestas cognita rerum* ('the majesty of nature made known', 5.7) is one of the most abundant and purest sources of the *De rerum natura*. It is Lucretius' sense of history and discovery that explains too why the language which describes the gradual discovery and illumination of Lucretius' reader also describes the progress of civilization (5.1452–7):<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> (1947), iii.1555. A long series of discoveries (*reperta*) have led up to Epicurus and his discoveries: cf. 5.12 and 13; money and gold (5.1113); metals (5.1241, 1281, 1286); writing (5.1445); cf. 5.1279, 1414–15.

<sup>24</sup> *Usus* and *experientia* ('familiarity' and 'experience', 5.1452) are crucial for the mastery of Lucretius' argument: 3.206–7; 4.822–47; as is a quick mind, 1.402–9. In some matters (*adela*), the progress of Lucretius' reader must be cautious, 5.529–33, but gradually he draws the hidden workings of nature out into the light (5.1453–4): 1.402–9; 5.1028–32, 1388–9. In a sense, Lucretius' poem imitates the processes of nature, in which one thing springs up from another: *alid ex alio*, 1.263; 3.970. Cf. 1.407, 1114–17; 5.1456.

usus et impigrae simul experientia mentis  
paulatim docuit pedetemptim progredientis.  
sic unumquicquid paulatim protrahit aetas  
in medium ratioque in luminis erigit oras. 1455  
namque alid ex alio clarescere corde uidebant,  
artibus ad summum donec uenere cacumen.

Familiarity and the experience of an active mind  
have gradually instructed men as they make their  
way step by step.  
So it is that time in its progress draws all into our sight 1455  
and reason lifts everything up into the shores of light.  
In their mind's eye men could see one thing casting  
light on another  
until by their arts they reached the highest pinnacle.

### CALLIOPE

Aeneadam genetrix, hominum diuumque uoluptas  
alma Venus . . .

aeternum da dictis, diua, leporem.

Mother of the descendants of Aeneas, pleasure of men and gods,  
nurturing Venus . . .

grant my poetry a charm eternal.

There is one other invocation to a Muse in the *De rerum natura*: as he approaches the end of his poem, Lucretius mounts a chariot that he calls *insignis* ('that carries fame', 6.47), and appeals to Calliope to direct him to the finish line that will mark the end of his poem and course (6.92–5):

tu mihi supremae praescripta ad candida calcis  
currenti spatium praemonstra, callida musa  
Calliope, requies hominum diuumque uoluptas,  
te duce ut insigni capiam cum laude coronam. 95

You who are the source of repose for humans  
And pleasure for the gods, Calliope, my cunning Muse,  
show me the finish line as I race the course to the white chalk  
so that with you as my guide I can win  
the distinction of the poet's crown and the fame it conveys. 95

This is a familiar representation of the poet and his chariot. It brings to mind Pindar, Parmenides, and Empedocles. It is Lucretius' last



representation of himself as a poet. Unfortunately, it is not complete. He began to speak of mounting a chariot as he introduced the argument of the last book of the *De rerum natura* (6.43–7):

et quoniam docui mundi mortalia templa  
 esse natiuo consistere corpore caelum,  
 45 et quaecumque in eo fiunt fierique necessest,  
 pleraque dissolui, quae restant percipe porro;  
 quandoquidem semel insignem conscendere currum

And, since I have taught that the regions of the world are  
subject to death
 and that even heaven is made of corruptible matter  
 45 and that all that happens in this world happens of necessity  
 and have explained most of my subject,  
 now learn what remains, since once I have decided  
 to mount a chariot that carries fame . . .

Bernays saw that this picture of the poet and his chariot is incomplete and that something has been lost after line 47. Lucretius returns to this chariot at the end of the proem to Book 6 when he asks Calliope to point him to the white finish line set out before him and the long course of his argument. Here again he uses the adjective *insignis* ('that carries fame')—now to describe the fame which he sees as his prize. What Lucretius' invocation to Calliope helps explain is the sense he would give *insignis*: Lucretius has once again turned to Empedocles in order to present and set off by contrast the distinctive character of his own argument *de rerum natura*.<sup>25</sup>

There are two passages in Empedocles where he turns to a muse. Both seem to enter the larger context of the proem to the final book

<sup>25</sup> Waszink is one of the few of Lucretius' commentators who goes beyond noting that the invocation of 6.92–5 might be inspired by the two invocations to a muse we know in Empedocles (B 3 and 131 DK) to notice some of the differences this comparison brings to light: 'There is a remarkable difference in the function of the Muse or Muses in the two poets: Lucretius connects the Muse (or rather the *musaeus lepos* ["charm of the muses"]) with the element of *ψεῦδος* ["falsehood"], in poetry, whereas Empedocles (probably after the example of Hesiod's *Theogony*. . .) represents his doctrine as coming from the Muse (B 4, 2: *ὥς δὲ παρ' ἡμετέρης κέλεται πιστώματα Μούσης* ["as the pledges of our Muse bid you"], to be connected with B 23, 11: *ταῦτ' ἴσθι, θεοῦ πάρα μῦθον ἀκούσας* ["know this, having heard the word of a god"])? For Lucretius Epicurus, the *pater et rerum inuentor*, has taken the place of divine power—and hence has to be revered as such (5.8: *dicendum est deus ille fuit, deus, in clute Memmi* ["it must be said—he was a god, a god, glorious Memmius"]); (1954), 254 n. 37.

of Lucretius' poem. The first must come from the beginning of the *Peri phuseōs*; the second Diels assigned to the *Katharmoi*, against the weight of the evidence that puts it in the last book of the *Peri phuseōs*.<sup>26</sup> In the first of these invocations, Empedocles does not name his muse. He calls her white-armed, a virgin, and πολυμνήστη—an ambiguous epithet which, as Jean Bollack has suggested in his commentary to this passage, is best rendered by 'she who remembers many things'.<sup>27</sup> In an invocation of five lines preserved by Hippolytus, Empedocles calls upon his muse once again (*νῦν ἀδτε παρίστασο*, 'stand by me now, once again', B 131.4 DK) and this time he calls her by name, Calliope. What both passages have in common is the expression of the need for divine help in a poem that speaks of the gods and the theme of piety. This is the language with which Empedocles appeals to the gods and his muse for the first time in his poem (B 3 DK = 14 Bollack):

ἀλλὰ θεοὶ τῶν μὲν μανίην ἀποτρέψατε γλώσσης,  
 ἐκ δ' ὁσίων στομάτων καθαρὴν ὀχετεύσατε πηγῆν.  
 καὶ σέ, πολυμνήστη λευκώλενε παρθένε Μοῦσα,  
 ἄντομαι ὧν θέμις ἐστὶν ἐφημερίοισιν ἀκούειν,  
 πέμπε παρ' Εὐσεβίης ἐλάουσ' εὐήμιον ἄρμα·  
 μηδὲ σέ γ' εὐδόξιο βιήσεται ἄνθεα τιμῆς  
 πρὸς θνητῶν ἀνελέσθαι, ἐφ' ᾧ θ' Ὀσίης πλέον εἰπεῖν  
 θάρσει καὶ τότε δὴ σοφίης ἐπ' ἄκροισι θοάζει.

5

Now I pray to you gods to turn from my tongue  
 the madness of some and to pour out from a pure mouth  
 a pure stream. And I entreat you, my Muse,  
 who remembers many things, virgin Muse of fair white arms,  
 grant that I hear what is permitted for a mortal to hear.  
 Drive your chariot, obedient to your guidance, from Holiness  
 and come to me on it. Piety will not compel you to wrest

5

<sup>26</sup> This is not the place to rehearse the arguments which assign B 131–4 to the account of the gods which Empedocles reserved for the third book of his *Peri phuseōs*. They are clearly set out in Charles Kahn's 'Religion and Natural Philosophy in Empedocles' Doctrine of the Soul' (1960), 6 n. 8. What seems significant from the point of view of the evidence of Lucretius is that he turns to Empedocles' *lóγος* concerning the gods in the last two books of his own *De rerum natura* in order to present the distinctive character of his own argument. The argument of Books 5 and 6—*de summa caeli ratione deumque* ('on the supremely important matter of heaven and the gods', cf. 1.54)—necessarily introduces an account of the gods, and the theme of piety: cf. 5.84–90, 110–80, 1160–1240—especially 1203; 6.48–79, 251–5, 387–422, 762–8, 1276–9.

<sup>27</sup> *Empédocle* iii.1 (1969), 28–9.

the flowers of honour and fame from the hands of mortal men  
with that daring that would pronounce more than Holiness  
would allow and then take your seat on the heights of ‘Wisdom’.

And this is the language of his second appeal (B 131 DK):

εἰ γὰρ ἐφημερίων ἔνεκέν τινος, ἄμβροτε Μοῦσα,  
ἡμετέρας μελέτας < ἄδε τοι > διὰ φροντίδος ἐλθεῖν,  
εὐξομένῳ νῦν αὖτε παρίστασο, Καλλιόπεια,  
ἀμφὶ θεῶν μακάρων ἀγαθὸν λόγον ἐμφαίνοντι.  
< ἄδε τοι > Wilamowitz, Maas: μέλε τοι Diels: ἡμετέρας ἔμελεν V.

Immortal Muse, Calliope, if ever for the sake of some mortal  
it pleased you, out of your care for the objects of human care,  
to come to us, come stand by me now, once again,  
as I reveal an account of the blessed gods.

Lucretius too appeals to Calliope, but he calls her a *callida musa* (‘cunning Muse’), giving her name in Latin a sense it did not have in Greek.<sup>28</sup> He speaks too of the flowers of fame, and his language (*ut insigni capiam cum laude coronam*, ‘so that I can win the distinction of the poet’s crown and the fame it conveys’, 6.95) seems to respond to the language of Empedocles’ *εὐδόξιο βιήσεται ἄνθεα τιμῆς* (‘will [not] compel [you to wrest] the flowers of honour and fame’, B 3.6 DK). Both poets speak of their chariots, although it is not clear that Lucretius asked his muse for a chariot in what has been lost from his poem after 6.47. Whatever he said in this lacuna, it is clear that both Lucretius’ Calliope and Empedocles’ Muse will accompany their poets in their course (cf. *πέμπε*, ‘drive’ in B 3.5 DK and *te duce*, ‘with you as my guide’ in Lucretius 6.95).

Lucretius’ allusions to his closest and greatest predecessor in philosophical poetry seem to go beyond the parallels between the two poets’ Muses, chariots, and the flowers of fame. Both poets reveal a doctrine that involves an account of the gods. And both poets speak piously, and partially, as befits mortal and limited men. Lucretius’ account of the gods is incomplete, or apparently so, because he does not seem to fulfil his promise of a further discussion concerning the

<sup>28</sup> The muse of the fair voice *ὀπι καλῆ*, cf. *Theogony*, 68, 79, and the association of the Muse’s name with *καλλίστην φωνήν* (‘the loveliest voice’) in Plato’s *Phaedrus* 259d (quoted in n. 29 below). In Lucretius, *callida* (‘cunning’) seems to recognize both the elements of fairness and deceptiveness that bring his reader to the end of his poem.

gods and their place in the universe: *quae tibi posterius largo sermone probabo* ('as I shall prove to you later in abundant discourse', 5.155). What the argument of the final two books of Lucretius' poem demonstrates is that the gods had nothing to do with the origin of the world, that they have nothing to do either with its workings or with human affairs, yet they are not completely absent from human experience. Rather, the divine is far removed: *semota ab nostris rebus seiunctaque longe* ('apart and far removed from our world', 1.46 = 2.648). They are not completely absent, since it is the tenuous and barely perceptible image of their tranquillity that affords men with their remote notion of true tranquillity and *ataraxia*. At the end of Book 5 Lucretius defines true piety as the ability to contemplate everything and *anything* with a mind that has found its calm: *placata posse omnia mente tueri* (5.1203).

This theme of human piety is an important part of the proem to Book 6—inevitably, for Lucretius' argument now comes to centre on one of the greatest sources of fear and one of the grounds for human belief in the terrible gods of an angry heaven. But the beliefs men hold concerning the gods cannot affect the gods as they are: they can only affect the believer's peace of mind (6.73–5):

sed quia tute tibi placida cum pace quietos  
constitues magnos irarum uoluere fluctus  
nec delubra deum placido cum pectore adibis . . .

but because you will make the gods roil with great waves of anger,  
though they remain undisturbed in their profound peace,  
and you for your part will not approach the temples of the gods  
with a mind at peace . . .

It was the purpose of Epicurean physiology to dispel or purge these fears (cf. 6.24: *ueridicis igitur purgauit pectora dictis*, 'so he purified their hearts with true speech', of Epicurus). It is only once Lucretius' reader has quieted his fears concerning the gods that he will be able to receive in peace their likenesses (6.76–8):

nec de corpore quae sancto simulacra feruntur  
in mentis hominum diuinae nuntia formae,  
suscipere haec animi tranquilla pace ualebis.

nor will you have the strength to receive in tranquil peace

the images that are borne from their sacred bodies  
into the minds of men to announce the shape of divinity.

This peace was once the object of Lucretius' prayer to Venus (*tranquilla pace*, 'with tranquil peace', 1.31). As the *De rerum natura* nears its end, Lucretius' reader can, by himself—*tute tibi*, achieve a state no goddess or Muse can grant. But it is a state a goddess or a Muse can introduce him to. The poem has moved a long way from its beginning when Lucretius invoked Venus. As it began, gods and men seem united in a common pleasure: *hominum diuumque uoluptas, alma Venus* ('pleasure of gods and men, nurturing Venus', 1.1–2). As it nears its close, gods and men are separated: Calliope can give the gods *uoluptas* ('pleasure'), but men she can only afford *requies* ('repose').

This distinction, which few of Lucretius' readers have been moved to comment on, seems a part of Epicurean piety.<sup>29</sup> True *uoluptas* is beyond the reach of men. Lucretius' clever Muse, who can give men only rest, points him and his reader to the grim spectacle with which the *De rerum natura* ends. Whether she can give him the peace that can make it possible for him to regard the devastation of human achievement which he encounters at the end of the poem is the final problem of the poem itself. Gods live without disturbance; they are remote from human affairs and are indifferent to men. They can truly be called *quietos* ('undisturbed'). It is a part of true piety to describe

<sup>29</sup> Consider the commentary of Leo Strauss (1968), 134, on the eclipse of Venus by Calliope. The reader who wants to discover the difference between *uoluptas* ('pleasure') and *requies* ('repose') and in part the difference between gods and men can find no help in either the commentaries of Ernout-Robin or Bailey. The note in Ernout-Robin, 3.199 is: '*hominum... uoluptas*: I, 1'; Bailey gives the same lemma in his commentary, and offers a comment on the difference between Lucretius' first and last invocation to a Muse: 'The difference between the two invocations is seen in that here the expression is purely conventional, there it has also an esoteric meaning' (iii.1567). Yet nowhere either in Greek or Roman literature was there ever such an invocation to Calliope—*callida Musa*. It is usually said of her that she is the Muse of *ιστορία* in the wider Greek sense ('enquiry'); so Bailey, and Henderson (1970), 740. Calliope is also the Muse of philosophers like Empedocles and Lucretius; cf. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 259d: τῇ δὲ πρεσβυτάτῃ Καλλιόπῃ καὶ τῇ μετ' αὐτὴν Οὐρανίᾳ τοὺς ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ διάγοντάς τε καὶ τιμώντας τὴν ἐκείνων μουσικὴν ἀγγέλλουσιν (οἱ τέττιγες), αἱ δὲ μάλιστα τῶν Μουσῶν περὶ τε οὐρανὸν καὶ λόγους οὔσαι θεῖους τε καὶ ἀνθρωπίνους ἰᾶσιν καλλίστην φωνήν ('the cicadas report to Calliope, the oldest of the Muses, and Ourania, who is her companion, those who live the life of philosophy and who honour her inspiration; these are the Muses most concerned with discourses concerning heaven, both divine and human, and they sing with the loveliest voice').

them as they are. Men cannot live their lives *summa cum pace* ('in profound peace'). The most they can hope for is to free their minds and souls from trouble and achieve peace. Their highest state of piety, and happiness, requires an earlier state of turmoil. The human soul must first be disturbed to find its peace: *placata mente*.

*Requies* ('repose') is a word which takes on a clear and distinctive range of associations in Lucretius. As it is associated with Calliope in the proem to Book 6, it brings Hesiod to mind for a moment and the gift of his Muses: *λησμοσύνην τε κακῶν ἀμπαυρά τε μερμηράων* ('forgetfulness of troubles and a respite from cares', *Theogony* 55). But in Lucretius, *requies* (or *quies*, 'rest') and the verb *requiescere* apply to three things: on the most fundamental level, *quies* is denied to matter (2.95).<sup>30</sup> *Quies* also describes the gods and their tranquillity.<sup>31</sup> But for men, sleep and death are the states which represent ultimate rest.<sup>32</sup>

At the end of the poem, Calliope, Lucretius' clever Muse and the goddess who gives men rest (*hominum requies*), brings Lucretius' reader to a scene which offers men no relief. Of the plague that devastated Athens, Lucretius says: *nec requies erat ulla mali* ('there was no respite from evil', 6.1178). This last stage of the *De rerum natura* has been carefully prepared for. Lucretius has brought his reader to the point from which he can contemplate the highest pinnacle of human civilization and its destruction. It is Athens that is praised in the beginning of Book 6. Athens seems to represent the high point, the *summum cacumen*, reached at the end of Book 5 (5.1457). The first line of Book 6 points to its end; *mortalibus aegris* ('suffering mortals') is echoed in *aegris* ('suffering', 'sick') of 6.1152.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> 1.135, 463, 992; 2.95, 227, 310; 6.933. On the most fundamental level, bodies are in perpetual motion and only the void can be called 'quiet', 2.238.

<sup>31</sup> 2.18–24; 5.168; 6.73.

<sup>32</sup> Of sleep: 3.910, 920; 5.454, 463, 484, 907, 990–1; of the sleep of death: 3.1038; of death: *leti secreta quies* ('the repose of death free from all care'), 2.211; 3.939. Lucretius cannot give his reader true *uoluptas* or absolute *quies*; his Muse can only offer *requies*—the peace that comes after a period of struggle and turmoil. *Requies* is the state that lies at the end of the *De rerum natura* as it lies at the end of the *Aeneid*, which ends, like Lucretius' poem, with an act of violence. Beyond is Rome: *is locus urbis erit, requies ea certa laborum* ('this will be the site of your city, and sure rest from toil'), 3.393.

<sup>33</sup> This and other links which span the beginning and end of Book 6 are set out by Martin Ferguson Smith in his note to 6.1 in the new Loeb *Lucretius* (1975), 492–3.

The theme of a world in flux permeates the sixth book,<sup>34</sup> and surfaces in Lucretius' treatment of the magnet which is one example of the *aestus* ('wave', 'current') of matter in motion (6.921–35); it is treated for a last time in Lucretius' description of the *mortifer aestus* ('death-bearing wave') which comes at the end of the poem (cf. 6.1138). Underlying both Lucretius' account of the magnet and description of the plague is a vision of a world in constant and perpetual motion: *nec mora nec requies interdatur ulla fluendi*, ('no respite or pause interrupts the flux'), 6.931.

The end of the *De rerum natura* comes as the final test of Lucretius' reader. As the argument of the poem develops, so does Lucretius' reader. In the early stages of the poem this reader can be represented as a child who must be deceived in order to be cured of the anxieties that disturb his life (1.935–50; 6.1–25). But he is also given the independence that Epicurus' physiology was designed to make possible for its student. Both Epicurus and Lucretius seem to have written to give their readers an independence and security in the most critical moments of their lives: *ἵνα παρ' ἐκάστους τῶν καιρῶν ἐν τοῖς κυριωτάτοις βοηθεῖν αὐτοὺς δύνωνται* ('so that on every occasion they may be able to help themselves on the most important points')—in the language of *Ep. Hdt.* 35.5. And Lucretius, even before he has turned to the representation of his reader as a child, envisages an independence for him that can take him well beyond the doctrine of the poem itself. Once he is on the right track, Lucretius' reader will be able to penetrate the invisible workings of nature (1.407–9):

<sup>34</sup> The theme is, of course, fundamental to the argument of the *De rerum natura*: cf. n. 30 above and 1.271–328. The theme re-emerges in Book 6 when the human heart is compared to a restless vessel which can never be filled, 60; cf. 34, 74. As for the outer world, the theme is announced in 6.29–30, which prepares for the description of currents of disease in 6.1095–6. The theme enters Lucretius' long treatment of thunder and lightning, where the word *aestus* in 6.144 prepares for the treatment of the magnet: 6.921–35, 942–58, 1003, 1049, 1051–6, 1059. The *aestus* of matter in motion, for good and ill, brings back to the poem the theme of disease (cf. *quidue mali*, 'what evil', 6.29): *morbida uisque simul, cum extrinsecus insinuat*, 'and at the same time the force of disease when it finds its way in from outside', 6.955. The plague which devastated Athens, the *mortifer aestus* ('death-bearing wave') of 6.1138, is the final statement of this overarching theme.

sic alid ex alio per te tute ipse uidere  
talibus in rebus poteris caecasque latebras  
insinuare omnis et uerum protrahere inde.

In this way you will be able to see all by yourself  
how in these matters one thing follows from another,  
and worm your way into all truth's secret hiding places,  
and drag it forth.

It is such a reader that Lucretius contemplates at the end of the first book of the *De rerum natura* (1.1114–17):

haec sic pernosces parua perductus opella;  
namque alid ex alio clarescet nec tibi caeca  
nox iter eripiet quin ultima naturai  
peruideas: ita res accendent lumina rebus.

And in this way you will recognize these truths,  
led on with a little effort. One truth will illuminate another.  
The dark of night will not rob you of the path  
on which your eye will penetrate to nature's fundamental truths.

When he has come to the last stretch of his argument, Lucretius addresses a reader who has become responsible for his own peace of mind: faced with a choice between a belief in the angry and violent gods of Roman religion and the tranquil gods of Epicurean theology, Lucretius' reader must choose between turmoil and peace. *Per te tibi* ('by yourself and for yourself', 6.70) and *tute tibi* ('you, for yourself', 6.73) reflect Lucretius' expectation that the effect of his teaching is to give his reader the ability to help himself. One test of the effectiveness of Lucretius' teaching comes when his reader is able to look back on the Venus that first attracted him to the *De rerum natura* and to realize that neither she nor any god can grant him favours; and that she is only one of the faces of a larger *natura* who, or which, is responsible for both generation and destruction (cf. 1.54–61). He comes to realize too that she has her origins in human passion, just as the gods of Roman religion have their origin in human fear. This is the fate of the goddess who attracts every reader to the poem; *it uer et Venus* ('spring comes, and Venus', 5.737).

What Lucretius' reader is left to contemplate at the end of the poem is the grim features of a power which is destructive as well as creative. And when he arrives at the finish line Lucretius' clever Muse has marked out for him, he can see nothing peaceful or quiet. Only



the spectacle of the living fighting among themselves rather than give up their dead in the collapse of custom and religion:

multo cum sanguine saepe  
rixantes potius quam corpora deserentur.

often brawling with much bloodshed  
rather than abandon the bodies.

The *De rerum natura* does not end with *requies*. It does not end in a contradiction. Its end is the last and greatest test of the reader who would master its teaching. For the piety the poem makes possible is the ability to contemplate everything and anything with a mind that has found its peace:

placata posse omnia mente tueri.

There is a certain pleasure in this.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> 'Man has to choose between peace of mind deriving from a pleasing delusion and peace of mind deriving from the unpleasing truth. Philosophy which, anticipating the collapse of the walls of the world, breaks through the walls of the world, abandons the attachment to the world; this abandonment is most painful. Poetry on the other hand is, like religion, rooted in that attachment, but unlike religion, it can be put to the service of detachment. Because poetry is rooted in the prephilosophic attachment, because it enhances and deepens that attachment, the philosophic poet is the perfect mediator between attachment to the world and the attachment to detachment from the world. The joy or pleasure which Lucretius' poem arouses is therefore austere, reminding of the pleasure of the work of Thucydides.' (Leo Strauss in 'Notes on Lucretius' (1968), 85.)

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## ADDENDUM (2005)

This essay originally appeared in J. Bollack and A. Lakes (eds.), *Études sur l'Épicurisme antique*, Cahiers de Philologie 1 (Lille, 1976), 203–27. It has been reprinted as Chapter 8 in my *Paradosis and Survival: Three Chapters in the History of Epicureanism* (Ann Arbor, 1998). It prepared the way for a new treatment of some of these themes in Chapter 1 of my *Lucretius and Epicurus* (Ithaca/London, 1983). A good deal is said about Lucretius' relation to Empedocles in the above pages. The reader should turn to Monica Gale's discussion of the relation between the two poets and Lucretius' use of myth in her *Myth and Poetry in Lucretius* (Cambridge, 1994), 58–75, 129–55. Alain Gigandet has also explored many of the themes I take up here (the echo, Cybele, and Venus especially) in *Fama Deum: Lucrèce et les raisons du mythe* (Paris, 1998).

The publication of 'The New Empedocles' (ed. A. Martin and O. Primavesi, *L'Empédocle de Strasbourg (P.Strasb. gr. Inv. 1665–1666)* (Berlin and New York, 1999)) has opened the possibility that Lucretius was indebted to Empedocles not only in his account of cosmogony and evolution in Book 5 but in the proem of Book 1. David Sedley, who studied the papyri in advance of their publication, suggests that a hymn to Aphrodite opened Book 1 of the poem *On Nature (Lucretius and the Transformation of Greek Wisdom* (Cambridge, 1998), Chapter 1 [= Ch. 2 of this volume]).

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## The Empedoclean Opening

*David Sedley*

### 1. CICERO'S LETTER

Lucreti poemata ut scribis ita sunt, multis luminibus ingeni, multae tamen artis. sed cum veneris, virum te putabo si Sallusti Empedoclea legeris, hominem non putabo.

Writing to his brother in 54 BC, Cicero supplies two unique testimonies (*Q. Fr.* 2.10(9).3). In the first sentence he echoes Quintus' admiration for Lucretius' poem, thus providing the sole allusion to the *De rerum natura* likely to be more or less contemporary with its publication. In the second, he attests the publication of an *Empedoclea* by a certain Sallustius, presumably a Latin translation or imitation of Empedocles (compare Cicero's own near-contemporary use of the title *Aratea* for his translation of Aratus).

But even more striking than the two individual testimonies is their juxtaposition. Modern editors have taken to printing a full stop after *sed cum veneris*, understanding 'But when you come . . . (sc. we will discuss it).' This suppresses any overt link between the two literary judgements: the first breaks off abruptly with an aposiopesis, and the second, juxtaposed, is to all appearances a quite independent observation. On the equally natural and more fluent reading that can be obtained simply by reverting to the older

punctuation,<sup>1</sup> as printed above, with a comma instead of the full stop, the letter is an explicit comparison between the *DRN* and the *Empedoclea*:

Lucretius' poetry shows, as you say in your letter, many flashes of genius, yet also much craftsmanship. On the other hand, when you come, I shall consider you a man if you have read Sallustius' *Empedoclea*, though I won't consider you human.

If this is right, the two works were being directly compared at the time of their publication, and Cicero, at least, judged the Lucretian poem vastly superior.

Why did this particular comparison suggest itself? It is well recognized that Empedocles is, along with Homer, Ennius, and others,<sup>2</sup> an important literary influence on Lucretius, and it has even been claimed that he was a philosophical influence.<sup>3</sup> But I do not believe that the depth and significance of the poem's Empedoclean character have yet been properly understood. If what I shall argue in this chapter is right, Cicero's comparison of the *DRN* with the *Empedoclea* will turn out to be an entirely natural one, which Lucretius would have welcomed and indeed invited. My case will be centred on the relation of Lucretius' poem to the poem of Empedocles' *On Nature*.

## 2. EMPEDOCLES' TWO POEMS

There is plentiful evidence that it was principally if not exclusively in the hexameter poem usually known in antiquity as the *On Nature* (*Περὶ φύσεως*) or the *Physics* (*Τὰ φυσικά*)—I shall discuss its actual title in

<sup>1</sup> This was the standard punctuation until the late nineteenth century. The repunctuation, with its aposiopesis *sed cum veneris*... (unique, but cf. partial parallels at *Att.* 12.5a and 14.20.3), appears to have been introduced by R. Y. Tyrrell in 1886, in his revised text of Cicero's letters (Dublin, 1885–1901), but without offering any evidence or argument—since when it has been repeated, without comment, by all editors.

<sup>2</sup> The range of literary influences on Lucretius was considerably enlarged by the findings of E. J. Kenney, 'Doctus Lucretius', *Mnemosyne* 4.23 (1970), 366–92 [= Ch. 13 of this volume].

<sup>3</sup> D. J. Furley, 'Variations on Themes from Empedocles in Lucretius' Proem', *BICS* 17 (1970), 55–64 = id., *Cosmic Problems* (Cambridge, 1989), 172–82, discussed below; also J. Bollack, 'Lukrez und Empedokles', *Die neue Rundschau* 70 (1959), 656–86.

§7—that Empedocles expounded his world system. The central features of the cosmic cycle it described are well known: four enduring elements—earth, air (called ‘aether’),<sup>4</sup> fire, and water—are periodically united into a homogeneous sphere by a constructive force called Love, then again separated out into the familiar stratified world by the polar force, Strife.<sup>5</sup> But there is a longstanding scholarly tradition, deriving primarily from Diels’ editions published in 1901 and 1903, of attributing all the fragments concerning Empedocles’ theories on the pollution and transmigration of the individual spirit, or ‘daimon’, to a second hexameter poem, the *Katharmoi*, or *Purifications*.

The original ground for this segregation was the belief that the physical doctrine of the cosmic cycle and the ‘religious’ doctrine of transmigration belonged to radically distinct and probably incompatible areas of Empedocles’ thought. But Empedoclean studies have now reached a curious stage. On the one hand, the old dogma has been subjected to searching criticism, and is regarded by many as an anachronistic imposition on fifth-century thought.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, the conventional apportionment of fragments between the two poems, which was founded on that dogma, remains largely unchallenged, as if it had some independent authority. I believe that it has none.

One radical challenge to this picture, however, has been developed recently. Catherine Osborne<sup>7</sup> proposes that there were never two

<sup>4</sup> For ‘aether’, rather than ‘air’, as Empedocles’ chosen designation of this element, see P. Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic: Empedocles and Pythagorean Tradition* (Oxford, 1995), Ch. 2.

<sup>5</sup> The traditional belief that zoogony took place in both halves of this cycle, for which see especially D. O’Brien, *Empedocles’ Cosmic Cycle* (Cambridge, 1969), has been powerfully challenged by J. Bollack, *Empédocle*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1965–9); U. Hölscher, ‘Weltzeiten und Lebenszyklus’, *Hermes* 93 (1965), 7–33; F. Solmsen, ‘Love and Strife in Empedocles’ Cosmology’, *Phronesis* 10 (1965), 109–48 = R. E. Allen and D. J. Furley (eds.), *Studies in Presocratic Philosophy* (London, 1975), ii.221–64; and A. A. Long, ‘Empedocles’ Cosmic Cycle in the ‘Sixties’’, in A. P. D. Mourelatos (ed.), *The Presocratics* (New York, 1974), 397–425; and ably defended by D. W. Graham, ‘Symmetry in the Empedoclean Cycle’, *CQ* 38 (1988), 297–312.

<sup>6</sup> e.g. C. H. Kahn ‘Religion and Natural Philosophy in Empedocles’ Doctrine of the Soul’, *AGP* 42 (1960), 3–35; J. Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (London, 1979), ii.93; M. R. Wright, *Empedocles: The Extant Remains* (New Haven, 1981); C. Osborne, ‘Empedocles Recycled’, *CQ* 37 (1987), 24–50; B. Inwood, *The Poem of Empedocles* (Toronto, 1992); Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic* (n. 4); reservations in A. A. Long, ‘Thinking and Sense-Perception in Empedocles: Mysticism or Materialism?’, *CQ* 16 (1966), 256–76.

<sup>7</sup> Osborne, ‘Empedocles Recycled’ (n. 6).

poems: rather, both titles name one and the same work. Although this proposal has found some favour,<sup>8</sup> and has certainly inspired some important reassessment of the doctrinal relation between the two sides of Empedocles' thought, I do not think that it can be right. Diogenes Laertius is unambiguously speaking of two separate poems when he tells us that 'On Nature and the *Katharmoi* (8.77, τὰ μὲν οὖν Περὶ φύσεως καὶ οἱ Καθαρμοί . . .) run to 5,000 lines'.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, a number of the surviving fragments of Empedocles are reported with explicit assignments to one or the other poem, yet not a single one with attributions to both the physical poem and the *Katharmoi*. Finally, as Jaap Mansfeld has brought to light, Giovanni Aurispa is known to have had a manuscript entitled (in Greek) 'Empedocles' *Katharmoi*' (now tragically lost) in his library at Venice in 1424.<sup>10</sup> Even if this evidence were thought insufficient, I hope that the matter will be put beyond doubt by my next section, where it will turn out that one major fragment cannot be placed in the *Katharmoi* without glaring inconsistency: Empedocles must have written at least two poems.

If we simply stick to the hard and the relatively hard evidence for what was in the *Katharmoi*, a different picture will emerge. We do at least have its opening lines.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Cf. its further development in Inwood, *Empedocles* (n. 6), 8–19. The reply to Osborne and Inwood in D. O'Brien, 'Empedocles Revisited', *Ancient Philosophy* 15 (1995), 403–70, is unfortunately timed: it contains news of the recent papyrus find (see below), but not the specific information that this now virtually proves at least one 'Katharmic' fragment to belong to *On Nature*.

<sup>9</sup> See Osborne, 'Empedocles Recycled' (n. 6), 28–9 on the unreliability of the figure 5,000. But as for the separation of the two titles, there is no compelling reason to doubt Diogenes' reliability, especially when no ancient source contradicts him on the point.

<sup>10</sup> J. Mansfeld, 'A Lost Manuscript of Empedocles' *Katharmoi*', *Mnemosyne* 47 (1994), 79–82, which should also be consulted for its further arguments for the existence of two separate poems. Of course his evidence is not strictly incompatible with the thesis that there was one poem, whose proponents may reply that this was that one poem. But it is uncomfortable for them, since it means that, if they are right, *Katharmoi* was the official title, contrary to the great bulk of the ancient citations.

<sup>11</sup> Empedocles B112. The square-bracketed words represent Greek words apparently corrupt or missing in the quotation as preserved. Here and elsewhere, I use the Diels/Kranz numbering of Empedocles' fragments (*Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 6th edn. (Berlin, 1951–2)), although a significantly better text is now available in the valuable edition of Wright (n. 6 above). Since the many available numerations are, as I shall argue, all equally misleading as regards the apportionment of fragments between the two poems, it is better for now simply to stick to the standard one.

Friends, who in the great town of the yellow Acragas dwell on the city's heights, caring about good deeds, I greet you. You see me going about as a divine god, no longer a mortal, honoured amongst all, it seems, and wreathed in ribbons and verdant garlands. [Whenever] I arrive in prosperous towns I am revered by men and women. They follow me in their thousands, asking me where lies their road to advantage, some requesting oracles, while others have asked to hear a healing utterance for ailments of all kinds, long pierced by troublesome [pains].

Thus Empedocles addresses the citizens of his native Acragas, telling how they revere him as a living god, 'no longer a mortal'. Men and women flock to follow him, pressing him with enquiries, requesting oracles and cures.

Why should we not suppose that the poem was nothing more nor less than a response to these requests, a set of purificatory oracles and 'healing utterances'?<sup>12</sup>

There is immediate support for this conjecture in the pseudo-Pythagorean *Carmen aureum*: 'But abstain from the foods that I spoke of in my *Katharmoi* and *Absolution of the Soul*.'<sup>13</sup> This citation, or pseudo-citation, of the author's own *Katharmoi* invokes it for just the kind of self-purificatory advice that the title itself suggests. And that the allusion is inspired by Empedocles' work of the same name is confirmed just three lines later, where the poem closes with the words 'You will be an immortal, divine god, no longer a mortal' (ἔσσειαι ἀθάνατος θεὸς ἄμβροτος, οὐκέτι θνητός), pointedly recalling the famous opening of Empedocles' *Katharmoi*, 'You see me going about as a divine god, no longer a mortal' (B112.4–5, ἐγὼ δ' ὑμῖν θεὸς ἄμβροτος, οὐκέτι θνητός, | πωλεύμαι). Whatever the date of this forgery may be, its author clearly knows Empedocles' *Katharmoi*, and associates it with advice to abstain from certain kinds of food.

That a work with this title should be one dedicated to purificatory advice is unsurprising, since the very word *katharmoi* means ritual acts of purification. To adherents of the traditional interpretation, it is easy to assume that the poem was one about the wandering spirit's

<sup>12</sup> For the scope and content of the relevant notions of pollution and purification, see R. Parker, *Miasma* (Oxford, 1983). I have no particular suggestion to make about the function of the 'oracles'. The evidence of a purificatory role for oracles is meagre (Parker, op. cit., 86), and I would guess that it is Empedocles' assumed divinity that makes this an appropriate designation for his pronouncements.

<sup>13</sup> *Carmen aureum* 67–8, in D. Young, *Theognis* (Leipzig, 1971), 103–4: ἀλλ' εἴργου βρωτῶν ὧν εἴπομεν ἐν τε Καθαρμοῖς | ἐν τε Λύσει ψυχῆς.

processes of purification, but I know no evidence that the word can mean that:<sup>14</sup> such processes would normally be called *katharseis*.

Better still, the hypothesis also fits the other two items of evidence known to me for *Katharmoi* as a literary genre. These two references also resemble the *Carmen aureum* in fathering the works in question on archaic figures of semi-legendary status. First, Epimenides the Cretan is said to have written *Katharmoi*, in verse and perhaps also prose,<sup>15</sup> and, although their content is not reported, it can hardly be a coincidence that Epimenides was celebrated above all for his ritual purifications, an expertise that led the Athenians to send for him to purify their city of plague.<sup>16</sup> Second, the remark at Aristophanes, *Frogs* 1033 that Musaeus taught ‘healing and oracles’ is glossed by a scholiast with the comment that Musaeus ‘composed absolutions [?], initiations, and *katharmoi*’.<sup>17</sup> Healing and oracles are precisely the two services mentioned by Empedocles at the opening of his *Katharmoi*. Then why look further for the content of the poem?

Certainly no fragment explicitly attributed to the *Katharmoi* forces us to look further. Apart from the proem, there are just two such cases. One is B153a: according to Theon of Smyrna (104.1–3), Empedocles ‘hints’ (*ἀνίπτεται*) in the *Katharmoi* that the foetus achieves full human form in seven times seven days. Aetius<sup>18</sup> confirms the report—though not the attribution to the *Katharmoi*—with the further information that the differentiation of limbs starts at thirty-six days. That Empedocles should only have ‘hinted’ this in the *Katharmoi* suggests that we are not dealing with an expository account of embryology. We learn from Censorinus<sup>19</sup> (third century AD) that in Greece the pregnant woman does not go out to a shrine before the fortieth day of her pregnancy. This is thought to be linked to the widespread belief that miscarriages are likeliest to occur in the

<sup>14</sup> The use of *καθαρμοί* is usefully surveyed by W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1969), ii. 244–5.

<sup>15</sup> 3A2–3 DK.

<sup>16</sup> 3A1, 2, 4, 8 DK.

<sup>17</sup> 2A6 DK. There is a close parallel at Plato, *Rep.* 2.364e–365a: Adimantus, as evidence of the belief that the gods can be bought off, cites the books of Musaeus and Orpheus, on the basis of which rituals are performed to bring about the *λύσεις τε καὶ καθαρμοί* of wrongs done by both the living and the dead.

<sup>18</sup> Aetius 5.21.1=Empedocles A83.

<sup>19</sup> Censorinus, *De die natali* 2.7.



first forty days.<sup>20</sup> There is a strong possibility that Empedocles' original remark occurred in the context of ritual advice to pregnant women, perhaps to avoid shrines for the first 'seven times seven' days. Here it is important to remember the opening of the *Katharmoi*, where it is made explicit that the demands for healing and oracles to which Empedocles is responding come from women as well as men.

The other explicit attribution to the *Katharmoi*—in fact to Book 2 of the poem—occurs in a fragment first published in 1967, fr. 152 Wright:<sup>21</sup> 'For those of them which grow with their roots denser below but their branches more thinly spread . . .' Trees, or more generally plants, of this kind were singled out for a reason which cannot now be recovered.<sup>22</sup> The context may well have been one concerning the avoidance of certain leaves. According to Plutarch, in a probable but unprovable citation of the *Katharmoi*, Empedocles urged that all trees should be 'spared', but especially the laurel:<sup>23</sup> 'Keep completely away from the laurel's leaves' (B140). This has every chance of tying in with Empedocles' views on transmigration—he holds, for example, that the laurel is the best tree to transmigrate into (B127)! But it is significant that here once again, if the link with the injunction about laurel leaves is accepted, the actual fragment may well contain moral or purificatory advice rather than the doctrinal exposition characteristic of the physical poem. To repeat, ritual advice is just what we should expect in a work entitled *Katharmoi*.

The expectation finds further strong support in the story surrounding fragment B111. We learn that the biographer Satyrus quoted this fragment as confirming the suspicion that Empedocles dabbled in magic.<sup>24</sup> Since, according to Apuleius,<sup>25</sup> it was Empedocles' *Katharmoi* that brought upon him just such a suspicion, there is a strong likelihood that B111 is from this poem.<sup>26</sup> Significantly, the fragment is once

<sup>20</sup> See Parker, *Miasma* (n. 12), 48.

<sup>21</sup> Wright, *Empedocles* (n. 6), 151 and 298; not, of course, to be found in Diels/Kranz, *Vorsokratiker* (n. 11).

<sup>22</sup> According to Theophrastus, *HP* 1.6.4, all plants have their roots more densely packed than their parts above ground, but some, e.g. the olive tree, have a particularly dense mass of slender roots.

<sup>23</sup> Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 646D; see preamble to B140 DK.

<sup>24</sup> D.L. 8.59.

<sup>25</sup> Apuleius, *Apol.* 27.

<sup>26</sup> This attribution is supported, as Inwood, *Empedocles* (n. 6), 16 has shown, by the fact that Clement (*Strom.* 6.30.1–3) directly associates B111 with the opening lines of the *Katharmoi*.

again not a doctrinal exposition but ritual advice: how to influence the weather and to summon up the dead.

b111 uses the second person singular: 'You [singular] will learn...' Because the *On Nature* was addressed to an individual, Pausanias, whereas the opening lines of the *Katharmoi* address the citizens of Acragas in the plural, it has often been thought that any fragments containing the second person singular must be assigned to the former poem. This is a very dubious criterion, since changes of address within a single didactic poem are quite normal. Hesiod's *Works and Days* switches in its first three hundred lines between addresses to the Muses, to Perses, and to the 'bribe-swallowing princes'.<sup>27</sup> That the *Katharmoi* should, after its opening, move into the second person singular may merely reflect the fact that Empedocles is by now answering the individual requests from his audience of which the proem spoke.

There are no further unambiguously attested fragments of the *Katharmoi*. But we may, with caution,<sup>28</sup> consider as potential fragments of it any citations of Empedocles whose sources explicitly call them *katharmoi*. The clearest case of this is in Hippolytus,<sup>29</sup> who describes prohibitions on marriage and on certain foods as tantamount to teaching the *katharmoi* of Empedocles. Given this remark, along with the association of the *Katharmoi* with food prohibitions in the *Carmen aureum*, it seems safe to assume that the poem carried Empedocles' advice to abstain from slaughter, meat-eating, and perhaps even beans.<sup>30</sup> And it seems that abstention from marriage was a further injunction to be found in the same work.<sup>31</sup>

Another plausible such candidate is a fragment preserved by Theon of Smyrna.<sup>32</sup> Comparing philosophy as a whole to a religious

<sup>27</sup> See further, Osborne, 'Empedocles Recycled' (n. 6), 31–2, who appositely compares Lucretius' own switches of address.

<sup>28</sup> b139, which in 'The Proems of Empedocles and Lucretius', *GRBS* 30 (1989), 269–96, I incautiously left in the *Katharmoi*, can now be shown to belong to the physical poem: see p. 83 below.

<sup>29</sup> Hippolytus, *Ref.* 7.30.3–4; see preamble to b110 in Diels/Kranz.

<sup>30</sup> Empedocles b141, carrying the Pythagorean advice to abstain from beans, is condemned as inauthentic by Wright, *Empedocles* (n. 6), 289, perhaps rightly.

<sup>31</sup> Hippolytus, loc. cit. presents the advice not to marry as itself Empedoclean: 'You are dissolving marriages made by God, following the doctrines of Empedocles, in order to preserve the work of Love as one and undivided. For according to Empedocles, marriage divides the one and makes many.' This is a curious view to take of marriage, although it could well apply to the *family*.

<sup>32</sup> Theon of Smyrna 14–15.

ritual, Theon calls Plato's five propaedeutic mathematical studies in *Republic* 7 a *katharmos*, which he immediately proceeds to link with Empedocles' injunction to cleanse oneself by 'cutting from five springs (in a bowl of) indestructible bronze' (B143).<sup>33</sup> We are here firmly in the territory of ritual self-purification. Theophrastus' god-fearing character, for example, refuses to set out on his daily rounds until he has washed his hands at three springs.<sup>34</sup>

Deciding just which other verbatim fragments should be assigned to the *Katharmoi* is a problem to pursue on another occasion. The argument to which I shall now turn relies on a primarily negative conclusion: there is no reason to attribute to this poem any fragments of Empedocles beyond those offering ritual advice.<sup>35</sup>

### 3. THE PROVENANCE OF EMPEDOCLES B115

There is a decree of necessity, an ancient resolution of the gods, sworn by broad oaths, that when one of the daimons which have a share of long life defiles . . . its own limbs, or does wrong and swears a false oath, for thirty thousand years it must wander, away from the blessed ones, being born during that time as every form of mortal creature, exchanging for each other the arduous paths of life. The might of the aether drives it to the sea, the sea

<sup>33</sup> I here translate the Diels/Kranz text, based on Theon, *κρηνάων ἄπο πέντε ταμόντ* <έν> ἀτειρέι χαλκῶ. Aristotle, *Poet.* 1457<sup>b</sup>13 quotes (without attribution) the words *τεμῶν ἀτειρέι* (A, *τανακεί* B) *χαλκῶ*, explaining that 'cutting' here is used to mean 'drawing'. This leads van der Ben (*The Proem of Empedocles' Περὶ φύσεως* (Amsterdam, 1975), 203–8) and Wright (*Empedocles* (n. 6), 289–90) to follow the lead of Maas and conflate the two quotations in the form *κρηνάων ἄπο πέντε τεμῶν* (or *ταμῶν*) *ταναήκει χαλκῶ*, with the further inevitable conclusion that the reference is to drawing blood with a knife—which of course Empedocles would be condemning. This seems to me too high a price to pay, since it totally contradicts Theon's report that Empedocles with these words is advising us to cleanse ourselves.

<sup>34</sup> Theophrastus, *Char.* 16.2. See Parker, *Miasma* (n. 12), 226–7. Cf. Apollonius Rhodius 3.860, where Medea, before preparing an ointment which confers invulnerability, bathes herself in seven streams.

<sup>35</sup> I agree with Kingsley ('Empedocles' Two Poems', *Hermes* 124 (1996), 108–11, at 109) that the *Katharmoi* must have contained some indication of how it is the facts of transmigration that make meat-eating a sin. But Empedocles' declared celebrity at the time of writing this poem hardly suggests that he would need to do very much explaining of his doctrine. I certainly see no necessity on this ground to attribute any specific known fragment (e.g. B137, as Kingsley suggests) to it, beyond those I have listed.

spits it out onto the threshold of land, the earth sends it into the rays of the gleaming sun, and the sun hurls it into the whirling aether. One receives it from another, and all hate it. I too am now one of these, a fugitive from the gods and a wanderer, who trust in raving Strife.

These lines (B115),<sup>36</sup> which are crucial for explaining the daimon's migrations, have been assigned to the *Katharmoi* by every editor of Empedocles since Diels.<sup>37</sup> The attribution has been questioned by N. van der Ben, and subsequently defended by D. O'Brien.<sup>38</sup> But this renewed debate has so far focused excessively on the contexts in which the lines are quoted by our sources, as if one could settle the question of their provenance by counting the allusions in those contexts to *katharsis* and cognate terms and likewise those to the cosmic cycle. Given the improbability that any ancient reader of Empedocles might have expected the physical poem and the *Katharmoi* to conflict doctrinally, the provenance of the lines will have mattered less to those who cited them than their value as evidence for Empedocles' views on the *katharsis* of the soul—a topic on which Platonism had conferred an absolutely pivotal importance.

Plutarch reports that Empedocles used these lines 'as a preface to the beginning of his philosophy'.<sup>39</sup> Is this too vague to be helpful? 'Philosophy' certainly might describe the content of the physical poem.<sup>40</sup> It might also be appropriate to the *Katharmoi*, on the traditional view of that poem's content as expository and doctrinal.

<sup>36</sup> I have avoided engaging with the textual difficulties of this passage, which are well discussed by Wright, *Empedocles* (n. 6). They do not affect any of the issues I am addressing here.

<sup>37</sup> This of course applies to Inwood, *Empedocles* (n. 6), only in so far as he identifies the *Katharmoi* with the whole of Empedocles' poetic *œuvre*.

<sup>38</sup> Van der Ben, *Proem* (n. 33), 16 ff.; D. O'Brien, *Pour interpreter Empédocle* (Paris/Leiden, 1981).

<sup>39</sup> Plut., *De exilio* 607c: ἐν ἀρχῇ τῆς φιλοσοφίας προαποφωνήσας.

<sup>40</sup> Kingsley ('Empedocles' Two Poems' (n. 35)) argues, in reply to Sedley, 'Proems' (n. 28) that 'philosophy' to Plutarch would normally mean the kind of moral precepts, tinged with myth and religion, that are associated with the *Katharmoi*. This may not seem much of a challenge to my position, since I argue that there was a good deal of this kind of material in *On Nature*. But Kingsley's claim is that 'philosophy' is precisely the word Plutarch would use to distinguish the 'philosophical' *Katharmoi* from the other, merely 'physical' poem. However, his evidence crumbles on examination. At *De gen. Socr.* 580c Plutarch's speaker Galaxidorus does (on a plausible restoration of the text) say that Pythagoras' philosophy, already full of 'visions and myths and religious dread', became positively 'Bacchic' in the

But it is very much less appropriate if, as I have argued, the *Katharmoi* was not a doctrinal work but a set of purificatory pronouncements. Indeed, if that suggestion is correct, Plutarch's expression 'at the beginning of his philosophy' would immediately gain a much clearer sense. If Empedocles wrote two doctrinal poems, the words 'his philosophy' are a desperately vague way of referring to either one of them. But if he wrote just one, they become an entirely natural way of referring to that one.<sup>41</sup>

Plutarch's description in no way indicates that these were the very opening lines of the poem to which they belonged, just that they preceded the philosophy proper. Hence there is little value in the argument<sup>42</sup> that since we have the opening of the *Katharmoi* and it differs from these lines, they must have opened the physical poem instead. Much more mileage can be got out of the content of the disputed lines. First, it is hardly insignificant that they name five of the six cosmic entities on which Empedocles' physical system is based: the daimon's wanderings are graphically described in terms of its being tossed into and out of each of the four elements in turn; and Strife is named as the cause of its downfall. This at least supports the *coherence* of the passage with the physical poem.

But far more important, and strangely absent from the debate about its provenance, is the following consideration. In these disputed lines, Empedocles is himself a fallen daimon: 'I too am now one of these, a fugitive from the gods and a wanderer, who trust in raving Strife.' Is it credible that these words came in the introductory passage of a poem in whose opening lines Empedocles had moments

hands of Empedocles. But in no way does this, as Kingsley seems to think, delimit what Plutarch would mean by the expression 'Empedocles' philosophy', and thus exclude physics from it. Plutarch's other speakers often make it abundantly clear that, like anybody else, they regard 'philosophy' as including physics (*De def. or.* 420B; *De facie* 942B) and logic (*De Is. et Os.* 387A), as well as contemplation of first principles (*ibid.* 382DE). And although, as Kingsley notes, at *De poet. aud.* 14E and 15F, Plutarch recommends the couching of philosophy in versified myth as a didactic device, that tells us nothing about what he means by the word 'philosophy', especially when at least one of his speakers, Theon (*De Pyth. or.* 406E), takes an almost diametrically opposed view of philosophy.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Osborne, 'Empedocles Recycled' (n. 6), 29 ff.

<sup>42</sup> Van der Ben, *Proem* (n. 33), 16.

earlier described himself as ‘a divine god, no longer a mortal’?<sup>43</sup> Without the straitjacket of the old prejudice that science and religion do not mix, it is hard to believe that anyone would ever have thought of assigning the former text to the *Katharmoi*. The most natural interpretation is that B115 comes from a poem in which Empedocles classed himself as a fallen daimon still working through its long cycle of transmigrations, whereas in the *Katharmoi*, opening as it does with his confident self-proclamation as a god, ‘no longer a mortal’, he presented himself as having now completed the cycle and recovered his divinity. I therefore feel a reasonable degree of confidence in placing Empedocles’ major fragment on the wanderings of the daimon somewhere in the proem to the *On Nature*.

Since I first developed this argument several years ago,<sup>44</sup> it has received welcome confirmation in the discovery of papyrus fragments from Book 1 of Empedocles’ *On Nature*.<sup>45</sup> They include lines denouncing animal slaughter<sup>46</sup>—lines which editors have always hitherto assigned to the *Katharmoi*. The taboo on slaughter is, famously, one which Empedocles based on his doctrine of transmigration. Hence the transfer of these lines to the opening Book of the *On Nature* should do much to obviate any remaining resistance to the conclusion that B115, on the migrations of the daimon, belongs to the proem of that same book.

This conclusion will prove important at a later stage in my argument. Earmarking it for future use, we can now at last turn to Lucretius.

<sup>43</sup> B112.4, reinforced by B113.2 (‘if I am superior to frequently perishing mortal human beings’), if, as Sextus’ juxtaposition of B113 with B112 suggests, it is also from the *Katharmoi*. In Empedocles’ world, even the generated gods perish eventually, i.e. at the end of each cosmic cycle: hence they are not immortal but ‘long-lived’ (B21.12, B23.8; cf. B115.5 on the daimons). By contrast, mortals are ‘frequently perishing’, *πολυφθερέων*, see Wright, *Empedocles* (n. 6), 269.

<sup>44</sup> In ‘The Proems of Empedocles and Lucretius’ (n. 28).

<sup>45</sup> The exciting new Strasbourg papyrus of Empedocles has its *editio princeps* in A. Martin and O. Primavesi, *L’Empédocle de Strasbourg* (*P.Strasb. gr. Inv. 1665–1666*) (Strasbourg/Berlin, 1998). Although, at the time of completing the present book, I had not seen this edition, Oliver Primavesi was kind enough to send me a copy of his *habilitationsschrift* (the basis of O. Primavesi, *Kosmos und Dämon bei Empedokles. Der Papyrus P.Strasb. gr. Inv. 1665–1666 und die indirekte Überlieferung*, *Hypomnemata* 116 (Göttingen, 2002)), and both he and Alain Martin have been extremely generous in keeping me informed about their work.

<sup>46</sup> B139, see n. 109 below.

## 4. LUCRETIUS AND EMPEDOCLES

Numerous echoes of Empedoclean passages have been recognized in Lucretius' poem, with varying degrees of certainty.<sup>47</sup> It is no part of my purpose to catalogue these. But two observations seem in order. First, the 500 or so extant lines of Empedocles<sup>48</sup> represent around one-tenth of his poetic output, if we are to trust Diogenes Laertius' figure of 5,000 lines in total,<sup>49</sup> and even on the most conservative estimates of Empedocles' total output,<sup>50</sup> not more than one-fifth. Or supposing (as I am inclined to suppose) that Lucretius' interest was exclusively in the *On Nature*, what is extant of that is still likely to be less than a quarter—roughly 450 lines out of 2,000.<sup>51</sup> This raises the probability that if we had Empedocles' poems intact a great deal more Empedoclean influence would come to light, and our understanding of the *DRN* be immensely enriched.

Second, I would suggest that Lucretius is likely to owe rather more to Empedocles in terms of poetic technique than is generally recognized. For example, at 1.271–97 Lucretius argues for the corporeality of air by means of an intricate analogy between the destructive power of wind and that of water. David West has observed that the number of distinct points of correspondence between the description of the wind and the description of the water greatly exceeds that normally found in the similes of Homer and Apollonius.<sup>52</sup> Lucretius

<sup>47</sup> Esp. Furley, 'Variations on Themes from Empedocles' (n. 3); also W. Kranz, 'Lukrez und Empedokles,' *Philologus* 96 (1944), 68–107; C. J. Castner, 'De rerum natura 5.101–3: Lucretius' Application of Empedoclean Language to Epicurean Doctrine,' *Phoenix* 41 (1987), 40–9; M. R. Gale, *Myth and Poetry in Lucretius* (Cambridge, 1994), 59–75. I have not seen F. R. Jobst, 'Über das Verhältnis zwischen Lukretius und Empedokles' (diss., Munich, 1907), but I understand from Don Fowler that he anticipated Kranz's most important findings. For other studies, see W. J. Tatum, 'The Presocratics in Book I of Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*, *TAPA* 114 (1984), 177–89 [= Ch. 5 of this volume], at 178 n. 5.

<sup>48</sup> This figure tries to take some account of the new papyrus find. I understand from the editors, Alain Martin and Oliver Primavesi, that they have detected in them some new examples of locutions imitated by Lucretius.

<sup>49</sup> D.L. 8.77; for discussion see Osborne, 'Empedocles Recycled' (n. 6), 28–9.

<sup>50</sup> Wright, *Empedocles* (n. 6), 21.

<sup>51</sup> 2,000 lines seems to be the figure for the length of the physical poem given by the *Suda*, s.v. 'Empedocles' (= Empedocles Λ2 DK), despite the slightly odd grammar.

<sup>52</sup> D. West, 'Virgilian Multiple-Correspondence Similes and their Antecedents,' *Philologus* 114 (1970), 262–75.

is thus, in West's terminology, a practitioner of the 'multiple-correspondence simile', a legacy that he was to pass on to Virgil. What I would myself add is that, although Homer and Apollonius may offer no adequate model for the technique, Empedocles does. In his description of the eye's structure and function as analogous to those of a lantern,<sup>53</sup> Empedocles reinforces the idea with a set of carefully engineered correspondences between the two halves of the simile.<sup>54</sup> As in Lucretius, so already in Empedocles, the multiplicity of correspondences has an argumentative motive, and not merely a descriptive one: the more correspondences there are, the more persuasive the analogy becomes. Here then is a technique, singularly at home in philosophical poetry, which has almost certainly passed from Empedocles, through Lucretius, into the Latin poetic tradition.

Lucretius' reverence for Empedocles is evident in the paean of praise with which he prefaces his criticism of Empedocles' four-element theory at 1.716–41:

quorum Acragantinus cum primis Empedocles est  
 insula quem triquetris terrarum gessit in oris,  
 quam fluitans circum magnis anfractibus aequor  
 Ionium glaucis aspargit virus ab undis,  
 angustoque fretu rapidum mare dividit undis 720  
 Aeoliae terrarum oras a finibus eius.  
 hic est vasta Charybdis et hic Aetnaea minantur  
 murmura flammarum rursum se colligere iras,  
 faucibus eruptos iterum vis ut vomat ignis  
 ad caelumque ferat flammai fulgura rursum. 725  
 quae cum magna modis multis miranda videtur  
 gentibus humanis regio visendaque fertur,  
 rebus opima bonis, multa munita virum vi,  
 nil tamen hoc habuisse viro praeclarius in se  
 nec sanctum magis et mirum carumque videtur. 730  
 carmina quin etiam divini pectoris eius  
 vociferantur et exponunt praeclara reperta,

<sup>53</sup> Empedocles B84. For discussion see Wright, *Empedocles* (n. 6), 240–3; D. Sedley, 'Empedocles' Theory of Vision in Theophrastus, *De Sensibus*, in W. Fortenbaugh and D. Gutas, *Theophrastus: His Psychological, Doxographical and Scientific Writings*, Rutgers University Studies in Classical Humanities 5 (New Brunswick, 1992), 20–31.

<sup>54</sup> These are contained principally in the close linguistic parallelism of lines 4–5 with the final two lines. For comparable prose uses of complex analogy in Hippocratic authors, cf. G. E. R. Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy* (Cambridge, 1966), 345–8.



ut vix humana videatur stirpe creatus.  
 hic tamen et supra quos diximus inferiores  
 735 partibus egregie multis multoque minores,  
 quamquam multa bene ac divinitus inveniētes  
 ex adyto tamquam cordis responsa dedere  
 sanctius et multo certa ratione magis quam  
 Pythia quae tripodi a Phoebi lauroque profatur,  
 740 principiis tamen in rerum fecere ruinas  
 et graviter magni magno cecidere ibi casu.

Of these [*sc.* the four-element theorists] the foremost is Empedocles of Acragas, born within the three-cornered terrestrial coasts of the island [Sicily] around which the Ionian Sea, flowing with its great windings, sprays the brine from its green waves, and from whose boundaries the rushing sea with its narrow strait divides the coasts of the Aeolian land with its waves. Here is destructive Charybdis, and here the rumblings of Etna give warning that they are once more gathering the wrath of their flames so that her violence may again spew out the fire flung from her jaws and hurl once more to the sky the lightning flashes of flame. Although this great region seems in many ways worthy of admiration by the human races, and is said to deserve visiting for its wealth of good things and the great stock of men that fortify it, yet it appears to have had in it nothing more illustrious than this man, nor more holy, admirable, and precious. What is more, the poems sprung from his godlike mind call out and expound his illustrious discoveries, so that he scarcely seems to be born of mortal stock.

But this man and the greatly inferior and far lesser ones whom I mentioned above, although in making their many excellent and godlike discoveries they gave responses, as from the shrine of the mind, in a holier and much more certain way than the Pythia who makes her pronouncements from Apollo's tripod and laurel, nevertheless came crashing down when they dealt with the elementary principles of things. Great as they were, their fall here was a great and heavy one.

This is remarkable praise<sup>55</sup> to lavish on a philosopher who did, after all, radically misconceive the underlying nature of the world. Where does the emphasis lie? Lucretius speaks highly both of Empedocles' 'illustrious discoveries' (*praeclara reperta*, 732), and of his poetry, which is so sublime as almost to prove his divinity—an honour that

<sup>55</sup> Contrast M. J. Edwards, 'Lucretius, Empedocles and Epicurean Polemic', *A&A* 35 (1989), 104–15, who takes this passage and others in Lucretius as treating Empedocles with a certain disdain.

in the end Lucretius will reserve for Epicurus alone.<sup>56</sup> With regard to Empedocles' 'discoveries', I am inclined to agree with those who hold that Lucretius is implicitly commending, among other things, the clarity of their exposition, especially by contrast with the obscurities of Heraclitus denounced in the preceding passage.<sup>57</sup> This, I would further suggest, is supported by the closing remarks in the passage quoted above, where Lucretius expresses his approval both of Empedocles and of his 'lesser' colleagues in the pluralist tradition<sup>58</sup> for revealing their findings 'in a holier and much more certain way than the Pythia who makes her pronouncements from Apollo's tripod and laurel' (738–9). This has standardly been understood as crediting those philosophers with an authority comparable to that of an oracle. It would be safer, however, to say that it relies on a contrast—between religious oracles, which Lucretius like any good Epicurean deplors, and the philosopher's rational alternative, delivered 'as from the shrine of the mind' (737).<sup>59</sup> That would amount to a contrast between, on the one hand, the clear, rational, and unambiguous assertions of the pluralists, and, on the other, the Delphic ambiguities

<sup>56</sup> First at 3.15. It is unwise to be too confident that Lucretius is alluding to Empedocles' own profession of divinity at the beginning of the *Katharmoi*, if, as I would maintain, his interest is otherwise focused entirely on Empedocles' *On Nature*. But the legend of Empedocles' plunge into Etna in a bid to establish his own divinity was probably well enough known by this date to give the remark extra point (cf. Wright, *Empedocles* (n. 6), 15–16; and Hor. *Ars* 463–6).

<sup>57</sup> 1.635–44, cf. E. D. Kollmann, 'Lucretius' Criticism of the Early Greek Philosophers', *Stud. Class.* 13 (1971), 79–93; and especially Tatum, 'Presocratics' (n. 47).

<sup>58</sup> The reference is vague, but perhaps picks up the proponents of two elements in 1.712–13 as well as the four-element theorists of 714–15.

<sup>59</sup> On this reading, Lucretius' words distance him from approval of (literal) oracles as effectively as the way in which, for example, those who praise the 'university of life' distance themselves from approval of (literal) universities. Thus Lucretius' application of oracular language to his own pronouncements, here and at 5.111–12 (*fundere fata*), is ironic: cf. D. Obbink, *Philodemus on Piety, Part I* (Oxford, 1996), 568–9, commenting on the irony in Philodemus, *Piet.* 2044–5 (ἐχρησσω[ι]δήσαμεν) and in Epicurus *SV* 29, with a comprehensive set of Epicurean parallel uses of oracular language. The evidence listed by Smith (W. H. D. Rouse, rev. M. F. Smith, *Lucretius: De Rerum Natura* (London/Cambridge, MA, 1975), 60–1 n. b) does not militate against this picture: in Epicurus *SV* 29, *χρησσωδεῖν* is associated with unintelligibility; Cic. *Fin.* 2.20, 102 and *ND* 1.66 do use *oracula* of philosophical pronouncements (some of them Epicurean), but only in the mouths of Epicurus' critics; the epigram of Athenaeus (ap. D.L. 10.12) speaks of Epicurus not as himself oracular but as *inspired* either by the Muses or by the Delphic oracle. Cf. M. F. Smith, 'An Epicurean Priest from Apamea in Syria', *ZPE* 112 (1996), 120–30, at 130 n. 75 for further comment.

so characteristic of Heraclitus.<sup>60</sup> If so, we must be wary of exaggerating the extent to which this eulogy of Empedocles expresses special admiration for his teaching as such. It is largely as an eloquent and straight-talking expositor of his teaching that he is canonized. Empedocles' language may be densely metaphorical (as is Lucretius' own), but at least, as Lucretius sees it, it lacks the multi-layered evasiveness and trickery of Heraclitean prose. About Lucretius' very reserved evaluation of Empedocles' actual teachings I shall say more below.

What purpose is served in this passage by the fulsome praise of Sicily? One object, no doubt, is to compare Empedocles favourably with that other wonder of Sicily, Etna.<sup>61</sup> But it also has the job of illustrating why Sicily was the birthplace of the four-element theory.<sup>62</sup> The four elements are intricately worked into the travelogue. Empedocles was born within Sicily's 'terrestrial coasts' (*terrarum... in oris*, 717: literally 'coasts of lands')—and here *terrarum* is no 'otiose addition' (Bailey), but Lucretius' way of identifying the land of Sicily with the element earth. The elements water and fire are abundantly in evidence in the descriptions of the surrounding sea, of the whirlpool Charybdis, and of the flames of Etna (718–25). Finally (725), those flames are borne 'to the sky' (*caelum*). Now the sky, as the abode both of air and of the heavenly bodies, might in principle symbolize either of the elements air and fire. What surely clinches its identification with air, and thus completes the catalogue of four

<sup>60</sup> For *certus* = 'unambiguous' see *OLD* s.v., 9. The same sense fits perfectly into 5.111–12, where these lines recur: Lucretius is saying that his quasi-oracular prediction that the world will one day perish is a firm and unambiguous one, unlike those associated with the Delphic oracle. For Heraclitus' 'Delphic' ambiguity, cf. his B93 DK. As for *sanctius*, in a comparison with an oracle this must primarily imply 'holier', but the basic meaning of *sanctus* (from *sancire*) is 'ratified' or 'confirmed', and it also has connotations of 'above board' or 'honourable' (*OLD* s.v., 4).

<sup>61</sup> If the thesis developed below about Lucretius' literary debt to Empedocles is right, it may not be too fanciful to see in the imminent new eruption of Etna (722 ff.) a hint at the scheduled rebirth of Empedoclean poetry. And is it really just a coincidence that at 730 Lucretius praises Empedocles as 'carus', his own cognomen (for the point, see P. G. and D. P. Fowler, *OCD*<sup>3</sup>, 888)? The adjective is not part of his regular vocabulary, this being one of only two occurrences in his poem.

<sup>62</sup> This was well spotted by L. MacKay, 'De rerum natura 1.717sqq.', *Latinitas* 3 (1955), 210; and J. M. Snyder, 'Lucretius' Empedoclean Sicily', *CW* 65 (1972), 217–18.

elements, is the fact that Empedocles himself uses 'sky' (*οὐρανός*) as a name for his element air (B22.2).<sup>63</sup>

And the Empedoclean influence goes deeper still. The very idea of using individual phenomena like sea, rain, wind, and sun to symbolize the four elemental stuffs is thoroughly Empedoclean. So too is the poetic device of interweaving the four elements into the language of a descriptive passage: we have already seen Empedocles do the same at B115, when he described the tossing of the fallen daimon from aether (= air) to sea, to land, to the sun's rays, and then back once more into the eddies of the aether.

At the very least, then, Lucretius' description of Sicily reveals his intimate knowledge and exploitation of Empedoclean poetry. And it would be unwise to rule out a further possibility: that it is itself a direct imitation of a lost passage of Empedocles.

## 5. THE ENIGMA OF LUCRETIUS' PROEM

We are now ready to turn to the most hotly and inconclusively debated passage in Lucretius, the proem to Book 1.<sup>64</sup> It is structured as follows:

- 1–20: praise of Venus as *Aeneadum genetrix* and the life force of all nature;
- 21–8: prayer to Venus to inspire Lucretius' poem, because she alone is responsible for making things pleasing, and because Memmius has always been her favourite;
- 29–43: prayer to Venus to intercede with her lover Mars and bring peace to the Roman republic;
- 44–9: it is not in the divine nature to concern itself with our affairs;

<sup>63</sup> As Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic* (n. 4) Ch. 2, shows, Empedocles' own designation of air is 'aether', and aether in early Greek epic is intimately associated with *οὐρανός*.

<sup>64</sup> The huge bibliography on this passage prominently includes F. Giancotti, *Il preludio di Lucrezio* (Messina, 1959); K. Kleve, 'Lukrez und Venus (*De Rerum Natura* 1, 1–49)' *SO* 41 (1966), 86–94; E. J. Kenney, *Lucretius, Greece and Rome New Surveys in the Classics* 11 (Oxford, 1977), 13–17; D. Clay, *Lucretius and Epicurus* (Ithaca, 1983), 82–110; Gale, *Myth and Poetry* (n. 47), Ch. 6; and all the major commentaries.

- 50–61: programmatic address to Memmius about the content of the poem;
- 62–79: praise of Epicurus' intellectual achievement;
- 80–101: attack on the evils of religion, as illustrated by the sacrifice of Iphigeneia;
- 102–35: warning to Memmius not to be enticed by false religious tales about the survival and transmigration of the soul;
- 136–45: the difficulty of Lucretius' poetic task.

The most enigmatic feature of the proem lies in the first three subdivisions, 1–43. How can Lucretius, as an Epicurean, praise Venus as a controlling force in nature, and even beg her to intervene in human affairs? In Epicureanism, the gods emphatically do not intervene in any way in human affairs—as Lucretius himself paradoxically goes on immediately to point out (44–9 = 2.646–51).

To respond that the proem's treatment of Venus is allegorical is not in itself a solution to the puzzle. As Lucretius himself warns at 2.655–60, allegorical use of divinities' names, e.g. 'Neptune' for the sea and 'Ceres' for corn, is permissible only if one avoids any false religious implications. Although Venus might, on this principle, get away with symbolizing nature, or even perhaps Epicurean pleasure,<sup>65</sup> the opening address to her as ancestress of the Romans can hardly be judged equally innocent, nor can the prayers to her to intervene in Roman affairs and to inspire Lucretius' poetry.

It is not that these allegorical explanations do not carry any weight at all. I think there is much truth in them. But the most they can do, for readers who have read on and been surprised to learn that this is an Epicurean poem, is mitigate their bafflement. The question remains, what can have impelled Lucretius to start out so misleadingly, undermining exactly that attitude to the gods that the rest of the poem will so energetically promote? It would scarcely be an exaggeration to say that he spends the remainder of the poem undoing the damage done by the first forty-three lines.

<sup>65</sup> The suggestion of E. Bignone, *Storia della letteratura Latina*, 3 vols. (Florence, 1945), ii.437–44, but one which faces the difficulty that Lucretius' Venus controls all natural coming-to-be (esp. 21 ff.), not just animal reproduction. E. Asmis, 'Lucretius' Venus and Stoic Zeus', *Hermes* 110 (1982), 459–70 [= Ch. 3 of this volume] proposes that Venus is here an Epicurean deity invented to take over the role assigned to Zeus by the Stoics; but against the supposition that Lucretius is concerned to resist the Stoics, see D. Sedley, *Lucretius and the Transformation of Greek Wisdom* (Cambridge, 1998), Ch. 3.

## 6. FURLEY'S THESIS

In short, the opening of the proem simply is not like Lucretius. But it is very like Empedocles. In his outstandingly important study of the proem, David Furley has observed the high level of Empedoclean content to be found in it.<sup>66</sup> My object here will be to augment his observations with further evidence of Empedoclean echoes, but then, in the remainder of the chapter, to propose a very different explanation from his for their presence here.

First, notice the by now familiar technique of working the four elements into a descriptive passage. The poem begins as follows (1–5):

Aeneadum genetrix, hominum divomque voluptas,  
 alma Venus, caeli subter labentia signa  
 quae mare navigerum, quae terras frugiferentis  
 concelebras, per te quoniam genus omne animantium  
 concipitur visitque exortum lumina solis.

5

Ancestress of the race of Aeneas, delight of humans and gods, nurturing Venus, who beneath the gliding beacons of the sky pervade the ship-bearing sea and the crop-carrying lands, because it is due to you that every race of living beings is conceived, and born to look upon the sunlight.

Planted in the text already are references to the sky (which we have seen to represent the element air in Empedoclean imagery),<sup>67</sup> to the heavenly bodies and the sunlight (i.e. fire), to the sea, and to the land. We then launch into a second catalogue of the same four (6–9):

te dea, te fugiunt venti, te nubila caeli  
 adventumque tuum, tibi suavis daedala tellus  
 summittit flores, tibi rident aequora ponti  
 placatumque nitet diffuso lumine caelum.

From you, goddess, and your approach the winds and the clouds of the sky flee away. For you the creative earth pushes up sweet flowers. For you the sea's surface laughs, and the sky, made calm, shines with diffused light.

<sup>66</sup> Furley, 'Variations on Themes from Empedocles' (n. 3). The range and depth of Empedoclean nuances in the proem are further enriched by Clay, *Lucretius and Epicurus* (n. 64), 22–3, 49 ff., 82–110, 253–7.

<sup>67</sup> I offer this as a ground for going beyond Furley and detecting all four elements even in lines 1–5.

Again, the four elements feature: the winds and clouds of the sky, the earth, the sea, the sunlight. And if all this is still not enough, we need only move on to 29–43, Lucretius' prayer to Venus to intercede with her lover Mars. It has long been recognized that here we have a striking allusion to the joint protagonists of Empedocles' physical poem, *Love and Strife*—whom Empedocles himself sometimes calls Aphrodite and Ares.

Furley has noted two other Empedoclean echoes in the proem, to which we will come shortly. But first the question must be asked: why should an Epicurean poem start with an Empedoclean prologue?

It is here that I part company with Furley. He argues that Lucretius' act of piety to Empedocles is the acknowledgement of a philosophical debt. Although Lucretius was himself a committed follower of Epicurus, Furley suggests, he recognized Empedocles as the inaugurator or champion of two traditions to which, as an Epicurean, he too adhered. The first of these is the insistence on absolutely unchanging physical elements. The second is the rejection of a teleological world view, with all its implications of divine intervention.

But this could hardly explain Lucretius' decision to open with a tribute to Empedocles. No reader of the proems to Books 3, 5, and 6 can doubt that Lucretius' other philosophical debts pale into insignificance when compared with his acknowledged dependence upon Epicurus. Why then would he give his putative philosophical obligation to Empedocles the undeserved and thoroughly misleading prominence that it gains from a position at the poem's opening?

Moreover, the unwritten rules of philosophical allegiance in the ancient world do not normally permit the imputation of authority to anyone other than the founder of your own school, or, at most, to his own acknowledged forerunners.<sup>68</sup> The Epicurean school was second to none in observing this principle. It seems certain that Empedocles was not regarded by Epicurus or his successors as any sort of philosophical forerunner; and even an acknowledged forerunner like Democritus was treated with limited respect in the school.<sup>69</sup> Now

<sup>68</sup> As argued in D. Sedley, 'Philosophical Allegiance in the Greco-Roman World', in M. Griffin and J. Barnes (eds.), *Philosophia Togata* (Oxford, 1989), 97–119.

<sup>69</sup> For Democritus as an acknowledged precursor of Epicurus, see Plut. *Col.* 1108<sup>EF</sup>; for Epicurus' reserved praise of him in *On Nature*, see Sedley, *Lucretius* (n. 65), 142–3. Epicurean attacks on Empedocles include those of Hermarchus (see F. Longo Auricchio,

Lucretius is admittedly in certain ways a non-standard Epicurean, and I argue elsewhere<sup>70</sup> that he was not a participating member of any Epicurean group. Even so, his declarations of absolute loyalty to Epicurus as the very first philosopher to liberate the human race from fear of the divine<sup>71</sup> hardly suggest that he was an exception to this usual style of school loyalty. In any case, he certainly knew his Epicurean source texts well enough to be aware of Epicurus' own reserve with regard to his forerunners.

Even on the two philosophical issues picked out by Furley, element theory and anti-teleology, it is doubtful whether Lucretius or any other Epicurean would have been as generous in acknowledging Empedocles' contribution as Furley proposes. Indeed, so far as concerns element theory, Lucretius is emphatic at 1.734–41 (translated above p. 62) that this is not a topic on which Empedocles acquitted himself with distinction.

That there is something, singular or plural, that somehow persists through all cosmogonical and other changes is common ground for all physical philosophers from Anaximander on. No doubt Empedocles' elements were more emphatically unchanging than those of his predecessors. At least, he says that as the elements intermingle they both become different things at different times and remain always alike (B17.34–5). He probably means that they form different compound substances but nevertheless retain their own distinctive properties in the mixture. But other interpretations were possible—for example, that in mixtures the elements do retain their original properties, but that these remain dormant until the compounds separate out again. And, at any rate, I see little sign that Lucretius was prepared to give him the benefit of the doubt on this point. In criticizing the four-element theory, he makes no gesture of respect even for the well-advertised indestructibility of Empedocles' elements

*Ermarco: frammenti* (Naples, 1988), 66–73, 92–9, 125–50; and P. A. Vander Waerdt, 'Hermarchus and the Epicurean Genealogy of Morals', *TAPA* 118 (1988), 89–90, n. 13) and Colotes (Plut. *Col.* 1111F ff.); see also Cic. *ND* 1.29, Diogenes of Oenoanda 6.11–111 Smith, with the further passages assembled by Vander Waerdt. In my view (D. Sedley, 'Epicurus and his Professional Rivals', in J. Bollack and A. Laks (eds.), *Études sur l'épicurisme antique*, Cahiers de Philologie 1 (Lille, 1976), 119–59) Epicurus' attitude to his predecessors was more respectful and lenient than that adopted by his followers, but it undoubtedly showed enough coolness to authorize and encourage their attacks.

<sup>70</sup> Sedley, *Lucretius* (n. 65), Ch. 3.

<sup>71</sup> 1.62–79; 3.1–22; 5.9–13.



(B8, B9, B12): on the contrary, his principal ground for rejecting the theory is that stuffs like earth, air, fire, and water are inevitably perishable (1.753–62). As for their unchangeability, he mentions this as no more than a possible interpretation of the theory, and one that would rob it of what little explanatory power it has (1.770–81).

Does Empedocles fare any better in Lucretius' eyes as a champion of anti-teleology? It cannot be denied that Aristotle casts him in that role: in defending the teleological structure of organisms, Aristotle contrasts his view with the zoogonical thesis of Empedocles that originally a set of randomly composed monsters sprang up—graphically described by Empedocles as 'ox-children man-faced'<sup>72</sup>—of which only the fittest survived. This anticipation of one of the principles of Darwinism has earned Empedocles widespread respect, including, it is sometimes suggested, the respect of the Epicureans. For Lucretius testifies (5.837–77) that they adopted a similar-sounding theory of the survival of the fittest as their basis for the origin of species.

I would not want to deny the probability of a historical link between the Empedoclean and Epicurean theories. But it is a large leap from that to the supposition that the Epicureans acknowledged a debt to Empedocles. Indeed, it can be precisely in those cases where a school is drawing on the ideas of another that it is most at pains to minimize the resemblance and to stress its own originality. This appears to have been the Epicurean attitude to the Empedoclean theory of evolution. Plutarch<sup>73</sup> tells us explicitly that the Epicureans derided Empedocles' 'ox-children man-faced'. And well they might, for Empedocles' monsters were themselves the bizarre product of random combinations of limbs and organs that in an even earlier stage had sprung up and wandered about on their own!<sup>74</sup> There is nothing like this in the Epicurean theory, as we hear about it from Lucretius; and I can see no attempt in Lucretius Book 5 to restore to Empedocles the credit which the Epicurean school traditionally denied him.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Empedocles B61.2. Cf. Aristotle, *Phys.* 198<sup>b</sup>32, 199<sup>b</sup>10–12; *PA* 640<sup>a</sup>19 ff.

<sup>73</sup> Plut. *Col.* 1123B.

<sup>74</sup> Empedocles A72, B57.

<sup>75</sup> Furley, 'Variations on Themes from Empedocles' (n. 3), 61 with n. 15, supports his thesis with the claim that Lucretius 5.837–41 is a translation of Empedocles B57. Although it may pointedly recall the Empedoclean lines, it is hardly a translation. Where Empedocles describes isolated limbs, Lucretius describes whole organisms with congenital defects—and that represents a crucial difference between the two zoogonical theories.

Indeed, since Lucretius certainly knew Empedocles' physical poem at first hand and did not have to rely exclusively on Aristotelian-influenced doxography,<sup>76</sup> it certainly should not be assumed that he read Empedocles as a pioneering opponent of teleology. If Aristotle chooses Empedocles rather than the far more suitable Democritus for that role, it is surely because Empedocles, perhaps alone among the Presocratics, has actually supplied him with an illustration of what a non-teleological explanation of an organism would look like. It does not follow that Empedocles' own intention, taken in context, came over as anti-teleological.<sup>77</sup> As is well known, he is supposed to have postulated four stages of animal evolution, of which the compounding of the ox-children man-faced was only the second. Either in the first stage, that of solitary animal parts, or perhaps in the third stage, that of the so-called 'whole-natured forms', he described the creation of individual animal parts in terms that could hardly have won him the friendship of an anti-teleologist like Lucretius. In B84, already mentioned above, Empedocles describes how Aphrodite<sup>78</sup> cunningly created the eye, just like someone fitting together a lantern for the preconceived purpose of lighting their way at night. Even if one strips from this the figurative personification of Love as a divine artisan, one is left with the impression of an intelligent and purposive creative force. The architectonic role of Love in Empedocles' cosmic cycle makes it a very hard task indeed to portray him as a pure mechanist.

Why, then, does Lucretius nevertheless speak approvingly of Empedocles' 'discoveries' (1.732–3)? To see this in perspective, it is important to note that only four lines later he speaks with equal

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Clay, *Lucretius and Epicurus* (n. 64), 22–3, 289–90 nn. 43–4. W. Rösler ('Lukrez und die Vorsokratiker: doxographische Probleme im 1. Buch von "De Rerum Natura"', *Hermes* 101 (1973), 48–64 = C. J. Classen (ed.), *Probleme der Lukrezforschung* (Hildesheim, 1986), 57–73) correctly stresses Lucretius' use of doxography in his critique of Empedocles at 1.714–829; but this is, I believe, a special case, in so far as the passage is almost certainly based on Epicurus' own criticism of earlier physical theories in *On Nature* 14 and 15, which in turn will have relied heavily on Theophrastus' *Physical Opinions* (see Sedley, *Lucretius* (n. 65), 123–6, 145–8, 182–5).

<sup>77</sup> Teleology was not in Empedocles' day an issue on which sides had to be taken. In what follows, I am describing the impression he was likely to make on later readers attuned to such a debate.

<sup>78</sup> B86 confirms that Aphrodite was the artisan in question; see Sedley, 'Empedocles' Theory of Vision' (n. 53).

approval of the ‘discoveries’ of other, unnamed natural philosophers whom he brackets with Empedocles. Lucretius is not, in effect, singling out Empedocles as a uniquely important authority but is expressing an Epicurean’s qualified respect for the work of the Presocratic natural philosophers in general. Following Epicurus, he applauds the Presocratic tendency to seek physical, as opposed to theological, explanations for such cosmic phenomena as celestial motions, eclipses, and earthquakes. The Epicurean school’s method of handling these phenomena was to catalogue with approval all the available physical explanations of each, adding that any or all might be correct, so that to choose between them would be arbitrary and unscientific. Both Epicurus, in his *Letter to Pythocles*, and Lucretius, in Books 5 (509–770) and 6, thus come to list as possibilities a range of explanatory theses deriving in large measure from the Presocratic philosophers, including Empedocles. For example, both Epicurus (*Letter to Pythocles* 101) and Lucretius (6.204–12) accept as one of the possible explanations of lightning the thesis of Empedocles (A63) that it is fire from the sun trapped in the clouds. It is, I am convinced, only at this level of detail that the Epicureans, Lucretius included, are prepared to applaud the ‘discoveries’ of Empedocles.

## 7. EMPEDOCLES AS LITERARY FOREBEAR

If, then, Lucretius is not thanking Empedocles for the content of the *DRN*, perhaps he is thanking him for its form. There are, after all, well-recognized formal correspondences between the two hexameter poems.

Take first their titles. *De rerum natura* is usually thought to translate *Περὶ φύσεως*, a title conventionally assigned to many Greek cosmological texts, including Empedocles’ physical poem, as well of course as being the title of Epicurus’ great prose treatise on which, as I argue in detail elsewhere<sup>79</sup> Lucretius was relying. As a matter of fact, though, one late source<sup>80</sup> reports Empedocles’ title as *On the Nature of the Things There Are* (*Περὶ φύσεως τῶν ὄντων*), which would be closer still to *De rerum natura*. There is no independent evidence to confirm this title,

<sup>79</sup> Sedley, *Lucretius* (n. 65), Chs. 4–5.

<sup>80</sup> *Suda*, s.v. ‘Empedocles’ = 31A2 DK.

but it seems highly plausible. The simple ‘On Nature’ is so widespread that it has been suspected of being, at least for fifth-century BC authors, no more than a standard title assigned to their works by later scholars.<sup>81</sup> But someone like Empedocles who wrote at least two poems, not to mention prose works, is less likely to have left them untitled, and we have seen no reason not to accept the title *Katharmoi* as entirely authentic. As for *On the Nature of the Things There Are*, his near-contemporary Melissus published a work entitled *On Nature, or On What There Is* (*Περὶ φύσεως ἢ περὶ τοῦ ὄντος*), the singular ‘what there is’ proclaiming his Eleatic monism. That Melissus’ reported title is authentic is confirmed by the parody published by Empedocles’ follower Gorgias, *On What There Is Not, or On Nature* (*Περὶ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος ἢ περὶ φύσεως*). Against this background, Empedocles’ choice of *On the Nature of the Things There Are*, with its plural form *τῶν ὄντων*, as a title for what was above all else a pluralist manifesto, makes ready sense.

Apart from the titles, there are other striking formal resemblances. In particular, Lucretius’ poem is addressed to a friend, Memmius, as Empedocles’ physical poem is to his friend Pausanias. And both at certain points turn to address an invocation to the muse Calliope.<sup>82</sup>

I am now ready to unveil my own hypothesis: *the proem of the DRN is, and is meant to be recognized as, an imitation of the proem to Empedocles’ physical poem.*

The letter of Cicero with which I opened the present chapter constitutes strong evidence that contemporary readers could be expected to recognize this imitation, if such it was. For it attests a literary climate in which Empedocles was on the list of acknowledged Greek authors,<sup>83</sup> familiar to the well-educated either through direct acquaintance or through Latin translations and imitations. (Even if other Roman literati shared Cicero’s inability to struggle through to the end of Sallustius’ *Empedoclea*, many could be assumed, like him, at

<sup>81</sup> E. Schmalzriedt, *Peri Physleos: zur Frühgeschichte der Buchtitel* (Munich, 1970).

<sup>82</sup> Empedocles B3, B131; Lucretius 6.92–5. See Clay, *Lucretius and Epicurus* (n. 64), 253–7.

<sup>83</sup> For a judicious discussion of Ennius’ possible use of Empedocles, see O. Skutsch, *The Annals of Quintus Ennius* (Oxford, 1985), 160, 164 n. 18, 260, 394 ff., 758. Ovid’s extensive use of Empedocles in the speech of Pythagoras in *Met.* 15 is impressively discussed in P. R. Hardie, ‘The Speech of Pythagoras in Ovid *Metamorphoses* 15: Empedoclean *epos*’, *CQ* 45 (1995), 204–14.

least to have read the opening.) Above all, it shows us Lucretius being thought about by his contemporaries in an Empedoclean context.

On my hypothesis, Lucretius' purpose is to establish from the outset the precise Greek literary mantle he is assuming (rather as Virgil's *Aeneid* announces with the opening words *arma virumque cano* that it will be a combined *Iliad–Odyssey*). Lucretius, in his poetic manifesto at 1.921–50 and his appreciation of Ennius' pedigree at 1.117–26 (see below), shows himself to be no less concerned with literary pedigree than other Roman poets of his era.

To amplify the hypothesis: Lucretius is imitating Empedocles' proem, but adapting it, as he goes along, (a) to a Roman patriotic theme, and (b) to Epicurean philosophy, at the same time steering us gently away from Empedocles' actual doctrines. His object? To announce himself as *the Roman Empedocles*—the great Roman poet of nature. In short, he is laying claim to a literary, not a philosophical, heritage. For there can be little doubt that it was to Empedocles, rather than to the only other available candidate, Parmenides, that Lucretius looked as his great Greek forebear in the tradition of cosmological poetry. This was certainly the comparison that regularly occurred to Roman readers,<sup>84</sup> and rightly so.

A glaring weakness of this hypothesis will already be obvious. We do not have the proem to Empedocles' *On Nature*.<sup>85</sup> How then can we say anything at all about its resemblance or otherwise to Lucretius' proem?

My answer is twofold. First, we are not altogether without evidence about its content, as I hope to show. Indeed, there is little doubt that some of our familiar fragments of Empedocles are in fact from it. Moreover, thanks to the exciting papyrus find that has been made since I first formulated the argument of this chapter,<sup>86</sup> we now have considerably more of Empedocles' proem than was available even a few years ago. The new fragments are believed all to come from a single scroll, which contained Book 1 of Empedocles' physical poem.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>84</sup> e.g. Quintilian *Inst.* 1.4.4; Lactantius, *Div. Inst.* 2.12–14.

<sup>85</sup> Van der Ben (*Proem* (n. 33)) offers his own wholesale reconstruction of Empedocles' proem. Most of it rests on guesswork. My grounds for rejecting it will simply be the arguments I offer below for accepting a different reconstruction, based largely on Lucretius.

<sup>86</sup> In 'The Proems of Empedocles and Lucretius' (n. 28).

<sup>87</sup> See above p. 59.

Second, if the proposed hypothesis proves capable of explaining features of Lucretius' proem that otherwise remain inexplicable, that in itself would provide some degree of confirmation.

1.1–49. I shall begin my defence of the hypothesis with a re-examination of the opening lines (translated above p. 67):

Aeneadum genetrix, hominum divomque voluptas,  
 alma Venus, caeli subter labentia signa  
 quae mare navigerum, quae terras frugiferentis  
 concelebras . . .

The linguistic case for a direct Empedoclean model seems to me a rather strong one. The first two words are, of course, a distinctively Roman invocation. But *hominum divomque voluptas* already bears an Empedoclean fingerprint. The identical phrase recurs, with a small change of syntax, at 6.92–5, in an address to Calliope that has long been recognized as an Empedoclean touch on Lucretius' part.<sup>88</sup> *Hominum divomque* could translate some variant on the regular hexameter ending ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε, used in Homer's formulaic designation of Zeus as 'father of men and gods'. Such reworkings of Homeric locutions are an integral feature of Empedocles' poetry.<sup>89</sup> And *voluptas* picks up Γηθοσύνη, 'Delight', used by Empedocles, like 'Aphrodite', as a title for his goddess Love (B17.24). Next, *alma*, 'nurturing', might represent ζείδωρος, 'life-giving', an attested Empedoclean epithet for Aphrodite (B151); but as a matter of fact there is a much better candidate among the new fragments of Empedocles. These include (in a fragmentary context) the adjective φυτάλμιος, 'nurturing', commonly used in Greek poetry as a stock epithet for divinities.<sup>90</sup> In addition to being virtually synonymous with the Latin *almus*, it also shares its leading syllable. It would be easy to imagine 'Κύπρι φυτάλμιε . . .' as an Empedoclean line-beginning, matching Lucretius' *alma Venus* . . .

We then proceed, in 2–9 (quoted p. 67 above), to the elaborate double interweaving of the four elements into the hymn. For Lucretius

<sup>88</sup> 6.94, *Calliope, requies hominum divomque voluptas*.

<sup>89</sup> See the seminal study by Bollack, *Empédocle* (n. 5), i.277 ff. Aristotle, in his lost *On Poets*, called Empedocles Ὀμηρικὸς (D.L. 8.57).

<sup>90</sup> There seems little possibility that in the actual fragment the adjective is serving this role.

to expect any reader to identify these as the Empedoclean four in the very opening lines of the poem, without any prior clue, would be wildly optimistic. It is far more credible that he found them already present in his Empedoclean original. We have already noted that interweaving the four elements into a descriptive passage is an authentic Empedoclean device.

Line 3 is remarkable for its pair of compound adjectives: *quae mare navigerum, quae terras frugiferentis*. . . . Lucretius has a well-known penchant for these quasi-Greek formations,<sup>91</sup> which sometimes combine with Greek loan words to build up an evocative context that transports his reader to the Greek world. But there are two unusual features of this particular pair. First, both accurately translate actual Greek compound adjectives—respectively, *navigerum* = *ναυσίπορον* and *frugiferentis* = *καρποφόρους* (or a participial equivalent from *καρποφορεῖν*).<sup>92</sup> Second, although the bold deployment of compound adjectives in pairs, or even in trios, is among the most prominent features of Empedocles' verse,<sup>93</sup> it is one Empedoclean practice which elsewhere Lucretius studiously avoids. In his whole poem, in fact, such a grouping occurs uniquely here.<sup>94</sup> The double idiosyncrasy suggests that in line 3 some exceptional motivation is at work. The supposition that Lucretius was consciously seeking to capture and reproduce in Latin an actual Empedoclean line would provide such a motivation. In fact, his line practically tumbles unaided into a characteristically Empedoclean Greek hexameter: *πόντον ναυσίπορον καὶ γαίας καρποφορούσας*.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>91</sup> See Bailey, i.132 ff. for a convenient catalogue of Lucretius' compound adjectives.

<sup>92</sup> This is not unique in Lucretius—for instance *florifer* (3.11) corresponds to *ἀνθοφόρος* and *ignifer* (5.459 etc.) to *πυρφόρος*—but I have spotted very few such cases.

<sup>93</sup> Empedocles B20.6–7, B21.11–12, B40, B60–1, B76.1–2, etc. The forms *ἐμπεδόφυλλα* and *ἐμπεδόκαρπα* (B77.1) are unique to Empedocles, and suggest a heightened consciousness of the etymology of his own name as a further compound adjective, 'eternally renowned'.

<sup>94</sup> The closest groupings of compound adjectives, outside 1.3, are at 2.1081–3 and 5.864–6. In both cases they occur two lines apart, qualifying items which are respectively first and third in a list.

<sup>95</sup> In 'The Proems of Empedocles and Lucretius' (n. 28) I placed the first two words in the reverse order (perhaps metrically preferable—but cf. e.g. Empedocles B84.6) *ναυσίπορον πόντον καὶ γαίας καρποφορούσας*. Gisela Striker has persuaded me to avoid the jingle which this creates in the second to third foot. Her own suggestion is to retain my original order but change the cases throughout to genitives. This could well be preferable. I retain the accusative merely in order to maximize the isomorphism with the Lucretian line.

Lines 10–20 present Lucretius' entrancing portrait of the reproductive frenzy which Venus inspires throughout the animal kingdom in spring. Then in line 21 Venus emerges as the controller of all *natura*, in the passage (21–8) which also, in line 25, effectively delivers to us the title of the poem:

quae quoniam rerum naturam sola gubernas  
 nec sine te quicquam dias in luminis oras  
 exoritur neque fit laetum neque amabile quicquam,  
 te sociam studeo scribendis versibus esse  
 quos ego de rerum natura pangere conor  
 Memmiadae nostro, quem tu, dea, tempore in omni  
 omnibus ornatum voluisti excellere rebus.  
 quo magis aeternum da dictis, diva, leporem.

25

Since you alone control the *natura* of things, and without you nothing springs forth into the realm of light or becomes joyful and delectable, I am eager for you to be my partner in writing the verses which I am trying to set out about the nature of things (*de rerum natura*) for our friend Memmius, whom you, goddess, have wanted to be at all times outstanding in all things. All the more then, goddess, bestow on my words an everlasting charm.

As Diskin Clay has pointed out, in this context *natura* (21) tends towards the sense 'birth' (through its association with *nasci*, 'be born') rather than simply 'nature', thus echoing Empedocles' characteristic use of φύσις with precisely the same shift from the more familiar 'nature' to 'birth'.<sup>96</sup>

Leaving aside these linguistic and conceptual echoes, it is in any case eminently plausible that Empedocles' poem should have opened with a hymn to Aphrodite. Hesiod's *Works and Days*, with its opening hymn to Zeus, would constitute ample precedent within the tradition of didactic poetry; and it goes without saying that Aphrodite would be Empedocles' preferred divinity. In B128 he makes it a mark of the Golden Age, in which among other things there was no animal slaughter, that Aphrodite was the only divinity worshipped:

Nor did they have Ares or Strife as a god, nor was Zeus or Cronos or Poseidon their king, but Cypris was queen.... Her they propitiated with pious images...

<sup>96</sup> Empedocles B8. See Clay, *Lucretius and Epicurus* (n. 64), 83–95, with the parallels he cites at 308 n. 29.



I am not suggesting that this fragment itself comes from Empedocles' poem. But it does reveal a feature of his religious thought that Lucretius could himself use to advantage—namely the idea that the identity of a person's divinities is a function of that person's own moral state.<sup>97</sup> If you are a peaceful person, Ares is not your god, but Aphrodite is. Lucretius, as an Epicurean, must hold the somewhat similar view that the gods' true nature is peaceful, and that people's tendency to endow them with angry and warlike temperaments is a projection of their own moral maladjustment.<sup>98</sup> The essence of god is blessed detachment; anger, jealousy, and the like are accretions misleadingly superimposed by us on that essence.

This may offer us a lead on the much-debated lines 44–9, in which Lucretius presents the correct Epicurean view of the gods as tranquil and detached:

45                   omnis enim per se divom natura necessest  
immortali aevo summa cum pace fruatur  
semota ab nostris rebus seiunctaque longe;  
nam privata dolore omni, privata periclis,  
ipsa suis pollens opibus, nil indiga nostri,  
nec bene promeritis capitur neque tangitur ira.

For the entire nature of the gods, in its essence, must of necessity enjoy everlasting life along with perfect peace, removed and far separated from our affairs. Without any pain, without dangers, strong through its own resources, with no need of us, it is neither won over by favours nor touched by anger.

These lines occur also at 2.646–51, where they are superficially much more at home, and many editors believe that they are an intrusive gloss in the poem:<sup>99</sup> it seems anomalous for Lucretius to stress the total detachment of the gods from human affairs directly after his prayer to Venus to intervene and save the Roman republic from war. And yet the sudden reversal is too characteristic of Lucretius to be

<sup>97</sup> Cf. B17.23, where Love is 'she by whom mortals think friendly thoughts and perform peaceful deeds'.

<sup>98</sup> See A. A. Long and D. N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1987), i.139–49. The point stands whether or not, as argued there, Lucretius was wrong to understand Epicurus' gods as objectively real life-forms.

<sup>99</sup> See the arguments marshalled by E. Courtney, 'Quotation, Interpolation and Transposition', *Hermathena* 143 (1987), 7–18, at 11 ff.

lightly dismissed. Even when these same lines recur in Book 2, they are used similarly to reverse the religious implications of what precedes, this time a seductive allegorical reading of the worship of Cybele as symbolizing (at least in its last lines) her direct interest in human affairs.

Imagine now in addition an original Empedoclean proem in which Aphrodite, as Love, is asked to propitiate Ares, as Strife. What Empedocles would have intended by this is not so much an attempt to interfere with the inevitable progression of the cosmic cycle, as a plea to human beings to let their peaceful tendencies calm and suppress the bloodthirsty side of their nature.<sup>100</sup> If so, Lucretius would welcome this essentially moral use of myth and prayer, and could readily apply it to the current war-torn state of his own country. But since Empedocles regards Ares/Strife as a real, if less palatable, god, Lucretius might very naturally want to add an Epicurean corrective: that Venus' hoped-for propitiation of Mars represents no more than people's return to the one true conception of the divine nature as tranquil and detached, instead of angry and warlike. Hence the connexion of thought found in the text: Venus, make Mars peaceful, because that alone is the *essential* nature of divinity (*omnis enim per se divom natura . . .*). Or, translated into Epicurean moral terms: Romans, let your belief in a peaceful god overcome your belief in a warlike god, because peacefulness is the true essence of godlike happiness. The connexion of thought could no doubt have been made clearer; but I would be reluctant to rob Lucretius of this important Epicurean modification to Empedoclean theology.

By this stage, it should be noted, I am no longer suggesting direct translation or line-by-line imitation of Empedocles' proem on Lucretius' part, but the deployment of the same sequence of themes as occurred in it, for increasingly Epicurean purposes.

<sup>100</sup> Eustathius (*Od.* 310.33 ff., *ad Hom. Od.* 8.367) may imply that Empedocles used the myth of the union of Aphrodite and Ares as an allegory for friendship; and since there is no stage within the cosmic cycle itself at which Love and Strife unite, the likeliest location for that piece of symbolism would indeed be his proem. However, Eustathius' words may mean no more than that some allegorists proposed an Empedoclean interpretation of the myth; cf. Heraclit. *Alleg. Hom.* 69.8; and F. Buffière, *Les mythes d'Homère et la pensée grecque* (Paris, 1956), 168–72.

1.50–61. The next section of Lucretius' proem is a programmatic address to Memmius. He asks Memmius to give him his full attention—perhaps an echo of the passage that contained Empedocles' surviving line 'Listen to me, Pausanias, son of wise Anchiteus' (B1). He then proceeds to outline the content of the poem. He will explain to Memmius the character of the heaven and the gods, and the elements (56–7):

unde omnis natura creet res auctet alatque  
quove eadem rursus natura perempta resolvat.

...from which nature creates, increases, and nurtures all things, and into which that same nature once more resolves them when they are destroyed.

After this he spends four lines naming his cosmic first principles (*genitalia corpora, semina rerum*, etc.).<sup>101</sup>

This dual process, whereby things combine and are once more dissolved into their constituents, bears a strong formal resemblance to Empedocles' own programmatic description in B17, a passage that is explicitly attested by Simplicius as coming from the opening of the physical poem.<sup>102</sup> Not only do we have Simplicius' attestation to that effect, but the new papyrus find includes a fragment which at its beginning coincides with lines 31–5 of B17 and then continues it for another 34 lines. Thanks to a line number ( $\Gamma = 300$ ) preserved in the margin at the end of the new fragment, we can now say that the opening couplet of fragment 17 was probably lines 233–4 of the poem:

δίπλ' ἐρέω· τοτὲ μὲν γὰρ ἐν ἡὺξήθη μόνον εἶναι  
ἐκ πλεόνων, τοτὲ δ' αὖ διέφθυ πλέον' ἐξ ἐνὸς εἶναι.

I will tell a double tale. For at one time there grew to be just one thing from many, and at another it grew apart once more to be many out of one.

The symmetrical two-way nature of the process is emphasized repeatedly in similarly balanced antitheses for a further fifteen lines,<sup>103</sup> after which Empedocles, like Lucretius, proceeds to name the cosmic

<sup>101</sup> See further Sedley, *Lucretius* (n. 65), 38–9, 193–8, 201–2.

<sup>102</sup> Simplicius, *In Phys.* 161.14–15; see preamble to B17 in Diels/Kranz.

<sup>103</sup> In the new fragment which continues the passage there appear to be further returns to much the same two-way description of change, as well as a brief preview of the beginning of the cycle, to be resumed in earnest in B35.

principles underlying the process—the four elements, plus Love and Strife. Empedocles' repetitiveness, a device for emphasizing the eternality of his cosmic cycle, is understandably not reproduced by Lucretius. But in other respects the formal parallelism of the two programmatic passages is striking.

It begins to look highly plausible that Empedocles' proem to *On Nature*, having opened with a hymn to Aphrodite, then continued with a programmatic address to Pausanias, of which B17 formed a part. Such a structure would, naturally enough, mimic the opening of Hesiod's *Works and Days*, where a short hymn to Zeus is immediately followed by a personal address to Perses.

Given our new knowledge of Empedocles' line numbering, this hypothesis would mean that the hymn to Aphrodite and the personal address to Pausanias occupied around 230 lines.<sup>104</sup> Is this implausibly long? I do not think so. Empedocles is a wordy and repetitive writer, as the new fragments amply confirm. And we have no way of guessing how much personal detail was included in the address to Pausanias (the Hesiodic model would have permitted plenty).<sup>105</sup>

1.62–79. Lucretius' next section is his praise of Epicurus' intellectual achievement.<sup>106</sup> At a time when mankind was wretchedly oppressed by religion, a certain Greek became the first (*primum Graius homo*, 66) to stand up against its tyranny. Such were his mental powers that he was able to break through the 'flaming walls of the world' and traverse with his intellect the measureless universe. By reporting back to us the laws that bind and limit natural processes, he has broken the power of religion.

<sup>104</sup> The numbering was not a system of textual citation but the scribe's way of keeping count of the number of lines he was due to be paid for. It is therefore (I understand from Drs. Martin and Primavesi) possible that his numeration included the title—in which case the number of lines preceding B17 would be slightly reduced. Hence I have rounded my figure down to 'around 230 lines'.

<sup>105</sup> Full discussion of the opening part of the poem and its possible contents must await publication of the new fragments in Martin/Primavesi, *L'Empédocle de Strasbourg* (n. 45).

<sup>106</sup> I am unpersuaded by the proposal of L. Edelstein, 'Primum Graius homo (Lucretius 1.1–149)', *TAPA* 71 (1940), 78–90, that the reference is a general one to the Presocratic physical tradition. The proems to Books 3, 5, and 6 supply ample evidence of Lucretius' belief that Epicurus was the first to make the crucial breakthrough, scientific as well as moral.

Once more there is a clear Empedoclean model, B129, almost certainly referring to Pythagoras:

There was among them a man of extraordinary knowledge, possessing a vast treasury of understanding, and master of every kind of wise deed. For when he reached out with all his understanding he easily saw everything there is, over ten and twenty human generations.

As Furley has pointed out,<sup>107</sup> the Lucretian passage unmistakably recalls the Empedoclean. Both men are great historical figures, too august to be named. And both are praised for their intellectual achievement in breaking through the boundaries of ordinary human experience—Pythagoras for his recollection of his former incarnations,<sup>108</sup> Epicurus for his grasp of the nature of the infinite universe beyond our own world.

Doctrinally, it should be noticed, Lucretius and Empedocles are veering ever further apart. Epicurus' discoveries, which secured his victory over religion, are taking the place of an Empedoclean religious doctrine that is anathema to Lucretius, the doctrine of transmigration.

1.80–101. There follows Lucretius' direct attack on the evils of religion, illustrated with the example of Agamemnon's sacrifice of his own daughter Iphigeneia.

Furley is right to point out the clear reminiscence of Empedocles B137, in which Empedocles attacks the sin of animal slaughter with the example of a father unwittingly sacrificing his own son, who has transmigrated into the body of an ox. There is no detailed linguistic imitation, but the close functional parallelism of the two pathetic scenes of sacrifice should leave little doubt that the one passage is written with the other in mind. (Lucretius' description does not, incidentally, appear to be directly modelled on any of the accounts of Iphigeneia's sacrifice extant in Greek tragedy.)

That B137 came from Empedocles' physical poem, and not from the *Katharmoi*, was until recently a highly unorthodox proposal. Now,

<sup>107</sup> Furley, 'Variations on Themes from Empedocles' (n. 3). See also W. Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism* (Cambridge, MA, 1972), 137; P. R. Hardie, *Virgil's Aeneid: Cosmos and Imperium* (Oxford, 1986), 39 n. 17.

<sup>108</sup> For the tradition of Pythagoras' multiple incarnations, see Burkert, *Lore and Science* (n. 107), 137 ff.

however, we have the new papyrus fragments from the opening book of the physical poem, and they include B139, where the speaker expresses his regret that he did not perish before his wicked complicity in the slaughter and consumption of animals. So close is the thematic link between B137 and B139 that they have regularly been assumed to derive from a single original context. That context can now be identified as Book 1 of the physical poem, and very probably its proem.<sup>109</sup>

1.102–35. Lucretius continues with a warning to Memmius not to be confused by superstitious tales, such as those about the survival and transmigration of the soul.

Why did he choose to include the topic of transmigration in his proem? In view of all the Empedoclean echoes we have already witnessed, it can hardly be a coincidence that Empedocles likewise outlined his beliefs about transmigration in his proem. It is here that I can at last call upon the findings of §§2–3 above, in which I defended the attribution of B115, Empedocles' explanation of his doctrine of transmigration, to the proem of his *On Nature*. If I am right, and Lucretius' attack on transmigration is an intended counterpart to Empedocles' exposition of the doctrine at the corresponding point in his own proem, he has now moved yet further in distancing himself philosophically from his principal literary model. Where previously we saw him adapting themes from Empedocles' proem to his Epicurean philosophy, he is now presenting his own matching passage not as an adaptation of Empedocles but as a direct antidote to his teachings.

In the course of making this point, Lucretius names Ennius as the author of just the kind of confusion that he is condemning. Somehow Ennius managed to believe both in transmigration and in the sojourn of departed souls in Hades. The latter is an explicit reference to the dream in which Ennius, in his own proem to the *Annales*, had described

<sup>109</sup> It would be unwise, in the present transitional state of Empedoclean scholarship, to insist that B139 itself came from the proem. The work of Martin and Primavesi, based on its admittedly fragmentary context in the papyrus, is currently favouring a location later in the poem, but with the further inference that the daimon's original sin and subsequent fate must already have been described in the proem. Given that B115, which I have argued comes from the proem of the physical poem, ends up with Empedocles' declaration that he is himself one of the fallen daimons—'I too am now one of these, a fugitive from the gods and a wanderer, who trust in raving Strife'—the story of his own downfall could very naturally accompany it.

meeting the shade of Homer. However, Lucretius allows, Ennius must be given his due as the great innovator who brought Greek poetry to the medium of the Latin language: ‘... our own Ennius, the first to bring down from lovely Helicon the enduringly-leaved crown which was to achieve glory throughout the Italian peoples’.

Here we should note Lucretius’ concern with literary pedigree, and specifically with Ennius’ pioneering role in the task which he is himself now engaged in, that of recreating for Latin readers the poetic genres of the Greeks. There is in fact little doubt that the dream passage in Ennius’ own proem is being directly echoed in Lucretius’ lines.<sup>110</sup> Lucretius is here distancing himself from Ennius’ beliefs, while revering his poetry, in a way that pointedly parallels his treatment of Empedocles.<sup>111</sup> Anyone who may doubt the appropriateness of my distinction between a ‘literary’ and a ‘philosophical’ debt to Empedocles should note that just such a distinction is operating here with regard to Ennius.

1.136–45. Finally we come to the closing section of Lucretius’ proem, in which he stresses the magnitude of his poetic task—a task made harder, he says, by the deficiencies of the Latin language and the novelty of the subject matter. It is overwhelmingly tempting to correlate this with the group of fragments (B8–11, B15) in which Empedocles deplores the imprecision of ordinary language in speaking of things’ being born and dying, where there is in reality only combination and separation, but adds that he will nevertheless follow the convention. The shared theme of how to cope with the deficiencies of one’s own language<sup>112</sup> constitutes a strong link between the two passages. We have no explicit attribution of these fragments to Empedocles’ proem, but B8 is at least cited by Simplicius as coming

<sup>110</sup> See Skutsch, *Ennius* (n. 83), 12, 155; Clay, *Lucretius and Epicurus* (n. 64), 310 n. 48; J. H. Waszink, ‘The Proem of the *Annales* of Ennius’, *Mnemosyne* 4.4 (1950), 215–40, at 224–5.

<sup>111</sup> The point is redoubled if, as seems likely, Ennius’ beliefs were themselves influenced by Empedocles: cf. Hardie, *Cosmos and Imperium* (n. 107), 17–22, 79–83.

<sup>112</sup> Empedocles does not in the surviving fragments specify that the deficiency is one of his own language, Greek, rather than of language as such. But his contemporary Anaxagoras (B17) makes the same point with explicit reference to Greek usage, and that was a natural enough way to understand Empedocles too.

from the opening book of *On Nature*; and even without the Lucretian parallel the proem has always seemed the likeliest location.

## 8. EMPEDOCLES' PROEM

A little earlier we arrived at the informed guess that Empedocles' proem to *On Nature* opened with a hymn to Aphrodite, followed by a programmatic address to Pausanias. We can now, in the light of our subsequent findings, ask how it went on.

Lucretius' proem offers the following sequence of topics in its latter part (62–145):

- (a) Epicurus' intellectual achievement and defeat of religion;
- (b) the evils of religion;
- (c) the folly of uncritically believing religious tales, such as those about transmigration;
- (d) the magnitude of Lucretius' poetic task.

The thematic link between the first three is a perfectly satisfactory one, and the last is, if not directly connected, still an appropriate enough topic to address in a proem. And yet there is something disquietingly specific, not to say arbitrary, about the third topic. Why go to such lengths to criticize the transmigration thesis in particular, when there are countless other offending doctrines? Is it merely in order to introduce a heavily qualified tribute to Ennius?<sup>113</sup> My preferred explanation has been that the choice and sequence of topics was in some measure dictated by a further consideration, Lucretius' desire to reproduce the thematic structure of Empedocles' proem.

<sup>113</sup> I do not mean to deny that direct reaction to Ennius plays a significant part in this passage. My question concerns the overall thematic structure of the passage. I would tentatively add that, even if Lucretius were thought to be reacting to current philosophical trends (which I doubt—see *Lucretius* (n. 65), Ch. 3), he would still be unlikely to feel impelled to pick transmigration as a target. To judge from the evidence of Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations*, the current revival of interest in Plato's immortality doctrine played down reincarnation in favour of discarnate survival. Nor does transmigration appear to be an attested feature of first-century BC neo-Pythagoreanism (for which see J. M. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists* (London, 1977), 117–21; and cf. P. A. Vander Waerdt, 'Peripatetic Soul-Division, Posidonius, and Middle Platonic Moral Psychology', *GRBS* 26 (1985), 373–94, esp. 388–9).



One incidental by-product has been the materials for a scissors-and-paste reconstruction of the latter part of Empedocles' own proem. Now stand back and look at the result. We have supplied Empedocles with the following fluent sequence of topics:

- (a) Pythagoras' achievement in recalling past incarnations: an appeal to authority for the doctrine of transmigration;
- (b) the evils of animal slaughter, illustrated by the unwitting sacrifice of a deceased and transmigrated son: the moral importance of the doctrine of transmigration;
- (c) the origin and nature of transmigration itself;
- (d) the folly of being misled by ordinary linguistic usage into supposing that anything literally dies.

This time the thematic coherence of the sequence (a)–(d) is extraordinary. It is much more tight-knit than the corresponding passage in Lucretius, and tells a complete story of its own, one thematically parallel to the Lucretian passage, yet utterly unlike it in detailed content. What is more, the denial of literal birth and death with which it ends not only gives a philosophical basis to the transmigration doctrine that precedes it, but also prepares the ground for the physical exposition to follow, which will likewise be founded on the Parmenidean tenet that nothing literally comes to be or perishes.<sup>114</sup>

This emergence of a reconstructed Empedoclean proem with a coherence and vitality of its own is an additional windfall, which lends welcome support to my hypothesis about Lucretius' proem, quite apart from what it promises to teach us about Empedocles himself.

## 9. CONCLUSION

The nature of my case has been essentially cumulative. Every main stage of Lucretius' proem has proved to correlate with an Empedo-

<sup>114</sup> See especially B12. The Parmenidean tenet seems to be applied by Empedocles indiscriminately to the soul's survival and to the permanence of the elements: both equally are separated, not destroyed. How coherent this conflation is is another question. Cf. especially Kahn, 'Empedocles' Doctrine of the Soul' (n. 6).

clean original. The first part reads as if it were closely imitating an Empedoclean hymn, while the remainder sustains a virtually unbroken series of thematic links with known or attested passages of Empedocles. Moreover, every one of those Empedoclean originals can plausibly be located in the proem of his *On Nature*, either on independent evidence, or through its thematic coherence with passages that have already been located there.

Lucretius is the servant of two masters. Epicurus is the founder of his philosophy; Empedocles is the father of his genre. It is the unique task of Epicureanism's first poet to combine these two loyalties. And that task is what gives his proem its very distinctive character.

#### ADDENDUM (2005)

Some of the ideas argued in this chapter have now been further developed or modified in my 'Lucretius and the New Empedocles', published online in *Leeds International Classical Studies* 2 (2003).

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## Lucretius' Venus and Stoic Zeus

*Elizabeth Asmis*

A long-standing problem of Lucretian scholarship is: why does Lucretius begin his poem on Epicurean physics by invoking the goddess Venus as ruler of nature, and ask her to assist him in the composition of his verses and to give peace to the Romans, when he and every other Epicurean believed that the gods have no concern whatsoever with this or any other world? Various answers have been given in the past. The main answers may be summarized as follows: (a) Lucretius is following a poetic tradition of invocation; (b) he is giving his poem a Roman setting by invoking the ancestress of the Romans; (c) he is honouring Memmius by invoking the patron goddess of his family; (d) he is paying homage to Empedocles' Aphrodite; and (e) he views Venus as an allegorical representation of either the creative forces in nature or pleasure.<sup>1</sup> I think that there is some truth in all of these answers. However, an important element has been missed, which provides, I think, the key to a solution.

I shall argue in this paper that Lucretius was influenced by the contemporary Stoic view of Zeus to fashion an Epicurean divinity, Venus, who would take the place of Stoic Zeus as well as of any other ruling deity. Venus, I suggest, was conceived in part as an allegorical rival to Stoic Zeus: she stands for pleasure and a world ordered by its

<sup>1</sup> A good overview of the various positions is provided by F. Giancotti, *Il Preludio di Lucrezio* (Messina/Florence, 1959), 157–201. A. Dalzell includes references to some later studies in his article 'A Bibliography of Work on Lucretius, 1945–1972', *CW* 66 (1973), 389–427 and 67 (1973), 65–112 (see esp. vol. 67, pp. 84–5). Studies which are especially relevant to this essay will be cited below.

own spontaneous impulses, as opposed to Stoic Zeus who stands for divine might and a world bound by an inexorable divine will. As a rival to Stoic Zeus, moreover, Venus offers a challenge to all religious and philosophical systems that would impose divine tyranny upon the world. Thus, while Venus is a poetic creation that has been shaped by many influences quite apart from Stoicism, it is only when we see her as a creation set within a contemporary philosophical context, in which the Stoics proposed Zeus as the all-mighty ruler of the world, that we have a sufficient explanation why Lucretius would depart so far from Epicurean orthodoxy as to resort to an all-mighty ruling goddess to introduce a poem designed to expel the gods from this world.

I shall proceed by first giving a general sketch of the Stoic concept of Zeus, together with some Epicurean observations of the first century BC. Next, I shall analyse Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus* in order to show how the various aspects of Stoic Zeus were unified into a single poetic vision. Third, and most important, I shall turn to Lucretius' invocation to show how Lucretius has fashioned a unified portrait of a goddess who has a similar range of powers as Stoic Zeus but who exercises these powers entirely differently. I shall conclude that Lucretius was influenced by the Stoic concept of Zeus to exalt a goddess of traditional beliefs to a position where she represents the distinctively Epicurean view of how the world is governed.

The Stoics regarded the physical world as a combination of 'matter' and 'God', whom they named 'Zeus'. They viewed this divinity as a kind of breath (*πνεῦμα*) which by permeating all the world invests it with all the properties that it has. In consequence Zeus is identical with the physical world.<sup>2</sup> Two Stoic etymological explanations of the name *Δία* ('Zeus') are related to this general causal role of Zeus. Chrysippus interpreted *Δία* to mean that 'through him [through his agency, *δι' αὐτόν*] are all things'.<sup>3</sup> It is likely that he proposed this as an explanation that was sanctioned by tradition; for Hesiod appears to explain the name *Δία* by *ὅν τε διά* ('through whom') in his *Works and Days* (verses 2 and 3).<sup>4</sup> In addition, Poseidonios took the name *Δία* to mean 'governing all things', *πάντα διοικούντα*; in this case the

<sup>2</sup> See esp. SVF ii.300 and 310; and ii.527 and 528.

<sup>3</sup> SVF ii.1062 and 1063.

<sup>4</sup> That Hesiod is explaining the name *Δία* by *ὅν τε διά* is argued by E. Norden, *Agnostos Theos* (Leipzig, 1913), 259 n. 1.

prepositional prefix  $\delta\iota$ - suggests that Zeus governs all things by passing 'through' them.<sup>5</sup>

Zeus was also viewed by the Stoics as identical with certain aspects of the physical world, chief among them nature, reason, providence, fate, and law. As nature ( $\phi\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\iota\varsigma$ ) Zeus is the creative force which is responsible for the growth of all plants and animals including humans. One special function that Zeus has in this role is that of giving life to animals. Chrysippus explained the name  $Z\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma$  as derived from  $\zeta\eta\nu$  ('to live'), on the ground that Zeus is the giver of life.<sup>6</sup> Zeus is, moreover, a rational being and hence 'reason',  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ ; and as a rational being he has a will, which is called 'providence',  $\pi\rho\acute{o}\nu\omicron\iota\alpha$ . As 'providence' Zeus takes thought not only that the world as a whole but also all human affairs should be ordered as harmoniously as possible.<sup>7</sup> Providence is, in turn, identical with 'fate',  $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\mu\alpha\rho\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\eta$ , the eternal network of causation by which every event in the universe is determined from an infinite time. Chrysippus explained the power of fate by stating that 'no particular thing can occur even in the least degree otherwise than in accordance with common nature and its reason ( $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ )'.<sup>8</sup> Lastly, Zeus' 'reason' constitutes an all-encompassing 'law',  $\nu\acute{o}\mu\omicron\varsigma$ , which enjoins what should be done and forbids what should not be done.<sup>9</sup>

These views of Zeus were the subject of detailed discussion by Epicureans in the first century BC. The Epicurean Philodemus summarized the theological views of various Stoics in his treatise *On Piety*. A related shorter summary is presented by the Epicurean spokesman Velleius in the first book of Cicero's *De natura deorum*.<sup>10</sup> Particularly relevant is Philodemus' summary of Chrysippus' treatise *On The Gods*. Philodemus notes that in the first book of the treatise Chrysippus claims that Zeus is 'reason' ( $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ ) and the 'soul of the whole', as well as the 'common nature of all and Fate and Necessity', and that this is also 'Good Rule ( $E\delta\nu\omicron\mu\acute{\iota}\alpha$ ) and Justice ( $\Delta\iota\kappa\acute{\eta}$ ) and Concord ( $\text{'}\omicron\mu\acute{o}\nu\omicron\iota\alpha$ ) and Peace ( $E\acute{\iota}\rho\eta\eta$ ) and Aphrodite and everything similar'.<sup>11</sup> The inclusion of 'Aphrodite' in this list is at

<sup>5</sup> SVF ii.1063.      <sup>6</sup> SVF ii.1062.

<sup>7</sup> See esp. SVF i.172 (Zeno), ii.528, and 933.      <sup>8</sup> SVF ii.937; cf. ii.913.

<sup>9</sup> SVF i.162 (Zeno), and iii.316.      <sup>10</sup> Cic. ND 1.36–41.

<sup>11</sup> Chs. 11.12–12.8 in the complete edition of Philodemus' treatise by T. Gomperz (*Philodem über die Frömmigkeit, Herkulanische Studien* Heft 2 (Leipzig, 1866), 77–9). The text is also included in A. Henrichs' re-edition of that part of Philodemus' treatise

first surprising. She is not mentioned elsewhere as an aspect of Zeus. Moreover, the Stoics held that pleasure is not a good and that passion is to be eradicated, and that men first acquired a concept of Aphrodite by deifying a passion (*πάθος*).<sup>12</sup> However, as Philodemus and others show clearly, the Stoics made a practice of subsuming under the name of Zeus the deities of tradition while reinterpreting their functions in conformity with their theology. As a symbol of sexual union, Aphrodite would certainly have a role which is appropriate to the creative function of Zeus. Philodemus' text, however, suggests that Aphrodite had a rather wider and more important role as a symbol of conciliation and union. A little earlier in his summary of Stoic theology, Philodemus mentions a 'power that brings together (*συνακτικὴν*) in a suitable way the parts with one another'. This description is preceded by a gap and the letters *ΔΕΙΤΗΝ*; and this has been restored very plausibly as *Ἀφροδείτην*.<sup>13</sup> The description of Aphrodite as a conciliatory power would explain very well her inclusion in a list of so-called 'similar' deities along with Good Rule, Justice, Concord, and Peace.

In his *Hymn to Zeus* Cleanthes evokes all the main functions of Zeus and lays stress at the same time on Zeus' power.<sup>14</sup> The theme of the poem is indicated in the first place by *παγκρατὲς αἰεὶ* ('omnipotent

which deals with Stoic theology, in 'Die Kritik der stoischen Theologie im *PHerc.* 1428', *Cron. Erc.* 4 (1974), 5–32; it is presented here as *PHerc.* 1428 cols. 4.12–5.8, on p. 15. The text is cited in addition by H. Diels, *Doxographi Graeci* (Berlin, 1879), 545–6, and at *SVF* ii.1076; in both of these places 'Aphrodite' is omitted from the list of names, apparently by an oversight.

<sup>12</sup> For the Stoic explanation of how the concept of Aphrodite originated see *SVF* ii.1009; cf. Cic. *ND* 2.61.

<sup>13</sup> This restoration is due to Von Arnim (*SVF* i.168) and is accepted by Henrichs, 'Die Kritik der stoischen Theologie' (n. 11), 12. The entire description is presented at Ch. 8. 1–4 Gomperz (p. 74) and at *PHerc.* 1428 col. 1.1–4 Henrichs (p. 12). Both Gomperz and Henrichs complete *συνα.τικὴν* as *συναπτικὴν*, while Von Arnim (rightly, I think) writes *συνακτικὴν*; this difference, however, is unimportant. Diels suggests that the description belongs to a discussion of Zeno's theology (*Doxographi Graeci* (n. 11), 542–3).

<sup>14</sup> I am using the text of G. Zuntz in 'Zum Kleantes-Hymnus', *HSCP* 63 (1958), 289–308, at 301–3, although I think that the text can be read without assuming any missing lines. Zuntz offers an emendation of verse 4 in 'Vers 4 des Kleantes-Hymnus', *RhM* 122 (1979), 97–8. I offer no conjectures about this line except to suppose that *ἦχου*, which is unmetrical, is corrupt. Zuntz' paragraph indentations (at verses 7, 15, and 32) agree with the divisions that I propose. An edition of the poem with notes is provided by A. C. Pearson, *The Fragments of Zeno and Cleanthes* (London, 1891), Cleanthes fr. 48, pp. 274–9. The *Hymn* is also included in *SVF*, Cleanthes i.537.

always’) at the end of the first verse, and is repeated with resounding emphasis by the final syllables *κράτος αἰὲν ἀείσω* (‘I shall sing always of your power’) of the sixth verse, with duplication of *αἰὲν* (‘always’) by *ἀείσω* (‘I shall sing’). These two references to Zeus’ power frame the opening address and prepare the detailed celebration of Zeus’ power in the aretalogy that begins at verse 7. In the intervening lines of the opening address, Zeus’ power is exemplified by his role as ruler of nature (verse 2) and the creator of all living beings (4–5).

The central development of the poem, or ‘aretaology’, then begins at verse 7 with an explanation of the theme that has just been announced (7–8):

*Σοὶ γὰρ πᾶς ὄδε κόσμος ἐλισσόμενος περὶ γαῖαν  
πείθεται ἢ κεν ἄγης, καὶ ἑκὼν ὑπὸ σεῖο κρατεῖται.*

This whole cosmos, spinning around the earth, obeys you in whichever way you lead, and is willingly mastered by you.

The final word of verse 8, *κρατεῖται* (‘is mastered’), reiterates the theme of *κράτος* (‘power’) as the poet now demonstrates Zeus’ power by pointing out that all the heavens surrounding the earth obey Zeus. The paradoxical collocation of words ‘is willingly mastered’, *ἑκὼν*. . . *κρατεῖται*, shows the special nature of Zeus’ leadership: it is an imposition of power, and the obedience of his followers is a willingness to have power imposed on them. Cleanthes immediately reinforces this view of Zeus’ rule by portraying it concretely as a ‘two-edged, fiery, ever-living thunderbolt’ wielded by Zeus’ ‘unconquerable hands’ (verses 9–10). Cleanthes keeps this image in the next line as he states that ‘all of nature’s works are accomplished by its blows’ (11); and he sums up the entire preceding demonstration of Zeus’ power by calling him ‘supreme king [ruling] through everything’ at the end of verse 14.

In the remainder of the central development, Cleanthes widens the scope of Zeus’ power by including Zeus’ relationship to men. These verses (15–31) form the second and main part of the aretalogy, and are the focal part of the entire *Hymn*. The new subject is the existence of human wickedness in a world controlled by an omnipotent deity. Turning to the world as a whole, Cleanthes now acknowledges an apparent exception to Zeus’ power (15–18):

Οὐδέ τι γίγνεται ἔργον ἐπὶ χθονὶ σοῦ δίχα, δαίμων,  
 οὔτε κατ' αἰθέριον θεῖον πόλον οὔτ' ἐνὶ πόντῳ  
 πλὴν ὅποσα ῥέζουσι κακοὶ σφετέραισιν ἀνοίαις.

Nor does any deed happen on earth apart from you, o deity, either through the divine ethereal sky, or in the sea, excepting all those things that the wicked do in their mindless folly.

Cleanthes appears at first to exempt human wrongdoing from Zeus' control, but he immediately introduces a refinement as he explains that Zeus has 'fitted all things into one, the good with the bad, so that there is a single ever-existing *logos* of all things' (verses 20–1). Human wickedness, Cleanthes contends, is part of Zeus' overall plan; and thus Zeus has control over it even though he is free from any responsibility for it. Subsequently Cleanthes dwells on the attitude of men to the *logos* of Zeus: if they were to obey it, he states, they would have a good life; as it is, they flee it as they rush in pursuit of fame, or gain, or pleasure (22–31).

The image of men's flight from Zeus' plan leads directly to the third, concluding section of the *Hymn*, the prayer (32–9), in which Cleanthes asks Zeus to save men from their foolishness. Cleanthes introduces the prayer by an address, consisting of a single verse, which balances the initial address of verses 1–2 (32):

Ἄλλὰ Ζεῦ πάνδωρε, κελαινεφές ἀρχικέραυνε.

But Zeus all-giving, he of the black clouds who rules with the thunderbolt.

By this new accumulation of epithets, Cleanthes gives final emphasis to Zeus' power. He repeats the symbol of Zeus' power, the thunderbolt, which he had developed in the central portion of the hymn; and by pairing it with a related symbol, the black clouds, he turns it into an ominous threat. Following upon 'all-giving', this pairing indicates that Zeus' gifts include the castigation of the wicked. Zeus' bounty is not viewed so much as an act of creation as a power to adjust good and evil.

The overall view of Zeus which emerges from the poem is that he is a supremely powerful ruler who has absolute control over the structure of events, even though there is resistance by mankind. This view is elaborated by Cleanthes in another poem which was famous in antiquity:



ἄγου δέ μ', ὦ Ζεῦ, καὶ σύ γ' ἡ πεπρωμένη,  
 ὅποι ποθ' ὑμῖν εἶμι διατεταγμένος,  
 ὡς ἔψομαί γ' ἄοκνος· ἦν δὲ μὴ θέλω  
 κακὸς γενόμενος, οὐδὲν ἤττον ἔψομαι.<sup>15</sup>

But lead me Zeus, and you, Fate, to whatever place I have been assigned by you, for I will follow unreluctantly. But if I am unwilling and become wicked, I will follow nonetheless.

Cleanthes acknowledges that in the event that he is wicked and is unwilling to follow Zeus, he will follow all the same. In his memorable translation of these verses, Seneca puts this point by adding as a fifth verse *ducunt volentem fata, nolentem trahunt*, ‘the fates lead the willing and pull the unwilling’.<sup>16</sup> Seneca very likely owes this distinction to an image attributed to Zeno and Chrysippus. As Hippolytus reports, these Stoics likened a human being to a dog tied to a wagon: the dog both is pulled and follows, if he is willing to follow; and he is wholly forced if he is unwilling to follow. Thus a human being acts both by necessity (Hippolytus points out) and of his own volition, if he is willing to follow; and he acts wholly from necessity if he is unwilling to follow.<sup>17</sup> What the image illustrates is that a human being acts in conformity with Zeus’ plan whether one assents to it or not; and although the vocabulary is different, the idea is the same as that expressed in Cleanthes’ *Hymn*.

Cleanthes’ *Hymn to Zeus* has sometimes been cited briefly as a parallel to Lucretius’ invocation to Venus on the ground that the two poems display the same spirit of religious exaltation and that in both cases the deity is viewed as ruler of nature.<sup>18</sup> These similarities are

<sup>15</sup> A. C. Pearson, *The Fragments of Zeno and Cleanthes* (n. 14), Cleanthes fr. 91, p. 313; and SVF, Cleanthes i.527.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> SVF ii.975. While the distinction between being pulled and following is certainly Stoic, the use of the term ‘necessity’ is contrary to Chrysippus’ distinction between ‘fate’ and ‘necessity’ (see SVF ii.974) and should probably be taken as a critical interpretation of the Stoic doctrine. M. Marcovich suggests the dog image as Seneca’s source in ‘On the Origin of Seneca’s *Ducunt volentem fata nolentem trahunt*’, *CP* 54 (1959), 119–20.

<sup>18</sup> H. A. J. Munro notes in his comments on Lucretius’ invocation: ‘The Stoic Cleanthes’ hymn to Jupiter is conceived in much the same spirit: he addresses the god as Ζεῦ φύσεως ἀρχηγέ [“Zeus, ruler of nature”], whom all mortals should address, ἐκ σοῦ γὰρ γένος ἐσμέν [“for our birth is from you”].’ (*T. Lucreti Cari De rerum natura libri sex*, 4th edn. (Cambridge, 1886), ii.31). O. Regenbogen cites verse 15 of

joined by others, as well as by differences which are as striking as the similarities. The reason for this, I suggest, is that the two deities are alike presented as supreme rulers who, however, symbolize two fundamentally different philosophical systems. Cleanthes' Zeus, and Stoic Zeus in general, is the omnipotent god who imposes his will upon the world by force; Lucretius' Venus is likewise omnipotent, but her supremacy is achieved by the allurements of pleasure.

Lucretius strikes the keynote of his invocation by describing Venus in the first line as *hominum divumque voluptas*, 'pleasure of men and of gods'. The term *voluptas* dominates the opening section of Lucretius' hymn, and subsequently the entire invocation, in the same way as *παγκρατές* ('omnipotent') dominates Cleanthes' *Hymn*. The notion of pleasure persists through *alma*, 'fostering' or 'bountiful', at the beginning of the second line, and through the ensuing description of peace and abundance beneath the stars, both on sea and on land (verses 2–4); and it is reasserted with special vividness by the image of sunlight at the end of verse 5, as Lucretius proclaims that it is 'through you' (*per te*) that 'all the race of living things is conceived and sees, upon issuing, the light of the sun (*lumina solis*)' (4–5). In this prelude, Lucretius has chosen traditional attributes of Venus—the epithet *alma*, her sway on land and on sea, and her creation of life—to assign to Venus a similar creative function as Cleanthes assigns to Zeus. However, Lucretius presents this function under a wholly different aspect from Cleanthes: suffused as it is with light, the creation of living beings by Venus is an act of pleasure, and her bounty is a gift of joy.

*Lumina solis* ('the light of the sun') at the end of line 5 announces the theme of Lucretius' invocation no less clearly than Cleanthes' explicit *σὸν κράτος αἰὲν αἰέσω* ('I shall sing always of your power') announces the theme of his poem. Both expressions form the close of the prelude and lead immediately to the aretalogy. In the case of Lucretius, there follows immediately the dispersal of clouds, with the

Cleanthes' *Hymn* as a parallel to Lucretius' verses 22–3 ('Lukrez. Seine Gestalt in seinem Gedicht', in *Kleine Schriften*, ed. F. Dirlmeier (Munich, 1961), 364); and Diskin Clay mentions that 'in a metaphor reminiscent of Parmenides, of Empedocles, and even of Cleanthes in his "Hymn to Zeus", Venus is said to govern the events of genesis' ('*De Rerum Natura*: Greek Physics and Epicurean Physiologia [Lucretius 1,1–148]', *TAPA* 100 (1969), 31–47, at 35).

result that 'the sky shines, appeased, with spreading light' (verse 9). The image of spreading sunlight is subsequently resumed in the address which begins the third section of Lucretius' invocation, the two prayers (21 ff.). Lucretius now summarizes the role of Venus by asserting that 'you alone (*sola*) govern the nature of things and without you nothing arises into the bright shores of light (*dias in luminis oras*) and nothing becomes happy or loveable' (21–3). Lucretius here assigns explicitly to Venus the powers implied by the preceding descriptions, as he elevates the goddess to the position of sole ruler of nature; and as he did previously, he associates this role with light and pleasure. The symbol of light thus acquires the same importance in Lucretius' invocation as the symbol of the thunderbolt and clouds in Cleanthes' *Hymn*.

Lucretius' invocation is divided similarly to Cleanthes' *Hymn* into (a) a prelude which announces the theme of the central development (verses 1–5), (b) a central development (6–20), and (c) a final section of prayer (21 ff.).<sup>19</sup> Lucretius' central development also falls, like Cleanthes', into two parts. First Lucretius sketches Venus' effect on the whole world (6–9) and thus provides a cosmic setting for the second and focal part of the hymn; and then Lucretius shows the effect of Venus on living beings (10–20).

In the first part (6–9), Lucretius combines traditional motifs, associated as early as Homer with a variety of deities, to show how extraordinarily exuberant is the response to Venus. All at once the winds flee, the clouds flee, the earth sends up flowers, the waters laugh, and the sky is serene with light. The excitement of the response is heightened by the repetition of *te* ('you') and *tibi* ('for you'). At the same time, the accumulation of personal pronouns emphasizes the manner in which Venus works: not only does Venus bring light and

<sup>19</sup> This analysis is a modification of H. Diels' proposal that Lucretius' invocation corresponds to Cleanthes' *Hymn* in having (a) an address (1–4), corresponding to verses 1–2 along with following *χαίρει* of the *Hymn*, (b) a parenthetical aretology (6–20), corresponding to 3–31 of the *Hymn*, and (c) a concluding prayer (24–8), corresponding to 32–9 of the *Hymn*; Diels also suggests that Lucretius has introduced two refinements, the symmetrical transitions at 4–5 and 21–3 ('Lukrezstudien', *SBBerlin, Philos.-Histor. Klasse* 41 [1918], 912–39, at 921–3). For two quite different analyses, see E. Adelaide Hahn, 'Lucretius' Prooemion with Reference to Sappho and Catullus', *CW* 60 (1966), 134–9; and P. H. Schrijvers, *Horror ac Divina Voluptas* (Amsterdam, 1970), 182–4 and 188.

calm, but she does her work simply by her presence. Her person alone is sufficient to elicit an immediate joyful celebration. No force is imposed and no effort is expended: all give freely and spontaneously to the goddess.

As Lucretius turns to consider Venus' effect on living beings (10–20), the response becomes one of eager pursuit. Lucretius now sets all in motion: the breezes blow, the birds soar, and the wild animals bound over the pastures and swim through rushing rivers. Lucretius summarizes the response to Venus by the terse statement (15–16):

... ita capta lepore  
te sequitur cupide quo quamque inducere pergis.

So, captivated by your charm, each one follows you eagerly wherever you go on to lead them.

Venus acts directly upon each animal by her charm; and each reacts directly by rushing after her. It is traditional that Venus subdues all creatures. What is noteworthy about Lucretius' version of this theme is that Lucretius presents Venus' conquest not as a forced submission on the part of the conquered, but as a voluntary, eager pursuit of the goddess. In this, Lucretius uses the same phrasing used by the Stoics to describe the relationship of men to the supreme deity, Zeus. In the case of Zeus, all 'follow' but some do so unwillingly, and none do so 'desirously', but in Cleanthes' words even the willing are 'willingly mastered'. In the case of Venus, all follow eagerly. Though all are captivated by the goddess, there is nothing forced about this; for all act in pursuit of their own pleasure. The reaction of the animals, though prompted by Venus, is free and spontaneous, just like the reaction of the sky, the earth, and the sea, as previously described. There is not the slightest hint of any hesitation: on the contrary, even the rivers rush in time with the rushing beasts.<sup>20</sup>

By the end of the central development, we have seen Venus as a creative force who passes through all parts of the world and commands the eager obedience of all. Lucretius is, therefore, justified in summarizing Venus' role at the beginning of his third section as that

<sup>20</sup> I disagree, therefore, with Herta Klepl, who views Venus as a blind force by whom all creatures are robbed of their own will (*Lukrez und Virgil in ihren Lehrgedichten* (Darmstadt, 1967), 19); Klepl is followed by E. Ackermann, *Lukrez und der Mythos* (Wiesbaden, 1979), 186.

of being 'sole' governor of nature (21). With this description, Venus has manifestly usurped the role of all other ruling deities, and especially the role of Stoic Zeus. Her creative function, her immanence in all parts of the world, and her power over all parts of the world and over all creatures make her the counterpart of Stoic Zeus. It would not be surprising, then, if *per te* ('through you') in verse 4 is a deliberate attempt to usurp for the goddess Venus the function of being the deity 'through' whom all things are done. At the same time, in assuming the role of Zeus, Venus has changed it. Venus is the goddess of pleasure: thus her omnipotence does not consist in the imposition of divine reason and will upon the ruled, but in the joyful and spontaneous pursuit of pleasure by the ruled. Stoic Providence and Fate have been replaced by Epicurean desire and freedom.

Lucretius' first prayer follows appropriately upon the preceding address, as Lucretius prays that Venus may assist him in the creation of beautiful verses on the nature of things (24–8). Lucretius derives the role of Muse from Venus' supremacy in the world: the Muse who is to help the poet write charming verses on nature is herself the charming ruler of nature. The second prayer (29–43) follows just as suitably. Lucretius now prays that Venus, the creator of all things joyful, may create peace for the Romans. The portrait of Mars reclining in the arms of Venus complements the earlier descriptions of the responsive cosmos and the eagerly pursuing animals. Venus' power over Mars is just as immediate and pleasurable as her power over the cosmos as a whole and the animals in it. What we now see in addition is the fulfilment of a promise suggested earlier: Venus, the goddess who calms storms and brings light, also creates peace among men and so becomes fully the goddess of Peace. And significantly, Venus brings peace not by using force, but by means of persuasion and desire. Venus utterly conquers Mars; but she does so by petitioning a passionately enamoured Mars with 'sweet words' (*suavis . . . loquelas*, 39).

In the second prayer, therefore, Venus assumes another function of Stoic Zeus, that of Peace, and with it that of Harmony and Concord. She too subdues disharmony. But there is this important difference: Venus subdues the discordant by pleasure and accordingly has no resistance whatsoever. Because Venus conciliates all gently and lov-

ingly through their own will, Venus is the true goddess of Peace, or the true 'Aphrodite'.

It has been objected by some that the Mars episode cannot be understood allegorically. Giussani and Bailey both contend that the very concrete details of this scene preclude any allegorical interpretation.<sup>21</sup> This reason fails if one considers the practice of allegorical explanation at the time of Lucretius. We have a very good example in Lucretius' own poem: this is the allegory of Mother Earth, in book 2.600–60, which is laden with concrete details. We know, too, that the Stoics, who took the lead in allegorical explanation, delighted in a mass of concrete details. Cleanthes, for example, asked his students to imagine Pleasure seated on a throne and decked out in the finest royal garb, with the various Virtues in attendance.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, we have evidence that the Stoics made a practice of interpreting existing paintings of Zeus in line with their own physics and theology. In particular, the Stoics interpreted the notorious motif of Hera pressing her head into the genitals of Zeus as the reception of the divine seed of reason by inert matter.<sup>23</sup> In the Mars episode Lucretius fashions a portrait in verse to be explained allegorically in the manner of the Stoics; and it is all the more appropriate that he should do so as he is fashioning a deity who rivals Stoic Zeus.

In his second prayer, then, Lucretius completes the process of exalting the goddess Venus to a position which is fully equivalent to that of Stoic Zeus. Venus is now viewed as the cosmic law who adjusts all things into perfect order. Previously Lucretius had emphasized the spontaneity and exuberance of the response to Venus; now he emphasizes the peace and harmony that result from this attitude. Through pleasure Venus achieves everything that Zeus does, and more—because nothing resists.

E. Bignone suggested in a very influential study that Lucretius' Venus is the symbol of pleasure; and he argued that Lucretius is drawing on a long philosophical tradition in which Aphrodite stands for pleasure.<sup>24</sup> Bignone includes Empedocles' Aphrodite in this tradition;

<sup>21</sup> C. Giussani, *T. Lucreti Cari De rerum natura* (Torino, 1896), ii.5–6; and C. Bailey, *Titi Lucreti Cari De rerum natura* (Oxford, 1947), ii.590 and 599.

<sup>22</sup> SVF, Cleanthes i.553.

<sup>23</sup> SVF ii.1071–5.

<sup>24</sup> E. Bignone, *Storia della Letteratura Latina* (Florence, 1945), Appendix: 'Il proemio del libro I di Lucrezio e l'allegoria di Venere', ii.427–43.

but his main piece of evidence is Plato's use of Aphrodite in the *Philebus* to represent hedonism. In addition, Bignone proposed that Venus symbolizes the two kinds of pleasure recognized by the Epicureans, 'kinetic' and 'katastematic' (that is, belonging to a settled bodily condition), and that the first kind is symbolized in verses 1–23 of the invocation and the second in the Mars episode.<sup>25</sup> While I agree that Venus belongs to a philosophical tradition in which the goddess symbolizes pleasure, it seems to me highly implausible that Lucretius is symbolizing two distinct kinds of pleasure. As others have pointed out, the pleasure felt by Mars does not seem 'katastematic' at all; and if we must distinguish between two kinds of pleasure, these seem to be interwoven throughout the invocation.<sup>26</sup> The portrait of Venus, as I have argued, is a highly complex allegory, in which the traditional goddess of sexual pleasure has been transformed into a cosmic ruling force who has various attributes corresponding to those of Stoic Zeus. As the goddess of pleasure, Venus becomes the supreme creator, and the goddess of freedom and peace; and as such Lucretius claims her as his own source of inspiration and as a goddess to be venerated by the Romans.

In his discussion of the invocation Bignone mentions incidentally that in the *Philebus* Plato opposed the hedonists' deity Aphrodite by the god Zeus.<sup>27</sup> In Plato's dialogue Zeus stands for mind, a principle which Socrates opposes to pleasure; and Zeus is viewed as king of the universe. This conflict between pleasure and mind persisted through Hellenistic philosophy and indeed became the dominant ethical issue of this period, as the Epicureans defended pleasure as the supreme good and the Stoics defended reason as the supreme ruling principle. In close agreement with the function of mind and Zeus in the *Philebus*, the Stoics viewed Zeus as the rational principle in the universe. Lucretius takes the next logical step in the debate by raising Venus once again to a position in which she directly opposes Zeus.

<sup>25</sup> Bignone, *Storia della Letteratura Latina* (n. 24), 429–31.

<sup>26</sup> See esp. J. P. Elder, who agrees with Bignone that the two Epicurean types of pleasure are represented allegorically in the invocation, but argues that both types occur closely joined with one another throughout the invocation ('Lucretius 1,1–49', *TAPA* 85 (1954), 88–120).

<sup>27</sup> Bignone, *Storia della Letteratura Latina* (n. 24), ii.438.

Although there is much controversy about the extent to which Lucretius addresses Stoic doctrine in his poem, it is clear that Lucretius was well versed in the philosophical issues of his time and responded to them.<sup>28</sup> Considering that Lucretius had a wide literary acquaintance as well as wide philosophical knowledge, it is plausible that Lucretius knew Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus* in addition to other accounts of Stoic theology; but it is sufficient for my thesis that Lucretius should have had a general acquaintance with Stoic theology, whether he owed any of this to Cleanthes' *Hymn* or not.

In proposing that Lucretius was influenced by Stoic theology in his invocation to Venus, I am not suggesting that the invocation is to be described as an anti-Stoic polemic. Lucretius has a much broader view. As a counterpart to Stoic Zeus, Venus stands for the liberation of nature—including mankind—from *all* divine masters, whether this is Stoic Zeus or the Platonic demiurge or Aristotle's first mover or, above all, the gods of the priests. In his invocation to Venus Lucretius proclaims the theme of the entire poem: nature is free of its divine masters, and humans are free to pursue their own pleasure. This theme dominates the rest of the poem, as Lucretius glorifies Epicurus' victory over superstition and over gods who, just like Stoic Zeus, threaten men with lightning and thunder from the sky, and as he laments the ritual murder of Iphigeneia. All the argumentation which Lucretius subsequently musters has one aim: this is to reveal, as he puts it in 2.1090–2, that nature is 'free, rid of its proud masters, doing all things herself by herself of her own accord, having nothing to do with the gods'.

To return now to our initial question: is Lucretius' invocation to the goddess Venus in conflict with his belief that the gods have nothing to do with the world? The answer, I suggest, is no. For in the first place, Venus is an allegorical deity, who in opposition to Stoic Zeus represents pleasure and a variety of functions derived from pleasure. And secondly, as a counterpart to Stoic Zeus, Venus represents precisely the freedom of the world from divine intervention.

<sup>28</sup> K. Kleve has an excellent recent discussion on Lucretius' familiarity with philosophical issues debated after Epicurus, in 'The Philosophical Polemics in Lucretius: A Study in the History of Epicurean Criticism', *Fondation Hardt Entretiens* 24 (Geneva, 1978), 39–71.



Venus, it turns out, stands for the Epicurean belief that the gods have nothing to do with the world. Paradoxically, a supremely powerful goddess signifies the ejection of the gods from the cosmos. But this paradox is the more acceptable as Venus is a deity who takes the place of Stoic Zeus. For, as was previously noted, Stoic Zeus is identical with the order of the physical world and the totality of bodies that make up the world. Similarly, Lucretius' ruler of nature, as Lucretius shows in the remainder of his poem, is nothing but the laws which govern the movement of the atoms in the universe. Venus, it turns out, is identical, just like Zeus, with the material cosmos. The crucial difference between the two conceptions is that the Stoics do not eliminate the divine by reducing it to the physical, but rather exalt the physical to the divine; Lucretius on the other hand uses the identity to eliminate divinity altogether. He embarks on this process very quickly after the invocation. There is already a hint of it in the announcement of the contents of the poem at verses 54–7: 'I shall begin to set out for you the supreme explanation of the heavens and the gods and I shall unfold the principles (*primordia*) of things, from which nature creates all things and increases and nourishes them, and to which the same nature dissolves the same things again upon destruction.' Although nature is still personified here, the reference to 'principles' suggests that nature is in fact nothing but these principles; it follows that the gods are themselves bound by natural law and are not the arbiters of it.

This brings us to a final consideration. Do lines 44–9 belong in the place which they occupy in our manuscripts? The lines are identical with lines 646–51 in Book 2; and their place in the text has been argued as strenuously as the role of Venus. The lines are clearly appropriate in Book 2, where after giving a detailed description of the worship of Mother Earth, Lucretius claims that these beliefs are 'far removed from a true account' (2.645) and immediately adds the six verses in question starting with the explanation 'for all of the nature of the gods must enjoy supreme peace... removed from our affairs and far separate'. In Book 1, Lucretius has just appealed to a goddess who is intimately involved in everything that goes on in the world; and with this the claim that the gods are far removed from our affairs would seem to be in flat contradiction. Editors were therefore agreed

in excising verses 44–9 as a gloss, until Bignone proposed that there is an overriding continuity in the received text, as Lucretius' prayer for peace leads to the thought of the peace enjoyed by the gods.<sup>29</sup> This argument helped to convince many editors since Bignone to keep the text as it is. In addition, Bignone argued that Lucretius was not the type of poet to sacrifice philosophical truth to poetic fiction, and would therefore have added an immediate clarification.<sup>30</sup>

Bignone's first argument is not, it seems to me, compelling: the alleged continuity of theme is far outweighed by the discontinuity between a peace wrought by Venus on earth and a peace enjoyed by the gods in the interspaces—a peace enjoyed for the very reason that the gods do *not* do any work on earth. As for the second argument, I agree entirely that the portrait of Venus needs an explanation. But this explanation, I suggest, does not come immediately; rather it consists in everything that follows in Lucretius' poem. Indeed, an immediate explanation not only would have undercut Lucretius' credibility just when he most needs to establish it, but also it would have been contrary to Lucretius' own purpose. Lucretius uses myth and allegory deliberately to begin with in order to unfold the full underlying meaning as he proceeds through the remainder of his poem.

<sup>29</sup> E. Bignone, 'Nuove ricerche sul proemio del poema di Lucrezio', *RFIC* 47 (1919), 423–33. Among those who follow Bignone in keeping verses 44–9 are P. Friedländer in 'Retractiones II', *Hermes* 67 (1932), 43–6; and 'The Epicurean Theology in Lucretius' First Proemium (Lucr. I. 44–49)', *TAPA* 70 (1939), 368–79; P. Grimal in 'Lucrèce et l'Hymne à Venus', *REL* 35 (1957), 184–95; and K. Kleve in 'Lukrez und Venus', *SO* 41 (1966), 86–97.

<sup>30</sup> 'Nuove ricerche' (n. 29), 432.

## Epicurus' Triumph of the Mind (Lucr. 1.62–79)

Vinzenz Buchheit

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It is well known how little appreciation and respect there was in Rome for intellectual pursuits and even the intellect itself.<sup>1</sup> While the achievements of the *imperator* were considered far the most glorious, only a few had respect for philosophers, poets, and writers. The latter's function consisted in the glorification of the *imperator's* achievements. Given that one's reputation in Rome depended solely on achievements for the *res publica*, literary prestige could only be won by proving the value for the state of one's literary activities.

In such a rigid hierarchy of values, any questioning of the traditional claims to glory necessarily led to a critical analysis of the values connected with the *res publica*. Some writers sought appreciation by relating their work to the existing value system: Cicero praised the political action resting on an intellectual basis above the *imperator's* feats. Virgil ranked literary achievements alongside those of an *imperator* (*Geo.* 3, proem), and Horace even claimed to have produced a lasting monument. Others chose the device of sharp antithesis, as developed by Lucretius, Propertius, and Ovid.

<sup>1</sup> See V. Buchheit, 'Ciceros Triumph des Geistes', *Gymnasium* 76 (1969), 232–53. The content of this discussion is presupposed here. Cf. also V. Buchheit, *Der Anspruch des Dichters in Vergils Georgica* (Darmstadt, 1972), 1–9 ('Hinführung: Der Anspruch des Geistes in Rom vor Vergil').

Both sides could only articulate their claims in terms of the traditional scheme and its vocabulary. In Rome, a triumph and the *memoria* associated with it was considered the high point of imperial achievement. The authors mentioned above therefore deployed the imagery and vocabulary of the triumph in order to stake their claim to recognition.

In this context, an important text of Lucretius, which had a decisive influence on Virgil and Horace, has not yet been given sufficient attention. This text is the eulogy of Epicurus in the introduction to the first book. Some related aspects from the proem of the fifth book also merit attention. The relevant passage, to which we will keep returning, is as follows (1.62–79):

Humana ante oculos foede cum vita iaceret in terris oppressa gravi sub religione, quae caput a caeli regionibus ostendebat horribili super aspectu mortalibus instans,	65
primum Graius homo mortalis tollere contra est oculos ausus primusque obsistere contra; quem neque fama deum nec fulmina nec minitanti murmure compressit caelum, sed eo magis acrem, inirrat animi virtutem, effringere ut arta	70
naturae primus portarum claustra cupiret. ergo vivida vis animi pervicit et extra processit longe flammantia moenia mundi atque omne immensum peragravit mente animoque, unde refert nobis victor quid possit oriri,	75
quid nequeat, finita potestas denique cuique quanam sit ratione atque alte terminus haerens. quare religio pedibus subiecta vicissim opteritur, nos exaequat victoria caelo.	

When human life lay prostrate on the ground before our eyes, oppressed by burdensome religion, which showed its face from the regions of heaven, standing over mortals with horrible countenance, a Greek man first dared to raise his mortal eyes against it and to resist it. Stories about the gods, thunderbolts, and heaven with threatening noise did not scare him, but spurred on the eager virtue of his mind even more, so that he wished to be the first to break the tight bolts of the gates of nature. Therefore, the lively force of his mind prevailed, and he progressed far beyond the flaming walls of the world, and in mind and spirit he wandered the immeasurable

universe, whence he brought back to us victorious (report of) what can happen and what is impossible, and indeed on what principle each thing has its powers restricted, and its deep-set boundary stone. Therefore religion is in turn thrown under our feet and trampled down, and his victory has made us equal to heaven.

It should be stressed how the *Graius homo* ('Greek man'), Epicurus,<sup>2</sup> bravely raised his mortal eyes for the first time<sup>3</sup> against the oppressive weight of *religio*, and had the courage to break the *arta naturae portarum claustra* ('the tight bolts of the gates of nature'). The description recalls a military campaign, and the metaphors are taken from military language. He conquered (*pervicit*) all obstacles with his *vivida vis animi* ('lively force of mind'). On his campaign he penetrated *extra* | ... *longe flammantia moenia mundi*<sup>4</sup> | *atque omne immensum peragravit*<sup>5</sup> *mente animoque* ('far beyond the flaming walls of the world, and in mind and spirit wandered the immeasurable universe'). He returned victorious, bearing the truth about the nature of things<sup>6</sup> as his prize of war (*refert nobis victor*).<sup>7</sup> The result was: *religio pedibus subiecta*<sup>8</sup> *vicissim* | *opteritur* ('religion was in turn

<sup>2</sup> L. Edelstein's opinion, expressed in *TAPA* 71 (1940), 78–90, that Lucretius is not speaking of Epicurus, but of the early Greek philosophers in general, is unfounded; against it amongst others see already G. F. Else, *CW* 37 (1943), 136 n. 5; H. Diller, *SIFC* 25 (1951), 25 n. 1. The following discussion will also provide proof, if proof be needed.

<sup>3</sup> His claim that this is a pioneering work is stressed three times (66, 67, 71).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. 3.16 f.: the understanding of nature achieved through Epicurus' *divina mens* has brought it about that *diffugiunt animi terrores, moenia mundi* | *discedunt* ('terrors of the mind flee and the walls of the world fall away'); also 2.1044 f.: *quaerit enim rationem animus, cum summa loci sit* | *infinita foris haec extra moenia mundi* ('for the mind seeks an explanation, when the extent of space beyond the walls of this world is without limit'). In relation to *extra moenia*... ('beyond the walls...'), Bacchylides fr. 5 should be recalled.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Manil. 1.13–15.

<sup>6</sup> For this famous Epicurean dogma, see e.g. Epicur. *Ep. Hdt.* 78–82; *KD* 11, and in Lucretius the preceding verses, 50–61. R. Reitzenstein, *NGG* (1920), 80 ff.; G. Müller, *Philologus* 102 (1958), 72 f.; F. Giancotti, *Il preludio di Lucrezio* (Florence, 1959), 267 f.; and W. Heilmann, *WS* n.s. 3 (1969), 49–59 rightly stress that these verses are original here. For the Lucretian passage see G. Müller, *Die Darstellung der Kinetik bei Lukrez* (Berlin, 1959), 18 n. 1, 84 f.; W. Schmid, *Gnomon* 39 (1967), 494.

<sup>7</sup> This phrase, which is central for Virgil, is clarified when one considers that the expression is based on a technical term of triumphal language, *spolia referre* ('bring back spoils'); cf. e.g. *Aen.* 4.93; 10.542; *Liv. Perioch.* 4; *Tac. Ann.* 12.54.3.

<sup>8</sup> For ample material on this common image of the pose of the victor, see Bömer *ad* Ovid, *Fast.* 4.858.

thrown under our feet and trampled down'). This victory raised the initiated to heaven.<sup>9</sup>

It can hardly be a coincidence that in the introduction to the fifth book this initial deed (*qui princeps vitae rationem invenit*, 'who first discovered the principle of life', 9)<sup>10</sup> is also celebrated as an achievement of considerable importance. Epicurus appears to be a god because of it (this is emphasized three times, 8, 19, 51),<sup>11</sup> and his achievement transcends those of Ceres, Bacchus, and especially Heracles.<sup>12</sup> Finally, the difference is summarized in an antithesis which must have sounded shocking to Roman ears: Epicurus did not complete his splendid task *armis* ('with weapons'), but *dictis* ('with words').<sup>13</sup>

If we read these two passages together (as I have suggested in the introduction to this paper that they should be)<sup>14</sup> it emerges that the eulogy of Epicurus in Book 1 must have been intended and understood as a provocation. The provocation lies not only in the harsh rejection of traditional *religio*, but also in the presumption of presenting Epicurus' achievement and glory by means of the terminology of the deeds and praises of the Roman *imperator*. That the lines were intended to be provocative seems even more likely if we consider that Lucretius made the demand *μη πολιτεύεσθαι* (to abstain from political participation) more forcefully than Epicurus himself had done. The harsh antithesis of *arma/dicta* ('arms'/ 'words') in the introduction to Book 5 must also have had a similarly provocative effect. At this point I should mention in advance that the literary context of the hymn in Book 1, which will be re-examined here, suggests that it stands in rivalry with well-known Alexander encomia.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Cf. e.g. Epicur. *Ep. Men.* 135 Us. E. Bignone, *L'Aristotele perduto e la formazione filosofica di Epicuro* (Florence, 1936), i.134 f., recognized the connection with Aristotle (fr. 61 Rose = 10c Ross); cf. also M. Pohlenz, *GGA* 198 (1936), 519; W. Schmid, *Gnomon* 20 (1944), 19; *RhM* 94 (1951), 127 ff.; id., *RAC* v.695, 747; cf. also E. Norden, *Agnostos Theos* (Leipzig, 1913), 99 ff.; O. Tescari, *Lucretiana* (Turin, 1935), 14 n. 3, who assembles references. For the use of metaphor cf. also D. West, *The Imagery and Poetry of Lucretius* (Edinburgh, 1969), 58–61.

<sup>10</sup> For Epicurus as an inventor, see the context in K. Thraede, *RAC* v.1224 f.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. n. 9 above. It is important that Virgil already incorporated this claim in the *Eclogues*, and also used it indirectly in the proem to *Georgics* 3.

<sup>12</sup> See below, p. 120–1.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. 5.112 f.; 6.24 f.

<sup>14</sup> See especially the works cited in n. 1 above.

<sup>15</sup> Since completing this article, I now read in W. Heilmann, *WS* 82 (1969), 56 n. 28, that the 'image of the unstoppable conquerer' suggests Alexander the Great.

Unlike the Romans, the Greeks regularly made heroes of great thinkers as well as rulers. Among the philosophers,<sup>16</sup> this is especially true of Pythagoras,<sup>17</sup> Plato,<sup>18</sup> and Epicurus.<sup>19</sup> The sort of eulogy of Epicurus which we find in Lucretius might very well have existed in ancient Greece. It has been observed more than once before<sup>20</sup> that the ideas and language of the mysteries had an influence here.

W. Schmid's<sup>21</sup> careful documentation and critical investigation of the passages that have so far been employed to explain the hymn to Epicurus in Book 1 make it unnecessary for me to run through them again. However, in the present context, attention should be drawn to two particular passages, because they may be considered the origin of the development of hymns to Epicurus. The first of these is Metrodorus fr. 37 Koerte = SV 10: μέμνησο ὅτι θνητὸς ὢν τῇ φύσει καὶ λαβὼν χρόνον ὠρισμένον ἀνέβης τοῖς περὶ φύσεως διαλογισμοῖς ἐπὶ τὴν ἀπειρίαν καὶ τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ κατεῖδες τὰ τ' ἐόντα τὰ τ' ἐσσόμενα πρό τ' ἐόντα ('remember that although you are mortal by nature and a limited time is allotted to you, you have ascended, in our discussions of nature, to the infinite and the eternal, and you have come to know "what is, and what will be, and what was before" [Hom. *Il.* 1.70]).<sup>22</sup>

<sup>16</sup> See esp. W. A. Heidel, 'Die Bekehrung im klassischen Altertum mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des Lucretius', *Zeitschr. Relig. Psych.* 3 (1910), 377–402, esp. 394 ff.; B. Gladigow, 'Zum Makarismos des Weisen', *Hermes* 95 (1967), 404–33.

<sup>17</sup> See W. Burkert, *Weisheit und Wissenschaft* (Nürnberg, 1962), 112–42; id., *Phronesis* 14 (1969), 22 ff.; cf. esp. Aristotle frs. 178, 191 Rose; Ovid, *Met.* 15 belongs in this context.

<sup>18</sup> He claims that the adjective *θεῖος* ('divine') is especially appropriate for the philosopher; see e.g. *Sophist* 216b; *Symp.* 209b; *Tim.* 53b; see L. Bieler, *Θεῖος ἀνῆρ* (Vienna, 1935), i.9 ff.; ii.82 ff.; F. Taeger, *Charisma* I (Stuttgart, 1957), 155 f.

<sup>19</sup> Unhelpful: Taeger, op. cit. (n. 18), i.293; ii.158 f.; important: Heidel, op. cit. (n. 16), 395 ff.; and W. Schmid, *RhM* 94 (1951), 127 ff., 150 ff.; id., *RAC* v.746 f.

<sup>20</sup> Apart from Heidel, see K. Kerényi, *Arch. Rel. Wiss.* 29 (1930), 392–5 (referring to O. Weinreich, *Gebet und Wunder* (Stuttgart, 1929), 363 ff., 438 ff. = *Religionsgeschichtliche Studien* (Darmstadt, 1968), 201 ff., 276 ff.); J. Kroll, *Gott und Hölle* (Leipzig, 1932), 506–11; O. Regenbogen, *Lukrez* (Leipzig/Berlin, 1932), 42 f.; and, with more material, W. Schmid, *RAC* v.751 ff. See also W. Burkert, *Phronesis* 14 (1969), 5; A. J. Festugière, *Epicure et ses dieux* (Paris, 1948), 57.

<sup>21</sup> Op. cit. (n. 20).

<sup>22</sup> Quoted by Clem. Alex. *Strom.* 5.138 (see A. Koerte, *Metrodori Epicurei fragmenta*, Jb. Klass. Phil., Suppl. 18 (1890), 557), although with Platonic-Christian alterations of the relevant Epicurean component: ἀναβάς τῇ ψυχῇ ἕως ἐπὶ τὸν αἰῶνα ('having ascended to eternity in the spirit').

In this passage we find two crucial elements of the eulogy of Epicurus in Lucretius 1.62–79 already present: the ascent by means of the scientific understanding of the *res naturae* ('the natural world') and the journey through the *omne immensum* ('immeasurable universe'). If this passage is read in conjunction with Epicurus' *Letter to Herodotus*,<sup>23</sup> and if it is borne in mind that Epicurus' friend and student Metrodorus<sup>24</sup> died before him, it seems obvious that the foundations for a hymn to Epicurus with anti-Academic tendencies<sup>25</sup> were already laid during Epicurus' lifetime. An attack on the Academy is suggested by certain formulations of Plato<sup>26</sup> and the Academic tradition.<sup>27</sup> At *Phaedrus* 247c, it is said of souls: αἱ δὲ θεωροῦσι τὰ ἔξω τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ('they see what is beyond the heavens'); and, at 248a: ... εἰς τὸν ἔξω τόπον ('into the place beyond'); or, again of the soul, at 249c: ἀνακύψασα εἰς τὸ ὄν ὄντως ('looking up to that which really exists'). Philo, *Gig.* 61, writes of those who have attained perfection: τὸ δὲ αἰσθητὸν πᾶν ὑπερκύψαντες εἰς τὸν νοητὸν κόσμον μετανέστησαν ('they have passed beyond the perceptible world and ascended to the realm of the intelligible').<sup>28</sup> Ps.-Apuleius writes of philosophy helping humans (*De Mundo*, intr.):<sup>29</sup> *homines... philosophiam ducem nacti eiusque inventis imbuti animo peregrinari ausi sunt*

<sup>23</sup> 78–82; see *KD* 1 and numerous parallels in Lucretius (see e.g. 1.50–61, 146–8), esp. 1.62–79.

<sup>24</sup> See also *Metr. fr.* 38 Koerte, and on this Schmid, *op. cit.* (n. 20), 753.

<sup>25</sup> On this see G. Arrighetti, *Epicuro: Opere* (Turin, 1960), 476 f. (with bibliography). We may assume that the quotation from Homer has the object of transferring not only the prophetic talents of Calchas, but also those attributed by Hesiod to the Muses and through them to the poet (*Theog.* 32, 38), on to Epicurus. Virgil, in the proem to *Geo.* 3, claims them again for the poet.

<sup>26</sup> W. Burkert, *Phronesis* 14 (1969), 1 ff. shows that in relation to the idea of ascension, the proem of Parmenides can be ruled out. That does not necessarily mean that the whole concept of the knowledge of the philosopher who has passed the gates of the world (see also *Eur. fr.* 903 *N*<sup>2</sup>; on this *Plut. Mor.* 786d) and experienced a revelation has nothing to do with this. Of course, Epicurus is not led by the gods. He acts of his own accord and overcomes the wrong idea of *religio* though his insight into the *species naturae et deorum* ('character of nature and the gods').

<sup>27</sup> See above n. 22 on Clement of Alexandria, who projected the Epicurean formula back on to the Platonic sphere.

<sup>28</sup> Similarly, of the liberation of the soul from the body, Plotin. 4.8.6.37; Porph. *Marc.* 6; also *Petr. Apoc.* 31 f. = Dieterich, *Nekyia* 4, of the land of the blessed: χῶρον ἔκτος τούτου τοῦ κόσμου ('a place outside this world'). In a broader sense, we should also think of the countless examples of the ascension of the soul to god.

<sup>29</sup> See Ps.-Arist. *De Mundo* intr. as source.



*per caeli plagas his itineribus* . . . ('men took philosophy as their leader and, their minds imbued with her discoveries, dared to wander through the heavens on those paths . . .'). The wording is reminiscent of Lucretius (1.62 ff.).

The much-discussed<sup>30</sup> example of the bishop Dionysius of Alexandria also comes to mind in this context: deriding Epicurus, he writes: ἢ τοῦ κόσμου προκύψας Ἐπίκουρος καὶ τὸν οὐράνιον ὑπερβὰς περίβολον ἢ διὰ τινων κρυφίων ἄς μόνος οἶδεν ἐξελθὼν πυλῶν οὐς ἐν τῷ κενῷ κατέειδε θεοὺς ('Epicurus either peeped out of the cosmos and crossed the boundary of the heavens, or departed through some secret gates known only to him and beheld the gods in the void').<sup>31</sup> There is an obvious relation between the highlighted phrases and the fragment of Metrodorus, and especially the Platonic-Academic descriptions of the ascent of the soul. The image of Epicurus passing through the gates (of the world) is new. It turns up again in *portarum claustra* ('the bolts of the gates'), and in *extra processit . . . moenia mundi* ('he progressed beyond the walls of the world', *Lucr.* 1.71–3). It follows that this element, too, was already contained in the very early hymns to Epicurus. It seems to follow easily from Epicurus' teachings about the *metakosmia* (spaces between worlds). Compare, for instance, Hippolytus, *Philos.* 22.3: καθήσθαι γὰρ τὸν θεὸν ἐν τοῖς μετακοσμίοις . . . ἔξω γάρ τι τοῦ κόσμου οἰκητήριον τοῦ θεοῦ ἔθετο εἶναι λεγόμενον τὰ μετακόσμια ('for [he says that] god dwells in the *metakosmia* . . . for he posited the existence of a dwelling place for god somewhere outside the cosmos, called the *metakosmia*').<sup>32</sup> The Platonist Atticus, who ironically<sup>33</sup> apostrophizes Epicurus as περιττὸς οὗτος τῆς φύσεως εὐρετῆς καὶ τῶν θείων πραγμάτων ἐπιγνώμων ἀκριβής ('this incomparable discoverer of nature and astute observer

<sup>30</sup> Heidel, *op. cit.* (n. 16), 397; Regenbogen, *op. cit.* (n. 20), 42 f.; Schmid, *op. cit.* (n. 20), 751.

<sup>31</sup> Epicur. fr. 364 Us. = Eus. *Praep. Evang.* 14.27.9 (2.336.15 ff. Mras); see also H. J. Mette, *A&A* 16 (1970), 4.

<sup>32</sup> Epicur. fr. 359 Us.

<sup>33</sup> In tone and context he is reminiscent of Bishop Dionysius. The praise of Epicurus as the one who discovered true understanding of nature must have been especially important in hymns for Epicurus. This alone explains the sharp criticism that we find in Cic. *Tusc.* 1.48: *qui naturae cognitionem admirantur eiusque inventori et principi* [see *Lucr.* 1.66 f.; 3.9] *gratias exultantes agunt eumque venerantur ut deum* ('those who admire the study of nature and joyfully give thanks to its inventor and initiator, venerating him as a god').

of divine affairs'),<sup>34</sup> is quoted in similar terms by Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.* 15.5.11: *τοὺς θεοὺς... εἰς ἀλλοδαπὴν ἀπόκτισε καὶ ἔξω πον τοῦ κόσμου καθίδρυσε* ('he sent the gods away and settled them somewhere outside the cosmos').<sup>35</sup> Seneca writes very impressively: *ne cuiquam metuendus esset, proiecisti illum [sc. deum] extra mundum; hunc igitur intersaeptum ingenti quidem et inexplicabili muro divisumque a contactu et a conspectu mortalium non habes quare verearis* ('... so that he (god) should not have to be feared by anyone, you have thrown him out of the world; therefore, you have no reason to fear this god who is fenced in by a huge and unending wall, and separated from the touch and sight of mortals').<sup>36</sup>

The idea which Dionysius conveys in *ἐξελθὼν πυλῶν* ('departing through gates'), and Lucretius in *portarum claustra* ('the bolts of the gates [of nature]') and *extra moenia mundi processit* ('he progressed beyond the walls of the world'), seems to follow naturally. The concept of the *moenia mundi* ('walls of the world') was an established part<sup>37</sup> of philosophical<sup>38</sup> and poetic tradition. A phrase like *extra moenia mundi processit* might therefore already have been used in the early beginnings of the eulogy of Epicurus. Of course, this does not mean that we can be sure about 'all the features reminiscent of a military action, which have left such a strong stamp on the poet's [Lucretius'] description'.<sup>39</sup> It is undoubtedly true that the Lucretian combination of *ascensus* and the discovery of the truth by 'defeat of the evil foe *religio*' is a concept which presupposes 'the influence of late Hellenistic mystery cult, and of a mytheme mediated by it'.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 15.5.12.      <sup>35</sup> Epicur. fr. 362 Us.

<sup>36</sup> *Ben.* 4.19.1 f.; see also 7.31.3 *alius illos extra mundum suum proicit* ('one thrusts them out of the world') = Epicur. fr. 364 Us. See further Augustine, *Ep.* 118.28, *deos quos... non in aliquo mundo sed extra mundos atque inter mundos constituit* ('the gods... whom he has located not in any world but outside and between the worlds') = Epicur. fr. 352 Us.

<sup>37</sup> See W. Burkert, *Phronesis* 14 (1969), 10, 14 f.

<sup>38</sup> See e.g. Heinze, *ad Lucr.* 3.16.

<sup>39</sup> Schmid, *op. cit.* (n. 20), 751.

<sup>40</sup> Schmid, *op. cit.* (n. 20), 751 f., with reference to the works by Kroll and Kerényi cited in n. 20 above. Such concepts go even further back, to door miracles and the initiations of the spirits of heroes in Greece. See Weinreich, *op. cit.* (n. 20); W. Burkert, *Phronesis* 14 (1969), 26 ff. Compare also for *effringere portarum claustra* ('to break the bolts of the gates', *Lucr.* 1.70) *Verg. Aen.* 8.225 ff., 244; *Sen. HF* 47 *effregit ecce limen inferni Iovis* ('see, he has broken down the door of the infernal Jupiter!'); *Tr.* 723 *qui perfracto limine Ditis caecum retro patefecit iter* ('who opened a way back through the

However, if we consider the connection described above, it seems very likely that the first version of the eulogy for Epicurus already contained the idea of the conqueror, who transgresses the limits of the world and takes up the fight against the arch-enemy *religio*. Furthermore, at the time of Epicurus the comparison with another conqueror, Alexander, would already have seemed obvious.

Alexander's goal of world domination, apparent in his conquests and the campaigns he planned<sup>41</sup> and in his ideological claims,<sup>42</sup> was even in his lifetime expressed in hyperbolic encomia. These claimed that he had subdued the *oikumenē*, from East to West, as far as the path of the sun reaches.<sup>43</sup> Exaggeration led to the suggestion that he went even beyond this. His contemporary Aeschines offers a first example. In belittling Demosthenes' achievements, he compared them unfavourably with the successes of Alexander, which he praised in the following hyperbolic words: ὁ δὲ Ἀλέξανδρος ἔξω τῆς ἄρκτου καὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης ὀλίγου δεῖν πάσης μεθειστήκει ('Alexander had departed for lands that lie beyond the Great Bear, and almost beyond the boundaries of the inhabited world', *Adv. Ctes.* 165). And this was written at a time when Alexander had not even reached the peak of his powers.

Some historians' remarks, which we may assume to be the scarce remnants of an extremely rich tradition, support this idea: Nearchus of Crete, Alexander's historian and admiral, writes of Alexander's attempt to reach the Persian Gulf and the difficulties he encountered but overcame: ἀλλὰ ἐκνικῆσαι γὰρ αὐτῷ τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν τοῦ καινοῦ

darkness, breaking down the door of Dis'), always said of Heracles. Lucr. 1.68 (*nec fulmina*) surely refers to the Giants as striving for heaven; only compare Lucr. 5.117 ff. and Ov. *Fast.* 1.305 ff. Epicurus is here pictured as the new 'giant', who fights against Zeus and breaks down the doors to his realm. What the giants did not manage with their *vis corporis* ('physical force'), Epicurus achieves with his *vivida vis animi* ('lively force of mind'); cf. Hor. *C.* 3.4 and Manil. 1.97–104). See also n. 55 below.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. e.g. W. W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great* (Cambridge, 1948), ii.378 ff.; R. Andreotti, 'Die Weltmonarchie Alexanders des Großen in Überlieferung und geschichtlicher Wirklichkeit', *Saeculum* 8 (1957), 120–66.

<sup>42</sup> See E. Norden, 'Ein Panegyricus auf Augustus in Vergils Aeneis', *RhM* 54 (1899), 468–70; H. Berve, *Das Alexanderreich auf prosopographischer Grundlage* (Munich, 1926), i.93 ff.; E. Mederer, *Die Alexanderlegenden bei den ältesten Alexanderhistorikern* (Stuttgart, 1936), 94–107; Taeger, op. cit. (n. 18), i.185 ff.

<sup>43</sup> Apart from the literature cited in n. 42 above, see also F. Pfister, *Der Reliquienkult im Altertum* (RVV 5, Gießen, 1909), i.266 ff.; *ZNTW* 14 (1913), 216–21.

τι αἰεὶ καὶ ἄτοπον ἐργάζεσθαι ('for the desire always to achieve something new and remarkable had conquered him').<sup>44</sup> This aspect is most clearly explored by Arrian: οὐτε μικρόν τι καὶ φαῦλον ἐπινοεῖν Ἀλέξανδρον οὐτε μείναι ἂν ἀτρεμοῦντα ἐπ' οὐδενὶ τῶν ἤδη κεκτημένων ('... that Alexander was neither planning some small or unworthy task, nor would he be satisfied with the things he had already achieved'), not even if he had added Europe to Asia, and the British Isles to Europe, ἀλλὰ ἔτι ἂν ἐπέκεινα ζητεῖν τι τῶν ἠγνοημένων, εἰ καὶ μὴ ἄλλω τῷ ἀλλὰ αὐτόν γε αὐτῷ ἐρίζοντα ('but that he would still have searched further for something yet unknown, and if not competing with someone else, then competing with himself', 7.1.4). We might add Curtius Rufus: *si humanum genus omne superaveris, cum silvis et nivibus et fluminibus ferisque bestiis gesturus es bellum* ('should you overcome the whole human race, you are ready to wage war on forests and snowstorms, rivers and wild beasts', 7.8.13),<sup>45</sup> Sen. NQ 5.18.10 *Alexander... quaeretque quid sit ultra magnum mare et indignabitur esse aliquid ultimum sibi* ('Alexander will search for what is on the other side of the great sea, and he will be angry that there are things beyond even him'), and Teles' note (quoted in Stobaeus) on the immoderateness of man, who is not content with the fulfilment of his wishes, but also wants to be king, then later, like Alexander, immortal, and finally Zeus himself (5.33.31, p. 816.11 Hense).<sup>46</sup>

The following passages are later, but we may assume that such phrases were already in use at the time of Epicurus. This follows from the passages of Aeschines, Nearchus, and Arrian quoted above, and from the fact that the basis of these texts is not mere rivalry, but also the tendency to present Alexander as surpassing the heroes.

<sup>44</sup> *FGrH* 133 F 1.20.2 Jacoby, with II B, p. 452; further Arr. *Ind.* 20.2; on the *πόθος* (desire) which drove him to do this, as an ideological phenomenon, see V. Ehrenberg, *Alexander and the Greeks* (Oxford, 1938), 52 ff.; H. U. Instinsky, in *Beiträge zur geistigen Überlieferung* (Godesberg, 1947), 186–206; also R. Andreotti, *Historia* 1 (1940), 599; id., *Saeculum* 8 (1957), 120 f.; cf. already Mederer, op. cit. (n. 42), 96 n. 7; for the *καινόν* (novelty) that Alexander desires, see Instinsky, op. cit., 195 f. We can identify the same topos in Lucretius' celebration of Epicurus' pioneering work (1.66 f., 70). Alexander's *ἐπιθυμία* (desire) is then replaced by the *logos* of Epicurus.

<sup>45</sup> See further R. Kohl, *De scholasticarum declamationum argumentis ex historia petitis* (Diss. Münster, 1915), 86.

<sup>46</sup> See Tarn, op. cit. (n. 41), ii. 364; and R. Merkelbach, *Die Quellen des griechischen Alexanderromans* (Munich, 1954), 48.

In this category belong a number of passages<sup>47</sup> from Seneca:<sup>48</sup> *Ben. 7.2.5 f. illius [sc. Alexandri] ne ea quidem erant, quae tenebat aut vicerat, cum... et bella in ignoto<sup>49</sup> mari quaereret.<sup>50</sup> non satis adparabat inopem esse, qui extra naturae terminos arma proferret, qui se in profundum inexploratum et immensum aviditate caeca prorsus inmitteret... tantum illi deest, quantum cupit.* ('He [Alexander] did not even own the countries which he held and had subdued... while he was also looking for wars in unknown seas. Was it not clear enough that he was a weak man, who led his army beyond the bounds of nature, and who, from blind greed, plunged headlong into an unexplored and immeasurable sea? He lacks as much as he desires'). *Ep. 94* (to which we will come back because of its relation to Lucretius and the *Georgics*) alludes to Alexander from 57 onwards. In a discussion of the principle *secundum naturam vivere* ('living according to nature') in 62 f., we find *agebat infelicem Alexandrum furor aliena vastandi, et ad ignota mittebat* ('a mania for laying waste to foreign lands drove unhappy Alexander on, and sent him towards the unknown'). After enumerating his conquests, Seneca writes: *it tamen ultra oceanum<sup>51</sup> solemque, indignatur ab Herculis Liberique vestigiis victoriam flectere, ipsi naturae vim parat* ('nevertheless he goes beyond ocean and sun, he scorns to turn away his victorious onslaught from the footsteps of Hercules and Liber, and does violence even to

<sup>47</sup> See e.g. Sen. *Suas.* 1, esp. 2 *ultra Liberi patris trophaea constitimus* ('we have halted beyond the trophies set up by Father Liber'). This *Suasoria* (*Deliberat Alexander, an Oceanum naviget*, 'Alexander deliberates whether to set sail on the Ocean') shows how this aspect of Alexander's image was preserved in the schools of rhetoric. Generally instructive is the scheme of the ruler encomium in Menander *Rhet.* 3.368 ff. Spengel, and also the fact that Alexander was a popular topic for school rhetoric (Cic. *De Orat.* 2.341; *Rhet. Her.* 4.31; Cic. *Fin.* 2.116); for details see already Norden, *op. cit.* (n. 42), 467 ff.

<sup>48</sup> In addition, note the extensive discussion of all the passages of Seneca dealing with Alexander in V. Bogun, *Die außerrömische Geschichte in den Werken Senecas* (Diss. Köln, 1968), 162 ff.

<sup>49</sup> For this aspect, see below.

<sup>50</sup> The highlighted phrases should in all cases remind us of Lucretius 1.62–79.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. *Ep.* 91.17 *et trans oceanum cogitationes suas mittens* ('sending his thoughts across the ocean'); *NQ* 6.23.3; 5.18.10 *sic Alexander ulterior Bactris et Indis volet quaeretque quid sit ultra magnum mare et indignabitur esse aliquid ultimum sibi* ('thus Alexander will desire to go beyond the Bactrians and Indians, he will search for what is on the other side of the great sea and be angry that there are things beyond even him'); so already *Rhet. Her.* 4.22.31.

nature'). Interestingly, Seneca follows this up with *Alexandri alteri* ('second Alexanders'), namely Pompey and Caesar.<sup>52</sup> In *Ep.* 119.7 he writes, in a similar context: *post Dareum et Indos pauper est Alexander. mentior? quaerit quod suum faciat, scrutatur maria ignota, in oceanum classes novas mittit et ipsa, ut ita dicam, mundi claustra perrumpit* ('After Dareus and the Indians, Alexander is poor. Do I lie? He searches for something he can make his own, investigates unknown seas, sends new fleets on to the ocean and even, in a manner of speaking, breaks the very bolts of the earth'). The similarity with the Lucretian *effringere portarum claustra* ('to break the bolts of the gates', 1.70 f.)<sup>53</sup> is startling. A passage about Alexander from the *Excerpta Graeca Barbari* should also be mentioned: πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ὑπέζευξεν ἀπὸ τῶν Κασπιακῶν πυλῶν τῶν ἐν ἀνατολῇ μέχρι τῶν ἐσχάτων ὄρων Ἡρακλείων τῶν κειμένων ἐν τοῖς ἐσχάτοις δύσεως μέρεσι κατέναντι Γαρίρων ('he brought under his yoke all the nations from the Caspian gates in the East to the far-off Pillars of Heracles which lie in the most distant regions of the West, opposite the Gariroi').<sup>54</sup> Here it becomes clear that it must have seemed natural to speak of breaking open gates in encomia for Alexander, as soon as one wanted to go beyond the usual symbol of his realm, the borders *in oriente et occidente* ('in East and West'). This assumption is confirmed by a very similar passage in Jerome about the Huns bursting out *ab ultima Maeotide . . . ubi Caucasi rupibus feras gentes Alexandri claustra cohibent* ('from furthest Maeotis . . . where Alexander's bolts confine fierce tribes behind the rocky Caucasus', *Ep.* 77.8). Even Jerome is still using Alexander to signify the end of the *orbis* as a bulwark against the barbarians—this shows how widely used such concepts must have been in antiquity.

In *Ben.* 1.13.1 ff., Alexander's lack of moderation is criticized. After his victory over the East he no longer recognized any limits: *cum victor Orientis animos supra humana tolleret . . . et homo gloriae deditus, cuius nec naturam nec modum noverat, Herculis Liberique vestigia sequens ac ne ibi quidem resistens, ubi illa defecerant . . . tamquam caelum, quod mente vanissima complectebatur, teneret, quia Herculi aequabatur*

<sup>52</sup> For their position in the declamations see Kohl, *op. cit.* (n. 45), 101–3.

<sup>53</sup> See n. 40 above.

<sup>54</sup> After the edition by Frick, *Chronica Minora* i.271, see Pfister, *ZNTW* 14 (1913), 217; I was unable to access this edition.

(‘when, after his victories over the East, he raised his spirits above the human condition . . . and, given over as he was to glory, of which he understood neither the nature nor the limit, he followed in the footsteps of Hercules and of Bacchus and did not stop even there, where they failed [and he aspired to surpass these models and rivals] . . . just as if he now held the heavens, to which in his supreme vanity he aspired because he was treated as a rival to Hercules’).

The beginning of the third poem of Virgil’s *Catalepton* is similar:

aspice quem valido subnixum gloria regno  
*altius et caeli sedibus* extulerat.<sup>55</sup>

Look at him, relying on his strong dominion, whose fame lifted him higher even than the dwellings of heaven.

The connection (discovered by Norden)<sup>56</sup> between the praise of Augustus in *Aeneid* 6 and Alexander encomia is well known. Anchises prophesies (6.793–7):

Augustus Caesar divi genus, aurea condet  
saecula qui rursus Latio regnata per arva  
Saturno quondam, super et Garamantas et Indos  
proferet imperium, iacet *extra sidera tellus*,  
*extra anni solisque vias*, ubi caelifer Atlas  
axem umero torquet stellis ardentibus aptum.

Augustus Caesar, son of a god, who will found a new golden age in Latium through the lands once ruled by Saturn and extend the empire even to the Garamantes and Indians, to a land that lies outside the stars, outside the paths of the year and the sun, where heaven-bearing Atlas turns on his shoulder the axis studded with flaming stars.

<sup>55</sup> The poem is certainly addressing an *Alexander alter* (the different alternatives are discussed by Westendorp-Boerma i.43–65). In my view (see also P. Treves, *Il mito di Alessandro e la Roma di Augusto* (Milan, 1953), 19, 33f.), Pompey is the most likely alternative. With the epigram, compare esp. Sen. *Ad Marc.* 20.4; Plut. *Pomp.* 46.1; and above all Ambros. *Ep.* 18.35. In antiquity, such hyperbolic formulae of praise originated with Pindar (e.g. *Isthm.* 3.29 ff.; 6.21 ff.; *Nem.* 3.20 ff.; *Ol.* 3.43–5), who lets the glory of his victors reach the ends of the earth as marked by Heracles. He adds, however, that it would be sacrilege to venture beyond them; for the Pillars of Heracles as boundary and limit in Pindar, see M. Bernhard, *Pindars Denken in Bildern* (Pfullingen, 1963), 15, 32, 36, 77 n. 51; see further Hdt. 7.8.5; on the oriental background see E. Fraenkel, *Horace* (Oxford, 1957), 451; see also n. 75 below.

<sup>56</sup> Norden, op. cit. (n. 42).

Anchises adds that in this, Augustus would even surpass Hercules and Liber. Of Liber, he says:

nec qui pampineis victor iuga flectit habenis,  
Liber agens *celso Nysae de vertice tigris*.

Nor Liber, who in triumph turns the yoke with reins wound in vine-shoots, driving his tigers down from the high peak of Nysa.

This eulogy of Augustus<sup>57</sup> in many respects closely resembles<sup>58</sup> the Lucretian hymn to Epicurus in Book 1.

In this context belong also the very interesting miracle stories from the Alexander Romance: Alexander's ascent to heaven, descent into the sea and his journey to the Amazons *beyond* the Pillars of Heracles.<sup>59</sup> R. Merkelbach<sup>60</sup> has good reasons for assuming that these stories originated soon after Alexander's death. They support the above texts, which, conversely, explain the miracle stories and their origin. This makes Merkelbach's assumptions about their date very convincing.

We must not forget passages in Curtius Rufus, Seneca the Elder, the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, and Quintilian. Their similarity is striking. Curtius Rufus<sup>61</sup> recounts how the frightened army mutinied when Alexander attempted to venture beyond even the Hyphasis: *indomitis gentibus se obiectos, ut sanguine suo aperirent ei Oceanum. trahi extra*

<sup>57</sup> Which does not, however, seek to trump Alexander in the use of the phrase *extra sidera*... ('outside the stars'), as Norden argues, *op. cit.* (n. 42), 460 f. (We saw earlier how commonly just this particular element was used in Alexander encomia. See also the passage from Sen. *Ben.* 1.13.3 quoted above, which claims that Alexander even desired to reach places untouched by Liber and Hercules.) Rather, Augustus surpasses Alexander, in Virgil's eyes, in being not just a conqueror, but also the bringer of peace and the return of the *aetas Saturnia*; see also n. 1 above.

<sup>58</sup> See G. Gernentz, *Laudes Romae* (Diss. Rostock, 1918), 123 f. for similar passages in post-Augustan literature. See also Lucan 10.36 ff.

<sup>59</sup> For these passages see also H. J. Mette, *Deutsche Vierteljahresschr. f. Literaturwiss. u. Geistesgesch.* 25 (1951), 31 f.

<sup>60</sup> *Die Quellen des griechischen Alexanderromans*, *Zetemata* 9 (Munich, 1954), 40–9. He might have referred to Sen. *Suas.* 1 in connection with Ps.-Call. 3.17.

<sup>61</sup> 9.4.17 ff. Cf. also Curt. Ruf. 4.8.3 f. *cupido...incesserat non interiora modo Aegypti, sed etiam Aethiopiam* [see Norden, *op. cit.* (n. 42), 470 ff.] *invisere: Memnonis Tithonique celebrata regia cognoscendae vetustatis avidum trahebat paene extra terminos solis* ('he was overcome by the desire to see not only the Egyptian interior, but even Ethiopia; the famed palace of Memnon and Tithonus was drawing him on, in his eagerness to visit ancient sites, almost beyond the path of the sun'); and esp. 9.6.20 (quoted in the main text below).



*sidera et solem cogique adire, quae mortalium oculis natura subduxerit*<sup>62</sup> ... *caliginem ac tenebras et perpetuam noctem profundo incubantem mari, repletum immanium beluarum gregibus fretum, immobiles undas, in quibus emoriens natura defecerit* ('hurled against unconquered tribes, so that with their blood they might open for him a way to the ocean, they were being dragged beyond the stars and sun and compelled to approach places which nature had hidden away from the eyes of men ... darkness and shadows and the everlasting night pressing on the deep sea, waters filled with swarms of monstrous beasts, and immobile waves, over which nature failed and had no power').<sup>63</sup> Alexander tried to disperse these worries, and finally demanded: *ne inviderent sibi laudem, quam peteret. Herculis et Liberi Patris terminos transituros illos* ... ('that they not begrudge him the praise he sought; they were about to cross the boundaries set by Hercules and Father Liber').<sup>64</sup>

It can be shown that Curtius is drawing here on older material, which was communicated through rhetoric. The following passages seem to suggest this: in the first *Suasoria* of Seneca the Elder, '*Deliberat Alexander, an Oceanum naviget*' ('Alexander deliberates whether to set sail on the Ocean'), we find many very similar expressions. In the—unfortunately corrupt—introduction<sup>65</sup> he refers to some people's claim that: *ultraque Oceanum rursus alia litora, alium nasci orbem, nec usquam rerum naturam desinere, sed semper inde, ubi desisse videatur, novam exsurgere* ('beyond the Ocean yet other shores and

<sup>62</sup> Cf. 9.6.22 (Alexander of himself) *aperiam cunctis gentibus terras* [cf. 9.6.20], *quas natura longe submoverat* ('I shall open up for all peoples the lands which nature has placed far off').

<sup>63</sup> Cf. the descent into the sea in the Alexander Romance.

<sup>64</sup> For comparison with Hercules and Liber see also 3.10.5, 12.32; 8.10.1–18.

<sup>65</sup> See also the passages related to Curtius Rufus: *satis sit hactenus Alexandro vicisse, qua mundo lucere soli satis est. intra has terras caelum Hercules meruit* ('Let it be enough for Alexander to have conquered the lands over which it enough for the sun to shine. Within these lands, Hercules earned deification.');

*stat immotum mare quasi deficientis in suo fine naturae pigra moles; novae ac terribiles figurae magna etiam oceano portenta, ... circumfusa lux alta caligine et interceptus tenebris dies, ipsum vero grave et defixum mare et aut nulla aut ignota sidera. haec est, Alexander, rerum natura: post omnia Oceanus, post Oceanum nihil* ('the sea stands still in a sluggish mass, as though nature were failing at her furthest limit; there are new and dreadful forms, monsters huge even for the ocean ... the daylight is overwhelmed in thick blackness and cut off by the dark; indeed the very seas are heavy and still, the stars either absent or unknown. This, Alexander, is the nature of the world: beyond all, the Ocean, beyond the Ocean, nothing.').

another world begin; nor is there any end to nature, but it always rises anew from the point where it seems to have come to an end'). Many passages show that this question was discussed especially in relation to Alexander, and deployed in rhetorical declamation. Curtius Rufus has Alexander say: *iamque haud procul absum fine mundi, quem egressus aliam naturam, alium orbem aperire mihi statui... aperiam cunctis gentibus terras, quas natura longe submoverat* ('and now I am not far from the end of the earth; I am resolved to cross it and open a way for myself to another nature, another world... I shall open up for all peoples the lands which nature has placed far off', 9.6.20, 22). Quintilian alludes to the typical topic of declamation, *an Alexander terras ultra Oceanum sit inventurus* ('whether Alexander would find land on the other side of the Ocean', 3.8.16); a similar topic can be glimpsed in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium: trans Oceanum Macedonum transvolassent sarisae* ('the spears of the Macedonians would have flown across the Ocean', 4.22.31).<sup>66</sup>

This one aspect alone, when compared to Epicurean physics<sup>67</sup> and the hymn-like verses in Lucretius (1.70 ff.), clearly demonstrates the close relation between Alexander encomia and eulogies for Epicurus. We should consider in addition all the other passages mentioned above (which are only the scanty remains of a much richer tradition), Alexander's great popularity in rhetorical instruction<sup>68</sup> and the fact that, in the first century BC especially, imitation of Alexander was extremely

<sup>66</sup> Kohl, op. cit. (n. 45), 85 f. Cf. also Albinovanus Pedo in Sen. *Suas.* 1.15 = Morel, *FPL* p. 115 ff., esp. verses 16–23 *quo ferimur? fugit ipse dies orbemque relictum | ultima perpetuis claudit natura tenebris. | anne alio positas ultra sub cardine gentes | atque alium † liberis intactum quaerimus orbem? | di revocant rerumque vetant cognoscere finem | mortales oculos. aliena quid aequora remis | et sacras violamus aquas divumque quietas | turbamus sedes?* ('Where are we being carried? Day itself flees, and the furthest limit of nature closes off the world we have left behind in everlasting darkness. Or do we seek races dwelling under another sky and a new, untouched world? The gods call us back and forbid mortal eyes to see the end of the world. Why do we violate alien seas and holy waters with our oars and disturb the peaceful dwelling places of the gods?')

<sup>67</sup> See above, pp. 105–6.

<sup>68</sup> Apart from Kohl (op. cit. (n. 45), 83–7), see also Norden, op. cit. (n. 42), 466 ff.; W. Hoffmann, *Das literarische Porträt Alexanders des Großen im griech. und röm. Altertum*, Leipzig. histor. Abh. 8 (Leipzig, 1907), 87–96; L. Pearson, *Historia* 3 (1954–5), 449 f.; K. Ziegler, *Plutarchos von Chaironeia*, 2nd edn. (Stuttgart, 1964), 87.

fashionable in Rome (Pompey, Caesar, Antony, Augustus).<sup>69</sup> Lucretius' verses (1.62–79) were surely reminiscent of Alexander encomia and were supposed to be understood as their antithesis: Epicurus had achieved more than Alexander, but with the force of his mind. In the introduction to Book 5, a similar antithesis also shapes the argument, and again we can identify elements of an encomium for Hercules. It is not by chance that of the three would-be divinities, Ceres, Liber, and in particular Hercules, who are contrasted with the real god Epicurus, Liber and especially Hercules regularly appear in Alexander encomia. This is sufficiently well known<sup>70</sup> and can also be seen from some of the passages quoted above. However, we should consider that in Lucretius' lifetime, not only Mithridates,<sup>71</sup> but also in Rome Marius<sup>72</sup> and especially Pompey<sup>73</sup> included obvious imitation of Dionysus and Heracles in their programme of Alexander imitation (and Antony<sup>74</sup> soon followed suit). It would seem that Lucretius only put special emphasis on Hercules because he could express Epicurus' achievement most clearly by contrast with the most striking example of ruler ideology (at

<sup>69</sup> See below, pp. 129–30; and cf. e.g. Cicero on Pompey (*Cat.* 3.26 *quorum alter finis vestri imperii non terrae, sed caeli regionibus terminaret*, 'one of whom extended the bounds of your empire not to the ends of the earth, but to the heavens'; 4.21 *Pompeius, cuius res gestae atque virtutes isdem quibus solis cursus regionibus ac terminis continentur*, 'Pompey, whose exploits and virtues are bounded by the same space and limits as the course of the sun'; for Cicero's later tendencies, see p. 129).

<sup>70</sup> See already Norden, op. cit. (n. 42), 470, 473; Pfister, op. cit. (n. 43), 170 ff.; Berve, op. cit. (n. 42), i.93 f.; A. D. Nock, 'Alexander and Dionysos', *JHS* 48 (1928), 21–30; E. Mederer, op. cit. (n. 42), 94 ff.; A. Piganiol, *REA* 42 (1940), 285 ff.; Taeger, op. cit. (n. 18), i.176 f., 180, 186 ff.; H. U. Instinsky, *Historia* 10 (1961), 234 f.; H. R. Breitenbach, *MH* 26 (1969), 149.

<sup>71</sup> See H. Volkmann, *Sullas Marsch auf Rom* (Munich, 1958), 32 ff.; cf. already A. Heuss, *A&A* 4 (1954), 79; typical is Cic. *Flacc.* 60 *illum* [sc. *Mithridatem*] *Euhium, Nysium, Bacchum, Liberum nominabant* ('they called him [Mithridates] Euhium, Nysius, Bacchus, Liber').

<sup>72</sup> Val. Max. 3.6.6; Plin. *NH* 33.150.

<sup>73</sup> See D. Michel, *Alexander als Vorbild für Pompeius, Caesar und Marcus Antonius: archäologische Untersuchungen* (Brussels, 1967), 37, 41, 54 f.; D. Kienast, *Gymnasium* 76 (1969), 437–9; W. Derichs, *Herakles, Vorbild des Herrschers in der Antike* (Diss. Köln, 1950), 35, 38; M. Gelzer, *Pompeius* (Munich, 1949), 134 ff.; H. P. Orange, *Apotheosis in Ancient Portraiture* (Oslo, 1947), 49 ff.; P. Treves, *Il mito di Alessandro e la Roma d'Augusto* (Milan, 1953); H. R. Breitenbach, 'Der Alexanderexkurs bei Livius', *MH* 26 (1969), 146–57.

<sup>74</sup> Michel, op. cit. (n. 73), 109–32; Kienast, op. cit. (n. 73), 441 f., 444; Derichs, op. cit. (n. 73), 37.

the same time probably taking a sideswipe at the Stoa), especially as the hyperbolic aspect of the Alexander encomium (*ultra/extra*) clearly developed from the praise of Heracles and the attempt to outdo it.<sup>75</sup>

I conclude that the Lucretian verses 1.62–79 were not only intended to act as a philosophical antithesis to the Academy and Aristotle, but also, in their strikingly similar images and expressions, to compete with the well-known Alexander encomium, and that they were understood as such. The question remains, whether this tendency is due to Lucretius, or whether it was already developed in the school of Epicurus. There are a number of arguments in favour of the latter possibility, which will now be examined.

In fourth-century Greece, there had arisen a lively literary dispute over the character and the task of the true ruler. The Cynic Antisthenes participated with his pamphlet *Cyrus*<sup>76</sup> and a work on Heracles.<sup>77</sup> In these, he drew a picture of the true Cynic and ruler, who decides in favour of the difficult path (*πόνος*)<sup>78</sup> by virtue of *phronêsis*. A model was surely the study of 'Herakles at the Crossroads' by his friend Prodicus (Xenoph. *Symp.* 4.62); it would be useful to know whether Antisthenes' work was already in the same spirit as that of Dio Chrysostom (*Or.* 1). It seems likely, because Dio also shows other parallels with Antisthenes concerning the question of the true ruler *versus* the tyrant.<sup>79</sup> At least we can be sure that both types of rulers were treated in Antisthenes' *Heracles*, and that Heracles was employed

<sup>75</sup> See n. 55 above. Since finishing this paper, I now notice that H. J. Mette, *Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift f. Literaturw. u. Geistesgesch.* 25 (1951), 37 f. already came to the same conclusion, also with reference to Pindar; as background one could compare further examples in Pfister, *ZNTW* 14 (1913), 217–19. Ultimately, at the bottom of this is also rivalry with the claims of the Persian kings; see Hdt. 7.8.1; Aeschin. 3.132. Hercules and Liber also belong to a catalogue of heroes, which was developed in Alexander's circles; see A. R. Bellinger, 'The Immortality of Alexander and Augustus', *YCS* 15 (1957), 91–100.

<sup>76</sup> D.L. 6.16–18 mentions a number of writings with similar content, which dealt with Cyrus and other rulers. See *Antisthenis fragmenta*, ed. Caizzi, pp. 93 f., 97 f.; F. Wehrli, *Gnomon* 39 (1967), 543; R. Höistad, *Cynic Hero and Cynic King* (Uppsala, 1948), 73 ff., 92 ff.

<sup>77</sup> D.L. 6.16, 18 mentions three; see *Antisthenis fragmenta*, ed. Caizzi, 94–7; Wehrli, op. cit. (n. 76), 543; also Höistad, op. cit. (n. 76), 35–7, 57 ff., 70 f.

<sup>78</sup> This can be seen clearly from Eratosthenes (see C. Robert, *Eratosthenis Catasterismorum reliquiae* (1878, repr. Berlin, 1963), p. 184).

<sup>79</sup> See K. von Fritz, *Quellenuntersuchungen zu Leben und Philosophie des Diogenes von Sinope*, *Philologus Suppl.* 18.2 (Leipzig, 1926), 78 f., with bibliography.

as model for the true ruler. From Antisthenes' speech in Xenophon's *Symposium* (4.30 ff.), we may conclude that he mentioned the superiority of the wise Heracles over the apparently powerful tyrant. The claim that virtue is a weapon that cannot be stolen from you seems to fit this context (D.L. 6.12). This is the origin of an influential antithesis, which we will deal with presently.

The portrayal of Heracles as the model ruler and philosopher had great influence not only among the Cynics (the best example is the first speech of Dio Chrysostom), but also in the Stoa and in literature dealing with the figure of the ruler.<sup>80</sup> We may therefore assume that Heracles also had his place in the *Politeia* of Diogenes of Sinope.<sup>81</sup>

As mentioned above, Alexander wanted to support and secure his claims as world conqueror through comparison and competition with the mythical models of Heracles and Dionysus.<sup>82</sup> This tendency will surely have been received enthusiastically in the (doubtless) numerous praises of the writers around Alexander. Examples are Pyrrho's poem about Alexander<sup>83</sup> and especially the tendentious works of Onesicritus,<sup>84</sup> which lavishly praise Alexander, and are characterized as encomium by Diogenes Laertius. If the writer, who was strongly influenced by the Cynics, sought to immortalize the philosopher in action (τὸν ἐν ὄπλοις φιλοσοφούντα, 'the man who philosophizes under arms'),<sup>85</sup> he must surely have tried to relate Alexander to Cynic ideals of the true ruler. He was thus bound to venture a comparison with Heracles, in line with Alexander's own propaganda, and even to make Alexander surpass him.<sup>86</sup> He had to portray the

<sup>80</sup> For bibliography, see above, n. 73.

<sup>81</sup> For this work see von Fritz, op. cit. (n. 79), 55 ff.

<sup>82</sup> Apart from the bibliography and the sources mentioned above, see generally A. Heuss, *A&A* 4 (1954), 72 f.

<sup>83</sup> The poem is mentioned in Sext. Emp., *Adv. Gram.* 282b. The facts about his connection with Alexander are collected by Berve, op. cit. (n. 42), ii.340.

<sup>84</sup> See Berve, op. cit. (n. 42), ii.287–9; H. Strasburger, *RE* xviii.460 ff., esp. 464–6; T. S. Brown, *Onesicritus*, Univ. Calif. Publ. History 39 (Berkeley/Los Angeles, 1949).

<sup>85</sup> *FGH* 134, fr. 17 Jacoby; see Plutarch, *De Alex. Fort.* 331 f.

<sup>86</sup> See W. W. Tarn, 'Alexander, Cynics and Stoics', *AJP* 60 (1939), 41–70, at 55: 'Onesicritus, the imperfect Cynic, may have tried to reconcile Alexander the king with Cynic ideas by making Alexander a Cynic philosopher.' See already Hoffmann, op. cit. (n. 68), 9 f.; Berve, op. cit. (n. 42), i.67. A similar partiality and exaggeration may be assumed in Callisthenes' πράξεις 'Αλεξάνδρου (*Exploits of Alexander*), which would then become an important model for a hyperbolic Alexander encomium. For this, see Berve, op. cit. (n. 42), ii.98 f.

'philosopher in arms', who, guided by philosophical understanding, presumably chose the difficult path for the sake of mankind, and in this even surpassed Heracles. Bearing in mind that, since Pindar,<sup>87</sup> the deeds of Heracles marked the limits of the earth, and that Aeschines already in 330 claimed that Alexander's conquests led ἐξω ἄρκτου (i.e. outside the area under the constellation of the bear),<sup>88</sup> I am convinced that if we had Onesicritus' complete works we would find parallels there for the later claims quoted above, that Alexander went even beyond the limits of the world set by Heracles.

In the philosophical tradition,<sup>89</sup> however, the ambitions of Alexander and his encomiasts were not received particularly well. The weaknesses of his character, his Persian pomp, and despotic arrogance did not recommend Alexander as the ideal ruler, but on the contrary presented him as the very image of a tyrant. The Cynics' attacks<sup>90</sup> are not surprising in the light of their hostile attitude towards state and society in general, and also because of Alexander's tyrannical rule and his attempt to surpass Heracles. These criticisms may already have been voiced in the *Politeia*<sup>91</sup> of Diogenes of Sinope, in which he wrote, for instance, of the ἀχρηστία τῶν ὀπλῶν ('the uselessness of weapons').<sup>92</sup> There would have been no room for an Alexander—on the contrary, it is more likely that he was the prime example of the τὴν φῶς (vanity) of the tyrant,<sup>93</sup> and the opposite to the wise Cynic Heracles.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>87</sup> See above, pp. 120–1 with n. 75.

<sup>88</sup> i.e. before the Indian conquest. For the meaning of this phrase see R. Andreotti, *Saeculum* 8 (1957), 122. Cf. Lucan 10.48, on Roman *imperium*.

<sup>89</sup> Literature collected by D. Kienast, *Gymnasium* 76 (1969), 431 n. 2; still useful as a collection of sources is L. Eicke, *Veterum philosophorum qualia fuerint de Alexandro Magno iudicia* (Diss. Rostock, 1909).

<sup>90</sup> See R. Höistad, op. cit. (n. 76), 204 ff., 212 f. He thinks that the Cynics' rejection of Alexander should be seen as a reaction to Onesicritus' attempt to portray Alexander as a philosopher-king; important is Tarn, op. cit. (n. 86) (convincing discussion of M. H. Fisch, 'Alexander and the Stoics', *AJP* 58 (1937), 59 ff., 129 ff., who overestimated the influence of Onesicritus and misunderstood the Stoics' and Cynics' view of Alexander).

<sup>91</sup> See n. 81 above.

<sup>92</sup> We know this from Philodemus' pamphlet *On the Stoics*, col. xiv ed. W. Crönert, *Studien zu Pal. und Papyruskunde* 6 (Leipzig, 1906).

<sup>93</sup> Tarn, op. cit. (n. 86), 55. For the effect on the Stoa see J. Stroux, 'Die stoische Beurteilung Alexanders des Großen', *Philologus* 88 (1933), 220 ff., esp. 332 ff.; Höistad, op. cit. (n. 76), 210–12.

<sup>94</sup> See, explicitly, D.L. 6.71.

In such fertile soil grew the influential antithesis between mind and arms (power), which in Greece was only thinkable among the Cynics and above all the Epicureans. Onesicritus' fictional<sup>95</sup> account of the meeting of Diogenes and Alexander in Corinth—at the time still in the context of Alexander's idealization as a philosopher in action<sup>96</sup>—was later understood as a confrontation between the philosopher, without any worldly means, yet superior, and the world conqueror, lacking any real value in life. Compare for example Cic. *Tusc.* 5.92:

at vero Diogenes liberius, ut Cynicus, Alexandro roganti ut diceret si quid opus esset, 'nunc quidem paululum' inquit, 'a sole'... et hic quidem disputare solebat, quanto regem Persarum vita fortunaque superaret; sibi nihil deesse illi nihil satis umquam fore; se eius voluptates non desiderare, quibus numquam satiari ille posset, suas eum consequi nullo modo posse.

But Diogenes, as a Cynic, replied more freely to Alexander, who had asked him whether he wanted anything: 'For now, step a little bit out of the sun'... And indeed he used to discourse on how far he surpassed the king of Persia in his life and fortunes: he lacked nothing, that man would never have enough; he did not desire the pleasures, with which that man could never be satisfied; it was in no way possible for the king to attain his own pleasures.<sup>97</sup>

This is strongly supported by Arrian, *Alex. Anab.* 7.2.1–2 ... οὐτω τοι οὐ πάντη ἔξω τοῦ ἐπινοεῖν τὰ κρείττω ἦν Ἀλέξανδρος, ἀλλ' ἐκ δόξης γὰρ δευῶς ἐκρατεῖτο ('thus it was not completely beyond Alexander to see what would have been better for him, but he was ruled powerfully by his ambition').<sup>98</sup> His account of Alexander's meeting with Indian gymnosophists shows a similar tendency (7.1.5–6).<sup>99</sup>

<sup>95</sup> That it is fictional was already emphasized by E. Schwartz, *Charakterköpfe aus der Antike*, 4th edn. (Leipzig, 1956), 123 f.; see also von Fritz, op. cit. (n. 79), 27.

<sup>96</sup> See T. S. Brown, *Onesicritus* (Berkeley, 1949), 48; S. L. Radt, 'Zu Plutarchs *vita Alexandri*', *Mnemosyne* 20 (1967), 120–2 (see above, nn. 84 f.).

<sup>97</sup> Parallels in Hoffmann, op. cit. (n. 68), 12 ff.; for the Middle Ages see F. Pfister, *Historia* 13 (1964), 43; see further Höistad, op. cit. (n. 76), 150 ff., 213 ff., on the basis of Dio Chrysostom 4.

<sup>98</sup> For similar anecdotes with the same aim, see von Fritz, op. cit. (n. 79), 27 f. (for D.L. 6.43 f.).

<sup>99</sup> For this meeting, see *FGrH* 153 F 9 Jacoby (and commentary, II B, p. 542); differently, Onesicritus 134 F 17 Jacoby (and comm. II B, p. 476); cf. also Merkelbach, op. cit. (n. 46), 52 f., 104 f., 113 ff., 188. The bold comment on the world conqueror, who after his death only needs as much ground as his body takes up (Arr. 7.36), is influential for later writers; see Pfister, *Historia* 13 (1964), 38 n. 1; cf. already Juvenal 10.168–72 with Pfister, op. cit., 63; generally, on the ruler and the man without moderation, see Epicur. frs. 473–6 Us.

Seneca treats the question more generally in *Ben.* 5.4.3 f.,<sup>100</sup> and most insistently in *Ben.* 7.2.5–7.4.1.<sup>101</sup> In spite of Alexander's *aviditas caeca* ('blind greed'), he lacks *tantum, quantum cupit* ('as much as he desires'). The philosopher, on the other hand, like a god, possesses everything through his *animus: ingentis spiritus res est, cum Orientem Occidentemque* [unambiguous rivalry here with Alexander's world domination] *lustraveris animo... haec omnia mea sunt... dic mihi: quemadmodum potest aliquis donare sapienti, si omnia sapientis sunt?* ('it is the claim of a great spirit, when you survey East and West in your mind... [to be able to say] all these things are mine... Tell me: how can anyone give anything to the wise man, if the wise man possesses everything?'). This text is reminiscent of *Lucr.* 1.74. At this point we should note that no Greek philosophy offered such ideal ground for the antithesis set out above as Epicureanism. The Stoa, following the Cynics, also glorified Heracles<sup>102</sup> as the ideal philosopher, and took a positive attitude towards activity for the state.<sup>103</sup> On the other hand, Epicurus' teachings about the attitude of the philosopher towards the state<sup>104</sup> offered the perfect basis for an antithesis between 'mind' and 'power'.

Some more specific clues can be identified in addition. First, there is Epicurus' own work *On Kingship*. Unfortunately only a single fragment has survived.<sup>105</sup> At least we can gather from it that Epicurus was not in favour of a philosophical-musical training for rulers. In

<sup>100</sup> Cf. 5.6.1; Eicke, *op. cit.* (n. 89), 34 f. is wrong about this.

<sup>101</sup> In this context see also the passages mentioned above, *Ben.* 1.13.1 ff. (antithesis Hercules/Alexander); *Ep.* 94.17 ff.; 109.7 f. We will return to this in connection with Epicurus.

<sup>102</sup> See *Cic. Fin.* 3.75; *Tusc.* 4.50; *Sen. Const. Sap.* 2.2.1.

<sup>103</sup> *SVF* i.259–71; iii.611–24 (see M. Pohlenz, *Die Stoa: Geschichte einer Geistigen Bewegung* (Göttingen, 1948), i.137–9; ii.75); see esp. 620 f., *μόνον τὸν σοφὸν βασιλέα*. Under these conditions, Alexander could not be a model; see also Stroux, *op. cit.* (n. 93), 223–40; Tarn, *op. cit.* (n. 86). Heracles was elevated, Alexander rejected as a model (see also the examples from Seneca quoted above).

<sup>104</sup> For documentation see esp. A. Grilli, *Il problema della vita contemplativa nel mondo greco-romano* (Milan, 1953), 48 ff. ('avversione per la fama e per la folla'), 59 ff. ('ὐ μὴ πολιτεύεσθαι'); R. Westman, *Plutarch gegen Kolotes*, *Acta Philol. Fennica* 7 (Helsinki, 1955), 201–6; W. Schmid, *RAC* v.727–30.

<sup>105</sup> *Epicur. fr.* 5 *Us.* Fr. 6 *Us.* possibly also belongs to this work. It would fit well with the sense of fr. 5; for fr. 556 *Us.* see Westman, *op. cit.* (n. 104), 203 f. The argumentation which he assumes for this work seems fairly certain, given Epicurus' basic attitude towards the *ataraxia* of the philosopher.



this, Epicurus not only contradicts the ideal of rulership set out by Plato and by Aristotle,<sup>106</sup> who corrected Plato on some points. He also contradicts the Stoics (*μόνον τὸν φιλόσοφον βασιλέα*, ‘only the philosopher is king’) and disagrees with their basic attitude towards the state since Zeno: *accedet ad rem publicam [sapiens] nisi si quid impedi-erit* (‘the wise man will participate in politics, unless something prevents him’).<sup>107</sup> The same goes for the Cynics, their ideal of the true ruler embodied in Heracles, and their approval of *πόνος*. Usener is probably right in attributing fr. 6 (Westman fr. 556)<sup>108</sup> to this work. Usener believes,<sup>109</sup> furthermore, that in this work there was discussion *de misera regum vita* (‘of the wretched life of monarchs’). Again, this seems likely and is borne out by general considerations, supported by Lucretius (proems to Books 1 and 2, 5.1127 f.), Seneca,<sup>110</sup> and Virgil (*Geo.* 2.495 ff.).<sup>111</sup> Can there be any doubt, then, that this was demonstrated using the standard example of Alexander? In the same context, Heracles was surely rejected as a model. The real opposite could only be the Epicurean philosopher. For the students of Epicurus and those singing his praises, this was, of course, the master himself. How much more then could Lucretius, who propagated the slogan *μὴ πολιτεύεσθαι* (do not take part in politics) much more radically than Epicurus himself,<sup>112</sup> emphasize this antithesis in his hymns.<sup>113</sup>

Finally, I want to support this argument further with a few passages from Epicurus and the Epicurean tradition. They belong in the

<sup>106</sup> See esp. fr. 79 Rose. Bignone, op. cit. (n. 9), ii.541 n. 1, claims too narrowly: ‘we can clearly see that Epicurus’ polemic was directed against Aristotle... In fact he made it clear that he was opposed to literary education for kings, and condemned those philosophers who lived in royal courts’; also Arist. *Protr.* 46–51 Düring and his commentary on the passage; id., *Der Protrepitkos des Aristoteles* (Frankfurt, 1969), 96–8.

<sup>107</sup> Sen. *Ot.* 3.2 = *SVF* i.271.

<sup>108</sup> See above, n. 105.

<sup>109</sup> Usener, *Epicurea*, p. 92.6.

<sup>110</sup> See the passages mentioned above (pp. 114–16); for their relation to Epicurus see below, pp. 127–8.

<sup>111</sup> See below, pp. 128–9.

<sup>112</sup> This radical attitude is even more conspicuous because, e.g., the contemporary Epicurean Philodemus took a much more moderate standpoint in his work *On the Good King According to Homer*, addressed to Piso. He surely has a more positive attitude towards the state than Epicurus himself; see R. Philipsson, *RE* xix.2474.

<sup>113</sup> For Epicurus’ certain compromises on this point, see Westman, op. cit. (n. 104), 204; Schmid, op. cit. (n. 104), 727–9.

wider context of maxims *de honore et gloria* ('on honour and glory').<sup>114</sup> Epicurus fragments 548 (...οὐδ' ἀρχαί τινες οὐδὲ δυνάμεις, ἀλλ'...), 'neither political office nor power, but...'), 554, and 556 are important; so too in Lucretius—apart from the two texts we are discussing (1.62–79, proem to Book 5)—are the proems to Books 2 and 3 and 5.1117–30:

quod si quis vera vitam ratione gubernet,  
divitiae grandes homini sunt vivere parce  
aequo animo...  
at claros homines voluerunt se atque potentes...

But if one were to govern one's life by true reason, it is great wealth for a man to live a frugal life with tranquil mind... but men wanted to be famous and powerful...

But in this way they made their lives dangerous and often became the object of envy:

... ut satius multo iam sit parere quietum  
quam regere imperio res velle et regna tenere.

So that it is much better to obey quietly than to desire to rule the world with one's power and hold kingdoms.

Virgil, *Geo.* 2.495 ff. and 505 ff., where the 'fortunate man who knows' (*fortunatus et ille... qui novit*) is free from the *populi fasces* ('fasces of the people') and *purpura regum* ('royal purple'), from envy and greed for gold, fit in well with this.<sup>115</sup> Diogenes of Oenoanda is also clearly influenced by Epicurean tradition. He phrases the antithesis particularly concisely: ...μήτε πλούτος...μήτε δόξα πολιτική μήτε βασιλεία...φιλοσοφία δέ... ('neither wealth nor civic glory nor kingship, but philosophy...').<sup>116</sup>

In this context belong all the passages from Seneca<sup>117</sup> quoted above. *Ben.* 7.2.5–7.4.1, which clearly marks the antithesis discussed

<sup>114</sup> Usener, *Epicurea*, pp. 325–9.

<sup>115</sup> One should take into account that 2.505 ff. is an allusion to the actual failure of the 'tyrant' Mark Anthony.

<sup>116</sup> Fr. 24 Chilton; see also SV 81; and cf. Bignone, *op. cit.* (n. 9), ii.182 ff.

<sup>117</sup> The reader should not be surprised to find these texts incorporated into the Epicurean tradition. It is true that they deal with the principle *secundum naturam vivere* ('to live according to nature', which was of course closely related to the world of Epicurus). But, even apart from the close connexion with the antithesis discussed

above (pp. 114–16) and is almost a commentary on *Lucr.* 1.62–72, and *Ep.* 94 deserve special mention. In the conclusion (57–74) of this letter, starting from the standard set down by nature, the true path to the perfect happiness of the philosopher (*hoc est enim sapientia, in naturam converti... sanabis ista, si absconderis... contra illos, qui gratiam ac potentiam attollunt, otium ipse suspiciat traditum litteris et animum ab externis ad sua reversum*, ‘For this is wisdom, to turn back to nature... you will cure yourself of those vices, if you hide away from them... unlike those, who exalt influence and power, he himself should value a quietness dedicated to study, and a mind turned away from external things to his own affairs’) is contrasted with the path of the politician, who is addicted to glory and worn out by power. Negative *exempla* are provided by Alexander and his imitators Pompey, Caesar, and Marius, who are portrayed as insatiable tyrants. This text<sup>118</sup> summarizes everything that had, since

above, it is evident that Seneca continually substantiates the theme ‘wealth—true wealth—poverty’ (which is almost a leitmotif in the letters) by means of *dicta Epicuri* (see *Ep.* 2.5; 4.10; 14.17; 17.11 f.). These lead up to the climaxes of *Ep.* 94 and 119. On this step-by-step teaching in Seneca’s letters see I. Hadot, *Seneca und die griech.-röm. Tradition der Seelenleitung* (Berlin, 1969), 54. For Epicurus’ influence on Seneca see esp. T. Hermes, *Epikur in den Epistulae morales Senecas* (Diss. Marburg, 1951; on our topic 40–7); Schmid, op. cit. (n. 20), 767 f., with critical discussion of further literature and problems, is excellent.

<sup>118</sup> There is a striking similarity between 94.59–61 and *Geo.* 2.495 ff. and 505 ff. in many details, including the contrast with tyrants. The structure of the antithesis is almost the same:

Sen. *Ep.* 94

59 *in tanto fremitu tumultuque... tantis clamoribus ambitionis* (‘amidst such noise and uproar... such shouts of ambition’)

60 *non est quod invidetas* (‘there is nothing to envy’)

60 *plausus* (‘applause’)

60 *purpurea cultus* (‘clad in purple’)

60 *fascibus... lictor* (‘the *fasces*... the lictor’)

61 *multi inveniuntur qui ignem inferant urbibus, qui inexpugnabilia...* (‘there are many to be found who would set fire to cities and [overthrow] the impregnable’)

Virgil, *Geo.* 2

508 *hic stupet attonitus rostris; hunc plausus hiantem* (‘one man marvels open-mouthed at the *rostra*, and drinks in the applause’)

499 *aut invidit habenti* (‘nor does he envy a rich man’)

508 *plausus* (‘applause’)

495 *non purpura regum* (‘not royal purple’)

495 *non populi fascies* (‘not the *fascies* of the people’)

505 *hic petit excidiis urbem* (‘this man brings destruction on the city’)

Antisthenes, lent colour to this antithesis for the Cynics and especially the Epicureans. Antisthenes' innovation of a counter-figure to the tyrant was in the Cynic-Epicurean tradition exemplified by Alexander. When Epicurus, the true philosopher, was contrasted with the failures of the tyrannical ruler, this necessarily led to a confrontation with Alexander and to the claim that Epicurus surpassed him.

It is surely no accident that Cicero used the antithesis with Pompey to demonstrate the claims of the intellect.<sup>119</sup> His portrayal of the ideal ruler is naturally not identical with that of the Epicureans, but follows the Academic-Stoic tradition, and it is the political situation that has led to the confrontation. However, the fact that Cicero characterizes Pompey as *Alexander alter* ('a second Alexander') and *armatus* ('a warrior'),<sup>120</sup> in order to distinguish himself and his own claims from him, is due not only to Pompey's imitation of Alexander, but also to the antithesis of intellect and power, and its personification in Epicurus-Alexander.

It seems to follow that Cicero and Lucretius must at least have been prompted by an impulse from the same source to set out this antithesis independently of each other,<sup>121</sup> regardless of the fact that their intentions were very different. Furthermore, the circumstances

61 *perfusi caede* ('drenched in gore')

Distancing from the tyrant  
Ideal of the true philosopher

510 *perfusi sanguine* ('drenched in blood')

Distancing from the tyrant  
Ideal of the true philosopher

<sup>119</sup> See V. Buchheit, *Gymnasium* 76 (1969), 232 ff., esp. 241 ff.

<sup>120</sup> See my remarks in the paper mentioned in n. 119 above; assimilation to Alexander is apparent in Cic. *Cat.* 3.26 and 4.21 (quoted in n. 69 above). The phrasing is reminiscent of the texts about Alexander quoted above. The speech *Pro Archia*, which in terms of intention belongs very closely to the speeches of 63, contains the same antithesis. I hope to be able to discuss this in more detail in the future; some preliminary remarks in *Gymnasium* 76 (1969), 248 f.

<sup>121</sup> This is slightly modified from *Gymnasium* 76 (1969), 202, 253. An influence of Cicero on Lucretius, especially on the antithesis intellect/power, is of course possible, especially through *De Consulatu Suo*, where this aspect was surely mentioned in analogy to *Cat.* 3. Furthermore, one should not forget that Cicero enjoyed a high poetic reputation extending even to Lucretius and Catullus (see K. Büchner, *RE* viia.1266 f.; id., *Cicero* (Heidelberg, 1964), 30; O. Seel, *Cicero*, 2nd edn. (Stuttgart, 1961), 383). For the relation between Cic. *De Cons. Suo* and Lucretius see K. Büchner, *RE* viia.1249 f.; id., *Cicero*, 502 f. (with bibliography; cf. esp. A. Fellin, 'Risonanze del De consulatu ciceroniano nel poema di Lucrezio', *RFIC* 29 (1951), 307–15).

discussed above make it very probable that Lucretius did not derive his inspiration from Ennius.<sup>122</sup>

It is very significant that Virgil employs this antithesis again with Alexander as the counter-model: he claims the triumph and the world domination of the mind, which Lucretius had attributed to his master Epicurus, for himself and the ruler Octavian. Horace also follows the same tradition in the third and fourth *Roman Odes* and in the sphragis, *Odes* 3.30. These claims on behalf of the intellect therefore go back to the Greek conception outlined above.

The actual Roman component<sup>123</sup> in Lucretius is consequently reduced to the image of the triumph<sup>124</sup> and the translation into Roman terminology.<sup>125</sup> The great innovation, however, is the courage and decisiveness with which Lucretius makes this claim. It involves a stark denial of the traditional Roman way of life and hierarchy of values. Lucretius goes far beyond Cicero,<sup>126</sup> so far indeed that Virgil retreats slightly and in some ways returns to the Ciceronian version.

#### ADDENDUM (2005)

For good observations on the hymn to Epicurus and its place in the work as a whole, see also M. R. Gale, *Myth and Poetry in Lucretius* (Cambridge, 1994), *passim*, esp. 43 ff., 138 ff; H. Schwabl, 'Methodisches zum Venushymnus des Lukrez', *AAntHung* 44 (2004), 236, 238 f.; V. Buchheit, 'Novos decerpere flores: Geistiges Schöpfertum bei Lukrez und Vergil', *Hermes* 132 (2004), 426 ff. On the influence of the hymn on Virgil, see id., *Der Anspruch des Dichters in Vergils*

<sup>122</sup> See V. Buchheit, *Der Anspruch des Dichters in Vergils Georgika* (Darmstadt, 1972).

<sup>123</sup> It is possible that Lucretius' Epicurus eulogy contains a criticism of the Roman *Alexandri alteri*, or even Pompey himself.

<sup>124</sup> This remains the case, even though Dionysus in particular returned in this way, and Pompey followed this tradition; see Michel, *op. cit.* (n. 73), 37; and e.g. *Aen.* 6.804 f. For the 'triumph of Dionysus' as a popular motif for Roman painters see e.g. the *tablinum* in the house of M. Lucretius Fronto, and a similar painting in a villa at Stabiae.

<sup>125</sup> Overemphasized by Regenbogen, *op. cit.* (n. 20), 42 ff.; see the qualifications in W. Schmid, *Gnomon* 20 (1944), 19; G. Müller, *Die Darstellung der Kinetik bei Lukrez* (Berlin, 1959), 84 f.; Schmid, *Gnomon* 39 (1967), 494.

<sup>126</sup> See *Gymnasium* 76 (1969), 233 n. 2.

*Georgika* (Darmstadt, 1972), 72 ff. (*Geo.* 2.490 ff.), 99 ff. (proem to *Geo.* 3), and 106 ff. (*Ecl.* 5/proem to Book 3). In *Ecl.* 5.58 ff., in relation to Lucretius (1.62 ff.; proem to Book 5), Virgil sets himself in marked opposition to the heroization of Epicurus and the Epicurean poet (V. Buchheit, 'Tierfriede in der Antike', *WJA* 12 (1986), 147 ff., 158 f.); in their place he puts Daphnis, as initiate and initiator (*Atti del Convegno virgiliano sul bimillenario delle Georgiche* (Naples, 1977), 203 ff.), and later himself (on this point, see also *Hermes* 132 (2004), 431 ff.) and in general the Dionysiac poetics instituted by him (*Geo.* 2.486 ff., 493 ff.; 3.40 ff.) and taken over by Horace (cf. most recently V. Buchheit, *Hermes* 129 (2001), 243 ff.; and esp. id., 'Einflüsse Vergils auf das Dichterbewusstsein des Horaz', *RhM* 144 (2001), 139 ff.). All this allows aspects of the controversy over the optimism or pessimism, or pro- or anti-Augustanism, of the *Georgics*—which has been largely fruitless, because not sufficiently closely based on the text—to appear in a different light. It is time that we returned to well-tried methods of interpretation and allowed the text of the *Georgics* to speak for itself. A first step in this direction is taken by M. R. Gale, *Virgil on the Nature of Things* (Cambridge, 2000).

## The Presocratics in Book 1 of Lucretius’ *De rerum natura*

W. J. Tatum

In Book 1 of *De rerum natura*, after Lucretius’ exposition of the atomistic worldview, there is a long polemic against other physical theories (1.635–920). Three Presocratic philosophers are mentioned explicitly: Heraclitus, Empedocles, and Anaxagoras. Scholars have observed that few of the criticisms made against Heraclitus and Empedocles are appropriate to their philosophies, the usual explanation being that the Stoics are the true objects of the Epicurean’s scrutiny.<sup>1</sup> D. Furley, who argues that there is no compelling evidence that Lucretius attacks the Stoics, proposes instead that Heraclitus is simply the general representative of material monism, Empedocles of the four-element theory, and Anaxagoras of the theory of infinite divisibility.<sup>2</sup> M. Bollack, on the other hand, does not regard the passage as fundamentally polemical.<sup>3</sup> Instead, she maintains, it demonstrates an instructive progression of advancing and developing philosophical ideas.

<sup>1</sup> H. A. J. Munro, *T. Lucreti Cari de rerum natura libri sex*, 4th edn. (Cambridge, 1886); A. Ernout and L. Robin, *Lucrèce: De rerum natura* (Paris, 1925); C. Bailey, *T. Lucreti de rerum natura libri sex* (Oxford, 1947); W. E. Leonard and S. B. Smith, *T. Lucreti Cari de rerum natura libri VI* (Madison, 1965); K. Kleve, ‘The Philosophical Polemics in Lucretius: a Study in the History of Epicurean Criticism’, in O. Gigon (ed.), *Lucrèce, Entretiens Hardt 24* (Geneva, 1978), 39–76.

<sup>2</sup> D. Furley, ‘Lucretius and the Stoics’, *BICS* 13 (1966), 13–33; see now D. N. Sedley, *Lucretius and the Transformation of Greek Wisdom* (Cambridge, 1998), 73–5.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Un désaccord de forme: Lucrèce et Héraclite’, *Actes du VIII<sup>e</sup> Congrès Association Guillaume Budé* (Paris, 1969), 383–92.

These explanations have done much to enhance our understanding of the general philosophic argument in this passage. Furthermore, they suggest very plausible factors for Lucretius' selection of these specific thinkers in his polemic. Each of the three names is associated with an unquestionably important (and rival) physics and as such their choice is logical. Yet purely scientific considerations do not account for the personal characterizations of Heraclitus and Empedocles, which clearly emphasize not philosophic but literary judgments.<sup>4</sup> In short, they do not provide a full solution. My aim in this paper is to demonstrate that Lucretius singles out each of these Presocratics to highlight the problem of philosophical language and, particularly through the *exemplum* of Empedocles, to present a case for the use of poetry in Epicurean discourse. He does so, moreover, within the traditional context of the Epicurean doxography, and our poet's innovations in this rather standard feature of Epicurean writing help to explain the loose connection between the Presocratics he names and the criticisms he presents.

W. Rösler has shown that Lucretius' refutation of the Presocratics does not attack the actual teachings of the philosophers, but their teachings as reported in handbooks.<sup>5</sup> The objections against Heraclitus and Empedocles attempt to discredit all forms of monism and the four-element theory. In addition, several of the arguments have rather a standard ring. For example, two criticisms are common to the physics of all three: they deny the existence of the void and the primary substances which they propose are perishable. Both faults are regarded solely from the Epicurean point of view. This combination of blanket judgements with standard arguments, all under the rubric of a typical representative, suggests that Lucretius' approach is doxographical. The use of such a polemical doxography is hardly surprising, however, since it was a regular feature of Epicurean writing.

<sup>4</sup> E. D. Kollmann, 'Lucretius' Criticism of the Early Greek Philosophers', *Studia Classica* 13 (1971), 79–93; L. Lenaghan, 'Lucretius 1.921–50', *TAPA* 98 (1967), 221–51; P. H. Schrijvers, *Horror ac Divina Voluptas: Études sur la poétique et la poésie de Lucrèce* (Amsterdam, 1970), 84–5.

<sup>5</sup> 'Lukrez und die Vorsokratiker: doxographische Probleme im 1. Buch von "De rerum natura"', *Hermes* 101 (1973), 48–64 = C. J. Classen (ed.), *Probleme der Lukrezforschung* (Hildesheim, 1986), 57–73. It now seems very likely that Lucretius derived his concise doxography from Books 14 and 15 of Epicurus' *On Nature*; cf. Sedley, *op. cit.* (n. 2), 123–6. This does not imply that Lucretius did not know any of the Presocratics at first hand. Certainly he knew Empedocles: see W. Kranz, 'Lukrez und Empedokles', *Philologus* 50 (1943), 68–107; cf. Sedley, *op. cit.* (n. 2), 11–14.



The use of critical doxographies goes back to Aristotle and his pupil Theophrastus. Aristotle employs such doxographical catalogues in *Metaph.* 983<sup>b</sup>–984<sup>a</sup>17, *De gen. et corr.* 328<sup>b</sup>–329<sup>b</sup>6, and *De an.* 405<sup>a–b</sup>. All these passages present historical surveys oriented toward a single problem or theme. Theophrastus' work, *Opinions of the Physicists*, similarly treated the theories of various philosophers under various topics.<sup>6</sup> Doxographies became quite popular in lieu of the large library the writings of the Presocratics could easily fill. Even Epicurus had recourse to handbooks.<sup>7</sup>

Epicurus, as is well known, was highly critical of philosophers other than himself (D.L. 10.7–8). Several of his works were exclusively polemical, both specific (e.g. *Against Democritus*) and general (e.g. *Against the Physicists*) in scope.<sup>8</sup> In his *magnum opus*, *On Nature*, he appears to have dealt with previous thinkers in the fashion of a critical doxography. The Epicureans followed their master's lead. In time they developed their own massive doxography, the remnants of which include the speech of Velleius in Cicero's *De natura deorum* 1.25–41 and the inscriptions of Diogenes of Oenoanda.<sup>9</sup> This intense concern for the history of philosophy on the part of the Epicureans has several explanations. A critical doxography provides a structuring principle for the explication of one's own theories.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, it permits an author to reinterpret the ideas of previous thinkers as if they were all moving toward his own views.<sup>11</sup> Because Epicurus had established the true doctrine his followers had little to do in the way

<sup>6</sup> G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven, and M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge, 1983), 1–6, provide a succinct discussion of the doxographic tradition.

<sup>7</sup> H. Usener, *Epicurea* (Leipzig, 1887 = Stuttgart, 1966), xl–xli; cf. Rösler, *op. cit.* (n. 5), 63.

<sup>8</sup> Kleve, *op. cit.* (n. 1), 43–7. D. N. Sedley, 'Epicurus and his Professional Rivals', in J. Bollack and A. Laks (eds.), *Études sur l'Épicurisme antique*, Cahiers de Philologie 1 (Lille, 1976), 119–59, argues against the prevalent view that Epicurus was hypercritical of other philosophers.

<sup>9</sup> See Kleve, *op. cit.* (n. 1) for details; cf. M. Gigante, *Philodemus in Italy: The Books from Herculaneum*, trans. D. Obbink (Ann Arbor, 1995), 16–17; D. Obbink, *Philodemus On Piety, Part 1* (Oxford, 1996), 81–2; R. Janko, *Philodemus On Poems, Book One* (Oxford, 2000), 191. *On Nature*: Sedley, *op. cit.* (n. 2), 94–133.

<sup>10</sup> M. Bollack, *La raison de Lucrèce* (Paris, 1978), xxviii; cf. Obbink, *op. cit.* (n. 9), 81–2; Janko, *op. cit.* (n. 9), 191.

<sup>11</sup> H. Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Presocratic Philosophy* (Baltimore, 1935), xii and 347–8.

of original speculation. As Cicero puts it (*Fin.* 1.6), the Epicureans never stopped writing on the same topics as their master. They had, moreover, a mission to administer the true philosophy to a sick and needy world (Epicurus, fr. 221 Usener = fr. 247 Arrighetti; Diog. Oen. fr. 2 iv Chilton), and this involved the use of polemic. As the Epicureans looked back in time to the teachings of their founder so they might expect others to look back to relevant philosophers. Hence the need for a historical philosophical polemic. Furthermore, since there was little opportunity to enhance the doctrine, the widest creative avenues open to the disciple of Epicurus were exposition of the Garden and criticism of its opponents. The use of a critical doxography allowed that creativity to be expressed in a form sanctioned both by philosophic writing in general (e.g. Aristotle) and by Epicurus' own method.<sup>12</sup>

Let us now consider the relationship between Lucretius' doxography and the tradition of Epicurean criticism. Comparison of other Epicurean doxographies, those of Epicurus, Philodemus, Cicero, and Diogenes of Oenoanda, with the one offered by Lucretius reveals a significant difference. The former aim either at completeness or near-completeness in their treatments of previous philosophers; not so our poet. He refutes all Presocratic physics, yet he names only three philosophers. This peculiarity suggests that he is indeed exercising his creativity within this traditional feature of Epicurean discourse, and the emphasis placed on these particular philosophers demands our attention.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> On the Epicureans' creativity in re-evaluating their positions see Bollack, *op. cit.* (n. 10), xxv–xxx; cf. Kleve, *op. cit.* (n. 1), 47–8. Lucretius appears to have been remarkable in his exclusive veneration of Epicurus: by the first century, it was natural for Epicureans to revere the four founding members of the school (*viz.* Epicurus, Metrodorus, Hermarchus, Polyaeus); cf. Sedley, *op. cit.* (n. 2), 67–8.

<sup>13</sup> Diogenes of Oenoanda presents a more expansive doxography than does Lucretius (cf. fr. 5 Chilton); even in their present condition, Philodemus' treatises display the impressive range of his engagement with predecessors; cf. Obbink, *op. cit.* (n. 9); and Janko, *op. cit.* (n. 9). Sedley, *op. cit.* (n. 2), 74–93, emphasizes that Lucretius' doxography is incomplete in terms of contemporary Epicurean polemic; he also observes that, on his view of the structure of *On Nature* and Lucretius' dependence on that work, Lucretius has significantly transposed the position of this doxographical material: it is introduced much earlier, a shift that diminishes its aptness to his comprehensive philosophical argument (Sedley accepts the view that in this passage Lucretius is making a case for appropriate philosophical discourse); cf. Sedley, *op. cit.* (n. 2), 190–1.

Lucretius' treatments of Heraclitus and Empedocles are very similar in format: general theory; name of its champion; personal characterization; list of critical arguments. The discussion of Anaxagoras diverges: the personal characterization is replaced by an explanation of the term *homoeomeria*. The remarks about Heraclitus are openly hostile, those concerning Empedocles admiring, while Anaxagoras' treatment, while I hope to show it is critical, is not so explicit as the others'. It is important to notice that Lucretius' attitude is determined not on philosophical but on *linguistic* grounds. The Ephesian is *clarus ob obscuram linguam* ('famous for his obscure language'), while the Sicilian is praised for his *carmina* ('poetry'), which *expouunt praeclara reperta* ('explains glorious discoveries'). Even the introduction of Anaxagoras is attended by linguistic concerns: the famous *patrii sermonis egestas* ('the poverty of my native speech') and an explication of the Greek word *homoeomeria*. The interest in language is pronounced and requires further comment.<sup>14</sup>

Lucretius, like his contemporary Cicero, was preoccupied with the task of presenting Greek philosophy in Latin. While the Romans had by the first century been exposed to Greek thought for some time, philosophy had not yet transcended the Greek language.<sup>15</sup> This is most clearly revealed by the attitude of Varro, the most learned of the Romans, in Cicero's *Academica* (1.4):

Nam cum philosophiam viderem diligentissime Graecis litteris explicatam, existimavi, si qui de nostris eius studio tenerentur, si essent Graecis doctrinis eruditi, Graeca potius quam nostra lecturos; sin a Graecorum artibus et disciplinis abhorrent, ne haec quidem curaturos, *quae sine eruditione Graeca intellegi non possunt*; itaque ea nolui scribere, quae nec indocti intellegere possent nec docti legere curarent.

Inasmuch as I realized that philosophy had been set out and explained very thoroughly in Greek, it was my opinion that, if a Roman developed an interest in the subject, he would read about it in Greek and not in our

<sup>14</sup> See the discussions cited in n. 4 above; cf. Sedley, *op. cit.* (n. 2), 13–14 and 190–1; M. Gale, *Myth and Poetry in Lucretius* (Cambridge, 1994), 62–5.

<sup>15</sup> One might propose certain exceptions, e.g. the *Epicharmus* or the *Euhemerus* of Ennius. Also, we gather from Cicero (*Tusc.* 1.6) that quite a number of Latin philosophical tracts—of dubious quality—were being churned out, yet they apparently did not solve the problem of creating a Latin philosophical vocabulary as both Cicero and Lucretius did.

language. If, however, he had an aversion to the sciences and the subjects favoured by the Greeks, then he would hardly care about philosophical matters, *which cannot be understood without a Greek education*. Consequently, I did not wish to write what the unlearned could not understand and what the learned would not bother to read.

Yet Cicero, at leisure from his political efforts, grappled with the adaptation of Greek ideas to the Roman tongue (*Tusc.* 1.5–6; *Acad.* 1.25; *Fin.* 3.3). Lucretius also recognized this need and this challenge, and he explicitly confronted the task (1.136–9):

Nec me animi fallit Graiorum obscura reperta  
difficile inlustrare Latinis versibus esse,  
multa novis verbis praesertim cum sit agendum  
propter egestatem linguae et rerum novitatem.

Nor does it escape me that it is a difficult thing to elucidate the dark discoveries of the Greeks by means of Latin poetry, especially because it is often a business of inventing new words owing to the poverty of our language and the novelty of the subject matter.

Here Lucretius sets himself a double task: not only to create a new philosophical vocabulary but to do so within the constraints of hexameter verse.

The verb in line 137, *inlustrare* ('elucidate'), is also the word used by Cicero to describe his rendering of Greek philosophy into Latin (*Acad.* 1.3 and *Tusc.* 1.5). However, in *De rerum natura* the word has special significance. Its only other occurrence in the poem is at 3.2, where the poet is addressing to Epicurus his famous eulogy:

O tenebris tantis tam clarum extollere lumen  
qui primus potuisti inlustrans commoda vitae.

O you who were the first to be able to raise aloft so clear a light in the midst of such darkness and by so doing to elucidate the benefits of life.

The parallels between the two passages have been discussed by G. Cabisius.<sup>16</sup> *Inlustrare* likens the accomplishments of master and disciple. The word should be read with its full force, not simply as a term for translation. But the difference between Lucretius' act of

<sup>16</sup> 'Lucretius' Statement of Poetic Intent', in C. Deroux (ed.), *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History* (Brussels, 1979), 242.

illumination and that of Epicurus must not be overlooked. Lucretius illustrates *Latinis versibus* ('by means of Latin poetry'); his poetry is the agent which clarifies the *obscura* of his master.<sup>17</sup> For Lucretius the task of translating Epicurean thought into Latin was a major one; more important for our purpose, so far as he was concerned poetry was the proper vehicle for that thought. It is in this light that we should consider his attitude toward the three Presocratics, shaded as it is by linguistic concerns. We can begin with Lucretius' judgment of Heraclitus (1.638–44):

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Heraclitus init quorum dux proelia primus,  
 clarus ob obscuram linguam magis inter inanis  
 quamde gravis inter Graios qui vera requirunt.  
 omnia enim stolidi magis admirantur amantque,  
 inversis quae sub verbis latitantia cernunt.  
 veraque constituunt quae belle tangere possunt  
 auris et lepido quae sunt fucata sonore.

Heraclitus joins battle as the most famous general [of those who believe fire is the basic substance], famous for his obscure language, at any rate amongst frivolous Greeks if not amongst the serious ones who seek the truth. For fools admire and love everything more when they see it hidden by perverse expressions. They consider something true if it caresses their ears and is glamourized by its fashionable ring.

Heraclitus is *clarus ob obscuram linguam* ('famous for his obscure language'), and so in fact he was known in antiquity; Cicero (*Fin.* 2.15) informs us that he was called the 'dark one' (*skoteinos*). This is no compliment, especially when we recall that Lucretius' self-imposed task is to elucidate (*inlustrare*). The play is on *clarus*, which means 'clear' as well as 'famous', and the phrase, a keen oxymoron, is itself a parody of the Ephesian's twisted use of language.

Recent critics have discussed the passage carefully and fruitfully, so that a complete analysis here is unnecessary.<sup>18</sup> The Presocratic is patently criticized for his obfuscating use of language. Important in this regard is Lucretius' attack on the fools (*stolidi*) who mistake

<sup>17</sup> Light imagery in Lucretius: D. West, *The Imagery and Poetry of Lucretius* (Edinburgh, 1969), 79–93. The importance of clarity in Lucretius: Gale, op. cit. (n. 14), 143–5.

<sup>18</sup> Kollman, op. cit. (n. 4), 81–5; West, op. cit. (n. 17), 26.

titillating expression for truthful reasoning. The warning is clear: Heraclitus' riddles are more likely to mislead and deceive than to enlighten. Puns (*clarus, inanis, stolidi*), oxymora (e.g. *latitantia cernunt*, 'they see it hidden'), the jingle-like quality of the poet's rhymes (e.g. *inversis... sub verbis*, 'by perverse expressions'), as well as the outrageous imagery which closes the passage all serve to create a travesty of 'the specious tortuosities of Heraclitus' style'.<sup>19</sup> Lucretius, in sum, condemns the Ephesian's obscurity.

Anaxagoras poses a rather different case.<sup>20</sup> Lucretius does not comment explicitly on his style, but he does emphasize his technical terminology: the term *homoeomeria*.<sup>21</sup> He does so, in fact, instead of offering a personal characterization of the philosopher (as he does for Heraclitus and Empedocles). Indeed, the word takes priority over the man (1.830–3):

nunc et Anaxagorae scrutemur homoeomerian  
quam Grai memorant nec nostra dicere lingua  
concedit nobis patrii sermonis egestas,  
sed tamen ipsam rem facilest exponere verbis.

Now let us scrutinize Anaxagoras' *homoeomeria*, a Greek expression, which the poverty of my native speech prevents my translating into our language. Nevertheless, it is easy to explain the thing itself with words.

The special force of *scrutemur* is explained by West: 'This word implies a search into the hidden details of something, a search beneath the surface'.<sup>22</sup> If any word ever required such scrutiny it is *homoeomeria*, for it is a difficult expression whose philosophical implications are not immediately clear despite its ostensibly descriptive function.<sup>23</sup> The verb, *scrutemur*, for all its appropriateness, is rather homely, and

<sup>19</sup> West, op. cit. (n. 17), 26.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. R. D. Brown, 'Lucretian Ridicule of Anaxagoras', *CQ* 33 (1983), 146–60.

<sup>21</sup> *Homoeomeria*: 'things with like parts'. Although it is unclear whether Anaxagoras himself used the term, it is plain nevertheless that Lucretius attaches the word to Anaxagoras' physical theory; cf. Brown, op. cit. (n. 20), 153 n. 46.

<sup>22</sup> West, op. cit. (n. 17), 25; cf. Lenaghan, op. cit. (n. 4), 233.

<sup>23</sup> A remark in Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, op. cit. (n. 6), 377, is of interest here: '... it seems very probable that many of those who used it [the word *homoeomeria*] did so without understanding its exact significance'. See also G. Vlastos, 'The Physical Theory of Anaxagoras', in A. P. D. Mourelatos (ed.), *The Pre-Socratics* (New York, 1974), 476 n. 64, for a sample of modern difficulty due to the word's ambiguity.

R. D. Brown calls attention to the grotesque effect produced when this word is sandwiched between the philosopher's name and the ponderous Greek noun.<sup>24</sup> Further attention is drawn to *homoeomeria* by its placement, which gives line 830 (as well as 834) an unusual end rhythm.<sup>25</sup>

*Homoeomeria* is one of only three Greek words used in Lucretius' philosophical exposition, the other two being *harmonia* (3.98–103) and *prester* (6.423–30), both specifically tagged as Greek imports. In lines 830–4 our author laments that *homoeomeria* cannot be translated into Latin. This is, of course, untrue. Since Cicero succinctly translates the idea in *Acad.* 2.118 as *particulas, similes inter se, minutitas* ('tiny particles, identical to one another'), it was hardly beyond the poet's ingenuity to turn the Greek into a Latin hexameter.<sup>26</sup> Instead Lucretius chooses to exploit this opportunity to comment yet again on the difficulty of good philosophic discourse.

Although *homoeomeria* is perplexing and never translated by Lucretius, his explanation of the theory which underlies the term is clarity itself (1.835–41):

ossa videlicet e pauxillis atque minutis  
 ossibus hic et de pauxillis atque minutis  
 visceribus viscus gigni sanguenque creari  
 sanguinis inter se multis coeuntibu' guttis  
 ex aurique putat micis consistere posse  
 aurum et de terris terram concrecere parvis,  
 ignibus ex ignis, umorem umoribus esse.

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bones actually consist of tiny and minute particles of bone and flesh consists of tiny and minute particles of flesh, blood is formed when many drops of blood unite with one another, and he [viz. Anaxagoras] thinks that gold may be composed of grains of gold and that soil is the solidification of tiny particles of soil, fire emerges from particles of fire, liquid from particles of liquid.

Bollack suggests that *homoeomeria* is left untranslated to permit this elucidating circumlocution.<sup>27</sup> Lucretius is certainly concerned that his terms be understood. Previously in Book 1 he has provided

<sup>24</sup> Brown, op. cit. (n. 20), 153. The verb is related to *scruta*, 'trash'.

<sup>25</sup> West, op. cit. (n. 17), 25; cf. W. Ott, *Metrische Analysen zu Lukrez De Rerum Natura Buch I* (Tubingen, 1974), 92.

<sup>26</sup> Bollack, op. cit. (n. 10), 175 cannot salvage matters by interpreting *nostra lingua* as 'la langue Épicurienne du poème'.

<sup>27</sup> Bollack, op. cit. (n. 10), 176.

definitions for much of his technical vocabulary, although it is noteworthy that most of that vocabulary is simple Latin.<sup>28</sup> The juxtaposition in this passage of Anaxagoras' jargon and Lucretius' perfectly comprehensible exposition is sharp.

The passage is also good poetry. As West has observed, the strikingly similar shape of lines 835 and 836 reinforces the content of those lines, that as bones are composed of minute bits of bone so is flesh in the same way composed of minute bits of flesh.<sup>29</sup> Here the effect of the poet's verbal artistry is to inform, in contradistinction to the obfuscating wordplay of Heraclitus. Lucretius' refusal to translate Anaxagoras' terminology and his lengthy but lucid definition are an implied criticism. That Lucretius wishes to avoid Greek is clear from 1.136–7: his goal is to translate into Latin the *obscura reperta* ('dark discoveries') couched in Greek. Moreover, he desires to avoid anything which smacks of difficult terminology. That is evident not only from his own choice of terms, but from the simple and elegant explanation he provides for Anaxagoras' difficult word. For Lucretius there is a mean between the obscurity of Heraclitus and the jargon he associates with Anaxagoras, between the dark and the drab, and that mean is presented through the person of Empedocles. It is to the panegyric of the Sicilian that we now turn.

Empedocles is introduced as the foremost of the philosophers who adhere to the four-element theory. His introduction is followed by a description of Sicily and Mount Aetna, a justly celebrated purple passage whose grandeur pays homage to the author of the *Peri phuseōs* (*On Nature*). For, awesome and wonderful though Sicily may be (1.729–33),

nil tamen hoc habuisse viro praeclarius in se  
nec sanctum magis et mirum carumque videtur.  
carmina quin etiam divini pectoris eius  
vociferantur et exponunt praeclara reperta,  
ut vix humana videatur stirpe creatus.

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yet it [viz. Sicily] seems to have contained nothing more glorious than this man, nor anything more sacred or marvellous or dear. Indeed, the poetry of his godlike mind cries aloud and explains glorious discoveries: he seems hardly to be born of mortal stock.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. 1.55–61, 329–34; cf. Schrijvers, *op. cit.* (n. 4), 173–4.

<sup>29</sup> West, *op. cit.* (n. 17), 118–19.



This passage compliments Empedocles in a manner quite similar to the laudation of Epicurus in Book 5. There Epicurus is spoken of as divine (5.8: *dicendum est, deus ille fuit, deus, inclute Memmi*, 'it must be said, noble Memmius, he was a god—a god'). Comparison with the master is the highest praise Lucretius can bestow, praise sought, in fact, by our poet himself.<sup>30</sup> And Empedocles is addressed not only with admiration but even in terms of personal affection (*carus*).<sup>31</sup>

Admiration for Empedocles is rather surprising, since the tradition of Epicurean polemic was quite hostile to the Sicilian.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, while Lucretius must conform to the traditional doxography in refuting Empedocles' physics, he makes no personal attack on the philosopher himself. The Presocratic is *praeclarus* ('glorious') and his glory is his *carmina* ('poetry'). Many qualities of Empedocles' verses are of course praiseworthy, yet it is their role as philosophic discourse which Lucretius highlights: they expound illustrious discoveries (*exponunt praeclara reperta*). The word *praeclarus* is chosen both times to reflect the genuine fame which Empedocles and his doctrine enjoy. Moreover, the vocabulary recalls Lucretius' own efforts to *illustrare* the *obscura reperta* of the Greeks ('elucidate the dark discoveries', 1.136–9). The contrast with Heraclitus, *clarus ob obscuram linguam* ('famous for his obscure language'), is unmistakable. For the Roman, as for the Sicilian, the elucidating medium for philosophy is poetry.<sup>33</sup>

Light, as we have seen, is the image for clarity and elucidation, not unnaturally. J. H. Waszink compares the *Peri phuseōs* (*On Nature*) of Parmenides, in which light and truth are strongly identified with one another.<sup>34</sup> Relevant also are the closing lines of Book 1 which comment on the student's advancement in understanding (1.1114–17):

<sup>30</sup> Cabisius, op. cit. (n. 16), 240–4.

<sup>31</sup> Bailey, op. cit. (n. 1), 727, observed that this instance of *carus* should perhaps be read as a Hellenistic sphragis (Lucretius' cognomen was Carus); cf. Gale, op. cit. (n. 14), 59.

<sup>32</sup> Cicero *ND* 1.93; D.L. 10.25; Plut. *Adv. Coloten* 1123b.

<sup>33</sup> Lucretius' poetic debt to Empedocles: Kollman, op. cit. (n. 4); Lenaghan, op. cit. (n. 4); Sedley, op. cit. (n. 2), 190–1; Gale, op. cit. (n. 14), 59–74. Sedley, op. cit. (n. 2), 13–14, observes that in 1.136–9, Lucretius also stresses Empedocles' clarity.

<sup>34</sup> 'Lucretius and Poetry', *Mededelingen der koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen* 17 (1954), 253; cf. W. J. Verdenius, 'Parmenides' Conception of Light', *Mnemosyne* 4 (1949), 116–31; A. P. D. Mourelatos, *The Route of Parmenides* (New Haven, 1970), 241–6; Gale, op. cit. (n. 14), 202–4.

haec sic pernosces parva perductus opella;  
 namque alid ex alio clarescet nec tibi caeca  
 nox iter eripiet quin ultima naturai  
 pervideas: ita res accendent lumina rebus.

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in this way, led on by little effort, you will understand these matters thoroughly, for one thing will be made clear by another, nor will blind night steal the path from you and thereby prevent your seeing the extreme aspects of nature—so clearly will one matter give light to others.

The image, one light kindling another, is borrowed from Ennius.<sup>35</sup> The *caeca nox* ('blind night') is the darkness of ignorance, the light is the true light of reason, as suggested in 1.146–8:

hunc igitur terrorem animi tenebrasque necesses  
 non radii solis neque lucida tela diei  
 discutiant, sed naturae species ratioque.

therefore it is necessary that this terror and darkness of mind be dispelled, not by the sun's rays or the bright shafts of day, but by the outward appearance and the inner logic of nature.

For Lucretius poetry is the medium of that *ratio*.

This is most apparent in Lucretius' poetic credo, which follows immediately his Presocratic doxography (1.921–50). Scholars have rightly lavished attention on this passage and a close reading of the entire text is not needed here.<sup>36</sup> It is enough to remind the reader that Lucretius sets two goals for his poetry: clarity and charm. Consider, for example, lines 933–4:

... obscura de re tam lucida pango  
 carmina, musaeo contingens cuncta lepore.

...I compose such clear poetry about a dark subject, touching everything with the Muses' charm.

Poetry is a vehicle for pellucid exposition; its purpose is to enlighten the reader (1.948–50):

<sup>35</sup> *Scaenica* 398–400 Vahlen = 313–16 Jocelyn; cf. West, op. cit. (n. 17), 30.

<sup>36</sup> See now Gale, op. cit. (n. 14), 138–55, for discussion and previous scholarship. 1.926–50 = 4.1–25, a potential editorial problem that need not distract us here; cf. Gale, op. cit. (n. 14), 116.

si tibi forte animum tali ratione tenere  
 versibus in nostris possem, dum perspicias omnem  
 naturam rerum qua constet compta figura.

if by such a method I might keep your mind engaged in my poem until you recognize in what design the entire nature of things is framed.

Thus Lucretius' praise for Empedocles, motivated by his admiration for the Sicilian's verse, reflects the Roman's conscious belief, stated openly several times, that poetry is well able to communicate philosophical ideas understandably.

Clarity in philosophic discourse was an issue of some importance to Epicurus and hence to Lucretius. Epicurus taught that speech is corporeal; words are physical things which produce the sensation of hearing (D. L. 10.53). And the best way to employ words, particularly in philosophic discussion, is without ambiguity. In *Letter to Herodotus* 38 he advises: 'we must accept without explanation the first mental image brought up by each word if we are to have a standard to which to refer a particular inquiry, problem, or opinion'.<sup>37</sup> Clarity is, of course, one of the four virtues of style (Cicero, *De or.* 3.49) and thus a natural goal for any writer. Yet Lucretius' asseveration that poetry is capable of clarity seems best understood as a function of his Epicureanism and not as a standard stylistic reflex. This seems especially likely when one considers Epicurus' attitude toward poetry, which is based upon his demand for clarity.

Diogenes Laertius (10.121) reports the opinion of the master on versifying: 'only the wise will converse correctly about music and poetry, but the wise man would not write poetry'. Although Epicurus did not condemn every aspect of the experience of poetry—the pleasure that can be derived from poetry was conceded—he remained highly suspicious of poetry as a medium for education and for philosophical discourse.<sup>38</sup> His strictures regarding clarity seem to disallow ornamental imagery, complicated and suggestive symbolism, in short much if not most of the stock-in-trade of the poet's craft. Cicero's portrayal of the Epicureans in *Fin.* 1.71–2 indicates

<sup>37</sup> See also D.L. 10.13; Cic. *Fin.* 2.15. Epicurus on language: D.L. 10.52, 53, 75.

<sup>38</sup> See now Janko, *op. cit.* (n. 9), 9 (with further literature); see also the collection of essays in D. Obbink (ed.), *Philodemus and Poetry: Poetic Theory and Practice in Lucretius, Philodemus, and Horace* (Oxford, 1995).

that in the first century they continued to keep aloof from the art, though Epicureans certainly held views and argued about poetics. Philodemus versified, but was in Cicero's eyes quite the exceptional Epicurean (*Pis.* 70), and even he thought little of the philosophical or educational use of poetry. Didactic poetry, then, was not a familiar aspect of Epicurean philosophic writing before Lucretius.<sup>39</sup> Whatever his personal reasons for composing *De rerum natura*, the point is that in using poetry to expound Epicureanism he made a conscious and significant innovation in the Garden. Our poet supports, defends if you will, that innovation by appeal to the master's views on good philosophic discourse. He illustrates poetry's value for philosophic exposition by means of a comparison of his own discourse with the obscurity of Heraclitus and with the technical philosophical jargon typified by the term *homoeomeria*. The centrepiece of his argument on style is Empedocles, both a great poet and, as evidenced by his notable place in the tradition of Epicurean doxography, an important philosopher. Lucretius concludes his case with a statement of his own poetic inspiration, which also demonstrates poetry's utility.

The pieces fit together. Lucretius' specific choice of Heraclitus, Empedocles, and Anaxagoras in this passage cannot be explained solely in terms of his immediate philosophic argument, as previous scholarship has attempted to do. Their value as exponents of various sorts of philosophic discourse must also be taken into account. The polemical doxography, a common feature of Epicurean writing and a traditional outlet for the Epicurean writer's creativity, is exploited by Lucretius to make his case for Epicurean philosophical poetry.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Epicurean poetics: Janko, *op. cit.* (n. 9), 129–34, and of course the evidence of Philodemus' *On Poems*, on which see Janko, *op. cit.* (n. 9), *passim*. In any case, it appears that Lucretius was little influenced by the ideas of contemporary Epicureans: cf. Sedley, *op. cit.* (n. 2), 65–93.

<sup>40</sup> This essay, originally published in 1984 (during my student days), has been only very modestly revised. Translations (utilitarian, not literary) have been included, unnecessarily comprehensive footnotes have been pruned and minimal references to modern scholarship have been added (the reader is urgently referred to the editor's thorough survey of recent work on Lucretius). Every temptation toward wholesale rewriting, however strong, has been resisted.

## Distant Views: The Imagery of Lucretius 2

*Phillip De Lacy*

The proemium of the second book of the *De rerum natura*, coming in the middle of Lucretius' presentation of the atomic theory, has been a source of difficulty to students of the poem.<sup>1</sup> It contains no explicit reference to what went before or what is to follow; and it appears to be merely an interruption which, like a choral interlude in a poorly written tragedy, could be placed equally well at any other point in the poem.

Such is the usual opinion. I should like to suggest, however, that there is a connection between the second proemium and the rest of the book. It lies in the vistas and views presented in the proemium and reflected in the subsequent portrayal of the atomic universe in a way that brings unity and added significance to the whole.

The very opening lines of the proemium present three vistas in quick succession: first, seeing from the shore the distress of another on a stormy sea:

Suave mari magno turbantibus aequora ventis  
e terra magnum alterius spectare laborem;

It is sweet to watch from dry land another's great toil on great seas, when winds are stirring the deep;

second, watching a great battle from a point of safety:

suave etiam belli certamina magna tueri  
per campos instructa tua sine parte pericli;

<sup>1</sup> This article is based on the presidential address delivered at the sixtieth annual meeting of CAMWS, March 27, 1964.

sweet too it is to look on the great strife of war ranged over the battlefield,  
without any danger on your own part;

and third, looking down from the serene heights of philosophy,

despicere unde queas alios passimque videre  
errare . . .

whence you can look down on others and see them straying all around . . .

In all three situations the distance and detachment of the viewer are crucial. In the first two there is a literal removal that puts him out of the reach of danger; in the third, a metaphorical detachment permits him to see human life from a philosophical point of view.

In the lines that follow, Lucretius reinforces his point by drawing a contrast between men of wealth and power who fail to disengage themselves from the world and its troubles, and the simple carefree life of the countryside. Here, as in the opening scenes, there is a movement from physical well-being, portrayed in the traditional pastoral scene with its grass, stream, shade tree, and fair weather, to tranquillity of mind. This is the same movement, incidentally, that we find in the beginning of the proemium to Book 1, where the joys of activity at the coming of spring give way, gradually, to the quieter but more enduring joys of peace, and (if we follow the text of the manuscripts) culminate in the description of divine felicity. The second proemium, like the first, the third, and the sixth, ends with the image in which philosophical wisdom, rather than the light of the sun, dispels the fear that attends the darkness of ignorance:

hunc igitur terrorem animi tenebrasque necesses  
non radii solis neque lucida tela diei  
discutiant, sed naturae species ratioque.

This terror and this darkness must be dispelled from our minds  
not by the rays of the sun and the bright shafts of daylight, but  
by the outward view and inner laws of nature.

After the proemium, as Lucretius resumes his exposition of atomism, he presents another set of scenes which help to understand the movement of atoms through the void. First is a generalized view of the successive changes in things caused by the constant arrival and departure of atoms. Examples are youth and old age, the growth and

decline of nations, the generations of living things that, like runners, pass on the torch of life (79). Soon after, we are asked to look at rays of sunlight entering a house, and observe in them the tiny particles that move about, advancing and retreating as if in endless battle (114–20). A few lines later we watch the light of dawn spreading over the earth and listen to the birds singing in remote woodlands (144–9).

These scenes, and the many more that follow, all illustrate some point that Lucretius is making about the atoms. They all cast us in the role of observers of the cosmic spectacle that unfolds before us. As for the atoms themselves, our view of them too is a distant one, not in the sense that we are spatially removed from them, for of course they are all around us and in us; but because their very small size does not permit a close view (cf. 312–13). Lucretius uses a pair of images to clarify the matter: we see a collection of atoms only as we see a flock of sheep on a distant hillside; the sheep are in constant motion, the lambs leaping and playing, but we see only a patch of white (317–22). Or again, when we look down from some high mountain on an army marching in a distant plain, all the excited action is calmed, and we see only a stationary brilliance (323–32).

Already a few points of contact can be observed between the proemium and the exposition that follows. There is the same underlying disposition to assume the role of spectator, to take a detached view of things. There are similarities also in the images used, the light of the sun, the country scenes, the panorama of human life. Of special importance, I think, is the recurring theme of the military spectacle. There were several variations on this theme in the proemium: the view from a safe distance of the *belli certamina magna* ('great strife of war', 5), followed by the use of the word *certare* ('striving') in the picture of human folly (11); then the portrayal of the general whose mighty army does not have the power to banish anxiety and fear (40–9). Further variations appear in the account of atomism: the motes in the sunbeam, engaged in an eternal struggle (*aeterno certamine*, 118), give a clue to the way in which the atoms attack and strike each other (136–7); and the distant view of the army as an indistinguishable mass is analogous to our view of a mass of atoms.

This repetition of the military theme emphasizes the point that distance really does make a difference. In the proemium, being far

away makes the difference between danger and safety; in the atomic theory, being far removed from the atoms makes the difference between a world of endless random motion, where the only events are collisions and rebounds, and a world of relatively stable, recognizable objects behaving in relatively orderly ways. Removal from the warring atoms, it seems, is as essential to our well-being as removal from the storm at sea, the battlefield, and the destructive conflicts engendered by human ignorance and folly.

We may say, of course, that there is a great difference between our avoiding human conflicts, which is a matter of voluntary action, and our estrangement from the atoms, with which we could never be on intimate terms even if we wished. But the difference is not so great as it seems. Just as we cannot come to terms with other men unless we have a correct view of human life, so we can come to terms with the universe only if we understand its nature and look at it in the right way. So it is, in a real sense, our own doing, whether we let ourselves be buffeted about by ignorance and fear, as by a storm at sea (a favourite Epicurean metaphor), or scale the calm heights of wisdom.

The wrong way to look at the universe is, for Lucretius, precisely this: to look on it not as something remote and indifferent, but as involving us in a way that makes us the helpless victims, in this life and for all we know in the next, of cosmic powers whose ways we cannot understand. This view of the universe, he contends, leads only to fear and desperation.

The right approach rests on the knowledge that the natural world is irrelevant. We examine it only in order to prove that it is incapable of causing fear or anxiety; we learn about atomic processes only to dismiss them. Had not Epicurus himself said, 'If we were not disturbed by apprehension about things in the sky and fear that death somehow concerns us and ignorance of the limits of pain and desire, we would not need natural science'<sup>2</sup> It is, then, up to us to put ourselves in the right relation to nature, as we do to ships and armies; we must take the distant view, the perspective gained by philosophical wisdom, which brings security in the same measure as it brings understanding. This is the life of the gods, who themselves, from their distant abodes in the spaces between the universes, are indeed far removed from our world and its troubles: *semota ab nostris rebus seiunctaque longe* ('apart and far removed from our affairs', 648).

<sup>2</sup> KD 11.



Thus the second proemium has the same relation to the rest of the book as the initial perspectives on human affairs—seafaring, fighting, contending for wealth and power—have to the subsequent perspectives on the physical world as a whole. Just how close this relation is, will be clarified by a backward look at the use made by other Greek and Latin writers of some of the Lucretian images. First, let us consider ships and armies.

Looking at ships and armies has always been popular. The spectacle of a plain filled with men and horses and gleaming bronze is as old as Homer.<sup>3</sup> One of Sappho's love poems, recovered from a papyrus, contains the following stanza (fr. 27a.1–4 Diehl):

Some say a company of knights, some a troop of foot soldiers, some a fleet of ships, is the most beautiful thing on the dark earth; but I say, it is the one you love.

Herodotus, too, liked a parade. In 7.187 he described Xerxes' army and was moved to remark that no person in it was more deserving of the supreme command than Xerxes himself, because of his beauty and stature. In an earlier passage (7.44–6) he related that Xerxes had a throne built on a hill so that he could view his entire force. The sight caused him to weep, when he thought that not one of all that great assembly would still be alive a hundred years later; his advisers, meanwhile, worried about the difficulties of supplying and transporting so large a force. Later Xerxes himself was to leap up from his throne three times in terror, as he watched the engagement at Thermopylae (7.212). Lucretius alludes in Book 3 to Xerxes' crossing the Hellespont, and E. Bignone once suggested, with good reason, that Lucretius' description in the second proemium of the general who feels anxiety and fear even as he reviews his mighty armament, contains an allusion to the Great King of the Persians.<sup>4</sup>

But ships and armies appealed also to philosophers. Aristotle found in them models for understanding the whole universe. Among the 'fragments' assigned by his editors to a lost work entitled *On Philosophy* is the following passage:<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Iliad* 2.455–65; *Odyssey* 14.267–8.

<sup>4</sup> See C. Bailey (ed.), *Lucretius*, vol. 3 (Oxford, 1947), Addenda, p. 1752.

<sup>5</sup> Fr. 12b Ross = Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. math.* 9.26–7. The lines of verse are *Iliad* 4.297–8 and 2.554.

If a person sitting on Mt Ida at Troy had seen the army of the Greeks advancing on the plain in order and by ranks,

Knights first, with chargers and chariots,  
and foot soldiers behind,

such a person would certainly have got the notion that there was someone who saw to the arrangement of these troops, who gave the orders to the soldiers ranked under him, such a person as Nestor or some other hero, who was competent

to marshal horses and armed men.

And just as an expert in navigation, on seeing from far off a ship running before a favourable wind, with all its sails made ready, understands that there is someone directing the ship and guiding it to the intended harbour, just so those who first looked up to the heavens and saw the sun running its race from rising to setting, and saw certain orderly dances of the stars, looked for a designer of this most beautiful arrangement, conjecturing that it happened not by itself, but by the act of some greater and indestructible nature, which is God.

Aristotle's universe is a *τάξις*, an orderly arrangement,<sup>6</sup> and the army and ship serve admirably as illustrations of such an order. In the *Metaphysics* (1075<sup>a</sup>11–15) Aristotle says (Oxford translation):

We must consider also in which of two ways the nature of the universe contains the good and the highest good, whether as something separate and by itself, or as the order of the parts. Probably in both ways, as an army does; for its good is found both in its order and in its leader, and more in the latter; for he does not depend on the order but it depends on him.

By the time of Lucretius such comparisons had become commonplace. An anonymous Greek work of the first century BC, the pseudo-Aristotelian *De mundo*, compares the universe to a ship, a chariot, a household, a chorus (cf. Plato, *Timaeus* 40c), a city, and an army.<sup>7</sup> The philosopher is a spectator, and God is the helmsman, the commander, the head of the household, and so forth. Among the Romans, Cicero repeats the image of the well-directed ship: *cum*

<sup>6</sup> Cf. W. Jaeger, *Aristotle*<sup>2</sup>, tr. R. Robinson (Oxford, 1948), 388.

<sup>7</sup> *De mundo* 398<sup>a</sup>8, 399<sup>b</sup>1–10, 400<sup>b</sup>6–8. A later example is Maximus of Tyre, 13.4, pp. 162–3 Hobein.

*procul cursum navigii videris* ('when you watch the course of a ship from afar', *ND* 2.87), and asks,

What navigating of ships, what marshalling of armies, or again, to compare natural objects, what growth of vine or tree, what living form, what conformation of bodily members, shows nature's skill so much as the universe itself?<sup>8</sup>

Another passage preserves an Aristotelian fragment comparing the universe to a house. If persons who lived in underground dwellings, well lighted, furnished with statues and paintings and all the other things found in the houses of the wealthy, were suddenly to come up to the light of day, they would recognize in the brilliance, beauty, and adornment of heaven and earth the furnishings of the dwelling of those supreme householders, the gods.<sup>9</sup> Here Aristotle was no doubt drawing on Plato's allegory of the cave (*Republic* 7) and the myth of the *Phaedo* (esp. 109c–10a).

Thus the philosophers who looked on the universe as a well-designed, well-governed, unified whole had used such images as the ship, the army, the chariot, the household, to help express their thought. Of course it was always the well-disciplined army, the well-run ship, the well-driven chariot, the well-managed and well-appointed household. These analogies stress the excellence of the cosmic order, and at the same time they give to men a sense of belonging, of being an integrated part of a universe governed by a wise and beneficent ruler. Indeed they give man a privileged place, as he alone of all creatures is able to comprehend the universal harmony. The perspective here, for all its vastness, does not detach men from the totality of things, but rather unites them with it, for we are all of us soldiers in the universal army; we are the crew of the cosmic ship.

This is the view, and these are the symbols, that Lucretius is attacking. He denies that the totality of things is a well-organized, well-directed, unified whole; he denies that there is a supreme power controlling all things and arranging them for the best. But his theoretical arguments, which we need not review here, are not enough; he must discredit even the analogies and images that his opponents used. To

<sup>8</sup> Cicero, *ND* 2.85; for parallels see Pease's note ad loc.

<sup>9</sup> Cicero, *ND* 2.95 = Aristotle, *De philosophia*, fr. 13 Ross. Cf. also *ND* 2.17, with Pease's note.

do this, he does not simply deny that the universe is like an army; he points out, rather, that armies, in battle, are anything but orderly, and even armies on parade are powerless against ignorance and fear. The universe is all too much like an army (2.573–4):

sic aequo geritur certamine principiorum  
ex infinito contractum tempore bellum.

Thus a war is waged forever between the primary particles, struggling through infinite time in evenly-matched combat.

The army is for Lucretius a symbol not of order but of the endless conflict that characterizes atomic movement on the physical level, and, among men, the life of ignorance and folly (cf. 5.43–4). Only the philosopher, by seeing things for what they are, can with that knowledge remove himself from the conflict.

The ship at sea illustrates the same point. Aristotle's ship, symbolic of the orderly universe, was sailing before a favourable wind, making for its intended harbour. Lucretius' ship, in the second proemium, is in heavy seas, bringing distress to those aboard. Later in Book 2, when Lucretius returns to the image of the ship (552–64), it is a complete wreck. Its benches, crossbeams, yardarms, prow, masts, oars, and stern have been scattered over all the earth's shores, a warning to mortals of the dangers of the sea. This, Lucretius says, is the way the atoms scatter through infinite space; and all things would face immediate dissolution were it not for the endless supply of incoming atoms replacing those that depart. In other words, the universe is not so much a ship as a shipwreck.<sup>10</sup>

Lucretius is silent about the comparison of the universe to a house, but he has something to say about the metaphor of household, or family, or state, that is, the notion that there is a supreme power in the universe comparable to a master or parent or ruler. Such analogies were extremely common in the ancient world; at the moment we need

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Lucretius 5.222–4: *tum porro puer, ut saevis proiectus ab undis | navita, nudus humi iacet, infans, indignus omni | vitali auxilio...* ('Then too the infant lies naked on the ground like a sailor cast ashore by the cruel sea, without speech, and in want of everything that sustains life...') and Plut. *Moralia* 1103c–d, where Plutarch compares the Epicurean attitude toward death to that of a person who reassures the passengers on a ship in a storm by telling them that the ship has no pilot and will soon be dashed to pieces on the rocks.

only recall, in addition to the passages already mentioned, Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1075<sup>a</sup>19, where the universe is likened to a household in which freeborn, slaves, and animals all have their proper station; the Stoic Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus*, where the supreme deity is called a father and a king ruling by law; and Cicero, *De natura deorum* 2.15 (with Pease's note), where he is master of the house.

It is not fanciful, I think, to see in Lucretius' famous passage on the Magna Mater (2.600–43) his rejection of this notion. The Great Mother is an excellent target. She is, as he says, mother of gods, of beasts, and of mankind (598–9). But what an unlovely and unloving mother she is! Her chariot is drawn by lions; her mural crown makes her worshippers tremble; her disorderly bands (*catervas*) of mutilated attendants raise a discordant din in her honour, excite themselves to madness, and terrify the people with the weapons they carry. If this frightful lady is head of the cosmic household, Lucretius seems to say, we are in real trouble. As if to emphasize his point, he tells how some people have attempted to make her respectable by interpreting allegorically her barbarous ways and giving them an acceptable meaning. Her terrors, they say, are only for the wicked, and the weapons her attendants carry symbolize their readiness to fight and die for their native earth. But however beautifully you deck them out, they are still false. There is no cosmic household. The gods have their own blessed existence quite unconcerned with our human world (646–51). There is no golden chain, as he says later on (1154), in allusion to a Stoic allegory, which let us mortals down from heaven to earth. We may, if we like, call the sky our father and the earth our mother (cf. 991–8), for they do supply the materials from which we are formed; but this is to use the metaphor in quite a different sense from that intended by the rival schools.

As the second book draws toward its close, Lucretius invites us to view this great universe of ours as only one of an infinite number of universes scattered through infinite space. He warns us (1024–41) not to be alarmed by the newness of his doctrine, for newness in time wears off. His example of this recalls Aristotle's subterranean man, or even more the man who has just emerged from Plato's cave: suppose, he says, that we were now suddenly seeing for the first time the sky, the wandering stars, the sun and moon; how amazed we would be! What could we imagine less believable to persons who had never seen

these things? And yet we have long since become so bored with it all that no one even thinks of looking up at the sky. So, he says, do not be frightened by the novelty of seeing for the first time in your mind that infinite expanse that extends beyond the walls of our universe.

This is indeed a distant view. Once you have seen it, Lucretius continues, you recognize that there are no proud masters ruling it.

For [he says] who could rule the whole of the infinite? Who could hold in his hands the mighty reins of the depths, and guide them? [Notice here the metaphor of the chariot.] Who could set all the heavens alike to turning and warm all the fertile earths with ethereal fires? Or who could be present in all places at all times, make darkness with the clouds, make the clear sky tremble with the sound of thunder, let fall the lightning, often destroying with it his own temples, and withdrawing to the deserts to brandish in fury the weapon that often passes by the guilty and strikes down the innocent and guiltless?

In this passage (1095–1104) once more we see Lucretius undertaking to discredit the traditional symbols. He rejects the notion of a cosmic master by pointing out, as he sees it, the impossibility of the task required of such a ruler, and the absurdity of attributing to him acts that would presumably defeat his own purposes.

The final scene in the book (1105–74) is that of our particular universe taking form, reaching its maximum development, and then declining toward dissolution. It is again a 'distant' view, and it raises in a forceful way the question that we have had with us from the start. Just how is it possible for us to detach ourselves from the world around us? Let us grant that we have severed all ties with officious deities, whether conceived of as navigators, generals, charioteers, householders, parents, or kings; let us suppose that we have in our minds travelled with Epicurus through the whole of infinity and understand it all; let us assume that we have now taken up residence on our philosophical mountaintop. What good is all this if we are sitting on top of a disintegrating universe? How can we detach ourselves from that?

Lucretius answers by contrasting the philosopher and the farmer. The farmer shakes his head and heaves a sigh, as he sees the earth becoming ever less fertile, and his own labours going for nothing. He wearies heaven with his complaints and wishes for the return of the good old days, when men harvested larger crops from smaller fields.

How does he differ from the philosopher? Only in this, that the philosopher understands what is happening, and the farmer does not. This is the essence of what Lucretius has been saying all along. After all, it is not a literal spatial detachment that the philosopher seeks, it is rather the ability to understand what is happening, to see it as an aspect of the workings of nature, and so to observe it calmly. Because the ploughman does not see the deterioration of the soil in the larger context of cosmic process, he is unable to face it with equanimity; while the philosopher, by freeing himself of the ploughman's false beliefs, has, at the same time, separated himself from the ploughman.

This, then, is the unifying theme of the second book of the *De rerum natura*. The subject matter of the book is the atomic universe; its proemium is an imaginative portrayal of the blessings of a life removed from the confusion, the struggles, the folly of the world we live in; its teaching is that just as a true understanding of good and evil protects us from human error, so we may find peace in a universe of meaningless atomic motion simply by understanding what it is and how it operates. The traditional symbols of security and order and power and beauty are as illusory on the cosmic level as they are on the human level.

If we compare the second book, thus interpreted, with other Epicurean writings, and ask ourselves whether Lucretius is here departing in any significant way from the traditions of the school, our answer must be mixed. The notion of an infinite, valueless expanse of atoms and void is authentic enough. It is also a common Epicurean practice to attack the analogies and figures of their opponents. Velleius in the first book of Cicero's *De natura deorum* ridicules the supposedly Platonic comparison of God to an architect, who uses axes and levers and cranes to construct the universe (1.19); and when he comes to the Stoic description of the parts of the universe as members of some great living organism, this cosmic animal, Velleius says, with its arctic and tropical regions, must forever suffer from extremes of cold and heat (1.24). Again, it is typically Epicurean not merely to reject an opposing view, but if possible to reverse it. The journey of the mind through the universe, which for the Platonists was an approach of the soul to God, becomes for the Epicureans the discovery of the atomic theory. Sense-perception, for Plato an uncertain source of truth, is heralded as the only truth we can really depend on. Tendance of the soul (*Phaedo* 107c) becomes

tendance of the belly (Plut. *Mor.* 1097c, 1127b), and to follow Epicurus is to be initiated into the only true mysteries (cf. Plut. *Mor.* 1117b). Against this background the Lucretian reversal of the symbolic meaning of ships and armies is a characteristically Epicurean attempt to add a note of mockery to a refutation.<sup>11</sup>

But if we ask further whether the distant view is orthodox, our answer must be negative. For Lucretius, taking the distant view is in effect pursuing the life of contemplation. The true piety, Lucretius says in a famous passage in the fifth book (1198–1203), is to be able to look at all things with a mind at peace, . . . *pacata posse omnia mente tueri*. Epicurus himself did not attach any such importance to contemplation. He asked his followers rather to memorize a convenient set of rules, which would take care of any problems they might have to face. It was living by the rules, not gazing on the distant scene, that gave them detachment and security.

As for Lucretius himself, throughout the poem he strives for the distant view. He is not always successful, especially when he is looking at the joys and the suffering of mankind. But whatever we may think of his aims, his methods, and his results, we cannot help but be impressed by the titanic struggle he engaged in, a struggle between man and the universe, in which man's only weapon is the living power of his mind—*vivida vis animi*, as Lucretius called it in his praise of Epicurus (1.72). But this weapon, for him, is enough. Nowhere else in ancient literature, to my knowledge, is faith in human reason so eloquently expressed. It, and it alone, gives man the power to follow Epicurus through the flaming walls of the world—*flammantia moenia mundi*—and return triumphant, bringing back the knowledge, and the perspective, that enable him to rise victorious over all.

<sup>11</sup> One of the most striking reversals in Lucretius is the argument (3.526–30) that a gradual death is proof of the mortality of the soul. Although Socrates is not mentioned by name, the implication is clear: Socrates' arguments for immortality in the *Phaedo* are refuted by his manner of dying.



## Lucretius the Epicurean: On the History of Man

David J. Furley

I propose to distinguish two senses of the word 'Epicurean': (1) one who subscribes to the doctrines of Epicurus; (2) a follower of Epicurus.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I believe the original stimulus for this paper, which I acknowledge gratefully, came from an essay contributed to one of my graduate seminars by Dr Gregory Staley.

In preparing the paper, I have consulted the following works, apart from the standard editions and commentaries, which it seems unnecessary to list here:

J. Woltjer, *Lucretii Philosophia cum fontibus comparata* (Groningen, 1877).

M. Guyau, *La morale d'Épicure* (Paris, 1878).

K. Reinhardt, 'Hekataios von Abdera und Demokrit', *Hermes* 47 (1912), 492–513.

L. Robin, 'Sur la conception épicurienne du progrès', *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* 22 (1916), 697 ff.

E. Bignone, *Storia della letteratura latina* II (Florence, 1945).

G. Vlastos, 'On the Prehistory in Diodorus', *AJP* 67 (1946), 51–9.

M. Taylor, 'Progress and Primitivism in Lucretius', *AJP* 68 (1947), 180 ff.

P. Merlan, 'Lucretius, Primitivist or Progressivist?', *JHI* 11 (1950), 364 ff.

A. C. Keller, 'Lucretius and the Idea of Progress', *CJ* 46 (1951), 185–8.

A. Grilli, 'La posizione di Aristotele, Epicuro, e Posidonio nei confronti della storia della civiltà', *Rendiconti dell' Istituto Lombardo, Classe di Lettere...* 86 (1953), 3–44.

P. Giuffrida, 'Il finale (vv. 1440–1457) del V libro di Lucrezio', in *Epicurea in memoriam Hectoris Bignone* (Genoa, 1959), 129–65.

W. Spoerri, *Späthellenistische Berichte über Welt, Kultur und Götter*, Schweizerische Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft 9 (Basel, 1959).

J.-P. Borle, 'Progrès ou déclin de l'humanité?', *MH* 19 (1962), 162–76.

C. R. Beye, 'Lucretius and Progress', *CJ* 58 (1963), 160–9.

T. Cole, *Democritus and the Sources of Greek Anthropology*, American Philological Association Monographs 25 (1967).

L. Edelstein, *The Idea of Progress in Classical Antiquity* (Baltimore, 1967).

A distinction hardly worth making, perhaps? On the contrary, there is an important point in it. To be an Epicurean in the first sense is an attribute shared by both Epicurus and Lucretius; but Lucretius was, while Epicurus was not, an Epicurean in the second sense. If we seek to understand the individual philosophical personality of the Latin poet, it may well be useful to concentrate on something that unquestionably distinguishes him from his master. At any rate, in the hope that this is so I shall focus attention in this paper, not on comparisons between Epicurus' and Lucretius' philosophical arguments, treated timelessly, but on Lucretius' sense of himself and his readers as followers of Epicurus.

I shall begin with a short discussion of what seem to me the difficulties and hazards of other approaches to Lucretius the Epicurean.

In the first place, it is perfectly obvious, although often temporarily forgotten, that Lucretius had access to much more of the written work of Epicurus than we have. If we seize upon some nuance, in the exposition of a piece of doctrine, that appears to differentiate Lucretius from the *Letter to Herodotus*, we must always try to rest content with frustrating conditionals, because we do not know whether Epicurus wrote with the same emphasis and the same tone in his book *On Nature*.<sup>2</sup> There is no need to say more about this.

There is plainly more hope, if we wish to compare Lucretius with Epicurus doctrinally, in fixing upon intellectual developments that belong without any doubt to the two and a half centuries between Epicurus and Lucretius. If we can find Lucretius defending an attitude to such developments, then clearly his defence could not have

W. R. Nethercut, 'The Conclusion of Lucretius' Fifth Book: Further Remarks', *CJ* 63 (1967), 97–106.

L. Perelli, 'La storia dell'umanità nel V libro di Lucrezio', *Atti della Accademia delle Scienze di Torino* 101 (1967), 117–285.

M. Ruch, 'Lucrèce et le problème de la civilisation', *LEC* 37 (1969), 272–84.

V. Buchheit, 'Epikurs Triumph des Geistes', *Hermes* 99 (1971), 303–23 [= Ch. 4 of this volume].

J. C. Fredouille, 'Lucrèce et le double progrès contrastant', *Pallas* 19 (1972), 11–27.

E. J. Kenney, 'The Historical Imagination of Lucretius', *G & R* 19 (1972), 12–24.

Of these, the closest to my own position is the article by J. C. Fredouille, and I wish I had known of it earlier in the preparation of this paper.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. W. E. Leonard, in his General Introduction to the Leonard and Smith edition of Lucretius, p. 32: 'The very different temperament of Epicurus, so imperturbable and unimaginative, so self-secure beyond debate or boast . . .'. How does he know?

been learnt directly from Epicurus, and we can begin to collect evidence that might reveal Lucretius' own enrichment of Epicurean doctrine.

The most significant feature in the history of philosophy in this period was the rise of Stoicism. Although Epicurus lived and taught in Athens alongside Zeno's school for many years, his philosophical doctrines appear to have been worked out before he came to Athens, and no one will suggest that Zeno was a major factor in their formation. Of developments of Stoicism by Cleanthes and Chrysippus, of course, he knew nothing. On the other hand, Lucretius wrote at a time when Stoic literature was extensive, Stoic doctrines were well known to the literate world, and to a great extent Stoicism had displaced the Academy and the Peripatos from the position of authority that they held in the time of Epicurus. If Lucretius, then, could be shown to respond precisely to Stoic positions, to show knowledge of Stoic arguments and to frame reasoned replies to them, that would be a fairly reliable proof that he advanced beyond the position of Epicurus.

If one asks what were the peculiar physical doctrines of the Stoics—doctrines not shared by the fourth-century Academy and Peripatos—those which come to mind at once are the periodic conflagration of the cosmos and its rebirth out of the fire, the fiery creative pneuma which permeates everything in the cosmos, the special kind of mixture (*κρᾶσις δι' ὄλου*) exemplified by the permeation of pneuma, the tension (*τόνος*) imparted by the pneuma which gives each thing its individuality, the *seminal formula* or *spermatic reason* (*σπερματικὸς λόγος*) which accounts for the generation of each new thing, and Fate. I cannot find any passage in Lucretius where one of these doctrines receives special attention.<sup>3</sup> If we turn to ethical questions, the list of characteristic Stoic doctrines would, I suppose, include the 'indifferents' (*ἀδιάφορα*), the equality of vices, the intellectual interpretation of the emotions, and the 'apathy' of the wise man. Again, I can find nothing in Lucretius that takes particular notice of these peculiarities. Lucretius' editors and commentators commonly point to particular passages of the poem with the claim that 'no doubt' he had the Stoics particularly in mind here. But on

<sup>3</sup> The doctrine of Fate might appear to be an exception, because of Lucretius 2.251–93. I have tried to argue that the philosophical background of this passage is Aristotelian, rather than Stoic, in *Two Studies in the Greek Atomists* (Princeton, 1967), Part II.

examination it appears that these passages always may, and often must, be directed at other targets.<sup>4</sup>

If the Stoics will not serve as a touchstone for testing Lucretius' use of his philosophical legacy from Epicurus, are there not other intellectual advances, post-Epicurean but pre-Lucretian, that might serve the purpose? The special sciences made great strides in this period, and one might perhaps expect Lucretius to take some notice of the astronomy of Eratosthenes, Hipparchus, or Archimedes, or of the physiology of Herophilus and Erasistratus, or of other similar work. In fact, we find no clear evidence in Lucretius of any acquaintance with this work. Lucretius seems to take more notice of Presocratic theories than of Hellenistic ones. The sixth book of *De rerum natura* evidently uses material from earlier meteorology—but the closest connections seem to be with no one later than Theophrastus.<sup>5</sup> Although the subject of astronomy—or rather of astrophysics—was important to Epicureans, for obvious reasons, their attitude to astronomical science was cavalier. The study of Book 5.416–770 shows Lucretius to be a good poet and a good Epicurean, but it does not throw any special light on the nature of his Epicureanism.

I turn now to the main subject of this paper—to Lucretius the Epicurean in the second sense.

It needs no long argument to show that Lucretius was indeed conscious of the philosophical activity of Epicurus as an event in history (1.62–7):

humana ante oculos foede cum vita iaceret  
 ...  
*primum* Graius homo mortalis tollere contra  
 est oculos ausus, primusque obsistere contra.

When human existence lay basely before one's eyes... a Greek man first dared to raise his vision in defiance, and was the first to offer resistance.

In just the same way, in the lines that Lucretius imitates here, Empedocles picked out a particular event (the philosophical activity

<sup>4</sup> See my article 'Lucretius and the Stoics', *BICS* 13 (1966), 13–33, where I have attempted to argue this in detail.

<sup>5</sup> See E. Reitzenstein, *Theophrast bei Epikur und Lukrez* (Heidelberg, 1924), and the Appendix to Book 6 in C. Bailey's 1947 edition of Lucretius.

of Pythagoras, according to the ancient source) as crucial to the growth of understanding (31 B 129 DK):

ἦν δέ τις ἐν κείνοισιν ἀνὴρ περιώσια εἰδώς...

There was one amongst them, a man of surpassing knowledge...

At the beginning of Book 3, Lucretius reiterates the same theme:

E tenebris tantis tam clarum extollere lumen  
qui *primus* potuisti inlustrans commoda vitae  
te sequor, o Graiae gentis decus...

You who first succeeded in raising so clear a light from such gloom and who illuminated the positive side of life, I follow you, O glory of the Greek people...

And again, climactically, at the beginning of Book 5 (8–10):

dicendum est, deus ille fuit, deus, inclute Memmi,  
qui *princeps* vitae rationem invenit eam quae  
nunc appellatur sapientia...

It must be said: he was a god, a god, famous Memmius, who first discovered that way of life which is now called wisdom...

There was a time *before*, when human life was tainted with fear and greed, then came the teaching of Epicurus, and now *we*—Lucretius, Memmius, and all of mankind—have been taught the wisdom (if we will listen to it) that will enable us to live in peace and purity of mind.

Now, when Lucretius expounds the tenets of Epicurean atomism, about the elements of the physical world, or cosmology, or even morality, there may well be no particular significance in the chronological distance between himself and Epicurus. But there is one context in which it can hardly fail to be significant: namely, in the long account, at the end of Book 5, of the *history* of human civilization. It would have been difficult for Epicurus to view himself and his work as a point of discontinuity between earlier and later time. At least, if Epicurus made such a claim for himself (and there is no evidence that he did), he plainly could not make it with the same air of proclaiming a *fact*—a piece of good news—with which Lucretius invests it. Epicurus rarely refers to himself in the first person singular in the extant letters when he is expounding his philosophy; in the

introductions, where he does refer to himself, he seems to me to adopt the tone of one who seeks for the truth along with his readers. There is, of course, a well known tradition that Epicurus was the most ungenerous of all Greek philosophers in his treatment of his predecessors, and went to great lengths to dissociate himself from all 'influences'. But this tradition itself rests on shaky ground, and it seems to me to have been grossly exaggerated by the commentators.<sup>6</sup> The tradition rests very largely on Diogenes Laertius 10.7–8, where the tales of Epicurus' rudeness about other philosophers are retailed along with other tales that Diogenes explicitly declares to be slanders on Epicurus; and Diogenes follows with the remark: 'But all these people [*sc.* who tell these tales] are crazy, since there are abundant witnesses to Epicurus' unsurpassed kindness to all men.' Moreover, where the slanders can be checked, they get no confirmation. 'Run away from all *paideia*' is quoted from 'the Letter to Pythocles', but it cannot be found in the extant *Letter*. 'Lerocritus' is said to be Epicurus' contemptuous nickname for Democritus, but this contempt finds no expression in the *Letter to Herodotus*. The evidence does not suggest that Epicurus himself claimed to be a divinely inspired prophet with a totally new message.

Lucretius, however, committed himself to such a view of Epicurus, in the passages quoted above, and thereby found himself confronted with a problem, if he was to save his consistency in his account of the development of human civilization. Following Epicurus' own doctrine, he must explain the history of man as a continuous development, wholly dependent on natural causes, from the first natural growth of men from the earth to contemporary civilizations. The important thing will be to eliminate the need for supernatural breaks in the continuity, so as to combat rival theories involving a 'creator' or 'lawgiver'. But then the happy condition of the Epicurean community, accessible to all mankind if they will only listen, needs precisely this to explain it—a break away from previous history, produced by a kind of 'lawgiver', Epicurus himself.

<sup>6</sup> For example, C. Bailey, *The Greek Atomists and Epicurus* (Oxford, 1928), 226. For a detailed criticism of the tradition, see now D. Sedley, 'Epicurus and his Professional Rivals', in *Études sur l'Épicurisme antique*, ed. J. Bollack et A. Laks (Lille, 1976), 119–59.

To put it another way, Lucretius must show that the well-known achievements of mankind—the progressive stages of technology, political and social institutions, and so on—were learnt from nature.<sup>7</sup> But he must bear in mind all the time that nature *uninterpreted* or wrongly interpreted produces not Epicurean enlightenment, but only the impoverished and darkened mentality of pre-Epicurean society. As he puts it himself in a phrase that he liked well enough to use four times, the pre-Epicurean terror and darkness of mind must be dispersed by *naturae species ratioque* ('the form and reason of nature', 1.146–8; 2.59–61; 3.91–3; 6.39–41)—that is, by looking at nature *and interpreting it*. The commentators have not always seen the point of this fully. Bailey's translation 'the outer view and the inner law of nature' does not quite get it right, and his analysis in the note on 1.51 does not justify the translation. C. Giussani glosses the word *ratio* with *φυσιολογία*, which is correct, and A. Ernout quotes Cicero, *Fin.* 1.63 *omnium autem rerum natura cognita levamur superstitione, liberamur mortis metu, non conturbamur ignoratione rerum* ('but when the nature of all things is understood, we are raised above superstition and freed from the fear of death, nor are we disturbed by our ignorance about things'), where the word *cognita* ('understood') makes the right point.

That is not to say, of course, that Lucretius was committed to the idea of an *opposition* between the tendencies of nature and the doctrines of Epicurus. The relationship is a good deal more subtle than that. Epicurean doctrine is not unnatural or antinatural—and of course not supernatural: *deus ille fuit* ('he was a god') is not to be taken literally. Nature without Epicurean interpretation taught mankind how to make clothes, fires, metals, language, cities, music; and the Epicurean is not required to reject any of these things. What, then, is inadequate about nature's teaching? Chiefly, it may be that it is *endlessly* suggestive. Man is apt to pick up from nature a line of progress, without picking up the realization that the line has an end, or, to change the metaphor, that although one may continue along the same path, at a certain point one ceases to climb and starts going downhill. Thus the invention of metals is good in that it provides

<sup>7</sup> There was of course a long tradition of imaginative histories of the development of man, beginning perhaps as far back as Anaxagoras. For bibliography and a recent account, see Cole, *op. cit.* (n. 1)

man with a means of security against wild beasts, but bad when it leads to a greed for gold.

Epicurus' understanding of nature, according to Lucretius, was superior in just this, that he understood the *limits* of things (1.74–7):

atque omne immensum peragravit mente animoque,  
unde refert nobis victor quid possit oriri,  
quid nequeat, finita potestas denique cuique  
quanam sit ratione atque alte terminus haerens.

He traversed the whole universe with his mind and soul, whence he proclaims to us, victorious, what can come into being, what cannot, according to what principle each thing ultimately has its own limited power and a firmly established boundary.

Nature herself is given a voice by Lucretius to protest at being misinterpreted by men who believe that life offers a *limitless* variety of pleasures (3.944–5):

nam tibi praeterea quod machiner inveniamque,  
quod placeat, nihil est: eadem sunt omnia semper.

There is nothing further that I might devise or invent that would please: all things are the same always.

Nature speaks, and with an Epicurean accent. The good Epicurean *interprets* the message of nature. There is no clash of motives between nature and Epicurus, but nature needed the life and work of Epicurus to make its message clear.

If this idea is right, then we can conclude at once that the question so often posed about Lucretius' history of civilization, 'primitivist or progressivist?', is quite beside the point. It could hardly be, for him, either a matter of a 'natural' decline from a primitive golden age, or of a progression to higher and higher levels of prosperity and happiness. What we would expect, rather, is a step-by-step account of the growth of civilization with a mainly negative emphasis—to show that *no* step requires supernatural agencies for its explanation—together with Epicurean reflexions about the spiritual impoverishment of any or perhaps each of the stages.

Let us probe a little more deeply into what we might expect of Lucretius in this situation, first stating our hypothesis somewhat more exactly.



It is, first, that Lucretius found in the writings of Epicurus an account of the growth of the institutions of human civilization, following upon the description of the origin of life on earth. It hardly needs to be proved that Epicurus would interest himself in this topic, in view of the clear indications that it had long been a point of contention between those who believed the world had an origin, like Anaxagoras and Democritus, and supporters of an eternal cosmos, like Aristotle. But in any case the very brief account in *Letter to Herodotus* 75–6 is proof enough. Some, like Giussani and Bailey, believed that a fuller version of Epicurus' theory is to be found in Diodorus Siculus 1.7–8, but this belief had already been shown to be dubious by Reinhardt, and it looks still more threadbare after Cole's careful analysis.<sup>8</sup> If we cannot use Diodorus to fill out our picture of Epicurus' theory, we must make the most of the slight indications that we find in the *Letter to Herodotus*.

'One is to assume' says Epicurus, 'that nature itself was instructed and constrained as to many and various matters by the very facts (*ὅπ' αὐτῶν τῶν πραγμάτων*), and that reasoning later sharpened up and added further discoveries to the lessons passed on by nature, in some matters more quickly and in some more slowly' (*Ep. Hdt.* 75).

The first point that receives special emphasis here is that the opening move is accomplished by the sheer physical interaction between man and the environment: this is what provides the material for human reason to work on. With this simple move, Epicurus countered three different rival theories. There is, first, the naive idea that an Athena or a Hermes made a gift of the arts to man—the idea that is explicitly denied in the parallel passage of Diogenes of Oenoanda (fr. 10). Secondly, Epicurus' theory undermines the argument of Plato in *Laws* 10 that art is prior to nature and chance as a source of motion. Thirdly, it shows that the complicated hypothesis that apparently featured in Aristotle's dialogue *On Philosophy*—that the cosmos is liable to periodic floods and conflagrations, after which the arts grow all over again from ideas preserved by a few survivors—is quite unnecessary.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> See Reinhardt and Cole, *opp. cit.* (n. 1).

<sup>9</sup> Arist. *De philosophia* fr. 8 Ross.

Secondly, we must notice that Epicurus distinguishes two steps in the development process: an irrational effect of the environment, and a rational use of the lessons taught by the environment. But it would be wrong to think of these as two successive chronological periods. The only point of importance is that the intelligent development of the arts presupposes the unplanned effect of the environment.

Thirdly, Epicurus mentions that the contribution of reason was a gradual process that took more time in some fields than in others.

These general principles are then exemplified in the famous description of the development of languages.<sup>10</sup>

There are no moral reflections in this part of the *Letter*. The following sections deal with the motion of the heavens, and in this connection Epicurus frequently refers to the moral principle familiar from *Kyriai Doxai* 11 and 12: that freedom from fear of the gods can come only to one who has the right philosophy of nature (*φυσιολογία*). There is no trace, however, so far as I can see, of the idea that this philosophy of nature is itself a feature to be fitted into the scheme of development that was sketched in §§75–6. Epicurus suggests neither that his philosophy of nature started from a natural impulse and progressed by stages, like other arts, nor that he himself, the inventor, was responsible for bringing about an exception to this gradualism. He simply does not consider the question.<sup>11</sup>

Our hypothesis is, then, that Lucretius found in his collection of works of Epicurus a fully worked-out theory of the history of civilization and the arts, written in the same spirit as the relevant passage of the *Letter to Herodotus*. He himself worked this material into a new shape. That it was Lucretius who was the author of this new shape, and not some unknown intermediate source (the unwanted standby

<sup>10</sup> I take it that this passage *is* to be thought of as an example. A summary letter has no room for more than one example, and the general point is made more clearly by setting out one theme in some detail than by surveying many themes. There is no great significance, then, in the fact that Lucretius gives equal weight to many other matters. There may yet be significance, of course, in the detailed differences of treatment of the theme of language, but we shall not discuss that here.

<sup>11</sup> There are two other Epicureans whose writings in this field have been partially preserved (apart from Lucretius): Diogenes of Oenoanda, and Hermarchus, the first scholar, whose account of the origin of laws against homicide is reproduced in Porphyry, *De abstinentia* 1.10–11. There is nothing in either of these that is similar to Lucretius' *primum Graius homo*...

of those who hate to impute originality to any writer), seems to me a reasonable supposition. The focus of this reworking is the rhetorical elevation of the role of Epicurus in the history of civilization; and that is surely something that belongs to the structure of Lucretius' poem. The reworking must preserve the principles of the original—that the initial move in each process comes from the environment itself, and that the development takes place by gradual stages, as human reason deliberates about the natural facts. But the whole development is now to be studied in its relation to the discoveries (*divina reperta*) of Epicurus, which took place at a particular time in this development but stand out as an exceptional event, neither caused by the automatic necessity of the environment like the first communicative noises of animals, nor prepared by gradual stages in earlier history like the use of iron for ploughshares. The philosophy of Epicurus thus provides Lucretius with a new viewpoint from which to study the history of man; and it is just this viewpoint that gives the moral perspective to Lucretius' 'anthropology'.

Of course, in the Epicurean system the development of human society and technology is necessarily a progression of a certain sort. There was first a simple way of life, when the human species first emerged from earth, now a highly complex one, and the task is to describe the gradual progression from one to the other. But neither simplicity itself, nor complexity itself, gives a *morally better* way of life: which of the two is better is simply something that has to be determined by looking at both in the light of Epicurus' moral principles. What we should expect of Lucretius, therefore, if this hypothesis is correct, is that he would describe the development, by exercising his imagination on the theory of human history laid down by Epicurus, and take care to point out the moral inadequacies of each stage.<sup>12</sup> We should add that since what he describes is inevitably a progression of a sort, as we have said, we might think he would especially emphasize, to avoid misunderstanding, that this progression is not a moral one—that the latter stages are not better, and can be worse, than the earlier.

The next step is to test this hypothesis by looking for confirmation or refutation of these expectations in Book 5 of *De rerum natura*. The

<sup>12</sup> There is a stimulating tribute to Lucretius' historical imagination by Kenney, *op. cit.* (n. 1).

outcome—to anticipate—is that there is nothing in the text, so far as I can see, that falsifies our hypothesis. Furthermore, what is found in the text is accounted for more plausibly by this explanation than by any of the others that have been advanced: for example, that Lucretius was really a progressivist, because that was the teaching of Epicurus, but was inhibited from being wholeheartedly a progressivist because of his misanthropy, pathological fears, or compassionate poetic sensibilities; or that he was really a primitivist, because he was committed to the thesis that the world is now past its prime and is proceeding downhill towards ultimate dissolution, but was sometimes distracted from this thesis by the beauty of nature's lessons and the ingenuity of human art; or that Epicureanism was optimistic but Lucretius was a pessimist.

Although the whole passage must be carefully examined before we can accept our hypothesis as the best available explanation, that will not be possible within the limits of this paper. I propose to comment on three sections only: the description of the life of primitive man (925–1010), the origin of wrong beliefs about the gods (1161–1240), and the end of the book.

On the subject of primitive man, I shall be as brief as possible, since so much has already been written. The first point to note is that the passage follows closely upon a description of the origin of living species from the earth, and the process of natural selection of the fittest to survive, from the large (although limited) variety of spontaneously produced creatures. Although Lucretius interposes a forty-seven line paragraph explaining the limits imposed on this variety by the facts of nature (878–924), we should remember that initially the subject under discussion at 925 ff. is *survival*. We have already heard that lions survive because of their *virtus* ('courage'), foxes because of their *dolus* ('cunning'), deer because of their *fuga* ('swiftness in flight'), and dogs, sheep, and cattle because their services have earned them protection at the hands of men. But man, as we can see, has none of these advantages, and it is obvious that contemporary men and women, thrust out into raw nature without any of their technology, would have a poor chance of survival. So in this case the historical imagination of Lucretius must go to work within strict limits: he could hardly do other than give primitive men a stronger, hardier constitution than men of the Roman Republic (*multo durius*, 'much tougher', *solidis magis ossibus* 'with stronger bones', 925–7).

Having made this point, Lucretius stresses what they lacked: ploughing, iron, agriculture, fire, clothes, houses, politics, laws, legal marriage. They ate berries, drank water, lived in caves, slept under brushwood, mated through love, rape, or barter, defended themselves against animals with stones. There is nothing, so far, that is not an almost inevitable consequence of Epicurean physical theory. This is the first stage on the (non-moral) progression towards the complexity of civilization.

But of course there is more to it than that. A quite different picture can be presented, as many have shown.<sup>13</sup> Lucretius goes on to say that the first men suffered no fear that the sun would fail to return in the morning, and experienced only the same mortality rate, from wild beasts or famine, as men of the present day do from war, shipwreck, and surfeit. Moreover, much of the description of primitive conditions is deliberately contrasted with later passages. Thus primitive man was hardy (*durius*, 926), but later began to soften (*mollescere*, 1014). At first sexual desire was associated with manly strength (962–5), later with weakness (1017). At first, they could withstand cold (929), later the discovery of fire made them less tolerant (1015). Observation of such contrasts led one scholar to claim that for Lucretius ‘primitive man is living the ideal existence, free of entangling human commitments; his sexual encounters can be considered auspicious by virtue of the asocial, antiseptic and atomic implications in the phrase... “*Venus... iungit corpora amantum*” [“Venus joined the bodies of lovers”]... The final contrast becomes one of innocence and serenity in ignorance, set beside viciousness and misery in knowledge.’<sup>14</sup>

Now, I submit that this is exaggerated nonsense. It is both ludicrous and unnecessary to think that Lucretius commends to us a life without clothes, houses, fire—or poetry; or that he wants us to return, as to a lost ideal, to fighting for our lives, in constant fear (*paventis*, 986), against wild beasts. It is notorious, of course, that he warns the reader against deep sexual feelings; but that is not to say that he wants to commend rape as an alternative, still less that he wants us to regard even friendship with disapprobation because it

<sup>13</sup> Especially Robin, Beye (n. 1), and P. Boyancé.

<sup>14</sup> Beye, *op. cit.* (n. 1), 166.

first arose in the 'softer' stage of human development (1019). Nor is there any contrast between 'serenity in ignorance' and 'misery in knowledge'. The lines that have been supposed to suggest such a contrast (973–81) in fact make a quite different point: namely, that primitive men lacked those *false superstitions* about the sun which might give rise to the fear that daylight would never return to earth. There is absolutely no warrant for generalizing the passage into a commendation of ignorance and rejection of knowledge.

The hypothesis that I am suggesting, on the other hand, leads to a perfectly consistent and unforced view of the passage. We find in it just that kind of texture that we should expect—on the one hand, the description of a primitive, simple state of unthinking interaction with nature, to be contrasted with more complex and more deliberate ways of life; and on the other hand, a clear moral perspective that surveys both stages, without identifying either of them as worse or better in their own nature. There is much that is morally praiseworthy about the primitive life; and Lucretius praises it in effect, as Robin and others have demonstrated. There is also much that is deplorable, and Lucretius makes that clear too: they were *miseri* ('wretched', 944 and 983), they were afraid (986), they died agonizingly from wounds because of ignorance (998), they suffered from famine (1007), they often died from accidental poisoning (1009). As an Epicurean, Lucretius' criterion for the good life was freedom from anxiety and pain. Admittedly, he contrasts their wounds, caused by wild beasts, with war wounds, their hunger with modern over-indulgence, their accidental poisoning with the wilful murders of modern times. But it is only dedication to a false theory about his intention that has persuaded critics to believe that he meant us to envy and emulate these poor people.

The origin of religion is discussed after an account of the development of social and political structures. In passing, it is worth observing in that account a particularly clear instance of the pattern that confirms our hypothesis—a natural development that is non-moral, assessed by moral criteria drawn from outside that development. At first, Lucretius says (1110 ff.), men of power distributed property to others according to their beauty, strength, or intelligence. But then property and wealth supplanted these natural talents, because the

beautiful and strong people—he carefully omits intelligence this time—normally (*plerumque*) pursue wealth. Then he comments on the folly of this development from the point of view of the true philosophy of life (*siquis vera vitam ratione gubernet*, ‘if one directs one’s life in accordance with true reason’, 1117). But before claiming this as another bit of evidence for the ‘primitivist’ interpretation, one should notice that a few lines further on the natural progression, as it continues, produces a change that must be thought of as better, when unbridled rivalry for power led to a greater reliance on law and punishment. ‘Thenceforward, the fear of penalties taints the prizes of life’ (1151). Bailey comments:<sup>15</sup> ‘... There arose a new disturbing influence in men’s lives, the fear of punishment’—as if this were an *added* misery, another step on the downward path. But that seems to distort the sense somewhat. As an Epicurean, Lucretius would unquestionably prefer the institutions of the law to the violence of anarchy. He makes his moral comment, not by deploring the change in motivation from rivalry and anger to fear of punishment, but by noting simply that because of the fear of punishment one cannot live unjustly and be happy.<sup>16</sup>

The notion that Lucretius intends to present some kind of steady moral progression or decline—especially one from ‘innocence in ignorance’ to ‘misery in knowledge’—is impossible to reconcile with the way he describes the origin of religious beliefs and practices. For he puts together, in the same context, both a theory about true beliefs (according to Epicurus), and one about false beliefs. Visions, waking and sleeping, led men to the notion of gods, in human form, everlastingly alive and supremely happy (1169–82). Beyond that, they observed the seasonal changes of the sky, and in ignorance of the true causes they attributed all the workings of the heavenly bodies and meteorological phenomena to the will of the gods (1183–93). There is no suggestion here that the second of these arguments is a

<sup>15</sup> Bailey, iii.1504.

<sup>16</sup> *inde metus maculat poenarum praemia vitae. | circumretit enim vis atque iniuria quemque | atque unde exortast ad eum plerumque revertit...* (1151–3) I suggest that instead of taking this as a general comment on the folly of mankind, we take full note of *quemque* and *plerumque*, and interpret the lines thus: this is the origin of the fear of punishment, which taints all the good things in the lives of those who suffer from it; their own violence and wrongdoing has a tendency to recoil upon them.

decadent successor to the first, nor even that one preceded the other. Lucretius is vague about the timing: he introduces the first reason with the adverb *iam tum* ('even then', 1169), which presumably means that it was contemporaneous with the early stages of civilization that he has been describing; and he continues with the second reason in the same imperfect tense with no temporal adverb but simply *praeterea* ('besides', 1183).

He follows this description, morally neutral, as we have seen, with his moral comment (1194 ff.):

o genus infelix humanum, talia divis  
cum tribuit facta...

O miserable race of men when it accorded such deeds to the gods.

The structure of this passage needs some clarification: its logic has been much misunderstood.

We have first an exclamation about the miserable folly of mankind in supposing that the phenomena of the sky express the anger of the gods: they thus stored up grief for all future generations (1194–7). There is no piety in maintaining rituals at the altars: piety lies rather in being able to view everything with a mind at peace (1198–1203). For (*nam*, 1204—this is the word that has been seen as a source of trouble) when we contemplate the motions of the stars and planets, 'then into our hearts weighed down by other ills this misgiving too begins to raise up its wakened head' (*tunc aliis oppressa malis in pectora cura | illa quoque expergefatum caput erigere infit*, 1207–8)—the misgiving that perhaps there is some immense divine power that turns the stars. 'For lack of reasoning assails the doubting mind' (*temptat enim dubiam mentem rationis egestas*, 1211), that perhaps the world after all had no natural origin and will have no end, but is endowed with eternal being by the will of the gods.

At first sight, the lines introduced by *nam* (1204 ff.), since they give an explanation of how human beings are led to a belief in powerful, executive gods by the movements of the stars and planets, seem to follow more naturally upon the description of this belief in 1194–7. Hence Giussani, followed by H. Diels, bracketed the intervening lines 1198–1203 as a later addition. Bailey kept the lines in the text in his 1947 edition, but explained the passage as involving either an ellipse,



or (Bailey's own personal favourite) 'another case of Lucretius' "suspension of thought"'. In his paraphrase (p. 1512) he ruthlessly supplanted *nam* with 'yet'.

Editors have been led astray especially, I believe, by misunderstanding two expressions: *aliis oppressa malis* ('weighed down by other ills', 1207) and *dubiam mentem* ('the doubting mind', 1211). Ernout and Robin (also Leonard and Smith) in line 1207 preferred the reading of the Italian manuscripts *in pectore* to *in pectora* (O and Q), alleging that '*in pectora . . . caput erigere infit*' tortures the sense and the grammar.<sup>17</sup> *Oppressa* must therefore agree with *cura*, and has to be read simply as an antithesis to *caput erigere infit*: 'this anxiety, hitherto suppressed beneath other ills, begins too to raise its head'. But why should this anxiety have been hitherto suppressed in this way? And what does that idea add to the sense? Bailey, following Giussani, retains the reading *in pectora*, and takes *oppressa*, correctly, to agree with *pectora*. Yet both he and Giussani miss the point of the phrase. It is not just otiose description, but states the cause of superstitious belief: if the mind is not at peace but oppressed already by other anxieties (i.e. other than superstitious fear), then this fear too begins to raise its head. Having failed to understand this emphasis, the editors also overlook the force of *temptat dubiam mentem* (1211). We should take *dubiam* not proleptically, as Bailey does ('lack of reasoning assails our mind with doubt, whether. . .'), but conditionally: 'if the mind is in doubt, then lack of reasoning troubles it, as to whether. . .?'

The logic is now perfectly straightforward. Early in their history, says Lucretius, men were led to belief in gods, firstly because of dream images and other visions, and secondly because they could not otherwise explain the phenomena of the sky (1169–93—all without moral comment). Wretched creatures! This belief involved them in misery and impiety. True piety does not lie in ritual observances and sacrifices, but in being able to contemplate everything with a mind at peace (1194–1203). For (*nam*, 1204) if the mind is assailed by other ills, then it is easy to fall also into terrifying *and impious* beliefs about

<sup>17</sup> Perhaps they were convinced by A. Brieger's astonishing comment, quoted by Bailey (p. 1517): 'nothing could raise its head into the heart unless it were below the heart, i.e. in the stomach'.

the gods—namely, that they taint their perfect happiness with the work of rolling the heavens around and expressing their anger in thunder and lightning. For if the mind is in doubt, lack of a true philosophy of nature (*rationis egestas*)—the source of this doubt—makes one wonder whether after all the (Epicurean) theory of the mortality of the world must be wrong and the (Platonic-Aristotelian) theory of an everlasting cosmos maintained by divine powers may be right.<sup>18</sup>

This reading of the passage<sup>19</sup> reflects a normal Epicurean view of the nature of true piety and gives us a perfectly rational and coherent sequence of thought, in which the sentences introduced by *nam* in 1204 explain the thought that immediately precedes them. It is confirmed by the following lines 1218–25: it is an uneasy conscience (*ob admissum foede dictumve superbe*, ‘on account of some shameful deed or arrogant word’, 1224) that makes men fear that thunder and lightning are an expression of the gods’ wrath—thus again *other* psychological troubles, of the kind that Epicureanism professes to cure, are the source of impious beliefs. Lucretius’ next thoughts are similar: the admiral of a fleet—*ipso facto* disobeying the Epicurean command to live a quiet life—prays vainly to the gods in a storm. There is a certain unseen force (*vis abdita quaedam*, 1233) that frustrates the ambitions of men. I take this to be a generalizing comment: nature, of itself, brings some evils to men,<sup>20</sup> and if they are ignorant of the true philosophy of nature, which teaches them that these evils are limited and bearable, they allow these experiences to overwhelm them with anxiety; this anxiety makes them fall prey also to the superstitions that are the topic of the whole passage.

Now we may ask what is the relationship between this passage and our hypothesis about the composition of the history of man as a whole. There is a difference in emphasis—a slight and subtle one, but perhaps of some significance—between the rejected reading of the

<sup>18</sup> It may be pointed out in passing that the everlasting cosmos was not an item of Stoic belief. See *supra* p. 160.

<sup>19</sup> One interpreter who comes very close to this same reading is J. H. Waszink, ‘Zum Exkurs des Lukrez über Glaube und Aberglaube (V 1194–1240)’, *WS* 79 (1966), 308–13. But even he does not quite bring out the significance of *aliis oppressa malis*, and speaks (312) of 1203–4 as ‘a sentence, admittedly, not composed in accordance with strict logic’.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. 6.29–31.

passage and the interpretation I have just proposed. Here is Giussani's summary of the whole section from 1181 onwards: 'Observing such and such, men naturally came to believe such and such; poor creatures! But how could it have been otherwise? Observing such and such, how ever could they not have believed such and such?' Thus he points out and attempts to make sense of the repetition of the sense of 1183–93 in 1204–25. The moral comment ('poor creatures!'—actually lines 1194–1203) is a brief section sandwiched between two expressions of the same psychological explanation.

I suggest we should rather summarize thus: 'Observing the sky, men came to believe such and such. Poor creatures! It led them to think piety lies in placating the gods with rituals, whereas true piety is rather to be found in Epicurean philosophy, which enables one to observe the sky without forming impious beliefs.'

Thus the passage represents exactly the pattern our hypothesis leads us to expect. We have a description of a development in human society, followed by a long moral comment which explains the nature of true piety on principles drawn from outside that development. We must recall again that the whole of this theory about superstition follows an account of the origin of *true* religious belief (1169–82). Lucretius' meaning is that nature by itself suggests to the human imagination both the right and the wrong idea of gods. Which is right and which is wrong? Only the discoveries of Epicurus can teach men that.

The last twenty-two lines of Book 5 have for a long time been a point of contention among scholars. They consist, it seems, of repetitions of ideas from earlier lines, together with some scrappy and inadequate comments that do not correspond with anything earlier.<sup>21</sup> Repeated motifs are the fortification of cities (1440), the distribution of land (1441), the formation of alliances (1443), the origin of agriculture (1448), of weapons (1449), of garments (1449), of poetry (1444 and 1451), of laws (1448). The only new idea of any importance is that since writing is a recent discovery, the historian of early times has nothing but *ratio* to guide his inquiries (1445–7).

Of course, a conclusion may appropriately repeat in summary form the ideas already developed. But this list is rather unsatisfactory

<sup>21</sup> For details, see Merlan, *op. cit.* (n. 1).

in that role, since it has the appearance of being an arbitrary and uncoordinated selection.

Yet the last ten lines, taken by themselves, do look like a concluding summary. We have first a list of technological achievements, then a statement about the manner of their origin:

usus et impigrae simul experientia mentis  
 paulatim docuit pedetemptim progredientis.  
 sic unumquicquid paulatim protrahit aetas  
 in medium ratioque in luminis erigit oras.  
 namque alid ex alio clarescere corde videbant,  
 artibus ad summum donec venere cacumen.

Usage and simultaneously the experience gained by the unresting mind gradually taught men proceeding cautiously step by step. Thus time progressively reveals one thing after another and reason brings it to the light of day. For they saw in their heart how one thing was illuminated by another until they reached the highest pinnacle with their skills.

What is striking about the last ten lines is that they present a totally *non-moral* conclusion. Without discrimination Lucretius mentions inventions that are useful in catering to human needs, such as agriculture and clothing, and superfluous ornaments such as sculpture. What he stresses is the gradualness of discovery, and the fact that its origin lies in experience (*usus*) and human ingenuity. We are back, in other words, in the world of ideas that we found in the *Letter to Herodotus* 75–6 (see *supra* pp. 166–7).

But we have what looks like a different conclusion in 1379–1435, immediately before the last twenty-two lines. And this conclusion is a moral one. It is worth examining it more closely. Merlan, in an otherwise valuable article on the conclusion of Book 5,<sup>22</sup> dismisses it as one of ‘two jottings’ incorporated here by an editor; Bailey (p. 1540) defends it against editors who called it ‘incoherent’, but only by allowing it to be ‘discursive . . . typical of Lucretius’ mind with its habit of accepting one thought after another, as they occur to him’. If it is seen, however, as the conclusion to the history of civilization, I believe it can be shown to be one of the most carefully and beautifully composed sections of the poem.

<sup>22</sup> *Op. cit.* (n. 1).

The ostensible subject is the development of the art of music, from the first natural impulse of birdsong. But it is crucial to notice the remarkable frequency of occurrences of the idea of *pleasure*. We have *iuvare* ('please', 1381), *dulcis* ('sweet', 1384), *otia dia* ('the peace of the open air', 1387), *iuvabant* ('gave pleasure', 1390), *cordi* ('agreeable', 1391), *iucunde* ('pleasantly', 1394), *dulces cachinni* ('sweet laughter', 1397), *laeta* ('joyful', 1400), *risus dulcesque cachinni* ('mirth and sweet laughter', 1403), *solacia* ('solace', 1405), *dulcedini' fructum* ('enjoyment of pleasure', 1410), *suavius* and *placet* ('more pleasant', 'pleases', 1413), *vera voluptas* ('true pleasure', 1433). This strikes one even more significantly when one notices that in the whole preceding section 925–1378 there is no occurrence of any of these words except *dulcis* and *laetus*: *dulcis* appears once in a formula (*dulcia lumina vitae*, 'sweet light of life', 989), and twice in the passage about horticulture which may be seen as preparing the way for our conclusion (1367, 1377); *laetus* appears once in the same context (1372). In all the long description of the history of civilization and the moral comment upon it so far nothing has been said explicitly about the goal of all moral endeavour according to Epicurean philosophy: pleasure. It would be superbly appropriate if, by way of conclusion, something were at last said about how much pleasure the human race had achieved.

After his discourse about the pleasures of music, Lucretius therefore generalizes his moral comment in a brief glance over the whole development. He prepares for this carefully: there is first a description of the simple pleasures of music among country people, all expressed in a past tense, then a sentence or two remarking that watchmen of the present day, seeking to keep themselves awake, stimulate themselves with pleasant music. This pleasure is constant in quantity, he observes, not any greater now than it was in early times. It is what is at hand that gives pleasure, provided that one does not remember something more pleasant that is now lost (1412–13), and the present object of pleasure drives out of mind what one used to enjoy. Thus the objects enjoyed change through the course of history, but the sum of pleasure does not grow. Once acorns and skins and beds of leaves were men's delight, then they were supplanted by other foods and clothes and more luxurious bedding. Both the simple and the more complex goods give rise to senseless

rivalries and covetousness, but our fault, in modern times, is greater than that of the ancients, because the things we allow to torture us are unnecessary desires. Lucretius, the Epicurean, concludes (if this is truly the conclusion) with a comment that applies to the history of all humanity, insofar as it has failed to learn the moral lessons of Epicurus (1430–5):

ergo hominum genus incassum frustra que laborat  
semper et in curis consumit inanibus aevum,  
nimirum quia non cognovit quae sit habendi  
finis et omnino quoad crescat vera voluptas  
idque minutatim vitam provexit in altum  
et belli magnos commovit funditus aestus.

Hence the race of men labours fruitlessly and to no avail and continually wastes life's span with empty worries. No wonder, since it fails to see what limit there should be to material possessions and altogether to what degree the pursuit of true pleasure is legitimate. Failure here has progressively led life astray and has stirred up the great cataclysms of war.

This ignorance has both goaded men to seek greater technological achievement, and plunged them into wars of rivalry.

This is, of course, totally incompatible with a 'final contrast . . . of innocence and serenity in ignorance, set beside viciousness and misery in knowledge' a description that we quoted on p. 170. It is also quite incompatible, if these last few lines are read in their context, with Robin's more moderate comment: 'the spirit of this section [sc. 1408–35] is entirely analogous to that of the development at 925–1010; every advance stimulates new needs in us, and removes us further from the happy simplicity of the life of nature.'<sup>23</sup> Lucretius explicitly rejects such an interpretation, in spite of the gloom of the last six lines, by pointing out that rivalry was just as great, in primitive times, for skins, as it is now, for purple embroidered robes (1423–7). He has just painted a charming picture of the innocent delights of a *cultivated* orchard (1370–8). He does not argue for a gradual moral decline, any more than for a gradual moral progression. He argues for a non-moral progression, and comments on it from his post-Epicurean moral standpoint.

<sup>23</sup> Ernout and Robin, iii. 182.

The appropriateness of this passage (1379–1435) as a conclusion of the book convinces me that it *was* the conclusion, in Lucretius' mind. The sudden and striking emergence of the theme of pleasure (which is not noticed in the commentaries that I have consulted) shows that something different is intended here from the earlier moral comments; and the fact that pleasure is the Epicurean *telos* shows that this difference marks a climax. We finish with that crucial Epicurean moral lesson, that *vera voluptas* ('true pleasure'), has a limit, in spite of its changing objects throughout the course of human history, and ignorance of this limit means the end of peace.

The presence of a second, non-moral conclusion (1448–57) tempts one to guess. That it *is* an alternative is suggested by the repetition at 1454–5 of two lines that occur in good order in the argument at 1388–9. Repetition by itself does not entail that one of the two occurrences is to be treated with suspicion, but this particular repetition seems too close and too pointless. My guess—and it is only a guess, and there may be others just as well based—is that at one time Book 5 was of approximately the same length as the other five books; it contained a fairly brief, non-moral account of the progression of human institutions, similar in spirit to *Letter to Herodotus* 75–6, which included the two displaced scraps 1436–9 and 1440–7, and ended with 1448–57. Lucretius, the Epicurean, rewrote it at greater length, adding his own extensive moral assessments of each step in the history of man.<sup>24</sup>

One final comment: if my hypothesis is correct, then it is no accident that the prologue to Book 6 says what it does. Athens was the first to give man corn, a civilized life, laws—and then 'the pleasant comforts of life', when she gave birth to Epicurus. He understood that men had now acquired all that was necessary for life: they had security, wealth, good reputation, and worthy children—and yet they were anxious. The fault lay in the mind itself, like a dirty, leaky pitcher (a picturesque way of describing the condition that we have discovered in Lucretius' account of superstition, in 1204 ff.: the mind 'weighed down by other ills' finds new sources of anxiety). Epicurus taught the limits of desire and fear (6.25), and showed how the vain desires

<sup>24</sup> I have been greatly helped, in framing my thoughts about the conclusion of Book 5, by conversations with Prof. John Jacobson.

and fears that tormented mankind could be cured by the study and right interpretation of nature (*naturae species ratioque*, 41).

The moral perspective that informs Lucretius' history of civilization, set out finally in what I take to be the conclusion of the book (1430–5), is thus attributed to its author. The life and work of Epicurus came at the end of the development described by Lucretius, but it was neither a culmination nor a reversal of it. Epicurus stood above it, and shed the light of his philosophy on all that happened.



## Lucretius' Interpretation of the Plague

*H. S. Commager, Jr.*

According to his editors, Lucretius in his account of the plague at Athens (6.1138–1286) is guilty of mistranslation, misrepresentation, and a general lack of competence with regard to his source, Thucydides. Munro finds that he ‘more than once misapprehends or misinterprets his [Thucydides’] words’; Bailey notes several ‘serious mistakes in interpretation’, while Ernout and Robin go so far as to suggest the existence of a Latin translation which Lucretius uses.<sup>1</sup> In general, however, a close and direct dependence upon the Greek author is recognized: editors must, after all, assume this before they can attack Lucretius for his divergences. Hence to exclaim over every similarity would be fatuous. On the other hand, it is not within the scope of this paper to catalogue every alteration or addition which Lucretius makes.<sup>2</sup> Rather, I would examine in detail some of the errors singled out most frequently. The prevailing view assumes that these represent

<sup>1</sup> H. A. J. Munro, *T. Lucr. Cari libri sex* (Cambridge, 1893), iii.391; C. Bailey, *T. Lucr. Cari libri sex* (Oxford, 1947), iii.1728; A. Ernout and L. Robin, *T. Lucr. Cari libri sex* (Paris, 1928), ad 6.1138. I use Bailey’s text and numbering throughout.

<sup>2</sup> Especially such minor changes as the substitution of ‘eighth or ninth day’ (6.1197) for Thucydides’ ‘seventh or ninth’ (on which see Munro ad loc.) Nor do I make any attempt to discuss an alternative source for such a catalogue of symptoms as appears in 6.1182–96 (probably derived from the writings of Hippocrates: see Munro and Ernout-Robin ad loc.) Munro and Bailey give fairly exhaustive listings of all additions and alterations, and see also W. Lück, *Die Quellenfragen im 5 und 6 Buch des Lukrez* (Breslau, 1932), 175 ff. None of the changes I discuss involves any question of another source, Hippocratean or otherwise. All occur within sentences which are a direct translation of Thucydides, and are of such a nature that his Greek may in each case be seen behind them.

random lapses from an otherwise faithful account; yet if considered together they betray a remarkable pattern. Lucretius appears to be viewing physical phenomena in moral or psychological terms, especially the terms of fear and desire, held by Epicurean doctrine to be the two principal obstacles to happiness. And from this tendency to see physical facts and events in non-physical terms, rather than from the carelessness imputed to him by his editors, Lucretius' deviations from Thucydides arise.

The first of these changes occurs in 6.1152 (1151–3 quoted):

inde ubi per fauces pectus complerat et ipsum  
morbida vis in cor maestum confluxerat aegris,  
omnia tum vero vitae claustra lababant.

When, passing through the throat, the force of the disease had filled the breast and had flowed down into the sorrowing heart of the sick, then truly all the bonds of life began to totter.

*Cor*, as every editor since Victorius has pointed out, is a mistranslation of Thucydides' *καρδίαν* (2.49.3) which means stomach.<sup>3</sup> Lucretius, moreover, adds *maestum* ('sorrowing'), for which there is no warrant in the Greek.<sup>4</sup> The mistranslation *cor maestum*, Bailey (ad loc.) notes,

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Scholia to Thuc. quoted ad loc. by Creech, *T. Lucr. Cari Libri Sex* (London, 1835): οἱ παλαιοὶ ἰατροὶ τὸν στόμαχον καρδίαν ἐκάλουν, καὶ καρδίωγον τὸν πόνον τοῦ στομάχου ('in ancient times doctors called the stomach *kardia* and an ailment of the stomach *kardiognon*').

<sup>4</sup> This conclusively disposes of Lambinus' attempt to prove that Lucr. uses *cor* for 'stomach' (see Munro ad loc.). *Maestus* is an adjective never used of physical pain by Lucretius: *deficiens animo maesto cum corde iacebat* ('his courage failed him and he lay there sick at heart', 6.1233) does not refer to a stomach ailment. Cf. *perturbata animi mens in maerore metuque* ('the mind was disturbed in its grief and fear', 6.1183). If *cor* ever refers to anything but 'heart' it is surely 'mind'. Its use in 6.5, as applied to Epicurus, seems to have a primarily intellectual connotation, for nowhere is he signaled but for his mental prowess. *Vivida vis animi* ('the lively force of his mind', 1.72) appears less an attribute than a definition. Cf. 3.1043, *ingenio superavit* ('he surpassed in his intellect'); 3.14–15, *tua ratio . . . divina mente coorta* ('your reasoning, sprung from a divine mind'); and the proems to Books 3 and 5 *passim*. For the use of *cor* as implying intellect see 4.44; 5.882, 1456 (reading, with Bailey, *clarescere corde videbant*). Cicero (*Tusc. disp.* 1.18) equates *cor* and *animus*, and gives several examples demonstrating the intellectual sense of *cor*. Without entering the vexed question of exactly where the seat of thought was located, it should be noticed that the *cor* is for Lucretius the faculty subject to fear (3.116, 874; 6.14) and desire (4.1059, 1138). In this connection it should be noted that *maestus*, in its only uses outside the description of the plague, refers each time to fear of the gods (1.89, 99; 4.1236).

‘anticipates the misinterpretation of *μετὰ ταλαιπωρίας* [“with suffering”]’, (2.49.4). Here Lucretius uses *anxius angor* (‘the torment of anxiety’, 1158). This is an unusual phrase, particularly as applied to physical pain. Lucretius uses these words only rarely, and in each case in a striking context. *Anxius angor* as a phrase occurs only once otherwise, referring to Tityos, the mythological representative of man beset by passionate desire (3.992–4):

sed Tityos nobis hic est, in amore iacentem  
quem volucres lacerant atque exest anxius angor  
aut alia quavis scindunt cuppedine curae.

But Tityos is here among us, the man languishing in love, lacerated by winged passions and devoured by torments of anxiety, or torn apart by the cares of some other desire.

*Anxius angor* here has clear reference to the psychological fact of *cupido* (‘desire’), which with *metus* (‘fear’) forms the principal obstacle to a life of happiness, according to Epicurean dogma.<sup>5</sup> *Anxius* alone appears again in the proem to the sixth book: *anxia corda* (‘anxious hearts’) remain in human beings, despite their physical comforts (6.14). That they remain is the result of *cupido atque timor* (‘desire and fear’, 6.25).<sup>6</sup>

These are the only uses of *anxius*. *Angor*, besides its reference to Tityos (*anxius angor*, see above), occurs only twice. Rejecting the *timor* that there may be a life after death, Lucretius ridicules the notion that any *angor* for our former selves afflicts us (3.853). Again the context is not a physical one, but that of the fear of death. The other use of *angor*, only fifty lines later, is actually a hendiadys, identifying *angore metuque* (‘torment and fear’, 3.903). Man after death, affirms Lucretius, will be subject to no *doloribus aegris* (‘grievous sorrows’, 905). *Angat*, the verbal form, occurs only once, in reference not to fear, but to its companion desire (4.1133–4):

<sup>5</sup> Usener, *Epicurea* (Leipzig, 1887) fr. 485 (p. 305), 203 (161), *Kuriai Doxai* 10 (73). Lucretius devotes his third book to a systematic attack on the immortality of the soul (and hence the fear of death), and the end of the fourth to a similar attack on *cupido*. There are, of course, shorter passages on fear and desire *passim*.

<sup>6</sup> These *anxia corda* are signalized by *infestis querellis* (‘with hateful complaints’, 6.16), much as the *anxius angor* of the diseased was the constant companion of *gemitu commixta querella* (‘complaints mingled with moaning’, 6.1159).

nequiquam, quoniam medio de fonte leporum  
surgit amari aliquid quod in ipsis floribus angat.

In vain, since from the midst of the fountain of pleasures something bitter arises, which torments them even among the flowers.

If, then, *anxius angor* is a 'mistranslation', it is a remarkable one. Both these words are for Lucretius immensely evocative ones, occurring elsewhere only in contexts of fear or desire, a realm of psychological significance rather than of physical description. Moreover, the substitution of *anxius angor* for Thucydides' merely physical symptom is but a single illustration of a pervasive tendency: two other similar changes occur within ten lines, each exhibiting the same movement away from a biological statement towards one with mental or psychic connotations. First, Lucretius makes the addition of *animi interpres* ('the messenger of the mind', 6.1149) to Thucydides' flat *γλωσσοα* ('tongue', 2.49.2):

atque animi interpres manabat lingua cruore.

And the tongue, the messenger of the mind, oozed blood.

Secondly, he adds a line (6.1152–3):

morbida vis in cor maestum confluerat aegris,  
*omnia tum vero vitae claustra lababant.*

[when] the force of the disease had flowed down into the sorrowing heart of the sick, *then truly all the bonds of life began to totter.*

Leonard and Smith<sup>7</sup> here compare *animus vitae claustra coercens* ('the mind, preserving the fastnesses of life', 3.396). If the mind habitually preserves the 'fastnesses of life', when they 'totter' (*lababant*) presumably the mind has been affected. We thus have strong contributory evidence that *cor* ('heart', 6.1152), if not actually synonymous with *animus* ('mind'), has at least strong non-physical overtones.<sup>8</sup> The addition of this line (6.1153) is not very impressive in itself, and in isolation might seem to represent no more than the 'poetic elaboration' which Lucretius' editors offer as an explanation.<sup>9</sup> Yet

<sup>7</sup> W. E. Leonard and S. B. Smith, *T. Lucr. Cari libri sex* (Madison, 1942).

<sup>8</sup> See n. 4 above.

<sup>9</sup> 'He now seeks to satisfy his poetical feeling . . .' (Munro, iii.392). For an equally unsatisfactory alternative see Bailey's explanation: 'Here must be recognized not so much the difference between prose and poetry, but, as Giussani has pointed out, the

the cumulative effect of the changes and additions in this section form substantial evidence that something more radical is concerned. The two gratuitous insertions (*animi interpres* ('the messenger of the mind', 1149), and line 1153 as a whole) and the two important changes (*cor maestum* ('sorrowing heart', 1152) and *anxius angor* ('the torment of anxiety', 1158)) all within ten lines betray a remarkable imaginative progress away from Thucydides' clinical description.

An identical process may be observed in yet another of Lucretius' changes. Robin summarizes lines 1208–1210 as follows:

In these five verses L. has committed another error, pointed out at an early date by Victorius (*Var. lect.* 25.8; cf. Munro ad loc. and at 6.1151), against which Lambinus seeks in vain to defend the poet. The general sense of Thuc.'s description . . . is that the *loss* [italics Robin's] of the genitals, of the feet or the hands, or of the eyes was for some the condition of their *survival*. But L. has taken him to mean that, *through fear of death* (1208, 1212, cf. 1240) and *in order* to stay alive (1210 f.), they voluntarily (1209) had the affected parts removed.

Or, as Munro (ad loc.) points out, Lucretius is then in a position to 'take advantage of his own error to point his favourite moral'. He may now add two lines to Thucydides, which frame the picture (6.1208 and 1212):

et graviter partim metuentes limina leti

and some, terribly fearing the threshold of death

usque adeo mortis metus his incesserat acer

to such an extent had the bitter fear of death overtaken them.

difference in the genius of the two languages, the Latin author tending naturally to the fuller and more emotional description' (Bailey iii.1723). Both of these suggestions contain an element of truth, but neither should be accepted as a complete explanation, any more than an easy reference to Lucretius' carelessness or ignorance should be.

<sup>10</sup> et graviter partim metuentes limina leti  
vivebant ferro privati parte virili,  
et manibus sine nonnulli pedibusque manebant  
in vita tamen, et perdebant lumina partim:  
usque adeo mortis metus his incesserat acer.

and some, terribly fearing the threshold of death, lived on after their male part had been removed with a knife; some without hands or feet yet remained alive, and others lost their eyes: to such an extent had the bitter fear of death overtaken them.

Bailey here compares (3.79–80):

et saepe usque adeo, mortis formidine, vitae  
percipit humanos odium lucisque videndae . . .

and often disgust with life and looking on the daylight has taken so firm a hold of people, through their fear of death . . .

Again, what was in Thucydides a baldly factual account becomes in Lucretius one freighted with moral overtones.<sup>11</sup>

This 'moralizing', in its broadest sense, of physical description appears again forty lines later (6.1239–42):

nam quicumque suos fugitabant visere ad aegros,  
vitai nimium cupidos mortisque timentis  
poenibat paulo post turpi morte malaque,  
desertos, opis expertis, incuria mactans.

For those who, too eager for life and in fear of death, shrank from visiting their own sick were punished a little afterwards by lack of care which offered them up to a loathsome and evil death, deserted and bereft of any help.

Thucydides describes (2.51.5) two types of people who die: the sick who are unaided and die alone (*ἀπώλλυντο ἐρήμοι*), and those who visit the sick and catch the disease. Lucretius, on the other hand, makes those who refuse to give aid the ones who die *desertos, opis expertis* ('deserted and bereft of any help', 1242). Introducing ethical terms masquerading as clinical ones (*turpi . . . malaque*, 'loathsome and evil', 1241), he makes the plague a punishment (*poenibat*, 1241) for those displaying *cupido* and *timor* ('desire' and 'fear', 1240), an idea quite alien to Thucydides.<sup>12</sup> What is rightly only physical narrative has been altered and erected into a moral question.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> P. Maas, however, defends Lucretius on the grounds that *στερισκόμενοι* ('deprived of', 2.49.8) might refer to the operations of surgeons, and that Lucretius does also (Bailey, 'Addenda', iii.759). This would require some distortion of the Greek, and even if we accept the idea that Thucydides may refer to surgeons, it does not follow that Lucretius does. Vergil, in his imitation of Lucretius, has the horses wound themselves (*Geo.* 3.514). In any case, Maas's attempt to rehabilitate Lucretius' scholarship succeeds in obscuring the most interesting point, which is not whether Lucretius thought doctors were involved, but that he here saw fit to introduce a moral comment.

<sup>12</sup> See Ernout and Robin ad loc.

<sup>13</sup> Lucretius also acknowledges that the socially minded contract the disease (6.1243–6). Like Thucydides he allows 'all the most virtuous' (Bailey's translation

One last fairly minor alteration is perhaps worth noting. Thucydides records the crowding into the city of the country people, compelled, of course, by the Spartan invasion of Attica. Lucretius rather allows the plague to embrace the countryside as well, broadening its scope rather than concentrating it. Every shepherd, herdsman, and farmer is affected (1252); only in Lucretius does the *robustus curvi moderator aratri* ('the sturdy wielder of the curved plough', 1253) appear. He seems to represent a kind of Everyman, much as he did at the end of the second book, where he bore gloomy witness to the earth's decay: *caput quassans grandis suspirat arator | crebrius...* ('shaking his head, the old ploughman more often heaves a sigh', 2.1164–5).

These changes betray something more than carelessness, poetic elaboration, or the inevitable consequence of writing in Latin rather than in Greek. We have seen Lucretius describe physical ills in a psychological vocabulary, treat clinical phenomena as emotionally motivated actions, change medical data to ethical commentary, and broaden the plague's area in defiance of historical fact. In simplest terms, his additions and alterations display a marked tendency to regard the plague less in physical terms than in emotional, moral, and psychological ones. These changes might be seen as a sort of verbal weathervane, pointing the direction towards which Lucretius' imagination seems to be heading. They not only allow but encourage us to inquire if Lucretius might have felt the plague to represent something more than a historical event.

Two questions must be answered before this can be a legitimate approach. First, is Lucretius in the habit of viewing physical things as representative, or symbolic? There can be little question here: the whole of the *De rerum natura* is predicated upon the assumption that we can grasp *res caecae* ('hidden things') from *res apertae* ('visible things'). Lucretius of necessity sees sermons in stones: to have a mind which habitually imagines intangibles in terms of tangibles is a prerequisite for explaining Epicurean physics.<sup>14</sup> Secondly, granting

of *optimus quisque*, 6.1246; cf. οἱ ἀρετῆς μεταποιούμενοι, 'those who laid claim to virtue', 2.51.5) to die. But this is a different matter from his substitution of those who are unaiding for those who are unaided.

<sup>14</sup> Thus the 'first beginnings' find illustrations in the letters of the alphabet (1.196–8, 823–7; 2.688–94), sheep on a mountainside (2.317), military manoeuvres (2.323), or

that his mind generally sees things as representative, is there any evidence that he might feel the plague, in particular, to be susceptible of symbolic treatment? Perhaps the best way to answer this is to start at the other end. As his alterations show, psychological elements, particularly *timor* ('fear') and *cupido* ('desire'), persist in obtruding themselves into a supposedly physical account.<sup>15</sup> If it can be shown that Lucretius often views certain states of mind as a disease, this would lend substance to the supposition that he might conversely see in the plague an emblem of mental or psychological states.

We have at least one definite statement on this (3.459–61):

Huc accedit uti videamus, corpus ut ipsum  
suscipere immanis morbos durumque dolorem,  
sic animum curas acris luctumque metumque.

This further argument can be adduced: we see that just as the body itself is subject to monstrous diseases and cruel pain so is the mind to intense anxieties and grief and fear.

This parallel between physical disease and care, grief, and fear, only explicates what often inheres in the language itself. The victim of *metus* is described as *aeger* ('sick', 3.1070), with all the proper medical symptoms: *aegrus luctibus* ('sickly lamentations', 3.933) and *doloribus aegrus* ('sickly pains', 3.905). *Cupido* similarly appears clothed in a clinical vocabulary: *ulcus . . . vivescit et inveterascit alendo | inque dies gliscit furor atque aerumna gravescit* ('the sore festers and becomes ingrained through feeding, and from day to day the frenzy grows and the suffering intensifies', 4.1068–9) . . . *cures* ('treat', 1071) . . . *sanis* ('the healthy', 1075) . . . *redit rabies eadem et furor* ('the same madness and frenzy recurs', 1117).<sup>16</sup> Even the after-effects of passionate love are described

notes in a sunbeam (2.114). Lucretius is committed to the discovering of *vestigia notitiae* ('traces of knowledge', 2.123; cf. 2.112) in every imaginable physical phenomenon. Cf. Epicurus, fr. 212 (Usener 163).

<sup>15</sup> I am not, of course, taking Lucretius to task for describing the psychological effects of the disease, as Thucydides himself does, particularly in Chapter 53. Rather Lucretius fails to draw the line between the two: medical symptoms are often described in a markedly unmedical manner.

<sup>16</sup> The impact of this passage is strengthened by the linkage of the medical vocabulary with that describing the burning heat of love (4.1087–90, 1096–1101, 1116–17, 1138). The fire of the lovers seems to have less in common with the traditional conceit than with the *sacer ignis* ('sacred fire' (i.e. erysipelas), 6.1167) of the plague (6.1145, 1168–77,



in this manner: *languent officia atque aegrotat fama vacillans* ('their duties languish, and their tottering reputation falls sick', 1124).

This use of a clinical vocabulary to define *cupido* and *metus* is not to be dismissed either as literary convention or as a handy metaphor invoked for clarity and organization. Rather it stands as an impassioned declaration of mankind's predicament: *mortalibus aegris* ('wretched [lit. sick] mortals', 6.1) is less a casual reference than an epitome.<sup>17</sup> The whole of the *De rerum natura* is directed towards the healing of man's inner sickness; Lucretius would have been the first to inscribe his name beneath a later Epicurean's strikingly similar declaration:

Since as I have said most men suffer alike from false opinions as if in a plague, and the number of sufferers increases, since by copying one another they catch the disease like sheep and it is right to give help to future generations, for they are ours even if they are yet unborn, having regard further to the love of mankind and the duty of giving help to strangers who are at hand, forasmuch as the benefits of the written word are spread abroad I decided to use this colonnade and set forth in it the means of safety (*τὰ τῆς σωτηρίας φάρμακα*) for all to see.<sup>18</sup>

1180). The lovers' sickness and accompanying flames present themselves to Lucretius less as literary conventions than physiological symptoms. The vehement elaboration of his writing conveys an immediacy denied any merely literary conceit.

A wound metaphor sometimes substitutes for, or stands together with, that of disease. It too applies both to fear (*haec vulnera vitae... mortis formidine aluntur*, 'these wounds in our lives are nourished by the fear of death', 3.63; cf. 5.1197) and desire (*vulnere amoris*, 'the wound of love', 1.34; *incerti tabescunt vulnere caeco*, 'in their uncertainty, they waste away because of an unseen wound', 4.1120; cf. 4.1068–83, noting the complete intermixture with the disease imagery). With the wound imagery, as with that of fire and disease, we have the peculiarly Lucretian tendency to become so carried away by his own figures that they attain concrete reality. Starting with the conventional *mens saucia amore* ('the mind wounded by love', 4.1048), perhaps in imitation of Ennius' *Medea animo aegro, amore saevo saucia* ('Medea, sick at heart and wounded by cruel love', *Trag.* 254, ed. Vahlen<sup>3</sup> (Leipzig, 1928)), Lucretius proceeds to a remarkably concrete description (4.1049–57). Cf. his transformation of the equally familiar image of the bonds of love (4.1145–50, 1187, 1201–7): he applies it with such sustained fierceness that it finally achieves physical reality (4.1201–7).

<sup>17</sup> It is particularly effective here, coming after the enumeration of all man's physical comforts (5.1440–57). It would be interesting to speculate as to whether the tentative medical metaphor of the sixth proem (*aegris* ('wretched')... *recreaverunt* ('renewed', cf. *recreata valescat*, 'be healed and grow well', 1.942; 4.17)... *querellis* ('complaints')... *purgavit pectora*, ('he purified their hearts'), 6.1–24) is deliberate, looking forward to the description of the plague at the book's end. If intentional, this would shed light on Lucretius' practice in unifying the different books.

<sup>18</sup> Diogenes of Oenoanda, fr. 2, col. ii.7, ed. William (Leipzig, 1907), 5. The translation is that of A. D. Nock, *Sallustius* (Cambridge, 1926), xxxvi.

This *σωτηρίας φάρμακα* ('means [lit. drugs, remedies] of safety') is precisely what Lucretius is trying to administer; and his abiding concern finds expression in the formalization of his relationship to his readers as that of a doctor to his patients (1.936–43=4.11–18):

sed veluti pueris absinthia taetra medentes  
cum dare conantur, prius oras pocula circum  
contingunt mellis dulci flavoque liquore,  
ut puerorum aetas improvida ludificetur  
labrorum tenuis, interea perpotet amarum  
absinthii laticem deceptaque non capiatur,  
sed potius tali pacto recreata valescat,  
sic ego nunc...

But just as when the doctors are trying to administer unpleasant wormwood to children they first touch the cup all around its rim with the sweet golden liquor of honey, so that the children in their unsuspecting youth may be deceived as far as the lips and meanwhile drink up the bitter juice of wormwood, and, though charmed, may not be harmed, but rather through this device be healed and grow well again; in the same way I now...

Though traditional, the passage presents not merely a perfunctory simile, but expresses a basic impetus of the poem. Wrote Epicurus:

We must not pretend to study philosophy, but study it in reality: for it is not the appearance of health that we need, but real health.

Vain is the word of philosopher which does not heal any suffering of man. For just as there is no profit in medicine if it does not expel the diseases of the body, so there is no profit in philosophy either, if it does not expel the suffering of the mind.<sup>19</sup>

And for Lucretius no less than Epicurus, this correspondence between body and mind was no stylistic flourish, but a controlling assumption.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Frs. 220 and 221 (Usener 169). I use, here and below, the translation of C. Bailey, *Epicurus* (Oxford, 1926), frs. A 54 (p. 115) and D 54 (133). Cf. *Ep. Men.* (Usener 59, line 3); fr. 471 (Usener 301); Wotke, *WS* (1888) 196, fr. 64 (also in Bailey, fr. A 64, p. 116).

<sup>20</sup> The use of clinical terminology for mental or moral ills is of course traditional. Greek tragedy exploits the analogy constantly (see any *index verborum* under *νόσος* or *φάρμακος*); cf. the indices in the 3 vols. of W. Jaeger's *Paideia*, tr. G. Highet (New York, 1939–44), s.v. 'medicine', and for references to the Diatribes see Nock, *Sallustius*, xxviii n. 69. By Horace's time terms like *sanus* ('healthy', 'sane') and *insanus*

The concept of a sick mankind, to be cured by the healing draughts of Epicureanism, was then a familiar one to Lucretius. This imaginative habit, when combined with the use of symbols as a sanctioned educational method, makes it not unlikely that he should see in a physical description of disease an emblem of the human estate in its unregenerate form. Perhaps in transcribing Thucydides' account Lucretius became aware—or even only half aware—of the potentialities it held for his purpose. His alterations do not indicate a deliberate verbal dexterity: he does not use *anxius aigor* ('the torment of anxiety') because he recalls his previous uses and intends his reader to remember them also. Rather he seems to be himself responding imaginatively to a half-felt similarity between the victims of the actual plague at Athens and the sufferers from the psychic plague of fear and desire. Lucretius' language betrays this; it does not proclaim it, issuing a directive to us to compare the various passages. A contrast with Vergil's practice may illuminate this. He writes of the emperor (A. 8.679–80):

...penatibus et magnis dis,  
stans celsa in puppi...

...standing high on the poop deck, with the household gods and the great gods...

This represents a conscious hat-tipping, a deliberate attempt to associate Augustus verbally, as he claimed to be genealogically, with Aeneas and Anchises. Vergil intends us to remember that both half-lines have been previously applied to Augustus' great forebears, the first line to Aeneas (3.12), the second to Anchises (3.527).<sup>21</sup> Lucretius,

('unhealthy', 'insane') were such common coin that their original impress had been nearly obliterated by too frequent handling. Horace, however, refreshes their radical meaning by placing them often in contexts of explicitly medical metaphors. Cf. also his adaption of the doctor-patient analogy of Lucretius, in *Satire* 1.1.25. The tradition persists at least until Swift, who makes his masque Gulliver a doctor (and twice quotes Lucretius' honeyed cup passage).

I am here concerned only to show that Lucretius draws the analogy, and not to present its biography. Lucretius, moreover, exhibits a fierceness of imaginative involvement which transcends any merely conventional formulation. In general, his images are less striking for their originality than for the intensity and elaboration with which he employs them.

<sup>21</sup> And later, to Aeneas (10.261).

by contrast, tends to associate emotionally rather than refer intellectually. He responds in a similar verbal way to what he feels to be similar situations: is spontaneous rather than calculated, impulsive rather than formal.<sup>22</sup>

With this reservation, let us then take the path which the alterations from Thucydides point to, and look at Lucretius' account as at least tending towards metaphorical statement. As we have seen, Lucretius' habit of conceiving mental sicknesses in terms of physical disease might have encouraged him to see in the physical plague the emblem of a mental one. Several other elements in Thucydides' account might have similarly appealed to Lucretius' imagination as being the physical actuality for terms he himself had used as metaphors for fear and desire; as being the objective equivalent of mental or psychological truths. Situations which for Thucydides represented historical fact might for Lucretius embody a depth of moral significance and possess a symbolic resonance gained from his own handling of them as figures in nonphysical contexts. His discovery, in Thucydides' factual account, of particular situations which held for him a wealth of symbolic reference, might also have influenced him, consciously or unconsciously, to treat the whole plague as, in a sense, a metaphor for life.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Thus where Lucretius exhibits such imaginative involvement in what he describes that conventional metaphors tend to take on physical reality (cf. n. 16 above), Vergil reveals careful meditation in submitting his images to this same physical realization. Dido, for instance, is carefully described as transfixed with love for Aeneas, as she will later be transfixed with her physical wound. The opening lines of the fourth book contain terms, here used figuratively, which are to reappear later in their physical reality: ... *regina gravi... saucia cura vulnus alit... haerent infixi pectore vultus* ('the queen, wounded by heavy passion, feeds the wound... his face is implanted deep in her heart', 4.1-4); *tacitum vivit sub pectore vulnus* ('the secret wound within her breast lives on', 67); cf. *infixum stridit sub pectore vulnus* ('the wound implanted in her breast gave a hiss', 689). This represents, I think, a premeditated artistic foreshadowing having little in common with Lucretius' impulsive absorption.

<sup>23</sup> My feeling is that Lucretius was probably largely unconscious of any symbolic function the plague might fulfil, and certainly did not think of it as an allegory. His alterations of Thucydides are better understood as a record of his own imaginative tendencies than as the result of any formulated plan consciously imposed. I doubt that his readers would be aware of the changes, or would look upon the plague as anything more than factual. Hence I find it hard to accept J. P. Elder's tentative suggestion that Lucretius may have 'intended, deliberately,' the plague to be Epicurean conversion propaganda ('Lucretius 1.1-49', *TAPA* 85 (1954), 93 n. 10). If this were Lucretius'

Psychological speculation is, however, less rewarding than an examination of the text: what are these situations which might have held for Lucretius this rich suggestiveness? Consider the diseased, plunging headlong into wells and streams in a vain attempt to satisfy their thirst (6.1176–7):

insedabiliter sitis arida, corpora mersans,  
aequabat multum parvis umoribus imbrem.

An insatiably parching thirst, overwhelming their bodies, made a great flood of water equal to a few drops.

Not dissimilar is the striking image of those seeking to satisfy their thirst for life, and quell their fear of death: *sitis aequa tenet vitae semper hiantis* ('a constant thirst grips those who are always craving open-mouthed for life', 3.1084).<sup>24</sup> The same metaphor characterizes the ambition-stricken man; hell's emissaries surround us (3.995–7):

Sisyphus in vita quoque nobis ante oculos est  
qui petere a populo fascis saevasque securis  
imbibit . . .

Sisyphus too is here among the living, plain for us to see: the man athirst to seek the *fascis* and cruel axes from the people . . .

deliberate intention, surely the pattern would be less equivocal, and the lesson more carefully conveyed. The echoes of psychological terminology collected above, and those I shall treat below, are but evidence of his associative manner of thinking. Compare his tendency to revert to the same verbal clusters when treating birth or creation (*pabula laeta*, 'rich meadows', *nitidae fruges*, 'shining crops', *ridet*, 'laughs', *suavis*, 'sweet', *blandus*, 'charming', etc. Cf. 1.1–23, 252–7; 2.594–6, 994; and J. P. Elder, 'Lucretius', 111). There is a similar recurrence, in connection with birth, of *in luminis oras* ('into the realms of light'; borrowed from Ennius, but applied in quite different fashion: 1.22; 2.577, 617; 5.1455). None of these words or phrases is intended as a deliberate reminiscence of any other; rather all alike chart the associative manner in which Lucretius' imagination works.

<sup>24</sup> Thirst implies water, which is of course the archetype of the life-giving force. The underlying paradox that thirst for this supposedly reviving element (whether figurative, as in the third book, or literal, as in the sixth) should result in death, might be tied to the proem of Book 3 (79–83). Here the love of life (or fear of death) leads men to kill themselves, forgetting that this very fear is the *fontem curarum* ('the fount of their anxieties', 3.82). In a sense, the effort to avoid death leads men to plunge into it. The notion of a false or seeming nourishment which is actually a destructive force underlies all three cases, though to insist upon an exact equivalence or detailed parallels would be futile.

Those seeking to satisfy their craving for life by an accumulation of wealth or honours are doomed to this perpetual thirst.<sup>25</sup> Desire, as well as fear, takes on this metaphoric guise (4.1100):

in medioque sitit torrenti flumine potans.

He is thirsty even as he drinks in the middle of a swollen river.

The only precedent for the burning thirst of the Athenians is to be found in those suffering from the diseases of fear or desire.<sup>26</sup>

The element of frantic and pointless struggle might have struck Lucretius as forcibly as that of insatiable thirst. The very height of the plague finds men still fighting over burial sites: *multo cum sanguine saepe* | *rixantes* ('often brawling with much bloodshed').<sup>27</sup> Yet how better than this is the struggle for false ends that plagues mankind (5.1131–2)?

proinde sine incassum defessi sanguine sudent,  
angustum per iter luctantes ambitionis.

So allow them to wear themselves out and sweat blood in vain, as they struggle up the narrow path of ambition.

The exhausting fight for wealth (5.1421 ff.) or honours (5.1124; cf. 2.11 ff.; 3.59 ff.) is, rightly viewed, no better than the race for tombs. Passionate love is similarly marked by this total exhaustion and vain endeavour.

adde quod absumunt viris preuntque labore.<sup>28</sup>

Add the fact that they exhaust their strength and waste away with toil.

<sup>25</sup> It should be remembered that Lucretius considers both avarice and ambition as largely motivated by the fear of death (3.64).

<sup>26</sup> Epicurus also draws the analogy between the diseased, thirsting man and the victim of desires: fr. 471 (Usener 301).

<sup>27</sup> 6.1285–6. For the generally exhausting effect of the plague, and the struggles it arouses, cf. *dissolvebat eos, defessos ante, fatigans* ('it brought them to the point of collapse, wearing them out when they were already exhausted'; 6.1162); *nec requies erat ulla mali: defessa iacebant | corpora* ('there was no respite from suffering: their bodies lay exhausted', 6.1178–9); *incomitata rapi certabant funera vasta* ('they vied in rushing through desolate, unattended funerals', 6.1225); *populum sepelire suorum | certantes* ('striving to bury their own dead', 6.1247–8).

<sup>28</sup> 4.1121. Cf. *frustraque laborat* ('and toils in vain', 4.1099), and for the broad picture of the exhausting and unrewarded struggle which love entails, see 4.1097–1120. The number of negatives is extraordinary; they systematically punctuate and destroy any

To the Athenians the plague came only once; but for the mass of a sick and unenlightened mankind struggle and exhaustion are among the very attributes of existence.

Finally, Lucretius might find in the uncertainty of medical treatment an analogue to the lack of any sure knowledge on the part of those infected by fear or desire (6.1226–34):<sup>29</sup>

nec ratio remedi communis certa dabatur;  
 nam quod ali dederat vitalis aeris auras  
 volvere in ore licere et caeli templa tueri,  
 hoc aliis erat exitio letumque parabat.  
 illud in his rebus miserandum magnopere unum  
 aerumnabile erat, quod ubi se quisque videbat  
 implicitum morbo, morti damnatus ut esset,  
 deficiens animo maesto cum corde iacebat,  
 funera respectans animam amittebat ibidem.

Nor was any sure method found as a universal cure; for what had allowed one man to draw the life-giving breezes of the air into his mouth and look upon the precincts of the sky was deadly to others and delivered them up to death. One aspect of these events was especially pitiable and grievous: when anyone realized that he had become ensnared in the disease, his courage failed him

possibility of beauty or pleasure that love might have: *non datur* ('is not granted') . . . *nec satiari queunt* ('nor can they satisfy') . . . *nec possunt* ('nor can they') . . . *nequiquam* ('in vain') . . . *possunt nec* ('they can, nor') . . . *nec reperire possunt* ('nor can they discover').

<sup>29</sup> Lucretius particularly emphasizes the uncertainty to which those attacked by fear or desire are reduced. For fear see the end of the third book: *morbi quia causam non tenet aeger* ('because he is sick, and does not grasp the cause of his disease', 3.1070; cf. 3.1050; 3.37–93). The lovers' search for any sure remedy to their desires is similarly doomed. The description of the immediate act of love (4.1077–1120) is introduced by *fluctuat incertis erroribus ardor amantum* ('the lovers' burning passion fluctuates and strays uncertainly'), and concluded by *nec reperire malum id possunt quae machina vincat: | usque adeo incerti tabescunt vulnere caeco* ('nor can they discover any device to overcome this evil: in such uncertainty do they waste away because of their unseen wound'), while the results of passion declare man bound to hopeless insecurity: *adde quod alterius sub nutu degitur aetas* ('add to this the fact that their life is lived at another's beck and call', 4.1122). Hence the approval of *meretrices* ('prostitutes', 4.1071)—those using them are healthy (*sanis*, 1075) in that they at least escape the perpetual uncertainty of lovers (4.1060; 1133–40). Cf. the similar attitude of Horace in *Sat.* 1.2.37–79, 127–34, noting the many Lucretian echoes, especially in 72–5, 111–14. Cf. Lejay, *Les Satires d'Horace* (Paris, 1911), ad loc. The evidence for Epicurus' attitude is confused; he appears to have objected not to a peaceful marriage, but only to the upsetting quality of an unsatisfactory passion, which he likened to a goad of restlessness (fr. 483; Usener 305). Cf. Bailey, ad 4.1058, and J. B. Stearns, 'Epicurus and Lucretius on Love,' summarized in *TAPA* 63 (1932), xxxiv.

and he lay there sick at heart, as though he had been condemned to death, and surrendered his life at that very moment as he awaited his doom.

This passage embodies one rather odd alteration from Thucydides. For Thucydides two things are 'most dreadful' (2.51.4): on the one hand the apathy, on the other, the danger of contagion. Lucretius sees only one thing as *miserandum magnopere* ('especially pitiable', 6.1230). He makes the apathy (*deficiens animo*, 'languishing in mind', 1233) all-important, while the spread of the disease becomes subordinated (*quippe etenim*, 'for indeed', 1235).<sup>30</sup> A mental, or psychological, despair, resulting from the failure of any *certa ratio* ('sure method'),<sup>31</sup> appears to Lucretius as the central issue. The physical aspect is relegated, with considerable grammatical confusion, to a dependent position. *Implicitum morbo* ('ensnared in the disease', 6.1232) seems to indicate the way Lucretius' thoughts are moving. The word occurs only once elsewhere. Man could escape from the toils of love, *implicitus* ('ensnared'), unless he stood in his own way: *nisi tute tibi obuius obstes* (4.1150). I do not imply a direct relationship, but there is a certain similarity of feeling. External forces are no longer of equal importance, as they were for Thucydides. Man's own despair before his incurable state is most significant—he stands in his own way.

Exploiting these verbal parallels is only a sharply specific method of demonstrating a closeness of general impression, not an effort to point out subtle verbal echoes. I suggest only that Thucydides' portrait of a diseased population, burning with an insatiable and self-destructive thirst, weary and uncertain, may have obscurely reminded Lucretius of his own image of man. And for this reason he appropriates Thucydides' account. It becomes not merely the physical climax to the physical manifestations of the sixth book, but the moral culmination of the whole poem. Where Thucydides

<sup>30</sup> See Ernout-Robin ad loc: 'there is in *quippe etenim* another curious deformation of Thuc.'s thought'. Cf. Munro ad loc.

<sup>31</sup> *Ratio* translates the Greek *ἰαμα* (2.51.2) which means only 'remedy' or 'medicine'. Though *ratio* here may mean only 'method', it surely betrays the same tendency on Lucretius' part to move towards issues that are more than physical. There are at least overtones of the technical terminology of Epicureanism: *vitae rationem . . . quae | nunc appellatur sapientia* ('that way of life . . . which is now called wisdom', 5.9–10). For the use of *ratio*, with *certa* ('sure'), of philosophic utterance cf. 1.738; 5.111.



recorded the plague as an aid to future generations (2.48.3), Lucretius borrows it as an emblem of a present mental sickness. To recognize it man is to look not ahead, but within.

An analogy based on the common elements of thirst, exhaustion, and uncertainty, would not be a very telling one. Luckily we have Lucretius' specific alterations (pp. 183–8 above) to initiate the comparison which a more general view has confirmed. Again let me repudiate any suggestion that Lucretius was seeking to articulate any formal doctrine. Only an incorrigibly symbolic imagination appears to be at work, not a calculated mental effort: there is nothing approaching the definitive austerity of an allegory. If we do acknowledge that Lucretius consciously or unconsciously may have felt the plague's symbolic potentialities, we can see why he ended his poem here.<sup>32</sup> By broadening the plague's applicability, heightening its intensity, and deepening the controlling moral awareness, Lucretius gives to it a monumental solidity of reference. The architecture of the poem culminates here, as the various perceptions of man's folly unite in a final despairing integrity of vision.

<sup>32</sup> And did not, as Bignone suggests, plan to make an addition about the life of the gods. (See Bailey, 'Addenda et corrigenda', for various views, and J. P. Elder, 'Lucretius' (n. 23), 88 for numerous references and several interesting suggestions of his own.) It seems to me highly unlikely that any author of such violence of imaginative habit that he must describe lambs as 'stunned' (*perculsa*, 1.261) by their mother's milk, would be able to write *largo sermone* ('an abundant discourse', 5.155) about the immensity of indifference which Epicurean gods inhabit.

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## Lucretian Conclusions

*Peta Fowler*

The ‘ending’ of Lucretius’ *De rerum natura* is a traditional scholarly problem. Critics like Bignone and Kenney<sup>1</sup> have argued that the poem is incomplete and would have ended differently had the poet lived. In ending with the grim events of the plague at Athens, Lucretius, it is alleged, fatally undercuts the message of the poem, which is that mankind can be spiritually saved by conversion to Epicurean beliefs. In a work essentially optimistic in its promise of an improvement in the condition of mankind, the present ending is seen as dominated by a tone of gloomy pessimism and thereby self-evidently misplaced. In a work whose scope is general enough to include the universe and everything within it, the transition from our *mundus* to a narrowly localized geographical place within the cosmos, and indeed from general meteorological phenomena to a specific historical event, limited in time and space, seems to narrow the vision of the reader and direct it from the sublime (the *ipsa... maiestas cognita rerum*, ‘the majesty of nature now known to us’, 5.7) to the messiness and ugliness of human existence. There is also, however, a smaller philological problem: are the final lines that we are given in the manuscripts the original conclusion? It is this smaller problem that I want to examine here, but inevitably it will transpire

<sup>1</sup> E. Bignone, *Storia della letteratura latina*, vol. 2 (Florence, 1945), 318–22; E. J. Kenney, *Lucretius*, Greece and Rome New Surveys in the Classics 11 (Oxford, 1977), 22–33.

that this problem in textual criticism also involves the wider issues of the ending as a whole, and indeed of the entire poem.

In the manuscripts, the *De rerum natura* ends with a description of the distraught relatives fighting to bury those who have died in the plague (1282–6):

multaque <res> subita et paupertas horrida suasit.  
 namque suos consanguineos aliena rogorum  
 insuper extracta ingenti clamore locabant  
 subdebantque faces, multo cum sanguine saepe  
 rixantes potius quam corpora desererentur.

Sudden need also and poverty persuaded to many dreadful expedients: for they would lay their own kindred amidst loud lamentation upon piles of wood not their own, and would set light to the fire, often brawling with much shedding of blood rather than abandon the bodies.<sup>2</sup>

These lines correspond to the last lines of Thucydides' section on burial (2.52.4):

καὶ πολλοὶ ἐς ἀναισχύντους θήκας ἐτράποντο σπάνει τῶν ἐπιτηδείων διὰ τὸ  
 συχνοὺς ἤδη προτεθνάναι σφίσιν· ἐπὶ πυρᾶς γὰρ ἀλλοτρίας φθάσαντες τοὺς  
 νήσαντας οἱ μὲν ἐπιθέντες τὸν ἑαυτῶν νεκρὸν ὑψήπτων, οἱ δὲ καομένου ἄλλου  
 ἐπιβαλόντες ἄνωθεν ὃν φέροιεν ἀπῆσαν.

Many people, lacking the necessary means of burial because so many deaths had already occurred in their households, adopted the most shameless methods. They would arrive first at a funeral pyre that had been made by others, put their own dead upon it and set it alight; or, finding another pyre burning, they would throw the corpse that they were carrying on top of the other one and go away.

The second half of the passage in Thucydides is translated, however, in a section of the poem that the manuscripts place earlier, at 1247–51:

inque aliis alium, populum sepelire suorum  
 certantes: lacrimis lassi luctuque redibant;  
 inde bonam partem in lectum maerore dabantur.

<sup>2</sup> All translations from Lucretius, unless otherwise noted, are from W. H. D. Rouse, rev. M. F. Smith, *Lucretius: De Rerum Natura*, 2nd edn. (London/Cambridge, MA, 1992); other translations are taken from the Loeb Classical Library editions, except where these are unsuitable. The translations from Thucydides are from R. Warner (tr.), *Thucydides: The Peloponnesian War* (Harmondsworth, 1954).

nec poterat quisquam reperiri, quem neque morbus  
nec mors nec luctus temptaret tempore tali.

... and one upon others, fighting to bury the multitude of their dead; weary with weeping and grief they returned, then for the greater part took to their beds from grief. Nor could anyone be found whom neither disease had assailed nor death nor mourning at such a time.

These lines are not connected either grammatically or in terms of subject matter with their surrounding context in the manuscripts, and they clearly refer to events after 1282–6, which are indeed bathetic if they come later than the firm generalization of 1247–51. The correspondence with Thucydides<sup>3</sup> merely confirms that 1247–51 ought to follow 1282–6. Such transpositions are not uncommon in the text of the *De rerum natura*, and the ending of a work is notoriously liable to suffer textual corruption: another example in the immediate vicinity is the isolated line 1225, *incomitata rapi certabant funera vasta*, ‘without mourners the lonely funerals competed with one another in being rushed through’, which again has no connection with its surrounding context and may well belong after 1281. It is surprising, therefore, that the transposition of 1247–51 was first proposed only in the nineteenth century by Bockemueller,<sup>4</sup> and it has been taken up amongst modern editors only by Martin (ironically elsewhere the most conservative of editors).<sup>5</sup> I shall argue here that the transposition not only makes better sense, but also gives us a worthy ending to the poem as a whole. My argument will be based on the closural conventions seen in the lines, a comparison with the other book ends of the *De rerum natura*, and an examination of some of the principal intertexts. I shall then attempt to look more broadly at the end of the *De rerum natura* in relation to the Epicureanism of the poem.

<sup>3</sup> Most notably *redibant* (‘they returned’) with ἀπήσαν (‘they would go away’) and *inque aliis alium* (‘and one upon others’, with a suitable verb supplied in a preceding lacuna) with καομένου ἄλλου ἐπιβαλόντες ἄνωθεν (‘they would throw [the corpse] on top of the other one’). I argue below that the former is especially significant.

<sup>4</sup> F. Bockemueller (ed.), *Lucretius, De rerum natura* (Stade, 1873), ad loc.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. also D. F. Bright, ‘The Plague and the Structure of the *De Rerum Natura*’, *Latomus* 30 (1971), 607–32.

## THE CLOSURAL NATURE OF 1247–51

*Signals of Closure*

Four aspects in particular of the transposed lines are features commonly used to signal closure. With the transposition of 1247–51, the last action described in the *De rerum natura* is that of the mourners returning to their homes (*redibant*). The return from a funeral is often marked as the concluding part of the ritual,<sup>6</sup> but the closural device of the return home is of wider significance. It is most notably represented by the end of the *Iliad*, which I discuss below, but it is widespread in literature, particularly in the heroic sagas of the *nostoi* of the heroes. The *Odyssey*, the *nostos* poem par excellence, reiterates a related but variant version of the homecoming of its central character at the end of the poem.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, throughout Apollonius' *Argonautica* it is reiterated that glory is only won if the expedition not only achieves its goal of securing the Golden Fleece but also arrives safely home.<sup>8</sup> More generally, departures are amongst the most familiar of all devices of closural allusion. As Carolyn Dewald has shown,<sup>9</sup> a departure brings the whole of Herodotus' *Histories* to a

<sup>6</sup> The departure of the bereaved was the fifth and final stage of the Athenian ceremony of public burial for the war dead, and was signalled in the closing words of the funeral speech that constituted the fourth stage. Cf. ἀπυτε ('depart!') in Thuc. 2.46.2 (with a variant ἀποχωρεῖτε), picking up ἀπέρχονται ('they depart') in 2.34.6–7, where Thucydides describes the ceremony; Plato *Menex.* 249c; [Dem.] 60.37; T. Kakridis, *Der Thukydideische Epitaphios: Ein stilistischer Kommentar* (Munich, 1961), 106; J. E. Ziolkowski, *Thucydides and the Tradition of Funeral Speeches at Athens* (New York, 1981), 164–73; S. Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1991), 315–16.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. A. Heubeck, S. West, and J. B. Hainsworth, *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1988–92), i.58, 171, 194; *Od.* 24.470–1 (Eupheithes), 528. Cf. Thuc. 7.87.6, invoking the unusual epic word ἀπενόστησαν ('they returned home'; cf. S. Hornblower, *Thucydides* (London, 1987), 114–15) with irony at the end of the Sicilian Expedition.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. R. L. Hunter, "Short on Heroics": Jason in the *Argonautica*, *CQ* 38 (1988), 436–53, at 440, on the 'single obsessive end' of the *Argonautica*. Although the poem actually ends with εἰσαπέβητε ('you disembarked')—the return home is viewed as arrival—ἀνερχομένοισιν occurs at 4.1777. The scholion (ad loc.) interprets this as meaning 'as they returned' (= ἀναχωρήσασιν).

<sup>9</sup> C. Dewald, 'Wanton Kings, Pickled Heroes, and Gnostic Founding Fathers: Strategies of Meaning at the End of Herodotus's *Histories*', in D. H. Roberts, F. M. Dunn, and D. P. Fowler (eds.), *Classical Closure: Reading the End in Greek and Latin Literature* (Princeton, 1997), 62–82.

close, although as in Lucretius it is not an obviously significant one, but simply marks the end of the exemplary story, itself an external analepsis looking back to the chronological period of Book 1 and the beginning of the Persian Empire. Nevertheless, it is full of resonance for the whole work. As we shall see later, there is a similar kind of ring composition and sense of return to a starting place in Lucretius. Plato similarly often ends his dialogues with a dispersal of the characters involved in the discussion and signals closure with a simple verb for going or related compounds.<sup>10</sup> The ending is not constituted by the conclusions drawn from the argument—that is, it is not an ‘internal ending’—but rather it is one imposed by the fictitious social framework within which the discussion takes place. The departure of the characters after a discussion is an ‘external ending’, motivated by factors extrinsic to the main issues of the dialogue. In fact, Herodotus, Plato, and Lucretius all share this ‘skewed’ kind of ending, which does not conclude the main work as we define it but a minor part of it, the exemplary story within the main narrative in Herodotus, the digression in Lucretius, and the dramatic framework in Plato.

The return of the mourners is followed by a generalizing reflection on the sad progress of the disease (1250–1):

nec poterat quisquam reperiri, quem neque morbus  
nec mors nec luctus temptaret tempore tali.

Nor could anyone be found whom neither disease had assailed nor death nor mourning at such a time.

The note of authority created by a general categorical reflection of this nature is another familiar closure device.<sup>11</sup> The summarizing function of the lines has already been remarked upon by Bright,<sup>12</sup> who points also to the recurrence of the key thematic words, *morbus* (‘disease’), *mors* (‘death’), and *luctus* (‘mourning’), which encapsulate the whole experience of the plague. This function would disappear

<sup>10</sup> Cf. the end of the *Apology* (Socrates ‘going home’ to the gods, *μετοίκησις*; cf. 40c, *Phd.* 117c); *Euthphr.* 15e, 42e; *Symp.* 223d; *Phdr.* 279c; *Cra.* 440d–e; *Tht.* 210d; *La.* 201c; *Lysis* 223a–b; *Prt.* 362; *Menex.* 100b; [Plat.] *Ax.* 372a.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. B. H. Smith, *Poetic Closure: A Study of How Poems End* (Chicago, 1968), 166–71.

<sup>12</sup> Bright, ‘The Plague’ (n. 5), 622–3.

if the manuscripts' ordering of the lines were retained. The plague in its personified form has figured in the passage preceding 1247–51, at 1224 (*vis morbida*, 'the power of the disease') and 1236 (*avidia contagia morbi*, 'the contagion of the insatiable disease'), whereas specific descriptions of the dead (as opposed to the physiological process of dying of plague) and of grief follow the manuscripts' placement of the lines. Without the transposition, *mors* would carry less weight in 1251 because it would not yet have been vividly personified as a powerful force heaping up its victims (1262–3, 1272–3). And *luctus* is more striking in context if the lines are moved because words for grief (not simply sadness) are concentrated in the section on burial, which naturally focuses on the distress of the bereaved survivors (*dolor*, 'grief', 1277; *maestus*, 'sorrowful', 1281) and their futile and excessive devotion to the dead (1286). It is after the completion of the funeral rites that we expect to see the mourners collapse from grief and exhaustion. With the transposition of 1247–51 and 1225, all three subjects, plague, death, and grief, recur in the sequence in which they unfold in the account.

More specifically, the generalizing statement found in 1250–1 is a form of the closural device that ancient rhetoricians called an *epiphonema*.<sup>13</sup> It is most often found at the end of arguments or descriptions, marking off a section of the text as a paragraph with a self-contained concluding *gnome*. It typically contains such words as (*usque*) *adeo* ('to such an extent'), *tantus* ('so great'), and *talis* ('such'): the classic examples are *De rerum natura* 1.101 (*tantum religio potuit suadere malorum*, 'so potent was Superstition in persuading to evil deeds') and Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.33 (*tantae molis erat Romanam condere gentem*, 'so vast was the effort to found the Roman race', cited as an example by Quintilian in *Inst.* 8.5.11).<sup>14</sup> Though common to internal closure, it is also found at the end of

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Quint. 8.5.11; H. Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik*, 2 vols. (Munich, 1960), i.434, 879; R. Volkmann, *Die Rhetorik der Griechen und Römer*, 2nd edn. (Leipzig, 1885), 455–6; D. P. Fowler, 'First Thoughts on Closure: Problems and Prospects', *MD* 22 (1989), 75–122, at 103–5.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *Aen.* 1.11: *tantaene animis caelestibus irae?* ('can heavenly spirits cherish resentment so dire?'); Quint. 1.12.7: *adeo facilius est multa facere quam diu* ('so much easier is it to do many things than to do one thing for a long time continuously'); and in Greek, e.g., Dem. 6.27, 120.

complete works.<sup>15</sup> Many *epiphonemata* are characterized by a nominalized form of expression: abstract nouns designating emotions and qualities are employed instead of personal subjects, adjectives, and verbs. This mode of locution has the function of detaching the reference of the statement to individuals and particular circumstances and conveying the point in an apparently objective and authoritative manner.<sup>16</sup> In Lucretius' Book 6, this abstract form of expression is particularly apt in that the hypostasis of the three key terms is a natural extension of the idiom used so far, and it is the accumulation of the three subjects in the same phrase that brings this usage to a close. Nevertheless, although related to the context,<sup>17</sup> lines 1249–51 have the air of a general truth: at times like these, no one can escape these potent forces, which are introduced as unqualified absolutes.

Finally, the transposed lines can be seen as contributing to the ring composition of the *De rerum natura*, whereby the concluding description of the plague corresponds to or 'balances' the opening springtime address to Venus. Critics have often noted<sup>18</sup> that the opening of the poem with its emphasis on Venus' generative role and the procreation of the species is counterbalanced at the end by the destructiveness of the plague. If one sees one function of the poem, in G. Müller's terms,<sup>19</sup> as the overcoming of our natural terror at our own individual ends and the end of our world through an insight into the eternal law of growth and decline, then it is natural to find this theme being developed in two of the most important positions in the poem, at the beginning and at the end. Their stark

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Sall. *Cat.* 61.9: *ita varie per omnem exercitum laetitia, maeror, luctus atque gaudia agitabantur* ('thus the whole army was variously affected with grief, rejoicing, and lamentation'); Cic. *Phil.* 6.19: *aliae nationes servitutem pati possunt, populi Romani est propria libertas* ('other nations can endure slavery; the assured possession of the Roman people is Liberty').

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *De rerum natura* (here abbreviated *DRN*) 1.101; 6.1250–1; Sall. *Cat.* 61.9; Cic. *Phil.* 6.19; Dem. 6.27.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. S. F. Bonner, 'Lucan and the Declamation Schools', *AJP* 87 (1966), 257–89, at 261; Quint. 8.5.6–15.

<sup>18</sup> G. Müller, 'Die fehlende Theologie im Lukreztext', in *Monumentum Chiloniense: Festschrift für E. Burck* (Amsterdam, 1975), 277–95, at 291–3; id., 'Die Finalia der sechs Bücher des Lukrez', in *Lucrèce, Entretiens Hardt* 24 (Geneva, 1978), 197–221, at 218 [= p. 251 in this volume]; P. Fowler, 'A Commentary on Part of Book Six of Lucretius *De rerum natura*', *DPhil thesis* (Oxford, 1983), 244; and cf. Bignone, *Storia della letteratura* (n. 1), 318–22.

<sup>19</sup> G. Müller, *Die Darstellung der Kinetik bei Lukrez* (Berlin, 1959), 25 ff.



isolation belies the fact that the two processes are necessarily complementary, that is, that one cannot take place without the other.<sup>20</sup> This does not mean, however, that the reader cannot mentally re-establish the links. She is helped to do so partly by the close similarity in phrasing between 1.22–3, which focuses on the far-reaching extent of Venus' power (*nec sine te quicquam dias in luminis oras | exoritur neque fit laetum neque amabile quicquam*, 'since without you nothing comes forth into the shining borders of light, nothing joyous and lovely is made'), and 6.1250–1 (*nec poterat quisquam reperiri, quem, neque morbus | nec mors nec luctus temptaret tempore tali*, 'nor could anyone be found whom neither disease had assailed nor death nor mourning at such a time'). The litotes created by the negative formulation and the generality of *quicquam/quisquam* ('nothing'/ 'no one') perfectly express the ubiquity of plague and creation.

### *Tragic Patterns of Closure*

Lines 2.576–80, which relate the processes of coming into being and passing away, are similarly phrased in the negative:

miscetur funere vagor  
quem pueri tollunt visentes luminis oras;  
*nec* nox ulla diem *neque* noctem aurora secutast  
quae non audierit mixtos vagitibus aegris  
ploratus mortis comites et funeris atri.

With the funeral dirge is mingled the wail that children raise when they first see the borders of light; and no night ever followed day, or dawn followed night, that has not heard mingled with their sickly wailings the lamentations that attend upon death and the black funeral.

Those lines, however, raise a familiar problem in Lucretian studies, in that although they formally balance birth and death, the formulation of birth in terms of the *vagitibus aegris* ('sickly wailings') of the newly born seems to tip the balance toward a darker view of the human condition. The finality and categorical nature of 6.1250–1 might similarly be seen as emphasizing more death and pain than life and pleasure. This is accentuated by the resemblance of the lines to the

<sup>20</sup> Cf. 1.56–7, 263–4; 2.62–79, 294–307, 569–80; 6.769–72, 1093–6.

'pessimistic' conclusions of Greek tragedy, such as Euripides, *Heracles* 1427–8, 'We go in wretchedness with loud lament, having lost the greatest of friends,'<sup>21</sup> and the coda that appears at the end of four of Euripides' tragedies, *Alcestis*, *Andromache*, *Helen*, and *Bacchae*, where the gnomic utterance is followed by the application to the circumstances in question, in the manner of *tali* ('such') in Lucretius:

Many are the shapes divinities take,  
 much that's unanticipated the gods accomplish;  
 what we expect goes unfulfilled,  
 and the god finds a way for the unexpected.  
 Such was the outcome of this matter.<sup>22</sup>

The invoking of tragic conventions is extended by the resemblance of 1250–1 to the pessimistic assertions about the mortal condition frequently voiced in Greek plays.<sup>23</sup> In particular, Cicero's translation of some lines of Euripides' *Hypsipyle*<sup>24</sup> is remarkably similar to Lucretius 6.1250–1: *mortalis nemo est quem non adtingit dolor | morbusque* ('no mortal is there but pain finds him out and sickness'). This statement, however, is not really pessimistic, but part of a *consolatio* on the natural cycle of birth and decay: it is the human lot to experience the death of loved ones, and therefore we should not grieve over the inevitable. In a sense this is the message that is often felt to be missing at the end of the *De rerum natura*; no *consolation* is offered. Epicurus, by contrast, had explicitly condemned tragic pessimism in *Letter to Menoeceus* 126–7:

Yet much worse still is the man who says it is good not to be born, but 'once born make haste to pass the gates of Death'. For if he says this from conviction why does he not pass away out of life?<sup>25</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Cf. D. H. Roberts, 'Parting Words: Final Lines in Sophocles and Euripides', *CQ* 37 (1987), 51–64, at 52; and F. M. Dunn, *Tragedy's End: Closure and Innovation in Euripidean Drama* (Oxford, 1996), 13–25.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, esp. 58: 'Codas that set a seal on the past do so either by including brief lamentations or by placing an emphasis on the finality or authority of what has happened.'

<sup>23</sup> Cf. the (spurious?) tailpiece to Soph. *OT* 1528–30; Eur. *Andr.* 100–2; Aesch. *Ag.* 928; Soph. *Trach.* 1–3.

<sup>24</sup> Fr. 60.90–1 Bond, quoted in Cic. *Tusc.* 3.59 (= fr. 42 Büchner), and discussed by C. Segal, *Lucretius on Death and Anxiety* (Princeton, 1990), 64–5.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Theognis 425–8 West, with the scholion on Soph. *OC* 1225.

Euripides fragment 449 N (from his *Cresphontes*) comes particularly close to *De rerum natura* 2.576–80:

ἐχρῆν γὰρ ἡμᾶς σύλλογον ποιουμένους  
τὸν φύντα θρηνεῖν εἰς ὃς ἔρχεται κακά,  
τὸν δ' αὖ θανόντα καὶ πόνων πεπαυμένον  
χαίροντας εὐφημοῦντας ἐκπέμπειν δόμων

For we should gather to lament the child who has been born for the evils he is entering upon, and escort from home with joy and reverence the person who has died and ceased from pain.

The initial reckoning of the disadvantages that await the newly born throughout its life and a lament for its condition seem to be endorsed by Lucretius in 5.222–34, in a passage that again emphasizes the negative aspects of our world as a part of the argument that there is no divine providence: the human baby at birth ‘fills all around with doleful wailings—as is but just, seeing that so much trouble awaits him in life to pass through’. Lucretius is at this point invoking a well-known truth found frequently in Greek poetry, and especially tragedy, for the purposes of demonstrating that human beings do not occupy a privileged position among the species of the world. Yet, the image of the shipwrecked baby and the implied conception of stepmother nature seem to reinforce the poetic tradition with its insistence on the fragility of human life and the instability of happiness.

As these other passages suggest, however, it is not an objection to the final placement of 6.1250–1 that they end on a note of excessive pessimism: their tone is amply paralleled throughout. The ‘solutions’ to this ‘problem’ offered by critics are various, and the ramifications of the issue many: I shall return to some of them later. For the moment, I merely note that if we consider the ring composition not of the whole work but of Book 6 within it, the transposed lines themselves may be taken as pointing to a way out for readers oppressed by the apparent tragic helplessness of the plague. First, the phrase *tempore tali* (‘at such a time’) points us back to the prologue of Book 6, where precisely such ‘hard times’ brought about by natural forces have been discussed, along with Epicurus’ discovery of strategies for coping with them when they occur (6.29–32):

[sc. monstravit]  
 quidve mali foret in rebus mortalibu' passim,  
 quod fieret naturali varieque volaret  
 seu casu seu vi, quod sic natura parasset,  
 et quibus e portis occurri cuique deceret

[He showed] what evil there was everywhere in human affairs, which comes about and flies about in different ways, whether by natural chance or force, because nature had so provided, and from what sally ports each ought to be countered.

Second, *poterat* ('could') in 6.1250 stresses the status of the plague as a past event in history: it does not have to be repeated in exactly the same form. Book 6 opens and closes with Athens: we already know that at a subsequent time the redeeming and life-giving message of Epicurus was to be born and to change the course of history. In a reversal of the normal sequence, the problem follows the remedy. By this arrangement, Lucretius is in effect testing the readers' responses to the Epicurean 'message' of the poem.<sup>26</sup> What at first appears to be a false closure, disappointing the readers' expectations, turns out on closer inspection to be a successful one in that this 'surprise ending provides a perspective point from which the reader can now appreciate a significant pattern, principle, or motive not grasped before'.<sup>27</sup>

## BOOK ENDINGS IN THE *DE RERUM NATURA*

Two of the other book endings in the *De rerum natura* are particularly significant for the closure of Book 6. Books 1 and 5 both end with *epiphonemata* in which a *sic*<sup>28</sup> ('so') clause is followed by a *nam* ('for') clause in a four-line block (1.1114–17, 5.1454–7):

<sup>26</sup> Cf. D. Clay, *Lucretius and Epicurus* (Ithaca/London, 1983), 250–66.

<sup>27</sup> Smith, *Poetic Closure* (n.11), 212.

<sup>28</sup> The manuscripts have *sic* in 1.1114, but Munro adopted the reading *sei* (*si*) from L, together with a lacuna of one line after 1114. This reading is supported by Empedocles 110 DK, 100 Wright, where a future conditional clause is used in a similar context. Moreover, some scholars regard the Empedoclean lines as a concluding statement and place them either at the end of *On Nature* (Bollack) or near the end (Wright). However, although the Empedoclean model makes Munro's suggestion tempting, the parallel with Book 5 pulls the other way.

Haec *sic* pernosces parva perductus opella;  
*namque alid ex alio clarescet* nec tibi caeca  
 nox iter eripiet quin ultima naturai  
 pervideas: *ita* res accendent lumina rebus.

So you will gain a thorough understanding of these matters, led on with very little effort; for one thing will become clear by another, and blind night will not steal your path and prevent you from seeing all the uttermost recesses of nature: so clearly will truths kindle light for truths.

*sic* unum quicquid paulatim protrahit aetas  
 in medium ratioque in luminis erigit oras.  
*namque alid ex alio clarescere* corde videbant,  
 artibus ad summum donec venere cacumen.

So by degrees time brings up before us every single thing, and reason lifts it into the precincts of light. For they saw one thing after another grow clear in their minds, until they attained the highest pinnacle of the arts.

These two passages are clearly related: apart from verbal resemblances, we have the hypostasis of night, time, and reason, a common concern with concealment and discovery, and a reference to extreme points. In relational terms, *ultima* ('the uttermost recesses') and *summum cacumen* ('the highest pinnacle') are diametrically opposed. The latter suggests visibility on all sides and a prominence that stands out from the low-lying surrounding area. The former implies precious secrets hidden away in underground recesses, deep within the universe. This sense is conveyed by the connections of both passages with 1.407–9:

*sic alid ex alio per te tute ipse videre*  
*talibus in rebus poteris caecasque latebras*  
 insinuare omnis et verum *protrahere* inde.

So you will be able for yourself to see one thing after another in such matters as these, and to penetrate all unseen hiding places, and draw forth the truth from them.

The idea of succession in the phrase 'one thing after another' is common to all three passages—here, at the end of Book 1, of a philosophical chain of reasoning in which the basic principles of Epicureanism are discovered; and in Book 5, of the concepts of the

technologies that enhance the living conditions of mankind. *Protrahere* ('draw forth') is used again at 5.1454, *protrahit*, as is *videre* ('see'). The same images of light and dark and language of concealment and discovery occur.

The metaphor of 'unseen hiding places' helps to explain the nuance of *ultima naturai* in 1.1116. Smith aptly translates this phrase as 'the uttermost recesses of nature', Brown in his commentary as 'nature's last secrets'. The *per-* prefix in *pernosces* ('understand thoroughly'), *perductus* ('led on'), and *pervideas* ('see [fully]') suggests the penetration of an inner sanctum or places shrouded in mystery; the verbs function similarly to *insinuare* ('penetrate') in 1.409. Indeed, 'natural philosophy' was known in Latin as *res occultae* or *res abditae* ('hidden things'),<sup>29</sup> rendering Greek τὰ ἄδηλα; this usage is reflected in the *De rerum natura*.<sup>30</sup> Variant expressions in Cicero convey the qualities of concealment and mystical shrouding associated with the subject (e.g. *Brut.* 44 (*reconditis abstrusisque rebus* ('obscure and abstruse problems')), *Acad.* 1.15 (*a rebus occultis et ab ipsa natura involutis*, 'mysteries veiled in concealment by nature herself')). Thus it is natural for Lucretius to use the language of unveiling and revelation to describe philosophical enlightenment in the prologue to Book 3. It is expressed in terms of nature's secrets being opened up and revealed to all: *sic natura tua vi | tam manifesta patens ex omni parte resecta est* ('nature thus by your power has been so manifestly laid open and uncovered in every part', 3.29–30). The influence of the Mysteries here is unmistakable.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Cf. J. S. Reid (ed.) *M. Tulli Ciceronis Academica* (London, 1885) on Cic. *Acad.* 1.19 (*de natura et rebus occultis*, 'the secrets of nature'); Epicurus, *Ep. Hdt.* 38, 80.

<sup>30</sup> 1.145, 933 (= 4.8).

<sup>31</sup> The culminating events in the initiation ceremony were the opening of the doors of the *telesterion* amid a blaze of light and the unveiling of the *orgia*: cf. Plut. *De prof. virt.* 81d–e, fr. 178 Sandbach; Hippol. *Haer.* 5.8.164.62 ff. DS; N. J. Richardson, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Oxford, 1974), 26; G. E. Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Princeton, 1961), 273, 306; W. Burkert, *Homo Necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth*, tr. P. Bing (Berkeley, 1983), 276–7. The *epopteia*, or final vision, was accompanied by a reaction of awe, well conveyed in Lucretius' *divina voluptas | —atque horror* ('divine delight and shuddering'). The language of the Mysteries had very early on been appropriated by philosophers to describe the progress from ignorance to intellectual enlightenment, and the Empedocles passage that may lie behind Lucretius' 1.1114–17 employs mystical

The movement in the Book 5 passage is antithetical to that at the end of Book 1: instead of piercing the central mystery, we find a gradual emergence and gaining of a peak. In fact, the opening of Book 2 showed how one movement can paradoxically lead to the other: the philosopher's *arx* ('citadel') of security and mental calm soars high above the plains on which struggling humanity dwells (2.7–13). Yet the *ratio* of 5.1455 is not the *ratio* of Epicureanism. The language used to describe the invention of the arts is a mixture of revealing what is hidden (*protrahit*, 'brings forth') and of bringing to birth (*in luminis . . . oras*, 'into the precincts of light'), perhaps reflecting the complex nature of Lucretius' account of technological inventions as a combination of imitation of nature and rational experimentation.<sup>32</sup> Although the development of civilization is not seen as uniformly positive and Lucretius' version highlights various setbacks and moral flaws that come about under the pressure of changes in the external environment, it is interesting to note that *ratio*, even this lower-order kind that is not to be identified with true rationality, is inextricably linked with bringing light out of darkness. The way in which the description of technological/artistic inventiveness and philosophical reasoning are assimilated to each other reveals that the activities are not so very different. Indeed, the discoveries of Epicureanism and of Lucretius himself are temporally located in the diachronic account of civilization at 5.335–7 and, more specifically, after men reach the summit of achievement in the arts at 6.5. In all of these passages there is an affirmative tone that emphasizes men's agency in sorting out their own problems, be they philosophical or technological/artistic.<sup>33</sup>

How do lines 6.1250–1 stand in relation to these passages and, in particular, to the book endings of 1 and 5? In Book 5, human beings are at the summit of achievement, in the bright light, while in Book 6, they

language (110.2 DK). Lucretius' language at the end of Book 1 by its similarity to the prologue of Book 3 suggests the poet in the role of hierophant, showing the way, and the reader in the part of the initiand, being led by the torches of philosophy.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Epicur. *Ep. Hdt.* 75–6; B. Manuwald, *Der Aufbau der lukrezischen Kultur-entstehungslehre* (Mainz, 1980), 18–30.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. 1.407: *per te tute ipse* ('for yourself'); 1.1114 ff.: *pernosces . . . nec tibi . . . eripiet quin . . . pervideas* ('you will gain a thorough understanding . . . and [night] . . . will not prevent you from seeing'); 5.1456: *clarescere corde videbant* ('they saw . . . grow clear in their minds'). Epicurus himself was *tali cum corde repertum* ('a man endowed with such wisdom', 6.5).

are at the nadir of failure, in the darkness of death. The *cor* ('heart'), the seat of the mind, is no longer an area where reason operates, but where despair has taken hold (6.1151–3, 1233). No effort is made by the plague-stricken to exert themselves, but they collapse in a state of passivity (6.1249, 1250), in contrast to the agency emphasized in the other passages. The only experimentation is carried on by disease, death, and grief.<sup>34</sup> The powerful contrast between these antithetical pictures is strengthened by the fact that Books 5 and 6 cohere as a pair within the overall structure of the poem. They both crucially present the condition of mankind before the advent of Epicureanism:<sup>35</sup> there is a strong sense of continuation between Books 5 and 6 as Athens in the prologue to Book 6 clearly represents the 'peaking' of civilization<sup>36</sup> in the birth of Epicurus. Yet this Athens is also the location for the historical plague of 430 BCE, and its much-vaunted civilized values and social norms disintegrate when put to the test. The creativity of the abstracts 'time' and 'reason' in Book 5 is undermined by the destructive experimentation of the abstracts 'disease', 'death', and 'grief' in Book 6.

The relationship of the end of Book 6 to that of Book 1 may be read in a similar fashion, as an undermining of the rationalist optimism of the earlier passage. But we may also read the closing lines of Book 1 as already anticipating the later shock of the final end. The phrase *ultima naturai* ('the uttermost recesses of nature') may also be read metapoetically as looking to the end of the work, and the darkness of death in the account of the plague as already foreseen in the blind night of Book 1. From this point of view, what the reader meets with at the end of Book 6 is what she has been prepared for all along by the unbroken thread or chain of arguments that the work has offered. The plague is one more example of nature's opacity, its power to surprise and perplex. In the gloom generated by this natural disaster, the reader seems to have been abandoned by the didactic poet, but in effect a beacon light shines out from the end of Book 1

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Verg. *Geo.* 4.328, *omnia temptanti* ('for all my endeavour') of Aristaeus. The great inventors in Book 5 were those *ingenio qui praestabant et corde vigeant* ('who were pre-eminent in genius and strong in mind').

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Fowler, 'Commentary on Book Six' (n. 18), 338–40, on *DRN* 6.2; Clay, *Lucretius and Epicurus* (n. 26), 257–9.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Fowler, 'Commentary on Book Six' (n. 18), 13–15; Segal, *Lucretius* (n. 24), 231–2.



over the intervening space of five books with its promise of aid. The reader has to act on his or her own resources with the poem as a support (cf. 1.407 ff.). Whether the *res*, ‘truth’ or ‘facts’, reinforced by Epicurus’ torch (3.1), will kindle the light of truth against the smoky glare from the ignited pyres (*accendent*, ‘kindle’, significantly varies *subdebantque faces*, ‘set light to’, at 6.1285) remains to be seen, but the reader is invited to make the attempt.

### INTERTEXTUALITIES I: EPIC, DIDACTIC, TRAGEDY

One of the factors that make the ending of the *De rerum natura* particularly ‘open’ is the lack of any formal coda. Although it is difficult to make confident assertions, especially about the earliest texts, this is arguably a feature that associates the poem with epic rather than with didactic.<sup>37</sup> Presumably, the texts known by Lucretius and his first readers would have been published at least in some form with our present endings. We have lost the ‘bird omens’ section at the end of *Works and Days*, but we know that Apollonius of Rhodes athetized them. If that athetesis is accepted, the final lines of the poem possess a degree of generality, and a confidence about the future success of a man imbued with the knowledge imparted by the poem, that give them a closural force. Within 822–8, lines 826–8 constitute a *makarismos*-type ending:<sup>38</sup>

τάων εὐδαίμων τε καὶ ὄλβιος ὁ τάδε πάντα  
εἰδὼς ἐργάζεται ἀναίτιος ἀθανάτοισιν,  
ὄρνιθας κρίνων καὶ ὑπερβασίας ἀλεείνων

That man is happy and lucky in them [days] who knows all these things and does his work without offending the deathless gods, who discerns the omens of birds and avoids transgression.

τάων (‘them’) refers to the days and ἐργάζεται (‘does his work’) to the works that together form the subject of the poem. Thus the key terms

<sup>37</sup> Cf. B. A. van Groningen, *La composition littéraire archaïque grecque: Procédés et réalisations* (Amsterdam, 1960), 70–7.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Richardson, *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (n. 31), 313 ff.

figure in the conclusion. More importantly, the pupil is promised success and happiness if he masters the advice provided by the poem. Various endings speculatively proposed for Empedocles' *On Nature* carry similar predictions about the future capabilities of the pupil: 110 DK, the choice of Bollack and placed in penultimate position by Wright, has already been cited as bearing a close resemblance to the end of Lucretius' Book 1 (1114–17). In context, the end of *De rerum natura* Book 1 refers to the ensuing reading of the rest of the poem, but divorced from its context and placed at the end of the whole work, it would read like a characteristic promise of complete mastery of the subject and a thorough understanding of nature. Even Empedocles' lines envisage future meditation on the ideas of the poem by Pausanias after its close.<sup>39</sup> Aratus makes lower-level and consequently less exciting claims, as befits his 'slight, finely wrought' (λεπτόν) poem, and promises simply accuracy in weather forecasting rather than larger-scale claims of complete knowledge and perfect happiness: but then it is difficult to see how either of these results could be brought about by a didactic poem on weather signs (*Phaen.* 1153–4):

τῶν ἄμυδις πάντων ἔσκεμμένος εἰς ἐνιαυτὸν  
οὐδέποτε σχεδίως κεν ἐπ' αἰθέρι τεκμήραιο.

Study all the signs together throughout the year and never shall your forecast of the weather be a random guess.

Again the result is specified in terms that relate only to the ostensible aim of the work. A modest potential optative is used instead of the bold future indicative.

The form of Hesiod's *Theogony*, as we possess it, was probably shaped by the Alexandrians, who separated it off from a *Catalogue of Women* (not the extant one). Thus it possesses a somewhat puzzling, if very influential, four-line ending (1019–22), of which the first two lines contain a summarizing recapitulation of the section on goddesses, and the following two invoke the Muses to sing about women. West thinks that the ending would have been 1020 and that lines 1021–2 belonged to the opening of the poem following in the

<sup>39</sup> For this anticipation of future study, cf. Epicurus, *Ep. Men.* 135; *Ep. Pyth.* 116; with *Ep. Hdt.* 83, echoed in *DRN* 1.398–417 (note the future *poteris*), which is in turn related to 1.1114–17 (note the futures *pernosces, clarescet, eripiet, accendent*).

papyrus roll, which later got incorporated into the text. Callimachus' *Aitia* ends in a similar manner, looking forward to the poem that follows in the published edition, the *Iambi*:

χαῖρε σὺν εὐεστοῖ δ' ἔρχεο λωιτέρῃ.  
 χαῖρε, Ζεῦ, μέγα καὶ σύ, σάω δ' [ὄλο]ν οἶκον ἀνάκτων·  
 αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ Μουσέων πεζὸν [εἴ]πειμι νομόν.

Farewell and return with great prosperity. Hail greatly, thou too, Zeus, and save all the house of kings. But I will pass on to the prose pasture of the Muses.

This ending clearly conforms to the closing formulas of the Homeric Hymns, which bid farewell and often promise a future return to the subject.<sup>40</sup> Callimachus, then, cleverly adapts an archaic closural technique, in which an open-ended commitment to return to the theme is expressed, to the exigencies of the published book, so that the position of the poem in the ordering of his works is brought to the reader's attention, in an extreme example of self-reflexivity. This type of ending, known to moderns as the *sphragis*,<sup>41</sup> continued to be popular in didactic verse, appearing twice in Nicander and once in Virgil.<sup>42</sup> Amongst other extant didactic works, those of Manilius and Grattius both have textual problems at the end of the extant text, though the end of Manilius, at least, may well be original (and imitate Lucretius).<sup>43</sup> Oppian's *Cynegetica* has no formal closure, but the *Halieutica* of his namesake ends with a prayer for the well-being of the reigning emperor, whichever Antoninus he may be (5.675–80).<sup>44</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Cf. *Hymn. Hom.* 2.495 (Demeter); 3.166, 177–8 (Delian Apollo); 3.545–6 (Pythian Apollo), 4.579–80 (Hermes), etc. *Hymn. Hom.* 9.7–9 is very close to the end of the *Aitia*. On the χαῖρε ('hail'), cf. N. Hopkinson (ed.), *A Hellenistic Anthology* (Cambridge, 1988) on Callim. *Hymn* 5.137–42.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. W. Kranz, 'Sphragis. Ichform und Namensiegel als Eingangs- und Schlussmotiv antiker Dichtung', *RhM* 104 (1961), 3–46, 97–124.

<sup>42</sup> Nicander, *Theriaca* 957–8; *Alexipharmaca* 629–30; Vergil, *Geo.* 4.559–66.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. D. P. Fowler, 'From Epos to Cosmos: Lucretius, Ovid, and the Poetics of Segmentation', in D. C. Innes, H. Hine, and C. Pelling (eds.), *Ethics and Rhetoric: Essays for Donald Russell on his 75th Birthday* (Oxford, 1995), 1–18, with bibliography; and id., 'Second Thoughts on Closure', in Roberts, Dunn, and Fowler (n. 9), 1–22.

<sup>44</sup> Note also, however, the strikingly Lucretian conclusion to the preceding section on the death of fishermen (672–4), 'And they in sorrow speedily leave those waters and their mournful labour and return to land, weeping over the remains of their unhappy comrade.' The resemblances point to the *Iliad* as a shared intertext (so earlier lines 323 ff. clearly point to *Il.* 22.369 ff. on Hector's death): the presence of the coda points the difference from Lucretius.

Although the evidence is not unanimous, there is clearly a tendency for didactic works to end with a formal conclusion—a *quod erat demonstrandum* or injunction to further study. On both the manuscripts and the transposed endings, the *De rerum natura* lacks this, although the deictic *tempore tali* marks a slight gesture toward a summation. We should not be surprised, however, to find the poem associating itself more with epic, as there has been a constant dialectic between the two genres throughout the work.<sup>45</sup> The relationship to the model for the epic genre, the *Iliad*, goes much further than merely the absence of a coda, however. Both works end with funeral rites, perhaps the most familiar form of social closure, ‘an expression of order and solidarity in a world of sometimes uncontrollable conflict’;<sup>46</sup> in the *Iliad*, this function is related to the central themes of the poem, in that, as C. W. Macleod points out, the funeral ‘represents civilisation maintained in the midst of war, as the ransom represented it maintained against rage and revenge’.<sup>47</sup> With the transposition of 1247–51, however, there is a further element of resemblance between the *Iliad* and the *De rerum natura*, in that in both cases the return home of the mourners is mentioned. In the *Iliad*, the ceremony, properly conducted, acts as a therapeutic experience, bringing a release to the emotions and a final resolution to the strife of the poem. The mourners return home to take part in a banquet (*Il.* 24.801–4):

χέυαντες δὲ τὸ σῆμα πάλιν κίον· ἀντάρ ἔπειτα  
 εὖ συναγειρόμενοι δαίνυντ’ ἐρικυδέα δαῖτα  
 δώμασιν ἐν Πριάμοιο, διοτρεφέος βασιλῆος.  
 ὧς οἱ γ’ ἀμφίεπον τάφον Ἔκτορος ἵπποδάμοιο.

And once they’d heaped the mound,  
 they turned back home to Troy, and gathering once again

<sup>45</sup> Cf. G. B. Conte, ‘Instructions for a Sublime Reader: Form of the Text and Form of the Addressee in Lucretius’ *De rerum natura*, in *Genres and Readers*, tr. G. W. Most (Baltimore, 1994), 1–34.

<sup>46</sup> R. Seaford, ‘Homer and Tragic Sacrifice’, *TAPA* 119 (1989), 87–95, at 93; cf. id., *Reciprocity and Ritual: Homer and Tragedy in the Developing City-State* (Oxford, 1994), 159–64.

<sup>47</sup> C. W. Macleod (ed.), *Homer: Iliad 24* (Cambridge, 1982), 45–6. On ‘funeral and antifuneral’ in the *Iliad*, cf. J. Redfield, *Nature and Culture in the Iliad* (Chicago, 1975), 167–71.

they shared a splendid funeral feast in Hector's honour,  
held in the house of Priam, king by will of Zeus.  
And so the Trojans buried Hector breaker of horses.<sup>48</sup>

In the *De rerum natura*, by contrast, the bereaved on their return cannot reintegrate themselves into normal life in this way, but instead yield completely to their emotions. The inversion of ritual is already present in the Thucydidean model (and the Homeric manner of Thucydides' closural devices has often been noted<sup>49</sup>), but the placing of the funerals and return home at the end of the poem points directly to the *Iliad*. Lucretius' attitude to ritual practices is radically different from that of Thucydides. While we observe little regard for religion in Thucydides, the failure to carry out burial rites properly is treated as a sign of the collapse of social mores and civilized life. Lucretius, however, argues against a belief in the need for burial in Book 3 (870–93) and attacks most of the rituals associated with religious worship, especially sacrifice.<sup>50</sup> The plague simply exposes the vacuity of meaning that Epicureans ascribe to these practices even in 'normal', everyday existence, untroubled by war or plague. People still pathetically cling to their cherished beliefs even when the ritual is so hopelessly travestied that it cannot achieve its normalizing function. The gods of popular conception are implicated in the horror by appearing to allow sacrilegious behaviour (1272–7). In Lucretius, then, the ritual of burial or sacrifice admits neither of a normative expression nor of an improper one.<sup>51</sup>

This is accentuated by the detail of the fighting among the mourners, which spans the final lines of the manuscripts and the transposed ending. This is not in Thucydides, but is another epic trait. Shedding blood over the disposal of corpses seems to be a pointless exercise, and yet this peculiarly desperate form of fighting had formed the central subject of *Iliad* Books 16, 17, and 18, while the disposal of Hector's and Patroclus' bodies dominates Books 22–4. The struggles

<sup>48</sup> Trans. R. Fagles, *Homer: The Iliad* (New York, 1990).

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Hornblower, *Thucydides* (n. 7), 115–16 with n. 32: see especially *Il.* 24.1 and *Thuc.* 2.47.1 (cf. *Il.* 24.2 with 23.257, and Macleod, *Iliad* 24 (n. 47) on 24.801).

<sup>50</sup> Cf. 1.80–101; 2.352–66; 3.50–4; 4.1233–9; 5.1198–1203.

<sup>51</sup> There is a tacit reference to the custom of *conclamatio*: cf. 3.467–9 with E. J. Kenney (ed.), *Lucretius: De Rerum Natura, Book III* (Cambridge, 1971), ad loc.; Servius on *Aen.* 6.218.

here have a heroic aspect: the characters see themselves not as fighting over mere corpses but as establishing the *kleos*, the reputation, of the dead heroes. Eternal fame does not attach itself to a corpse that is hacked about and thrown to the dogs, as Agamemnon in the underworld makes only too plain.<sup>52</sup> Renown is only ensured when the hero dies nobly and is safely buried with honours that befit his status. Lucretius shares a number of details with the battles in the *Iliad* (fighting over the dead in appalling strife, spilling blood, a terrible accompanying noise or din, refusal to give up the corpse, and the theme of return<sup>53</sup>) but goes out of his way to remove any element of heroism. He presents the fighting as taking place within a polis, where concern for burial was strong, but by using the verb *rixantes* and by making the pun on 'spilling blood' on behalf of those 'related by blood', he undercuts the ideals of the *Iliad* and presents a travesty of the events of Books 16 to 18. Displaced from its cultural context in the *Iliad*, in which reputation, *kleos*, is the substitute for immortality of the soul, this fighting looks like a meaningless squabble. Concern for the burial of the dead, an abiding interest in Homer, is dismissed in Epicureanism as an aberration of the irrational mind.<sup>54</sup>

Thus the ending of the *De rerum natura* parallels the strife over the corpses in Books 16 and 17 of the *Iliad*, and the success that some achieve in disposing of the bodies and returning home from the funeral in part corresponds to Books 23 and 24. While these later books are occupied with rituals, the therapeutic effect of which is felt by all concerned, the funerals in the *De rerum natura* mark no such

<sup>52</sup> *Od.* 24.93–7.

<sup>53</sup> *DRN* 6.1286; with *Il.* 16.622, 756; 17.384–5, 397–8, 412–13, 543–5, 733–4; 18.242 (strife over the dead); *DRN* 6.1285 with *Il.* 17.360–3 (blood); *DRN* 6.1284 with *Il.* 16.565; 17.756, 759 (din); *DRN* 6.1286 with *Il.* 17.357–9, 634, 669–72 (refusal to abandon corpse); *DRN* 6.1248 with *Il.* 17.406, 636; 18.238, 330 (return).

<sup>54</sup> Significantly it is the contemptuous attitude toward death as expressed in Achilles' speech to Lycaon that Lucretius appropriates as the true kind of *consolatio* (3.1024–52, based upon *Il.* 21.99–113). Achilles then goes on to fling Lycaon's body into the river to ensure that it will not receive burial. Although Achilles' action is not condemned within the cultural domain of the *Iliad*, nevertheless Lycaon's fate is such that within its system of values it is contemplated with horror. Even the modern-day reader, whatever her beliefs, is sympathetic for the duration of the poem to the conventional attitude. Epicureanism, conversely, would demand indifference as a response.

limit to grief or misunderstanding. In this imitation of the *Iliad* there seems to be a tacit comment that the ending there was somehow falsely optimistic, that grief and anger are not so easily overcome. The mourners bear a stronger resemblance to the striving masses of Books 16 and 17 than to the exceptional and enlightened pair of Priam and Achilles in Book 24, who both learn from their suffering. Ironically, Lucretius' mourners repeat in a travestied form (and in ring composition) the heroic actions of the new kind of hero, the philosopher with the military-sounding name, Epicurus, who in the prologue to Book 1 takes his stand over the prone bodies of mankind and challenges the threatening gods to a duel.<sup>55</sup>

The *Iliad* is also perhaps relevant to one final detail, specifically from the transposed ending, the retirement of the mourners to bed (*in lectum maerore dabantur*, 'they took to their beds from grief'). The reference to bed is not entirely certain (*in lectum* is Marullus' correction of the manuscripts' *iniectum*, and is not the only possibility<sup>56</sup>), and the detail may seem a banal development, inappropriate to the heightened style and emphatic position occupied by the final lines. The action in itself seems domestic and familiar, and lexically *lectus* does not belong to the high style.<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless, the action is not without significance. In the *Iliad*, the mourners retire to bed after Patroclus' funeral (23.58), picking up a common clausal device seen elsewhere in epic.<sup>58</sup> In Lucretius, *in lectum* contains a hint of a different sort of bed, the funeral bier. There is a sinister

<sup>55</sup> Cf. 1.67, *est... ausus primus... obsistere contra* ('the first that dared to make a stand against [religion]'); Conte, 'Instructions for a Sublime Reader' (n. 45), esp. 1–2. One of the parallels from the *Iliad* noted by Conte in the prologue to the *De rerum natura*, 17.166–8, significantly belongs to the section where the warriors are striving to regain their dead. Glaukos is exhorting Hector to take his stand against Ajax in order to capture Patroclus' body so that the Trojans can exchange it for Sarpedon.

<sup>56</sup> R. G. M. Nisbet has suggested to me *in letum* ('[they were given] to death') to give a stronger ending, but the normal phrase is *letum dare* (*TLL* vii.2.1189.40 ff.; P. Thielmann, *Das Verbum dare im Lateinischen* (Leipzig, 1882), index s.v. *letum*). *Lectus* without an epithet in the sense 'sickbed' is certainly a little odd, but *dare in* with the accusative in the sense of *imponere* is attested (Ovid, *Met.* 7.608 ff.; *Ars* 1.638; *Her.* 14.26).

<sup>57</sup> So, for instance, the one occurrence in the *Aeneid* (4.496) is in a technical term for the marriage bed (*lectus iugalis*); and the homely force of the word is to the point in Catullus 31.7–10.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. *Il.* 1.609, and of course the famous alternative end to the *Odyssey*, 23.295–6. On *Il.* 23.58, see O. Taplin, *Homeric Soundings: The Shaping of the Iliad* (Oxford, 1992), 293, arguing for the end to a major division of the poem at that point.

suggestion that the mourners, by giving way to their grief, are in effect consigning themselves to the funeral bier and bringing on their own deaths. Retiring to bed or lying prostrate is clearly seen as a sign, on the part of the mourner, of withdrawal from life. In contrast, the normal practice in Homeric epic or Greece in general was for mourners to attend a feast or wake after the funeral. Achilles' refusal to eat before and after the funeral of Patroclus, which is harshly criticized by Apollo, is part of his generally anomalous behaviour.<sup>59</sup> The matching funeral of Hector, by contrast, is not marred by any such departure from the norm. After the Trojans return to Troy, they gather in Priam's palace and conduct a banquet: everything is done as it should be. No such positive comment is made at the close of the *De rerum natura*: here the retiring to bed contrasts with the proper conduct of the Trojans. The funeral meal signals the reintegration of the mourners into the life of the community: in Lucretius, there is no community to rejoin.

Epic and tragedy are always mutually implicated in Greek and Latin literature, and as in epic, many Greek tragedies end with funeral processions.<sup>60</sup> The resemblance of the transposed lines to a tragic coda has already been noticed, but there is perhaps a further tragic element in them. The funeral processions of tragedy form part of the aftermath of a *pathos*, a destructive deed or an experience of intense suffering by one or several characters in the play. Plays in which such acts of violence are prominent generally close with scenes in which the 'debris'<sup>61</sup> (that is, the dead bodies) is displayed in order

<sup>59</sup> For the funeral meal, cf. Burkert, *Homo Necans* (n. 31), 48–58; D. C. Kurtz and J. Boardman, *Greek Burial Customs* (London, 1971), 146 ff.; M. Andronikos, *Totenkult*, *Archeologica Homerica* 3 (Göttingen, 1968), 15–18; J. M. C. Toynbee, *Death and Burial in the Roman World* (London, 1971), 50 ff.; and cf. C. P. Segal, *The Theme of the Mutilation of the Corpse in the Iliad*, *Mnemosyne* suppl. 17 (Leiden, 1971), 66 ff., and Taplin, *Homeric Soundings* (n. 58), 276 ff., on the importance of the shared meal of Priam and Achilles; and C. Sourvinou-Inwood, 'To Die and Enter the House of Hades: Homer, Before and After', in J. Whaley (ed.), *Mirrors of Mortality: Studies in the Social History of Death* (London, 1981), 15–39, at 28 n. 47, on the importance of the location of the banquet in *Iliad* 23 by the tomb of Patroclus.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Aeschylus, *Septem* (on any version of the ending); Sophocles, *Antigone*, *Ajax*, *Trachiniae*, *Oedipus Coloneus* (a special version of the motif); Euripides, *Medea*, *Heracles*, *Bacchae*, *Supplices*, *Andromache*, and *Hecuba*.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. J. Dingel, 'Das Requisit in der griechischen Tragödie', diss. (Tübingen, 1967), 106 ff.; O. Taplin, *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus* (Oxford, 1977), 163 ff.



to intensify the emotional reaction of the audience, especially as the horrific act itself is generally related in a messenger speech rather than enacted on stage. Unlike epic narrative, where the closing stages of the funeral can be presented,<sup>62</sup> Greek tragedy is concerned only with initiating the ceremony. The actors and chorus have to leave the stage at the end of the play,<sup>63</sup> and the funeral procession provides a suitable motive for clearing the orchestra.

Clearly, meaning can be generated by the manner in which this departure is made: whether everyone leaves the stage together or moves off in separate groups in opposite directions.<sup>64</sup> If everyone departs together with the same goal in view, then the funeral ceremony can become a powerful symbol of the assertion of communal values at the end of the play. P. E. Easterling argues for such an ending to Sophocles' *Trachiniae*, suggesting that the last four lines are an address by the chorus leader to other members of the chorus not to be left behind but to hurry and join the funeral procession.<sup>65</sup> In the *Ajax*, the mere fact that the funeral is allowed to take place marks the completion of the recuperation of Ajax, whose *timē*, honour, temporarily damaged by his madness, is now restored. The body whose presence onstage dominates the second half of the action is carried off by family and friends, but significantly Odysseus is excluded from the rites because the hostility of the dead man toward him is thought to continue. The ending of the *Bacchae* is particularly susceptible to different interpretations. Easterling sees a positive value in the return to the norms of social behaviour on the part of the Thebans after the devastating irruption of Bacchic frenzy.<sup>66</sup> But although Agave performs her proper function as chief mourner, there are several features in the reconstructed ending that might prompt us to modify a wholly normative reading. First, we know that Agave's lament was so poign-

<sup>62</sup> Cf. also Pindar, *Pyth.* 3.100 ff., which ends with Achilles' blazing pyre.

<sup>63</sup> For words for departure, cf. Aesch. *Sept.* 916, 1059; Soph. *Trach.* 1275; *Aj.* 1402 ff., 1414; Eur. *Andr.* 1263 ff.; *Bacch.* 1368 ff, 1371, 1381.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. O. Taplin, 'Sophocles in his Theatre', in *Sophocle*, Entretiens Hardt 29 (Geneva, 1983), 155–83.

<sup>65</sup> P. E. Easterling (ed.), *Sophocles: Trachiniae* (Cambridge, 1982) on *Trach.* 1275 ff.; ead., 'The End of the *Trachiniae*', *ICS* 6 (1981), 56–74, at 69–72 (cf. H. Lloyd-Jones and N. G. Wilson, *Sophoclea: Studies in the Text of Sophocles* (Oxford, 1990), 177–8).

<sup>66</sup> P. E. Easterling, 'Putting Together the Pieces: A Passage in the *Bacchae*', *Omnibus* 14 (1987), 14–16.

ant that considerable pity was roused on behalf of Pentheus. Second, the reassembling or piecing together of Pentheus' body can be interpreted as a travesty of the ritual laying-out, *prothesis*, of the body on the bier. Finally, Agave departs in the opposite direction from the corpse, excluded from the funeral, like Heracles, on account of her pollution. The imperfect and incomplete nature of the funereal arrangement leaves in doubt society's capacity to restructure itself after the Dionysiac explosion. The tragic precedents, therefore, not only provide evidence of the socially integrative function of funerals that Lucretius is subverting, but also contain the seeds themselves of unease and disquiet at the success of such closure.<sup>67</sup> As modern scholarship on tragedy has often stressed, the cortège that leaves the stage at the end of a play may not be heading for any greater contentment than Lucretius' mourners, who take to their beds in unending grief.

## INTERTEXTUALITIES II: THE LUCRETIAN ENDING

The use of Lucretius' ending in later texts can be as significant for its interpretation as its own incorporation of earlier texts. The *De rerum natura* becomes one model for the 'problematic' ending, in which the comfort of closure is emphatically refused. In rewriting the *Iliad*, Lucretius emphasizes not the resolution of Achilles' anger and the reconciliation between enemies, but the renewal of war on the following day and the death and destruction that will follow. The power of that rewriting was in turn recognized in Virgil's *Aeneid*, which similarly ends abruptly on a ritual action, Aeneas' sacrifice (*immolat*, 12.949) of Turnus, that contains internal contradictions: a final resolution to the conflict of the second half of the poem and a foundational act for the New Rome, but also a perversion of ritual that casts doubt on the validity of civilized norms. The absence of a funeral at the end of the *Aeneid* is as strongly marked as its presence

<sup>67</sup> Cf. F. M. Dunn, 'Ends and Means in Euripides' *Heracles*', in Roberts, Dunn, and Fowler (n. 9), 83–111; and D. H. Roberts, 'The Frustrated Mourner: Strategies of Closure in Greek Tragedy', in R. Rosen and J. Farrell (eds.), *Nomodeiktēs: Greek Studies in Honor of Martin Ostwald* (Ann Arbor, 1993), 573–87.

at the end of the *De rerum natura*. Ovid integrates Lucretius' ending into the final part of the *Metamorphoses*, and the juxtaposition of words from the beginning and end of Lucretius' plague account<sup>68</sup> provides additional confirmation for our argument about the end in Lucretius. It is not, however, a 'Lucretian ending' in the sense in which that phrase is being defined here. Nor exactly is the end of Statius' *Thebaid*. This is not abrupt in the Lucretian sense, as it has a formal epilogue. It also bears the appearance of an Iliadic (and tragic) ending in that it closes with the funerals of the dead heroes and a cessation of hostilities. But an unresolved Lucretian (and tragic) note creeps in with the emphasis on the unending quality of the grief, which obviously bodes badly for the future: it is this grief that drives the sons of the Seven back to Thebes in the next generation, when they succeed in destroying the city.<sup>69</sup>

The two most important intertexts for the question of the transposition of 1247–51, however, are the endings to Virgil, *Georgics* 3<sup>70</sup> and Sallust's *Catiline*. The end of Virgil's Noric plague contains a number of echoes of the transposed lines (3.559–66):

nam neque erat coriis usus, nec viscera quisquam  
 aut undis abolere potest aut vincere flamma;  
 ne tondere quidem morbo inluevieque peresa  
 vellera nec telas possunt attingere putris;  
 verum etiam invisos si quis temptaret amictus,  
 ardentem papulae atque immundus olentia sudor  
 membra sequebatur, nec longo deinde moranti  
 tempore contactos artus sacer ignis edebat.

The hide was no good, and no man  
 Could cleanse the carcass in water or burn it up with fire:  
 You could not even shear the fleece, it was so corroded  
 With the foul pus, or work that rotten wool in the loom:  
 But if you were so foolhardy as to wear the hideous garment,

<sup>68</sup> Cf. 15.626, *quondam* ('once'), and 628–9, *funeribus fessi* ('weary with caring for the dead') and *temptamenta* ('efforts'), with A. Barchiesi, 'Endgames: Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 15 and *Fasti* 6', in Roberts, Dunn, and Fowler (n. 9), 181–208.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. F. Ahl, 'Statius' *Thebaid*: A Reconsideration', *ANRW* 2.32.5 (1986), 2803–912, at 2817–22; J. Henderson, 'Statius' *Thebaid* / Form Premade', *PCPS* 37 (1991), 30–79; P. R. Hardie, 'Closure in Latin Epic', in Roberts, Dunn, and Fowler (n. 9), 139–62.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. F. Klingner, 'Philosophie und Dichtkunst am Ende der zweiten Buches des Lukrez', in *Studien zur griechischen und römischen Literatur* (Zurich, 1964), 126–55; and M. R. Gale, 'Man and Beast in Lucretius and the *Georgics*', *CQ* 41 (1991), 414–26, who sees *Georgics* 3 as a microcosm of the *De rerum natura*.

Inflamed pustules and a noxious-smelling sweat appeared  
 All over your limbs: not long then  
 Before the fiery curse ate up your lettered frame.<sup>71</sup>

The structure and generalization of *De rerum natura* 6.1250–1 are recalled by *Georgics* 3.559–60,<sup>72</sup> *temptaret* ('assailed') of Lucretius 6.1251 by *temptarat* ('tried') of *Georgics* 3.563, *tempore tali* ('at such a time') of Lucretius 6.1251 by *Georgics* 3.565–6 (*nec longo... | tempore*, 'not long'), and the sequence of verbs in the imperfect tense, *redibant*, *dabantur*, *temptaret* in Lucretius, by *sequebatur* and *edebat* in *Georgics* 3.565–6, marking a radical switch in Virgil from the descriptive present that dominates the passage from 515 to 558. The first alternative (559–62), the non-use of skins, opens with an imperfect tense, *erat*, at 559, but then switches to the present; but in the second alternative, the use of skins (563–6), there is a decisive shift to the imperfect as in the last lines of Lucretius—it has been the dominant tense in Lucretius. The gradual wearing down or chipping away of the plague is perfectly conveyed in the concluding lines of both poems: Lucretius 6.1250–1 (*morbus | ... temptaret*, 'disease assailed') and *Georgics* 3.566 (*sacer ignis edebat*, 'the fiery curse ate up'). The sound and structure of the final lines is also similar, with alliteration of *s* and *t* and pronounced enjambement: *quem neque morbus | nec mors nec luctus temptaret tempore tali; nec longo deinde moranti | tempore contactos artus sacer ignis edebat*. *Sacer ignis* ('accursed fire') is Lucretian; it comes from 6.1167. It is emphatically closural for *Georgics* Book 3 because all of the natural disasters have arisen from an imbalance of the four elements and an excess of fire.<sup>73</sup> The invisible operation of fire in the *Georgics* is behind the maddening activities of the gadfly, the sexual energies of the human and animal kingdoms, the rage of the snakes, and the plague. Of course, it is significant that this is not the final ending in the *Georgics*, and some would see the darkness of the plague capped or transcended by the successful sacrifice at the end of *Georgics* 4; others would tend rather to

<sup>71</sup> Trans. C. Day Lewis, *The Eclogues, Georgics, and Aeneid of Vergil* (Oxford, 1966).

<sup>72</sup> The opening of the final eight-line sequence: *nam neque erat... usus, nec... quisquam | aut... potest aut*.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. D. O. Ross, *Virgil's Elements: Physics and Poetry in the Georgics* (Princeton, 1987), 66–74, 149–87.

assimilate that, too, to the problematic 'Lucretian' closure.<sup>74</sup> The arguments mirror the more celebrated ones over the end of the *Aeneid*.

Also relevant to the textual problem at the end of the *De rerum natura* is the end of Sallust's *Catiline*:

multi autem, qui e castris visundi aut spoliandi gratia processerant, volventes hostilia cadavera amicum alii, pars hospitem aut cognatum reperiebant; fuere item qui inimicos suos cognoscerent. ita varie per omnem exercitum laetitia maeror, luctus atque gaudia agitabantur.

Many, too, who had gone from the camp to visit the field or to pillage, on turning over the bodies of the rebels found now a friend, now a guest or kinsman; some also recognized their personal enemies. Thus the whole army was variously affected with sorrow and grief, rejoicing and lamentation.

Like the *De rerum natura*, the *Catiline* ends with tantalizing abruptness and in descriptive mode. Chapters 59–60 give an account of the battle between government forces and Catiline's armed band, whereas the final chapter, 61, gives a vivid description of the scene of the battlefield in the aftermath of the fighting. This section is introduced by an *occupatio*, an address in the potential mood, *tum vero cerneres* ('then you would have observed', 61.1), inviting the reader to contemplate the vividness or *enargeia* of the description. Lucretius issues similar invitations at 6.1259 and 1268. The scenes toward which the reader's gaze is directed are virtually the same in both works: heaps of corpses strewn over a wide area providing evidence of the intensity of the struggle in the process of dying, be it in armed struggle as in Sallust or in a frenzied state of mind as in Lucretius. The context in both is that of the polis or state.<sup>75</sup> The correlation extends to the focus on the emotional reactions of the living, of the would-be voyeurs and looters from the army camp in Sallust as they roll the bodies over to identify

<sup>74</sup> Contrast T. Habinek, 'Sacrifice, Society, and Virgil's Ox-Born Bees', in M. Griffith and D. J. Mastrorarde (eds.), *Cabinet of the Muses* (Atlanta, 1990), 209–23, and R. F. Thomas, 'The "Sacrifice" at the End of the *Georgics*, Aristaetus, and Virgilian Closure', *CP* 86 (1991), 211–18; and see Fowler, 'Second Thoughts on Closure' (n. 43).

<sup>75</sup> *Cat.* 61.7: *exercitus populi Romani* ('the army of the Roman people'), *DRN* 6.1279: *quo prius hic populus semper consuemat humari* ('with which this nation in the past had been always accustomed to be buried'); 1247: *inque aliis alium, populum sepelire suorum / certantes* ('... and one upon others, fighting to bury the multitude of their dead').

them, of the bereaved in Lucretius as they collapse in bed. Crucially, the ending is funereal and ritually impure: in the *Catiline* the bodies are left unburied where they have fallen, and in the *De rerum natura* the funeral is a makeshift affair.

Apart from these thematic and contextual links, there are also formal and lexical connections between the endings. There is a bipartite division between two groups of people, in Lucretius, the relatives who throw bodies on to empty pyres and those who hurl them on to pyres already occupied, in Sallust, the onlookers, *alii, pars*, who mourn the dead, and those, *fuere item qui*, who rejoiced at the death of their enemies. The paradox is that the bodies of public enemies, *hostilia cadavera*, can be distinguished as *amici* (friends), *hospites* (guests), and *cognati* (kinsmen) by one group, and as *inimici*, private enemies, by another. Personal relations become confused in a civil war.

Both works conclude with *epiphonemata* (*ita*, 'thus', in Sallust and *tali*, 'such', in Lucretius), in which emotions are hypostatized as abstract subjects of verbs. The two words for 'grief' both occur in Lucretius, although only *luctus* is a subject. The verbs *agitabantur* ('was affected') in Sallust and *temptaret* ('assailed') in Lucretius have a similar form and meaning; both frequentatives express persistent emotional arousal or attack. The emphasis is on the communal nature of the experience.<sup>76</sup> All of these features are strongly closural.<sup>77</sup>

The *Catiline* is open-ended and looks forward to the continuation of civil strife; failure to complete the account of the Catilinarian conspiracy reflects the failure of the Roman Republic to bring its *furor* to an end. Once again, the narrative technique reflexively mirrors its subject:<sup>78</sup> as McGushin notes (*ad loc.*), 'the inconclusiveness

<sup>76</sup> Cf. *Cat.* 61.9: *per omnem exercitum* ('through the whole army'); *DRN* 6.1250: *neq poterat quisquam reperiri, quem* ('nor could anyone be found, whom...').

<sup>77</sup> K. Vretska (*C. Sallustius Crispus: De Catilinae Coniuratione* (Heidelberg, 1976), *ad loc.*) notes that Sallust completes the work with an archaic exaggeration and without falling into empty pathos: the model is the *De rerum natura*. The phrase *in tali tempore* ('at such a time') is actually used of the Catilinarian Conspiracy at 48.5 and is applied elsewhere to political upheavals; cf. Virg. *Aen.* 11.303, *non tempore tali* ('not at such a time'), of the Italian/Trojan War, and Livy 22.35.7.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. F. Cairns, *Generic Composition in Greek and Roman Poetry* (Edinburgh, 1972), 163 n. 6; G. Lieberg, *Poeta Creator: Studien zu einer Figur antiken Dichtung* (Amsterdam, 1982), 5–45; and J. Masters, *Poetry and Civil War in Lucan's Bellum Civile* (Cambridge, 1992), 6–10, with Fowler, 'Second Thoughts on Closure' (n. 43).

of Sallust's decription is meant to underlie the inconclusiveness of fratricidal strife, the shadow of which lay over Rome at the time of writing'. The *De rerum natura* is open-ended and 'inconclusive' also, though not in the same way as Sallust. It leaves open the question of the possible continuance of strife, but whereas Sallust's work implies later historical developments, the question implicitly raised in the *De rerum natura* is not susceptible to historical enquiry: it cannot be answered at the historical or political level, but only at the level of each individual, and then by and for that individual alone. Sallust was vigorously opposed to the Epicurean ideal of individual *otium*,<sup>79</sup> yet his analysis of the causes of political decline brought him closer to Lucretius and those ancient moralists who attributed it to *otium*, peace, and the attendant luxury and idleness, not as in Thucydides to the indigent circumstances created by the harsh taskmaster, war.<sup>80</sup> Lucretius sees war and its attendants as simply exacerbating an already morbid mental condition (3.41 ff.). It is not insignificant that Sallust takes up in the *Catiline* the metaphor of plague for moral corruption.<sup>81</sup> It does not figure in literature before Lucretius as prominently as the simple disease metaphor, and it carries connotations not available to the commoner image, of a collective crisis and of contagion.<sup>82</sup> The historical discussion of social mores or behaviour of the populace en masse is thus a suitable, and common, context for the metaphor. The attraction of the *De rerum natura* to a writer like Sallust is that in no other text prior to it had the metaphor been developed for such a sustained stretch. Both doctors agree on the diagnosis of the sick patient, society, and on the failure of current techniques of therapy, notably politics; but they differ about the cure.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. *Cat.* 1.1–4; *Jug.* 1.4.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. *Cat.* 51.13 ff.; Nisbet and Hubbard on Hor. *Carm.* 2.16.5.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. *Cat.* 10.6, 36.5; *Hist.* 1.77.9 K, 4.46. For some other allusions to the *DRN*, cf. D. P. Fowler, 'Lucretius and Politics', in M. T. Griffin and J. Barnes (eds.), *Philosophia Togata: Essays on Philosophy and Roman Society* (Oxford, 1989), 120–50, at 138–9 [= Ch. 18 of this volume].

<sup>82</sup> Cf. H. S. Commager Jr., 'Lucretius' Interpretation of the Plague', *HSCP* 62 (1957), 105–18 [= Ch. 8 of this volume]; P. H. Schrijvers, *Horror ac divina voluptas: Études sur la poétique et la poésie de Lucrèce* (Amsterdam, 1970), 312–24.

## TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS

The consideration of Bockemueller's transposition has already involved many of the wider issues of the poem's end, and in this final section I should like to look at some of these in more detail. At the beginning of the *De rerum natura*, the poet's composition of the literary text had been assimilated to the creative processes in the world.<sup>83</sup> Just as the poem created itself and its message at the beginning, so now at the end (with the transposition) it enacts its own dissolution as the words break down into their constituent syllables (*consanguineos* into *cum sanguine*, 6.1283–5; *morbis* into *mors*, 1250–1; *temptaret* into *tempore*, 1251). The poem itself is no exception to the law that all compound bodies (with the possible exception of the gods) decompose. The poem is frequently set up as a model for the arrangements of the atoms in the formation of larger structures by the analogy between letters and atoms.<sup>84</sup> A rearrangement of atoms leads to the creation of a different compound in the same way as a change in the order of letters in a word changes that word into a new one with a different meaning.<sup>85</sup> Metaphors of weaving and unravelling are applied to both the literary and atomic processes.<sup>86</sup> The weaving metaphor is apt for the composition of a philosophical poem that has to lay out the interconnected propositions in an orderly manner, exhibiting its own system or *ratio* in a way that reflects the *ratio* of nature. The philosophical poet can fruitfully

<sup>83</sup> Cf. 1.25 (*pangere*, 'fashion'), 20 (*propagent*, 'beget'), 42 (*propago*, 'scion'), with D. Clay, 'De rerum natura: Greek Physis and Epicurean Physiologia', *TAPA* 100 (1969), 31–47, at 37; more generally, see A. Schiesaro, 'The Palingenesis of the *De rerum natura*', *PCPS* 40 (1994), 81–117.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. 1.197, 823–9, 912–14; 2.1013–18.

<sup>85</sup> As e.g. in *ligna* and *ignis* ('wood' and 'fire', 1.912–14). Cf. P. Friedländer, 'Pattern of Sound and Atomistic Theory in Lucretius', in *Studien zur antiken Literatur und Kunst* (Berlin, 1969), 337–53 [= Ch. 15 of this volume]; J. M. Snyder, *Puns and Poetry in Lucretius' De Rerum Natura* (Amsterdam, 1980).

<sup>86</sup> Cf. 1.418: *sed nunc ut repetam coeptum pertexere dictis* ('but now to resume my task begun of weaving the web of discourse'); 6.42: *quo magis inceptum pergam pertexere dictis* ('therefore I will proceed the more readily to weave the web of my discourse'); and, on the atomic level, e.g. 1.242–3; 247; 3.209; 4.88; 5.94, *retexo* (lit. 'unweave') in 1.528. *Primordia*, *ordia prima*, *exordia* are all terms for the first 'threads'. On cosmic weaving, cf. now J. Scheid and J. Svenbro, *Le métier de Zeus* (Paris, 1994), 172–7.



'imitate' nature; with his limited number of words, he can produce a vast number of different patterns. Only through the process of weaving will the *ratio* of the poem have its *species*, beautiful appearance, and the unseen processes be made visible. The word for 'unravelling' is not applied to the poetic process: it is easy to extend the analogy to this stage, but difficult to see how it would work in practice, because if the analogy were properly followed through, the poem would end with a meaningless jumble of letters individually placed to mirror the disintegration of the compound into constituent atoms. If a meaningful structure is to be preserved to the very end, the most we can expect is a sense of a partial breakdown at the level of syllables (and molecules), which is, in effect, the case. Even if on the formal level the breakdown is muted, at the semantic level it is strikingly prominent. The word *temptaret* ('assailed') is prominently placed at the very end: it is one of the words subject to the unravelling process, and it contrasts with *pangere* ('fashion', 'compose') at the beginning of the poem. It has by this stage become the *vox propria* for the attack of disease on the organism, occurring three times in the preceding paragraph on the *ratio* of the plague. More generally, it designates the stage before the collapse of any compound body.<sup>87</sup> At the end of the *De rerum natura*, the link between *temptaret* and *tempore* ('time') suggests that the process is like time in wearing down things or people.

The *De rerum natura*, then, establishes itself as a perishable construct, a composite of elements joined together in a linguistic system that can unravel and be rearranged to produce different words, arguments, books, etc. Ovid recognizes its status and, instead of promising it immortality, foresees its demise at the moment of the world's destruction:<sup>88</sup>

carmina sublimis tunc sunt peritura Lucreti,  
exitio terras cum dabit una dies.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. e.g. 1.530, *temptata labare* ('assailed and shaken'), in conjunction with *retexi* ('decomposed') in the preceding line; 537, *temptata labascit* ('it is shaken when attacked'); 580 in connection with *aeternum tempus* ('infinite time') in 578 and 582.

<sup>88</sup> *Am.* 1.15.23–4. The language of doom appropriately comes from Lucretius (5.95: *una dies dabit exitio*, 'one day shall consign to destruction'; 1000: [*non...*] *una dies dabit exitio*, 'one day did not send to destruction'; 3.898–9: *omnia ademit* | *una dies*, 'one day has robbed you of all these things').

The verses of sublime Lucretius will perish only then when a single day shall give the earth to doom.

Lucretius does not promise himself the 'eternal crown' that Ennius so boastfully claims.<sup>89</sup> The highest praise that can be given to the godlike Epicurus is modestly restrained: his words are 'most worthy of eternal life' (3.13). How, then, does the poem play itself out? To a degree, its measured self-reflexivity has been demonstrated already in the breaking up of the words in the closing lines, in the concentration of words for destruction, and in the closural devices. But in no area does it so evidently self-destruct as in that of its 'message'.

The 'solution' for the psychological problems of human beings is a recognition that all of us, and everything else in the world as well, are subject to decay. But what is more worrying is that the representation of the fear of death is so powerfully emotive that it appears to undermine in a radical manner the radiant message of Lucretius' faith—that Epicureanism has arrived to save mankind.<sup>90</sup> The problem is created by the false rhetoric of closure. The generalization/*epiphonema* of 1250–1 is so packed with closural features that it is hard for the reader to step back and distance herself from the pessimism created by it. As far as the overall didactic function of the poem is concerned, this is a false closure, an unexpected one: it fails to sum up the Epicurean arguments and give them the ringing endorsement that the reader expects to carry away with her. Since the poem ends with a description, the addressivity of the language, normally so prominent in the didactic genre, is muted to its lowest point. A refusal to draw conclusions at the end of a work is not typical of an ancient moral philosopher,<sup>91</sup> and this avoidance of an explicit message at the end destabilizes the reader's interpretation of the whole work. Why does this happen? Why is the reader presented with a problem at the end, not an answer?

One approach is to consider the generic nature of the poem. A didactic poem presents a set of *praecepta*. The poet has the dual

<sup>89</sup> Cf. *DRN* 1.118, *perenni fronde coronam* ('a chaplet of evergreen leafage'); 121, *aeternis . . . versibus* ('everlasting verses').

<sup>90</sup> Cf. 1.62–79; 3.1–30; 5.1–54; 6.1–42.

<sup>91</sup> One exception is obviously Plato, and the aporetic endings to some dialogues, most notably the *Republic*: cf. e.g. J. Annas, 'Plato's Myths of Judgment', *Phronesis* 27 (1982), 119–43.

function of poet and teacher: a corollary of this is that the reader has the dual function of reader and pupil. In other words, both poet and reader are actively engaged in a process that carries implications for the spiritual welfare of the reader. Throughout the poem Lucretius as narrator has stressed the reader's capacity to formulate arguments for herself. Knowledge of Epicureanism is constituted not simply by a knowledge of certain facts, but by an ability to formulate new arguments in support of Epicurean axioms. Lucretius sometimes refuses to embark on further arguments and leaves it to the pupil (Memmius plays this role for the reader) to fashion new ones (1.402–17) or think up other examples (6.1080–3). This pedagogic method may bear on the ending of the poem. There are certain arguments and conclusions at which pupils have to arrive by themselves. For them to be given the final and complete answer would be an abnegation of duty on the part of the teacher. Thus the plague passage can be seen as a kind of test for the reader to see if she has absorbed the message of Epicureanism.<sup>92</sup>

The poem on this view is 'open-ended' in that the readers 'write' their own 'conclusions',<sup>93</sup> but this open-endedness is only partial. The reader who wants to make a 'success' of the poem must read the ending in the spirit of an Epicurean convert: as a provisional one, to be balanced and supplemented by the mental argument that the plague of Athens was a historical event, that subsequently Epicurus has come to save us, and that there are always corresponding creative processes to compensate for the destructive motions, at least on the level of the universe, if not of our world. To read the ending more pessimistically is an option available to the reader and one that, as we have seen, leaves its traces very clearly in the later history of the 'Lucretian ending'; but it is an option that inevitably makes the poem a failure. This stark polarity has of course been with the reader from the beginning of the poem, and it is generated by the strongly positivist and solifidianist nature of Epicureanism. There is only one way to be saved, only one right way of looking at the world: Epicureanism cannot be just one philosophy amongst many, one possible model, but has to offer *the* nature of things. *Aporia* can

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Clay, *Lucretius and Epicurus* (n. 26), 250–66.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Fowler, 'First Thoughts on Closure' (n. 13), 78.

only be a temporary state on the way to enlightenment. For the Epicurean, travelling hopefully and philosophizing well is not enough: one has to make it to the end. The reader at the end of the *De rerum natura* has to decide for herself whether she has made it, whether the poem 'works'. The strength of the poem is that the very power with which the more pessimistic side is presented makes more secure the enlightenment of the reader who *has* managed to accept this darkness and incorporate it into the Epicurean vision of tranquillity.

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## The Conclusions of the Six Books of Lucretius

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In Lucretius' poem there are no separate conclusions as such, clearly distinguishable from the argumentative parts, like those we find in Virgil's *Georgics*. The description of the Athenian plague cannot really be separated from the argumentation. I do not see the last four verses of Book 1, which point forward to what follows, or the last ten verses of Book 5, which summarize and provide a starting point for the proem of Book 6, as containing even some of the formal elements of a conclusion.<sup>1</sup> However, we can understand the last part of each main argumentative section, though in terms of content it remains an integral part of the argument, as the conclusion to the book. Lucretius constructed these closing sections in two main ways: they always include discussion of a central theme of the book, or at least its application for daily life, and they contain a confrontation between the truth discovered in the book and the customary ignorance of man. My goal in what follows will be to substantiate the thesis that, in the six conclusions, the poet depicts in different ways, but ultimately to the same end, the error and sufferings of unfree humans in the face of the *maiestas cognita rerum* ('the majesty of the universe made known'). He does this, as he admits in the proem to Book 2, from the standpoint of one who has overcome suffering through

<sup>1</sup> On this point only, I disagree with the very interesting discussion by E. Pöhlmann, 'Charakteristika des römischen Lehrgedichts', in *ANRW* i.3 (Berlin/New York, 1973), 888 f.

insight and observes from a safe haven with a certain degree of pleasure. This pleasure has nothing to do with *Schadenfreude*, but with human compassion and the eagerness of a missionary to proclaim to everybody the one way to salvation. Lucretius shows admirable artistic skill in the opposition of error and truth.

Some Classicists have misunderstood Lucretius, and have thought that the pessimism and despair described by him reflect the state of his own soul. Lately, this position has met with stronger opposition.<sup>2</sup> This is a very positive development. The poem does not tell the story of the psychological development of the author. We are, rather, to understand from the artistic form of the work what the poet wants to communicate to us: that is, the overall triumph of happiness in life.

The conclusion of Book 1 depicts (from line 951 onwards) the infinity of space and matter. Lucretius employs the vivid image of the continuity of space, which admits of no limits, and describes how, in a finite universe, all matter would accumulate at the bottom because of its downward movement, so that all motion would cease to exist. He also uses images to explain that a limited amount of matter would only scatter in the infinite universe and could not lead to the formation of the world. Of course, this is combined with an Epicurean premise: in the formation of the world, no ordering principle, whether theological or inherently teleological, played any part at all. Our cosmos developed by trial and error, after many useless combinations of atoms, when the *dispositurae* (atomic configurations) suddenly allowed for the development of life. Here we are at the centre of Epicurean doctrine and experience (1.1021 ff.). In the hymn at the beginning of Book 1, Epicurus returns like a triumphant *imperator* from this infinite space, only one random part of which contains the development of our world, bearing the understanding of growth and decay and of the *alte terminus haerens* ('deep-set boundary stone'). The reader should remember this passage when he now hears of an experimentally formed cosmos, which is of necessity transitory—in order to hold together, the cosmos needs the continual impact of atoms from outside. This true picture of our world is now—and this is the point of the conclusion—contrasted with the

<sup>2</sup> P. H. Schrijvers, *Horror ac Divina Voluptas. Études sur la poétique et la poésie de Lucrèce* (Amsterdam, 1979) takes this position throughout.

erroneous Aristotelian-Stoic one, which is then discarded as absurd. The importance of this polemical passage is made clear from the beginning, with one of the rare apostrophes to Memmius (1052). The idea of the spherical earth with its antipodes is then presented in such a way as to conflict with all human experience and common sense. The free suspension of matter in the centre due to a *medii cuppedo* (centripetal force) is impossible, according to the atomic theory. But the climax of the refutation comes at the end: the upward movement of fire and air suggested by the Stoic theory would lead to the *moenia mundi* ('walls of the world') being dissolved, their dispersion throughout the universe, and then the collapse of the world, because the inner part of the sky (*penetralia templa*) would collapse and all solid matter would dissolve into atoms and fly away like dust from under our feet. After the preceding introduction to the true cosmology, this wrongly conceived cosmos, which supports the theological and teleological view of life, has now lost all credibility. The consequences of this insight for our life and its correct conduct are still postponed. At this point it is enough to lay the foundations for the second book, which will go on to develop a theory of kinetics in infinite space and the growth and decay of our cosmos as one among many. But, in truth, the foundations are also laid for the ethical liberation of our life. Through the collapse of the *moenia mundi*, and because access has been opened up to the atomic movements of the universe, we can find a way to overcome our fear of death, a way to freedom in the enjoyment of our transient existence as an end in itself. The last verse of the second proem (2.53; 54–61 are interpolated) concludes its ethical considerations with the phrase: *quid dubitas, quin omni' sit haec rationi' potestas* ('why do you doubt that all this power belongs to reason?'). This is the foundation for the liberating *ratio*, laid down already in the first conclusion, when false *ratio* was conquered.

This conclusion points both forwards and backwards. Its relationship with the first proem has already been discussed. But no less striking is its relation with the middle proem, inserted before the last section of the argument of Book 1. It constitutes a kind of pause, after the elementary introduction to atomic theory and the polemics against the Ionian scientists. The poet's proem-like declaration about his poetics, for which there was no space in the already very

full first proem, is very effectively placed in this pause. From this point onwards, the train of thought becomes ethically important, and important for human decision-making. Our trust in the singularity and meaningfulness of our universe is to be destroyed, in favour of a concept of the world that *plerumque videtur tristior esse, quibus non est tractata* ('usually seems quite harsh to those who have no experience of it'), and of which it is said: *retroque vulgus abhorret ab hac* ('and the people shrink back from it', 1.943–5). The purpose of the poetry, to make seemingly bitter truth sweet, will therefore become particularly relevant at this point. Under discussion is the most important truth of all, on which everything depends for us humans.

It should also be added that the last four verses of Book 1, if we disregard the futures *clarescet*, *eripiet*, and *accendent*, form an announcement of the following book and its kinetics. Such a transition exists only between the first and second books, which form a closer unit than the other two pairs. They actually merge into each other: there is a closed chain of reasoning from 1.951, through the proem to Book 2, to its end. Proem 2 is the only one in the poem that does not have its own indication of content, and does not refer to the conclusions reached in the previous book. The continuity of the train of thought is also apparent in the unique *nunc age* ('come now', 62) after the proem: *nunc age* is used elsewhere (so also in 1.953) for structuring purposes within an argument. In the same position in other books, the new train of thought is introduced with *principium*, *primum* or *in primis* ('in the first place'). The transitional character is however lost in the final verses if we reject the emendation *sei* for *sic*, adopted by the Itali and Munro, and do not supply an apodosis (beginning at *parva perductus opella*) in a lacuna of one verse.<sup>3</sup> Surely, the gist of the passage must be: anyone who has understood the conclusions reached in Book 1 will find the subsequent explanation of kinetics easier to follow. Similar transitions of thought occur at 6.527–34, and 1.402–9 (with the simile of the dogs that find everything easier once they have been set on the right track).

<sup>3</sup> It might be possible to read *sic pernosces* as referring to the just-completed train of thought, but then the explanation with *namque*... and future verbs would be impossible. Konrad Müller recognizes the difficulty in his edition (Zürich, 1975) and suggests *cetera pernosces*, which, understandably, he did not include in his text.



The long train of thought beginning at 1.951 has its climax at the end of Book 2 (from 1023), in the proof that our cosmos must come to an end because it is one of many. Unusually, a special introduction (1023–47) prepares for the outrageous truth that will be terrifying to many. But the first impression is not a criterion; otherwise, the amazement of the first humans upon leaving their cave dwellings and seeing the sky for the first time should have guaranteed for them the truth of the belief that the world is divinely governed and unique. (Lucretius is alluding to Aristotle's story of the cave in Cicero, *ND* 2.95–6, without naming the author.) Just as this initial amazement dies down in time, so the initial fear of this new concept of the world will dwindle and give way to the strong arguments of reason. It is impossible to believe that infinite matter in infinite space will not produce worlds like ours. It will produce them, and just as accidentally as our world was produced. The experimental character of the world's formation is again strongly emphasized, following the end of Book 1. Nothing can keep the force of nature from forming such worlds. Generally, there is nothing in our world that is not one of many, and as such created without a plan and destined to perish. The application of this thought to humans is retained for the third book. It is only important at this point that, in the face of the many transitory worlds, the concept of divine governors of our world becomes absurd.

How our cosmos will meet its end can be foreseen from the dwindling flow of atoms from the infinite universe, on which the growth of this or any other world relies. When this quasi-living creature has reached maturity, there develops an imbalance between the steady passing away of atoms and the slowly subsiding incoming flow. The nourishment can no longer be satisfactorily transferred to the limbs of the ageing organism. Our decrepit earth has already reached this stage, and cannot renew itself any more. This debilitation is beginning to become apparent in our part of the world, and we will not be terrified by it if we understand the necessity of the process through its physics. The poet contrasts such an insight with the stupidity of the normal world view, represented by two simple farmers, who interpret the decreasing productiveness of their fields as the whim of *Fortuna*, or, even worse, the anger of the gods incurred by growing impiety. Some people read in this passage the poet's own

pessimism<sup>4</sup> and thus a foreshadowing of the same pessimism at the end of Book 6. But this is to underestimate the poet's art of composition, which again contrasts the false with the true, delusion with understanding, at the end of a book. Now, at the real end of the world, the understanding gained can prove itself, and its victory become apparent. The dramatic collapse at the end of Book 1 was only a hypothetical image, to refute a wrong cosmology. The long discussion of kinetics, which has now reached its end, is supposed to help us look the future fearlessly in the eye: the definite end of our actual cosmos, which we would so like to consider everlasting (as the ancients, with the sole exception of the atomists, in fact did).

A certain relation between this conclusion and the proem to Book 2 seems to me obvious. The latter deals of course with greed and lust for power, but their origin in *religio* and fear of death is assumed without argument (2.44–6), before it is made explicit in the third proem. The second proem concludes with the statement that only *ratio* can free our soul (53). But *ratio* does not mean the knowledge of ethical precepts, such as the distinction between natural and necessary desires and those which are not.<sup>5</sup> *Ratio* in this context must be the physical doctrine to be developed in Book 2, the foundation for which is the infinity of the universe in matter and space, reached at the end of Book 1. Understanding the *natura rerum* makes us free—all the pathos of the poem is focused on this principle of Epicurus. It also follows from this principle that the ethical subject of the second proem does not in any way conflict with its close relation to its book, although Book 2 is devoted to physics. Epicurean ethics depend on a correct understanding of the *natura rerum*. Incidentally, none of Lucretius' proems are interchangeable like those of Cicero's dialogues. It does not even seem to me unlikely that the contrast between darkness and light, deployed to wonderful effect in the

<sup>4</sup> F. Klingner, 'Philosophie und Dichtkunst am Ende des zweiten Buches des Lucrez', *Hermes* 80 (1952), 3–31. Decisive objections in G. Jachmann, 'Lukrez im Urteil des Cicero', *Athenaeum* 45 (1967), 89–118.

<sup>5</sup> Argued by P. Boyancé in *Gnomon* 32 (1960), 621 f., who objects that I could only construct a relation between the second proem and its book by means of an implicit, unexpressed thought, and similarly with the other proems. But that the understanding of physics frees from the fear of death (and thus has an ethically cleansing effect in this way at least) is a principle that links the proem and the conclusion.

first verses of Book 3, is also a contrast between the state of unenlightened humans and the knowledge of physics, and so takes up the confrontation from the end of Book 2. This would again create a certain connection between the ending of one book and the beginning of the next, although the gap in terms of form and content after the first pair of books is greater than after Books 1, 3, and 5. After Book 1, one can hardly speak of a gap. Between Books 4 and 5, on the other hand, there is no link at all.

The conclusion of the second book confirms that Lucretius wants to contrast correct and incorrect doctrine. He describes clearly what he wants to turn the reader against, in order to lead him to the truth. He is passionately, as Goethe said, 'ein dichterischer Rhetor' ('an orator in verse'). It would be wrong to interpret the sparkling brilliance of his descriptions of erroneous theories as sympathy for them.

Our inclination to look forwards and backwards from the conclusions of the books, and to detect compositional correspondences with other parts of the poem, is encouraged by a relationship which forces itself on us: the relation between the end of our earth, as described at the end of Book 2, and the excursus about the cult of the Magna Mater which is placed in the middle of the book, also in a prominent position. It is located in a passage about the differences between combinations of atoms, where we find (598 f.) that the earth has been called mother of the gods, men, and animals, because it contains a wealth of such different combinations. There follows an *ecphrasis* of the cult of the Magna Mater, as the old Greek poets represented it. However, the description does not simply follow the form of the old myth, but mixes it with Stoic allegory which interprets the mythical events as natural and, in particular, ethical truths: the intimidation of the unfaithful, the unmaning of the *Galli* as a punishment for impiety or ungratefulness, the duty of children to obey their parents or to defend their parents like their fatherland. The *ecphrasis* ends with the harsh verdict: *quae bene et eximie quamvis disposta ferantur, | longe sunt tamen a vera ratione repulsa* ('although these things are excellently and skilfully presented and told, they are far removed from true reasoning', 644 f.). This allegorical interpretation is called 'excellently and skilfully presented'—but it is just an interpretation. And even worse, it interprets the myth as a representation of acceptable truths, in such a way as not to detract

from, but to strengthen the dignity and majesty and the divine grandeur of the Magna Mater. Deeply moved, the people pay her cultic honours, which are described in detail. The image of the divine mother travels through the world *horrifice* ('inspiring awe' or 'dread', 609). But fascination and *horror* are only justified towards infinity and the purposeless play of the atoms within it, which has no relation to humans and does not need their human worship (3.26–30). The earth must not block our view of infinity, and the ecstasy must never be on her account, not even partly: *nec tellus obstat, quin omnia dispiciantur, | sub pedibus quaecumque infra per inane geruntur* ('and the earth does not prevent all things from being clearly seen, whatever is happening beneath our feet in the void below'). Any worship of the earth as our mother or nurturer, even the most demythicized, is inconsistent with Epicurean doctrine. It is replaced by physics, which allots to our earth its relative position in the processes of growth and decay. This is exactly the result that is reached in the conclusion to Book 2. Our interpretation is confirmed by the connection we discovered between this conclusion and the excursus in the middle of the book. This is a very good example of Lucretius' large-scale compositional technique. The condemnation of the allegorical interpretation of the Magna Mater cult is obviously not alleviated at all by the admittedly impressive description. On the contrary: *longe sunt tamen a vera ratione repulsa* ('they are far removed from true reasoning', 2.645).

The next six verses describe the nature and the spatial separation of the true gods. The Earth is not one of them. Only the *largus sermo*, the 'abundant discourse', which is promised in 5.155 will bring proof of the existence of the real gods (for certain basic facts can be anticipated before their didactic treatment, and not only in the proems). This short theological explanation is followed directly by the important sentence: 'the earth is indeed without feeling at all times, and because it holds the first beginnings of many things, it brings forth into the sunlight many things in many ways' (652–4). Only after the poet has stripped the earth of every trace of dignity and divinity, does he, in an afterthought of six verses (655 ff.), allow the earth to be called *deum mater* ('mother of the gods'). He allows it because it is the conventional name, and he also allows similar metonymies, as long as the speaker always means them only *λόγῳ* ('in word'), and

not *ἔργω* (= *vera re*, 'in fact', 659). Otherwise, he would be sullyng himself (i.e. his own *animus*), with shameful religion.<sup>6</sup> Lucretius' own practice keeps faith with his precepts. Their positive aspect is of course only a concession to the necessities of the epic style. For example, in the first proem, he gives Epicurean *voluptas* (pleasure) the name *Venus*, and even, allegorically, the epithet *Aeneadum genitrix* ('mother of the race of Aeneas'), in order to begin his opening verses in the appropriate style.<sup>7</sup> We will return to the Acheron myth and its evaluation later.

This discussion of the whole excursus shows that the poet again presents a false opinion in order to deter us from it. He requires his reader to keep in mind right up to the end of the book the poetic rhetoric used in his critique of deluded religious beliefs about our earth in the middle of the book.

The long concluding section of Book 3 combats the fear of death using formal features derived from diatribe and consolation literature. This fear continues to have a powerful effect, in spite of the acknowledged proofs of mortality. The whole passage should be seen as the conclusion of the book. All non-Epicurean elements in it are integrated with Epicurus' own doctrine. Delusion is contrasted with the understanding that death does not concern us. This negative understanding is essential, because according to the master's teachings

<sup>6</sup> I firmly reject the opinion of P. H. Schrijvers (op.cit. [n. 2], 57 ff.), who says that *vera re = a vera ratione*, that this phrase should be joined with *parcat* instead of *contingere* and means 'grace à la vérité objective' ('by means of objective truth'), and that *animus* is that of the reader. All three interpretations are evidently linguistically impossible. More serious is his opinion (ibid., 54–6) that Lucretius welcomes the mythical presentation in the excursus as a means of making Epicurean truth understandable to the people (propagation through sacralization, and this even equated with the honey of artistic presentation in 1.945, ibid. 58 n. 8). But *a vera ratione repulsa* ('far removed from true reasoning', 645) does not indicate the poetologically necessary distance between truth and presentation: it indicates the sharpest rejection of the cult activities which the poet abhors even after their ethical interpretation.

<sup>7</sup> The image of Mars lying in Venus' arms in the first proem is an actual allegory. It is intended to express the fact that only Epicurean *voluptas* can restrain the spirit of war, which determines the Roman present. This is no more a relapse into the dreaded *religio* than the myths of Plato are a relapse into the mythical theology he rejected. The narration of the fable of Phaethon's fall (5.396–405) is intended to illustrate an incorrect cosmological theory, probably the Stoic *ekpyrosis*. It tells us more about the Stoic than about the Lucretian use of allegory. No one could miss the ironic rejection in 405 and the dogmatic tone of 406. The same goes for 2.1154.

this principle alone makes mortal life enjoyable: according to verses 41–93 of the proem, the fear of death is the main reason for the great vices which poison our lives. Only *naturae species ratioque*, ‘the outward appearance and inner laws of nature’, can free us from it. What this has taught so far leaves only *mors immortalis* (‘immortal death’) for humans; the warnings and sarcastic refutations in the nine sections of the conclusion are supposed to bring this home to stubborn minds. The topic, which is fundamentally important for ethics, is here, in the middle of the poem, treated in a great variety of ways.

The conclusion begins (830–64) with the idea that all the terrors of history after our death do not concern us any more than those before our birth. Death even makes it unimportant whether one has been born before or not,<sup>8</sup> ‘as soon as immortal death has taken away mortal life’ (869). At the end of the book, this principle is hammered home in the idea that, even if we could prolong our life for any number of human lifespans, nobody could take anything away from *mors aeterna*. The duration of non-existence stays the same, whether someone dies today or died many years ago. This is a negative expression of the fact that a sense of fulfilment in life definitely has to be found within a given lifespan, the length of which is irrelevant. But Lucretius avoids phrasing this positive doctrine of Epicurus as positively as we read it in e.g. *KD* 19. Graphic illustration of the absurdity of stubbornly clinging to life is much more in the style of this conclusion. The addressee is always the foolish man, who amidst all the insecurities of life always expects something from the future, i.e. more satisfaction from outside. He is told what the *natura rerum* already said in the middle of the conclusion: *nec nova vivendo procuditur ulla voluptas* (‘nor by living longer can we hammer out for ourselves any new pleasure’, 1081). He does not want to understand, and he is like the leaky jar of the Danaids (1084), mentioned not long before. One can see how this last paragraph summarizes and felicitously reformulates the ethical criticism of the conclusion,

<sup>8</sup> *Differre*, 868 requires a double question, since *differt an* seems not to be correct Latin. The supplement suggested by R. Heinze and Bailey, *utrum aliquo* preceding an elliptical *an nullo*, is unacceptable, and *iam*, which in this position cannot belong to *differre* in spite of Bailey, would remain incomprehensible. Therefore, K. Lachmann’s *ante ullo* should be combined with S. Brandt’s *necne; natus* is superfluous.

confronting *mors aeterna* very effectively with human delusion. In this indirect way, rather than in the repetition of a positive doctrine, it is made clear from where alone we can expect healing: that is to say, from the positive affirmation of our own transience. Not having this positive attitude is the real human misfortune.

C. Guissani was completely wrong when he interpreted this as merely the poet's disordered additions, and wanted to see line 1075 as the real conclusion.<sup>9</sup> This preceding paragraph (1053–75) actually clearly anticipates the final one. In a manner familiar from satire, it describes the unstable life humans lead if they have a weight on their heart, which only the study of the *rerum natura* can lift. This principle is only phrased as a problem here so that one can already guess the answer, which is then made explicit in the final paragraph. The problem is the status of the eternal time<sup>10</sup> awaiting mortals after death. This refers to *mors aeterna* ('eternal death'), in the face of which the short-term worries of humans (*unius horae*, 1073) seem pointless.

In the middle of the third conclusion, the longest and most important passage is the accusing speech which the *natura rerum* herself makes against the normal behaviour of humans. The form of the didactic poem is varied through *prosopopoeia*, in spite of a certain Greek theory which forbids this.<sup>11</sup> The poet has already let other people speak, but they were all deluded humans, who expressed their lack of understanding in conventional laments about the loss of a relative or the transience of their lives (894–911; 912–30). Epicurus' *Physis*, on the other hand, speaks as an Epicurean. But the form of the

<sup>9</sup> For a sensible refutation of Guissani, see the dissertation of T. Stork, *Nil igitur mors est ad nos* (Bonn, 1970), 146 ff., which also offers many other useful contributions to the interpretation of the conclusion.

<sup>10</sup> To interpret *status*, 1074 as the state of human beings (Bailey) is impossible here on grounds both of sense and of style. E. J. Kenney (ed., *De Rerum Natura*, Book III (Cambridge, 1971)) assumes a double meaning and finds in *status* also the rhetorical sense (*στάσις*). Against this stands *in quo*, which would then, against its position, have to belong to *temporis*. *Manendo*, 1075 is to be retained, with Heinze. *Restat manendo* is an intensifying doublet: 'remains by remaining'; this expresses the unconquerable power of *mors immortalis*. *Manenda* does not seem, in spite of Lambinus and Lachmann, to be correct Latin. I have found passive forms only of the intransitive *manere*. The transitive meaning, 'expect', was transferred from *expectare* only to the active voice of *manere*. It seems that one cannot say: *res futurae manentur*.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Pöhlmann, op. cit. (n. 1), 828 f.

abusive speech requires negative phrases, and the warnings of the master are echoed in them: enjoy the pleasure of limited time, and prefer quality to quantity; nothing is gained by prolonging life, *eadem sunt omnia semper* ('everything is always the same', 945). In a second speech, the harsh prosecutor rebukes the old man who still does not want to die; the principle of succession demands that he make space for younger ones. The poet discusses this further in his own voice, and coins the sentence which translates a pre-Epicurean commonplace into Roman rhetorical language: *vitaque mancipio nulli datur, omnibus usu* ('life is given to nobody as a freehold, but to all on lease', 971). He then repeats the point from the first section about the *anaesthesia* of death. The words *horribile* ('dreadful') and *triste* ('grim', 976) are used as part of the transition to the mythical underworld punishments.

These myths are condemned just as much as that of the Magna Mater. But it is said that the sort of agonies which are described for Tantalus, Tityos, Sisyphus, and the Danaids really do exist. They are the agonies of those humans who live in the wrong way. They do not recognize their fear of death as the reason for their passions and sufferings, and do not know how to put a limit to their agonies (1021), and therefore project<sup>12</sup> these agonies into a hell after death themselves, which only makes their own lives even more of a hell. What has developed out of the fear of death further strengthens that fear. Is Lucretius here interpreting myths allegorically, as many have claimed? To interpret allegorically means to preserve the meaning, which is separated from the content. Does Lucretius preserve the original meaning of these myths, by interpreting them in terms of the reality of our life on earth? Did the proselytizing preacher, who wanted to cleanse hearts, intend to use these images of infinite agony didactically, to act as a deterrent? Did he not rather want to get rid of the mythical content along with its source, or in other words along with its meaning, by means of his analysis? Is not the reprimand clear enough, which is directed against the inability of the soul to put a limit to its agonies? Can the description of an *apeiron* (infinity) of agonies encourage people to strive for a *peperasmēnon* (something finite) in the enjoyment of life? I assume that Lucretius

<sup>12</sup> This notion is already found in Democritus, B 297 DK, and is perhaps Epicurean.



rejected the agonies of hell projected into this life as much as the cult of the Magna Mater in its ethical interpretation. He does not have to say this explicitly, because he has already attacked the vices which inspire the myth as the result of the fear of death.

In the next section, the poet creates a welcome variation by for once letting somebody speak who is approaching understanding. He lets him measure his own mediocre life against the lives of great men, who all still faced death. How embarrassing would it then seem to the speaker to want to avoid death himself. The second paragraph (870–87), like the two mentioned above, combats trite sorrowing over our mortality, this time with the argument that the dead person does not feel anything; this point of view provides a link, because Lucretius wants to get to *mors immortalis*. The discussion deals with the fears about the fate of one's own corpse which even affect those who do not believe in immortality. Their inconsequence is demonstrated in the absurd image of the man who watches his own corpse being eaten by wild beasts. Ever since the proem of the *Iliad*, the prospect of being eaten by dogs and birds after death was most terrible to the ancients. But Lucretius argues that, in case of a normal burial of whatever form, the disaster would be just as great and the fear should therefore be no less. The fear is of course no more justified, however. For one consistently adhering to Epicurean thought, it does not matter how a corpse is buried or whether it is buried at all.

Finally we should consider that at the end of Book 3, we have reached the middle of the poem, and the middle of its message. So far the transience of the *kosmoi* in infinity and the transience of human souls have been proved; now ordinary people with their standard behaviour are confronted with this reality. Now, each man is supposed to embrace the feeling of transience, and through this to learn the only sensible way of life. The style of instruction in this conclusion is determined by the necessity of enlightening these ordinary human beings and profoundly correcting their ways of thinking. This is why Lucretius employs the traditional refutations, warnings, and reprimands. Over the end of the book stands the victorious truth, and this kind of instruction aims to set us on the way towards it.

In the fourth conclusion, we read the vicious devaluation of love's passion, which poisons our lives and makes pure Epicurean *voluptas* (pleasure) impossible. This happens because we misunderstand the

*simulacra* (visual or mental images) which have a necessary function in love-making. They must not, however, give rise to unrealistic expectations, as if it were possible to become one with the person who is emitting the *simulacra* (*penetrare et abire in corpus corpore toto*, ‘to penetrate and be absorbed body in body’, 4.1111). This desire is a disease of the soul (*aerumna, furor*, 1069). To avoid it, the role of the *simulacra* in love has to be restricted to their physical purpose; this is the beginning of the conclusion. A model for this correct understanding is offered by the pollutions experienced by boys at puberty, on whom *simulacra*, coming from random bodies, have an unconscious effect. And then we read (1037): *sollicitatur id nobis, quod diximus ante, | semen* (‘as we said before, semen is stirred in us’), when men reach manhood. Here, *id* has to be connected with *quod diximus* (because of its position, and because *id semen* would not fit the sense); the internal accusative is certain, and *idem* seems the obvious supplement for the missing syllable: that is, *eandem sollicitationem sollicitatur*,<sup>13</sup> as described in 1030–6. If, with R. Waltz, one also restores the necessary subordinate clause (*cum movet* instead of *commovet*), then the main clause *ex homine humanum semen ciet una hominis vis* (‘the power of a human alone can stir out from a man the human seed’) introduces the exact reason for the connection between the conscious erotic act and those pollutions. The loving relationship is reduced to a mere physiological process. It must not be connected with the passion of the soul which causes illness by nurturing the impossible wish for satisfaction, expected from the person who is loved. Only the emotionless satisfaction of the sex drive, even if it is with *Venus vulgivaga* (‘street-walking Venus’, i.e. prostitutes), allows for healthy *voluptas*. The Epicurean enjoyment of life is therefore not compatible with love as interpreted by the Neoterics. Lucretius employs a sarcastic polemic against their ideas and way of life; the Neoterics also employ satirical and diatribe-like modes of expression.

<sup>13</sup> I do not recognize a lacuna after 1037 (Giussani, K. Müller). I have on my side the *editio princeps Brixianensis* and the three subsequent Italian editions, which already had *idem* according to H. A. J. Munro. The evident improvement of R. Waltz can be found in *REL* 29 (1951), 193. In 1058 I accept T. Creech’s emendation, *hinc autem numen amoris*. The dignity of the divine power is destroyed. Incidentally, we can apply to the passion of love what Epicurus (*Ep. Hdt.* 50 f.) says about the corruption of sense perceptions through a *προσδοξαζόμενον* (added opinion).

Next, incorrect ideas about inherited features and childlessness are also corrected with physiological explanations. The final verses of the book offer, in a humorous tone, a better replacement for the ἐρωτικὸν πάθος (passionate love) in a marriage, namely familiarity and quiet affection. Should the words *consuetudo concinnat amorem* ('habit produces love', 1283) not suggest to us that the marital relationship, understood in this way, is the same as Epicurean friendship? Epicureans, especially in Cicero (*Fin.* 1.69), particularly mention the deep affection created by habit (*consuetudine adamare*) as a characteristic feature of friendship. Women in the *Kēpos* ('the Garden') were not excluded from *philia* (friendship), the most important path to happiness. And it would fit in well with my interpretation of the conclusions if the misplaced desire to become one were contrasted here with true philosophical unity with the master and the gods. It would also support the theory, which seems likely in any case, that Lucretius had intended the empty space of the fourth proem (which has been filled by someone else with verses from Book 1, an impossible iteration), to be filled with a hymn to friendship or to Epicurus as its founder. It would be surprising if friendship were not glorified anywhere in the poem, which is after all dedicated to a friend with great emphasis. The textual link which the poet would have had to create between the end of the third and the beginning of the fourth book, on the other hand, could well be this: he who is freed from the fear of death needs friendship especially in order to find the path to happiness (*KD* 27). In the fourth book, however, which is concerned with the theme of *simulacra*, the topic would extend from the beneficial *simulacra* of the gods to the dangerous *simulacra* of beautiful bodies.

The history of civilization in the long fifth conclusion brings out the antinomy between progress and happiness. Anyone who hears an optimistic note in the last verse of the book, *artibus ad summum donec venere cacumen* ('... until they reached the highest point of the arts', 1457), has misunderstood the poet,<sup>14</sup> who means a mistaken belief in a high point of civilization. Just before, he has diagnosed

<sup>14</sup> In general I agree with the interpretation of P. Giuffrida, 'Il finale (vv. 1440–1457) del V libro di Lucrezio', in *Epicurea in memoriam H. Bignone* (Genoa, 1959), 129–65. He only discusses 1440–57.

that humans do not know the right measure for possessions and true happiness. They make their own lives wretched with unimportant sorrows and with culpably exaggerated expectations of what life should offer, and thus promote the horrors of war. Already in the proem, the achievements of making bread and wine and of security from wild beasts are ranked very low in comparison to the cleansing of the heart by Epicurus. Just so, proem 6, which is closely linked to the conclusion of 5, proclaims that farming and the *polis*, which we owe to Athens, cannot cover up this basic human defect, and that only the Athenian Epicurus set up the *summum bonum* as the precept which can lead to healing.

One must not misjudge the three short paragraphs which conclude the fifth book after this diagnosis: they express how questionable progress is. First (1436–9), Lucretius says that the sun and the moon taught humans about the order of the year and the movements of the heavens. This is a legitimate new insight, but is only valuable if the movements of sun and moon are understood as part of *natura gubernans* ('guiding nature', 5.77), in the Epicurean way, and not misinterpreted as movements brought about by their own will or the gods'. The syllabus (78–81) warned of this danger; and the movements of celestial bodies catalogued in 1204–14 are one of the main reasons for the continued existence of *religio*. A second instance of ambivalent progress follows (1440–7): writing and poetry developed late, after cities, navigation, and international contacts. (A triple *iam* must precede *cum coepere* 1444, which means that Lachmann's *iam* for *tum* in 1442 is certain.) As a result of its late development, poetry, in the shape of epic and the dependant genres, does not know the truth about the early period of human existence, and instead offers us myths, which we are supposed to accept as true. The total rejection of this old poetry is clearly expressed here, in accord with Epicurus. The last ten verses of the book also say more than is immediately apparent. They are, of course, a bullet-point-like summary of the subjects treated, with small additions. But beyond that they identify *usus* and *impigrae mentis experientia* ('practice and experiments of an active mind') as the motors which, working simultaneously (*simul*, not 'in phases' as Bailey thinks) from the world's beginnings until today, have driven the development of civilization. This development is therefore a natural process like all others, and, as such, has to be

accepted. Humans had to further such a process in order to adapt to a harsh reality, for: *alid ex alio clarescere corde videbant* ('they saw one thing after another grow clear in their mind'). This means that the process is consistent in itself. The phrase sounds surprisingly like the one used for the logical consistency of the Epicurean view of nature: *namque alid ex alio clarescet* ('for one thing will become clear from another', 1.1115). The only difference is that there, at the end of Book 1, the persistent path leads to insight into the *ultima naturai* ('nature's furthest depths'). Here, however, humans see (*videbant*) the light of progress, which leads them to the high point only of the *artes*. This is something restricted and ambivalent; the belief in progress is qualified, even declared to be delusion, when measured against *eudaimonia*. It is congruent with the previous history of civilization, in which there is no happy affirmation of progress to be found. The individual phases of its development do not differ in *eudaimonia*. The refined musical technique of later times by no means increased the happiness that the primitive inhabitants of the woods felt when they first discovered a simple kind of music (1379–1411). *Eudaimonia* does not depend on time and stage of development. Things that are held to be valuable and desirable change with time, like bronze and gold (1273–80), but this is only one example. Animal hides and purple garments serve the same elementary need; but the guilt which humans heap on themselves in the acquisition of clothes becomes greater, the more sumptuous and superfluous the luxury (1418–29). In this way, progress can bring disaster. The best example is the enhancement of military technology, which is why it is treated in so much detail (1297–1340). Whoever devised the employment of wild animals for military purposes had to watch them devastating their own ranks.

This interpretation of the Lucretian history of civilization is also confirmed by analysis of its composition. In the middle is the paragraph about religion, divided into two halves. First, its development is discussed (1161–97), then (1204–40) why it kept an undiminished power over everybody's minds even after Epicurus. These two passages of almost equal length frame a short passage (1198–1203)—the only mention<sup>15</sup> by the poet of the promised *largus sermo* ('abundant

<sup>15</sup> S. G. Müller, 'Die fehlende Theologie im Lucrettext', in *Monumentum Chiloniense: Festschrift E. Burck* (Amsterdam, 1975), 277–95.

discourse') about the true gods. This three-part structure is now framed again by the two parts of the general history of civilization. When we read its second part, we know that wrong *religio* lives on, and with it live *timor* ('fear') and *cupido* ('desire')—how could it be otherwise in unenlightened souls? Their effect is stressed again and again, especially in the negative diagnosis of human society which precedes the three final paragraphs. Can it still be in doubt, in the light of this construction, that the high point of the *artes* in the last verse of the book can only have a purely positive value for the deluded followers of everything that is new (or for certain thinkers who assume a purpose to history)? Here too, the poet describes human delusion in the light of Epicurean ethics.

It would be strange if the sixth conclusion had a completely different meaning to all the others. But it seems difficult to find a confrontation of darkness and light in the description of the plague, where all one can see is darkness. Some scholars, like Giussani, have declared this ending to be completely un-Epicurean; and P. Boyancé (*Lucrece et l'épicurisme* (Paris, 1969), 285–7) sees the description of the plague as a purely literary excursus and denies it any connection with the philosophical subject of the poem. How improbable! E. Bignone's idea, that Lucretius would have wanted to put the missing theology after this description, seems unlikely. He could not have gone beyond the frame drawn in the summary of the poem; and the history of civilization in Book 5 is a much better place for the theology. Therefore, I think that the description of the plague is the intended conclusion to the poem, and is only to be understood in a (doubly) Epicurean sense: firstly as an example for the *motus exitiales* ('destructive movements') of this world, in relation to which human life is completely insignificant, and therefore as an antithesis to the image of happily flourishing life in the first poem; secondly, as an extreme case of human helplessness in the face of terrible disaster, and therefore as an antithesis to Epicurean peace of mind. This description does not leave behind the didactic context of the poem. On the contrary, it shows how the *natura rerum* plays its game, this time not promoting, but meaninglessly destroying life. This is a valid Epicurean perspective. The contrast between the beginning and end of the whole poem has been regarded by many critics as a great artistic achievement of the poet. The second

meaning of this conclusion, too, is conveyed through composition; again, the connection between proem and conclusion is instructive. It is not by chance that Lucretius, in the praise of Epicurus in the sixth proem, adds a third achievement to the master's two others, namely the cleansing of hearts from *timor* ('fear') and *cupido* ('desire'), and the proclamation of the *summum bonum*. The third achievement is phrased in terms suited to the exceptional phenomena of heaven and earth, the subject of the book, but most suited to the plague. Lucretius writes that Epicurus showed 'what disaster exists everywhere in human life, how it comes into being and flies about in different ways, whether through chance or force of nature, because it [nature] made it so'; (he also showed) 'from what positions of defence each one [of these disasters] should be met' (29–32). This is phrased with special reference to the disaster which will be the last and by far the most brutal to require scientific explanation at the end of Book 6. With a fearless heart, fixed firmly on the *summum bonum*, something like this in particular is to be endured as the ultimate trial. Amongst all the natural disasters dealt with earlier in the book, this should be much easier. The enlightened reader of the description of the plague will think particularly of positions of defence (*portae*). They should be understood in this way: the recognition of the purposeless majesty of the *natura rerum*, which induces divine happiness, for Epicurus means peace of mind; this would be the gate of defence from which one could meet even the worst disasters. In this way, he combated strong physical pain with the recollection of previous conversations with Idomeneus (fr. 138 Usener). He was able to say that even torture would not deprive the wise man of his *eudaimonia*, even if it made him groan (fr. 601 Us.). Lucretius hopes that *fortuna gubernans* will spare him from having to witness the imminent destruction of our world (5.107). This does not mean that he is dismissing the ideal of *pacata posse omnia mente tueri* ('to be able to look at all things with one's mind at peace', 5.1203); the power to do that is true *pietas*, which enables us to live like gods among men, as Epicurus expresses it in the last sentence of his *Letter to Menoecus*. Lucretius could not, however, set such ethical precepts against the fate of the Athenians in 430 BC, or criticize them for not being Epicureans before Epicurus. Such a

message would also frustrate the other purpose of the description of the plague, to form the antithesis to the happy life. The two images would cease to be definite opposites. For the same reason, the scientific explanation of the plague is anticipated in general terms, before the Athenian plague is mentioned. Thus, there are clear reasons why the positive Epicurean truth which many critics would like to add could definitely not have appeared here in an explicit form. The poet not only expects the reader to follow the important instruction in the praise of Epicurus in the sixth proem. He expects him to remember everything that he has learned about true philosophy through the whole poem, to see the story of the Athenian disaster in the right light. This story differs most from Thucydides' description in that Lucretius takes the events as a paradigm for a purposeless destruction that the *natura rerum* could inflict upon humans again at any time. Their collective helplessness would today and in future be the same as it was then, except for the enlightened souls: only they could, in the spirit of their master, look disaster calmly in the eye. The Athenians display an unphilosophical reaction, and we are supposed to feel their lack of mental resistance. The matter-of-fact and emotionless reports of Thucydides are amplified by the poetic speaker with two purposes in mind: firstly, the uncompromising cruelty of the plague, and secondly, the mindless helplessness of the people. Their stubborn clinging to life, even when they have lost their hands, feet, or eyes (6.1210–11), is also mindless. Lucretius, unlike Thucydides, wants to criticize the people's absurd stubbornness, where philosophical happiness, allowing the plague to do its work, would have been appropriate. Religion is completely disabled, but it is not overcome through enlightenment: it is only helplessly discarded, because it could not help. An anti-theological polemic of the poet is therefore unnecessary and would also not have fitted the context. The holy rites of burial cannot be executed, because the corpses are piling up in the temples; it is replaced by a makeshift procedure. But even then one has to fight over a place on other people's pyres for the corpses of one's relatives. Instead of leaving the corpses alone, people get involved in inhuman fights. This image, which concludes the poem, replaces a negative judgement like the *ne c tenet* ('he does not grasp...') which the poet uses to condemn the



stubbornness of the pious farmer faced with the destruction of the world, at the end of the second book (2.1173).<sup>16</sup>

For these reasons I believe that the ending of Book 6 is the one intended by the poet. I think it not the least important proof of his genius. The arrangement of this part of the poem in a way that creates meaning is not dependent anywhere on models. It is purely Lucretius' own invention. Summarizing remarks at the end, such as we find in scientific prose literature, Hellenistic didactic poetry, or even in Epicurus' letters, are no match for these artistic structures, in which Lucretius describes the bad in a way that lets the truth shine clearly through.

<sup>16</sup> The topic is inappropriate behaviour in the face of a disaster that comes from outside. This description cannot therefore also be a 'symbole du désordre moral' in Roman society, as P. H. Schrijvers (op. cit. [n. 2], 312–25) suggests. He follows the slightly vague, half-hearted interpretation of H. S. Commager Jr., 'Lucretius' Interpretation of the Plague', *HSCP* 62 (1957), 105–18 [= Ch. 8 of this volume].

## Seeing the Invisible: A Study of Lucretius' Use of Analogy in the *De rerum natura*

P. H. Schrijvers

Lucretius' frequent employment of analogy, and the use he makes of visible manifestations to shed light on the unseen processes of nature, place him in a long tradition of ancient philosophers whose method of argument is encapsulated in the epistemological maxim formulated for the first time by Anaxagoras (ὄψις τῶν ἀδύλων τὰ φαινόμενα, 'visible things are the mirror of the invisible').<sup>1</sup> While this maxim is of a rather general character, and can be applied to ways of thinking other than analogy in the strict sense, I will limit myself here to the examination of a range of fundamental arguments from analogy found in the *De rerum natura*. Analogy is present when a similarity of structure or relation is established between the *illustrandum*, the

<sup>1</sup> For the history and the content of this maxim, cf. O. Regenbogen, 'Eine Forschungsmethode antiker Naturwissenschaft', in *Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Mathematik, Astronomie und Physik* 1.2 (Berlin, 1930), 131–82 = *Kleine Schriften* (Munich, 1961), 141–94; H. Diller, 'ὄψις ἀδύλων τὰ φαινόμενα', *Hermes* 67 (1932), 14–42; G. E. R. Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy: Two Types of Argumentation in Early Greek Thought* (Cambridge, 1966), 337 ff.; for the history of analogy after Aristotle, see E. H. Hänsler, *Zur Theorie der Analogie und des sogenannten Analogieschlusses* (Basel, 1927), 65 ff.; P. H. De Lacy and E. A. De Lacy, *Philodemus: On Methods of Inference: A Study in Ancient Empiricism* (Philadelphia, 1941), 120 ff.; on the equivalence of *occultus* ('hidden', cf. *Lucr.* 1.145, 424) = ἄδηλος, K. Kleve, 'Zur epikureischen Terminologie', *SO* 38 (1963), 28. [See now (2005) also A. Schiesaro, *Simulacrum et imago: Gli argomenti analogici nel De rerum natura* (Pisa, 1990), and M. Armisen-Marchetti, *Sapientiae Facies: Etude sur les images de Sénèque* (Paris, 1989), ch. 5, 'L'analogie scientifique dans les *Questions Naturelles*'].]

conclusion at which the argument is aimed, and an illustration offered in support of the argument. This similarity of relation need not necessarily take the form of a mathematical proportion (of the type  $a:b = c:d$ ). A relationship of analogy exists whenever something that is for the moment uncertain (*quod dubium est*) is brought into relation in a more general way with something it resembles (*ad aliquid simile*).<sup>2</sup> What allows us to identify an analogy is the fact that the *illustrandum* and the illustration belong to different spheres of existence. A qualification imposes itself, however: the famous comparison of the dust motes moving in a beam of sunlight (Lucr. 2.109–41) demonstrates that an image drawn from the visible world may serve at the same time as both an analogue for (*simulacrum et imago*, 2.112) and a manifestation of (*exemplare*, 2.124; cf. the expression *significant*, ‘indicate’, 2.128) the atomic processes and forces which it illustrates.

When we consider the natural sciences in Antiquity, a very striking contrast can be observed between the frequent use of argument from analogy, and the paucity of systematic theoretical reflexion on this principle of explanation. In his classic study of polarity and analogy in Greek thought, G. E. R. Lloyd observes of Aristotle:

He devotes far less attention, in the *Organon*, to the heuristic function of analogy and to the question of its role in scientific method as a source of preliminary hypotheses, although in practice analogies figure prominently in this role both in Aristotle himself and throughout early Greek natural science.<sup>3</sup>

There is the same disproportion in rhetoric between the frequency with which orators resort to argument from analogy and the scarcity of theoretical discussions of this procedure. The ancient rhetoricians’ summary classifications and observations of a purely formal character on this subject seem meagre indeed when compared with modern

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Quint. *Inst.* 1.6.4: [*analogiae*] *haec uis est, ut id quod dubium est ad aliquid simile, de quo non quaeritur, referat et incerta certis probet*, ‘the essence of analogy is that it compares that which is doubtful to something similar which is not in doubt, and proves what is uncertain by means of what is certain’; see also Lloyd, *op. cit.* (n. 1), 175.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* (n. 1), 413–14; see also M. B. Hesse, *Models and Analogies in Science* (Notre Dame, 1966), 57, 137–8.

analyses such as we find, for example, in *La nouvelle rhétorique: traité de l'argumentation* of C. Perelman and L. Obrechts-Tyteca.<sup>4</sup>

Argument from analogy, in the modern sense of a movement from known similarities to further, hypothetical similarities between two things, and the heuristic role of metaphor in the development of a theory or an argument, are the subject of two fundamental articles by the American philosopher and linguist Max Black, 'Models and Metaphors' and 'Models and Archetypes'.<sup>5</sup> I shall take Black's discussion as the point of departure for my study of analogy in Lucretius and analyse, by way of illustration, the proofs that Lucretius deploys in Book 1 in support of the proposition that 'nothing comes into being from nothing'. This series of proofs, as I hope to show, is developed on the basis of a metaphorical description of the elementary particles as seeds.

An argument from analogy may appear in the guise of a comparison or parallel, or again in the form of a metaphorical expression—in most cases, a combination of these two forms will be at issue—and has two distinct components: the proposition to be proved (the *illustrandum*), in this instance the existence of elementary particles, and the illustration, that is, in the case of the opening argument of Book 1, seeds (*semina*). There is at the outset an assimilation between particles and seeds, which can be identified as a 'root metaphor',<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> (Paris, 1958), 499–534; their treatment may be compared with the ancient rhetorical theory of *loci a simili*, a *comparatione* and *exempla* (H. Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik* (Munich, 1960), §§394–7, 410–25). Neglect of the heuristic function of analogy and metaphor in ancient rhetorical theory can be explained in part by the fact that *similitudo* (comparison) and *translatio* (metaphor) were discussed under the headings of *elocutio* (delivery) and *ornatus* (ornament).

<sup>5</sup> Reprinted in M. Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy* (Ithaca, NY, 1962), 25–47 and 219–43. Black's theory is followed by Hesse, *op. cit.* (n. 3), 157 ff.; see also A. Arber, 'Analogy in the History of Science', in *Studies and Essays in the History of Science and Learning Offered in Homage to G. Sarton* (New York, 1947), 221–33; W. H. Leatherdale, *The Role of Analogy, Model and Metaphor in Science* (Amsterdam/Oxford, 1974). [See now (2005) also W. Shibles, *Metaphor: An Annotated Bibliography and History* (Whitewater, 1971); S. Sacks (ed.), *On Metaphor* (Chicago/London, 1978); G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago/London, 1980); A. Haverkamp (ed.), *Theorie der Metapher* (Darmstadt, 1983); and G. Steen, *Understanding Metaphor in Literature* (London/New York, 1994), with extensive bibliography at 248–56.]

<sup>6</sup> For the use of this term, cf. S. C. Pepper, *World Hypotheses: A Study in Evidence* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, 1942), 91 ff. on the 'basic analogy or root metaphor'.

pointing to potential similarities and establishing the programme of exploration and the framework within which the principal subject will be presented. In the introduction to Book 1 (55–61), where Lucretius announces the subject of his exposition, we already find a combination of neutral or semi-technical terms—*rerum primordia*, ‘first beginnings of things’, *materies*, ‘matter’, *corpora prima*, ‘primary particles’ (1.55, 58, 61)—belonging to the domain of the *illustrandum*, and terms which are derived instead from the specific field of biology, that is *genitalia corpora*, ‘generative particles’, *semina rerum*, ‘seeds of things’ (1.58, 59; cf. also the suggestive verbs *creet*, ‘creates’, *auctet alatque*, ‘causes to grow and nourishes’, 1.56). The point of departure for this assimilation between elementary particles and seeds is to be found in a common feature: it is to the prior existence of particles/seeds that everything owes its origins (*ex illis sunt omnia primis*, ‘everything comes from them in the first instance’, 1.61).

Argument from analogy and its most concise form, metaphorical description, derive their force and effectiveness from the fact that we attribute to the *illustrandum* a system of associations and implications belonging to the secondary item which is employed as analogue. These associations usually consist of commonplaces connected with whatever is being employed as illustration. The theory which flows from the analogy or root metaphor relies on the selection, emphasis, suppression, and—in general—the organization of aspects of the primary *illustrandum* by association with properties of the secondary subject. This heuristic function of the root metaphor can be seen very clearly, in my view, in Lucretius’ argumentation at 1.159–214.

As Robin observes in his commentary on 1.169, and as Solmsen has demonstrated at the end of his article ‘Epicurus and Cosmological Heresies’,<sup>7</sup> Lucretius’ aim in 1.159 ff. is not only to establish that nothing can come into being from nothing, but that nothing can be born except from a specific seed, under specific conditions which of necessity predetermine its appearance, the extent of its growth, and also how long it can survive. In the course of his argument for this proposition, Lucretius subtly exploits the connotations of the word *semina* (σπέρματα, ‘seeds’), a technical or semi-technical term of the atomists which, as Solmsen rightly maintains, was never

<sup>7</sup> *AJP* 72 (1951), 1–23, esp. 18 ff.

completely detached from its biological origins.<sup>8</sup> The *De rerum natura* offers a solution to the crucial problem of explaining how the random conjunction of atoms can result in things coming into being after a fixed pattern, using the biological analogy of seeds as a intermediate step. Biological seeds, as Cicero declares in his *De natura deorum* (2.81) in terms which recall the passage of Lucretius in question, have the capacity

although they are very small, should they nevertheless come into contact with a substance which receives and encloses them and matter by which they may be nourished and fed, to form and shape it after their own nature in such a way that, in some cases, they can simply draw up nourishment from their own roots, but in other cases that they are endowed with movement, sensation, appetites, and the ability to reproduce themselves.<sup>9</sup>

This series of associations is transferred by Lucretius to the elementary particles in general.<sup>10</sup> As Solmsen notes, the argumentation of 1.159 ff. assumes the Lucretian doctrine according to which a fixed order assigns to each object the place where it can grow and exist (*certum ac dispositumst ubi quicquid crescat et insit*, 3.787); the same assumption is made without further comment in dealing with the problem of the soul's location in the body (3.784–805) and in refuting the theory of the world soul (5.122–45).

In 1.174–83, the subsidiary proposition *certa... semina rerum | cum confluxerunt* ('when the specific seeds of things have come together', 176–7), the semi-technical term *primordia* ('first beginnings'), and the ambiguous expression *genitali | concilio* ('generative assembly', 182–3), all refer directly to the primary subject, the activities

<sup>8</sup> Cf. the use, in an atomic context, of the biological connotations of the term *semina* at 1.902 (see D. A. West, *The Imagery and Poetry of Lucretius* (Edinburgh, 1969), 24–5).

<sup>9</sup> *ut id, quamquam sit perexiguum, tamen, si inciderit in concipientem comprehendentemque naturam nantumque sit materiam qua ali augerique possit, ita fingat et efficiat in suo quidque genere, partim ut tantum modo per stirpes alantur suas, partim ut moveri etiam et sentire et appetere possint et ex sese similia sui gignere.*

<sup>10</sup> In his introduction to this paragraph, Bailey (p. 628) remarks that 'although Lucr. uses the terms which in 58–61 he enumerated as synonyms to express the conception of "atoms", he does not there employ them in that full technical sense, but rather with the wider meaning of "seeds" or "germs" or "primary particles"'; but he rightly notes that 'Lucr. is no doubt influenced in his phraseology (esp. in 205–14) by his own atomic conceptions' (cf. also Bailey on 1.176, p. 631).

of the elementary particles. Only with reference to these particles is it true to say that ‘all created things come forth into the light of day once the fruitful union of the “seeds of things” (*semina rerum*) has taken place’ (176–9): the union of seed, in the biological sense of the term, is followed by conception or germination; birth itself only comes about after the embryo has developed. On the other hand, the circumstances suggested by the phrases *suo... tempore* (‘under the appropriate conditions’, 176) and *tempore iniquo* (‘under unfavourable conditions’, 183) are transferred from the analogous sphere of the plant kingdom to the level of the elementary particles.<sup>11</sup> In Book 5, Lucretius will exploit these associations in seeking to explain the regularity (*tempore certo*, ‘at a fixed time’) of sunrise, a cosmic phenomenon which is once again illustrated by a series of analogues taken from the biological sphere (5.656–79).

In 1.184–94, we find the same interaction between the primary and secondary subjects. The expression *seminis ad coitum* (‘for the coming together of seed’, 185)<sup>12</sup> must necessarily refer here to the elementary particles by means of which human beings and trees grow and derive nourishment. Munro’s interpretation ‘after the meeting of the seed’ was rejected by Ernout on linguistic grounds, and is incompatible with the context: the union of male and female seed is followed at most by conception and the coming into existence of virtual qualities which await development; the *infantes parvi* (‘small infants’) mentioned by Lucretius in 186 would not be in question. On the other hand, the corroborating observation of 189–91 is once again derived from the analogous biological sphere. The examples used at 199–204 to illustrate the limits of growth are similarly taken from the realm of living things. The metaphorical equation of particles and seeds is, very clearly, pushed to its limits for the last

<sup>11</sup> The verb *confluere* (‘come together’) is used in a technical, atomist sense at 1.903, 987, 994; 5.601; 6.312. For the expression *suo tempore* (‘under the appropriate conditions’), cf. *SVF* i.497: ὡσπερ γὰρ ἐνός τιῶς τὰ μέρη πάντα φύεται ἐκ σπερμάτων ἐν τοῖς καθήκουσι χρόνοις (‘just as all the parts of a single thing are formed from seeds at the appropriate time’).

<sup>12</sup> The confluence of particles is generally indicated by the terms *coetus* or *concilium* (‘gathering’); the word *coitus* (‘union’), *hapax* in Lucretius but attested by all the manuscripts, was probably chosen for its suggestive connotations: *significat magis commixtionem generis masculini et feminini*, ‘it especially signifies the union of male and female’ (*TLL* iii.1567.4–8, s.v. *coitus*).

time in lines 1.208–14, which bring the series of proofs to an end. Here, the equivalence between particles and seeds seems no longer to play the role of an analogy, but to have developed into an identification, to such an extent that a line of reasoning borrowed from agriculture is presented as a decisive argument in favour of the proposition to be proved.<sup>13</sup>

As far as the origins of the Lucretian analogy are concerned, I want to draw attention, finally, to the fact that—as Lloyd observes—Anaxagoras' theory of *σπέρματα* ('seeds') is an important antecedent in its conscious exploitation of a biological model in developing a general theory of physics. The first generation of atomists also used the image of seed, or, better, of the mixture of seeds (*πανσπερμία*), in connexion with atomic matter.<sup>14</sup> In Epicurus, the word *σπέρμα* ('seed') occurs three times as a (semi-)technical term of atomism, apparently without any account being taken of its biological connotations.<sup>15</sup> In the article cited above, Solmsen aligns himself with the view that Epicurean doctrine was maintained century after century as a static and dogmatic system;<sup>16</sup> in dealing with the Lucretian argument under discussion, he effectively substitutes the name of Epicurus for that of Lucretius, almost without comment. Here, then, we must confront the problem of Lucretius' originality or dependence *vis à vis* his master in the exploitation of this root metaphor and in other cases of a similar kind. I limit myself at this point to drawing attention to the question, to which I will return.

The productiveness of an analogy may manifest itself in two ways. First, the illustration and the system of associations derived from it can fulfil their explanatory function in relation to several distinct *illustranda*. This is the case, as we have seen, for the notion that

<sup>13</sup> It should be noted that the steps of Lucretius' argument, developed on the basis of associations belonging to the root metaphor, correspond to *loci a loco, a tempore, a modo* (arguments from place, time and manner) in ancient rhetorical theory.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Lloyd, *op. cit.* (n. 1), 245 ff.; in my view, Lloyd pushes the atom/seed analogy too far when he observes (251) that 'the Atomists, too, may have thought of the atom-mass as instinct with life in that it is permeated by self-moving soul-atoms'.

<sup>15</sup> *Ep. Hdt.* 38.9, 74.9; *Ep. Pyth.* 89.6. On the other hand, the representation of seed functions as a root metaphor in the elaboration of Stoic physics: cf. K. H. Rolke, *Bildhafte Vergleiche bei den Stoikern* (Hildesheim, 1975), 392–8.

<sup>16</sup> Cf., however, the critique of P. H. De Lacy in 'Lucretius and the History of Epicureanism', *TAPA* 79 (1948), 12–23.



*certum ac dispositumst ubi | quando quicquid crescat et insit* ('it is fixed and predetermined where each thing may grow and exist'), implicitly derived in the course of argument for the first proposition of Book 1, which also has a role to play in the doctrine of the soul set out in Book 3 and in the cosmology of Book 5. Secondly, metaphor lends itself to many kinds of productive extension: its system of implicit associations may be enlarged either by the original author or by the reader, and then used in new contexts. The possibility of extending a metaphor may present itself, too, to an author's antagonists, in such a way that the original analogy is turned against him and becomes all the more effective as a polemical tool because the conceptual material is borrowed from the opponent himself.<sup>17</sup> This process is demonstrable, for example, in the case of the famous comparison established by the early atomists between the atoms and the letters of the alphabet. We meet this traditional analogy for the first time in Lucretius in the first argument of Book 1 (192–8): the earth can produce nothing without rain; deprived of food, animals cannot reproduce their species nor stay alive; it can be deduced that there are elements common to a great number of physical entities, just as the same letters are common to many words. Lucretius uses the alphabetic analogy four more times in Books 1 and 2 to illustrate the theory that the diversity of things, including living things, is the product of changes in the arrangement of atoms (1.823, 912; 2.1013), and to drive home the point that *res permixto semine constant* ('things consist of mixed seed', 2.687) and the associated account of nutrition (1.823; 2.688). The most evocative, but also the most risky formulation of the analogy is that of Democritus: tragedy and comedy are made up of the same letters.<sup>18</sup> Lucretius gives the impression of conscious restraint, in limiting the illustration to various isolated words composed from the same alphabet, and seems to have realized that the metaphor of composition, and especially the concrete example

<sup>17</sup> On this strategy, see Perelman, *op. cit.* (n. 4), 517 ff.; Leatherdale, *op. cit.* (n. 5), 138, and C. M. Turbayne, *The Myth of Metaphor* (New Haven, 1962), 56.

<sup>18</sup> Arist. *GC* 315<sup>b</sup>7–15: Δημόκριτος δὲ καὶ Λεύκιππος ποιήσαντες τὰ σχήματα τὴν ἀλλοίωσιν καὶ τὴν γένεσιν ἐκ τούτων ποιούσι... ἐκ τῶν αὐτῶν γὰρ τραγωδία καὶ κωμῳδία γραμμάτων, 'Democritus and Leucippus postulate the existence of atoms, and argue that change and birth are brought about by them... for tragedy and comedy are made up of the same letters.'

of tragedy and comedy, might easily call to mind an association, unwanted by the atomists, with the concept of an author or creator. Later, in the Hellenistic period, the opponents of Epicureanism were quick to exploit this unintentional association, using the *elementa* analogy in their polemic on the hotly debated question whether our world is a product of chance or of the providence of a divine demiurge.<sup>19</sup>

Lucretius' modern readers have not been insensitive to the suggestive power of the letter analogy, as the popularity of Paul Friedländer's seductively formulated theory 'etymology = atomology', and the broad application it has been given in the work of other, more recent commentators on the *De rerum natura* (from Bailey to E. J. Kenney) attests.<sup>20</sup> This modern extrapolation of associations implicit in the *elementa* image could only be arrived at because Friedländer isolated the comparison from its specific contexts and, by the same token, from the limits imposed on its application, and connected it, in a quite arbitrary (and, in my view, unjustified) fashion, with Lucretius' account of the origins of language.<sup>21</sup> Friedländer's observation in this connexion, that 'poetry is very likely to repeat the creative work of language on a different level',<sup>22</sup> seems to be based on the romantic analogy established in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries between the primitive human being and the poet. But we are dealing here with an analogy quite out of harmony with Lucretius' realistic vision of the first generation of human beings, whose efforts to express themselves through the medium of language he compares not to poetic creativity but to the awkward movements of young animals and the babbling of infants. A debatable interpretation of the letter analogy lies at the root of Boyancé's

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Cic. *ND* 2.93, with Pease ad loc.; Plut. *De Pyth. or.* 399E (p. 342 Usener); H. Diels, *Elementum: Eine Vorarbeit zum griechischen und lateinischen Thesaurus* (Leipzig, 1899), 3, 11–12.

<sup>20</sup> P. Friedländer, 'Pattern of Sound and Atomistic Theory in Lucretius', *AJP* 62 (1941) 16–34 = *Studien zur antiken Literatur und Kunst* (Berlin, 1969), 337–53 [= Ch. 15 of this volume]; cf. Bailey i.158–9, and E. J. Kenney (ed.), *Lucretius: De Rerum Natura, Book III* (Cambridge, 1971), on 3.446–8.

<sup>21</sup> For confusion in modern discussions of Epicurean linguistic theory between two senses of the word *φύσει* ('by nature'), see P. H. Schrijvers, 'La pensée de Lucrèce sur l'origine de langage (*Drn.* V 1019–1090)', *Mnemosyne* ser. 4.27 (1974), 337–64 = id., *Lucrèce et les sciences de la vie* (Leiden, 1999), 55–80.

<sup>22</sup> *Op. cit.* (n. 20), 349.

observation that 'this comparison, which we have seen to recur more than once... seems to represent the poet's verse as a faithful mirror held up to the world or as a world in its own right'.<sup>23</sup> Here, the atomist analogy is extended in such a way as to bring Lucretius' poem into relation with the conception of the literary work as microcosm—a relation fraught with risk. This last analogy, which found its most elaborate and extensive expression in Neoplatonism, also springs in the last analysis from the vision of the world as the creation of a divine artist.<sup>24</sup> The history of the *elementa* analogy shows once again that the productiveness of metaphor entails risks for the original author, in the sense that implications unforeseen and unwanted by him are extrapolated and exploited by readers whose cultural traditions are different from those prevailing in the author's own day.

I have already demonstrated that the first proposition of Book 1, the universally applicable physical doctrine that 'nothing can be created from nothing' (*nil posse creari de nihilo*), is reinforced and developed with the assistance of the biological analogy of seeds and associated commonplaces drawn from the life of plants, animals, and human beings. In a comparable fashion, the proposition that matter is indestructible is illustrated, in the second argument of Book 1 (215–64), by the tableau depicting the continuous process whereby the breakdown of raindrops enables the growth of vegetation and so, in turn, the nutrition and reproduction of animals (1.250–64). These images drawn from the biological realm serve to reinforce the general thesis that nothing returns to nothing, and that nature does not permit anything to be created without the assistance afforded by the death of some other thing (1.263–4). The general proposition that matter is imperishable and change incessant, or in other words that the birth and death, growth and decay of each individual is a continuous process, is formulated several times in the course of Book 2, and is again illustrated with images borrowed from the biological realm. Lucretius contrasts the sum total of matter, which remains intact (*incolumis... summa*, 2.71) with the growth and decay of each individual body, referring to these processes with the biological

<sup>23</sup> *Lucrèce et L'épicurisme* (Paris, 1963), 130.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. J. A. Coulter, *The Literary Microcosm: Theories of Interpretation of the Later Neoplatonists* (Leiden, 1976), 95–100.

metaphors *senescere* ('grow old') and *florescere* ('flower', 2.74). This is how the sum of things renews itself unceasingly, a general law exemplified by the reproduction of the human race (2.75–9).<sup>25</sup> The theory that *motus exitiales* ('destructive movements') and *motus genitales auctificaque* ('life-giving and nourishing movements', *sc.* of the atoms) have been engaged for all time in equally matched combat is illustrated by the very striking evocation of the wailing of newborn babies constantly mingling with funerary laments (2.569–80). Lucretius underlines his conception of the law of the permanence of matter and continuous mutability of individual things a third time by depicting the cycle of vegetable and animal life (*μετάβασις ἐξ ἀλλήλων*, or transformation of one thing into another): the earth receives fertilizing rain and brings forth vegetation which allows animals to feed themselves and reproduce; the process is completed by the return to the earth and sky of the elements which came from each (2.991 ff.).

On a close examination, it can be observed that the biological illustrations which recur as a leitmotiv in Books 1 and 2 (up to line 1023) are out of harmony with Epicurean doctrine. Strictly speaking, the theory that matter is *imperishable*, linked to the idea of continuous change in each individual entity, should not be illustrated within the framework of Epicurean physics by the *μετάβασις ἐξ ἀλλήλων* of plant and animal life on earth, since this earth and the living things which populate it have been born and are destined to die. Certainly one could attempt to resolve this contradiction by invoking the Epicurean theory of the plurality of worlds and animal species, but such an expedient would be open to the objection that this doctrine seems not to play any part in the choice of biological analogies in Books 1 and 2 (up to 1023).<sup>26</sup> It is formulated, moreover, nowhere outside the finale to Book 2 (1048–89). The theory of the eternity of

<sup>25</sup> In 2.77, the verbs *augescunt*, 'grow', 'increase', and *minuuntur*, 'diminish', 'decline', refer not to the number of individuals in particular races but to the growth and decline of generations (cf. *minuunt*, *augmine* in 2.73, and the surrounding context); *gentes*, 'races' = *genera*, in the sense 'generations', and is synonymous with *mortales*, 'mortals', and *saecla animantum*, 'generations of living things', cf. 1.1033.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. already C. Giussani, on 2.75: 'Here the primary reference is to our world; but also, we may infer, other worlds... Then the argument is suddenly restricted to our world, and to living creatures alone', and Bailey, on 2.76 'Lucr. is here narrowing his thought again to experience in this world'.

primary matter, and of the birth and death of the individual things derived from it, became widespread as a complex of ideas especially from the time of Aristotle and his Peripatetic successors. The Aristotelian theory, however, presupposes the eternal existence of the world and the human race.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, the theory that individual things are perishable while the Whole is permanent became a commonplace of Hellenistic thought, which Lucretius seems to have exploited in elaborating Epicurean doctrine after the manner of the eclectic epigones of his time.<sup>28</sup> In support of this hypothesis, I would like to draw attention to a number of parallels which can be found between Lucretius' biological analogies in Books 1 and 2 and passages taken from works strongly influenced by Peripatetic thought, such as the Pseudo-Aristotelian *De mundo*, the *De universi natura* of Ocellus Lucanus and the *De aeternitate mundi* of Philo of Alexandria.<sup>29</sup> To the parallels indicated between Lucretius and these three authors—eclectic epigones of the Graeco-Roman era—we can add the use of another Hellenistic commonplace, that of the *laudes terrae* ('praises of the earth').<sup>30</sup>

In the first argument of Book 1, the creative and nutritive functions of matter are indicated among other ways by the use of the word *mater*, 'mother' (cf. the wordplay *mater/materies*, 'mother'/'matter', at 1.168 and 171). The most striking illustration of this maternal function is the image of Mother Earth. Lucretius celebrates the omnipotence of the Earth Mother on a number of occasions in Books 1 and 2. The series of tableaux taken from biological life on earth in 2.581–717 is so extensive that the poet feels obliged to alert his reader to the fact that the laws of nature which he has set out and

<sup>27</sup> Cf. J. P. Maguire, 'The Sources of Pseudo-Aristotle *De Mundo*', *YCS* 6 (1939), 161 and n. 106.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. H. Stroh, 'Studien zur Schrift von der Welt', *MH* 9 (1952), 147–8.

<sup>29</sup> Compare Lucr. 2.68–79, 569–80 and *De mundo* 397<sup>b</sup>2, *De univ. nat.* 16, *De aet. mundi* 69; Lucr. 2.77, 1122–3, 1130; 1.564, and the complex of ideas around the 'nurture, prime, and decay of all things' (*De mundo* 399<sup>a</sup>28; cf. 399<sup>a</sup>30, 401<sup>a</sup>8; *De univ. nat.* 2–4); *De aet. mundi* 58: 'for nature has created stages of life, like steps, by which human beings in a sense ascend and descend: ascend when they are growing, descend when they are in decline'; cf. also the quotation from Euripides, *χωρεῖ δ' ὀπίσω* ('it returns again', fr. 839.8–14 N<sup>2</sup>), at *De aet. mundi* 5, 30, and 144; and Lucr. 2.999 ff.: *cedit enim retro*, 'for it returns again'.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Maguire, op. cit. (n. 27), 162.

demonstrated are valid not only for living things, but for all objects (2.718–19). Eulogies like those of *De rerum natura* 1 and 2 can be found in the *De mundo* and the *De aeternitate mundi*,<sup>31</sup> where, in a manner comparable to that of Lucretius, the world of growth and decay is concretized in the image of the earth, with the animals and plants which populate it and pass through the three phases of life: growth, acme, decline. The *topos* of the *laudes terrae* is found also in the Stoic tradition, where it serves to illustrate the divine perfection of the world.<sup>32</sup> In Lucretius, the praise of the earth functions as a supporting argument for two propositions: that matter is imperishable and that all objects are composed of a mixture of different elements.

Lucretius' exploitation of the originally Stoic and Peripatetic *topos* of the *laudes terrae* has brought internal contradictions in its wake. Many critics have noted the opposition which exists between the so-called positive depictions of the earth in Books 1 and 2 (up to 1023) and the negative character of the depictions at 2.1144 ff., 5.195 ff. and 826 ff. The reason for this opposition is not to be sought in hypotheses concerning the personality of the poet, but in the impossibility of integrating the eclectic use in Books 1 and 2 of motifs of Peripatetic and Stoic origin into a coherent whole with the Epicurean doctrines treated in Book 5: the doctrines that the world is neither eternal nor divine nor perfect, and that the human race, which is no more eternal than the world, is terrestrial in origin. It appears symptomatic, in this respect, that the treatises *De universi natura* and *De aeternitate mundi* both contain a polemic against the theory—common to Stoicism and Epicureanism—that human beings were born from the earth.<sup>33</sup> When Lucretius speaks of Mother Earth in Books 1 and 2, he represents the earth as the giver of both life and

<sup>31</sup> *De mundo* 391<sup>b</sup>13: ἡ φερέσβιος εἴληχε γῆ, παντοδαπῶν ζώων ἐστία τε οὔσα καὶ μήτηρ, '[the centre of the cosmos] is allotted to the life-giving earth, the hearth and mother of all kinds of living things'; 392<sup>b</sup>14, 397<sup>a</sup>24, 399<sup>a</sup>27; *De aet. mundi* 63–4; for the style of these panoramic descriptions, cf. Strohm, op. cit. (n. 28), 144; Pease on Cic. *ND* 2.98; P. H. Schrijvers, *Horror ac Divina Voluptas: Études sur la poétique et la poésie de Lucrèce* (Amsterdam, 1970), 261–2.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Cic. *ND* 2.98–9 with Pease ad loc.; J. Mansfeld, *The Pseudo-Hippocratic Tract Περὶ Ἐβδομάδων*, Ch. 1–11 and *Greek Philosophy* (Assen, 1971), 113–18.

<sup>33</sup> *De univ. nat.* 38; *De aet. mundi* 55–69; Sext. *Emp. Adv. math.* 9.28; Cens. *De die natali* 4.

nourishment to plants. In the case of animals and humans, he consciously restricts the set of ideas associated with the Earth/Mother analogy to a nutritional function only.<sup>34</sup> To the category of animals in existence today, the earth gives life only indirectly in the sense that the food produced by the earth is indispensable for reproduction: Lucretius appears to follow the ancient theory that linked the production of seed by living things to nutrition.<sup>35</sup> It is abundantly clear that the earth, which brought forth all living species, can nowadays scarcely produce minute organisms (2.1151), and that the same earth which now nourishes living things from its own substance gave birth to them in the distant past (2.1156). It necessarily follows that the praises of the earth, which serve in Books 1 and 2 (up to 1023) to illustrate the creative power of atomic matter, are succeeded in 2.1144 ff. and 5.826 ff. by a theory of the decay of this same earth.

Lucretius' account of the birth of the human race from the earth (5.783–836) offers another very clear instance of the poet's habitual exploitation of root metaphors. I have shown elsewhere that Lucretius systematically transfers to the primary subject (the earth) commonplaces associated with the secondary analogue (birth and maternity in living things).<sup>36</sup> I limit myself here to completing my analysis with a comparison between Lucretius' ideas and the refutation—Peripatetic in inspiration—of the Stoic theory of the birth of the human race from the earth presented by Philo of Alexandria in *De aeternitate mundi* 55–69:

<sup>34</sup> Cf. W. Kranz, 'Zwei Euripideische Chorlieder in lateinischem Gewande', in *Studien zur antiken Literatur und ihrem Fortwirken* (Heidelberg, 1967), 350: 'Lines 996–7 are independent additions by the Epicurean Lucretius. They transform the Euripidean hymn on the *hieros gamos* into a piece of rationalist doctrine: only in the sense that all living things derive their nourishment from the earth are they to be considered her children. The same idea is introduced already at 2.594 ff., and still more extensively in the first book, 250 ff.'

<sup>35</sup> The influence of the Aristotelian theory of semen as 'a residue from the nourishment of the blood' (GA 726<sup>b9</sup>) would directly explain the link established by Lucretius between nutrition and procreation. On this point, however, the relation between the theories of 'Pangeneses' (cf. 4.1041–2) and 'haematogenic generation' remains unclear (for the terminology, cf. E. Lesky, 'Embryology', *RAC* 4 (1959), 1228–9).

<sup>36</sup> *Mnemosyne* ser. 4.27 (1974), 345–61 = *Lucrèce et les sciences de la vie* (cit. n. 21), 5 ff. This analogical argument was no doubt facilitated by the well-established tradition, derived from Greek embryology, of comparing plants and animals (see also Lloyd, *op. cit.* (n. 1), 323).

- §66: Is it not utterly foolish to suppose that the earth contains wombs for the production of human beings? . . .  
 Since it must also be argued that when the earth gave birth, it grew breasts like a woman, so that the first-born might have suitable food. But it is not recorded that any river or spring . . . ever ran with milk instead of water. Lucr. 5.807–8  
 Lucr. 5.809–15
- §67 Moreover, just as it is necessary to feed a newborn baby with milk, so too it needs the protection of clothing against the harm done to its body by cold and heat. Lucr. 5.816–20

Cf. also Philo's objection to the myth of the *Spartoi*:

- §58 The first-born humans must at once have grown according to fixed periods and lengths of time.<sup>37</sup> Lucr. 5.808–16:  
*uteri*, 'wombs';  
*aetas infantum*,  
 'their infant age';  
*pueri*, 'children';  
 5.820; cf. 1.184–9
- §61 But what is there to prevent the earth from giving birth to human beings even now, just as they say it did formerly? Has the earth too grown so old that it seems to have become barren with the lapse of time? Lucr. 5.826–36

I do not propose to discuss in detail here the difficult if not insoluble problem of the relationship between the Peripatetic School, Critolaus, Philo, and Lucretius.<sup>38</sup> The quality of the parallels listed above nevertheless permits us, in my view, to assume that Lucretius, as an

<sup>37</sup> Cf. also Lucr. 1.77 *alte terminus haerens*, 'the deep-set boundary stone', and *De aet. mundi* 59: 'the laws of nature, immutable ordinances . . . since nature watches over immutable boundaries which were fixed from the beginning'. In his commentary on 5.808, W. A. Merrill mentions Philo's treatise, but the reference has been ignored by more recent commentators.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. W. Theiler, *Gnomon* 2 (1926) 590 ff., and F. Wehrli (ed.), *Die Schule des Aristoteles*, Heft X: *Hieronimos von Rhodos, Kritolaos und seine Schüler*, 2nd edn. (Basel/Stuttgart, 1969), 65–6: 'Connected with our text is Philo's demonstration, on the basis of a lengthy refutation of the myth of birth from the earth (the *Spartoi*), that the human race lacks any origin; Philo draws freely on a Peripatetic source, perhaps even on K[ritolaus]. After Aristotle (cf. on Dikaiarchos fr. 47–8), this became a dogma of the Peripatetic school, as a consequence of the earth's lack of origin . . .'



eclectic author of the late Hellenistic era, constructed his work as a composite, drawing on the reservoir of philosophical and scientific themes of the schools which made up the *Bildungsgut* of his age. In any case, the sequence of thought in *De rerum natura* 5.805 ff. and the Peripatetic critique worked out by Philo shed light on the ways in which arguments for and against the birth of the human race from the earth are developed on the basis of the same root metaphor, in accordance with the same series of commonplaces associated with it, and follow a traditional pattern.

The way in which Lucretius describes the earth's childbearing in Book 5 might suggest that the representation of the earth as a mother is for him no longer merely an explanatory analogy, but has taken on an ontological status and refers to a maternal function which actually existed. Nevertheless, Lucretius does not attribute to the earth all the commonplaces associated with maternity in animals: for him, the earth has never been a living thing endowed with sensation (*terra quidem vero caret omni tempore sensu*, 2.652). The digression on the Magna Mater (2.600–60), from which the verse just cited is taken, has the particular function of protecting the representation of the earth's prodigious maternity from the unintended (and disastrous) implication that this 'mother' is an anthropomorphic divinity. Visual images and mythological narratives as well as the symbolic acts of cult, which have been linked in the past to the root metaphor of the Earth Mother, form the basis for a new series of implications and associations, transferred, by means of allegorical interpretation, from the secondary subject (the Magna Mater) to various physical and ethical *illustranda*. Thus, one of the functions of this digression seems to consist in not allowing us to forget that this complex of mythological ideas surrounding the Earth Mother is only a manner of speaking—not without its uses,<sup>39</sup> but without any reference to an objectively existing physical reality. The conditionally formulated concession which Lucretius makes at the end of the digression (*concedamus ut hic terrarum dicitur orbem | esse deum matrem, dum vera re tamen ipse | religione animum turpi contingere parcat*, 'let us allow him [sc. the speaker/writer] to say that this earth is the mother of the gods, so long as he refrains in reality from staining the mind with

<sup>39</sup> Cf. my discussion in *Horror ac Divina Voluptas* (n. 31), 50–9.

disgraceful superstition', 2.658–60) is an application of the warning issued by the British philosopher Braithwaite: 'the price of the employment of models is eternal vigilance',<sup>40</sup>

In 2.109 ff., Lucretius points out that the observation of dust motes enables us to imagine the never-ending movement of the primary particles in the void, in so far, however, as phenomena on a small scale (*parva res*) can provide us with a model for those on a large scale (*rerum magnarum exemplare*, 2.123–4). This formula, which is not unparalleled in the history of analogy in Greek writers,<sup>41</sup> finds a specific application in Lucretius' frequent use of analogies between microcosm and macrocosm. It is appropriate in this connexion to make the following distinction, with A. Meyer:<sup>42</sup> if the human being constitutes the point of departure, that is, the secondary subject, and if the commonplaces associated with the human body are transferred to the entire universe or to particular parts of it, it is preferable to speak of the world as represented as a *makranthropos*. Alternatively, the roles may be reversed: the macrocosm is the point of departure and the commonplaces associated with the world are transferred to the human being, who constitutes the primary *illustrandum*. The representation of the human being as microcosm, in the strict sense, is found only once in Lucretius, in the description of an epileptic fit which he gives as part of his argument in support of the theory of the mortality of the soul (3.487–509). Having enumerated the symptoms in a clinical manner, the poet continues the description as follows: the sick person wears himself out with convulsive movements because the soul, damaged by the violent action of the disease through

<sup>40</sup> Cited by Black, 'Models and Archetypes' (n. 5), 235, who points out 'the ever-present and serious risk that the analogy will be used metaphysically, so that its consequences will be permanently insulated from empirical disproof; the more persuasive the analogy [called by Black an "archetype" = "a systematic repertoire of ideas by means of which a given thinker describes, by analogical extension, some domain to which those ideas do not immediately and literally apply", 241] the greater the danger of its becoming a self-certifying myth' (242).

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Hdt. 2.10; 4.99; Hp. *Vict.* 1.10 (6.484 Littré): *μικρά πρὸς μεγάλα καὶ μεγάλα πρὸς μικρά*, 'small things in the manner of the great and great things in the manner of the small'; Arist. *Met.* 366<sup>b</sup>29–30: *τὸ αὐτὸ δεῖ νοεῖν γινόμενον καὶ ἐν τῇ γῆ, ὡς εἰκάσαι πρὸς μικρὸν μεῖζον*, 'it must be supposed that the same thing happens in the case of the earth, drawing an analogy from the smaller to greater'.

<sup>42</sup> A. Meyer, *Wesen und Geschichte der Theorie vom Mikro- und Makrokosmos* (Bern, 1900); Lloyd, op. cit. (n. 1), 252; Mansfeld, op. cit. (n. 32), 104–5.

the limbs, swells and foams, just as the unrestrained violence of the winds, blowing over the salt plains of the sea, makes the waves boil up (3.491–4).<sup>43</sup> But during the epileptic fit—presented as a kind of microcosmic disaster—the soul remains in the shelter of the body (cf. *per artus*, 3.492; *corpore in ipso*, 3.506). Lucretius draws the following conclusion: how can we possibly believe that, without the protection of the body (*sine corpore*, 508), in the open air, exposed to the violence of the winds, the soul and the mind can survive? The traditional analogy between microcosm and macrocosm is thus ingeniously employed in the service of the demonstration that the soul is mortal.

One of the most elaborate representations of the cosmos as *makranthropos* occurs at Lucretius 2.1105 ff., a passage which has been subjected to penetrating analysis by Solmsen in his article ‘Epicurus on the Growth and Decline of the Cosmos’.<sup>44</sup> Solmsen demonstrates that a medical/biological theory of the nutrition, growth, and decay of the human body was developed first, and that ideas arising from it (that is to say, in my terminology, the series of associated common-places) were then transferred to the cosmos. Here again, as in the case of the analogy between particles and seed, the problem of Lucretius’ originality with respect to Epicurus presents itself. The analogy between the living thing (ζῷον) on the one hand and the cosmos or the earth on the other is found only twice in Epicurus: once in a doxographic notice, and once, in very concise form, in a fragment from Book 11 of *On Nature*.<sup>45</sup> In my opinion, it is not legitimate to deduce from these two texts that the analogical image of the world as *makranthropos* occupied a central place in Epicurus’ writings. At most, there is an indication in his work of potential similarities,

<sup>43</sup> The sea image seems to have been traditional in Greek medical writing; cf. R. Heinze ad loc., and C. Segal, ‘Lucretius, Epilepsy and the Hippocratic *On Breaths*’, *CP* 65 (1970), 181–2. To the list of parallels indicated by Segal between Lucretius and the author of the *Peri physeon* (*Flat.*), we must certainly add Lucr. 1.271–5 and *Flat.* 3 (6.94 Littré): ‘Whenever a great quantity of air forms a strong current, trees are torn up by the roots through the force of the wind, waves are formed in the sea, and ships of enormous bulk are tossed about. Such is its power over these things. But it is imperceptible to the sight, though clear to the reason.’

<sup>44</sup> *AJP* 74 (1953), 34–51, esp. 38–9.

<sup>45</sup> H. Diels (ed.) *Doxographi Graeci*, 331<sup>b</sup>24 (= fr. 305 Usener); G. Arrighetti (ed.), *Epicuro: Opere* (Turin, 1960), 232–3, 542 ad loc.; cf. A. Barrigazzi, ‘La μωνή della terra nei frammenti ercolanesi del lib. XI di Epicuro’, *SIFC* 24 (1950), 5.

which as far as we know he did not develop. A possible reason for this, as Solmsen suggests, is that the analogy involves 'a measure of arbitrariness inasmuch as in Epicurus' own view the Cosmos is not a living entity but an aggregation of dead matter'.<sup>46</sup> Although Solmsen admits, following Giussani, that Lucretius could have elaborated on this analogy independently in 2.1105 ff., he goes on to observe: 'However, so far as I know, no evidence is found anywhere in his work that he was capable of such feats of philosophical originality and independence'.<sup>47</sup> I cannot agree with this interpretation: do we not find in the *De rerum natura* the elaborately developed analogies of Mother Earth and of particles as seeds? As I will try to show later in my discussion, the detailed exploitation of root metaphors, which are almost always traditional in Greek thought in general, is characteristic of the *De rerum natura* from both a literary and philosophical point of view. Furthermore, in arguing in favour of a late (that is, post-Posidonian) dating of the Hippocratic treatise *Peri hebdomadōn*, my compatriot J. Mansfeld has indicated that prominent and detailed elaboration of the representation of the earth as *makranthropos* is not found before the Hellenistic and Graeco-Roman period.<sup>48</sup> This contention is congruent with the characterization of Lucretius as an eclectic epigone which emerged from the parallels between the *De rerum natura*, the *De mundo*, and the *De aeternitate mundi* outlined above. The eclectic and dialectic interplay in which philosophical opponents borrow themes, arguments, figures of thought, and also root metaphors from one another, sometimes in order to turn them against the school in which they originated, is characteristic of the late Hellenistic era.<sup>49</sup>

By calling frequently on the representation of the world or the earth as *makranthropos* in Books 5 and 6 of the *De rerum natura*, Lucretius ends up in a paradoxical position. As we have seen, the Epicureans, including Lucretius, categorically deny that the earth is a

<sup>46</sup> Op. cit. (n. 44), 39.

<sup>47</sup> Op. cit. (n. 44), 42 n. 32.

<sup>48</sup> Op. cit. (n. 32), 107.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. for example the refutation of the concept *deus aedificator mundi* (god as architect of the world) at Cic. *ND* 1.19, and the debate on the anthropomorphic conception of the gods; *ibid.* 1.49, 74, 92–4; for the influence of Carneades on the development of dialectic in Epicureanism, see R. Hirzel, *Untersuchungen zu Cicero's Philosophische Schriften I* (Leipzig, 1877), 175 ff.; P. H. De Lacy, 'Lucretius and the History of Epicureanism', *TAPA* 79 (1948), 17–19.

living thing and that the cosmos has a soul. This paradox can usefully be formulated in a different way: just as in the digression in Book 2 (600–60) the poet seeks to protect the idea of the Earth Mother, used several times over the course of the poem, from unintentional implications, in the same way he explicitly rejects the theory of the *anima mundi* (world soul) in 5.124–5, with the intention of delimiting as far as possible the application of the analogy of the cosmos as *makranthropos* which he has already used at the end of Book 2 and will use again a number of times in Books 5 and 6. One of the most hazardous applications of this analogy is found in 5.534–63, where Lucretius uses three supporting arguments in explaining how the earth can remain stationary in the centre of the world without being an overwhelming burden on the air. The first analogy, drawn from the human body, serves to corroborate the theory that the earth and the air have been connected with each other since the beginning of the world, in such a way that the former is no encumbrance to the latter, just as our body does not feel the weight of the head, nor our feet the weight of the body (5.540–2). This line of argument is developed on the basis of the conception of the world as an organism and its parts (*partes*) as limbs (*membra*).<sup>50</sup> This latter equation is no doubt inspired by the similarity of the Greek words *μέρη* (parts), and *μέλη* (limbs). Moreover, Lucretius has already used the analogy between the parts of the world and the limbs of the body to explain how it happens that the aether and the earth can remain at rest while the sun and moon are in motion within one and the same ensemble of the world: *quod genus in nobis quaedam licet in statione | membra manere, tamen cum sint ea quae moveantur* ('just as in our bodies some limbs may be stationary while others are in motion', 5.478–9).

The second proof used in support of the theory that the earth has been connected with the air from the beginning is borrowed from a visible phenomenon: the earth, when shaken by a violent thunder-clap, disturbs in its turn everything beneath it (5.550–5). It is the third proof, however, which is the most paradoxical: the close union between the heavy earth and the light air is compared to the union between body and soul; but the *tenuissima vis animai* ('the insubstantial force of the soul') has the capacity to hold up and to lift the

<sup>50</sup> Cf. A. S. Pease, on Cic. *ND* 2.86.

enormous weight of the body (5.556–63), a phenomenon which Lucretius explains in 4.898–906 and which is one of the traditional themes, moreover, of ancient psychology.<sup>51</sup> Lucretius' character as eclectic epigone, attested elsewhere in the poem, compels us to take seriously the observations of W. Lück, for whom the concept of a harmonious union between particular parts of the cosmos in the *De rerum natura* reflects the Stoic theory of *sympatheia*, and Lucretius is thus seen to have appropriated the Stoic theory of the world as a living organism for the purpose of illustrating a particular doctrine of his own cosmology.<sup>52</sup> In this connexion, I would like to draw attention again to the fact that the representation of the elementary particles as seeds could equally have been inspired by Stoic thought (see n. 15 above).

We find a second application of the *makranthropos* analogy in the argumentation of 5.338–50. Here, Lucretius deduces the mortality of the cosmos from the catastrophic disasters which affect it: heatwaves, earthquakes, floods. In the same way, he argues, human beings become aware of their own mortality through the realization that they are exposed to diseases which have already cut short the lives of many others. An analogy of the same type is in operation when earthquakes caused by the wind blowing through numerous pores in the ground are designated by the terms *horror* ('shuddering') and *tremor* ('trembling'), and subsequently compared to the shivering which makes our body tremble when the cold penetrates deep into our limbs (6.593–5).<sup>53</sup> In his explanation for the volcanic eruptions of Mt Etna, Lucretius begins by emphasizing that our sky encloses only a tiny fraction of the universe, to the extent that it is smaller in proportion to the universe as a whole than one human being in proportion to the entire world (6.647–52). Thus, from the perspective of the universe, a volcanic eruption is no more surprising than, say, a bout of fever (*calido febrim fervore coortam*, 6.656) or an

<sup>51</sup> Cf. J. H. Waszink, on Tert. *Anim.* 8.3.

<sup>52</sup> W. Lück, *Die Quellenfrage im 5. und 6. Buch des Lukrez* (Bresslau, 1932), 31; if we agree with Diels (*Elementum* (n. 19), 11–12) that Lucretius' eclecticism is inspired by the polymathy of Zeno and Phaedrus, it seems to me impossible to determine to what extent the *De rerum natura* reflects the teaching of the *Jungepikureer*.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. the discussion of sources in P. Rusch, *De Posidonio Lucreti Cari Auctore in Carmine De rerum natura VI* (Diss. Greifswald, 1882), 9 ff.; see also Robin ad loc., and Lloyd, op. cit. (n. 1), 362 on the Aristotelian tradition.

eruption of the ‘sacred disease’ (erysipelas) spreading through the human body (*sacer ignis*, 6.660). Given the establishment of this complex of analogies between the cosmos and the human body, it is very revealing that, in order to demonstrate that the principle of invoking multiple explanations for celestial phenomena and other *paradoxa* is well founded, Lucretius describes a scenario in which a man sees a corpse lying at some distance, and is obliged to list all the possible causes of death in order to be sure of naming the one which, amongst the whole list, has actually killed the dead person (6.703–11).<sup>54</sup> The comparisons established between grandiose cosmic phenomena and the minute scale of the human body have the psychological consequence that, thanks to these parallels, the miraculous and terrifying quality of the *paradoxa* is diminished. Lucretius’ cosmology has the effect of belittling the importance of things usually experienced as awe-inspiring; this diminution finds its corollary in the increased importance bestowed by Epicurean ethics on things usually regarded as small.<sup>55</sup>

Having examined up to this point the use of analogy in the explanation of two major categories of *ἀδῆλα* (invisible things), atoms and cosmic phenomena, in Books 1, 2, 5, and 6, I will now go on to consider the theories relating to the soul set out in Books 3 and 4. In the first argument of Book 3 (94–135), Lucretius asserts that the mind and the soul are part of the body, just as the hand, the foot, or the eyes are integral parts of the living thing as a whole (3.94–7). In order to demonstrate this, he refutes the opposing view—in other words, he demolishes a rival analogy, according to which the soul is a harmony of the body. We have seen that, in the polemics relating to the birth of human beings from the earth, the defence or refutation of a theory based on a root metaphor is constructed according to a method consisting of a demonstration that the implications associated with the secondary subject employed as analogue are, respectively, true/possible or false/impossible. The concept of ‘harmony’ implies, according to the ancients, that a mixture of different or mutually

<sup>54</sup> It is possible that this analogy also bears witness to the links between Epicurean epistemology and empirical medicine.

<sup>55</sup> The opposition between the infinitely large and the infinitesimally small is a major theme of Lucretius’ physics, ethics, and aesthetics; cf. my article ‘Entre les deux infinis’ in *Apophoreta ter ere van A. D. Leeman* (Amsterdam, 1977), 85–95.

opposed components has taken place, and that this mixture results in an equal contribution by all the constituent parts.<sup>56</sup> But Lucretius proceeds to show that it is impossible to transfer these two implications to the soul conceived as a harmony of the body, a harmony which, according to his opponents, would be comparable with the good health of the body, of which we often speak without imagining that health is a particular part of the healthy subject (3.98–103). He begins by observing that our body is sometimes sick at the same time as our mind is in a state of enjoyment, and vice versa. He reinforces this first observation by applying his own analogy of the soul as part of the body: a sick person may feel an ache in the foot without experiencing any pain in the head (3.110–11). We can see that, in invoking his own analogy, he obliterates the comparison between harmony and the good health of the body. Furthermore, the relaxation of the body when insensible in sleep is at odds with the agitation of the mind (in dreams, 3.112–16). Finally, Lucretius draws attention to the fact that the contributions made by the constituent parts of this supposed harmony are not equal (3.117–25). In refuting the opposing analogy by challenging its implications, Lucretius simultaneously confirms his own analogy: by their nature, the mind and soul are integral parts of the body (3.130–1). This analogy can then fulfil a heuristic function in demonstrating the mortality of the soul: the soul can no more continue to exist in isolation from the body than the hand, the eye, or the nose can have sensation or even exist on their own (3.548–57).<sup>57</sup>

Within the general framework of the parallel between the mind/soul and the other parts of the body, we find two specific analogies which influenced the construction of Lucretius' argument on several occasions: an analogy between the mind or the eyes and the hands, and an analogy between the mind and the eyes. As far as the former analogy goes, I hope to have shown in my study of Lucretius' poetry and poetics<sup>58</sup> that expressions such as *manifesta manu... ducunt* ('manifest evidence leads us by the hand', 2.867–9), *manibus manifesta suis emittere* ('to let manifest evidence slip through our fingers', 4.504), and some of Cicero's judgements on Epicurus in the *De*

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Arist. *De an.* 407<sup>b</sup>30–2; *De mundo* 396<sup>b</sup>15–17; Cic. *Tusc.* 1.19 and 21.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Heinze, on 3.548.

<sup>58</sup> Op. cit. (n. 31), 87–91; see also K. Kleve, 'Zur epikureischen Terminologie', *SO* 38 (1963), 25–31.



*natura deorum* and the *Tusculans*, stem from the fact that, in Epicurean physics, sensory and mental perception are reducible to touch, and that the hand is the organ associated with touch (*tactus*) by Lucretius. In the same study, I also followed the suggestion of F. Merbach, according to whom the Epicurean technical term ἐπιβολαὶ εἶ τε διανοίας εἶ θ' ὅτου δὴ ποτε τῶν κριτηρίων ('apprehension by the mind or any of the other criteria of truth') derives from the expression ἐπιβάλλειν τὰς χεῖρας (literally, 'lay hands on'). In support of this suggestion, I might add that Lucretius' translation *animi iniectus* (literally, 'casting of the mind', 2.740; cf. *inice mentem*, 'cast your mind', 2.1080) was based on the set phrases *iniectio manus* and *manum inicere* ('lay(ing) hands on'; cf. *iacere indu manus*, 5.102).<sup>59</sup> To press this connexion still further, I would like to draw attention here to the presence of the analogy between the mind and the hand in Aristotle's *De anima*, and again in the *Problemata*.<sup>60</sup> The creation of the technical term *epibole* (apprehension), by analogy with the expression ἐπιβάλλειν τὰς χεῖρας probably finds its best parallel in the anecdote about the Stoic Zeno, who explained the meaning of the new technical term *catalepsis* (literally, 'grasping') with the gesture of a closed fist.<sup>61</sup> The Epicurean analogy between the mind and the hand has exerted its influence on the construction of Lucretius' argumentation at 2.737–47: against those who believe that particles without colour are unimaginable (*si nullus tibi forte videtur | posse animi iniectus fieri...*, 'if perhaps you think that it is impossible to cast the mind [*sc.* on such particles], 2.739–40), he retorts that those who are born blind have the ability to recognize objects by touch, without being able to see colour, just as we ourselves, when in darkness, can touch an object but not know what colour it is (2.741–7).

<sup>59</sup> Cf. *TLL* vii.1, s.v. *iniectio*, *inicere*; J. H. Waszink on Tert. *Anim.* 34.3 *iniectionem*; on the other hand, the expression *animi iactus liber quo pervolet* ('where the free projection of the mind flies', *Lucr.* 2.1047) should be compared with 1.970 *iaciatque volatile telum* ('if one were to throw a missile').

<sup>60</sup> *De an.* 432<sup>a</sup>1: 'so that the soul is like the hand'; *Pr.* 955<sup>b</sup>24: 'god has given us two organs by means of which we may use external organs, the hand for the body and the mind for the soul'. Cf. also the texts cited by A. S. Pease, on *Cic. ND* 1.88 (p. 436).

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Rolke, *op. cit.* (n. 15), 124; on the links existing between the epistemological vocabulary of Epicureanism and the Stoa, see F. H. Sandbach, 'Ennoia and Prolepsis', in *Problems in Stoicism* (London, 1971), 32.

The established parallelism between the mind/soul and parts of the body suggested Lucretius' most extended use of the mind/soul: eyes analogy at 3.396–416. Here the poet demonstrates that the role of the mind is much more important than that of the soul in maintaining life. He observes that, without the mind, the soul cannot remain in our body even for a moment, whereas the body can survive for as long as the mind stays within it, even after the amputation of all its limbs and hence the removal of a substantial part of the soul (3.398–407). This observation is then illustrated by means of the following comparison: if the exterior part of the eye is mutilated while the pupil remains intact, the visual faculty survives (*stat cernundi vivata potestas*, 3.409). Heinze observed that the remarkable expression *vivata potestas cernundi* (literally, 'the living faculty of sight') was chosen 'because the faculty of sight is the life of the eye'. On the other hand, Lucretius continues, if the central part of the eye happens to be damaged, *occidit extemplo lumen tenebraeque secuntur* ('the light perishes forthwith and darkness follows', 3.414). Ernout (in his commentary), Bailey, and Kenney suppose that the expression *occidit lumen* ('the light perishes') refers to sunset, followed by the darkness of night. However, the context of the comparison and its function, which is to illustrate the dominant role of the mind in maintaining life, lead me to believe that, by opposition to the expression *stat cernundi vivata potestas*, the verb *occidit* has the sense 'dies',<sup>62</sup> and that the word *tenebrae* refers to the darkness of death. The analogy between the mind/soul and the eyes is used a second time in 3.558–65, in support of the proposition that the soul and the mind can do nothing independently, just as the eye cannot distinguish objects when separated from the body. We can observe that, in these two passages, Lucretius develops a system of very specific implications on the basis of the traditional metaphor, in support of his physiological argument.

In Book 4, again, the traditional metaphor offers Lucretius opportunities to develop his argument. Theodor Gomperz remarked that the maxim *ὅσα γὰρ τὴν τῶν ὀμμάτων ὄψιν ἐκφεύγει, ταῦτα τῇ τῆς γνώμης ὄψει κεκράτηται* ('whatever escapes the sight of the eyes is mastered by the sight of the mind'), found for the first time in the

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Ernout's translation, 'la lumière meurt'.

Hippocratic treatise *De arte*, has remained current among Greek, Roman, and modern authors.<sup>63</sup> We should note, however, that Lucretian expressions such as *mente (animo) videre* ('to see with the mind', cf. 1.143–5; 5.149); and the phrases *oculi animi (mentis)*, *acies mentis (animi)* ('the eyes/sight of the mind'), used frequently by Cicero, seem to a great extent to have been introduced into Latin by these authors.<sup>64</sup> It can be deduced from this that in Lucretius' day metaphors of this kind were less widely used than was subsequently the case. The root metaphor of the mind's eye is used by Lucretius to explain mental perception (4.722–817).<sup>65</sup> From the fact that mental vision is similar to physical vision, he concludes that the phenomenon is triggered in the same way, that is, by means of *simulacra*, except that the mind is capable of distinguishing still finer images (4.749–56). At the end of his discussion of mental perception, he pushes still further the established analogy with the mechanism of sight: because of the fineness of the *simulacra*, the mind can only see them clearly when it concentrates; in the same way, the eyes can only see small objects if they strain and pay close attention; moreover, if we look inattentively at clearly visible objects, they appear as though distant (4.802–15). In the chapter of his book *Die antike Mnemotechnik*<sup>66</sup> entitled 'Ancient Theories of Visualization', H. Blum assembles a large number of testimonia which demonstrate that, for the ancients, thought and learning in general could not dispense with visual representations as a material basis, nor with visualization as the accompaniment of abstract ideas, and that in this way vision was brought into very close relation with the mind. It is possible that Lucretius' explanation for mental perception was suggested to him by theories of mnemotechnics, since comparable analogies between the mechanisms of thought and vision are found in writing on this subject.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Cf. T. Gomperz, *Apologie der Heilkunst*, 2nd edn. (Leipzig, 1910), 134; P. Shorey on Plato, *Rep.* 519b: τῆν τῆς ψυχῆς ὄψιν ('the vision of the soul'); Rolke, op. cit. (n. 15), 440–1, 496.

<sup>64</sup> See *TLL*, s.v. *acies, mens, oculus* (i.400.73, viii.721.55, ix.2.448.35).

<sup>65</sup> Cf. also my discussion in *Horror ac Divina Voluptas* (n. 31), 91 ff.

<sup>66</sup> (Hildesheim, 1969), 164 ff.

<sup>67</sup> *Rhet. Her.* 32: 'for thought, like visual perception, is less efficacious if its object is removed to a distance or brought very close'; Quint. *Inst.* 11.2.10: 'there is no doubt that mental concentration and focus, like that of the gaze on its object, is most efficacious in this respect'.

The combination of great analytical intelligence and the artist's sharpness of vision manifests itself impressively in the philosopher-poet's selection and working out of a series of analogies, by means of which he illustrates in the first part of Book 3 various properties and faculties of the soul. The soul—the vital heat and breath (*calor ac ventus vitalis*, 3.128)<sup>68</sup> which quits the body at the moment of death—constitutes the primary *illustrandum*. As analogues, Lucretius employs objects which perceptibly give off emanations: the bouquet of wine (3.221), the scent of perfume or incense (3.222, 327), the taste and heat of an object or of the human body (3.223, 266–7),<sup>69</sup> smoke dissipating itself in the air (3.436, 456, 583). Depending on the content of the *illustranda*, these analogues are exploited, varied, and combined, the more easily as the different emanations can be explained according to the same physical theory of *aporrhoiai* (effluences).<sup>70</sup> We might suspect that this series of analogues presented itself to the poet's mind thanks to the wealth of the Latin language itself: in fact, we find as objects of the verbs (*ex*)*spirare* and (*ex*)*halare* ('breathe out') not only the mind or the soul, but also *vapor* ('warmth'), *odor* ('scent'), *calor* ('heat'), and *nebula* ('mist').<sup>71</sup>

Lucretius makes use of associations connected with these analogues to support various aspects of his psychological theory: the fineness of the soul (3.208–30), its faculties as multiple properties of a single body (3.262–70),<sup>72</sup> the common fate of soul and body (3.323–6). In a manner characteristic of his method of composition, Lucretius works out the physical implications of the traditional conception according to which the soul dissolves into the air like smoke:<sup>73</sup> just like smoke, it escapes through all the pores of the vessel

<sup>68</sup> Cf. E. Rohde, *Psyche*, 4th edn. (Tübingen, 1907), ii.319, 331–3.

<sup>69</sup> For the reading *calor* (3.267), see Bailey ad loc.; Heinze preferred to read *color*, although his comment (p. 86) rather supports *calor*: 'L. has chosen the, in itself rather unobvious, *viscus* in order to underline once again the status of the soul as part of the body.'

<sup>70</sup> Cf. 2.408 ff.; 4.216 ff.; and J. I. Beare, *Greek Theories of Elementary Cognition from Alcmaeon to Aristotle* (Oxford, 1906), 163.

<sup>71</sup> See *TLL*, s.vv.

<sup>72</sup> For the use of comparable analogies in support of the theory of the unity of the soul in Stoic philosophy (?Chrysippus), see already Heinze ad loc.; and Rolke, op. cit. (n. 15), 144.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Rohde, op. cit. (n. 68), ii.332–3.

which contains it, it comes apart even while contained within the body, and leaves behind nothing but a ruin (3.580 ff.).<sup>74</sup> Here, too, the poet is aware of unintended implications which could be associated with the analogue. In the case of heat, for example: as the soul and body have been intimately linked from the earliest age, their separation cannot occur without doing irreparable harm to both; this union is thus quite different from the relationship between water and the heat dispersed through it, since the heat has been added and can be lost again without doing any damage to the water (3.337–49).<sup>75</sup>

The representation of the soul as smoke clearly exemplifies Lucretius' practice of giving a physiological application to analogies which were traditional in earlier literature. This method of exploiting a traditional metaphor is very clearly displayed in his explanation of the relationship between soul and body. In 3.440, the human body is represented as the vessel (*vas*) of the soul. We are dealing here with an image already found in the dialogues of Plato and later in Cicero and Seneca.<sup>76</sup> It is in the context, however, of a dualist conception of the soul that, in these three writers, the body is represented as the worthless and perishable receptacle of the immortal soul. In the monist theory of the soul upheld by Epicurus and Lucretius, there should be no question of any such depreciation. Nevertheless, Lucretius makes use of this root metaphor in developing a line of reasoning which would thus have a kind of boomerang effect against any dualist thinker attached to the soul-vessel metaphor: just as we see the water run out in all directions from an agitated vessel, so too, when the human body has been injured or become porous, it will no longer be able to contain the soul (3.434–44). The traditional image, of dualist inspiration, is thus used in a physiological and monist context. Nevertheless, Lucretius still seems anxious about the dualist implications attached to the analogy, since, after reaching the conclusion in 3.554–5 that the soul cannot exist all alone outside the body and the individual who acts as the vessel containing it (*illius quasi quod vas esse*

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Heinze on 3.582.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Heinze on 3.339; for the sense of *coniunctum* ('united') in 3.349, cf. 1.451–2: *coniunctum est id quod nusquam sine perimitali | discidio potis est seiungi seque gregari* ('a property is that which can never be removed or separated without fatal dissolution').

<sup>76</sup> See F. Husner, *Leib und Seele in der Sprache Senecas* (Leipzig, 1924), 77–84; Rolke, op. cit. (n. 15), 467–8.

*videtur*), he adds that there is nothing to prevent us from imagining another object even more intimately linked with it, since it is attached to the body by a very close connexion (3.556–7).

Book 3 includes further examples of Lucretius' method of exploiting images originally linked to a dualist theory of the soul. In 3.576–9, he reaches the conclusion that the mind's sensation must be dissolved once the dissolution of its corporeal envelope is complete. The expression *tegmen* ('covering'), used to designate the protective function of the body with respect to the soul, is repeated in line 604, and the argument is concluded as follows: *quod si immortalis nostra foret mens, | non tam se moriens dissolvi conquereretur, | sed magis ire foras vestemque relinquere, ut anguis* ('but if our mind were immortal, its complaint at death would be, not that it was dispersing, but rather that it was departing and sloughing off its garment, like a snake', 3.612–14). As already noted by Heinze (*ad loc.*), the representation of the body as the garment of the soul is traditional.<sup>77</sup> Lucretius points out, ironically, that human behaviour at the moment of death does not harmonize with this conception. The point is further reinforced by the literary allusion hidden, in my view, in the brief closing comparison *ut anguis* ('like a snake'). The snake's annual renewal of its skin is used in ancient literature as a symbol of eternal youth, and ancient writers often add the complaint that, alas, no such rejuvenation is permitted to human beings.<sup>78</sup> Lines 3.612–14 illustrate Lucretius' habit of ending an argument with an unexpected ironic comment.

Lucretius gives the impression of having deliberately avoided the traditional dualist representation of the body as dwelling place of the soul.<sup>79</sup> The absence of this metaphor from the *De rerum natura* is probably to be explained by the fact that the image of the house is very popular with thinkers whose world view is theological and teleological,<sup>80</sup> and that Lucretius judged the use of analogies taken

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Husner, *op. cit.* (n. 76), 84.

<sup>78</sup> See P. Brandt on Ov. *Ars Am.* 3.77; K. F. Smith on Tib. 1.4.35: *crudelēs divi, serpens novus exiit annos: | formae non ullam fata dedere moram* ('Cruel gods! The snake sheds its years and is renewed: the fates have granted us no means of preserving beauty').

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Husner, *op. cit.* (n. 76), 60–6; note, however, the image of the collapsing building in 3.584 ff.; 4.867–8, 942–3.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Rolke, *op. cit.* (n.15), 166–7, 466; and Lloyd, *op. cit.* (n. 1), 272 on 'technological images'.

from the realm of artefacts too hazardous because, owing to their teleological implications, they ran the risk of being exploited by the opponents of Epicureanism. This is what the history of the *elementa* comparison illustrates so clearly. One of the physiological variations of the root analogy body/house of the soul is found in 3.359–69. Here, Lucretius is discussing the theory that the eyes can see nothing by themselves: they are the instrument which the mind uses to see, as through an open door (*ut foribus spectare reclusis*, 3.360).<sup>81</sup> Lucretius combats this proposition using the method described above: by extending the analogy, he reveals that its implications are unacceptable, even absurd. The eyes are dazzled by too bright a light; nothing of the kind happens to a door (3.363–4)! Besides, if our eyes play the role of doors, their removal ought to allow the mind to see better, since it would be freed from their troublesome jambs (*sublatis postibus ipsis*, 3.369). This is another example of extension *ad absurdum*, whereby an argument is completed in an ironic manner. Nevertheless, Lucretius was well aware of the dualist representation of the immortal soul living within the perishable dwelling of the body. This is clear from the ironic allusion which he makes at the end of the passage 3.741–75: *quidve foras sibi vult [sc. vis animi] membris exire senectis? | an metuit conclusa manere in corpore putri; | et domus aetatis spatio ne fessa vetusto | obruat? at non sunt inmortalis ulla pericla* ('Why does the soul want to come out from aged limbs? Is it afraid to remain shut up in a decaying body, in case its house, weakened by the long span of its age, should collapse? But there can be no danger for an immortal thing', 3.772–5).<sup>82</sup>

The image of the body as the habitation of the soul constitutes a root analogy widely used in a range of applications in ancient psychology, ethics, and physiology. The image of the ship was similarly widespread and popular: the representation of the world as a ship piloted by God found in teleological visions of the world, notably amongst the Stoics; the soul as helmsman of the body in Plato's *Phaedrus*; the relationship between soul and body compared to the relationship between pilot and vessel, in the psychology of

<sup>81</sup> In addition to the commentaries ad loc., cf. J. H. Waszink, on Tert. *Anim.* 14.5: 'the comparison of the senses (especially the eyes) to doors or windows is extremely frequent in popular philosophy'.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Husner, op. cit. (n. 76), 66.

Aristotle and later writers; the comparison between the body and a ship, found both in medical literature and in ethical texts.<sup>83</sup> Lucretius too uses this popular image to illustrate the way in which the human body is put in motion *ut ac navis velis ventoque feratur* ('as a ship is carried along by its sails and the wind', 4.987), and how the tiny particles of the soul can manoeuvre a body as big as our own: *quippe etenim ventus subtili corpore tenuis | trudit agens magnam magno molimine navem | et manus una regit quantovis impete euntem | atque gubernaculum contorquet quolibet unum* ('for indeed, the insubstantial wind with its delicate substance drives and pushes along the great bulk of a large ship, and one hand controls it however fast it sails, and one rudder turns it in any direction', 4.901–4).<sup>84</sup> Since Lucretius is in the habit of exploiting ancient traditions, it is entirely probable that in 2.257 ff. the image of the soul as charioteer of the body<sup>85</sup> has contributed to the choice of the horse as example, as well as, more specifically, to the metaphorical use of the verbs *refrenare/refrenari* ('rein in') and *residere* ('settle back'; 2.276, 283) in the description of the relationship between soul and body.<sup>86</sup>

I hope to have demonstrated that the exploitation of root metaphors underlies much of the argumentation of the *De rerum natura*. It is, then, legitimate to speak of a rhetorical use of analogy in two senses: the point of departure in most cases has a traditional character; and the development of the argument in numerous instances consists in a deliberate and systematic exploration of the implications of analogies, with the aim of using the associated system of commonplaces either to support or to demolish a proposition. Equally, I hope to have shown that both the choice of particular analogues and the process of systematic working out are indexes of the eclectic character of the *De rerum natura*, as a poem dating from the late Hellenistic period. As for the method which consists in refuting an opponent's thesis by

<sup>83</sup> See the examples cited by Husner, *op. cit.* (n. 76), 30, 37, 66 n. 3; J. H. Waszink on Tert. *Anim.* 52.4: *corporis navem... animae navigatio* ('the ship of the body... piloted by the soul'); Rolke, *op. cit.* (n. 15), 361 ff., 487.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. for the Aristotelian origin of this comparison (*MA* 701<sup>b</sup>25; *Mechan.* 850<sup>b</sup>28) *Lucrèce et les sciences de la vie* (cit. n. 21), 48.

<sup>85</sup> See Husner, *op. cit.* (n. 76), 47; Waszink, on Tert. *Anim.* 53.3: *auriga corporis spiritus animalis* ('the vital spirit is the charioteer of the body').

<sup>86</sup> Cf. also Husner, *op. cit.* (n. 76), 40, on the metaphorical elaboration of the concept of the *hegemonikon* in 3.94, 136, 281, and 396.



extending 'his' analogy beyond the original proposition, one could argue, as Perelman does in *La nouvelle rhétorique: traité de l'argumentation*,<sup>87</sup> that, from the modern point of view, a refutation of this kind is never compelling, since it is always possible to refuse to admit the extension. The marked popularity of this method in Lucretius, however, is itself an indication of the importance that argument from analogy had in antiquity as a plausible form of proof, in both rhetoric and science. Furthermore, certain ancient conceptions of nature and the world, which we would nowadays be inclined to class as metaphors, had in antiquity an ontologically or metaphysically independent status, such as to justify refutation by extension *ad absurdum*.

The systematic exploitation of root analogies is equally evident in the *De rerum natura* in the following forms: the same analogy is used in several contexts with different applications; the roles of *illustrandum* and illustration may be completely reversed, for example in the representations of the world as *makranthropos* and of the human being as microcosm, of death as sleep and of sleep as half way to death,<sup>88</sup> of the earth as woman and the woman as earth;<sup>89</sup> the *illustrandum* of argument X serves as illustration in argument Y.<sup>90</sup> This systematic exploitation is necessarily accompanied by a very emphatic rational control of the image. The poet defends his own analogies from unwanted implications; he demolishes those of his opponents by means of extension *ad absurdum*. On occasion—for example, in his discussions of the speed of atoms and *simulacra* (2.142–64; 4.176–208), and of the pre-eminence of Epicurus (5.1 ff.), and also in the representation of death as sleep (3.921–30) and of love as a kind of hunger and thirst (4.1089–96)—he will criticize and purify his own illustrations, and underline differences which exist alongside the similarities, so as to do justice to all dimensions of the *illustranda*.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>87</sup> (n. 4), 520 ff.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. my study 'La pensée d'Épicure et de Lucrèce sur le sommeil', in *Études sur l'épicurisme antique*, Cahiers de Philologie 1 (Lille, 1976), 231–59 = *Lucrèce et les sciences de la vie* (cit. n. 21), 119–45.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Lucr. 4.1107, 1272; and A. Dieterich, *Mutter Erde*, 3rd edn. (Leipzig/Berlin, 1925), 78; Waszink, on Tert. *Anim.* 27.8.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. 4.898–900; 5.556–60.

<sup>91</sup> The procedure is similar to the technique called 'correction of images' in Plotinus (cf. E. Bréhier, *Plotin: Ennéades V* (Paris, 1931), 129; and Perelman, op. cit. (n. 4), 510).

I have concentrated especially on the most technical parts of the poem, which have in general attracted little attention from commentators, since modern studies dedicated to Lucretius' imagery prefer to deal with the less technical passages. To this can be added the fact that modern studies very often rest, more or less explicitly, on the assumption that the literary work is an autonomous entity, with the result that they deliberately ignore Lucretius' historical context and the links which connect him with literature, philosophy, and science, precisely in the area of analogy and metaphor.<sup>92</sup> It should be noted, moreover, that in the proems to the six books we find the same methodology, consisting in the exploitation of a restricted number of traditional metaphors, such as the images of light and darkness, the road, the sea, warfare, sickness, and medicine.

At the end of his article 'Models and Archetypes', Max Black underlines the point that the sciences as well as literature are inspired by the imagination and that all intellectual activities, however much they may differ in their aims and methods, take as their starting point the systematic exploitation of particular root metaphors, termed 'archetypes' by Black, which play an important role in divergent disciplines. Black observes in this connexion that 'those interested in excavating the presuppositions and latent archetypes of scientists may have something to learn from the industry of literary critics.'<sup>93</sup> As literary critic, I have followed Black's modest advice in reverse, with all the more conviction in that, in the hybrid genre to which the *De rerum natura* belongs, scientific, philosophical, and literary aspects come together especially in the area of the use of analogy. The same method of reasoning and presentation is in play in the more and less technical parts of the poem, and lends itself to the same kind of analysis. It has become clear, in my view, that Lucretius fully deserves the accolade awarded by Karl Reinhardt to Posidonius: 'the greatest visual thinker of antiquity'. In his use of analogy, Lucretius takes his inspiration on the one hand from the axioms of Epicurus' sensualist epistemology; on the other, he responds to the

<sup>92</sup> Root metaphors in the history of literary theory are the subject of an exemplary study by M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (Oxford, 1953); see also W. A. Shibbes, *Metaphor: An Annotated Bibliography and History* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1971).

<sup>93</sup> 'Models and Archetypes' (n. 5), 242–3.

definition of the poet as 'he who sees', of the literary artist as one who has the capacity to enlarge, deepen, and above all renew the perception of his readers. Thus, the *De rerum natura* bears witness to the complete unity which can exist between the philosophical, scientific, and artistic works of the human imagination.

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## Lucretius and Epic

*David West*

*Imitation is not a failing... it is a law.* Leumann.

### CONVENTIONAL EPIC PERIPHRASES

In the recent book of essays collected by Dudley,<sup>1</sup> three writers discuss the imagery of Lucretius (51–2, 60–1, 86–91, 95–114), and each of these writers cites Davies' famous article.<sup>2</sup> But none of them has taken his most fundamental point, that the images of Lucretius are not yet fully understood.

For instance, on page 99 Townend accords 'some weight to criticism of those metaphors which Lucretius found ready made in earlier writers', and in particular to the conventional epic periphrases, *liquoris uitigeni laticem* and *flos Bacchi* for wine, *flos flammai* for fire, and *caeli cauernas*, the caverns of the sky. This chapter is an attempt to shed light upon these epic periphrases and in particular to defend them against this criticism.

Townend argues that *flos Bacchi* in 3.221, the flower of Bacchus, is an epic periphrasis which does not seem to assist the feeling of the passage, although here *flos* appears to have the sense of 'bouquet'. It

<sup>1</sup> D. R. Dudley (ed.), *Lucretius* (London, 1965).

<sup>2</sup> 'Notes on Lucretius', *The Criterion* 11 (1931), 25–42 [editor's note: now reprinted in C. J. Classen, *Probleme der Lukrezforschung* (Hildesheim, 1986), 273–90].

would indeed be monstrous to object to *flos* in this context since Lucretius is arguing precisely, falsely too but that does not matter, that when perfume loses its fragrance and when wine goes flat, there is no loss of mass or weight. The *bouquet* of the wine is what he is talking about. What is he to call it if not by its proper Latin name? To object to Bacchus being used as a synonym for wine would also be unfair. This trick with gods' names is very frequent in Latin poetry,<sup>3</sup> and Lucretius has already explained his sceptical attitude to it in 2.655–60.

The flower of flame which flashes at 1.900 is said by Townend to be 'a rather dubious Homeric metaphor' because it occurs not in the text of Homer but in Plutarch's citation of it in *Moralia* 934B. But far nearer home than Homer is the occurrence of this metaphor in early Latin poetry, *Volcani opera haec flammis fieri flora* ('by the work of Vulcan these buildings bursting into flowers of flame', Naevius, *tragicorum fragmenta* 48 R), in the conjecture *florebant flammis* ('flowered with flames', Ennius, *Annales* 323 V), and in the *De rerum natura* itself, at 4.450, *bina lucernarum florentia lumina flammis* ('double lights flowering in the flame of lamps'). More important than this is the context. Lucretius is here denying that every substance has within it particles of every other substance. His imaginary opponent invokes forest fires caused by branches rubbing together. Lucretius in reply insists that these are not the agglomeration of particles of fire, but of particles of indeterminate matter, of atoms, which cause fire; not particles of fire, but seeds of fire (1.897–903):

900                    'at saepe in magnis fit montibus' inquis 'ut altis  
                          arboribus uicina cacumina summa terantur  
                          inter se ualidis facere id cogentibus austris,  
                          donec flammai fulserunt flore coorto.'  
                          scilicet et non est lignis tamen insitus ignis,  
                          uerum semina sunt ardoris multa, terendo  
                          quae cum confluxere, creant incendia siluis.

'But' you say 'it often happens in great mountains that the topmost branches of tall trees which are close together are made to rub on each other by powerful winds until they flash out with the gathered flower of flame.'

<sup>3</sup> Cf. R. D. Williams, *Virgil: Aeneid 5* (Oxford, 1960), on 5.77; and add O. Gross, *De metonymis sermonis Latini a deorum nominibus petitis* (Diss. Halle, 1911).

That's true enough, but for all that the fire is not grafted into the wood, rather there are many seeds of heat which flow together as a result of the rubbing and generate a blaze among the woods.

In the first place *flos flammai* is not put forward as Lucretius' own phrase but is attributed by him to an imaginary antagonist. This observation will be developed later in this chapter. In the second place Lucretius picks this up in *insitus*, *semina*, and *creant*, and plays with it with an acute awareness of the force of the metaphor, and a devastating application of it to the argument in hand. The fire in branches is not an alien stock grafted on to the wood, *insita*, it is not particles of fire; it is rather particles which can generate fire, *semina ardoris*. There are no grounds for adverse criticism of this image.

Townend equally accepts such criticism against *caeli cauernas*, the caverns of the sky, in 4.171 and in 6.252. This last example is a towering demonstration of the grandeur of the imagination of Lucretius. Throughout this passage he is thinking of the clouds as great edifices piled above our heads, as we see from *nubibus exstructis* 6.247, 268 and 264–5

... nisi inaedificata superne  
multa forent multis exempto nubila sole

where 'cloud built up on cloud depriving us of the sun' may well be a swift play with a matter which must have caused much concern and some lawsuits to people who lived in an expanding tenement city like Rome (cf. *luminum*, '[legal disputes concerning] light', Cicero, *De oratore* 1.173).

But the force of this image is even more complex. In both the passages from which it is cited the immediate context is the same (4.170–1 ≈ 6.251–2):

... uti tenebras omnis Acherunta rearis  
liquisse et magnas caeli complesse cauernas

(The sky is so dark) that you would think that all the darkness had left the Underworld and filled the great caverns of the sky.

Acheron, the Underworld, is honeycombed with caverns (6.536–42). The suggestion is that the darkness has moved from one cavernous habitat to another. Each of these nuances must have flicked the mind of

the reader who was attuned to the style of this poet and familiar with his thinking, each in less time than it takes to write a word. The critic is pedestrian in pursuit but at least he can show that before we pass pejorative judgments upon these images, we should study them respectfully in their whole context. We should also know a great deal, which at the moment we do not know, about Lucretius' language. It is highly significant that the images discussed in this chapter all occur in early Roman poetry: *flos flammai* we have seen above, *flos Liberi* and *cauernas caeli* as in the passages cited in Munro's commentary and in Ennius, *Scaenica* 112 V *caua caeli*.

This leaves 'the juice of the vine-born liquid' in 5.14, in a passage full of resounding poetic periphrases. Lucretius has often suffered because commentators have failed to notice his trick of putting words on the lips of his opponents. Being merciless and often unfair in controversy, he regularly mimics their style of speech. A clear but benign example occurs in the imitation of Ennius in 3.1025–35. More indirect and malicious is his mockery of Heracleitus and his supporters in 1.643–4:

ueraque constituunt quae belle tangere possunt  
auris et lepido quae sunt fucata sonore.

They take as truth what can tickle their ears pleasantly, what is dyed in an attractive sound.

Here the adoration of the Heracleiteans is suggested in the adverb *belle* ('pleasantly') and the adjective *lepidus* ('attractive'), neither of which Lucretius uses anywhere else. The potential malice of these words is well brought out by Catullus 78 which was too scabrous to print in the recent Oxford edition of this poet. The triple synaesthesia in the Lucretius, tactile, visual, and aural, suggests the specious tortuosities of Heracleitus' style. Equally malicious is his mockery of oracular language (5.110–13):

qua prius adgrediar quam de re fundere fata  
sanctius et multo certa ratione magis quam  
Pythia quae tripode a Phoebi lauroque profatur,  
multa tibi expediam doctis solacia dictis.

Before I set myself to pour forth my oracles on this subject more binding and much more certain than those uttered by the Pythian priestess from the tripod and laurel of Apollo, I shall unfold many wise words of comfort for you.

More important is his mimicry in 6.852 where he is discussing the miraculous spring in the shrine of Hammon which was said to be cold during the day and warm at night (6.850–3):

hunc homines fontem nimis admirantur et acri  
sole putant subter terras feruescere partim,  
nox ubi terribili terras caligine textit.  
quod nimis a uerast longe ratione remotum.

Men are too inclined to marvel at this spring, and some believe that it is heated by the scorching sun beneath the earth when night veils the earth with terrifying darkness. But this is far removed from the truth.

This is important because Anderson<sup>4</sup> has argued that night is a symbol in Lucretius, referred to unemotionally at the beginning of the poem as being neither a good thing nor a bad, but by the time Lucretius had reached his last book, he had become more pessimistic, and contrary to his conscious philosophy, he gave way here to this momentary fear which he had previously rejected. All this is far removed from the truth, because night is not a symbol in Lucretius, any more than war, death, or the sea, which Anderson also cites in developing his case, and because this superstitious fear of darkness is here attributed by Lucretius to the credulous people who thought that the sun could heat the bottom of a spring more effectively during the night than the surface of it during the day. The sound of *terribili terras* guides the tone of the reading voice. So, then, with the 'juice of the vine-born liquid' in the preface to the fifth book, we have a priestly utterance, with *uitigeni* a parody of the cult titles so dear to the *uates* whom Lucretius detested (5.14–15):

namque Ceres fertur fruges Liberque liquoris  
uitigeni laticem mortalibus instituisse.

For Demeter and Bacchus are said to have ordained grain crops for mortals and the juice of the vine-born fluid.

This is surely the explanation of the other poetic periphrases in this whole passage, where Lucretius is belittling the achievements of Hercules in order to magnify by contrast the achievements of Epicurus. The famous great maw of the Nemean lion, the hydra palisaded

<sup>4</sup> W. S. Anderson, 'Discontinuity in Lucretian Symbolism', *TAPA* 91 (1960), 1–29.



by its venomous snakes, the triple-chested violence of triple Geryon are all stuffed dummies, heavily padded with epic fustian. They are all harmless to us, and would be harmless even if Hercules had never dealt with them, whereas the human evils that Epicurus overcame on our behalf are still besetting us. When Townend writes, ‘the periphrasis for *uinum* quoted above does not seem to assist the feeling of the passage’, he is failing to notice this use of parody in argument which is so characteristic of this brutal and unscrupulous controversialist. It is a weapon which has rebounded on Lucretius elsewhere, nowhere with more deadly results than at the end of Book 3, where he writes his great dialogue with the man who is afraid to die. Again and again the arguments of his antagonist are brought forward by writers on Lucretius as Lucretius’ own deepest, most irrepressible sentiments (3.898–9, 906–8):

‘... misero misere’ aiunt ‘omnia ademittit  
 una dies ...’  
 ‘at nos horrifico cinefactum te prope busto  
 insatiabiliter defleuimus, aeternumque  
 nulla dies nobis maerorem e pectore demet.’

‘Poor man, poor man!’ they say, ‘one fatal day has robbed you of all ...’... ‘But we beside you, as you lay burnt to ashes on the horrible pyre, have bewailed you inconsolably, and everlasting grief no time shall take away from our hearts.’ (tr. Smith)

Instead of taking such statements as manifestations of L’Anti-Lucrèce chez Lucrèce, we should remember that each of these arguments is punctually and brusquely rejected by Lucretius speaking in his own voice, and later even more peremptorily by Nature, who takes over his part in the dialogue. Surely these pathetic rhetorical figures and astonishing rhythms are meant as sarcastic caricatures of the mawkish clichés used by such *stulti* and *baratri* (‘fools’ and ‘scoundrels’). *Insatiabiliter* (‘insatiably’) for instance is not necessarily an elevated word. Its only other use in Lucretius is of swine rolling in filth, 6.978.

Such periphrases are in the Epic style, but in using them Lucretius is putting the Epic style to vigorous and effective use. It might be worthwhile to look at the ornamental epithets in Lucretius in this connection. For instance Palmer refers to ‘the use of the constant

ornamental epithet in 1.250–64.<sup>5</sup> Ornamental yes, but the discussion of this passage in my first chapter showed that none of them is otiose. Every single epithet is working wonders in its context at a logical, or emotional, or sensuous level. To take only a few other examples from the first book: *uiuuda tellus* 178, the earth is alive—‘quickened’ in Munro’s translation—because she is the mother who has received the *semina rerum*, and is bringing forth her tender young to the boundaries of light; in *fluctifrago suspensae in litore* 305, the shore is wave-breaking, because Lucretius is talking about clothes which have been hung up to dry and are saturated by spray from the breaking waves; in *rigidum permanat frigus ad ossa*, 355, the *rigid* cold oozing through to the bone, makes a penetrating paradox with its suggestions of steel and ice, a conceit later developed by Martial writing about the slave boy who was killed by a falling icicle (4.18.6):

tabuit in calido uulnere mucro tener

its brittle sword-point melted in the warm wound.

## ENNIUS AND HOMER

There is no reason to hold it against Lucretius that he imitated Homer and Ennius. The quality of his imitations should save him from that. Consider first his adaptation of an image in Ennius, and then his translation of a passage in Homer:

homo qui erranti comiter monstrat uiam,  
quasi lumen de suo lumine accendat, facit:  
nihilominus ipsi lucet, cum illi accenderit.

Ennius, *Scaenica*, 398–400V

If you obligingly point out the way to somebody who is lost, you are so to speak lighting his torch from your own, and your own torch gives no less light after lighting his.

haec sic pernosces parua perductus opella;  
namque alid ex alio clarescet, nec tibi caeca

<sup>5</sup> L. R. Palmer, *The Latin Language* (London, 1954), 106.

nox iter eripiet, quin ultima naturai  
peruideas: ita res accendent lumina rebus.

Lucretius 1.1114–17

So you will comprehend all this fully, being led to the end by making a little effort: one thing will become clear from another and night will not take away your view of the road and prevent you from seeing in full the ultimate truths of nature. So will one thing light a torch for the next.

In Ennius one man lights another's torch from his own and his civility costs him nothing; in Lucretius, Epicureanism is a series of doctrines in the dark, but as each one is illumined it transmits light forward. The basic image is the kindling of one light from another, but each poet employs it for a wholly different purpose, and Lucretius is no more a mindless imitator than is Dante (*Purgatorio* 22.67–9):

Facesti come quei che va di notte  
che porta il lume dietro e sé non giova  
ma dopo sé fa le persone dotte.

You did as one who goes by night, who carries the light behind him, and does not help himself but shows the way to those who follow.

The same poetic independence is noted by Giancotti in his study of Lucretius' most famous adaptation of Homer:<sup>6</sup>

ἡ μὲν ἄρ' ὡς εἰποῦσ' ἀπέβη γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη  
Οὐλυμπόνδ', ὅθι φασὶ θεῶν ἔδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ  
ἔμμεναι· οὐτ' ἀνέμοισι τινάσσεται οὔτε ποτ' ὄμβρῳ  
δεύεται οὔτε χιῶν ἐπιπίλναται ἀλλὰ μάλ' αἴθρη  
πέπταται ἀνέφελος, λευκὴ δ' ἐπιδέδρομεν αἴγλη.

*Odyssey* 6.41–5

Grey-eyed Athene said this, and went away  
to Olympus, where they say is the dwelling of the gods,  
untroubled for ever: never is it shaken by winds, nor wet  
with rain, nor does snow come near it, but cloudless aether  
is spread there and white light runs over it.

apparet diuum numen sedesque quietae,  
quas neque concutiunt uenti nec nubila nimbis  
aspergunt neque nix acri concreta pruina

<sup>6</sup> F. Giancotti, *Il prelude di Lucrezio* (Messina/Florence, 1959), 85–90.

cana cadens uiolat semperque innubilus aether  
integit et large diffuso lumine ridet.

Lucretius 3.18–22

The majesty of the gods comes into view and their quiet abode which winds do not shake, nor do clouds spatter it with rain, nor does snow solidified by sharp frost violate it falling white, and the unclouded aether encloses it and smiles on it with broad-spread light.

‘Superb as Lucretius’ version is,’ writes Farrington, ‘it will be found in one or two particulars to fall short of the Greek.’<sup>7</sup> In Farrington’s very sensitive comparison, he praises the rhythmic qualities of the Lucretius: I note that the run-on lines correspond to the shape of the Greek; the very sound of the Greek has been Latinized, the complex alliterations of the Greek for instance becoming broader and more obvious in the Lucretius. The only technical flaw in the Lucretius, and it is not a serious one, is the repetition *nubila* (‘clouds’) and *innubilus* (‘unclouded’). One of the miracles of the Homer is its simplicity, but Farrington is too severe on Lucretius for his failure to attain this. ‘In the phrase *large diffuso lumine ridet* [“smiles on it with broad-spread light”], Lucretius employs a metaphor, and thus mars the simplicity of Homer, with whom every word is to be understood literally. Still worse is the phrase *nix acri concreta pruina cana cadens uiolat* [“snow solidified by sharp frost violates it falling white”], for the words *acri concreta pruina* are padding and *uiolat* substitutes a valuation of the snowfall for the magic but perfectly literal ἐπιπίλναται [“comes near”]. To the first charge Lucretius might reply, that ἐπιδέδρομεν (‘runs over’) is a metaphor, too. If light has feet, the *aether* can surely smile. But even so there is something in the indictment. The Homer is as clean as the sky, despite his running light, whereas Lucretius was an inveterate anthropomorphizer, writing about the phenomena of nature in living human terms. He could plead in extenuation only that it is a strange critique which condemns a poet for using metaphors. If only more poets could produce botches like *large diffuso lumine ridet*. As to the padding, here again Lucretius is being damned for not being what he is not trying to be. He could never be a slavish imitator of Homer or Ennius. When he

<sup>7</sup> B. Farrington, *Primum Graius homo* (Cambridge, 1927), 33.

took his inspiration from them, he shaped what he took in the mould of his own imagination. He was possessed by a passionate interest in meteorological phenomena. He was a fanatical Epicurean. His senses were preternaturally acute. Homer writes 'It is never wet with rain', and this is perfect; but Lucretius is interested in rain and how it is produced and cannot check himself from seeing and hearing how it falls, so he writes 'the clouds do not sprinkle it with rain', *nubila nimbis aspergunt*, even although this extra visualization of clouds does land him in difficulties with *innubilus* two lines later. Homer writes 'the snow does not come near it', and this is perfect; but Lucretius is interested in snow and he knows that Epicurus explained it as moisture hardened by the powerful pressure of cold round about it (Diogenes Laertius 10.107), so he writes 'snow which is made hard by sharp frost' *nix acri concreta pruina*. This is not padding, but the fanatical intellectuality which is part of his nature and his power. Similarly, Homer's snow 'comes near', Lucretius' 'violates'. This is partly the anthropomorphizer at work, Lucretius thinking of natural phenomena in human terms, in this case in strenuous moral terms. But in this case too we must think of the context. He has just referred to the Epicurean explanation of the origin of snow. Snow is *concreta*. He now visualizes what is *concreta* bombarding the intangibly delicate abode of the gods (see 5.150–4). 'Handle it like a snowflake', we say. But in this context in Lucretius' visualization, snowflakes have become cannonballs. According to Cyril Bailey in his lecture to the British Academy the two primary characteristics of Lucretius were his passion and his *visualization* (and his acute sensory awareness is not confined to vision).<sup>8</sup> Once he has thought of snow being hard, he then shudders at its impact.

Although Wormell is inclined to prefer the Lucretius, and puts up a strong case for it,<sup>9</sup> and although it has its own incomparable qualities, I feel that Homer makes a mockery of all imitation, translation, or criticism. Lucretius doesn't come near him. Nobody ever has. This is not a shortcoming in a poet, but an inescapable element in the human condition.

<sup>8</sup> *Lucretius* (London, 1949), 12.

<sup>9</sup> D. E. W. Wormell, 'The Personal World of Lucretius', in Dudley (n. 1), 35–68, at 45.

The idea that there is something wrong with the ‘metaphors which Lucretius found ready-made in earlier writers’ has led us into something of a digression. As we return to our study of imagery we should remember that Lucretius admired three poets, and two of these were the greatest epic poets that had yet written, *unus Homerus sceptrapotitus* (‘Homer who alone holds the sceptre’, 3.1037–8), and (1.117–19)

Ennius . . . noster . . . qui primus amoeno  
detulit ex Helicone perenni fronde coronam  
per gentis Italas hominum quae clara clueret.<sup>10</sup>

Our Ennius who was first to take down from lovely Helicon a garland of everlasting green to win bright fame amongst the men of the Italian race.

The third poet whom Lucretius admired (1.729–33) was Empedocles, the greatest of all Greek didactic poets. ‘Show me a man’s books and I shall tell you his character’, they say. These are Lucretius’ books and there is nothing that can be objected to in what he read or how he used it.

<sup>10</sup> The comma which editors print after 118 is irrational. Lucretius is suggesting that Ennius is the first Latin poet, not the first poet.

*Doctus Lucretius*

E. J. Kenney

## I

In Statius' poem in honour of Lucan's birthday, addressed to the poet's widow, his *Genethliacon Lucani* (*Silvae* 2.7) the word *doctus* occurs five times, always in connexion with literature.<sup>1</sup> One may perhaps call his employment of the word in this poem loose or vague, but the association with poetry is clear enough in each case. As applied to Lucretius is it more than a conventional and complimentary synonym for 'poet'? Statius himself was nothing if not *doctus*: ought we not to expect that for him and for his readers the word still retained something of its proper literary connotations, those which associated it in particular with Alexandrian poetry?<sup>2</sup> The phrasing of the verse suggests also that Statius may have intended

<sup>1</sup> 3 *docto pectora concitatus oestro*, 'heart stirred by the poetic frenzy', 12 *docti largius euagentur amnes*, 'let poetic rivers run more copiously', 46 *doctos equites*, 'cultured knights', 76 *docti furor arduus Lucreti*, 'the high frenzy of skilled Lucretius', 83 *doctam atque ingenio tuo decoram*, (the Muse addressing the infant Lucan) 'a mate, cultured to grace your genius' (trans. Shackleton Bailey).

<sup>2</sup> W. Kroll, *Studien zum Verständnis der römischen Literatur* (Stuttgart, 1924), 37: 'Das charakteristische Beiwort des alexandrinischen Dichters war *doctus*'. Cf. C. J. Fordyce, *Catullus* (Oxford, 1961), 178 (on 35.18 f.); F. Cupaivolo, *Tra poesia e poetica* (Naples, 1966), 129–72; J. H. Brouwers, *Horatius en Propertius over epiek en lyriek* (Nijmegen, 1967), 122–3.

an opposition between *furor* and *doctrina* and wished to draw attention to the fact that Lucretius' poetry exemplified both; that he was, indeed, repeating in more epigrammatic and less equivocal form the much-disputed and much-emended sentence of Cicero, that Lucretius' work was *multis luminibus ingeni, multae tamen artis*, 'brilliantly original but also displaying much artistry' (Q Fr 2.10.3). It has been suggested that the favourite *ars-ingenium* antithesis, most familiar to us from the crisp Ovidian appraisals of Callimachus and Ennius,<sup>3</sup> is to be read as more or less equivalent to the antithesis between the 'old' and the 'new' poetry, so called.<sup>4</sup> That would permit us, if we wish to construe the combined testimony of Cicero and Statius strictly on this premiss, to label Lucretius as a 'new' poet; though one of a rather special kind who exemplified also that native genius (*furor = ingenium*) which was the special prerogative of the older school. This idea is of course at variance with what must still be accounted the received opinion about him, which may conveniently be summed up in one of those characteristic verdicts of Wilamowitz from which it is clear that no appeal was expected: that he had nothing in common with Hellenistic poetry.<sup>5</sup> The suggestion that Lucretius was one of the *noui poetae* is not entirely novel: it was made, and received sceptically by at least one reviewer, most recently by C. W. Mendell.<sup>6</sup> It is perhaps not surprising that Mendell's thesis, which was stated rather than argued, has not excited much comment, let alone approval. An earlier and more elaborate attempt to present the case for Lucretius as a 'new' poet had singularly little effect on received opinion. In 1949 an Italian scholar, Leonardo Ferrero, published a small and now rare book,<sup>7</sup> in which he undertook to show that the current conception of Lucretius as untouched by Alexandrian or neoteric influences was wrong and that he, no less than

<sup>3</sup> Am. 1.15.13–14 *Battiades* . . . *quamuis ingenio non ualet, arte ualet*, 'Callimachus is distinguished more for art than for original genius'; Tr. 2.424 *Ennius ingenio maximus, arte rudis*, 'Ennius, a great genius but an unskilled craftsman'.

<sup>4</sup> Brouwers, op. cit. (n. 2), 84 n. 53, 122.

<sup>5</sup> U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Hellenistische Dichtung in der Zeit des Kallimachos*, vol. 1 (Berlin, 1924), 230: '[Catullus] ebenbürtiger Zeit- und Schicksalsgenosse Lucretius steht ausser Beziehung zu der hellenistischen Poesie'.

<sup>6</sup> C. W. Mendell, *Latin Poetry: the New Poets and the Augustans* (New Haven, 1965), 14–27; M. L. Clarke, *CR* 16 (1966), 360.

<sup>7</sup> L. Ferrero, *Poetica nuova in Lucrezio* (Florence, 1949).



Catullus, was a *nouus poeta*. To those reviewers who read his book critically its weaknesses were readily apparent. For one thing, it tries to prove too much: as one writer observed, his 'definition of *neoterismo Romano* is wide enough to include practically all the intellectual activities of the late republic'.<sup>8</sup> Several critics acknowledged the value of the book in correcting an excessively isolationist view of Lucretius' poetry: 'Ferrero,' said one, 'has done a service in emphasizing that Lucretius . . . did not stand entirely aloof from the tides and currents which influenced his contemporaries'. However, the same scholar ended his notice with a statement of allegiance to the conventional position, reiterating his feeling that there is 'more of the classical and rugged about the *De rerum natura* than there is of the Hellenistic and refined'.<sup>9</sup> It is the contention of this paper that such assessments as this, which without offence to the author of the words quoted I think it not unfair to take as typical, fail to do justice to certain aspects of Lucretius' literary art; and also that Ferrero was essentially on the right lines. The pitfall into which, as I see it, Ferrero fell and which I wish to avoid, is that of attempting to fasten a label on Lucretius and to assign him to a school or sect of poets. So much has been written on the *noui poetae* and the 'neoterics' that we are in some danger of forgetting how slender is the actual ancient evidence on these matters.<sup>10</sup> Even supposing that such terms as οἱ νεώτεροι, 'the newer poets' and *cantores Euphorionis*, 'those who sing (or sing the praises of) Euphorion' conveyed some defined and special meaning to Cicero's contemporaries, are we really in a position to distinguish it with anything like precision? It is indeed not unlikely, if one's experience of modern polemic and modern party spirit is any guide, that those contemporaries would themselves have been hard put to it to define exactly what they meant by such terms except in so far as they expressed coterie animus and purely personal likes and dislikes. After all, no two experts seem to agree precisely who really represented 'Bloomsbury' or even when its *floruit* really was, and that is well within living memory.<sup>11</sup> More recently still, the Angry Young

<sup>8</sup> Michels, *AJP* 74 (1953), 220–1; cf. Giancotti, *Doxa* 4 (1951), 169–73.

<sup>9</sup> Stocker, *CP* 48 (1953), 114.

<sup>10</sup> See N. B. Crowther, *CQ* 20 (1970), 322–7.

<sup>11</sup> See M. Holroyd, *Lytton Strachey: A Critical Biography*, vol. 1 (London, 1967), Ch. 9, 'Bloomsbury: The Legend and the Myth'.

Men, so called, seem to have been themselves singularly vague about who they were and what, if anything, they represented. Which of us, even though we bandy the term about with some assurance, could provide a clear definition of the New Criticism?<sup>12</sup> Every poet is 'new' with respect to his predecessors.<sup>13</sup> In what follows I shall try to eschew mention of 'new' poetry and 'neoterism' and the like; the only label that we shall keep in view shall be that of *doctus*, fastened on our poet by one who was much nearer to him in time, and probably in spirit as well, than we are. The object of the enquiry is to examine certain aspects—by no means all—of Lucretius' *doctrina* and to describe its character as seen in certain instances.

## II

To begin with let us acknowledge the extreme improbability, in a priori terms, of the notion that Lucretius could possibly have thought and written in a cultural vacuum, or in detachment from or ignorance of the complex literary tradition that influenced the writers and the educated public of his day. It is true that the silence of our sources may lead us to suppose with some plausibility that his position vis-à-vis contemporary Epicureanism was an isolated one,<sup>14</sup> but that does not entail that he was immune from all current influences. His poem is obviously the work of a highly educated and widely read man.<sup>15</sup> Could someone so steeped in Hellenistic philosophy have been oblivious of Hellenistic literature? The very choice of the poetic form that is so surprising in a fervent disciple of Epicurus<sup>16</sup> represents a commitment, not simply to poetry at large, but to a particular *γένος*, that of the didactic epos; and such a

<sup>12</sup> Cf., for instance, C. Segal, 'Ancient Texts and Modern Literary Criticism', *Arethusa* 1 (1968), 11 ff.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. E. Castorina, *Questioni neoteriche* (Florence, 1968), 7.

<sup>14</sup> G. D. Hadzsits, *Lucretius and his Influence* (London, 1935), 21–7; P. Boyancé, *Lucrèce et l'épicurisme* (Paris, 1963), 12.

<sup>15</sup> *Titi Lucreti Cari De rerum natura libri sex*, ed. C. Bailey (Oxford, 1947), i.5–6.

<sup>16</sup> J. H. Waszink, 'Lucretius and Poetry', *Meded. Kon. Ned. Akad., Afd. Lett.*, n.r. 17.8 (1954), 243–58; Boyancé, *op. cit.* (n. 14), 4, 57–68.

commitment carried certain inescapable implications. Lucretius, that is to say, must have been aware that he was writing in a tradition that went back to Hesiod and had passed through various phases since. No doubt it was of his debt to Parmenides and Empedocles that he was chiefly conscious, but some of what we may call his 'programmatic' references to his poetical mission suggest that other, more specifically literary, models were familiar to him from the intermediate poetic tradition.

An obvious case is that of the famous passage 1.926–50 (= 4.1–25) *auia Pieridum peragro loca nullius ante | trita solo*, 'I traverse the trackless places of the Muses, untrodden by any before me' eqs. So much ink has been spilt over the correct position of these verses in the poem that perhaps equally interesting questions have been neglected. The terms of this statement are in fact familiar: what Paratore has called 'the typically Hellenistic commonplace, inventor's pride'.<sup>17</sup> Waszink has suggested that in writing these verses Lucretius had Ennius particularly in mind,<sup>18</sup> but the imagery in which he elaborates his claims is far from being specifically relevant to Ennius. Are not the trackless places of the Muses, trodden by no foot before Lucretius', bound to recall the untraversed paths, *κελεύθους ἀτρίπτους*, over which Apollo bade Callimachus drive and, conversely, the busy highroad which Callimachus claims to shun?<sup>19</sup> Do not the untouched springs, *integri fontes*, recall the slender rill of pure water recommended by the Callimachean Apollo and, conversely, the frequented spring rejected by Callimachus?<sup>20</sup> The image of the untrodden path is of course neither exclusively Callimachean nor exclusively literary.<sup>21</sup> It seems to have taken its origin from a Pythagorean

<sup>17</sup> *Lucreti De Rerum Natura: Locos praecipue notabiles coll. et ill. H. Paratore* (Rome, 1960), 310. Cf. Kroll, op. cit. (n. 2), 12–14; A. Kambylis, *Die Dichterweihe und ihre Symbolik* (Heidelberg, 1965), 159–60; Cupaiuolo, op. cit. (n. 2), 137–41.

<sup>18</sup> Waszink, op. cit. (n. 16), 250–1.

<sup>19</sup> Fr. 1.27–8 Pf.; *Epigr.* 28.1–2 (*AP* 12.43.1–2 = *HE* 1041–2). Cf. *Epigr.* 7.1–2 (*AP* 9.565.1–2 = *HE* 1301–2), where the purity image (see below) is merged with that of the path (Kambylis, op. cit. (n. 17), 81, n. 42).

<sup>20</sup> *Hymn* 2.112; *Epigr.* 28.3–4 (*AP* 12.43.3–4 = *HE* 1043–4); cf. Ferrero, op. cit. (n. 7), 22, n. 2. The prominence of the water symbol in the tradition must be ascribed to Callimachus and his followers: Kambylis, op. cit. (n. 17), 73–4, 98–102, 110–12.

<sup>21</sup> See Pfeiffer's notes on fr. 1.25–6. Pindar uses the image more than once (see especially *Pyth.* 4.247), but it does not follow, as suggested by J. K. Newman, *Augustus and the New Poetry* (Brussels, 1967), 47, that Callimachus borrowed the concept from him.

precept; and the idea that the poet traverses a way that is unfrequented, ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων ἔκτος πάτου, figures in the Proem of Parmenides' poem.<sup>22</sup> Lucretius' description of hammering out his poetry, *pango carmina* (1.933–4 = 4.8–9) recalls the Callimachean insistence on hard graft.<sup>23</sup>

A similar debt to Empedocles is noted by the commentators on *DRN* 6.92–5. However, the image is here identified by *Pieridum* ('of the Muses') as specifically literary, which it is not in Parmenides; in particular the close association of the track and the fountain metaphors inevitably recalls their grouping in Callimachus' epigram. Similarly the next image, that of the garland, is old and familiar; but this is a garland conferred by the Muses, and the closest parallel cited by the commentators is from an epigram of Antipater of Sidon addressed to Sappho.<sup>24</sup> Moreover the notion of crowning by the Muses recalls the tradition of symbolic gift-giving that began with Hesiod and was continued by Theocritus and by Roman poets after Lucretius.<sup>25</sup> It is possible also that the ideas of lucidity and clarity on which Lucretius in this passage and many others lays such stress refer to something more than the plainness, σαφήνεια, which was Epicurus' sole stylistic requirement,<sup>26</sup> and have something at any rate in common with the Callimachean insistence on clarity and precision that is conveyed in the well-known epigram on Aratus, with its reference to λεπταὶ ῥήσεις, 'slender

<sup>22</sup> On Pythagoras see Pfeiffer on Callim. fr. 1.25–6; and A. S. F. Gow-D. L. Page, *The Greek Anthology: Hellenistic Epigrams* (Cambridge, 1965), ii.156, on *Epigr.* 28 (*AP* 12.43 = *HE* 1041–6). For Parmenides see fr. 1; and cf. G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven, and M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge, 1983), 242–4; W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1965), ii. 6–13; Waszink, op. cit. (n. 16), 253.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. E. J. Kenney, *Lucretius*, Greece & Rome New Surveys in the Classics 11 (Oxford, 1977), 13–14 = (1995), 12–13 and n. 34.

<sup>24</sup> *AP* 7.14.3–4 (*HE* 238–9) ἄς μέτα Πειθῶ | ἐπλεκ' αἰείζων Πιερίδων στέφανον, 'with whom Persuasion wove an immortal garland of the Muses'.

<sup>25</sup> Hes. *Theog.* 30–1; Theoc. 7.128–9, on which see Luck, *MH23* (1966), 188–9. On the symbol of the garland see Kambylis, op. cit. (n. 17), 173–6. Ennius no doubt received his crown at the hands of the Muses (cf. Waszink, *Mnem.* 4.3 (1950), 232–3), as the Berne Scholiast on *Ecl.* 6.65 (quoted by Kambylis, 174) thought Hesiod had done; Lucretius, if we are to construe his words strictly (cf. Kambylis, 175) gathered the flowers for his own garland. One would like to know what he read in his text of *Theog.* 31, where the MSS offer alternative versions; cf. Kambylis, 65–6; M. L. West ad loc., accepting that in which the Muses did the gathering. Cf. below. In any case he had given the definitive shape to a motif that regularly recurs in Virgil, Horace, and Propertius (Kambylis, 175–1).

<sup>26</sup> D.L. 10.13.

utterances';<sup>27</sup> in the grasshopper image of the *Aetia*-preface;<sup>28</sup> in the famous disparaging reference to Antimachus' 'thick and obscure Lyde', *Λύδη παχὺ γράμμα καὶ οὐ τορόν*;<sup>29</sup> and in the image of the vast and muddy Euphrates of the *Hymn to Apollo*.<sup>30</sup>

Elsewhere indeed Lucretius commits himself to this type of value judgement in quite explicitly Alexandrian terms, when at 4.180–2 (= 4.909–11) he praises the song of the swan, described as a 'small melody', *paruus canor*,<sup>31</sup> as excelling the *clamor* of cranes in flight. This type of comparison, like the track image, was not exclusively Alexandrian;<sup>32</sup> but in this particular case, as has been more than once pointed out,<sup>33</sup> the source of his borrowing is obviously Hellenistic, another epigram of Antipater, this time addressed to Erinna (and so, like that already mentioned, belonging to what might be called a context of statements about poetry);<sup>34</sup> and ultimately, as has also been pointed out, the conceit is indebted to the *Aetia* preface.<sup>35</sup> In sum there is no doubt that in these two passages we encounter a style of writing that is deliberately and consciously 'poetic' and 'literary' in the sense that the grammar of allusion—so to call it—to conventional motifs and images is one that was bound to be familiar to Lucretius' educated contemporaries: educated, that is, in the special sense of being versed in Alexandrian poetry.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>27</sup> *Epigr.* 27 (*AP* 9.507 = *HE* 1297–1300); cf. fr. 1.24 Pf. *τὴν Μοῦσαν . . . λεπταλέην*, '(keep) the Muse slender'.

<sup>28</sup> Fr. 1.29–30 Pf.

<sup>29</sup> Fr. 398 Pf.

<sup>30</sup> *Hymn* 2.108–9.

<sup>31</sup> It has been suggested (Newman, *Latinitas* 13 (1965), 100–1) that 'to sing' (*canere* = *ἀείδειν*) was for the 'new poets' a term of art. His argument strikes me as in some respects fine-drawn, especially as it relates to *Lucr.* 1.117 ff. (103–5). On *paruus* as an 'Alexandrian' word see *ibid.*, 101.

<sup>32</sup> We may compare *Lucr.* 3.6–7; *Pind. Ol.* 2.87–9; *Theoc.* 5.136. Cf. Ferrero, *op. cit.* (n. 7), 23 n. 2.

<sup>33</sup> J. Hutton, *The Greek Anthology in Italy to the Year 1800* (Ithaca, NY, 1935), 12; A. A. Day, *The Origins of Latin Love-elegy* (Oxford, 1938), 104; Fellin, *RFIC* 29 (1951), 170; A. Ernout-L. Robin, *Lucrèce de Rerum Natura* (Paris, 1962), *ad loc.* The parallel is not noticed by Bailey.

<sup>34</sup> *AP* 7.713 (*HE* 560–7).

<sup>35</sup> Newman, *Latomus* 26 (1967), 525.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Paratore, *op. cit.* (n. 17), 308–12, especially 311–12, emphasizing Lucretius' indebtedness to the *Aetia* preface, both directly and via Epicurus, their divergent philosophies notwithstanding (on this last point see below). On Hellenistic characteristics in Ennius see Newman, *op. cit.* (n. 21), 64–77.

## III

On this, then, the overt level, as we may call it, Lucretius is undeniably *doctus*. More subtle and more interesting, if also more controversial, are the instances in which a motif or an image is used to make a point of a less obvious kind in an oblique or allusive fashion. Wit—if the word is not too anachronistic—of this kind is nothing if not Alexandrian; and no Roman poet exemplified it better than Lucretius' contemporary Catullus. It would, I am sure, be highly fallacious to identify the employment of such techniques with a particular group or school of poets; but if it can be shown that Lucretius used them it will have been demonstrated that he was not unsubtle or unsophisticated ('rugged', as the reviewer's verdict put it) and that he was not a peculiar throwback or literary anachronism in his own time.

A case which is of particular interest and relevance as involving (I think) polemic occurs in the proem to Book 1, at lines 117–26. Lucretius has at 102 ff. warned Memmius not to be deterred from philosophical speculation by the threats of *uates*, 'soothsayers'. These men concoct *somnia*, fantasies, which can overturn the *uitae rationes*, the ordered scheme of life, offered by Epicurean doctrine. As Euripides had written, 'Stories that terrify men profit the worship of the gods'.<sup>37</sup> If men had no fear of death they would despise the soothsayers, but since they fear eternal punishment in the afterlife they lack the resources to resist *religio*. This is because they are ignorant of the nature of the *anima*, whether it is born with the body or enters it from outside at birth, whether it dies with the body or goes down to the Underworld or enters the body of some other animal,

Ennius ut noster cecinit qui primus amoeno  
detulit ex Helicone perenni fronde<sup>38</sup> coronam,  
per gentis Italas hominum quae clara clueret;  
etsi praeterea tamen esse Acherusia templa  
Ennius aeternis exponit uersibus edens,  
quo neque permanent<sup>39</sup> animae neque corpora nostra,

<sup>37</sup> *Electra* 743–4.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. perhaps ?Archias, *AP* 9.64.3. (*HE* 1070) *καλλιπέτηλον*, 'prettily flowering', of the Muses' gift to Hesiod.

<sup>39</sup> *permanent* Politian: *permaneant* codd.

sed quaedam simulacra modis pallentia miris;  
 unde sibi exortam semper florentis Homeri  
 commemorat speciem lacrimas effundere salsas  
 coepisse et rerum naturam expandere dictis.

As Roman Ennius sang, who first brought back from lovely Helicon an imperishable crown of fame among the peoples of Italy; though Ennius also it was who teaches in his deathless verses that there is a realm of Acheron to which neither our souls nor our bodies penetrate, but only likenesses wondrously pale of ourselves; and from Acheron he records that there arose before him the appearance of immortal Homer, who began to weep and to expound the universe in conversation.

And so, the argument continues, we must understand all celestial and terrestrial phenomena, but most particularly the nature of the *animus* and the *anima* and the physical explanation of dreams in which we may even seem to see and to talk with the dead.

What is Ennius doing here? The question has not on the whole much interested the contributors to the voluminous literature on the proem to Book 1. Among the few scholars who have made an attempt to answer it<sup>40</sup> is Ferrero, but his suggestion seems to have received little or no recognition apart from a dismissive footnote in Boyancé's Book.<sup>41</sup> The philosophical bearing of the passage is, I think, reasonably clear. At the time of the famous dream encounter described by Ennius in the proem to the *Annales* the 'spirit', *anima* of Homer, as everybody knows, was residing in Ennius himself, so that what appeared to Ennius must have been the poet's 'phantom', *εἶδωλον*, one of the *simulacra* mentioned by Lucretius. The implications of the Ennian passage as to dreams, as well as the doctrine of metempsychosis itself, Lucretius was of course bound to reject.<sup>42</sup> But the problem with which we are concerned is a literary one: why is this allusion introduced here, at the beginning of the poem—we are still in the proem—and in such close association with the *laudes Enni*? This question Ferrero tried to answer with the suggestion that Lucretius'

<sup>40</sup> The passage is discussed by F. Giancotti, *Il prelude di Lucrezio* (Messina, 1959), 69–77, 273–7, but it does not seem to me that he puts his finger on the essential point. See below for comment on G. Marconi, 'Il proemio degli Annales di Ennio', *RCCM* 3 (1961), 224–45 (not mentioned by Kambylis, op. cit. (n. 17)).

<sup>41</sup> Boyancé, op. cit. (n. 14), 41 n. 2.

<sup>42</sup> W. R. Hardie, 'The Dream of Ennius', *CQ* 7 (1913), 188–95.

object in praising and criticizing Ennius in the same breath, praising him for his poetical powers and originality while disparaging his philosophy, was to emphasize his failure to satisfy a crucial requirement of poetry as seen by the Alexandrians and by Lucretius himself, the principle ‘della veracità e documentarietà’ summed up in the Callimachean ἀμάρτυρον οὐδὲν αἰίδω, ‘I sing nothing that is unattested.’<sup>43</sup> Documentation by *somnia* will not suffice. Fundamentally I think that Ferrero is right: in suggesting that Lucretius here engages in a style of polemic that is characteristic of Alexandrian poetry he has hit the nail on the head.<sup>44</sup> However, I do not think that the target is quite what Ferrero suggests: the principle ἀμάρτυρον οὐδὲν αἰίδω was not what Lucretius lived and wrote by, and we ought perhaps to expect that if a point is being made here it should concern something which was of greater fundamental significance to him than that. We must remind ourselves not only of the manner of making the point but also of the context in which it is made. That Lucretius, in a programmatic proemium, should have chosen to pay tribute to a poet who was not only an illustrious predecessor in the genre of epos but was also a πρῶτος εὐρετής, an original inventor—a claim which Lucretius was to repeat of himself—need excite no surprise.<sup>45</sup> But why is the compliment related so closely—for observe that the passage 112–25 is a single continuous sentence—to Ennius’ fallacious views about *somnia* and associated topics?

The clue, it seems to me, must be looked for in the programmatic context in which the reference is made. Much discussion has taken place about the exordium of Ennius’ *Annales* and the dream in which he conversed with Homer.<sup>46</sup> What, if anything, had this dream to do with the subject of Ennius’ poetic inspiration? The dream motif was of course established in such a connexion in the poetical tradition

<sup>43</sup> Ferrero, op. cit. (n. 7), 27, 51–7.

<sup>44</sup> Marconi, op. cit. (n. 40), 244–5, also sees polemic here, rightly, but I think mistakes the target.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. n. 17 above. On the possible reference to Ennius, *Ann.* 201 Sk. cf. Kambylis, op. cit. (n. 17), 203.

<sup>46</sup> See Kambylis, op. cit. (n. 17), 191–204, arguing against Waszink’s theory of the two initiations, first a meeting with the Muses on Helicon à la Hesiod, and then the dream encounter with Homer. The point does not in fact affect our argument, since Lucretius is concerned only with the dream. See also Marconi, op. cit. (n. 40), 224–45; Waszink, *Maia* 16 (1964), 327–40.



when Ennius wrote the *Annales*. Hesiod had related the scene in which the Muses confided to him their somewhat cryptic message of encouragement as a fact, but some ancient interpreters seem to have assumed that the encounter was to be understood as having taken place in a dream.<sup>47</sup> Certainly Callimachus narrated his own meeting with the Muses on Helicon as having occurred in a dream.<sup>48</sup> It is possible, indeed probable, that Lucretius took it for granted that Hesiod was describing some kind of vision rather than a physical encounter with living and walking deities. It may of course be objected that the conversation with Homer in which *rerum natura* was expounded constituted a vehicle of philosophical instruction rather than a poetic initiation.<sup>49</sup> This, it seems to me, is to make too hard and fast a distinction and one which would not have been important, or would have been of minimal importance, for Lucretius. The very fact that the scene of Ennius' dream seems to have been Parnassus<sup>50</sup> invests it with an unmistakably poetic significance and connects it with the similar scenes in Hesiod and Callimachus.<sup>51</sup> While it cannot be ranged precisely in the series (Hesiod)-Callimachus-Propertius, it equally cannot be excluded from it altogether.<sup>52</sup> Marconi seems to me to go beyond the evidence when he argues that the dream in the *Annales* constitutes a rejection of the conventional view of poetic inspiration, and to arrive at his conclusion by virtue of an undue emphasis on the distinction just mentioned between the circumstances of the two encounters, Hesiod's and Ennius'. For the Muses, after all, did not merely invest Hesiod with the symbols of his poetic calling; they promised, in effect, that they

<sup>47</sup> See M. L. West on *Theog.* 22–34, pointing out that 'the direct evidence for this view is scanty and mostly late', but drawing attention to the indirect evidence of Callimachus and Persius; Kambylis, *op. cit.* (n. 17), 55–9; Hardie, *op. cit.* (n. 42), 188.

<sup>48</sup> *Schol. Flor.* ap. Callim. ed. R. Pfeiffer (1949), i.11; cf. *AP* 7.42, Prop. 2.34.32; Kambylis, *op. cit.* (n. 17), 70–2, 94–8.

<sup>49</sup> So Marconi, *op. cit.* (n. 40), 226–7, repeating in effect earlier views cited by Waszink, *op. cit.* (n. 16), 219–20.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Kambylis, *op. cit.* (n. 17), 197–201; *contra*, Waszink, *op. cit.* (n. 16), 337–8.

<sup>51</sup> On Ennius' attitude to Callimachus see W. Clausen, 'Callimachus and Latin Poetry', *GRBS* 5 (1964), 185–7. See also A. Grillone, *Il sogno nell'epica latina: tecnica e poesia* (Palermo, 1967), 17–22; O. Skutsch, *Studia Enniana* (London, 1968), 126–8.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Kambylis, *op. cit.* (n. 17), 197; *contra*, Marconi, *op. cit.* (n. 40), 224–9.

would tell him what to say<sup>53</sup>—there was, in other words, an element of instruction in the meeting, just as there was in the meeting between Ennius and the *simulacrum* of Homer.

It is precisely this element of instruction by means of supernatural revelation<sup>54</sup> that the two encounters had in common and must have been seen by Lucretius to have in common; in both cases in a programmatic and proemiac context, as again in Lucretius. It was that common element of revelation, I suggest, which interested Lucretius; the *source* of the revelation, the Muses or the *simulacrum* of Homer, was in itself a matter of indifference to him, except in so far as it was in Epicurean terms illegitimate and inadmissible. What he was concerned to reject was the *principle* of revelation. Thus the reference to Ennius, so early in the poem, is seen as a *prise de position*. Hesiod, Callimachus, and Ennius had all in the first lines of their poems described the sources of their inspiration or information (the distinction, as I have insisted, is not important) and had indicated them as in some sort supernatural.<sup>55</sup> Moreover in two cases certainly and in the other putatively—in Lucretius' mind, that is to say—the vehicle of the revelation was a dream. It is not only in a comparable programmatic and proemiac context, as I have called it, but also in close connexion with the topic of dreams, true and false, rightly and wrongly interpreted, that Lucretius makes his point.

It is indeed the point on which the whole message of the poem turns: that the only source of valid revelation and enlightenment for mankind is reason, *ratio sagax* (130) and what our senses tell us of the physical universe, *naturae species ratioque*. The themes of *religio*, of

<sup>53</sup> *Theog.* 27–8 ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα, | ἴδμεν δ' εὖτ' ἐθέλωμεν ἀληθέα γηρύσασθαι, 'We [the Muses] know how to utter many falsehoods that resemble the truth, but we know how to speak truth whenever we wish'; 31–2 ἐνέπνευσαν δέ μοι ἀδῆν | θέσπιν, ἵνα κλείοιμι τὰ τ' ἐσόμενα πρό τ' ἔοντα, 'They breathed into me an inspired voice, that I might celebrate things to come and things past'; and for Callimachus *AP* 7.42.3. Cf. Kambylis, *op. cit.* (n. 17), 13.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. S. Mariotti, *Lezioni su Ennio* (Pesaro, 1951), 60–1 (quoted by Marconi *op. cit.* (n. 40), 229). Marconi (229 n. 14, 241–2) sees Lucretius' real target as Pythagorean doctrine, but there is no compelling reason why he should have attacked it apropos of Ennius. The lines must be read in the context of *somnia*, which begin and end the paragraph, so dominating its thought.

<sup>55</sup> The apparition of Homer is explained by Marconi, *op. cit.* (n. 40), 228, as that of a man, arguing that Ennius was thereby implying that the poet's art owed nothing to divine inspiration; cf. *ibid.* 241–2. I doubt whether this was how Lucretius read the lines.

fear of death and of an afterlife, of the nature of the *animus* and the *anima*, the mind and soul, are linked by the rejection of *somnia* as a source of valid knowledge of these matters, and the linking is contrived in the specifically programmatic context of obligation to the poet's predecessors. There is an obligation, so the implication must be taken as running, but it is purely artistic.

We may, if we will, see a further point in the reference to *uates*. Ennius in a famous passage referred to his predecessors as *uates*.<sup>56</sup> Whatever exactly he meant by the word, it was clearly not intended as a compliment. Lucretius' argument, if I have interpreted it correctly, ranges Ennius himself among the *uates*. His argument is sharpened by Ennius' own *prise de position* as, implicitly, Callimachus Latinus, that he was *poeta*, not *uates*. Lucretius is throwing his great predecessor's own polemic in his teeth: 'whatever he says, he *was* a *uates*.'<sup>57</sup>

The import of the passage, on this interpretation, is not Alexandrian. Callimachus' sources are rejected along with Hesiod's and Ennius'; and Lucretius must also, I think, have had Parmenides' prologue in mind and its claim to superhuman sources of inspiration.<sup>58</sup> It made no difference to Lucretius whether his predecessors really believed that they had had some sort of mystical experience or were resorting, as was obviously the case with Callimachus, to a purely literary convention.<sup>59</sup> This way of understanding the world must be ruled totally out of court.

<sup>56</sup> *Ann.* 206–7 Sk. (*ROL* i.82–3) *scripsere alii rem | uersibus quos olim Faunei uatesque canebant*, 'Others have written about this in the metres once sung by Fauns and seers'; cf. Newman, *op. cit.* (n. 21), 101.

<sup>57</sup> I am grateful to Dr A. S. Gratwick for pointing this out to me.

<sup>58</sup> For Parmenides' indebtedness to the literary tradition see Guthrie, *op. cit.* (n. 22), 10–13; and note his opinion (12) that 'one cannot doubt that the prologue describes a genuine experience'.

<sup>59</sup> This distinction is insisted on by Marconi, *op. cit.* (n. 40), 229, following Mariotti, but I do not think it affects my argument. Lucretius himself used such conventions when they suited him but the references to the Muses at e.g. 1.926 or 6.93–5 are purely literary and decorative; there is no suggestion that they are anything but a traditional symbolic fiction. Similarly the wording of 1.118 may be taken as conventional and should not be pressed to support the theory of an Ennian ascent of Helicon (Marconi, 226 n. 8). When Lucretius invokes Venus at the beginning of the poem he asks, not for inspiration, but for the peace which will follow if Venus = the creative principle can secure the ascendancy over Mars = the destructive principle. The interpreters have made unbelievably heavy weather of this allegory, and I shall not put them to shame by quoting them; see instead Dronke, 'L'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle', *Studi Medievali* ser. 3a.6 (1965), 394–5. Cf. n. 62 below, on Ovid.

What is Alexandrian about the passage is the manner in which the point is made. Ferrero draws attention to Horace's criticism of Lucilius.<sup>60</sup> What is even more to the point, it seems to me, is Horace's way of dealing with the critics of his criticism. In *Satires* 1.10 he turns the tables on these people by borrowing a Callimachean motif to reinforce his point. A poet like Alpinus, he implies, had no title to cavil at his, Horace's, references to Lucilius' style as 'muddy', *lutulentus*. In the verse *diffingit Rheni luteum caput*, 'he shapes Rhine's muddy head' (37) and in the recurrences later in the Satire (50–1, 62) of the image of a swift and turbid river we are bound, I think, to detect a reminiscence of a passage to which reference has already been made, the end of Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo* and the great river Euphrates that without discrimination rolls down all manner of garbage to the sea.<sup>61</sup> In Horace, moreover, there has been a mock epiphany, taking place in a dream, in which Quirinus takes the place of the Callimachean-Virgilian Apollo. To Horace's readers a wink was as good as a nod: they could take the point, without its being spelled out, that the voice of Horace's opponents was the voice of Envy, Callimachus' *Φθόγος*. Horace had of course read his Lucretius; so had Ovid. It is at least an interesting coincidence that Ovid at the beginning of the *Ars Amatoria*, a poem that might perhaps be described as a document of *ratio sagax*, also disclaims the notion of divine inspiration and revelation, and in doing so contrasts himself with Hesiod:

nec mihi sunt uisae Clio Clisque sorores  
 seruanti pecudes uallibus, Ascra, tuis;  
 usus opus mouet hoc: uati parete perito;  
 uera canam. coeptis, mater Amoris, ades.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Ferrero, op. cit. (n. 7), 52.

<sup>61</sup> I take it that Alpinus must in some sense have belonged to the party of Horace's critics, or Horace would not have bothered to bring him into the argument. The identification of this person with the neoteric Furius Bibaculus is now generally given up: see E. Fraenkel, *Horace* (Oxford, 1957), 130 n. 1; Niall Rudd, *The Satires of Horace* (Cambridge, 1966), 120 n. 52.

<sup>62</sup> Ovid, *Ars*. 1.27–30; cf. F. W. Lenz, *Maia* 13 (1961), 138–9; W. Suerbaum, 'Ovid über seine Inspiration', *Hermes* 93 (1965), 491–6. Though he repudiates divine inspiration, Ovid does not disdain to use conventional invocations of divine assistance: Suerbaum, 494 n. 1; cf. n. 59 above.

Neither have Clio and her sisters appeared to me as I herded flocks in in the vales of Ascra [Hesiod's birthplace]. This work is inspired by experience: pay heed to a 'bard' who has been through it. What I shall sing is true: Venus, attend my enterprise.

Similar in essence is the disclaimer of Persius in his Choliambics; he is varying an idea that he found in Horace, that the satirist may not claim full poetic status, but the terms of his disclaimer are not Horatian:

nec fonte labra prolui caballino  
 nec in bicipiti somniasse Parnaso  
 memini, ut repente sic poeta prodirem.  
 Heliconidasque pallidamque Pirenen  
 illis remitto quorum imagines lambunt  
 hederæ sequaces.<sup>63</sup>

I have not wetted my lips in the Horse's Spring [Hippocrene, near Helicon, the Muse's mountain], nor do I recall dreaming on twin-peaked Parnassus [Apollo's mountain], that I should suddenly come forward as a poet. The Muses and pale Pirene [a spring at Corinth sacred to the Muses] I leave to those whose busts are lapped by the clinging ivy.

It would be unwise no doubt to press these analogies too far, but in my opinion they lend support to a view which would see the passage that we have been examining as belonging in an apologetic tradition that had a continuous history from Hesiod to Persius. If, as I have been arguing, Lucretius had a place in that tradition then in this particular at least he cannot be seen as detached from the literary influences of his age, among which Alexandrianism was prominent.

#### IV

The device of attacking an adversary with weapons stolen from his own armoury is not the property of any school; it is one of the oldest tricks in the book. Nowhere does Lucretius use it with more effect

<sup>63</sup> Pers. *Chol.* 1–6; on his place in the apologetic tradition cf. E. Paratore, *Biografia e poetica di Persio* (Florence, 1968), 148 n. 16.

than in his great diatribe on love in Book 4. The fact has not gone unremarked. Professor Wormell draws attention to the effect of the extravagant list of Greek endearments at lines 1160–9 which, as he rightly suggests, satirize ‘the blind adulation of the beloved’ and serve to deflate ‘Catullus and his associates, who had sought to acclimatize in Latin erotic poetry the vocabulary, idiom, and music, of Greek’.<sup>64</sup> But this, though it is the most striking, is by no means the only passage of Book 4 in which Lucretius employs allusive irony to attack the erroneous notions of love that he saw at work around him and to convey the implication that the responsibility for them must at all events in part be fastened on the foolish romanticism and sentimentality of contemporary poetry. In comparison with certain other passages of sustained irony—such as the deflation of the Stoic hero Hercules at the beginning of Book 5—the catalogue of Greek hypocorisms may appear somewhat crude and overdone. More subtle is the device of borrowing characteristic imagery in order to turn it back on its originators and their too receptive readers. An instance occurs at the very beginning of the section (1037–57). Lucretius leads into his theme, as Dudley remarks, ‘with much art’.<sup>65</sup> To him love was a source of disturbance, a *παραχρή*, which must from the outset be dissociated from its pseudo-romantic attributes. Hence he embarks on his denunciation by way of its physical origins. Love is human and animal and material, there is nothing ‘divine’ about it; ‘love’, so called, consists of the physical effects generated by one human body on another: *ex homine humanum semen ciet una hominis uis*, ‘it is from a human being that human seed is drawn forth, only by the power of a human being’ (1040).

The threefold repetition drives the point home. The body so affected is drawn towards the source of its injury: *idque petit corpus, mens unde est saucia amore*, ‘the body seeks what has wounded the mind with love’ (1048). This too is an amatory conceit, a Hellenistic embroidery on the Telephus motif.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>64</sup> D. E. W. Wormell in D. R. Dudley (ed.), *Lucretius* (London, 1965), 57; cf. C. Bailey (ed.), *T. Lucreti Cari De rerum natura libri VI* (Oxford, 1947), iii.1753–4; G. Lieberg, *Puella Divina* (Amsterdam, 1962), 299–300, 306.

<sup>65</sup> Op. cit. (n. 64), 122.

<sup>66</sup> K. Kost (ed.), *Musaios Hero und Leander* (Bonn, 1971), 393–5.

The metaphor now introduced was familiar in poetry, indeed Lucretius has used it himself of Mars in the unforgettable tableau at the beginning of Book 1 (line 34). There is, it seems to me, a characteristically Roman immediacy and vividness about the word *saucius*; for the relatively colourless Euripidean ἔρωτι θυμὸν ἐκπλαγεῖσ' ('her mind struck with love', *Medea* 8) Ennius in his version had given the emphatic and pathetic *Medea animo aegro amore saeuo saucia*, 'Medea, her sick mind wounded by savage love',<sup>67</sup> an altogether more physical depiction of her state, in which *saeuo* may make us think of Lucretius' *dira libido*, 'dire craving' (1046). It is an image of which Virgil was to make solemn and effective use at the beginning of *Aeneid* 4.

Nowhere, however, are more variations played on this and similar conceits than in Hellenistic epigram. That Greek epigram was already influential in Italy by the end of the second century BC is evident from the well-known imitations that Gellius has preserved for us by Valerius Aedituus, Q. Lutatius Catulus, and Porcius Licinus.<sup>68</sup> It can be deduced from papyrus fragments that more than one collection existed,<sup>69</sup> but undoubtedly the best-known and most widely circulated by Lucretius' time was the Στέφανος or *Garland* of Meleager. When the *De rerum natura* was being written somewhat before the middle of the first century BC the *Garland* must have been circulating in Italy for some decades, having arrived in the peninsula about the time he was born, if not before.<sup>70</sup> The erotic poems of this collection

<sup>67</sup> *Scen.* 254 V.<sup>2</sup>; see H. D. Jocelyn, *The Tragedies of Ennius* (London, 1967), 356. W. Ludwig, 'Die Kunst der Variation im hellenistischen Liebesepigramm', in *L'épigramme grecque*, Entret. Hardt 14 (Geneva, 1968), 299–348. On the Roman predilection for *pathos* over *ethos* see A. Traina, *Vortit barbare* (Rome, 1970), *passim*.

<sup>68</sup> Catulus was acquainted with Antipater of Sidon (Cic. *De or.* 3.194); cf. Hutton, *op. cit.* (n. 33), 11; L. Alfonsi, *Poetae Novi* (Como, 1945), 9–17; Castorina, *op. cit.* (n. 13), 13–21.

<sup>69</sup> See A. Lesky, *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur* (Bern, 1957–8), 677; R. Reitzenstein, *RE* vi.72–4, s.v. 'Epigramm'; G. Luck, *GGA* 219 (1967), 50–1; D. O. Ross, *Style and Tradition in Catullus* (Cambridge, MA, 1969), 139–51; P. M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (Oxford, 1972), i.608 and n. 404, ii.858–9.

<sup>70</sup> It would be imprudent to attempt greater precision. The latest discussion by Gow-Page, *op. cit.* (n. 22), 1, tentatively places the composition of the *Garland* in the early years of the first century BC. An earlier date is not impossible: for the suggestion that the *Garland* was introduced to Italy by Archias in 102 BC see Day, *op. cit.* (n. 33), 104; J. Hubaux, *Les thèmes bucolique dans la poésie latine* (Brussels, 1930), 28; and cf. Hutton, *op. cit.* (n. 33), 11; A. Cameron, *GRBS* 9 (1968), 323 n. 1.

offer a rich choice of variations on the type of conceit employed in our passage of Lucretius. To none did this sort of thing appeal more strongly, it would seem, than to Meleager himself.<sup>71</sup> Love's bow and arrows figure several times. Eros the archer hides in Zenophila's eyes (*AP* 5.177.9–10 (*HE* 4198–9)). His arrows can find no other target than the poet (*AP* 5.215.3–4 (*HE* 4274–5)),<sup>72</sup> and into the poet he has emptied his quiver (*AP* 5.198.5–6 (*HE* 4128–9)).<sup>73</sup> They are described as 'fiery darts of desire', *πυριβλήτους...Πόθων ἀκίδας* (*AP* 12.76.2 (*HE* 4477)) and as 'fire-breathing', *πυρίπνοα* (5.180.1 (*HE* 4038)).<sup>74</sup> The poet threatens to burn his bow and arrows and quiver (*AP* 5.179.1–2 (*HE* 4028–9)). Timarion's eyes are described as shooting 'the bitter-sweet dart of love', *τὸ γλυκύπικρον Ἔρωτος... βέλος* (*AP* 12.109.3 (*HE* 4310)).<sup>75</sup> In exploiting these and associated conceits Meleager was, of course, ringing the changes on a fund of ideas already familiar is the work of earlier poets, also represented in his collection. The notion of the wounds of love is one such. Meleager uses it himself more than once, at *AP* 12.80.1–2 (*HE* 4082–3),<sup>76</sup> 12.72.5–6 (*HE* 4494–5);<sup>77</sup> with the bow image at *AP* 9.16 (*HE* 4386–9), 12.83.1 (*HE* 4342), 101.1–2 (*HE* 4540–1); and in a particularly elaborate form at *AP* 12.126.3–4 (*HE* 4466–7) *ἔξεις πάλι τὸ γλυκὺ τραῦμα, | ὦ δυσέρωος, λάβρω καϊόμενος μέλιτι*, 'you will suffer again the sweet wound, unhappy lover, burnt by violent honey'.<sup>78</sup> The poet's intention in this last example is clear, though in comparison with Catullus and Propertius he may be thought to fulfil it in a trivial and prettified and superficial manner: to bring out the paradoxical and double-edged character of love. Such a view Lucretius was of course bound to despise; for him there were no two sides to love, it was all bad and to be condemned root and branch.

<sup>71</sup> On his predilection for the 'fire of love' cf. Hubaux, op. cit. (n. 70), 29.

<sup>72</sup> On the ascription to Meleager see Gow-Page ad loc.

<sup>73</sup> Imitated by Archias, *AP* 5.58 (*GP* 3588–9).

<sup>74</sup> Cf. *AP* 12.48.3 (*HE* 4010); 12.83.1–2 (*HE* 4342–3).

<sup>75</sup> Cf. *AP* 12.101.1–2 (*HE* 4540).

<sup>76</sup> See Gow-Page ad loc. for other references.

<sup>77</sup> Gow-Page compare Callimachus, *AP* 12.134.1 (*HE* 1103).

<sup>78</sup> For the honey image cf. Gow-Page at Meleager, *AP* 12.81.2 (*HE* 4459).



Wound imagery seems to have had a particular appeal for Asclepiades, who is well represented in the *Garland*.<sup>79</sup> He lies on a doorstep, ‘wounded by desire for a false girl: for it is not love that Cypris has sent upon me but a flaming arrow shot into my tormented heart’ (*AP* 5.189.3–4). Again, ‘wanton Philaenium has wounded me; I cannot see the wound itself, but the pain I feel in my very fingertips. I am dying, you Loves, I perish, I am undone; seeking to embrace a girl I have attained Hades’ (*AP* 5.162).

It is upon these pretty images that Lucretius, in his account of love as he sees it, falls with a savage comparison drawn from the real world—as opposed to the baroque theatre of the emotional absurd inhabited by Meleager and Asclepiades—either from warfare or from the arena. The wounded lover falls, like a wounded warrior, in the direction of his foe (4.1049). The analogy between the physical and the spiritual *uulnus* is drawn with brutal and sardonic precision. To the *sanguis* of the first answers the *umor* of the second (1056): the conventionally prettified and, so to say, exsanguinated image is transformed so as to illuminate in the most crudely physical terms Lucretius’ physical conception of love and hence to devalue the current romantic conception. To extract the full force from the passage (and I think this is a principle of interpretation which may be usefully invoked elsewhere in Lucretius, as I shall instance, and indeed in other Latin poets) we must mentally supply inverted commas as we read line 1053: *sic igitur Veneris qui telis accipit ictus* must be rendered ‘the person who has received this “wound from the weapons of Venus”’—*sc.* that we are only too familiar with from the popular poetry that fosters and engenders absurd and unrealistic notions about love.

The point is summed up at lines 1058–9: *haec Venus est nobis* means ‘*this* is what we are told to call Venus’—and this Venus is in fact, as

<sup>79</sup> On Asclepiades and his influence see Gow-Page, *op. cit.* (n. 22), ii.114–15; E. F. M. Benecke, *Antimachus of Colophon and the Position of Women in Greek Poetry* (London, 1896), 71–4. Benecke suggests (p. 71) that ‘in the epigrams of Asclepiades we find, for the first time, love for a woman spoken of as a matter of life and death’; the theme is taken up by Meleager in lines which ‘reflect the language of liturgy’ (Gow-Page *ad loc.*), *AP* 12.158.7–8 (*HE* 4502), invoking the beloved as one ordained a god by destiny, in whom ‘is invested the power of life or death’. This is precisely the sort of romantic rubbish, as he was bound to regard it, that Lucretius sets himself to combat in Book 4.

has just been shown, a desire, prompted by a physical stimulus in which the mind has no part, to transplant seed from one body to another. Lucretius might have said with St Paul ἤν ἀγνοοῦντες εὐσεβεῖτε, ταύτην ἐγὼ καταγγέλλω ὑμῖν, ‘That which you ignorantly worship, that I declare to you.’<sup>80</sup> The threefold anaphora in these lines presses home the point in the poet’s familiar manner: *haec... hinc... hinc*, *this* is our Venus’, *this* is the source of ‘Cupid’, *this* is the source of desire.

The image in lines 1059–60 is most remarkable:

hinc illaec primum Veneris dulcedinis in cor  
stillauit gutta et successit frigida cura.

‘From this<sup>81</sup> first there has distilled into our hearts that drop of Venus’ sweetness, to be succeeded by chill care.’ The commentators quote Euripides, *Hippolytus* 525–6 ἔρωσ, ἔρωσ, ὃ κατ’ ὀμμάτων | σταῖζεις πόθοι κτλ., ‘love, love, that which drips desire into the eyes’. Mr Barrett in his note on the Euripidean passage merely observes: ‘That sexual desire manifests itself in the eyes is a commonplace of Greek poetry... it is naturally Eros who puts it there, and he naturally does so by dripping or pouring it in.’<sup>82</sup> What is ‘natural’ in poetry? Poetry is an artefact. Mr Barrett’s comment seems to me seriously to underrate the striking and original quality of Euripides’ image, closely paralleled in earlier surviving Greek poetry only at Alcman, fr. 59(a). In Latin closer Plautine analogies than *Epidicus* 554–5, quoted by Munro, may be found at *Most.* 161–4 *o Venu’ uenusta*, | *haec illa est tempestas mea, mihi quae modestiam omnem | detexit tectus qua fui, quom mihi Amor et Cupido | in pectus perpluit meum*, ‘O charming Venus, she is that tempest of mine that has stripped off all the modesty by which I was covered, now that Love and Desire have rained right into my heart’, and fr. dub. 1 (Lindsay) *Amoris imber grandibus guttis | non uestem modo permanauit sed in medullam ultro fluit*, ‘The rain of Love has not only penetrated my clothes in great drops but has flooded right into my

<sup>80</sup> Acts 17:23. The comparison with St Paul is not gratuitous. Both Lucretius and the saint employed the style of the diatribe to make their points: see E. Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa*, 2nd edn. (Stuttgart, 1958), ii. 556–8.

<sup>81</sup> The *muta cupido* of 1057 rather than the *uoluptas*.

<sup>82</sup> *Euripides Hippolytus*, ed. W. S. Barrett (Oxford, 1964), ad loc. C. P. Segal, *HSCP* 70 (1965), 130, offers nothing relevant to our present purpose.

marrow.<sup>83</sup> The idea is combined, perhaps not altogether felicitously, with that of Love's inescapable arrows by Crinagoras, *APL* 199.5–6 (*GP* 2066–7) ἐν δὲ πικρὰ καρδία βέλη | πήξας ἀφύκτων ἰὸν ἔσταξας πόθων, 'you have planted your bitter darts in my heart and dripped in the poison of desires from which there is no escape';<sup>84</sup> since he wrote in the half-century following the death of Lucretius<sup>85</sup> it is possible that he borrowed the image from the *DRN*, but there is no particular reason to think he did. Again, though the point is incapable of proof, Lucretius himself may well have had Euripides in mind, for the two *Hippolytuses* were famous plays and the story of Phaedra was an archetypal example of a criminal passion, a *παραχρή* par excellence. Then there is the word *illaec*. The commentators are too busy discussing its form to spare a thought for its meaning, but does not 'that drop of Venus' sweetness' mean the drop that is notorious because we have heard about it in the poets? The appearance of the image itself, which is unexpected, or at any rate rather more unpredictable than the generality of Lucretian imagery (not itself in general predictable of course) might have been suggested by the central role played by the idea of *umor* in the preceding section, or indeed deliberately contrived to arise from the idea.<sup>86</sup>

Finally it should be pointed out that the abrupt transition from the idea of languorous sweetness to the chill aftermath of care, *frigida cura*, also depends on a deliberate perversion of the language and ideas of love poetry, in which *cura* is one of the stock terms applied to the beloved by the lover who glories in his subjection. It is true that the word does not become common in this special sense until the Augustan period,<sup>87</sup> but one pre-Lucretian instance is especially relevant to our thesis, since it occurs in an epigram of Valerius Aedituus

<sup>83</sup> For other examples of imagery figuring 'love as a sort of physical emanation from the person of a lovely girl' see M. L. West on Hes. *Theog.* 910. I am indebted to Professor R. G. Mayer for calling my attention to that note and to Plaut. *Most.* 161–4.

<sup>84</sup> A. S. F. Gow-D. L. Page, *The Greek Anthology: The Garland of Philip* (London, 1968), ii.259, offer no comment.

<sup>85</sup> Gow-Page, op. cit. (n. 84), 210–13.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. P. Friedländer, *AJP* 72 (1941), 17–18 (= *Studien zur antiken Literatur und Kunst* (Berlin, 1969), 338–9 [= Ch. 15 of this volume]); D. West, *The Imagery and Poetry of Lucretius* (Edinburgh, 1969; London, 1994), 95–6, on the wordplay in *umor/amor*.

<sup>87</sup> However, there are two Catullan instances not recorded by *TLL* under this head which may be thought relevant: 68.18, 68.51. Cf. Lieberg, op. cit. (n. 64), 290 n. 26.

(*FLP* p. 72),<sup>88</sup> belonging to the well-known group already mentioned as being associated with the interest that had been shown in Greek epigram in Italy at about the turn of the century.

## V

I have spoken of the perversion by Lucretius of traditional or fashionable poetic imagery to further his arguments. A particularly striking case, as it seems to me, is found in this same discussion of love, at 4.1141 ff. Having shown that successful love is bad enough in all conscience, Lucretius goes on to show that unsuccessful love is very much worse. Here of course he was able to draw on a considerable stock of traditional material, since the tribulations of the star-crossed lover formed a stock theme of comedy, bucolic, satire, and elegy. So uninviting is the prospect, he says, that it is better to keep a sharp lookout and avoid these enticements altogether, for it is easier to steer clear of the snares of love than it is to escape from them once you are caught (1146–8):

nam uitare, plagas in amoris ne iaciamur,  
non ita difficile est quam captum retibus ipsis  
exire et ualidos Veneris perrumpere nodos.

For to avoid being lured into the nets of love is less difficult than to get out of their meshes once you are trapped in them and to break through the strong knots of Venus.

The language is emphatic and forceful and employs characteristically Lucretian devices to achieve its effects. The image of the nets is extended over three verses, and the notion of entanglement is reinforced by repetition and variation, three different words being used for 'net', *plagas... retibus... nodos*, and the last element being emphasized by the alliteration of the qualifying phrase *ualidos Veneris*.<sup>89</sup> Again the commentators fail to remark the comparative rarity of this

<sup>88</sup> Aedituus' debt in this particular epigram appears to be to Sappho.

<sup>89</sup> In passing it may be observed that the device familiar from the classic note of J. Henry, *Aeneidea* I (London, 1873), 206–7, 745–51, as 'theme and variation' was not invented by Virgil but was taken over with so much else from earlier poetry and refined in his inimitable manner.

particular ‘net’ image in poetry before Lucretius. Love as a hunter who shoots his prey of course represents an easy development from his armament of bow and arrows, and by another easy extension the lover himself can be figured as a hunter.<sup>90</sup> But Love or the lover as a trapper (or fisherman) is considerably rarer.<sup>91</sup> The best-known instance of all is also the earliest, the charming fragment of Ibycus (fr. 6 Page):

*Ἔρος αὐτέ με κυανέοισιν ὑπὸ  
βλεφάροις τακέρ’ ὄμμασι δερκόμενος  
κηλήμασι παντοδαποῖς ἐς ἅπει-  
ρα δίκτυα Κύπριδος ἐσβάλλει*

Once more Eros, looking at me languishingly under his dark eyebrows, by all manner of enchantments casts me into the nets of Cypris, whence there is no escape.

After Ibycus the haul from lyric and tragedy is surprisingly sparse. In lyric only Ariphron 1 (813 L.-P.), 4–5 ἢ πόθων | οὐς κρυφίοις Ἀφροδίτας ἔρκεσιν θηρεύομεν, ‘or desires which we hunt with Aphrodite’s hidden snares’. In tragedy Sophocles, fr. 932.3–4 Pearson (846.3–4 N<sup>2</sup>) (γυνή) ἐν τοῖσιν αὐτοῖς δικτύοις ἀλίσκεται | πρὸς τοῦ παρόντος ἡμέρου νικωμένη, ‘(a woman) is caught in the selfsame toils, overcome by present desire’;<sup>92</sup> Dicaeogenes incert. 1 (p. 775 N<sup>2</sup> = TrGF I F 1b Snell-Kannicht) ὅταν δ’ ἔρωτος ἐνδεθῶμεν ἄρκυσιν, | θᾶσσον θυραίοις τὴν χάριν ποιούμεθα | ἢ τοῖς ἀνάγκης ἐν γένει πεφυκόσιν, ‘When we are bound in the toils of love, it is strangers whom we are swifter to favour than our own kin’ (text disputed). Comedy, as might perhaps be expected, is rather more productive: Amphis, fr. 23 refers to courtesans as παγίδες τοῦ βίου, ‘life’s snares’;<sup>93</sup> Eubulus, fr. 84 as κερμάτων παλευτρίας, ‘decoy-birds of cash’; and Aristophanes (fr. 666) apparently referred to their adornments as παγίδες, while one of Antiphanes’ plays was called Ἡ ἀλιευομένη,

<sup>90</sup> See M. B. Ogle, *AJP* 34 (1913), 129–30; Elaine Fantham, *Comparative Studies in Republican Latin Imagery* (Toronto, 1972), 39–41; Kost, op. cit. (n. 66) on Musaeus 148–9.

<sup>91</sup> For a great deal of the material on which the following discussion is based I am deeply in the debt of Professor Sir Denys Page.

<sup>92</sup> This is in any case of doubtful relevance, since the image belongs to a common proverbial application, that of being hoist with one’s own petard (cf. A. Otto, *Die Sprichwörter und sprichwörtlichen Redensarten der Römer* (Leipzig, 1890), s.v. *laqueus*), and its association here with love is fortuitous.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Antiphanes, fr. 120.

'She who is fished for', 'The Catch' (cf. fr. 26).<sup>94</sup> Similar comparisons are found in Plautus, at *Epid.* 216, *Trin.* 237, *Truc.* 31 ff., this last being an extended comparison referring to fishing. Hellenistic poetry, outside epigram, produces a single example, at [Theoc.] 27.17 *μὴ λέγε, μὴ βάλλῃ σε καὶ ἐς λίνον ἄλλυτον* [*sc. τῆς Παφίας*] *ἔνθης*, 'Be silent, lest (Aphrodite) smite you and you fall into the toils that cannot be loosed'. Nor is the image very common in Latin poetry after Lucretius, though Ovid uses it several times, as we might expect, in the *Ars Amatoria*.<sup>95</sup> Before Lucretius there is only one class of literature in which we encounter anything that might be termed a concentration of examples, and that is in Hellenistic epigram.

For Dioscorides (*AP* 5.64.4) the eyes of his beloved were *σπλάγχνων ἡμετέρων δίκτυα καὶ παγίδες*, 'the nets and snares of my heart'. A particularly preposterous application of the idea, crying out, one would think, to be satirized, is found in an anonymous poet who proclaims himself (*AP* 12.87.5–6) as attracted not only by two boys that he names, but by all and sundry; and this he conveys by saying that 'his maddened eye is beckoned by the snares of all', in Greek which is in fact slightly more absurd even than my version indicates, *ἐπιπάντων | ἄρκυσι*<sup>96</sup> *πουλυμανῆ κανθὸν ἐφελκόμεθα*. Meleager warns the public to be on their guard against the runaway Eros, *ἔσορᾶτε | μὴ που νῦν ψυχαῖς ἄλλα τίθησι λίνα*, 'watch out that he is not laying other traps somewhere for souls' (*AP* 5.177.7–8 (*HE* 4196–7)). In another poem the same poet plays on the idea of himself as Love's captive: his soul has flown too often to the limed twig (*ἰξῶ πυκνὰ προσιπταμένη*) and is now caught fast, *εἰλὲν σε πάγη* (*AP* 12.132A.3 (*HE* 4106)).<sup>97</sup> At Meleager, *AP* 12.113 (*HE* 4312–13), Love himself is ensnared in Timarion's eyes; cf. *id.*, *AP* 12.92 (*HE* 4670–3). Rhianus constructs a whole epigram (*AP* 12.146 (*HE* 3276–9))

<sup>94</sup> Cf. the idea of the beloved as bait at Cratinus, fr. 216; Nicopho, fr. 4. It is no doubt to the comic tradition that Plato is indebted when he speaks of Love as *θηρευτῆς δεινός, αἰεὶ τινὰς πλέκων μηχανάς*, 'a terrible hunter always weaving some new snare' (*Symp.* 203d5–6).

<sup>95</sup> *Ars* 1.45–50 (but here and at 1.263, 270, it is *inuentio* that he has in mind: cf. Cic. *De or.* 2.147, 150); 2.2; 3.554 (where the context recalls the instances from comedy noted above: cf. 3.425–8); Tib. 1.6.1–6.

<sup>96</sup> ἄρκυσι Jacobs: δάκρυσι, 'tears', *cod.*

<sup>97</sup> For the birdlime metaphor, which is allied to that of the net, cf. Meleager, *AP* 5.96 (*HE* 4294–5); 12.92.1 (*HE* 4260); Rhianus, *AP* 12.93.1–2 (*HE* 3208–9).

around the idea of the lover as a hunter who loses his prey to a rival and brings home empty nets. It may also be remarked that the verb ἀγρεύω, 'hunt' first becomes common in erotic contexts in Hellenistic epigram, though in many, perhaps most, cases the reference is no doubt to shooting rather than to trapping or fishing.

Thus it may be suggested that here too Lucretius is enforcing his message by borrowing a motif from a class of poetry that was popular with his contemporaries, trivial epigrams in which love was a theme on which to play light and frivolous variations enhanced by pretty and superficial imagery. These conceits Lucretius uses to convey his message that these 'snares of love', familiar in the worthless poetry with which some of his readers must be presumed to be excessively familiar, really existed and were dangerous.<sup>98</sup>

## VI

If, as I have been suggesting, there is polemic here, it is natural to speculate about specific targets. If the epigrammatist Philodemus is identical with the Epicurean philosopher of that name, as it seems at least plausible to suppose,<sup>99</sup> it is tempting to wonder what Lucretius thought of his poetical performances and whether he might be covertly assailing what must have seemed to him the worst kind of *trahison des clerics*. Nothing in Lucretius' text seems to me to lend support to such a view; and indeed Philodemus' style was not on the whole such as to invite the sort of ironical exploitation of erotic imagery that we have been discussing.<sup>100</sup> What of Catullus? As has already been remarked, the whole discussion of love in *DRN* Book 4 is in effect

<sup>98</sup> Note how the ideas of entanglement and obstruction are forced on the attention of the reader by the alliteration of 1149–50:

et tamen *implicitus quoque possis inque peditus*  
*effugere infestum, nisi tute tibi obuius obstes.*

'And yet even when enmeshed and entangled you can escape the danger, if you do not stand in your own way.' (The effect is impossible to reproduce in English.)

<sup>99</sup> See Gow-Page, *op. cit.* (n. 84), ii. 371–4; Boyancé, *op. cit.* (n. 14), 11.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. Gow-Page, *ibid.*; D. Sider (ed.), *The Epigrams of Philodemus* (New York and Oxford, 1997), 24.

a sustained polemic against the Catullan view of life and love.<sup>101</sup> It seems to have been Catullus, as far as we can tell, who gave definitive shape to the idea of the apotheosis of the beloved, the mistress as *domina* and goddess, the *diuina puella*, and so on.<sup>102</sup> It is precisely this view of love and the beloved that is satirized throughout Lucretius' diatribe: at, for instance, 1122 *adde quod alterius sub nutu degitur aetas*, 'moreover one's life is lived at another person's beck and call'<sup>103</sup> and, even more pointedly, 1184 *plus quam mortali concedere par est*, '(the lover attributes to the beloved) more than it is right to allow to a mortal', which, in its context of the all too human characteristics of *Veneres nostrae* (an antithesis of which Swift was fond to the point of obsession, as is well known, but it does not follow that Lucretius was in this respect a Swift), makes its point very clearly.

Such emphases as these do not necessarily entail that Lucretius had read Catullus:<sup>104</sup> this sort of nonsense, as Lucretius must have regarded it, was in the air; the salons of Rome were full of poets reading out their latest essays in the fashionable vein, most of them, we are bound to suppose, of very limited merit. Nevertheless it is by no means improbable that Lucretius had at any rate glanced at Catullus. In the verses which we have just been discussing about the difficulty of extricating oneself from the toils of love it is possible that, as Léon Herrmann has suggested,<sup>105</sup> we have a sardonic reflection on Catullus' poignant *difficile est longum subito deponere amorem*, | *difficile est, uerum hoc qua lubet efficias*, 'Difficult it is to discard a long-lasting love, difficult, but somehow or other you must do it' (76.13–14). Very true, Lucretius may be saying; but more fool you for allowing yourself to be trapped in the first place. This can be no more than an attractive conjecture. Possibly the remorse of the sensualist for his wasted life (1135–6) is intended as a comment on the last stanza of Catullus 51; again one can

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Alfonsi, op. cit. (n. 68), 50–1, 185–8; Lieberg, op. cit. (n. 64), 284–300, with discussion of earlier literature.

<sup>102</sup> Lieberg, op. cit. (n. 64), *passim*. On Catullus' debt to Hellenistic epigram see E. Paratore in *Miscellanea di studi Alexandrini in memoria di Augusto Rostagni* (Turin, 1963), 562–87.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Lieberg, op. cit. (n. 64), 290 n. 26.

<sup>104</sup> The linguistic evidence has been used to argue for indebtedness in both directions: Lieberg, op. cit. (n. 64), 284–6.

<sup>105</sup> *Studi in onore di L. Castiglioni* (Florence, 1960), 447.



hardly be more positive.<sup>106</sup> More compelling, I think, is the suggestion that Lucretius' allusion at 1172 to the woman who 'has everything', *cui Veneris membris uis omnibus exoriatur*, 'from whose whole body the power of Venus radiates', where again one can almost hear the inverted commas as one reads, is to the address of Catullus' Lesbia as we meet her at 86.5–6:

Lesbia formosa est, quae cum pulcherrima tota est,  
tum omnibus una omnes surripuit Veneres.<sup>107</sup>

It is Lesbia who is (really) beautiful, not only that she is most fair in every part of her, she has stolen for herself all other women's graces.

This perhaps is as near as we can come to the identification of Lucretius' targets. In his preference for the oblique and ironical allusion Lucretius may perhaps be seen as more Alexandrian than Catullus or, in the next generation, Horace. The decisive influence here may be that of genre. Though Lucretius makes extensive use, especially in Book 3, of techniques pertaining to diatribe and satire, he maintains the dignity of the didactic epos as a literary genre, preferring on the whole to reflect on the literary and other deficiencies of his targets in terms of images and allusions belonging to a traditional pattern rather than through overt attacks.<sup>108</sup> The sophistication with which he does so is exactly what was meant by *ars*, and with *ars* was closely connected *doctrina*. Statius, to return to our starting point, included Lucretius in his catalogue for the same reason that Ovid included him in his catalogue in *Amores* 1.15, because he was a poet, and in calling him *doctus* he did not intend primarily to imply a recognition of his deep learning in the Epicurean philosophy, a matter that perhaps would not have engaged Statius' sympathies to any great extent. Rather he meant to convey that Lucretius was a conscious artist and craftsman of a very high order. In this he was surely right. Any really searching enquiry into Lucretius' literary artistry should be extended far beyond the bounds set in this paper. It could be objected that my argument is based on

<sup>106</sup> The connexion does not seem to me as close as has been suggested by Lieberg, *op. cit.* (n. 64), 288; cf. also Alfonsi, *op. cit.* (n. 68), 185–6.

<sup>107</sup> Here I agree with Lieberg, *op. cit.* (n. 64), 298, that the resemblance is particularly close.

<sup>108</sup> Philodemus, in his philosophical writings, was not so nice: Kroll, *op. cit.* (n. 2), 326.

selected passages and topics and that my conclusions, even if sound, do not greatly affect the general picture. To demonstrate otherwise belongs to that other and much larger enquiry, but I will say here that in my view a thorough examination of Lucretius' style, even in the expository, 'unpoetic' portions of the *DRN* would show that the poet and craftsman is consistently in evidence throughout the entire poem. If hitherto this has eluded the generality of his critics, it is, I think, because they have approached him in the wrong spirit, prepossessed by certain inherited and unexamined assumptions, themselves based on metaphors of doubtful legitimacy, about development and decay in poetry and poetic style.<sup>109</sup>

The chief premiss of such a major enquiry as I have mentioned should be a lack of disabling prejudices. I do not know to what extent the discussion of Lucretian *doctrina* in this paper may have helped to illuminate the spirit in which further investigation of Lucretius' art should be undertaken. The essential point has already been made much more elegantly and poetically than I could make it myself by Oscar Wilde, and I will end by quoting him:

All fine imaginative work is self-conscious and deliberate. No poet sings because he must sing. At least, no great poet does. It is so now, and it has always been so. We are sometimes apt to think that the voices that sounded at the dawn of poetry were simpler, fresher, and more natural than ours, and that the world which the early poets looked at, and through which they walked, had a kind of poetical quality of its own, and almost without changing could pass into song. The snow lies thick now upon Olympus, and its steep scarped sides are bleak and barren, but once, we fancy, the white feet of the Muses brushed the dew from the anemones in the morning, and at evening came Apollo to sing to the shepherds in the vale. But in this we are merely lending to other ages what we desire, or think we desire, for our own. Our historical sense is a fault. Every century that produces poetry is, so far, an artificial century, and the work that seems to us to be the most natural and simple product of its time is always the result of the most self-conscious effort . . . there is no fine art without self-consciousness, and self-consciousness and the critical spirit are one.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>109</sup> See J. C. Bramble, 'Some Considerations of Period in Latin Literature', *Farrago* (Journal of Cambridge University Classical Society) 5 (January 1969), 3–4.

<sup>110</sup> From 'The Critic as Artist' (1891).

## Lucretius and Callimachus

Robert D. Brown

Literary histories tend to present Lucretius as an isolated figure, his poem as something of an anachronism. Unlike the work of Catullus or the Augustans, whose variety and contemporaneity stimulate the study of influence, development, and interrelationship, the *De rerum natura* has seemed to stand apart from its historical and literary context. This impression is encouraged by the poet himself, when he preaches withdrawal from the follies of contemporary public life (e.g. in the proem to Book 2) and elevates the poem's practical aim above its merely aesthetic value (1.931 f.).

Nevertheless, this isolation has been much exaggerated. Firstly, both the Epicurean subject matter and the poetic genre of the *De rerum natura* mirror contemporary tastes. Epicureanism, which had been known at Rome since at least 154 BC, or maybe 173 BC,<sup>1</sup> reached a height of popularity in the late Republic,<sup>2</sup> partly in response to a growing disillusionment with the public scene which Lucretius depicts with such abhorrence (e.g. 3.59 f.), much like Sallust in the

<sup>1</sup> Depending upon which consulship is referred to by Athenaeus (12.547a): P. Boyancé, *Lucrece et l'Epicurisme* (Paris, 1963), 7–8.

<sup>2</sup> For Epicureanism at Rome see O. Tescari, *Lucretiana* (Turin, 1935), 101 f.; E. Bignone, *Storia della letteratura latina*, vol. 2 (Florence, 1945), 173 f.; A. Dalzell, 'A Bibliography of Work on Lucretius, 1945–1972', *CW* 67 (1973–1974), 83; T. Mantero, *L'ansietà di Lucrezio e il problema dell'inculturazione dell'umanità nel 'De rerum natura'* (Genoa, 1975), 15–62. For Lucretius in relation to his times see J. Masson, *Lucretius: Epicurean and Poet* (London, 1907), 1–33; Bignone, op. cit., 114–48; A. Traglia, *Sulla formazione spirituale di Lucrezio* (Rome, 1948), 9–31; E. J. Kenney, *Lucretius*, Greece and Rome New Surveys in the Classics 11 (Oxford, 1977), 3–8; P. Grimal in *Lucrece*, *Entretiens Hardt* 24 (Geneva, 1977), 233–62.

next generation. Prose authors catered to this interest<sup>3</sup> and Epicurean doctrine is conspicuous in Cicero's philosophical oeuvre. The idea of expounding such technical material in verse was an original stroke but by no means anachronistic, for indications exist that the didactic genre, revived in the Hellenistic era, was beginning to enjoy a vogue in Lucretius's day.<sup>4</sup> Apart from Cicero's translation of Aratus, known to Lucretius,<sup>5</sup> one might mention the *De rerum natura* of Egnatius (frs. 1–2 Morel), the *Empedoclea* of Sallustius (Cic. *QFr.* 2.10.3), and certain didactically flavoured fragments of Valerius Soranus (fr. 4 M) and Q. Cicero (p. 79 M); in the next generation came the *Chorographia* and *Epimenis* (?) of Varro Atacinus (frs. 14–22 M).

Another area of exaggeration concerns the poet's alleged neglect by his own and subsequent ages. Yet he is mentioned with praise by Cicero in a celebrated letter (*Q. Fr.* 2.10.3) and there are many parallels to suggest that Cicero drew upon him also in his philosophical works (despite the often accepted view to the contrary).<sup>6</sup> Catullus too introduced clear Lucretian reminiscences into his most ambitious poem<sup>7</sup> and probably shared with him the patronage of Gaius Memmius. In later literature there are specific references to Lucretius in Nepos (*Att.* 12.4), Vitruvius (9. praef. 17), Ovid (*Am.* 1.15.23; *Trist.* 2.425), Velleius (2.36.2), Seneca (*Tranq. anim.* 2.14; *Ep.* 58.12 etc.), Pliny the Elder (*NH*, index lib. 10) and Younger (*Ep.* 4.18.1), Statius (*Silv.* 2.7.76), Quintilian (1.4.4; 10.1.87 etc.), Tacitus (*Dial.* 23.2), Fronto (*Ep.* 4.3.2, p. 62 N etc.) and many later authors;<sup>8</sup> more significantly, he left an indelible print upon most subsequent poets, especially Virgil.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Amafinius (Cic. *Fam.* 15.19.2; *Acad. post.* 1.5–6; *Tusc.* 4.6–7); Catius (*Fam.* 15.16.1–2; 19.1–2); Rabirius (*Acad. post.* 1.5); Boyancé, op. cit. (n. 1), 8 f.; Mantero, op. cit. (n. 2), 41 f.

<sup>4</sup> Bignone, op. cit. (n. 2), 168 f.; Traglia, op. cit. (n. 2), 40–2; H. Bardon, *La littérature latine inconnue*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1952), 335; E. Pöhlmann, 'Charakteristika des römischen Lehrgedichts', *ANRW* 1.3 (1973), 848 (with n. 212).

<sup>5</sup> Munro on *Lucr.* 5.619; K. Büchner, *RE* 7A (1939), 1242 f.

<sup>6</sup> C. Martha, *Le poème de Lucrèce*, 4th edn. (Paris, 1885), 351–2; Masson, op. cit. (n. 2), 37–8; G. C. Pucci, 'Echi lucreziani in Cicerone', *SIFC* 38 (1966), 70–132.

<sup>7</sup> For Lucretius and Cat. 64 see Munro on *Lucr.* 3.57.

<sup>8</sup> Schanz-Hosius, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur*, vol. 1 (Munich, 1927), 282; K. Büchner (ed.), *T. Lucreti Cari De Rerum Natura* (Wiesbaden, 1966), xxxii–xxxvii.

<sup>9</sup> For Lucretius' 'Fortleben' see Schanz-Hosius, op. cit. (n. 8), 280–4; Boyancé, op. cit. (n. 1), 316–27; Dalzell, op. cit. (n. 2), 101 f.; L. Alfonsi in *Lucrèce* (n. 2), 271–315. Against the idea of Augustan suppression see A. Traina, 'Lucrezio e la "congiura del silenzio"', in *Dignam dis* (a Giampaolo Vallot) (Venice, 1972), 159–68.

These data suggest that Lucretius wrote about a relevant topic, employed a fashionable genre, and was read by contemporaries and posterity. But there remains a final argument of those who have stressed Lucretian isolation, which represents him as an arch-conservative clinging to the antique style and ethos of Ennius in opposition to innovative trends variously styled Neotericism, New Poetry, or Alexandrianism.<sup>10</sup> This old-fashioned Lucretius, immune to the influence of Hellenistic poetry and lacking contact with the Catullan circle, used to be a familiar figure,<sup>11</sup> but has happily disappeared from most modern criticism. No doubt those critics of Ennius whom Cicero characterized (some years after Lucretius' death) as *novi poetae* ('new poets', *Orat.* 161) and *cantores Euphorionis* ('singers of Euphorion', *Tusc.* 3. 45) disapproved of Lucretian archaism; no doubt the experimental poetry of Catullus evinces a disassociation from poems so long and so deeply rooted in early Latin as the *De rerum natura*. But this hardly amounts to a rigid polarization of attitudes and styles. The absence of any other successful model made imitation of Ennius prudent and inescapable, once Lucretius had decided upon a large hexameter poem. However, this fact should not be allowed to obscure his independence and modernity. Suffice it to observe here that Lucretian veneration for Ennius is tinged with criticism of his philosophy<sup>12</sup> and competitive emulation of his poetic achievement.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The first two expressions are based upon Cicero's notorious remarks (*Att.* 7.2.1; *Orat.* 161) and are unlikely to have a very broad significance: see N. B. Crowther, *CQ* 20 (1970), 322–7; on 'Alexandrianism' see J. K. Newman, *Augustus and the New Poetry*, Collection Latomus 88 (Brussels-Berchem, 1967), 31–60. For a recent attempt to define neoteric poetry see R. O. A. M. Lyne, *CQ* 28 (1978), 167–87.

<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., H. A. J. Munro, *T. Lucreti Cari De Rerum Natura Libri Sex*, 4th edn. (Cambridge, 1893), ii. 8; J. W. Duff, *A Literary History of Rome from the Origins to the Close of the Golden Age* (London, 1909), 275, 277–8, 303; W. Kroll, *Studien zum Verständnis der römischen Literatur* (Stuttgart, 1924), 86; U. v. Wilamowitz, *Hellenistische Dichtung* (Berlin, 1924), i. 230; J. F. D'Alton, *Roman Literary Theory and Criticism* (London, 1931), 283.

<sup>12</sup> Esp. 1.117 f., where the sincere praise of Ennius is followed by implicit criticism of his inconsistency (*etsi praeterea* . . . , 'though in addition', 120), and perhaps of the whole idea of supernatural revelation, as E. J. Kenney argues in his article 'Doctus Lucretius', *Mnemosyne* Series 4. 23 (1970), 373–80 [= Ch. 13 of this volume]. Maybe the Iphigenia passage, drawing possibly on Ennius as well as Greek models (L. Rychlewska, 'De Ennii Iphigenia', *Eos* 49 (1957–8), 71–81), is an indirect foretaste of criticism; but Ennian influence is denied by Grimal in *Lucrèce* (n. 2), 195.

<sup>13</sup> Esp. 1.921 f., which, as will be discussed later, probably contains Ennian motifs, and 6.95, where Lucretius' hope for a garland recalls the garland won by Ennius (1.118).

Moreover, a mechanical list of Lucretius' numerous archaisms does little justice to the quite un-Ennian range of sophisticated effects for which he employs them.

Another way of qualifying too narrow a view of the literary influences which moulded Lucretius is to demonstrate the multiplicity of his Greek models. Traces of Homer, Hesiod, Sappho, Aeschylus, Parmenides, Empedocles, Euripides, Thucydides, and Plato, not to mention Epicurus, testify to the broad reading and culture of the poet. Furthermore, it is becoming clear that, despite previous statements to the contrary, Lucretius was acquainted with the Hellenistic poetry which inspired young contemporaries like Catullus. Scattered parallels have been noted since Lambinus, but the first serious discussion came in L. Ferrero's overstated but unjustly neglected book on Lucretius and New Poetry,<sup>14</sup> which stresses the common literary climate of Lucretius and Catullus. In recent years several other authors, especially E. J. Kenney, have made useful contributions to this aspect of Lucretian background.<sup>15</sup> The intention of the present article is to explore further the extent and significance of Lucretius' debt to the most important of the Hellenistic poets, Callimachus. Not that Callimachus was a late Republican discovery, for Ennius almost certainly knew his work and he was translated by Q. Lutatius Catulus (fr. 1 M).<sup>16</sup> But since he played a key role in inspiring the fresh impetus of Alexandrianism which we observe in Catullus and his friends, any contacts with Lucretius become doubly interesting.

<sup>14</sup> *Poetica nuova in Lucrezio* (Florence, 1949).

<sup>15</sup> J. K. Newman, 'De verbis canere et dicere eorumque apud poetas Latinos ab Ennio usque ad aetatem Augusti usu', *Latinitas* 13 (1965), 99–105; A. Grilli, *Lucrezio* (Milan, 1970), 58–61, 99 f., 121 f.; Kenney, op. cit. (n. 12), 366–92; G. Tarditi, 'Sulla soglia della poetica lucreziana', *Studi classici in onore di Quintino Cataudella* (Catania, 1972), iii, 85–93; Mantero, op. cit. (n. 2), 90–109.

<sup>16</sup> That Callimachus' dream in the *Aetia* influenced the proem of the *Annales* is controversial, but very likely: see O. Skutsch, *Studia Enniana* (London, 1968), 7–9; J. H. Waszink, 'The Proem of the *Annales* of Ennius', *Mnemosyne* Series 4. 3 (1950), 215–40; for further bibliography see *Ennius*, Entretiens Hardt 17 (Geneva, 1972), 120 n. 2. Lucilius, and maybe Ennius, knew the *Iambi*: M. Puelma Piwonka, *Lucilius und Kallimachos* (Frankfurt am Main, 1949). Late Republican interest in Callimachus may have been stimulated by Parthenius: W. Clausen, 'Callimachus and Latin Poetry', *GRBS* 5 (1964), 181–96.

Roman poets were intrigued by the poet-critic combination in Callimachus and eagerly adopted his canons of style and subject matter in their programmatic poems. This kind of Callimacheanism is familiar to us from Catullus and the Augustans;<sup>17</sup> there has been less discussion of the series of programmatic passages in Lucretius, many of which bear unmistakable traces of Callimachus, both in their general self-consciousness and also their specific images and slogans. Let us begin with the famous digression in Book 1 (1.921–50), where we will be chiefly concerned with the first half proclaiming the poem's originality (921–34).

The remarkable richness and variety of imagery which pervades these lines should warn us from the outset against seeking a single source of influence: clearly this is an original synthesis of motifs, relating not only to external models, but also to the proem of Book 1 and the surrounding context.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, some of the threads composing this closely woven texture can be unravelled by reference to Lucretius' predecessors. For instance, in the opening lines he has drawn upon two conventional Greek concepts of the poet, those of the divinely possessed devotee (*thyrsos*, 'Bacchic wand', 923)<sup>19</sup> and the Muses' friend (*amorem | Musarum*, 'love of the Muses', 924–5).<sup>20</sup> Here he may have recalled the eloquent account of poetic inspiration in Plato's *Ion* 534a, where the idea of divine possession is followed by a comparison of poets with honeybees, according to which they are said to derive their songs from honeyed fountains in the gardens of the Muses (compare the sequence of ideas in Lucretius).<sup>21</sup> It is noteworthy, however, that Lucretius has converted these originally religious motifs into personal symbols of ambition and ecstasy,

<sup>17</sup> The standard work is W. Wimmel, *Kallimachos in Rom*, Hermes Einzelschriften 16 (Wiesbaden, 1960).

<sup>18</sup> Note, e.g., the following parallelisms: 922/136, 924/19, 925–6/74, 929/118, 934/28, and see L. Lenaghan, 'Lucretius 1.921–50', *TAPA* 98 (1967), 221–51.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Democritus B 17–18, 21 DK; Plato, *Apol.* 22b–c; *Phaedr.* 245a; *Leg.* 719c; and see Kroll, *op. cit.* (n. 11), 24 f.; E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley, 1951), 217 f.

<sup>20</sup> For a general account of the relationship see Kroll, *op. cit.* (n. 11), 26 f. By stressing his own love rather than that of the Muses Lucretius seems to invert the usual emphasis.

<sup>21</sup> Grilli, *op. cit.* (n. 15), 96–7. Lucretius compares himself with honeybees in 3.11 f., and his allusion in 6.910 f. to a magnetized chain of rings provides further evidence that he knew the Platonic passage (cf. *Ion.* 533d–e).

stripping away the reference to external inspiration which was conventional in a *Dichterweihe* of the Hesiodic kind.<sup>22</sup>

Having established a tone of exultant pride and individualism, Lucretius now describes his originality through a series of three metaphors—untrodden path, untouched springs, fresh flowers for a garland (926 f.). Much here is reminiscent of the beginning of the *Theogony* (the Muses, their gift to the poet, the natural setting and, later, the sweetness of song), but Lucretius probably had Ennius mainly in mind. The reconstruction of the proem to the *Annales* is highly controversial, but an excellent case can be made for supposing that Ennius, in imitation of Callimachus' dream in the *Aetia*, traversed the realm of the Muses, drank from an inspiring spring and won a garland, just as Lucretius does in metaphorical terms.<sup>23</sup> By repeating these motifs and simultaneously stressing newness (*avia*, 'pathless'; *nullius ante...*, 'no one before'; *integros*, 'fresh'; *novos, unde prius nulli...*, 'whence for no one previously'), Lucretius manages to convey both indebtedness and originality. However, it is going too far to state that these lines are 'no more than an elaboration in the imagery of Ennius',<sup>24</sup> for the terms in which Lucretius expresses

<sup>22</sup> For a convenient list of the conventional elements, see M. L. West's commentary (Oxford, 1966) on Hes. *Theog.* 22–34.

<sup>23</sup> Waszink, *op. cit.* (n. 16), *passim*. For the Muses' realm cf. Enn. *Ann.* 215, together with later evidence for an experience on Helicon (Lucr. 1.117 f.; Prop. 3.3.1 f.) and/or Parnassus (schol. Pers. prol. 2); for the draught from a spring (doubtless Hippocrene) cf. Prop. 3.3.6, in combination with Lucil. 1008 M and Enn. *Ann.* 217, where the object of *reserare* ('open up') may have been *fontes* ('springs'; Waszink, *op. cit.* (n. 16), 225–6, comparing Virg. *Geo.* 2.175); for the garland, presumably parallel to the laurel branch received by Hesiod (*Theog.* 30–1), cf. Lucr. 1.118; Prop. 4.1.61; and, in addition to Waszink, *op. cit.*, 232–3; see W. Suerbaum, 'Untersuchungen zur Selbstdarstellung älterer römischer Dichter', *Spudasmata*, 19 (Hildesheim, 1968), 310–11; Kenney, *op. cit.* (n. 12), 371 (with n. 2). I am unconvinced that Lucretius was chiefly inspired here by the garland which Hippolytus brings to Artemis from an inviolate meadow (Eur. *Hipp.* 73–87), as is claimed by G. Berns in 'Time and Nature in Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*, *Hermes* 104 (1976), 490–1, though it cannot be ruled out that he knew the passage. The notion of a poetic garland is Hellenistic (e.g. Antipater, *AP* 7.14.4) and the association of flowers with poetry is an old one: A. S. F. Gow and D. L. Page, *The Greek Anthology: Hellenistic Epigrams* (Cambridge, 1965), ii. 593–4; A. A. R. Henderson, *Latomus* 29 (1970), 742.

<sup>24</sup> J. H. Waszink, 'Lucretius and Poetry', *Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen*, NR 17 (1954), 251; cf. Suerbaum, *op. cit.* (n. 23), 59 n. 186, 227 n. 664.



his originality are irresistibly reminiscent of Callimachus. Lines 926–7, as Pfeiffer recognized,<sup>25</sup> recall the road imagery of *Aet. fr.* 1.25–8;<sup>26</sup>

πρὸς δέ σε] καὶ τόδ' ἄνωγα, τὰ μὴ πατέουσιν ἄμαξαι  
τὰ στείβει]ν, ἑτέρων ἴχνια μὴ καθ' ὁμά  
δίφρον ἐλ]ῶν μῆδ' οἶμον ἀνὰ πλατύν, ἀλλὰ κελεύθους  
ἀτρίπτο]υς, εἰ καὶ στε[ι]γοτέρην ἐλάσεις.

I also bid you this: tread paths that wagons do not trample; do not drive your chariot along the common tracks of others, nor along a broad road, but on unworn paths, though you drive a narrower course.

Indeed, if the supplement ἀτρίπτους is correct, the parallel extends to verbal detail (*loca nullius ante | trita solo*, ‘places worn by no one’s foot before’). Moreover, the role of springs as a source of poetic inspiration (927), an unclassical idea which Callimachus’ dream in the *Aetia* may have popularized,<sup>27</sup> reminds one here by its emphasis on freshness of the *Hymn to Apollo*, where Apollo is said to approve a *καθαρή τε καὶ ἀχράαντος... ὀλίγη λιβάς* (‘pure and undefiled little stream’, *Hymn* 2.111–2).<sup>28</sup> Despite his general debt to Callimachus’ dream, there is no evidence that Ennius formulated his claim to be

<sup>25</sup> R. Pfeiffer, ‘Ein neues Altersgedicht des Kallimachos’, *Hermes* 63 (1928), 323; and *Callimachus*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1949) on *Aet. fr.* 1.27 f. The parallel has often been mentioned since: e.g. by Bignone, *op. cit.* (n. 2), 170–1; P. Giuffrida, *L’epicureismo nella letteratura latina nel 1 sec. av. Cristo*, vol. 2 (Turin, 1950), 46; O. B. Niccolini, ‘De T. Lucretio Caro’, *Latinitas* 3 (1955), 286; I. Cazzaniga, *Lezioni su Lucrezio* (Milan, 1966), 44 f.; Lenaghan, *op. cit.* (n. 18), 222; E. Pasoli, ‘Ideologia nella poesia: lo stile di Lucrezio’, *Lingua e Stile* 5 (1970), 380; Kenney, *op. cit.* (n. 12), 370; Tarditi, *op. cit.* (n. 15), 89; Mantero, *op. cit.* (n. 2), 98 f. Lambinus had already recognized the parallel in Oppian, *Cyn.* 1.20–1, together with some Latin imitations of Lucretius.

<sup>26</sup> For which see Wimmel, *op. cit.* (n. 17), 103–11, esp. 106; cf. also Callim. *Ep.* 28.1–2, adduced in connection with Lucretius by E. Fraenkel in *Das Problem des Klassischen und die Antike*, ed. W. Jaeger (Leipzig and Berlin, 1931), 63; also O. Regenbogen, *Lukrez. Seine Gestalt in seinem Gedicht*, Neue Wege zur Antike 2.1 (Leipzig and Berlin, 1932), 24. For the possible origin of the image in a Pythagorean saying, see Pfeiffer on *Aet. fr.* 1.25 f.; and cf. also Parm. v 1.27 DK.

<sup>27</sup> Kroll, *op. cit.* (n. 11), 28–30 (suspecting, as others have done, the precedence of Philetas); E. Reitzenstein, in *Festschrift Richard Reitzenstein* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1931), 54 f.; Waszink, *op. cit.* (n. 16), 216 f., 239; A. Kambylis, *Die Dichterweihe und ihre Symbolik* (Heidelberg, 1965), 98–102, 110 f.; Pfeiffer is cautious about assuming the presence of the motif in the *Aetia* (*op. cit.* (n. 25), 11).

<sup>28</sup> Fraenkel, *op. cit.* (n. 26), 63; Ferrero, *op. cit.* (n. 14), 22 n. 2, 44; Kenney, *op. cit.* (n. 12), 370. Callimachus’ rejection of a public spring in *Ep.* 28.3–4 is also comparable.

the first real Roman poet<sup>29</sup> with such specifically Callimachean emphasis on novelty of theme; indeed, had he done so, Lucretius would surely have avoided a repetition both weak and subversive of his own claim. A more plausible explanation is that Callimachean influence on Ennius' proem was restricted to the dream passage, while Lucretius has borrowed from elsewhere in Callimachus (including the later preface, which can hardly have been congenial to the Roman epicist) in order to underline his own independence from Ennius.

These reminiscences raise two important questions, which must be answered if we are to assess their significance correctly. Firstly, even if they were not derived from Ennius, is it possible that they were channelled from Callimachus to Lucretius by an intermediary source, or that they had attained the status of commonplaces by his time? The evidence tells against the latter, inasmuch as the images of unworn path and pure spring are uncommon in Hellenistic poetry and, to judge from later imitations (e.g. Virg. *Geo.* 3.291 f.; Hor. *Carm.* 1.26.6), received from Lucretius their first definitive statement in Latin. The former possibility, that Lucretius took his cue from an imitation of Callimachus, is more serious, since the unworn path appears in an epigram by Antipater, *AP* 7.409.5–6 (εἰ τὰν ἄτριπτον καὶ ἀνέμβατον ἀτραπὸν ἄλλοις | μαίειαι, 'if you seek the way that is unworn and inaccessible to others'), which Lucretius is likely to have known on the basis of other parallels,<sup>30</sup> and pure springs are used in another epigram by Alcaeus of Messene, *AP* 7.55.5–6 (ἐννέα Μουσέων | ὁ πρέσβυς καθαρῶν γευσάμενος λιβάδων, 'the old man who had tasted the pure springs of the nine Muses'), to describe the inspiration of Hesiod. Whether or not Lucretius knew the Callimachean originals directly must therefore remain a matter of judgement, although it seems to me highly probable in view of other echoes of Callimachus which I hope to establish later.

Secondly, do these reminiscences—direct or indirect—imply any adherence to Callimachean stylistic canons, above and beyond their primary function of expressing Lucretius' originality? Kenney suggests

<sup>29</sup> For the 'primus-Motiv' in relation to Ennius see Suerbaum, *op. cit.* (n. 23), 269 f. Lucretius repeats his claim to novelty in 5.335 f.

<sup>30</sup> The unworn path parallel is mentioned by Munro, *ad. loc.*; for the other reminiscences (3.1037–8; 4.912) see Grilli, *op. cit.* (n. 15), 102–3, 118.

that the emphasis Lucretius lays upon clarity (e.g. 1.136–45, 921–2, 933–4) may go beyond an Epicurean concern for σαφήνεια ('clearness', D.L. 10.13) and share something with Callimachus' repeated insistence upon fine-drawn art.<sup>31</sup> One could add that the notion of poetic sweetness (936–50, esp. 945–7) is prominent not only in the opening of the *Theogony* (39–40, 69, 83–4, 97) but also the *Aetia* preface (fr. 1.11, 16) and the epigram praising Aratus (*Ep.* 27.2); moreover, Lucretius repeats the cliché in a strikingly Callimachean statement at 4.180 and 909 (*suavidicis potius quam multis versibus edam*, 'I will declare in sweet-speaking rather than many verses'), which I suspect to have been inspired by an epigram of Asclepiades that describes Erinna's tiny output as γλυκὺς...πόνος, οὐχὶ πολλὸς μὲν...ἀλλ', ἐτέρων πολλῶν δυνατώτερος ('sweet work, not large indeed, but more influential than many others', *AP* 7.11). However, very little can be made of such vague parallels, based as they are upon ideas which were prevalent not only in Callimachus but Hellenistic literature in general and even earlier Greek poetry. To return to the question posed above, we must answer that Lucretian assertions of thematic novelty (926–30) and lucid style (933–4) do not amount to a statement of allegiance to Callimachean poetics in the narrow sense of Catullus 95 or the Augustan *recusationes*. This clearly emerges from a contrast between Lucretius' expansive handling of the path and spring images and the ironic, allusive treatment of Callimachus.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>31</sup> *Op. cit.* (n. 12), 371; cf. Mantero, *op. cit.* (n. 2), 103–4. It is tempting to speculate whether Lucretian and Catullan insistence on *lepos* ('charm', *Lucr.* 1.28, 934; *Cat.* 1.1, 6.17, 16.7, 50.7), remarked upon by, e.g., Ferrero, *op. cit.* (n. 14), 38 f. and Newman, *op. cit.* (n. 15), 102, has anything to do with the Callimachean catchword λεπτός ('fine, delicate', *Aet.* fr. 1.11, 24; *Ep.* 27.3; and see Reitzenstein, *op. cit.* (n. 27), 25–40, on the history of the word). Several points discourage the idea—e.g. translation of λεπτός by *tenuis* ('fine') elsewhere (*Lucr.* 4.42 etc.; *Cat.* 51.9), contemporary use of *lepos* in literary criticism (e.g. *Rhet. Her.* 4.32; *Cic. De orat.* 1.213; 3.206), differences in sense—but ears so attuned to etymological connections as were those of the Romans might well have discerned an association; cf. S. Commager, *The Odes of Horace* (New Haven and London, 1962), 39 n. 85; V. Buchheit, 'Sal et lepos versiculorum' (*Catull.* c.16); *Hermes* 104 (1976), 338 n. 41.

<sup>32</sup> For instance the *thyrsus* image (923) lends a sense of Bacchic abandon to the whole passage; moreover, there is a significant difference between Callimachus' narrow path (*Aet.* fr. 1.27–8) and the remote haunts of Lucretius (926); also between the trickling Callimachean spring (*Hymn* 2.111–12) and the more robust-sounding fontes ('springs') of Lucretius (927: cf. the mention of *largos haustus e fontibus magnis*, 'copious draughts from large springs', in 1.412, which seems notably un-Callimachean, *pace* Ferrero, *op. cit.* (n. 14), 22).

Callimachus was revitalizing an old and jaded art by his insistence on refined exclusivity; Lucretius was exploring the potential of a relatively new one and conveys the exhilaration of a poetic pioneer and missionary.

However, the fact that programmatic Callimachean ideas influenced a segment of Lucretius' most personal statement remains significant in itself, and receives confirmation from echoes in other self-conscious passages of the poem. Perhaps next in importance as a personal utterance stand the lines on the difficulty of rendering obscure Greek discoveries in Latin (1.136–45), where, as in 1.921–34, the contrast of light and dark acts as a frame for reflections on the nature of the poem. Here Lucretius states that the hope of friendship persuades him *quemvis efferre laborem* ('to undergo any labour', 141) and *noctes vigilare serenas* ('to stay awake through clear nights', 142). The second phrase obviously reproduces a proverbial idea of working late into the night, with which one can compare the use of the verb *lucubrare* ('to work by lamplight')<sup>33</sup> and our own saying 'to burn the midnight oil'. However, I doubt whether it is coincidental that Lucretius' formulation of the idea in terms of staying awake (*vigilare*) puts one in mind of the sleeplessness which Callimachus ascribes to Aratus, as a token of his astronomical research and perfectionist artistry (*Ep.* 27.3–4):<sup>34</sup>

χαίρετε λεπταί  
ρήσιες, Ἀρήτου σύμβολον ἀγρυπνίης.

Hail, delicate utterances, token of Aratus' sleeplessness!

That this epigram was familiar to the Catullan circle may be inferred from the dedicatory poem attached to a gift by C. Helvius Cinna (fr. 11 M):

haec tibi Arateis multum invigilata lucernis<sup>35</sup>  
carmina, quis ignis novimus aetherios.

<sup>33</sup> Cf., e.g., Cic. *Parad.* 5; Varr. *L.* 5.9; *Men.* 219; *OLD* s.v.

<sup>34</sup> Ferrero, *op. cit.* (n. 14), 21 n. 2; Cazzaniga, *op. cit.* (n. 25), 25 f.; Grilli, *op. cit.* (n. 15), 123–4 (suggesting an Epicurean provenance also, on the basis of Epict. *Diss.* 2.20.9 and Him. *Or.* 3.17); Tarditi, *op. cit.* (n. 15), 88; see also Kroll, *op. cit.* (n. 11), 38 (with n. 34); R. O. A. M. Lyne's commentary (Cambridge, 1978) on *Ciris* 46.

<sup>35</sup> Apparently a conflation of the idea of sleeplessness with the metaphor *lucubrare* ('work by lamplight', n. 33), as in Auson. 19.1.5–6 Peiper (*damnosae... musae, | iacturam somni quae parit atque olei*, 'the prodigal muse, which causes loss of sleep and oil'). With *Arateis... lucernis* ('the lamps of Aratus') compare Juv. 1.51 (*Venusina... lucerna*, 'the Venusine lamp').

These poems for you, produced with much sleepless labour by the lamps of Aratus, through which we know the celestial fires.

As a didactic poet following in the tradition of Aratus, Lucretius may have felt a particular affinity to the epigram; one may even sense a hint of Aratus' star-studded sky in the epithet *serenas* ('clear'),<sup>36</sup> apart from its important psychological significance.<sup>37</sup> In harmony with this interpretation of Lucretius' sleeplessness, the poet's *laborem* ('labour', 141) can be compared with the Alexandrian ideal of painstaking craft,<sup>38</sup> for here (and in the oxymoron *dulci... labore* ('sweet... labour', 2.730; 3.419) the word seems to refer less to the effort of Epicurean research than to that of committing it to verse.<sup>39</sup> A concern for careful artistry also emerges from his use of the verb *pango* ('compose', 1.933) and the revealing statement about *politis | versibus* ('polished verses', 6.82–3).<sup>40</sup> Again, however, the similarities to Callimachus must not be overstressed. Most importantly, the sleeplessness, labour, and polish of Lucretius have a practical end, and by emphasizing them he wishes to engage our attention, not to praise art for art's sake.

Another programmatic statement occurs in 4.909–11,<sup>41</sup> where Lucretius promises to explain sleep *suavidicis potius quam multis versibus* ('in sweet-speaking rather than many verses', a line already mentioned earlier), and favourably compares the *parvus... canor* ('small song') of swans to the diffuse *clamor* ('cry') of cranes. Lines 910–11 are a close adaptation of an epigram by Antipater (*AP*

<sup>36</sup> 'Seems merely a poetical epithet' (Munro). D. West, in *The Imagery and Poetry of Lucretius* (Edinburgh, 1969), 81, remarks that '*noctes vigilare serenas* ('stay awake through clear nights') is the phrase of a man who enjoyed the solitude and serenity of working at night, and who couldn't keep away from the window'.

<sup>37</sup> Leonard and Smith ad loc.; J. P. Elder, *TAPA* 85 (1954), 105.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Philetas's description of the poet as *πολλὰ μογήσας* ('having toiled much', fr. 10.3); Call. *Ep.* 6.1; Asclepiades, *AP* 7.11.1; Leonidas, *AP* 9.25.5; Theoc. 7.51, with Gow's note; Kroll, op. cit. (n. 11), 38; Piwonka, op. cit. (n. 16), 125 f., 139 n. 2.

<sup>39</sup> See Lyne's note on *Ciris* 99, adding Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.224, *Ars* 291.

<sup>40</sup> For the metaphor cf., e.g., Cic. *Opt. gen.* 12; *Brut.* 326; Ov. *Pont.* 1.5.61; its Alexandrian quality is illustrated by Cat. 1.2, where *expolitum* ('polished') is more than literal. The Lucretian passage continues with a self-conscious use of *canere* ('sing', 6.84), which Newman believes was a catchword for neoteric poets (op. cit. (n. 15), 98 f., esp. 101–2), though he is opposed by C. Griffiths in *PVS* 9 (1969–70), 7 f.

<sup>41</sup> Identical to 4.180–2, but with extra verses integrally attached (912–15).

7.713.7–8).<sup>42</sup> Line 909 can hardly be called an imitation of Callimachus (I compared it before with Asclepiades, *AP* 7.11), but certainly derives ultimately from his celebrated rejection of *ἐν ἄεισμα διηλεκές... ἐν πολλαῖς... χιλιάσιν* ('one continuous song in many thousands of verses', *Aet.* fr. 1.3–4 and *passim*; cf. frs. 465; 398; *Hymn* 2.105 f.; *Ep.* 28.1).<sup>43</sup> In the light of this flagrantly Alexandrian sentiment (even the compressed incongruity sounds authentically Callimachean), it may be legitimate to suppose that pedagogical claims of *brevitas* ('brevity') elsewhere in Lucretius (1.499; 2.143; 4.115, 723; 6.1083) also contain an artistic motivation.<sup>44</sup>

Furthermore, it is interesting that Lucretius substitutes cranes for Antipater's jackdaws in his adaptation. To be sure, *gruum* ('cranes') is a more tractable word than *graculorum* ('jackdaws'), but in such a self-conscious and literary passage he is unlikely to have hit upon the replacement by accident. Pfeiffer originally conjectured that both poets worked independently from a common source in the *Aetia* preface,<sup>45</sup> but the recovery of lines 15–16 disproved a close imitation by Lucretius. Rather, he modelled his passage primarily upon Antipater but returned to the *Aetia* preface for the illustration of cranes, which there represent tedious epic, by contrast with the 'little nightingales' preferred by Callimachus. If this analysis is correct, we have concrete evidence here for the coalescence of two separate Hellenistic poems in Lucretius' creative imagination. Once again, however, we should note that ideas which Callimachus used to clarify his aesthetic standards are appropriated by Lucretius for the different role of alluring his audience (912–15).

Together, these echoes testify to the contemporary pull exerted by Callimachean poetics, although it is sometimes difficult to tell whether Lucretius was responding directly to Callimachus or his Hellenistic imitators. I turn now to a few miscellaneous resemblances

<sup>42</sup> As Lambinus noticed. I have discussed the imitation in my D. Phil. thesis, *A Commentary on Selected Passages of Lucretius IV* (Oxford, 1977), 194 f.

<sup>43</sup> Ferrero, *op. cit.* (n. 14), 23; Tarditi, *op. cit.* (n. 15), 89.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Ferrero, *op. cit.* (n. 14) 17 ff., but it is hard to see how the *De rerum natura* could escape the charge of being *ἐν ἄεισμα διηλεκές* ('one continuous song').

<sup>45</sup> *Op. cit.* (n. 25), 316; cf. Newman, *op. cit.* (n. 15), 100–1; F. Bornmann, *Maia* 19 (1967), 44 f. For this type of animal comparison cf. Pind. *Ol.* 2.87–8; Call. *Aet.* fr. 1.29–30; Theoc. 5.136–7; 7.41; Lucr. 3.6 f.; Virg. *Ecl.* 9.36; Prop. 2.34.83–4.

which permit a more confident decision in favour of direct inspiration. The first example has gone unnoticed hitherto and occurs within Lucretius' praise of Empedocles (1.716 f.). This powerful passage pays homage to the Sicilian's achievements as philosopher and poet through a vividly imaginative description of his island's natural wonders, implicitly linking the ruggedness and grandeur of Sicily with the philosopher's majestic verse.<sup>46</sup> Two areas of the encomium are verbally indebted to Callimachus' *Hymn to Delos* (4), which in a similar fashion approaches the tale of Apollo's birth with praise of his island birthplace.

The first of these is the beautiful description of Sicily's seaboard in 718–19:

quam fluitans circum magnis anfractibus aequor  
Ionium glaucis aspargit virus ab undis.

around which the Ionian sea, flowing in great windings, sprinkles brine from its blue-grey waves.

These lines are an adaptation of the picture sketched by Callimachus of the sea around Delos (*Hymn* 4.13–14):

ὁ δ' ἀμφί ἐ πούλῳς ἐλίσσων  
Ἰκαρίου πολλὴν ἀπομάσσειται ὕδατος ἄχνην.<sup>47</sup>

The sea, rolling around her in full stream, wipes off much foam of the Icarian water.

To press the point, *quam fluitans circum magnis anfractibus* ('around which flowing in great windings') answers roughly to ἀμφί ἐ πούλῳς ἐλίσσων ('rolling around her in full stream'),<sup>48</sup> *aequor* | *Ionium* ('Ionian sea') to Ἰκαρίου... ὕδατος ('Icarian water'), *aspargit virus* ('sprinkles brine') to ἀπομάσσειται... ἄχνην ('wipes off foam'); in addition to verbal correspondence, *Ionium* ('Ionian') and *aspargit* ('sprinkles')

<sup>46</sup> Bignone, op. cit. (n. 2), 200; L. MacKay, *Latinitas* 3 (1955), 210; a similar technique of encomium is applied to Epicurus in 6.1 f.: cf. F. Giancotti, *Il prelude di Lucrezio* (Messina and Florence, 1959), 79.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Hom. *Il.* 4.426; Wilamowitz, op. cit. (n. 11), ii.64 n. 2.

<sup>48</sup> *anfractibus* ('windings') refers to the wheeling sweep of the sea around the twisting coastline of Sicily (cf. its use in 5.683), not to the coastline itself as Bailey's note seems to imply.

stand at the identical point in the line.<sup>49</sup> Of course, Lucretius has also transformed the original, both in detail, e.g., the substitution of ‘brine’ for ‘foam’ and the addition of the ornamental detail *glaucis* (‘blue-grey’), and in tone, which is rather more elevated than in Callimachus, thanks largely to the resounding periphrasis in 718.

A second echo of the same hymn occurs a little later, where Lucretius praises the revelations of Empedocles above those of the Delphic oracle (738–9):

sanctius et multo certa ratione magis quam  
Pythia quae tripodi a Phoebi lauroque profatur<sup>50</sup>

with more holiness and much more certainty than the Pythia who speaks forth from the tripod and laurel of Phoebus.

The commentators offer parallels for the expression ‘from the tripod and laurel of Phoebus’ (e.g., Eur. *Or.* 329; *IT* 976; Arist. *Plut.* 39), refer to the proverbial notion, contradicted by Lucretius, of speaking as truthfully as Apollo’s oracle,<sup>51</sup> and mention an epigram by Athenaeus (not Epicurus, as Bailey says) which praises Epicurus as having learnt a certain fact from the Muses or the Delphic tripod (D.L. 10.12). Only Munro has recognized that the clever idea of speaking more accurately than the Delphic oracle derives from the humorously prophetic words of the unborn Apollo in Callim. *Hymn* 4.90–4, esp. 94:<sup>52</sup>

οὐπω μοι Πυθῶνι μέλει τριποδῆιος ἔδρη,  
οὐδέ τί πω τέθνηκεν ὄφρις μέγας, ἀλλ’ ἔτι κείνο  
θηρίον αἰνογένειον ἀπὸ Πλειστοῖο καθέρπον  
Παρνησὸν νιφόεντα περιστέφει ἐννέα κύκλοις·  
ἀλλ’ ἔμπης ἐρέω τι τομώτερον ἢ ἀπὸ δάφνης·

<sup>49</sup> It is interesting to observe that line 14 of the *Hymn* is a pure Golden Line. Unfortunately, the Lucretian line can only be construed as such by taking *Ionium* (‘Ionian’) with *virus* (‘brine’) instead of *aequor* (‘sea’), which is unnatural. Nevertheless, Lucretius has preserved something of the interlocking arrangement by the separation of *glaucis...undis* (‘blue-grey...waves’, matching *πολλήν...ἄχνην*, ‘much... foam’).

<sup>50</sup> = 5.111–12, in reference to himself. Epicureans appear to have sometimes affected an oracular pose for polemical purposes: cf. Epicur. *SV* 29; Lucr. 3.14 f.; 6.6; and see Pease’s note on Cic. *ND* 1.66.

<sup>51</sup> A. Otto, *Die Sprichwörter und sprichwörtlichen Redensarten der Römer* (Leipzig, 1890), 30.

<sup>52</sup> The Lucretian parallel was first noted by O. Schneider, in *Callimachea*, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1870–3), i. 277. Munro’s reference was picked up by Merrill.



Not yet does the three-footed seat at Pytho concern me; not yet has the great serpent died, but still that beast with dreadful jaws, creeping down from Pleistus, wreathes snowy Parnassus with its nine coils. Nevertheless I will proclaim something more clearly than from the laurel.

A comparison with the Lucretian lines will show that Callimachus' reference to the Pythian tripod (90) has been conflated with the joke about speaking more clearly than 'from the laurel' (94), in order to create a single, cogent idea. Significantly, Lucretius has turned the thought against Apollo and foreknowledge in general,<sup>53</sup> whereas Apollo's words in Callimachus are unprejudicial to the veracity of his future oracle (he simply implies that firsthand prophecy is better than secondhand).

It seems reasonable to conclude on the basis of these echoes that Lucretius had read the whole hymn with some care. Perhaps this reading supplied him with some of the inspiration to praise Empedocles through the medium of his island birthplace and in terms of a latter-day god<sup>54</sup> (although the poetic statements of Empedocles himself are likely to have provided the chief impetus).<sup>55</sup> This larger claim may be insupportable, but it helps towards a clearer appreciation of the plan and purpose of this striking digression, which can be seen as a demythologized hymn, removing true superhumanity from the realm of superstition to that of *ratio* ('reason') and scientific discovery. As such, the passage may be compared with the 'hymns' to Epicurus (3.1 f.; 5.1 f.), in which hymnic formulae of praise are applied to the enemy of superstition, partly for polemical reasons,

<sup>53</sup> In harmony with Epicurean doctrine: cf. D.L. 10.135; Cic. *Div.* 1.5, with Pease's note.

<sup>54</sup> The title *Acragantinus* ('of Acragas', 716), the association with a wonderful environment and the climactic praise of his inspired discoveries all sound vaguely hymnic. However, further echoes of Callimachus are lacking, apart from certain similarities which are no doubt coincidental: e.g. between the statement that Sicily 'bore' Empedocles (*gessit*, 717) and the pervasive notion that Delos was Apollo's nurse (2.5–6, 10, 51, 264–5, 275–6); *triquetris* ('three-cornered', 717) could be compared with *τριγύλαχιν* ('three-barbed'), which is applied to Sicily in *Aet.* fr. 1.36 and Poseidon's trident in *Hymn* 4.31, but the idea is fairly conventional (cf., e.g., Thuc. 6.2.2; Polyb. 1.42.3; Hor. *Sat.* 2.6.55; Sil. 5.489; Quint. 1.6.30); the uncommon lengthening of the first vowel of *Italiae* ('Italy', 721, if correct) is found in Call. *Hymn* 3.58 (cf. Norden on Virg. *Aen.* 6.61; Austin on *Aen.* 1.2; Fordyce on Cat. 1.5); the alliteration and polyptoton of 726 f. are a little like *Hymn* 4.266 f., though it would be unwise to postulate a model for such a common Lucretian feature.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. his self-apotheosis in B 112.4 DK.

partly to turn around ingrained religious attitudes and divert them into constructive channels.<sup>56</sup>

Another imitation of Callimachus is found in the virtuoso and complex digression on Cybele (2.600–60). Here, at the climax of the ritual procession he is describing, Lucretius paints a lively picture of the dancing attendants named Curetes, who recall the Dictaeon Curetes who drowned Jupiter's infant cries. After an ironic gesture to tradition (*feruntur*, 'are said', 634)<sup>57</sup> Lucretius reports the story of the latter's dance in 635–9:

cum pueri circum puerum pernice chorea  
armati in numerum pulsarent aeribus aera,  
ne Saturnus eum malis mandaret adeptus  
aeternumque daret matri sub pectore vulnus.

when boys around a boy in agile dance, armed with weapons, struck bronze on bronze in time, that Saturn might not catch him and consign him to his jaws, implanting an everlasting wound in the mother's heart.

The first half of this tableau seems to echo Callimachus's treatment of the same story in the *Hymn to Zeus* (1.52–4):<sup>58</sup>

οὔλα δὲ Κούρητές σε περὶ πρύλιν ὠρχήσαντο  
τεύχεα πεπλήγοντες, ἵνα Κρόνος οὔασιν ἠχὴν  
ἀσπίδος εἰσαῖοι καὶ μὴ σεο κουρίζοντος·

Around you the Curetes vigorously danced an armed dance, striking their armour, that Kronos might hear with his ears the sound of the shield and not of you crying like a boy.

Aside from rough correspondences of verbal detail (*circum* 'around' / *περὶ* 'around', *pernice chorea* 'in agile dance' / οὔλα<sup>59</sup> ... ὠρχήσαντο 'vigorously (?) danced', *armati* 'armed' / πρύλιν 'armed dance',<sup>60</sup>

<sup>56</sup> See further P. H. Schrijvers, *Horror ac Divina Voluptas* (Amsterdam, 1970), 308 f.

<sup>57</sup> A typically Alexandrian feature (see Nisbet and Hubbard's note on Hor. *Carm.* 1.7.23), though Lucretius' irony is authentically Epicurean (cf., e.g., Us. 228–9 on the master's contempt for mythological poetry).

<sup>58</sup> The parallel was noted by Lambinus; cf. Munro on 2.635; Ferrero, *op. cit.* (n. 14), 131 n. 1.

<sup>59</sup> This and πρύλις ('armed dance') were obscure words: E. Cahen, *Les hymnes de Callimaque* (Paris, 1930), 28; maybe Lucretius received elucidation from an annotated text.

<sup>60</sup> For this armed dance see W. H. Roscher, *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, vol. 2.1 (Leipzig 1890–94), 1611–12.

*pulsarent*... *aera* 'struck bronze' / *τεύχεα πεπλήγοντες* 'striking their armour', *ne Saturnus* 'that Saturn might not' / *ἵνα Κρόνος*... *μῆ* 'that Kronos might not'<sup>61</sup>), Lucretius has imitated the etymological play upon words in Callimachus: he, of course, connects *Κούρητες* ('Curètes') and *κουρίζοντος* ('crying like a boy'), while Lucretius more subtly suggests the derivation of *Κούρητες* from *κούροι* ('boys') by emphasizing the words *pueri*... *puerum* ('boys... boy', 635);<sup>62</sup> yet another pun appears in 643 (*parent*... *parentibus*, 'prepare... parents'). As usual, he has also made substantial changes to suit his anti-mythological purpose, particularly through an exaggerated use of alliteration and the ironically mock-epic development of 638–9, where he parts company entirely with Callimachus.

A small item of supporting evidence for direct imitation of the *Hymn to Zeus* here may be supplied by the first verse of the digression on Cybele (*hanc veteres Graium docti cecinere poetae*, 'of her the learned old poets of the Greeks have sung', 600). One would dearly like to know what poets Lucretius has in mind<sup>63</sup> and how they relate to his subsequent account of Cybele worship.<sup>64</sup> But, leaving aside these difficult problems, it is reasonable to suppose that Lucretius disapproved of the way in which these poets personalized the insentient earth (albeit allegorically), thus opening the door for superstition. That the tone of 600 is sarcastic may be confirmed by the similar references in 5.405 (*scilicet ut veteres Graium cecinere poetae*, 'as, to be sure, the old poets of the Greeks have sung'), where he dismisses the legend of Phaethon, and 6.754 (*Graium ut cecinere poetae*, 'as the

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Ov. *Fast.* 4.208 (*tutus ut infanti vagiat ore puer*, 'so that wailing might come safely from the child's infant mouth').

<sup>62</sup> Roscher, *op. cit.* (n. 60), 1591; West, *op. cit.* (n. 36), 108.

<sup>63</sup> Bailey argues for an allegorical account, which seems an unlikely subject for verse. Perhaps Lucretius has foisted an allegorical interpretation upon straightforward poetic descriptions, drawing from the same source as Varro (*Aug. Civ. Dei* 7.24) and Ovid (*Fast.* 4.215 f.), which Boyancé thinks was Stoic (*op. cit.* (n. 1), 123). Since none of the extant descriptions of the goddess in classical Greek poetry fit Lucretius' reference, it is worth mentioning that Cybele, Attis, and the Galli were a favourite Hellenistic and late Republican theme (cf., e.g., Call. fr. 761, with Pfeiffer's note; *Nic. Alex.* 7–8, 217–20; *Hermes.* fr. 8 Powell; *AP* 6.51, 217–20, 281; 9.340; *Cat.* 35, 63). The verbal play *docti*... *docentes* ('learned... teaching', 600–2) suggests a learned version of the Alexandrian type, which is the assumption of W. Kranz in *Philologus* 96 (1944), 68.

<sup>64</sup> The poets seem to be in the foreground until 610, where Lucretius turns to the universal acceptance of Cybele's cult.

poets of the Greeks have sung'), where the myth about crows being banished from the Acropolis is ridiculed. This being so, it seems possible that the allusion to 'old poets' was inspired by Callimachus' rejection of an unbelievable story in the *Hymn to Zeus*, only a few lines after the description of the Curetes (1.60):<sup>65</sup>

δηναιοὶ δ' οὐ πάμπαν ἀληθέες ἦσαν ἀοιδοί·

The old singers were not entirely truthful.

Of course, Pindar contradicts his predecessors in a similar way (*Ol.* 1.36),<sup>66</sup> but a closer analogy exists between Callimachus' phrase *δηναιοὶ*<sup>67</sup> ... *ἀοιδοί* ('old...singers') and *veteres...cecinerē poetae* ('the old poets have sung'); as for the charge of falsehood, one could compare the sweeping rejection of the whole Cybele cult which Lucretius makes later in 644 f. Nevertheless, a ready contrast between the two authors is again available, in that Callimachus is rejecting a particular myth told by ancient poets, while Lucretius is hostile to the mythologizing tendency of poetry in general.

The next passage for consideration is similar, for it once again involves the invocation and rebuttal of a Greek poetic source. In the course of Book 6 Lucretius discusses *Averna...loca* ('Avernian places', 738), i.e. pestilential areas which were observed to poison overflying birds. After mentioning the famous place near Cumae (747–8), he turns to the location on the Athenian Acropolis which was traditionally believed to be shunned by birds, particularly the crow (749–55):<sup>68</sup>

est et Athenaeis in moenibus, arcis in ipso  
 vertice, Palladis ad templum Tritonidis almae, 750  
 quo numquam pennis appellunt corpora raucae  
 cornices, non cum fumant altaria donis.  
 usque adeo fugitant non iras Palladis acris  
 pervigili causa, Graium ut cecinere poetae,  
 sed natura loci opus efficit ipsa suapte. 755

<sup>65</sup> Ferrero, op. cit. (n. 14), 90 n. 2, hints at a reminiscence. Cf. also *Ov. Am.* 3.6.17 (*veterum mendacia vatum*, 'the lies of old bards').

<sup>66</sup> Contrast the more respectful attitude in *Nem.* 3.52; and, later, Apollonius 1.18; *Arat. Phaen.* 637.

<sup>67</sup> *δηναιοί* is another word of difficult meaning: Wilamowitz, op. cit. (n. 11), ii. 9 n. 1.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. *Antig. Hist. Mirab.* 12; *Philostr. Apoll.* 2.10; *Apollon. Hist. Mirab.* 8; *Ael. Nat. Anim.* 5.8; *Plin. NH* 10.30.

There is a place within the walls of Athens, on the very summit of the citadel, near to the temple of nurturing Tritonian Pallas, whither hoarse crows never wing their bodies, not even when the altars smoke with offerings. So much do they shun not the fierce anger of Pallas on account of their vigil, as the poets of the Greeks have sung, but the nature of the place causes the effect on its own.

Not content with a reference to the simple fact, Lucretius mockingly alludes to the legendary explanation of how a crow had reported to Athene the disobedience of the daughters of Cecrops in opening the chest containing the infant Erichthonius which had been entrusted to their care by the goddess, who angrily banished the crow from the Acropolis in return for its unwelcome interference.<sup>69</sup>

As in the Cybele passage (2.600), Lucretius refers here to a poetic tradition (*Graium ut cecinere poetae*, 'as the poets of the Greeks have sung', 754), and again one would like to know of whom he is thinking. No doubt the story was well established in folklore long before Callimachus, but it is interesting to note that the sole known pre-Lucretian treatment in poetry comes in the influential short epic *Hecale*, where it is narrated by an old crow (fr. 260.17 f.). If, as appears likely, Lucretius has Callimachus primarily in mind when he mentions *poetae* ('poets'),<sup>70</sup> it may also be possible to identify a verbal reminiscence in the mannered phrase *iras Palladis acris* ('the fierce anger of Pallas', 753), which echoes recognizably the words of the old crow in *Hec.* fr. 260.41 (*βαρὺς χόλος. . . Ἀθήνης*, 'the heavy anger of Athena').<sup>71</sup> A less obvious allusion to the Callimachean source may possibly be detected in the epithet *Tritonis* ('Tritonian', 750), which in Greek first occurs in Callimachus (*Iamb.* 12, fr. 202.28) and Apollonius (1.109; 3.1183),<sup>72</sup> in Latin first in Lucretius (later in, e.g., Virg. *Aen.* 2.226; Ov. *Met.* 3.127).<sup>73</sup> One of the

<sup>69</sup> For a full account of the myth see Ov. *Met.* 2.552 f.

<sup>70</sup> Schneider, op. cit. (n. 52), ii. 98 (arguing for the presence of the story in the *Aetia*, before the *Hecale* passage was discovered); Munro on 6.754; I. Kapp, *Callimachi Hecalae Fragmenta* (Diss. Berlin, 1915), 47; W. Lück, *Die Quellenfrage im 5. und 6. Buch des Lukrez* (Diss. Breslau, 1932), 142 (repeating Schneider's error); Newman, op. cit. (n. 15), 100; Tarditi, op. cit. (n. 15), 92.

<sup>71</sup> Pfeiffer ad loc.; cf. Ov. *Met.* 2.568.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. also Antipater, *AP* 6.159.3; Alcaeus, *AP* 8.3; and see C. F. H. Bruchmann, *Epitheta Deorum, quae apud poetas Graecos leguntur* (Leipzig, 1893), 15–16.

<sup>73</sup> C. F. H. Bruchmann, *Epitheta Deorum, quae apud poetas Latinos leguntur* (Leipzig, 1902), 71.

commonest interpretations of Athene's title *Τριτογενής* ('Trito-born') explains it by reference to the Libyan lake Triton (or Tritonis) near which she was said to have been born;<sup>74</sup> this will naturally have commended itself to Callimachus, the native of Cyrene, for whom the name Tritonis may have had a special meaning and attraction.<sup>75</sup> Perhaps, then, Lucretius borrowed a *recherché* title from Callimachus (the context of the *Hecale* under discussion?) in order to sharpen his sarcastic mention of the legend. For, like the description of the Curetes, this passage offers a fine example of his ability to denigrate a mythical tradition. Note how the sentence ascends from the epic formula *est...* ('there is...'; 749) by an elegant tricolon to the impressive cult title of the goddess (750), only for the elevated tone to be deflated methodically in the following lines (751–5).

If Lucretius remembered the legend of the crow from the *Hecale*, maybe he recalled elsewhere the story of the raven who was turned from milky white to pitch black for telling Apollo about the adultery of Coronis, as briefly told by Callimachus soon after the passage on the crow (fr. 260.55–61). For, during his series of proofs that atoms lack colour, Lucretius uses an illustration involving white ravens as a *reductio ad absurdum* (2.822–5):

conveniebat enim corvos quoque saepe volantis  
ex albis album pinnis iactare colorem  
et nigros fieri nigro de semine cycnos  
aut alio quovis uno varioque colore.

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For it were fitting that ravens also in flight should often emit a white colour from white feathers, and swans be made black from black seed, or any other uniform or variegated colour.

This whimsical notion may easily have been drawn from the poet's own imagination or proverbial expressions,<sup>76</sup> but it is not unlikely that the myth was at the back of his mind, and, if so, it is worth

<sup>74</sup> Cf., e.g., Hdt. 4.180.5; Eur. *Ion* 872.

<sup>75</sup> The lake is mentioned in *Aet.* fr. 37.1; and cf. fr. 584.

<sup>76</sup> Ravens are proverbial for blackness (Otto, op. cit. (n. 51) 95; Bömer on *Ov. Met.* 2.535), swans for whiteness (Otto, op. cit. (n. 51) 104; Bömer on *Ov. Met.* 2.539). The contrast of raven and swan is present, to a varying degree, in Callimachus (fr. 260.56), Lucretius, and Ovid (*Met.* 2.539); cf. also Mart. 1.53.8; 3.43.2; Otto, op. cit. (n. 51), 104.

pointing out that the version in the *Hecale* is our first source for the detail about a change of colour.<sup>77</sup>

Lucretius' probable use of the poem to Aratus, which was discussed earlier, encourages the search for other connections with the epigrams of Callimachus. The general influence of Hellenistic erotic epigrams upon the end of Book 4 has been fruitfully explored by Kenney<sup>78</sup> and there is no need to repeat his findings. Suffice it to say that the love epigrams of Callimachus share with countless others the favourite images of wound/sickness (*Ep.* 43, 46), fire (*Ep.* 43, 44), and hunting (*Ep.* 31) which Lucretius selected for satirical exploitation. In addition, three possible instances of specific imitation may be suggested. Firstly, in the arresting phrase *vulgivaga . . . Venere* ('widely wandering Venus', 4.1071), which commentators wrongly attempt to elucidate by the title Πάνδημος Ἀφροδίτη ('Common Aphrodite'), for *Venus* here is simply a metonymy for sex. If a Greek model is necessary, the adjective is more likely to have been inspired by the word περιφοίτος ('wandering about'), used by Callimachus in his rejection of the promiscuous beloved (*Ep.* 28.3; cf. 38.2).<sup>79</sup> If so, Lucretius has managed a piquant reversal, for promiscuity is precisely what he recommends. Secondly, the euphemism *Chariton mia* ('one of the Graces', 4.1162), which is absent from the models in Plato (*Rep.* 474d–e) and Theocritus (10.24 f.), may derive from Callimachus' flattering conceit of adding Berenice to the number of the Graces (*Ep.* 51.1–2), though it could have reached Lucretius through one of the later imitations.<sup>80</sup> Thirdly, the tableau of the *exclusus amator* ('locked-out lover', 4.1177 f.), a composite picture indebted to Hellenistic epigram, introduces a detail which lies outside the general run of serenade literature when it mentions the kissing of the doorposts (1179). Observation from life cannot be ruled out as the inspiration, but the literary parallel in Callimachus' paraclausithyron epigram (*Ep.* 42.5–6)<sup>81</sup> is surely significant.

This concludes the examination of Callimachus' miscellaneous poetic influences on Lucretius (though other incidental resemblances

<sup>77</sup> Bömer on *Ov. Met.* 2.535.

<sup>78</sup> *Op. cit.* (n. 12), 380 f.

<sup>79</sup> Gow and Page, *op. cit.* (n. 23), 156.

<sup>80</sup> Esp. Meleager, *AP* 5.149.2.

<sup>81</sup> Gow and Page, *op. cit.* (n. 23), 163. In Theoc. 23.18 it may be a gesture of farewell rather than of sentimental adoration (see Gow's note).

can be found).<sup>82</sup> But we should remember that he was also the scholar who produced a famous catalogue of the Alexandrian library and wrote many works on subjects such as winds, rivers, and birds.<sup>83</sup> Among these was an encyclopaedia of marvellous natural phenomena (frs. 407–11), comprising information drawn from a multitude of previous writers (e.g. Aristotle, Theopompus, and Theophrastus). This work laid the foundation for the popular genre of paradoxography taken up by such authors as Antigonus of Carystus.<sup>84</sup> The influence of such writings can be seen in Book 6 of Lucretius, particularly in the sections on *Averna loca* ('Avernian places', 738–839) and extraordinary springs (840–905). Naturally, it is difficult to decide whether he used Callimachus directly or a later doxography partly based upon Callimachus (such as that of Antigonus, to whom we owe the main fragment of the former's work); additionally, Lucretius may have drawn some information from original sources (like Aristotle) or Epicurean studies. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that noxious areas like the *Averna loca* of Lucretius were recorded by Callimachus (fr. 407, xxiv, xxxi, xxxii), with emphasis duly placed upon the death of birds as in Lucretius (6.740 f., 818 f.). As for springs, Callimachus also records fresh water bubbling up in the ocean (ibid. i; cf. Lucr. 6.890 f.), the ignition of objects placed above water (ibid. xx; cf. Lucr. 6.879 f.), and puzzling phenomena of hot and cold water (ibid. v, xxxi; cf. Lucr. 6.840 f.), including the famous spring of Hammon which was cold at day and warm by night (ibid. xvi; cf. Lucr. 6.848 f.);<sup>85</sup> this wonder was recorded

<sup>82</sup> For the sake of completeness, some of these are listed here, though direct influence is very implausible: Lucr. 1.40; cf. Call. *Hymn* 6.137 (but the prayer is an obvious one; cf., e.g., Euphorion, in the Loeb Library volume *Select Papyri*, vol. 3, ed. D. L. Page (London and Cambridge, repr. 1970), 496 line 19; Hermocles, fr. 1.21 Powell); Lucr. 1.125, 920; cf. Call. *Hec.* fr. 313 ('salt tears' is probably an Ennian phrase and can be paralleled by Acc. *Tr.* frs. 420, 578 Ribbeck); Lucr. 2.196 etc.; cf. Call. *Hymn* 2.4 (but also Hom. *Il.* 7.448; Arat. *Phaen.* 733); Lucr. 3.957; cf. Call. *Ep.* 31.5–6 (a proverbial idea: see Kenney ad loc. and Gow on Theoc. 11.75); Lucr. 5.1 f.; cf. Call. *Hymn* 1.92–3 (Enn. *Ann.* 174 is closer); Lucr. 5.256; cf. Call. *Ep.* 44.4 (Hor. *Carm.* 1.31.8 is a much more likely imitation).

<sup>83</sup> R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship: from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford, 1968), 124 f.

<sup>84</sup> Lück, op. cit. (n. 70), 140–1; Pfeiffer, op. cit. (n. 83), 134–5; for a history of the genre see *RE* 18.3 (1949), 1137 f.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Diod. Sic. 17.50.4–5; Ov. *Met.* 15.309 f.; Plin. *NH* 2.228; Curt. Ruf. 4.7.22; Arr. *Anab.* 3.4.2; and see Lück, op. cit. (n. 70), 147.



by Herodotus (4.181.3), but Lucretius probably discovered it in a doxography.

To conclude, I hope to have demonstrated that Lucretius shows the direct or indirect influence of several Callimachean works. In particular, Callimachean motifs appear in certain programmatic statements of his poetic aims and attitudes, just as they do in those of Catullus (albeit with much more depth and significance). Furthermore, we have seen how various other details in Callimachus inspired Lucretian reminiscence by their verbal dexterity or pictorial charm. These echoes are not extensive or especially dramatic, but they help to dissipate further the myth of Lucretius' literary isolation and to indicate the necessity for more study of his poetic art, which is less divorced from Catullus than is generally recognized.<sup>86</sup> Lucretius was not Callimachean in the sense of being an aggressively modernistic poet, but he was sensitive to the invigorating winds of change which were effecting a transformation of the contemporary literary climate.

<sup>86</sup> For instance, Lucretius makes artistic use of several so-called 'Alexandrian' features, such as epanalepsis, spondaic fifth foot, and interlocking word order, though not of course to the same extent as Catullus. It is noteworthy that Nepos, the dedicatee of the Catullan *libellus* ('little book'), pairs Lucretius with Catullus as the best poets of their age and implies that both were *elegantes* ('fastidious', *Att.* 12.4); see further Alfonsi, *op. cit.* (n. 9), 276–7; and compare Cicero's well-known appraisal of Lucretius in terms of *ars* ('art') as well as *ingenium* ('inspiration', *Q. Fr.* 2.10.3).

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## Pattern of Sound and Atomistic Theory in Lucretius

*P. Friedländer*

Rosamund E. Deutsch in her Bryn Mawr dissertation 'The Pattern of Sound in Lucretius' (1939) has pointed an excellent lesson for the reader of the poet: read aloud, accustom your ear to the music of this language, hear the alliterations, assonances, rhymes, the similarities and the contrasts of sounds, the repetition of words, be it in a single verse or in two or spread over five or fifteen or fifty, and you will have an experience to be equalled with few other poems at least in European literature. This lesson I want to pursue. My suggestion is not meant to 'explain' the music of the vowels and consonants. The whole of it can be explained as little as can the lilies of the field; but many of the facts which Miss Deutsch has collected and sifted with care and love admit of an explanation and require it—as Lucretius himself has stated.

The explanation is to be found in an important point of his theory of language (which is after all the theory of Epicurus and the old Atomists). It is well known that he considers 'nature' and 'utility' as the factors at work in the genesis of speech, nature producing the sounds, utility moulding the names of things (Lucretius, 5.1028 f.).<sup>1</sup> This origin, he states, is quite natural and not at all mysterious, as

<sup>1</sup> Cf. C. Giussani, *T. Lucreti Cari De Rerum Natura* (Turin, 1896), i. 267 ff. For other aspects of this problem cf. Phillip DeLacy, 'The Epicurean Analysis of Language', *AJP* 60 (1939), 85. Concerning the background in Democritus cf. E. Frank, *Plato und die sogenannten Pythagoreer* (Halle, 1923), 167 ff.

experience shows the first step even in dogs, horses, and birds. His passage dealing with the 'language' of animals (1056 ff.) is a masterpiece of his art of expressive sounds. At the beginning one feels the dogs' lips move in *canuM cuM priMuM Magna MolossuM Mollia ricta freMunt* ('when the great soft jaws of Molossian hounds first begin to growl'), their teeth uncovering in *Duros NuDaNTia DeNTes* ('baring their hard teeth'), hears their growling in *Rabie RestRicta minantuR* ('they threaten, drawn back in rage'),<sup>2</sup> later on their barking in *cum iam latrant et vocibus omnia complent* ('when they are already barking and filling the whole place with noise'). It is quite obvious that the poet does not merely enjoy adorning a vivid description with a multitude of assonances. He rather presents the natural operation of lips, teeth, and pharynx and then shows the sounds of the animals in such onomatopoeic words as *adulant* ('wheel'), *baubantur* ('howl'), *hinnitus* ('whinny'; 1070 ff.) and onomatopoeic names as *cornix* and *corvus* ('crow', 'raven', 1084). Thus one directly experiences the natural process by which the *πάθη* ('feelings') and *φαντάσματα* ('sense impressions') of men produced and produce appropriate movements, sounds, and words.

This is the foundation of an important thought which Lucretius cherishes and utters again and again.<sup>3</sup> The 'letters'—this name covering at the same time what we call letters and sounds—are the elements of language, a limited number producing the abundance of words and verses. Thus they are an image of the atoms producing the world. To be sure, the variety of the atoms is inconceivably greater, and so many causes as *concursum motus ordo positura figurae* ('conjunctions, movements, order, position, and shape', 1.685 = 2.1021) are required to combine them into the nature of things, while language comes into being merely by the order, *ordine solo* (1.827), of its few *elementa* (= *figurae*), the letters.

The poet gives an example of this scheme (1.907 ff.). Change neighbourhood, position, motion, and the same atoms may produce both fire

<sup>2</sup> <re>*stricta* is Lachmann's conjectural restoration which is almost certain.

<sup>3</sup> Lucretius 1.196 ff., 823 ff., 907 ff., 2.686 ff., 1013 ff. are the main instances. The texts are collected and the question is discussed by H. Diels, *Elementum* (Leipzig, 1899), 5 ff. Diels bars for himself the way to the problem with which this paper is concerned by labelling Lucretius' combination of *ignes et lignum* a pun (*Wortwitz*). The poet never was more serious.

and wood, *ignes et lignum*, just as the words *ligna et ignis* have the same elements, small changes producing the distinction. The basis for this (*sit venia verbo*) atomology was laid early in the poem. In his polemic against Anaxagoras Lucretius had stated that one should find small particles of fire in wood, *in lignis . . . ignis* (891–2), if the theory of the *homoeomeriae* were right. And again (901): *non est lignis tamen insitus ignis* ('yet fire is not implanted within the wood'). The similarity of sound failing to support the wrong doctrine of Anaxagoras does support the orthodoxy of Democritus and Epicurus. It is understood that the poet bears in mind this significant similarity when in the second book (2.386 f.) he contrasts the delicate and therefore more penetrating fire of the lightning with the coarser fire originating in wood: *ignis noster hic e lignis ortus* ('this fire of ours which springs from wood').

In his merciless physiology of love Lucretius compares the stroke of love to the stroke of arms (4.1049 ff.). If a man is struck in battle the red fluid (*umor*) spurts out in the direction opposite to the stroke. If a man is struck by love he wants to throw the fluid (*umorem*) from his body into the body which has darted love (*amorem*) on him:

namque voluptatem praesagit muta cupido.

For dumb desire foretells pleasure.

Then the description of the process is discontinued for a moment (1058 ff.):

Haec Venus est nobis, hinc autemst nomen Amoris,  
hinc illaec primum Veneris dulcedinis in cor  
stillavit gutta . . .

This is our Venus, and this is where the name Amor [Love] comes from; it is from here that the drop of Venus' sweetness first drips into the heart . . .

and the process goes on. Interpreters usually refer *haec* to *voluptatem*, *hinc* to *cupido* of the preceding verse.<sup>4</sup> But *haec . . . hinc . . . hinc . . .* refer to the whole preceding process and *nomen Amoris* is not Cupido but just 'the name Amor'. By *hinc est nomen Amoris* ('this is where the name

<sup>4</sup> So Munro and Ernout. Giussani is on the right track: 'Venus, that is love, inasmuch as what is true and real in love is nothing more than *iacere umorem in corpus de corpore ductum* ['shooting the fluid drawn from the body into a body'], and the *voluptas* ['pleasure'] that goes with it'. Yet he does not follow up the clue but changes *nomen* into *momen*, failing to understand the significance of *nomen amoris*.

Amor comes from') the poet points to the twice-repeated *umor* ('fluid', 1051, 1056), as a few lines later he will again put side by side *umorem*—*amore* ('fluid'/'love', 1065–6).

The invisible must be interpreted from the visible. The wind, for example, is a kind of stream (1.277 ff.). The winds *fluunt* ('flow'), the water moves *flumine abundanti* ('in an overflowing stream') and overthrows *quidquid fluctibus obstat* ('whatever obstructs its current'). This exposition culminates in the outspoken parallelism *flamen*—*flumen* ('gust'/'stream'), symbolizing the parallelism of the subjects (291 f.):

sic igitur debent venti quoque *flamina* ferri;  
 quae veluti validum cum *flumen* procubuere . . .

So in the same way gusts of wind too must be carried along; when they have rolled forward like a powerful stream . . .

Among the different origins of lightning there is one (6.295 ff.),

cum vis extrinsecus incita venti  
 incidit in validam maturo *culmine*<sup>5</sup> nubem;  
 quam cum perscidit extemplo cadit igneus ille  
 vertex quem patrio vocitamus nomine *fulmen*.

. . . when the force of the wind is stirred up and falls from outside on a powerful cloud, after its peak is fully formed; when it has split the cloud, out at once falls that fiery whirl which we call in our native tongue a thunderbolt.

The reference to the native tongue<sup>6</sup> stresses the etymological value of the juxtaposition of *culmen* ('peak') and *fulmen* ('thunderbolt').

The peculiarity of the corporeal is resistance, ἀντιτυπία (1.336 ff.):

. . . *officium* quod corporis exstat  
*officere* atque *obstare* . . .<sup>7</sup>

. . . that which is the function of body, to resist and block . . .

<sup>5</sup> [Editor's note: the readers should note that the most recent editors of the poem accept the emendations of Bentley and Marullus, *gravidam maturo fulmine* ('pregnant with a fully formed thunderbolt') here: with this reading, the wordplay on *fulmen* and *culmen* detected by Friedländer disappears.]

<sup>6</sup> Giussani at least saw that here something is to be explained: 'The expression *quem patrio* . . . , too, has something strange and false about it after such extensive discussion of thunderbolts'. His reference to the unfinished state, to be sure, is wrong.

<sup>7</sup> 'One of his favourite plays on words', Munro. 'Note the play on words', Guissani. Munro ad 1.875 gives examples of what he thinks are repetitions of words 'without any point whatever and therefore to our taste faulty'.

One may imagine that Lucretius would have liked to find the notion of resistance in the very word *corpus* ('body') but that he succeeded in discovering it only in the paraphrase *officium corporis* ('the function of body'), these two words being as nearly connected as e.g. *animi natura* ('the nature of the mind'), *umor aquae* ('the fluid of water'), *taedai corpore* (the body of the torch'), etc.<sup>8</sup>

While the Romans sharply distinguish between *religio* and *superstitio*, Lucretius never has the second word. Both notions being one to him he has made *religio* the bearer of all his hatred. Yet in his grandiose image of this all-oppressing daemon he has purposely fixed an etymology of *superstitio*, thus stressing the identity of both of them (1.63 ff.):

gravi sub RELIGIONE  
 quae caput a caeLI REGIONIbus ostendebat  
 horribili *super* aspectu mortalibus *instans*.

...beneath the heavy weight of religion, which showed its face from the regions of heaven, standing over mortals with fearsome aspect.

The hint was understood in antiquity. Servius (*in Aen.* 8.187) quotes Lucretius as supporting his etymology: SUPERSTITIO *est* SUPERSTANTIUM *rerum*, *i.e. caelestium et divinarum quae SUPER nos STANT, inanis et SUPERfluus timor* ('superstition is the empty and superfluous fear of that which stands over [*superstantium rerum*], that is, of those heavenly and divine things that stand over us').<sup>9</sup> But the same verses seem to contain an etymology of *religio* too. The similarity of sounds between RELIGIONE ('religion') and caeLI REGIONIbus ('from the regions of heaven') haunts the ear once one becomes aware of it. It can hardly be a mere affair of sounds. The sounds express a reality, the fact that religion derives from the heavenly region. The inference is that Lucretius has combined the etymology of *religio* and of *superstitio* in one pattern.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Cf. A. Ernout, *Lucrèce, De Rerum Natura, Commentaire* (Paris, 1925), xxxix.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. J. Bernays, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen* (Berlin, 1885), ii. 6. The intention of Lucretius cannot be doubted. 1.932 very probably contains a hint at the etymology *religio a religando* (*religio* derived from the verb 'to bind'), but only an indirect one in the words *nodis exsolvere* ('to loose the knots'). (A similar hint I find in 5.114, *religione refrenatus* 'reined in by religion.') 6.382 has nothing to do with *indigitamenta*.

<sup>10</sup> It is a truism that an ancient etymologist does not see why one etymology should exclude the other; on the contrary, two are better than one. Plato, *Cratylus*

Lucretius ‘again and again’ (5.821) uses the expression *maternum nomen* (‘the name of mother’) in such a way that one cannot fail to hear in it both *mater* (‘mother’) and *terra* (‘earth’).

linquitur ut merito *maternum nomen* adepta  
*terra* sit, e *terra* quoniam sunt cuncta creata. (5.795–6)

The remaining alternative is that the earth has deservedly obtained the name of mother, since everything was created from earth.

quare etiam atque etiam: *maternum nomen* adepta  
*terra* tenet merito, quoniam genus ipsa creavit. (5.821–2)

So again and again I repeat that the earth has obtained and holds the name of mother deservedly, since she herself created the [human] race.

Consequently the famous passage about the matrimony of Heaven and Earth (2.991 ff.) must be read in the same manner:

umoris guttas MAter cum Terra recepit (2.993)<sup>11</sup>

When mother earth has received the drops of rain

quapropter merito MAternum nomen adepta est. (2.998)

therefore she has deservedly obtained the name of mother.

The poet feels or hears the motherhood of earth guaranteed since language has formed the word *ma-ternus* (‘maternal’) or even the word *ma-ter* (‘mother’).

It cannot be fortuitous either that in each case (2.998; 5.795, 822) *merito* (‘deservedly’) appears in the vicinity of *maternum* (‘maternal’) and *terra* (‘earth’). *Merito Maternum* twice accentuates the suggestive consonants m and t, i.e., the initial letters of *Mater Terra*, and the *er* inherent in *Mater*, *maternus*, and *Terra*. Perhaps it is not fortuitous either that in the passage about the Phrygian Mother

gives an abundance of examples. Lucretius combined the traditional etymology of *religio a religando* (i.e. from the verb ‘to bind’) with a new (?) one *a caeli regionibus* (i.e. from the phrase ‘regions of heaven’).

<sup>11</sup> The editors of Lucretius have a queer dislike of capitals in what we call personifications, thus supporting the philosopher against the poet. No editor of any other poem would hesitate to print *Amoris* in 5.1075, or *Discordia* in 5.440. (Since *Discordia* is the *Νεῖκος* of Empedocles, *quorum* depends upon *intervalla vias*, etc., not upon *Discordia*.)

(2.598 ff.) Lucretius says only *mater... dicta est* ('she is called mother') and *hanc vocitant matrem* ('they call her mother'), since there was no *terra* inducing *maternum nomen* ('the name of mother').<sup>12</sup>

The etymological fury does not stop short even of proper names (1.117–18):

*Ennius ut noster cecinit, qui primus amoeno  
detulit ex Helicone perenni fronde coronam*

As our own Ennius sang, he who first brought down from lovely Helicon a garland of perennial foliage

and (6.93–4)

*spatium praemonstra, callida Musa  
Calliope.*

mark out the course before me, my clever [*callida*] Muse Calliope.

The consonance is so obvious that one is astonished to find the commentators almost silent. I should suppose that they failed to hear it because such 'puns' if heard would have been unworthy of their author. For Lucretius they were not puns but a reality of language and nature. The invocations of his beloved Empedocles (fr. 131)<sup>13</sup> which he cherished in his memory:

*ἄμβροτε Μοῦσα*

immortal Muse

and:

*εὐχομένῳ νῦν αὖτε παράστασο, Καλλιόπεια*

stand by me now once again as I pray, Calliope

he fused into

*currenti spatium praemonstra callida Musa  
Calliope.*

<sup>12</sup> One may restrict the name 'alliteration' to the beginnings of words. But there is not the slightest reason to confine one's attention to these alliterations in the restricted sense.

<sup>13</sup> F. Jobst, *Über das Verhältnis zwischen Lucretius und Empedokles* (Diss. Erlangen, 1907), 14: 'Nor should the invocation of Calliope be put down to imitation of Empedocles. I think just the opposite is evident.'



mark out the course before me as I run, my clever Muse Calliope.

In the name Calliope he heard the Latin word expressing her skill. Calliope *is* clever: *callidus*, 'clever', occurs only once in the whole poem in order to express this very truth. Ennius *is* an eternal poet. A similar chance joined the atoms into the shape of this poet and the atoms of language into his name expressing his eternity and into the verses of his poem.

In the episode on the Magna Mater (2.600 ff.) Lucretius emphasizes the fact that her servants, the Curetes, have a Greek name (629 f.). Later on he interprets their armed appearance as the will of the goddess that one should defend one's country:

praesidioque *parent* decorique *parentibus* esse.

they should be prepared to protect and bring honour to their parents.

The assonance *parent parentibus* ('prepared for their parents') is strange, the average opinion labelling it as a pun is insufficient, and the stress on the parents needs an explanation too. Why not wife and children? One can and must explain the two riddles at the same time: the poet wants to etymologize the *Κούρητες* ('Curetes') as *κοῦροι* ('youths');<sup>14</sup> being sons or youngsters they must defend just their parents. The reader would not understand this meaning (as nobody seems to have understood it) if attention had not been called to *parentes* by the preceding *parent*. 'Preparedness for the parents' is the essence of the Curetes. That may be mannered or not; in any case it illuminates the etymological aim of the poet.

Lucretius in his general use of etymology is not very different from his contemporary Varro<sup>15</sup> or from any other ancient etymologist. What is his own—besides his *furor arduus* ('exalted frenzy')—is the connection of this etymology with his atomism. We may expect to find more evidence in the chapter on atomic shapes (2.333 ff.).

In the principal opposition between sweet and bitter there is on the one hand milk and honey (2.398–9,402–3):

Huc accedit uti mellis lactisque liquores  
IUCUNDO sensu linguae tractentur in ore

<sup>14</sup> Cf. e.g. Strabo 10.68.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. H. Dahlmann, *Varro und die hellenistische Sprachtheorie*, *Problemata* 5 (Berlin, 1932), 1 ff.

To this we can add that liquid honey and milk cause a pleasant sensation to the tongue when rolled around the mouth

ut facile agnoscas e levibus atque RUTUNDIS  
esse ea quae sensus IUCUNDE tangere possint.

So you can easily recognize that those things which are able to affect the senses pleasurably are composed of smooth and round particles.

On the other hand we have wormwood and centaury (2.400–1, 404–5):

at contra taetra absinthi natura feRIque  
centauRI foedo pertorquent ora sapore

But, on the other hand, the unpleasant nature of wormwood and harsh centaury afflicts the mouth with a foul taste

at contra quae AMARA atque aspera cumque videntur  
haec magis AMATIS inter se nexa teneri.

But, on the other hand, everything that appears bitter and harsh is made up of particles more hooked and tightly interconnected with each other.

Round atoms are pleasant to the taste, hooked atoms are bitter. The linguistic similarity of *iucundus*—*rutundus* ('pleasurable' / 'round') and *amarus*—*amatus* ('bitter' / 'hooked') emphasizes the fact.

But of course the similarity of words is only the most obvious mark in this province. Hardly less important is the abundance of smaller congruities. *meLLis Lactisque Liquores...Linguae* ('liquid honey and milk... to the tongue'): the poet enjoys the sound of the liquids melting with the labial nasal.<sup>16</sup> Yet here it is not the mere

<sup>16</sup> Everyone who has a tongue and an ear must combine the double *l* of *mellis* with the beginning *l*'s of the following words. Therefore I entirely disagree with the tendency to restrict the phenomenon under discussion to the repetitions 'of initial phonemes, to the exclusion of any internal or final assonance' (A. Cordier, *L'Allitération Latine* (Paris, 1939), 9). This tendency has its main foothold in the rich collections of E. Wölfflin, 'Über die allitterierenden Verbindungen der lateinischen Sprache', *Sitzungsb. d. bay. Akad. d. Wiss.* 2 (1881), 1 ff. Take at haphazard a few examples: *acer atque acerbus, acute arguteque, amens amans, actor auctor, faciendum fugiendum, fides fiducia, forte fortuna*, etc. It is obvious that these pairs are united not merely by the coincidence of the initial sounds. The analogy of the German 'Stabreim', Teutonic alliteration, important as it is, must not bias the whole of the observation. For the effect of the *l*, cf. D.H. *De comp. verb.* 14 (p. 54.11 U-R): the labial nasal *m* in *mellis* joins with the liquids. Cf. M. Grammont, *Traité de Phonétique* (Paris, 1933), 408: 'The nasal consonants, owing to the softness of their articulation, are suited to the expression of...sweetness and softness'. I wish here to express my gratitude to Leo Spitzer for his criticisms and suggestions.

pattern of sound which appeals to his ear. The *mel* and *lac* ('honey', 'milk') and *liquor* and *lingua* ('liquid', 'tongue') seek one another in sounds as they do in nature. The elements of the words appeal to the tongue and the ears as the atoms of the corresponding things appeal to the taste of the tongue.

'Instead'—*aT ConTRa*: already in this twice-repeated formula the ear feels a kind of offence. The harsh *tc* and *tr* are at once echoed in *taeTRa* ('unpleasant') and later continued in the *rt* and *rq* of the rare *peRToRQuent* ('afflict'),<sup>17</sup> and perhaps in the *r*'s of *natuRa feRique centauRi* ('the nature of harsh centaur'). The double consonants in *aBSinthi* ('wormwood') may fit into the sharp melody of sound. A little later (410 ff.) we have the same contrast of sharp *s*'s and *r*'s and their combination in *SeRRae STRidentis aceRBum hoRRoRem* ('the harsh rasping sound of the shrill saw') contrasting with the gliding *l*'s and *m*'s of *eLeMentis Levibus aequae ac Musaea MeLe* ('of elementary particles as smooth as those of melodious music'). And again (415) we have the sharp sounds of *TaeTRa cadaveRa ToRRent* ('foul-smelling corpses are burning') though this time the contrast is not so impressive in *croco Cilici* ('Cilician saffron'). The vowel *a* per se has no definite cachet; but since it is in *At* ('but') and *Amara Atque Aspera* ('bitter and harsh'), etc. it may turn into an expressive sound (the short *a* more than the long). The assonances *liquOREs*—*in ORE* ('liquid' / 'in the mouth', 398–9) and *ORA sapORE* ('the mouth with a taste', 401) are no mere play of sounds either; they seem to be expressive too, symbolizing the necessary connection of mouth, taste, and fluid.

In 422 ff. we follow the same trend again. The parallel connection of atoms and sensation is expressed by the parallel construction and the similarity of the endings: *quae mulcet cumque... levore creatast* ('whatever soothes is made up of [particles possessed of] smoothness'); *quae cumque... constat... squalore repertast* ('whatever is [irritating and harsh] is found to [have particles possessed of] roughness'). The opposite qualities of the two kinds of atoms are made sensible here by the liquids: *muLcet, principiaLi aLiquo Levore*

<sup>17</sup> *Pertorquet* is used a second time in all that is left of Roman literature in Afranius' *Abducta*, fr. 1 Ribbeck; *quam senticosa verba pertorquet turba* ('what thorny words the commotion hurls around'). Though the metre is obscure and the sense not very clear either, the very sound might be in favour of *turba*.

(‘soothes . . . a certain smoothness of its particles’), there by the sharp double consonants: *moleSTa aSPera conSTat SQualore repeRTaST* (‘. . . is irritating and harsh is found [to have particles possessed of] roughness’). The third kind of atoms which the poet introduces in this passage is neither smooth nor sharp but tickling the senses: *angellis* (‘small points’), *titillare* (‘tickle’), *fecula* (‘wine lees’), *inulae* (‘elecampane’) are the most impressive words both in content and in sound. It is quite possible that this third kind is not so easy to discriminate from the first as the first from the second; but then you must sharpen your ears as you may cultivate your taste.

We stressed and tried to explain the assonances *liquores—in ore* (‘liquid’ / ‘in the mouth’) at the end of two consecutive verses (398 f.) and *ora—sapore* (‘the mouth’ / ‘with a taste’) in one verse (401). It is not likely either that when Lucretius moulded the ends of two successive verses into the rhyme *odores—colores* (‘scents’ / ‘colours’) he merely yielded to a sensory propensity. Of course he liked such sounds as much as Vergil disliked them. But they are meant to express a reality too: the parallelism of the opposite smells and the opposite colours, the contrasts in both fields originating in the respective contrasts of atoms. The passage 730–864 excels in the same pattern of sound which is at the same time a pattern of thought or of reality—reality being the atoms. In those 135 verses one counts thirty-five words of the form *colorem* (-s) (‘colour’), *nitore(m)* (‘sheen’), *odorem* (-s) (‘scent’), *liquorem* (‘liquid’), *vaporem* (‘warmth’), taking into account only the ends of the verses. Of course one can say that Lucretius yields where Vergil resists. But when he yielded he followed the nature of things (1.907 ff.): *quo pacto verba quoque ipsa inter se paulo mutatis sunt elementis* (‘just as the words, too, are made up of letters with a slight alteration amongst themselves’).

A wide prospect opens. It is a matter of fact that not all the material labelled by Miss Deutsch as ‘pattern of sound’ is to be interpreted in the new sense. Yet much of it can. To be sure, between the one sphere where the phenomenon is restricted to a mere acoustic or musical pleasure and the other where it becomes the expression of a fact in nature, a broad boundary zone stretches, which it would be unwise to assign to either of the two sides. Our interpretation may and perhaps must overemphasize the facts. But it is better to run this risk than to close ears and eyes to reality. Only a few remarks will be made before leaving the task to the future readers of the poet.

To return to *callida*—*Calliope* ('clever' / 'Calliope', 6.93 f.): no doubt Lucretius felt and wanted us to feel the kinship of the two words and of the two facts which they represent. Neither can there be any doubt that he gives the tone with *ad CANDIDA CALCIS CURRENTI* ('as I run towards the white chalk line') and that he echoes it with *CAPIAM CUM LAUDE CORONAM* ('that I may win a wreath with praise'). The accord of the *c*'s is unmistakable. It is hard to fancy that he did not connect a meaning with the pattern. *Candida calcis* ('the white chalk line') means the end of the poem, *ad candida calcis currere* ('running towards the white chalk line') is the way of the poet, *capiam cum laude coronam* ('that I may win a wreath with praise') aims at the poet's reward. It goes without saying that the *c* has no more natural affinity with the idea of poetry than has any other letter of the alphabet. But since the poet puts *Calliope* in the middle strengthened by *callida*, the surrounding court of *c*'s becomes expressive through the very force of the centre.<sup>18</sup>

We remember the passage of the second book dealing with the contrast of honey and wormwood. The same contrast occurs in the prooemium of the fourth book (which Lucretius later transferred to the first) as a simile illustrating the severity of the doctrine and the sweetness of the poetical form:

lucida pango  
Carmina musaeo Contingens Cuncta lepore.

I compose bright verses, touching everything with the charm of the Muses.

The *l* of the first word joins with the *l* of the last, three *c*'s surrounding the central *musaeo* ('of the Muses'), which so far remains without resonance. In the simile the similarity is stressed by the repetition of *contingunt* ('touch'), which is followed by a comet's tail of *l*'s:<sup>19</sup>

contingunt mellis dulci flavoque liquore

<sup>18</sup> Cf. M. Grammont, op. cit. (n.16 above), 404: '... it is recognized that poets worthy of the name possess a subtle and penetrating awareness of the expressive value of words and the sounds of which they are composed; to communicate this value to their readers, it often happens that they re-echo the characteristic phonemes of the principal word, in such a way that this word becomes, in short, the generator of the whole line in which it appears...'

<sup>19</sup> Concerning *flavoque* cf. Grammont, op. cit. (n. 16 above), 411: 'The combination of *f* with *l* brings together breath and liquidity, giving the impression of *fluidity*'

they touch [the cup] with the sweet golden liquor of honey

continued a little later with *Ludificetur Labrorum tenuis* ('deceived as far as the lips'). The *m* of *mellis* ('honey') remains without correspondence, as did *musaeo* before; but some verses later both are united in one verse circulating again around *contingere* ('touch'):

et quasi *musaeo* dulci contingere *melle*.

and, as it were, to touch [philosophy] with the sweet honey of the Muses.

The opposite side dealing with the bitterness is much less elaborated than in the second book. Yet the sounds are the same: *aBSinthiaTaeTRa* ('bitter wormwood', 4.11 = 1.936) which not only means ugly but also has that sound, and *Amarum Absinthi laticem* ('the bitter juice of wormwood', 4.15 = 1.940) with its sharp *a*'s—sharp not so much by their own nature as because of the significance of the words in question. There can be no doubt that these different sounds had very specific cachets—not always the same, to be sure—in the poet's mind or sense. One cannot fail to hear the similar double consonants and *a*'s (rising out of a series of *o*'s) in a passage combining sharp odours (4.123 ff.):

suo de corpore odorem  
 expirAnt Acrem, pAnAces, AbsinthiA taetrA,  
 hAbrotonique grAves et tristiA centaureA

[everything that] exhales from its body an acrid smell, such as all-heal, bitter wormwood, strong-smelling southernwood, and harsh centaury

or the terrible sound of (3.966)

in *baratrum* nec *Tartara* deditur *atra*

delivered to the pit of black Tartarus

where the terribleness is guaranteed, if that be necessary, by the famous line of Ennius (*Ann.* 140):

at tuba terribili sonitu *taratantara* dixit.

But the trumpet with its fearsome sound cried *taratantara*.

Or observe both the meanings and the sounds of words with which *taeter* ('foul') is combined: in *Tartara taetra* ('to foul Tartarus', 5.1126);

*stercore de taetro* ('from foul-smelling dung', 2.872); *taetro quasi conspurcare sapore* ('it contaminated, so to speak, with a foul taste...'; 6.22); *taetro concrescere odore* ('to form with a foul stench', 6.807); *at contra nobis caenum taeterrima cum sit spurcicies* ('but, on the other hand, though mud is to us the most disgusting filth...'; 6.976). Or hear the wind in verses like

validi vis incita venti (6.137)

the force of a strong wind rises

principio venti vis verberat incita pontum (1.271)

in the first place, the force of the wind rises and pounds the sea

vis violenti per mare venti (5.1226)

the force of a violent wind over the sea.

The *v*'s give a blowing sound, the *i*'s whistle, and the rhyme *violenti—venti* stresses the natural relationship between violence and wind (giving, moreover, if I can trust my feeling, a swinging movement suited to wind and waves). Let us not do injustice to the poet. It is understood that no one should imagine him eagerly seeking and toilsomely combining sounds of words in order to imitate sounds in nature. He probably did that just as much and as little as Shakespeare:

When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees,

or Sainte-Beuve:<sup>20</sup>

Dans les buissons séchés la brise va sifflant,

the wind goes whistling through the dry bushes,

or Homer:

ἰστία δέ σφιν,  
τριχθὰ τε καὶ τετραχθὰ διέσχισε (F)ἰς ἀνέμοιο

in three and in four the force of the wind ripped the sails

or Goethe:

<sup>20</sup> Quoted by Grammont, *op. cit.* (n. 16 above), 391.

Du liebes Kind, komm geh mit mir!  
 Gar schöne Spiele spiel ich mit dir

Beloved child, come go with me! I will play delightful games with you

(where the poet himself states his intention: *In dürren Blättern säuselt der Wind*, 'the wind is rustling in the dry leaves'). The music of the wind blew through the mind of these poets similar melodies with different keys.<sup>21</sup> It is evident too that Lucretius did not aim merely at the external sound. He uses a similar pattern describing the storm of the lover (5.964):

vel violenta viri vis atque impensa libido

or the man's violent strength and importunate desire

or the energy of the discoverer (1.72):

ergo vivida vis animi pervicit.

So the lively force of his mind prevailed.

For it is the same force moving as wind in nature and as *ventus vitalis in ipso corpore* ('life-sustaining wind within the body itself', 3.128) and appearing as sound in the work of the poet.

Lucretius has a queer inclination for the old-fashioned phrase *multis modis* or *multimodis* ('in many ways'). It gains expressive strength when he combines it first with *multa* ('many'), secondly with *mutata* ('exchanged') or *mixta* ('combined') or *minuta* ('tiny'), thirdly with *semina* ('seeds') or *primordia* ('primary particles'). So one sees what drives him to use such verses again and again, e.g.

*semina multimodis in rebus mixta teneri* (4.644)

seeds combined in many different ways are contained within things

*sed quia multa modis multis mutata per omne...*  
 (1.1024)

<sup>21</sup> For this creative act onomatopoeia is a modern and bad expression, the Greek rhetoricians using the word in a much more appropriate manner. Cf. e.g. Quintilian, 8.6.31: *Onomatopoeia, id est fictio nominis, Graecis inter maximas habita virtutes nobis vix permittitur*, etc. ('Onomatopoeia, that is the coining of words, considered by the Greeks to be one of the greatest virtues, is scarcely permitted to us...') and 1.5.72; *Rhetores Graeci*, edd. Spengel-Hammer, i.368; *Rhet. Gr.*, ed. Spengel, iii.196. The notion of 'making words' is present everywhere. Grammont, op. cit. (n. 16 above), 377 ff. ('Phonétique impressive') rightly distinguishes between *onomatopée* and *mot impressif*.



but because many particles were exchanged in many ways throughout the universe...

propterea quia *multa modis primordia multis*  
*mixta*... (4.1220–1)

because many primary particles are combined in many different ways

*multa modis multis multarum semina rerum*  
quod *permixta* gerit tellus... (6.789–90)

because the earth bears many seeds of many things, mixed together in many different ways.

Not through the nature of the sound but through the associative force of alliteration do the *m*'s become for Lucretius a badge of the atoms. To this scheme by other artistic measures he gives such an astonishing extension as (1.812–16)

adiutamur enim dubio procul atque alimur nos  
certis ab rebus, certis aliae atque aliae res.  
nimirum, quia *multa modis communia multis*  
*multarum rerum in rebus primordia mixta*  
sunt, ideo *variis variae res rebus* aluntur.

For without doubt we are aided and nourished by particular substances, and other things again by particular substances in turn. Undoubtedly, because many primary particles of many things are shared and combined in things in many ways, different things are nourished by different substances.

He interlaces the *m*-words (*multa—communia—primordia*, 'many shared primary particles'; *modis—multis*, 'in many ways'), combines them with the doubling of different forms of *res* ('thing', 'substance') which he varies three times and accompanies with doublings of *certus* ('particular'), *alius* ('other'), *varius* ('different'), establishing an image of the world of atoms through the sounds and the order of words.<sup>22</sup>

A remarkable variation of the same scheme we hear finally in the description of the sun motes used as a simile of the moving atoms (2.116 ff.): first the chain of *m*'s

<sup>22</sup> Munro: 'Assonances and alliterations of all kinds seem to possess for Lucretius an irresistible attraction.' Giussani: 'Note the repetition and the interweaving of the words *res, multus, varius*, rendering the image of the phenomenon described more vivid.'

*multa minuta modis multis per inane videtis  
corpora misceri;*

you see many tiny particles mingling in many ways through the empty air  
then a pattern of words meaning struggle and impressing upon the  
senses sounds like *ter*, *cer*, *tur*, and *t's* and *p's*

*et velut aeterno certamine proelia pugnas  
edere turmatim certantia;*

and, as though in everlasting conflict, engaging in war and battles and  
struggling in troops

at last the unique and beautiful

*conciliis et discidiis exercita crebris,*

driven on through many meetings and many partings,

the opposite prefixes *con-* and *dis-* joining with almost the identical  
root words *-ciliis*, *-cidiis* which by their very sound and rhythm tickle  
the ear as the motes glitter in the eye.

*A Venere finis.* It is understood that Lucretius felt the significance  
or significances of her name, the main province of ancient etymology  
being the names of the gods.<sup>23</sup> Varro (*De lingua latina* 5.61) ety-  
mologizes Venus as the force of tying together fire and water, man  
and woman: *horum vincionis vis Venus* ('Venus is the force binding  
these things'). He contents himself with the twofold *v* and the ass-  
onance *vin—ven* (cf. Plautus, *Trin.* 658: *vi Veneris vincutus*, 'bound by  
the force of Venus'), whereas the much more banal etymology in  
Cicero's *De natura deorum* (3.62) *Venus quia venit* ('Venus because  
she comes [to all]') utilizes the whole root. Lucretius could not stop his  
etymological vein just short of Venus. When he writes (1.227)

*unde animale genus generatim in lumina vitae  
redducit Venus?*

whence does Venus bring back the race of animals after their kind into the  
light of life?

<sup>23</sup> Plato, *Cratylus* 400d–408d. Cf. M. Warburg, *Zwei Fragen zum Kratylus*, *Neue Philologische Untersuchungen* 5 (Berlin, 1929), 63 ff.

he feels her name blending almost the whole of *genus* ('race', stressed by the repetition of *gen-*) with the alliterative beginning of *vita* ('life'). Again he connects *vita* ('life'), *voluptas* ('pleasure'), and *genus* ('race') with *Venus* (2.172):

ipsaque deducit dux vitae dia Voluptas  
et res per *Veneris* blanditur saecla propagent,  
ne *genus* occidat humanum

and divine Pleasure herself, the guide of life, leads them on and entices them to reproduce their species through the act of Venus, lest the human race should die out

or he seems to replace *voluptas* ('pleasure') by *iuvare* ('give pleasure') in 2.437:

aut iuvat egrediens *genitales* per *Veneris* res.

or gives pleasure as it is emitted in the reproductive act of Venus.

The Homeric formula *ἔργα Ἀφροδίτης* ('the work of Aphrodite') has in its Latin translation *RES per Veneris* ('the act of Venus') and still more *per Veneris RES* a very expressive sound—expressive only in general or expressing something?

There is a strong presumption that the first prooemium, too, must contain such *lumina ingenii etymologici* ('flashes of etymological genius'); but I refrain from attempts to dissect them. Nor do I follow up the traces of other more or less significant sounds spread over the prooemium. This is only a secondary melody in the orchestra and modern readers may fail to perceive it or may sometimes dislike it. There may be a danger too of hearing the grass grow, and I am not quite sure whether this danger has been avoided throughout. But the danger of seeing and hearing too little is much greater, as this paper will have demonstrated. One may minimize each single case, but on the whole one should not fail to become aware of what Lucretius has expressly stated to be the very nature of language.

And perhaps it *is* the nature of language. He may express it in the wrong way because he expresses it in the terms of his atomistic theory. But the poet in him is wiser than the philosopher. And one may look upon his pattern of sound as a symbol of the fact that poetry is very likely to repeat the creative work of language on a

different level. Let Friedrich Rückert, the most skillful artificer in German poetry, plead the case of the poet:<sup>24</sup>

Das Wortspiel schelten sie, doch scheint es angemessen  
Der Sprache, welche ganz hat ihre Bahn gemessen.

Daß sie vom Anbeginn, eh'es ihr war bewußt,  
Ein dunkles Wortspiel war, wird ihr nun klar bewußt.

Womit unwissentlich sie allerorten spielen,  
Komm und geflissentlich laß uns mit Worten spielen!

They find fault with wordplay, but it seems appropriate to language that has fully measured out her way. That she was from the beginning, before she knew it, an obscure wordplay is now becoming clearly known to her. Everywhere they play with words unconsciously; come, let us play with them deliberately!

This is the fundamental aspect which one must bear in mind lest one misjudge the pattern of sound as a mannerism in Lucretius. The second point is the well-known peculiarity of Latin, or more correctly of the Italic languages, that they, much more than Greek, yielded to the magic of sounds. The prayers and spells, the legal formulas and the instructions of the priests with their ornaments of assonances, rhymes, alliterations, *figurae sermonis* set for the poets and writers of Rome a cast of solemn speech never to be forgotten.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Friedrich Rückert, *Die Weisheit des Brahmanen*, Erste Stufe, 55. Rückert, being a Mainfranke, rhymed *angemessen* with *Bahn gemessen*. See the end of my *Rhythmen und Landschaften im zweiten Teil des Faust* (Weimar, 1953).

<sup>25</sup> Cf. C. Thulin, *Italische sakrale Poesie und Prosa* (Berlin, 1906); F. Leo, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur* (Berlin, 1913), i. 34 ff.; E. Fraenkel, *Plautinisches im Plautus* (Berlin, 1922), 359 ff.; E. Norden, *Aus altrömischen Priesterbüchern*, Acta Reg. Societatis Humaniorum Litterarum Lundensis 29 (Lund, 1939), *passim*. It may not be useless to add a few words from a rather remote text, *The Johns Hopkins Tabellae Defixionum*, Supplement to *AJP* 33 (1912), by W. S. Fox: ... *eripias salutem, corpus colorem, vires virtutes . . . tradas illunc feбри quartanae tertianae cottidianae, quas cum illo lucent delucent, illum devincant vincant*... ('may you strip him of health, physique and colour, strength and manliness . . . may you deliver him up to quartan and tertian and quotidian fevers, may they wrestle with and overpower him, conquer and utterly defeat him') (*delucent* is a probable restoration of the editor. I think the original form must have run *vincant devincant*). A trace in Lucretius: H. Haffter, *Untersuchungen zur altlateinischen Dichtersprache*, *Problemata* 10 (Berlin, 1934), 81. Lucretius 1.1105, *neve ruant* suggests *neve lue rue* in the *Carmen arvale*; but the resemblance may be fortuitous.

The third aspect is the atomistic doctrine of language providing Lucretius with a rational bond by which to connect his most personal pattern of sound with the philosophy he professed.<sup>26</sup> The fourth aspect is the inexplicable individuality of his tone.

Another Tennyson could imagine the Roman poet haunted by the crowd of sounds, smooth or harsh, struggling and craving for each other, cajoling or wounding the ear, deceiving and telling the truth, forming words, and words into verses, and verses into the most extraordinary poem of Rome.

<sup>26</sup> The lost book of Democritus, *Περὶ εὐφώνων καὶ δυσφώνων γραμμάτων* (68 [55] v 18 DK) may have contained the theory of what is practice and art in Lucretius. In the same line seems to be Philodemus, *Περὶ ποιημάτων* col. 24 Hausrath.

## The Significant Name in Lucretius

Jane M. Snyder

Despite the recent attention to verbal play as a characteristic of Lucretius' work the puns on proper names in *De rerum natura* have not been studied in any detail nor analysed as a group.<sup>1</sup> This paper suggests that such puns in Lucretius' poem, while not widely used, do occur in connection with some major themes and important figures in the epic, and should be recognized for their contribution to Lucretius' poetic and didactic techniques.

Unlike the puns on names in Plautus, the purpose of Lucretius' puns is essentially serious. His puns tend to be etymological, and thus to reinforce the Epicurean theory that the name and the object or person named were originally of close relationship in the initial development of speech as described in Epicurus' *Letter to Herodotus* (75–6) and in Lucretius 5.1028–90.<sup>2</sup> Lucretius' etymological interests

<sup>1</sup> On verbal play in Lucretius, see P. Friedländer, 'Pattern of Sound and Atomistic Theory in Lucretius', *AJP* 62 (1941), 16–34 [= Ch. 15 of this volume]; D. West, *The Imagery and Poetry of Lucretius* (Edinburgh, 1969), especially 94–114; and J. M. Snyder, 'Word-Play in Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*, unpublished dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1969. On puns in other Roman authors, see, for example, C. J. Mendelsohn, *Studies in the Word-Play in Plautus* (Philadelphia, 1907); G. E. Duckworth, *The Nature of Roman Comedy* (Princeton, 1952), especially 345–56; and J. C. Austin, *The Significant Name in Terence* (Urbana, 1922); H. Holst, 'Die Wortspiele in Ciceros Reden', *SO Suppl.* 1 (Oslo, 1925), especially 47–53 (he lists a total of 39 puns on proper names in Cicero's speeches); and G. J. M. Bartelink, *Etymologisering bij Vergilius* (Amsterdam, 1965).

<sup>2</sup> Recent discussions of the theory include H. Offermann, 'Lukrez V 1028–1090', *RhM* 115 (1972), 150–6 and P. H. Schrijvers, 'La pensée de Lucrèce sur l'origine du langage', *Mnemosyne* 27 (1974), 337–64.

are revealed in his puns on the literal meaning of a name and in his association of a name with a similar-sounding word through the device of *paronomasia*. Lacking in his poem, as we might expect, is any intentional distortion of a name to create humour, as in the examples cited by Quintilian (6.3.53), in which *Tullius* the thief becomes *Tollius* and *Placidus* is transformed to *Acidus*.

Although some of Lucretius' puns on names have been remarked upon in detail by various scholars, Lucretius' poem contains several further examples of significant names which have gone largely unnoticed by the poet's students and commentators.<sup>3</sup> One such pun can be found in 3.750 in the midst of one of the proofs for the mortality of the soul. Here Lucretius argues against the concept of transmigration of the soul, pointing out that lions always act like lions and deer always act like deer because their respective spirits and bodies are composed of particular combinations of atoms which grow and die in a mutually interdependent relationship. If the spirit were immortal, he argues through *reductio ad absurdum*, we would see such ridiculous sights as a Hyrcanian canine, *canis Hyrcano de semine* (3.750), running away from an attacking deer. The deliberate collocation of *canis* and *Hyrcani* serves first of all to point out that just as the two words share a similar sound as the result of particular combinations of letters, so *canis* and the *Hyrcani* share a predictable capability of ferocity as a result of fixed combinations of atoms. We have here another example of what has been called Lucretius' 'atomology', through which the poet offers illustrations, within his own verses, of his often-repeated analogy between the atoms and the letters of the alphabet.<sup>4</sup> The *paronomasia* further serves to point

<sup>3</sup> On *Averna* (6.740), see the commentaries by W. A. Merrill (New York, 1907), 766; W. E. Leonard and S. B. Smith (Madison, 1942), 826; and C. Bailey (Oxford, 1947), 1666. On Lucretius' derivation of the name of the *Curetes* from *kouroi* ('youths', as emphasized in *parent...parentibus*, 'prepared...for their parents', 2.643), see P. Friedländer (see above, n. 1), 21: "Preparedness for the parents" is the essence of the *Curetes*. D. West (above, n. 1), 108, points out that the connection with *kouroi* is further emphasized in Lucretius' choice of vocabulary implying youthfulness (e.g., *ludunt*, 'play', 2.631).

<sup>4</sup> See 1.196–8, 814–29, 907–14; 2.688–99 and 1013–22; and cf. P. Friedländer (above, n. 1), 17. The quantitative difference in this example (*cānis Hyrcāno*) probably does not obscure the assonance significantly (cf. *rēligione...rēgionibus*, 1.63–4 and the discussion in Friedländer, 19).

out the appropriateness of the name of the *Hyr cani*, famous for the special ferocity of their *canes*.<sup>5</sup>

Another example of an explanatory pun on a proper name occurs in Lucretius' final invocation near the opening of Book 6, where he calls upon *callida musa Calliope* ('clever muse Calliope', 6.93–4), a pun noted briefly by both Friedländer and Bailey.<sup>6</sup> The line describing the muse, *Calliope, requies hominum divumque voluptas* ('Calliope, repose of humans and pleasure of gods', 6.94) recalls the poet's address to Venus in the first line of the epic. After the attack on Venus at the end of Book 4, however, Lucretius could scarcely return to her in his final appeal for poetic inspiration and recognition here in the last book of the poem. Much more appropriate is Calliope, not only because she is the muse of epic poetry, but also because, as the sound of her name suggests, she is *callida*, clever. The assonance calls attention to the literal meaning of her Greek name—'fine-voiced'—and emphasizes her shrewd and skilful nature. She is the symbol of the practical wisdom which the student of Epicurean philosophy should now be attaining as he completes the final stages in the course of Lucretius' instruction.

In some instances, Lucretius uses the truth which he finds in a name to his own advantage to attack his opponents or to point out some negative quality.<sup>7</sup> In connection with his attack against Heraclitus' obscure style, commentators have noted the niceties of the oxymoron in the phrase *Heraclitus... clarus ob obscuram linguam* ('Heraclitus famous for his obscure language', 1.638–9). What has not been remarked upon, however, is the additional scorn contained in the pun on Heraclitus' name. *Clarus* is the Latin equivalent for the last half of the name *Herakleitos*. Although *clarus* and *kleitos* are not from the same root, their meanings overlap since *clarus* can mean not only 'clear' but also 'brilliant' or 'famous'. Lucretius implies that the

<sup>5</sup> The dogs of the *Hyr cani* were commonly thought to be half-tiger (see Verg. *Aen.* 4.367, *Hyr canaeque admorunt ubera tigres*, 'you were suckled by Hyrcanian tigresses').

<sup>6</sup> P. Friedländer (above, n. 1), 20–1 and C. Bailey (above, n. 3), 158.

<sup>7</sup> In the opening prooemium, Mars is subtly associated with *mors* ('death') and is represented as the antithesis to the life-giving forces of Venus which Lucretius celebrates; cf. J. P. Elder, 'Lucretius 1.1–49', *TAPA* 85 (1954), 116. Later in Book 1, in the attack against Heraclitus, Lucretius describes that philosopher's followers as *stolidi* ('fools', 1.641), which Bailey (above, n. 3), 714 labels as 'probably an intentional pun' on *Stoici*. A similar kind of pun can be found in 5.1137, where *superba*, 'proud', suggests the name of Tarquinius Superbus.



theories of Heraclitus are splendid examples of obfuscation, so that the man indeed deserves his name.

Finally, there are several instances of puns on proper names in the poem in which the 'truth' of the name is emphasized for the sake of praising an individual of whom Lucretius approves. In the light of the already recognized puns on the names Ennius and Scipio, we can observe a similar kind of verbal play involving the names of the two most important sources from whom Lucretius draws his material and his method.<sup>8</sup> When Lucretius discusses his great predecessor in philosophical poetry, Empedocles, he treats him with much greater respect than he does Heraclitus, for although he criticizes Empedocles as a philosopher, he eulogizes him as a poet, praising him for his godlike poetry and extolling Sicily for giving birth to such a man. Lucretius devotes no less than 18 lines to this description in a passage (1.716–33) which includes such subtleties as hidden reference to the four elements of Empedocles.<sup>9</sup> Through this eulogy, Lucretius portrays Empedocles as truly *empedos*, 'firmly entrenched' in a lofty position among poets. True to his name, he stands firm and fast on the heights of his volcanic island—until, that is, he and the other Pluralists beneath him (*inferiores*, 1.734) literally come crashing down a few lines later because of the mistakes in their physics. Ironically, Empedocles' firm ground crumbles to pieces (1.740–1):

principiis tamen in rerum fecere ruinas  
et graviter magni magno cecidere ibi casu.

But in their elemental particles of matter they crashed in ruins, and because they were great, all the more heavily did they fall.

Lastly, what of Epicurus *ipse*? In the same catalogue of heroes in which Scipio is mentioned, Lucretius pays tribute to the solar intensity

<sup>8</sup> On *Ennius* . . . *perenni* ('Ennius . . . perennial', 1.117–18), see P. Friedländer (above, n. 1), 20 and C. Bailey (above, n. 3), 158. As H. A. J. Munro, *T. Lucreti Cari De Rerum Natura* (Cambridge, 1886), ii. 226 noted, the phrase *belli fulmen* ('thunderbolt of war', 3.1034) brings out the association suggested in Cicero (*Balb.* 34) and elsewhere between the name *Scipio* and the Greek word for thunderbolt, *skēptos*. For a full discussion of all these passages (including also Verg. *Aen.* 6.842–3), see O. Skutsch, 'De Fulminum Appellatione Scipionibus Indita', in *Studia Enniana* (London, 1968), 145–50.

<sup>9</sup> For two brief discussions of the allusions to air, earth, fire, and water in the description of Sicily see L. MacKay, 'De rerum natura 1.717 sqq.', *Latinitas* 3 (1955), 210 and J. M. Snyder, 'Lucretius' Empedoclean Sicily', *CW* 65 (1972), 217–18.

of Epicurus' brilliance through the *paronomasia* in the line in which he is named and the monosyllabic line ending which concludes the description (3.1042–4):

ipse *Epicurus* obit *decurso* lumine vitae,  
qui genus humanum ingenio superavit et omnis  
restinxit, stellas exortus ut aetherius sol.

Even Epicurus himself perished when the light of his life had run its course—he who surpassed the whole human race in genius and outshone them all, just as the sun rises in the sky and outshines the stars.

The Greek *epikouros* is one who acts as an ally, who runs to the aid of someone; the word is in fact from the same root as the Latin *curro*, 'run'.<sup>10</sup> The *paronomasia Epicurus . . . decurso* stresses the double significance of Epicurus' name, for it emphasizes his role as the 'helper' of mankind, while at the same time anticipating the comparison between the light of his genius and the brilliance of the sun as it travels on its daily course.

All of this evidence suggests that we should modify the disparaging terms which have sometimes been applied to Lucretius' puns on proper names. These puns are not mere 'jingles'. Rather, they serve to illustrate the Epicurean notion that language developed not through *nomos* (convention) but through *physis* (nature), so that the name of a thing or person is theoretically not entirely arbitrary. In addition, the wordplays involving proper names (together with other kinds of verbal play) reinforce Lucretius' analogy between the atoms and the letters of the alphabet by pointing out how the *elementa* of the name correspond to the *elementa* of the person. Finally, all of these puns show a certain rhetorical flair on the part of Lucretius, who, like Cicero, uses puns on names to further his argument. Just as Lucretius' great predecessors Empedocles and Ennius have lived up to the meaning which he perceives in their names, so too Epicurus is presented as truly an *epikouros*, our helper and ally in the search for knowledge and tranquillity.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> See H. Frisk, *Griechisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg, 1960), 537–8.

<sup>11</sup> This paper was originally delivered, in somewhat different form, at the meetings of the American Philological Association in Washington, D.C., December 30, 1975. The author wishes to thank Professor June Allison Amaral and the anonymous *CW* referee for several helpful suggestions.

Making a Text of the Universe:  
Perspectives on Discursive Order in the  
*De Rerum Natura* of Lucretius

*Duncan Kennedy*

In the early nineteenth century, as physics was moving towards an apogee of determinism, the Marquis de Laplace conjured up the figure of a demon who, knowing the position and velocity of every mass in the universe, could calculate the universe's entire history, past and future.<sup>1</sup> Many who have studied the physical world have harboured dreams of such a final theory (or nightmares, as it may be, in which there is no room for free will; Laplace's figure was a demon). There has been much talk in recent years, brought to wider public attention particularly by the success of Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time*, of physicists perhaps achieving a 'grand unified theory' (otherwise loosely and rather misleadingly nicknamed a 'theory of everything'), as well as a fierce debate over whether such an end is feasible. We might see a pretension of this sort already foreshadowed in Lucretius' *De rerum natura* (*DRN*). In a famous passage in Book 1 (936–50), Lucretius compares people who are ignorant of the true workings of the world, and so suffer from irrational fears, to sick children. To encourage them to drink medicine which they may shy away from, doctors smear the rim of the cup with honey to encourage the children to drink it all up and so recover. Similarly, Lucretius says, he smears the cup of his Epicurean

<sup>1</sup> Cf. D. Locke, *Science as Writing* (New Haven/London, 1992), 153.

philosophy with the sweet honey of the Muses so as to entice the reader into reading the whole poem ‘while you are learning to see in what shape is framed the whole nature of things’ (*dum perspicis omnem | naturam rerum qua constet compta figura*, 949–50).

Lucretius’ poem thus sets itself up as offering a final, definitive explanation of every phenomenon in the universe. The phrase ‘the world of the text’ is often bandied about; here, however, we are being offered ‘the text of the world’. But even if this text claims to offer a ‘theory of everything’—in this case of a universe thought of as infinite in extension, and with no beginning and no end in time—it cannot be coextensive with what it sets out to describe. As Alessandro Schiesaro has recently remarked, ‘the most faithful replica of the true nature of the universe would make for a non-circumscribed and virtually non-readable text.’<sup>2</sup> ‘Virtually’ here feels like a prevarication. Could a text be readable which had no limits and no internal order? Or is it by conceiving of that universe *as* a ‘text’ that it becomes ‘readable’? The challenge for a work such as the *De rerum natura*, with its totalizing claims, is then to render *all* phenomena ‘intratextual’. This essay will therefore explore what that challenge may entail and what limits it may come up against. In considering how the ‘universe’ is treated as ‘text’, we may also conversely get a sense of the limits of universalizing theories of the text.

The palpable paradox of confining the infinite within the finite is addressed in the description of Epicurus in the prologue to Book 1 (62–79). Epicurus is presented as a military leader of epic stature ‘breaking open outwards the confining bars of nature’s gates’ (70–1) which kept mankind’s understanding shut in. The consequences of his action are described in the lines that follow (72–7):

ergo uiuida uis animi peruicit, et extra  
processit longe flammantia moenia mundi  
atque omne immensum peragrauit mente animoque,  
unde refert nobis uictor quid possit oriri,  
quid nequeat, finita potestas denique cuique  
quanam sit ratione atque alte terminus haerens.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> ‘The Palingenesis of *De Rerum Natura*’, *PCPS* 40 (1994), 81–107, at 82.

<sup>3</sup> Where an explicit translation of the Latin is not offered, I have generally placed an argumentative paraphrase before or, as here, after the extract.

The lively vigour of his mind prevailed, and he marched out beyond the flaming ramparts of the world and traversed in mind and thought the immeasurable universe, from where he returns to us as victor, telling us what can come into being and what cannot, in short, how the potentiality of each thing, its *potestas* [its quality of being *potis*, being able to be something], is limited [*finita*, enclosed within boundaries], and each thing has its boundary stone deeply set.

Epicurus' sally carries him beyond the flaming ramparts of the world—but in his mind and imagination; and like a conquering Roman general, he sends reports home about the regions he has conquered. But his conquest is, paradoxically, a superhuman one, for he traverses the universe (*omne*, 74, everything there is), which is *immensum*, 'immeasurable'. Yet measure it is precisely what he is represented as doing, for he maps and surveys the universe, as a general would conquered territory, showing how each phenomenon is subject to immutable laws, figured in the image of plots of land marked out with deep-set, and so immovable, boundary stones (cf. *alte terminus haerens*, 77). The metaphor rendered 'literal' in this description is that of property: what can and cannot happen in the physical world is limited (cf. *finita*, 76), 'determined' by the 'properties' of matter, and these properties can be inferred. Epicurus conquers the universe, but conveys his control, his understanding, of it by textualizing it: an infinite phenomenon, the universe, is 'captured' within the confines of a finite phenomenon, a text. An established tradition of Lucretian scholarship has in turn mapped some of the ways in which the *DRN* uses textual phenomena (notably combinations of letters) as analogies for the workings of an atomic universe; and how these seek to transcend the status of analogies to become themselves examples of those workings.<sup>4</sup>

In setting itself up as a 'theory of everything', Lucretius' text emerges out of, and seeks to contest and displace, other descriptions of the world which make similar claims for themselves, primarily those modes of description which would place the divine at the centre of things. The *DRN* early on characterizes itself as hostile to

<sup>4</sup> Cf. P. Friedländer, 'Pattern of Sound and Atomistic Theory in Lucretius', *AJP* 62 (1941), 16–34 [= Ch. 15 of this volume]; J. M. Snyder, *Puns and Poetry in Lucretius' De Rerum Natura* (Amsterdam, 1980); S. E. Hinds, 'Language at the Breaking Point: Lucretius 1.452', *CQ* 37 (1987), 450–3; A. Schiesaro, 'Palingenesis' (n. 2 above).

religion and its modes of explanation. Humankind is depicted as lying grovelling under the heel of *religio* until Epicurus arises as its champion and overthrows the oppressor (1.62–79). His triumph reverses the earlier situation (1.78–9):

quare religio pedibus subiecta uicissim  
obteritur, nos exaequat uictoria caelo.

Therefore superstition in its turn lies crushed beneath his feet, and his victory lifts us level with the skies.

Thanks to the theories of Epicurus, we are now in the position formerly occupied by the gods. Discourse seeking to explain the physical world often explicitly sets itself up in competition with that of religion; the trope of humankind taking the place of God once a theory of sufficient explanatory power has been found is not peculiar to the *DRN*. Take for example the notorious concluding paragraph of Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time*:

However, if we do discover a complete theory, it should in time be understandable in broad principle by everyone, not just a few scientists. Then we shall all, philosophers, scientists, and just ordinary people, be able to take part in the discussion of the question of why it is that we and the universe exist. If we find the answer to that, it would be the ultimate triumph of human reason—for then we would know the mind of God.<sup>5</sup>

The method of the project is figured in terms of appropriation. Lucretius' appropriations of the characteristic language and images of his opponents are adventurous, but present potential problems as well. In his praise of Epicurus in the prologue to Book 3, Lucretius proclaims that once the constraints on his imagination are removed by reading the philosophy of Epicurus, the whole universe lies open to be viewed in his mind; the ramparts of the world roll apart, and he sees things taking place throughout the whole void (14–17); the true nature of the gods can be seen (18–24), whilst nowhere is there a trace of the fabled Underworld (25). For one who has read and understood the philosophy of Epicurus, the earth is no obstacle to seeing everything that goes on below our feet (26–7). Lucretius characterizes the impact of Epicurean ideas as a vertiginous experience,

<sup>5</sup> S. Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* (London, 1988), 175.

with a view stretching to infinity above our heads to the universe as a whole, and downwards below the human scale to the microscopic level of atoms and void. But it is more than a vertiginous experience, for he says that at this he is seized with ‘a sort of divine delight, and a shuddering, that by your [Epicurus’] power, nature thus stands so manifestly laid open and uncovered in every part’ (28–30):

his ibi me rebus quaedam diuina uoluptas  
 percipit atque horror, quod sic natura tua ui  
 tam manifesta patens ex omni parte relecta est.

The imagery Lucretius uses here is that of mystic revelation, and this picks up and elaborates earlier elements of the same kind, as in the opening lines of Book 3 in praise of Epicurus, which are cast in the syntactical pattern traditionally associated with hymns of praise to the gods. In the prologue to Book 5, Lucretius actually calls Epicurus a god (8), though he immediately goes on to interpret this from an Epicurean perspective which held that the traditional gods of mythology were in origin mortals who had conferred outstanding benefits on humankind, and had been given a special and honorific status after their deaths. Throughout these passages in praise of Epicurus, Lucretius attempts to appropriate the language of theology and divine revelation so as rhetorically to emphasize the way in which the Epicurean explanation of the physical universe has superseded and displaced explanations in terms of divine creation and intervention. But this expropriation of the language and images associated with religion is a game played for high stakes. Whatever Lucretius might have wanted for his own text, he could not wholly determine its reception. Expressing his vision in the language of religion may serve to naturalize and domesticate it, but it also leaves open the possibility of a recuperation, the reappropriation of the text of the *DRN* for the very position it ostensibly claims to be opposing. Witness the comment of E. J. Kenney on lines 28–30 of his commentary on Book 3: ‘Lucretius contemplates the Epicurean vision of the universe with an awe that can only be called religious.’<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> E. J. Kenney, *Lucretius: De Rerum Natura, Book III* (Cambridge, 1971), ad loc. The critical position called ‘L’Anti-Lucrèce chez Lucrèce’ holds that Lucretius ultimately was not convinced by his arguments, and that it shows.

The exposition of physical theory can thus draw on its culture's repertoire of established myths, images, and linguistic resources, and it employs this appropriative strategy, at the danger of subsequent recuperation, so as to contest and change the very perceptions which generated those myths, images, and linguistic usages. Let us broaden this focus to consider its implications for the wider rhetorical strategies of the poem. The desired goal of the *DRN*, ridding our minds of the notion of divine causation, entails abandoning the notion of design. Our world is a chance occurrence, not created for us; and we are chance inhabitants of it, not the culmination of a process of creation. If the world happens to fulfil our needs and pleasures, that is pure chance; for many other species, it has not been so, and they have perished (*DRN* 5.837–77). We may have our own purposes at the level of reality we call 'life', and it is legitimate and useful to talk in such terms of our actions, but at the level of reality we call 'the universe' (that of atoms and void), teleological explanation is, on principle, to be rigorously excluded (*DRN* 4.823–57). However, in terms of the language in which exposition must take place, this presents a challenge. Gillian Beer has helpfully illuminated this issue in relation to Darwinian theory.<sup>7</sup> The full title of Darwin's treatise on evolution of 1859 was *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. Darwin wanted to distance himself from the theological idea that species were the result of special acts of creation by a deity. Species whose chance characteristics were conducive to their survival in the circumstances in which they found themselves survived to pass on those characteristics to their descendants. This he sought to explain by means of a mechanism he termed 'natural' (that is, unwilling) 'selection'. His theory demands that the language he uses be purged of reference to agency or intention, and yet the very word 'selection' seems to imply a selector and 'preservation' a preserver. 'Favoured races' might be taken to imply that there is one who is conferring advantages on these races. Darwin was writing against the grain of the accumulated associations of the language he was using, a

<sup>7</sup> Cf. G. Beer, *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (London, 1983), 53; see also G. Levine, *Darwin and the Novelists: Patterns of Science in Victorian Fiction* (Cambridge, MA/London, 1988), 95–103.



language discursively developed partially in, and for, the expression of the very theological assumptions he was seeking to contest. He was thus fighting to appropriate for his own theory language that resisted his attempts to make it unambivalent; arguably, language is irreducibly anthropocentric and cannot be purged of those traces of agency and purpose which lay materialist accounts of the universe open to recuperation for a teleological version. The atmosphere hostile to his ideas in which Darwin was writing made prevarication on the issue of 'creation' an attractive, and arguably useful, strategy for the dissemination of his theory.

At this point, we might ask what scientists are doing when they offer descriptions of the world. We can in turn offer two competing descriptions of their discursive activities in terms of two different metaphors. On the one hand, the metaphor of *discovery* suggests that the laws of nature are immanent in the physical world, written, if you will, in the Book of Nature.<sup>8</sup> This metaphor implies that, though we may not yet have found it, there can exist what Richard Rorty has termed a 'final vocabulary' in which what is written in the Book of Nature can be faithfully and accurately transcribed.<sup>9</sup> Within this metaphor, the world has an intrinsic nature, language is a *medium* for representing the world, and truth lies in the correspondence between language and the world; language is, theoretically at least, capable of delivering to us a true and complete picture or theory of the world. On the other hand, the metaphor of *invention* implies that investigators of the natural world create linguistic constructs, invent

<sup>8</sup> Another instance, we may note in passing, of 'everything'—in this case 'Nature'—being seen as a 'text'. Explicitly developed, this image is post-Classical, and was particularly popular among the natural philosophers of the 17th c. whose theories could be seen as contesting Scriptural authority. God's plan for the world could be read not only in the Book of Scripture, they asserted, but in the Book of Nature as well. On this image see further E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (London/Henley, 1953), 319–26; E. Rothacker, *Das 'Buch der Natur'* (Bonn, 1979); E. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (Cambridge, 1980), Ch. 5; G. Markus, 'Why is there no Hermeneutics of Natural Sciences? Some Preliminary Theses', *Science in Context* 1.1 (1987), 5–51, at 14–15; D. R. Olson, *The World on Paper: The Conceptual and Cognitive Implications of Writing and Reading* (Cambridge, 1994), Ch. 9; S. Shapin, *The Scientific Revolution* (Chicago/London, 1996), 136–9. This image, we may note, sees God as an author, the producer of a text, a consideration I shall return to towards the end of this essay.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. R. Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge, 1989), Ch. 1.

descriptions of the world which are more or less useful for predicting and controlling its phenomena. This metaphor shifts the focus from the world to language: far from language being a transparent medium, or a barrier, between us and the world, our sense of the world and of reality is constituted *in* language. Within this perspective, scientists *create* the reality they are ostensibly investigating (which is not to imply that there isn't 'something out there'), and the term 'reality' is a mobile signifier, one of whose functions is to ratify a particular, preferred mode of description. The most important entailment of this metaphor for our purposes is that within it there can be no such thing as a final theory or description: new descriptions or redescriptions can always be offered, useful for various and as yet unpredicted purposes. It is a short step from this to see Lucretius, Newton, Darwin, Einstein, or Hawking as mythologists, the composers of aetiological stories for their societies, stories of tremendous intricacy, authority, and effect, but not the final word. Any theory of the universe has from this perspective a fictive dimension. In response to the question 'what is reality?' or 'what is the nature of the world?', it provides a determining and ordering fiction by which to 'read' the phenomena of the universe.

'Discovery' and 'invention' are, as I have put it, two competing ways of thinking about what we are doing when we describe the universe. However, to say which of these is the 'correct' way would be to prejudge the issue by assuming that there is a final vocabulary for describing the way we describe the universe. Viewing the discourse of science as 'invention' has many important repercussions which I cannot pursue in this context, but for present purposes, it opens out the possibility of seeing such discourse as having a rhetorical dimension which any investigator needs to negotiate, whatever description he or she puts on his or her activity,<sup>10</sup> for from this perspective 'reality' can be constructed in different ways to different effects. The issue has been seen as particularly acute in relation to atomic theories of the universe. Robert Wardy has remarked:

<sup>10</sup> Presumably those who see themselves as expounding a final theory, such as Lucretius, will tend to operate within a metaphor of 'discovery', though statements to that effect are not immune from recuperation. Lucretius describes Epicurus as *rerum inuentor* (DRN 3.9): 'discoverer' or 'inventor' of things.

From antiquity to the present day atomic theory has demanded that people confront a startling idea: that the world, on scales both very small and very large, is not faithfully represented by the experiences of human subjects... Theory reveals to the mind's eye a stark, pure vista of colorless, odorless, tasteless, soundless atoms traveling through the never-ending void. It opens a gap between basic reality and at least the most familiar or basic appearances, threatening to make strangers of us in our own world.<sup>11</sup>

Below the proliferation of colours, tastes, sounds, and smells which is the world of our senses, Epicurean physics asks us to imagine atoms that have only size, shape, weight, and movement. Moreover, these atoms are themselves lifeless. What we call 'life' and invest with such significance is merely a phenomenon at our level of reality of the chance combination of particular atoms moving in particular ways. The 'reductionist' thrust of such explanations runs the risk of producing an alienating effect. Readers may well be convinced by the theory, but be left with feelings of disorientation about things they had previously felt to be central and of value, all the things which make us 'human'. Within the Epicurean view of things, we have to realize that the world, which provides us with our rich sensory experiences, and to which we look to satisfy our needs and pleasures, is not *created* with the *aim* of fulfilling those needs and pleasures. This reductionist view works to depersonalize the universe, so as to take design out of it and strip it of the teleology which theological accounts would give to it. The notion of divine causation may be a source of fear, as Lucretius repeatedly alleges, but it also gives a personal dimension to the order and congruities we search for, and assume we find, in our world. The Epicurean system also provides a rationale for the order and congruities we find in the world, in the form of atoms whose properties enable some things to happen in the world and ensure that other things do not, but this rationale runs the risk of being a bleakly impersonal one. How do you relate to an atom and an atomic universe? The *DRN* has its means of effecting a reconciliation between the comparative featurelessness and impersonality of the atomic universe on the one hand and our sense of who and what we are on the other. I have so far spoken of the processes of appropriation and recuperation as constraints upon the physical theorist, but they might also be seen as

<sup>11</sup> R. Wardy, 'Lucretius on what Atoms are Not', *CP* 83 (1988), 112–28, at 112.

vitally enabling, as much an advantage to be exploited as a disadvantage to be negotiated. As we shall see, it is the reconfiguration of notions of design and teleology which gives to Lucretius' textualized universe its discursive economy and order. The anthropocentric characteristics of language are put under critical scrutiny, but also cleverly exploited.

We may start by considering the representation of the fundamental building-block of the Epicurean system, the atom. In *DRN* 1.136–9, Lucretius remarks upon 'the difficulty of the task of making clear the dark discoveries of the Greeks [Epicureanism] in Latin verse, especially because it is necessary often to make use of new words on account of the poverty of the language and the novelty of the matters' under discussion:

nec me animi fallit Graiorum obscura reperta  
difficile inlustrare Latinis uersibus esse,  
multa nouis uerbis praesertim cum sit agendum  
propter egestatem linguae et rerum nouitatem.

Difficulty and constraint are rhetorically emphasized, but Lucretius' own account of his working practices could be reconfigured to stress the potentially enabling aspects of this situation. There were no established words in Latin for many of the ideas central to Epicureanism, most notably atoms. One possibility open to Lucretius was transliteration of the Greek: he could have termed them *atomi*. This is something he doesn't do, however, and plausible reasons have been adduced, for example the difficulty this would have posed for readers unfamiliar not only with Epicureanism, but also with Greek. Instead we are presented with a variety of terms, many of which are gathered together earlier in Book 1, where they are introduced for the first time in the context of a summary of the content of the first two books of the poem, which deal with the formation and dissolution of atomic compounds (1.54–61):

nam tibi de summa caeli ratione deumque  
disserere incipiam, et rerum primordia pandam,  
unde omnis natura creet res auctet alatque  
quoue eadem rursus natura perempta resoluat,  
quae nos materiem et genitalia corpora rebus  
reddunda in ratione uocare et semina rerum

appellare suemus et haec eadem usurpare  
 corpora prima, quod ex illis sunt omnia primis.

The terms repay the most careful scrutiny. 'I shall begin to discourse to you,' Lucretius says, 'on the ultimate explanation of heaven and the gods, and I shall reveal the first beginnings of things (*rerum primordia*, 55) from which nature creates all things and increases and nourishes them and into which the same nature resolves them again when they are destroyed.' Describing atoms as 'the first beginnings of things' serves to characterize them as the ultimate building-blocks of the universe, the primary particles which come together to form the compounds from which all objects and phenomena are constituted. The use of the phrase *rerum primordia* emphasizes the notion of *beginning*. Epicurean atoms individually are eternal; they have always existed and will always exist. Here they are designated by an upbeat phrase, which concentrates attention on their role in the process of the formation and growth of compounds rather than their dissolution, which is equally part of the system, but is rhetorically occluded by the connotations of *rerum primordia*. These first beginnings of things are, Lucretius continues, 'what in discussing the system, I have made it my custom to call "matter" and "the bodies that generate things"' (*genitalia corpora rebus*, 58). Once again, 'the bodies that generate things' are atoms, the minute, lifeless particles that fly about in the void, but their designation thus pictures them in anthropomorphic terms (they are 'bodies', *corpora*), and the suggestion of the phrase is that not only are they endowed with a sort of 'life' of their own, but also with the capacity to pass on that 'life' to the visible objects they combine to form: they are bodies that 'give birth' (*genitalia*) to things. The capacity of atoms to form compounds is expressed in terms of biological reproduction. But there is more to come. 'I have made it my custom to call these particles "the seeds of things"' (*semina rerum*, 59). Again, this is an enormously suggestive way of describing atoms.<sup>12</sup> The physical appearance of seeds calls to mind discrete, separate particles of matter, but we know too that from tiny seeds huge things can eventually come into being, and come into being, moreover, through an ordered, not random, process of growth. Calling atoms 'seeds'

<sup>12</sup> Not all the credit for this should go to Lucretius; Epicurus used the Greek equivalent.

serves to suggest a reassuring degree of order in the universe. The properties of the atoms mean that the phenomena of the universe are strictly demarcated: not everything can happen, and what does follow fixed patterns of growth and decay, as Epicurus was able to report to humankind only a few lines below (1.75–7).

But the designation of atoms as ‘seeds’ has another connotation, one that from a strict Epicurean perspective is potentially misleading. Atoms are lifeless, but like seeds are, if not ‘alive’, not entirely inert: it is their inherent capacity for motion that leads to the formation of compounds. Or should that connotation be described not as ‘misleading’ but as ‘suggestive’? Again, a biological term is being used to describe the lifeless constituent ‘matter’ of the universe, and perhaps it is the connotations of inertness of the word ‘matter’ that are potentially the more misleading from the Epicurean perspective. Atoms may be lifeless, but they too are not entirely inert. One more term remains in this catalogue. ‘These same things I have made it my custom to call “first bodies” [*corpora prima*, 61] because from them as first elements all things have their existence.’ Once again, the term ‘bodies’ could suggest that we conceive of the atoms in anthropomorphic terms, and to refer to them as ‘*first* bodies’, because from them all things have their being, could evoke the kind of theological creationist myth exemplified in the Graeco-Roman tradition by the story of Deucalion and Pyrrha, who propagated the human race using inert lumps of matter in motion—by throwing stones over their shoulders.<sup>13</sup> Figuring atoms, which have only size, shape, weight, and movement, in anthropomorphic and biological terms does have the effect of rendering these atoms familiar and their workings more accessible, of naturalizing the discourse in which they are being discussed, but does so precisely by evoking associations which it is the poem’s ostensible object to counter.<sup>14</sup>

Lucretius’ reductionist strategy offers a determining closure on the processes of the universe in the idea of indivisibility beyond a particular point, designated the ‘atom’, itself lifeless, but characterized

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.395–402.

<sup>14</sup> Lucretius’ discussion of atomic compounds also invokes anthropomorphic imagery. See the discussion by D. P. Fowler, ‘Lucretius and Politics’, in M. Griffin and J. Barnes (eds.), *Philosophia Togata* (Oxford, 1989), 120–50, at 145–8 [= Ch. 18 of this volume].

through images and processes associated with life. However, the major obstacle that reductionist forms of explanation encounter is a satisfactory characterization of the phenomenon of life. When an organism is analysed, its constituent parts, its 'atoms', turn out to be very common substances (like carbon, hydrogen, oxygen) which of themselves do not exhibit the characteristics we associate with what we call 'life'. At this point, holistic forms of explanation tend to be invoked, in which solutions are offered to problems not by analysing them, taking them apart, but by putting them together, as the individual pieces of a jigsaw are meaningless on their own, but put together form a significant pattern.<sup>15</sup> A system with many components may collectively exhibit qualities that are absent or meaningless at the level of the individual component. Thus the behaviour of a colony of ants, for example, seems to display characteristics which are not explicable in terms of the behaviour of an individual ant; similarly, accounts of human behaviour which seek their explanations on the level of society rather than that of the individual could be described as holistic.<sup>16</sup> For holistic explanation, the ratifying rhetoric of 'reality' is invoked on the level of the collective phenomenon, for the reductionist on the level of the individual component. Holistic explanation, no less than reductionist, can provide a determining closure on an indeterminate phenomenon (in this case, the infinite universe) by the closural character imparted *in* naming and designation—in this case, *as* 'the universe': determination is achieved by the imposition of a 'term', derived from the Latin *terminus*.

Lucretius, as we have seen, designates the universe *omne*, 'everything there is', but just as he characterizes atoms in anthropomorphic terms, so when he asks us to conceive of the universe as a whole, all the atoms together with all they do, he does so through personification. But what does this personified universe get called, and what kind of person is it conceived to be? As we can see in lines 55–7 of Book 1, the name given is *natura*, 'nature'. Atoms are lifeless: they do what they do because of properties they happen to have, and for no other reason. Because they happen to have size, shape, weight, and movement, they collide, get entangled with one another and so

<sup>15</sup> See further P. Davies, *God and the New Physics* (Harmondsworth, 1990), 58–71.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. C. Lloyd, *Explanation in Social History* (Oxford, 1986), 15–18, 71–84.

combine to form the objects of the visible world, but there is no purpose to this activity. However, Lucretius' introduction of the term *natura* personifies the universe in which this activity takes place (55–7): 'I shall reveal the first beginnings of things, from which nature creates all things and increases and nourishes them, and into which the same nature resolves them when they are destroyed.' With personification of the universe as 'nature' re-enters the notion of *agency*. The universe, in the personified form of 'nature', becomes the initiator of action: 'nature' is the subject of the verbs 'create', 'increase', and 'nourish'. Activity in the Epicurean atomic universe has its patterns, but it has no purpose. With the word 'nature' are re-introduced the notions of design and intention the poem is ostensibly trying to get rid of. In 1.56–7, 'nature' is perilously close to being a creator figure cast in the very theological mould that the *De rerum natura* is trying to break. 'Nature' creates and nourishes: the neutral universe, when translated into personal terms, becomes significantly gendered as female. *Natura* is cognate with the verb *nascor*, 'to be born',<sup>17</sup> and figures the personified universe as a mother, its workings seen macroscopically, no less than microscopically, in terms of biological process. The ironies of this for an exposition of Epicurean atomic theory are apparent, and are inscribed in the title of the poem. *De rerum natura* is normally rendered as *On the Nature of Things*, but it could also connote *On the Birth of Things*. The juxtaposition of the inanimate and the animate in the phrase *rerum natura* is a particularly striking one in an Epicurean context.

'Nature' is so common a term in many discourses that it is always salutary to pause and think of the word as a construct, the product of creationist myths, theological presuppositions, and the anthropocentric tendencies of language. It would be easy to assume that the discourse of *natura* was so powerful a one that the *DRN*, having the physical universe as its subject, could not have avoided becoming entangled in it, but that is to picture the situation in negative terms. A more positive account would see the poem as attempting the delicate task of trying to appropriate this powerful and emotive discourse for its view of the universe, delicate because so many of the assumptions it encodes work against Epicurean theories of the

<sup>17</sup> Lucretius plays on this in *DRN* 1.112–13.



universe. But the Epicurean system runs the danger of exerting an alienating effect, and no other term offers so great a potentiality for rendering it familiar, for domesticating it, for *naturalizing* it. The poem could be seen as playing a dangerous rhetorical game for high stakes. The prize is the reassuring connotations of the word 'nature', but the stake is the risk of compromising the most profound observations the system has to offer about the absence of design and purpose in the universe, whilst at the same time leaving the poem open to the kind of reading that would recuperate it for a religious, theological view of the world, the kind of reading that would characterize Lucretius as '*really* a religious poet'.<sup>18</sup>

The term is not presented in the *DRN* as though it were unproblematic. Attention is drawn to the process of personification in such a way as to prompt questions about it, probe the degree to which it is heuristically useful, and suggest reasons why it might have come about. For example, in 1.250–64, as the climax of an argument that matter can only be dispersed, not destroyed, Lucretius says that 'lastly, raindrops pass away when Father Sky has cast them down into the lap of Mother Earth' (*postremo pereunt imbres, ubi eos pater aether | in gremium matris terrai praecipitavit*, 250–1). Here the earth, rather than the universe as a whole, is personified in the traditional

<sup>18</sup> One could draw a parallel with the recent theories of James Lovelock, who suggests that life on Earth, along with the atmosphere, the oceans, and the rocks of the Earth's crust, forms a single self-regulating system which has maintained stable conditions for life over millions of years. Lovelock draws attention to the relative constancy of the climate, the constant high levels of oxygen in the atmosphere, and the surprisingly low level of salt in the sea, and argues that a global feedback system is responsible, compensating for changes in the climate of the planet by adjusting the rates at which gases such as oxygen and carbon dioxide are produced and removed from the atmosphere, and thus maintaining the climate within limits favourable to life as a whole in one form or another, though not to individual species (and humankind may be one such, warns Lovelock) whose activities tend to disrupt the equilibrium. Lovelock denies that this self-regulating ecosystem operates in terms of any consciousness or intention, yet he chose to name it Gaia, the classical name of the goddess of the Earth, a suggestion made to him by the novelist William Golding. The choice of name has equally enraged scientists, who deplore what they see as the misleading and unscientific anthropomorphism, and the religious, whose initial attraction to the theory is frustrated in its rejection of the supernatural. Cf. J. Lovelock, *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth* (Oxford, 1979); id., *Gaia: The Practical Science of Planetary Medicine* (London/Stroud, 1991); id., *The Ages of Gaia: A Biography of our Living Earth*, 2nd edn. (Oxford, 1995).

manner as a mother figure, but the traditional image is not simply accepted passively. Father Sky casting raindrops into the lap of Mother Earth figures rain as semen, and the metaphor of the pro-generation of biological life is picked up and put to work in what follows. The raindrops pass away, 'but glistening crops rise up, the branches grow green on the trees, the trees themselves grow and become heavy with fruit' (*at nitidae surgunt fruges ramique uirescunt | arboribus, crescunt ipsae fetuque grauantur*, 252–3). The atoms which make up the raindrops do not disappear into nothingness, but are dispersed, and it is their dispersal and recombination into different compounds which produces the phenomena that at the level of our perception we call 'life' and 'growth'. At the atomic level, the process is one of dispersal and recombination of particles of matter, but the effect of this mechanical process at our level of perception is conveyed by the sensual images of copulation and pregnancy (cf. *fetuque grauantur*, 1.253). The image seems to become even more germane if we consider that within the framework of Epicurean physical explanation, rainfall and semen are involved in similar atomic processes. The atoms of both are dispersed, and the process of their subsequent combination with other atoms produces the phenomenon we call 'life'. So, if the personification of the atomic universe and its processes can carry with it the potentially misleading associations of purposiveness and intention, it can at the same time convey in a vivid and sensual way what are important truths in the Epicurean system. Atoms may be lifeless particles, but their properties and the processes in which they are involved produce the phenomena which constitute our being and with which we most closely associate our identities.

Description involves the use of terms which are applicable in other contexts as well. Figuring the universe in terms which are also applicable to people may involve both potentially misleading assumptions and relevant insights. So, there is always a play-off within an image of incomplete fit versus significant affinity. Looking at scientific discourse in terms of the metaphor of discovery, such differences and affinities will be a reflection of differences and affinities in the world itself. But looking at it in terms of the metaphor of invention, the perception of similarity or difference will be a function of discursive *construction* and so open to rhetorical

manipulation. One could see the image of the universe as mother in the *DRN* as *generating* significant affinities and producing explanations on the basis of them. One of the most difficult matters for Epicureanism to explain is the historical question of how life forms appeared on earth. Whilst a concept of what we might term 'the survival of the fittest' is operative within his explanation, Lucretius works without a concept of 'evolution'. As a result, he assumes that species come into being in a fixed and final form, and that many species have failed to survive because they lacked qualities conducive to their survival; he mentions the ability to protect themselves or win the protection of the human race because uses were discovered for them (5.855–61). The problem for an Epicurean then is: how do such species make their appearance? The personification of earth as mother suggests an explanation that Lucretius develops in 5.793–6:

nam neque de caelo cecidisse animalia possunt  
nec terrestria de salsis exisse lacunis.  
linquitur ut merito maternum nomen adepta  
terra sit, e terra quoniam sunt cuncta creata.

For animals cannot have fallen from the sky, and those that live on the land cannot have emerged from the salty oceans. The conclusion remains that the name of mother has rightly been bestowed on the earth, since out of the earth everything is born.

Lucretius then draws attention to the way that worms and maggots appear from the earth in warm and moist conditions. It would not be surprising, he surmises, if the earth produced larger creatures when it was younger (5.797–800). The appearance of birds from eggs provides a model for what must have happened (5.807–15):

hoc ubi quaeque loci regio opportuna dabatur,  
crescebant uteri terram radicibus apti;  
quos ubi tempore maturo patefecerat aetas  
infantum, fugiens umorem aurasque petessens,  
conuertebat ibi natura foramina terrae  
et sucum uenis cogebat fundere apertis  
consimilem lactis, sicut nunc femina quaeque,  
cum peperit, dulci repletur lacte, quod omnis  
impetus in mammas conuertitur ille alimenti.

Therefore, wherever a suitable spot was found, wombs would grow, joined to the earth by roots; when the time was ripe, the maturation of the infants would break these open as they rejected the moisture and sought the air, nature would direct there the pores of the earth and make it discharge from the veins it had opened a liquid resembling milk, just as nowadays every female when she has brought forth is filled with sweet milk, because all the rush of nourishment is directed into her breasts.

The personification of earth as mother is not an added decoration but a mode of explanation, and, on a spectrum ranging from incomplete fit to significant affinity, the image is constructed so as to suggest significant affinity. Lucretius triumphantly concludes (5.821–5):

quare etiam atque etiam maternum nomen adepta  
terra tenet merito, quoniam genus ipsa creavit  
humanum atque animal prope certo tempore fudit  
omne quod in magnis bacchatur montibu' passim  
aerisque simul uolucres uariantibu' formis.

Therefore over and over again, the earth rightly holds the name of mother she has gained, since she herself created the human race and brought forth at a fixed moment every animal that runs wild everywhere in the great mountains and at the same time the birds of the air in their varied forms.

The significant affinity generated in the personification is further used in the following lines to suggest a reason why the earth no longer produces creatures as large as human beings (5.826–7):

sed quia finem aliquam pariendi debet habere,  
destitit, ut mulier spatio defessa uetusto.

But because she must have some limit to parturition, she ceased, like a woman worn out with age.

Although it may be heuristically useful to construct significant affinities, it may be no less useful on occasions to emphasize incomplete fit. Nature, we are warned in 2.1090–2, works of herself without need of a divine creator. Atoms produce the effects they do thanks to the properties they happen to have and not because of any external cause. The personification of the universe is used to mediate reassuringly between the potentially alienating reductionist description of the universe as atomic and the wholly unacceptable notion of a divine

creator directing this activity. Wonder, Lucretius says (2.1023–47), is a quite appropriate reaction to the universe and its workings; if anything, he suggests, by dispelling the familiarity of the phenomenal world, Epicurean theory serves to restore its novelty and to reinstate within us the sense of wonder it deserves. Theories work to change accepted meanings and perspectives inscribed within the language they inherit, working to appropriate words for their perspective and so redefine their meanings. The *De rerum natura* seeks to contest the association of wonder with religious awe, an association it has acquired within the theological framework of explanation the poem is trying to supplant. The incomplete fit of the image of the earth as mother provides the ground on which this battle over definition is fought out, explicitly in 2.589–660. The earth, it is argued, contains within it the atoms from which all the phenomena of the visible world are constituted. This is why, Lucretius says, the earth is called the Great Mother (598), a cult name of the Asiatic goddess Cybele. In 600–43, he describes the iconography of the goddess, offering a rationalizing commentary on the details and suggesting how the image of earth as mother has been appropriated for a religious discourse. In 652–60, he tries to wrest it back for his own anti-theological perspective: ‘The earth in fact always at all times lacks sensation, and because it contains within it the first beginnings of many things, it sends up many things in many ways into the sunlight. So, if anyone decides to call the sea Neptune and corn Ceres and prefers to misapply the name Bacchus rather than to use the proper name of the juice, let us allow him to say that the earth is the Mother of the Gods, providing that in actual fact he refrains from polluting his mind with foul superstition.’

Anthropomorphism is thus mobilized to fulfil many vital rhetorical functions in Lucretius’ discourse. The representation of atoms as ‘bodies’ through to the representation of the universe as a whole by means of the image of a mother figure provides a consistent imagery from the most microscopic to the infinite, and thereby introduces a decisively important economy and order, that of the body, to the representation of the Epicurean universe. This impression of economy and order in the representation becomes elided with an impression that there is an economy and order inherent in the universe. From the perspective of the metaphor of discovery, that is

because the text is reflecting an order inherent in the universe. From the perspective of invention, however, we come to identify the qualities we associate with the text of the *De rerum natura* with the universe it purports to describe: we ‘understand’ the universe only in the discourses which describe it, and our sense of the ‘order’—or equally it may be our sense of the ‘disorder’—of the universe we inhabit is discursively produced. From this latter perspective, the notion of preceding design provides another example of the equation of narrative order and the order of the universe. Within such narratives, God is a projection of humankind’s ordering power within discourse, and embodies the idea that the universe is the work of a being who had something in mind, and who Himself spoke some language in which He described His own project.<sup>19</sup>

Seen thus, the depiction of Epicurus, deviser of a final theory, *rerum inuentor* (3.9), in divine terms seems wholly inevitable. From the point of view of invention, then, the idea that language is a medium whose function is to represent the world is complicit with the idea that the universe is a divine creation, and that the goal or *telos* of language is to approximate ever more closely to the language in which the Creator framed his project. Lucretius’ poem discusses the ‘nature’ of things, but from this perspective, as Rorty has argued, the idea that the world has an intrinsic ‘nature’, that we can know the *nature* of things, is the product of the idea that the world is a divine creation, the work of someone who had something in mind: ‘Only if we have some such picture in mind, some picture of the universe as either itself a person or as created by a person, can we make sense of the idea that the world has an “intrinsic nature”’.<sup>20</sup> To de-divinize the explanation of the physical world is the aim of Lucretius’ poem, and we may now have some sense of the negotiations and *aporia* this entails. In seeking to offer a text of the world, the world *as* text, one may find one’s self ever *within* the world of the text—trying to make sense of it *intratextually*, and wondering, perhaps, whether this ‘text’, or indeed *any* text, is susceptible of a complete and final reading.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (n. 9), 21.

<sup>20</sup> Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (n. 9), 21.

## ADDENDUM (2005)

When writing this essay, I was beginning to explore how bringing Lucretius into dialogue with issues of current concern in science studies could help to enlighten both; the ideas I broached here, including many assumptions which I left uninterrogated at the time, are developed in greater detail in my book *Rethinking Reality: Lucretius and the Textualization of Nature* (Ann Arbor, 2002), which contains extensive bibliography of further reading. For the passages from Book 5, see now Gordon Campbell, *Lucretius on Creation and Evolution: A Commentary on De Rerum Natura Book Five, Lines 772–1104* (Oxford, 2003).

## Lucretius and Politics

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THE original title of this paper was 'Lucretius and the *language of politics*', and I formerly devoted more space to illustrating the concordances between Lucretius' language and that of contemporary political discourse, as seen in the writings largely of Cicero and Sallust and as analysed in the well-known study of Hellegouarc'h.<sup>1</sup> As I now spend more time talking of propositions than of words, I have abandoned the fashionable linguistic turn. Nevertheless, I should wish to retain something of the original orientation. When we interrogate a poem like the *De rerum natura* to discover the attitude to politics it embodies, we cannot simply assemble from it a selection of sentences explicitly dealing with the subject and string them together to answer our question. It may well be that this is never good methodology for any text, but it fails more spectacularly for a dense literary work.<sup>2</sup> The words are more important and their interpretation more difficult. I make no excuse therefore for retaining some of the nit-picking obsession with mere words which distinguishes literary scholars from their more adult colleagues.

Let me begin however with facts, or rather their absence. We know next to nothing about Lucretius' life; Latin scholars remain more

\* I am most grateful for corrections and comments to Peta Fowler, Alessandro Schiesaro, and Martin F. Smith.

<sup>1</sup> J. Hellegouarc'h, *Le vocabulaire latin des relations et des parties politiques sous la république* (Paris, 1972).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *CR* 34 (1984), 45–52.



gullible about ancient biography than their Greek counterparts,<sup>3</sup> but as with all the Republican and Augustan poets the first step to understanding their chronology is to discard the biographical tradition. We do not know where Lucretius came from, nor what his social status was. The one secure datum is Cicero's famous letter to Quintus in February 54 BC which mentions with praise the combination of *ars* and *ingenium* ('artistry' and 'inspiration') in *Lucretii poemata* ('the poem(s) of Lucretius').<sup>4</sup> This is naturally taken to refer to a recent work, and certainly there is no reason to suppose the *De rerum natura* was not published<sup>5</sup> in late 55 or early 54. Whether the work is finished or not, and in consequence whether we are to think of posthumous publication, are not easy questions to answer, but it is at the very least substantially complete and the date of intended publication, if that is important, cannot have been very different from the time when the work actually appeared. It is addressed to one Memmius; we are only given the family name. It is laid before him *studio...fidei* ('with faithful zeal', 1.52), and Lucretius declares that he is induced to write his poem by *sperata voluptas | suavis amicitiae* ('the longed-for pleasure of sweet friendship', 1.140–1). This is the language of literary patronage, though not only of literary patronage: it is quite wrong to draw sweeping conclusions from these phrases about Lucretius' status or to deny that Epicurean friendship, the entry of Memmius into the Epicurean

<sup>3</sup> Cf. M. Lefkowitz, *The Lives of the Greek Poets* (London, 1981), viii: 'virtually all the material in all the lives is fiction'. J. Fairweather, 'Fiction in the Biographies of Ancient Writers', *Ancient Society* 5 (1974), 234–55, and 'Traditional Narrative, Inference, and Truth in the Lives of Greek Poets', *PLLS* 4 (1983), 315–69, offers useful analyses of some of the types of fiction employed.

<sup>4</sup> *Q. Fr.* 2.10(9).3 = 14.3 Shackleton Bailey (who well explains ad loc. the sense of Cicero's words, greatly mauled by critics).

<sup>5</sup> I hope to defend elsewhere my use of the term 'published', by which I mean something not essentially different from modern publication. The description of Lucretius declaiming his work in the public baths given by T. P. Wiseman, '*Pete nobiles amicos*: Poets and Patrons in Late Republican Rome', in B. Gold (ed.), *Literary and Artistic Patronage in Ancient Rome* (Austin, TX, 1982), 28–49, at 37–8, might politely be said to be underdetermined by the facts. On the date, note A. Fellini's discussion, 'Risonanze del *de consolatu meo* ciceroniano nel poema di Lucrezio', *RFIC* 29 (1951), 307–16, of possible polemic in Lucretius against Cicero's *De consulatu meo*, which appeared in 60.

community, is also in question.<sup>6</sup> Memmius' services are said to be required by the state, and he is therefore an active politician. In these circumstances and at this date, it is difficult for the reader to take the reference to be other than to C. Memmius L. filius, the praetor of 58 and luckless consular candidate in 54.<sup>7</sup> It was common to 'dedicate' works of literature to politicians on their attaining public office; perhaps Lucretius anticipates. The later letter of Cicero<sup>8</sup> to this Memmius asking him not to pull down Epicurus' house in Athens is no objection; that Memmius is not already an Epicurean is presupposed by the *De rerum natura* and nothing forces us to imagine that the poem brought about a successful conversion.<sup>9</sup> One might even wonder whether it was the *De rerum natura* which Cicero refers to when he talks of the *offensiuuncula* ('slight offence') caused to Memmius by the *peruersitas* ('perversity') of some Epicureans, but this is no more than conjecture.<sup>10</sup> Certainly, however, there is a mismatch between work and addressee, and Memmius might well find uncongenial the view of political life displayed in the *De rerum natura*. This will worry only those who take a narrow view of the possible relations between 'patron' and 'poet' in the Republican period.

It is becoming a commonplace of modern scholarship that the *De rerum natura* is a political work, and like most commonplaces this is

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Wiseman, '*Pete nobiles amicos*' (n. 5), 35–6, and his earlier *Cinna the Poet and Other Roman Essays* (Leicester, 1974), 35. On the language of dedication to a patron, see especially C. W. Macleod, 'Catullus 116', in his *Collected Essays* (Oxford, 1983), 181–6, at 185.

<sup>7</sup> *RE* Memmius 8; good sketch in P. Boyancé, 'Lucretè et son disciple', *REA* 52 (1950), 212–33. For the complicated events of 54, see *Cic. Att.* 4.17.2, and E. S. Gruen, 'The Consular Elections for 53 B.C.', in J. Bibauw, *Hommages à Marcel Renard* (Brussels, 1969), 311–21. The only problem with the identification is 1.42 *Memmi clara propago* ('renowned offspring of Memmius'): there is no eponym of the *gens Memmia* as there is of the *gens Claudia* when Manilius talks of *Claudi magna propago* ('the mighty offspring of Claudius', 1.796). One might wonder if a young man was being addressed as his father's son, and think of the younger C. Memmius, who was tribune in 54 and prosecuted Rabirius. But this is not enough to direct the reader away from the more famous politician, and *clara* ('renowned') supports the traditional identification.

<sup>8</sup> *Fam.* 13.1.3–4 = 63.3–4 Shackleton Bailey, on which see M. T. Griffin, 'Philosophy, Politics, and Politicians at Rome', in M. T. Griffin and J. Barnes, *Philosophia Togata: Essays on Philosophy and Roman Society* (Oxford, 1989), 1–37, at 16–17.

<sup>9</sup> *Desciscere* ('desert', 1.103) refers to the future, and is in any case hypothetical. If Memmius knew the truth only about the gods, it is likely that the fear of death would make him desert, but Lucretius is going to tackle that fear as well.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. M. F. Smith's introduction to the revised Loeb, p. xlvii.

more true than false.<sup>11</sup> The poem addresses the ills of contemporary society and suggests a solution for them in Epicurean philosophy. It has often seemed unusual that an Epicurean work should be so involved with the political world, but recent work has stressed the social message of Epicureanism from the time of the founder on.<sup>12</sup> Some of the details of this message are still in dispute, however, and a brief sketch of the Epicurean attitude to politics is a necessary prelude to any examination of the political stance of the *De rerum natura*.

The essence of Epicurus' position is well known, and easily summed up: do not take part in politics,<sup>13</sup> live unknown.<sup>14</sup> This was one of the school's most notorious tenets, attacked by Cicero in the opening of the *De re publica* and in the *In Pisonem*, by Plutarch at the end of the *Adversus Colotem* and in the little work *An recte dictum sit latenter esse vivendum*.<sup>15</sup> The application of the rule can be traced in all periods of the school's history, but I offer three examples. First, two passages from Epicurus' letters to his disciple Idomeneus, referred to by Seneca in the course of his own attempt to dissuade Lucilius from political life:<sup>16</sup>

Let me cite the example of Epicurus' letter to Idomeneus, written when the latter was an agent of royal power, engaged in great affairs. Recalling

<sup>11</sup> Cf. especially J. H. Nichols, *Epicurean Political Philosophy: The De Rerum Natura of Lucretius* (Ithaca, 1976), 17–20, and the fervid advocacy of J. D. Minyard, *Lucretius and the Late Republic*, Mnemosyne Suppl. 90 (Leiden, 1985), 33–70.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. R. Philippson, 'Die Rechtsphilosophie der Epikureer', *AGP* 23 (1910), 289–337, 433–46; R. Müller, *Die Epikureische Gesellschaftstheorie* (Berlin, 1972); V. Goldschmidt, *La doctrine d'Épicure et le droit* (Paris, 1977); A. A. Long, 'Pleasure and Social Utility—the Virtues of Being Epicurean', in H. Flashar and O. Gigon (eds.), *Aspects de la philosophie hellénistique*, Entretiens Hardt 32 (Geneva, 1985), 283–324.

<sup>13</sup> D.L. 10.119 = fr. 8 Usener, from Περὶ βίωσιν Book 1: on the likely content of that work, see W. Liebich, *Aufbau, Absicht, und Form der Pragmateiai Philodemis* (Berlin, 1960), 104–18, especially 107–10.

<sup>14</sup> Fr. 551 Usener.

<sup>15</sup> Cic. *Rep.* 1.1–12; *Pis.* 53–63; Plut. *Mor.* 1124 D–1127 E; *Mor.*, especially 1129 B–D. For the tradition of attacks on the precept, see P. H. De Lacy, 'Cicero's Invective against Piso', *TAPA* 72 (1941), 49–58, at 52–5. For Cicero's *De re publica* as an 'anti-Lucretian', see E. Andreoni, 'Sul contrasto ideologico fra il *de re publica* di Cicerone e il poema di Lucrezio (la genesi della società civile)', in *Studi di poesia latina in onore di A. Traglia* (Rome, 1979), 281–321.

<sup>16</sup> The context in the sequence of letters 19 to 22 is important, as also the relation to Seneca's own position: see the detailed discussion in M. T. Griffin, *Seneca: A Philosopher in Politics* (Oxford, 1976), 315–66.

Idomeneus from a life of vain show to secure and certain glory, Epicurus wrote: 'if it is love of glory which touches you, my letters will make you more famous than all the things you court and because of which you are courted.' Did Epicurus lie? Who would know of Idomeneus if Epicurus had not inscribed his name in his correspondence? All those *megistanes* and satraps and the king himself from whom Idomeneus' title was being sought, all are buried by deep oblivion.<sup>17</sup>

Read Epicurus' letter to Idomeneus on this subject, in which he tells him to put all his efforts into escaping, and to hurry before some greater force intervenes to take away the liberty of withdrawing. He adds that of course nothing should be attempted unless the time and circumstances are right; but when the long-awaited occasion comes, Idomeneus must, says Epicurus, leap up and be off. Anyone who wants to make the break must not relax, but there is every hope of being able to extricate ourselves from even the most difficult situation, so long as we neither hasten before the right time nor stay idle when it comes.<sup>18</sup>

Idomeneus was the recipient of a number of letters from Epicurus, including the famous one written on the latter's deathbed.<sup>19</sup> The two passages referred to by Seneca presuppose that Idomeneus is involved in political life in the service of some king; context, chronology, and historical background are obscure,<sup>20</sup> but Epicurus is clearly encouraging Idomeneus to avoid political involvement. Whether he did so we cannot say, but there is ascribed to him a work *On Demagogues* which earned him a place in Jacoby's *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*.<sup>21</sup> That contained an attack on the great Athenian political heroes of the past such as Themistocles, Pericles, and Demosthenes; the genre is a familiar one as Jacoby notes, its most famous representative being Theopompus in Book 10 of the *Philippica*.<sup>22</sup> It is

<sup>17</sup> *Ep.* 21.3 = fr. 132 Usener = fr. 55 Arrighetti = Idomeneus F 13 in A. Angeli, 'I frammenti di Idomeneo di Lampsaco', *Cron. Erc.* 11 (1981), 41–101.

<sup>18</sup> *Ep.* 22.5–6 = fr. 133 Usener = fr. 56 Arrighetti = F 14 Angeli, 'I frammenti di Idomeneo di Lampsaco' (n. 17).

<sup>19</sup> D.L. 10.22 = fr. 138 Usener = fr. 52 Arrighetti = F 23 Angeli, 'I frammenti di Idomeneo di Lampsaco' (n. 17).

<sup>20</sup> For a review of the evidence, see Angeli, 'I frammenti di Idomeneo di Lampsaco' (n. 17), 43–7.

<sup>21</sup> *FGrH* 338.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. W. R. Connor, *Theopompus and Fifth-Century Athens* (Cambridge, MA, 1968), especially 19–76.

wrong however to situate the work solely in an anti-democratic historiographical tradition. A. Angeli in her edition of the testimonia to Idomeneus goes so far as to claim that *On Demagogues* is the work not of the Epicurean but of a namesake, and she does not include the fragments in her collection. But such attacks on politicians have a philosophical dimension, as readers of Plato's *Gorgias* will not need to be reminded, and the demolition of the reputations of the famous was a favourite Epicurean tactic. I have no doubt that Angeli was wrong, and that *On Demagogues* should be restored to the Epicurean Idomeneus.

My second example of the school's antipathy to politics, comes from the peroration of Plutarch's reply to Colotes, in the course of which he quotes two fragments of Epicurus' companion Metrodorus:<sup>23</sup>

They mention politicians only to laugh at them and to destroy their reputations. They say, for instance, that Epaminondas had only one good thing about him, and that a 'wee' one (using the Boeotian dialect word); they call him 'ironguts', and ask what made him walk across the Peloponnese rather than sit at home with a little felt cap on his head—by which they mean, I suppose, that he would have been better off devoting his life to looking after his belly. And it is worth remembering what Metrodorus wrote in his work *On Philosophy*, when burlesquing the state: that 'some wise men in their prodigality of conceit have such a clear vision of the function of the state that when they talk about ways of life and virtue they get carried away with the same desires Lycurgus and Solon had'. Was it then conceit, and prodigality of conceit, to think that Athens ought to be free and Sparta well ordered, that young men should not be arrogant, that we should not have children by prostitutes, that law and justice should rule our cities and not money, extravagance, and brutal lust? These are the things Solon desired. Metrodorus adds the following piece of abuse: 'Therefore it is right to laugh a truly free laugh, at all mankind, but especially at these Lycurguses and Solons'. In fact, Metrodorus, this is not a free man's laughter, but that of a badly brought-up slave...

As R. Westman points out,<sup>24</sup> Plutarch is misconstruing Metrodorus, who is not attacking actual lawgivers at this point but philosophers who imitate them, like Plato, Zeno, and Diogenes in their ideal

<sup>23</sup> *Mor.* 1127 A–C = fr. 560 Usener = Metrodorus frs. 31–2 Körte.

<sup>24</sup> R. Westman, *Plutarch gegen Kolotes, seine Schrift 'Adversus Colotem' als philosophiegeschichtliche Quelle*, *Acta Philosophica Fennica* 7 (Helsinki, 1955), 213–14.

states.<sup>25</sup> But the context shows that the attitude to real statesmen is no different. Metrodorus indulges in Democritean laughter as he looks down on his deluded fellow men with a serenely indifferent smile. The wise man is free: they are not. These are themes that recur in Lucretius.<sup>26</sup>

My final passage is a well-known one, quoted by Momigliano in the short review (of Farrington's *Science and Politics in the Ancient World*) which is still the most stimulating treatment of Epicurean political theory.<sup>27</sup> It comes from the end of the first book of Philodemus' *De dis* (PHerc 26 xxv.22–37), as edited by Diels:

But I think I have said enough about the disturbance which comes from the gods, and I have done what I can to persuade the man of good character to stay outside of these endless disturbances; and so to free himself from evils which are hard to deal with, and to gain for himself goods of great importance; to consider himself alone a real man, and to look down on the others as if they were gnats—not only the insignificant, but also the rich private citizens, the famous political office holders, those afire with treacherous disease (?), when he sees the opponents throwing away the affairs of Rome into the hands of one man, Antony...

Because of the apparent mention of Antony, this has excited much discussion about context and date.<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately, Diels' text of the *De dis* is very unreliable: 'hardly is a line free from errors' according to the current editor K. Kleve,<sup>29</sup> and he has pointed out that the

<sup>25</sup> E. Bignone, *L'Aristotele perduto e la formazione filosofica di Epicuro*, 2nd edn., 2 vols. (Florence, 1973), i. 598, ii. 56–8, saw Plato and 'early Aristotle' as the main targets; B. Einarson and P. H. De Lacy in the Loeb ad loc. think of Diogenes' *Republic* because of the ironic phrase *δαψίλεια τύφου*, 'prodigality of conceit'. Zeno's *Republic* is said to be an early work (cf. H. G. Baldry, 'Zeno's Ideal State', *JHS* 79 (1959), 3–15, at 5) and so cannot be ruled out.

<sup>26</sup> See below on the opening of *DRN* 2. For Democritus' laughter, see A 21 Diels/Kranz (despite 'Demokrates' v 107a); Courtney on Juvenal 10.28–30; R. Philippson, 'Verfasser und Abfassungszeit der sogenannten Hippokratesbriefe', *RhM* 77 (1928), 293–328, at 317–20, who also collects the passages on Epicurean laughter: cf. especially Polystratus, *De irr. cont.* xxx.7–14, pp. 127–8 Indelli.

<sup>27</sup> A. Momigliano, 'Epicureans in Revolt', *JRS* 31 (1941), 149–57, at 153 = *Secondo contributo alla storia degli studi classici* (Rome, 1960), 383.

<sup>28</sup> See most recently P. Grimal, 'Les éléments philosophiques dans l'idée de monarchie à Rome à la fin de la République', in H. Flashar and O. Gigon (eds.), *Aspects de la philosophie hellénistique*, Entretiens Hardt 32 (Geneva, 1985), 233–87.

<sup>29</sup> K. Kleve, 'Zu einer Neuauflage von Philodem "Über die Götter", Buch I (PHerc 26)', *Cron. Erc.* 3 (1973), 89–91, at 89.

presence of Antony here is very dubious.<sup>30</sup> But even without Antony's name the attitude of Philodemus is plain: once more a philosophic pity and contempt for those caught up in political life, τῶν ἐπιφανεστάτων [ν ἐ]ν δυνάμεσι πολ[ι]τικαῖς ('the famous political office holders'). This may not always have been Philodemus' attitude, but here at the end of the *De dis* he is fully in harmony with the traditions of the school.

There are however some qualifications of the basic message mentioned in some of our texts, and they deserve particular attention because of their possible relevance to Lucretius' position in the *De rerum natura*. First, a passage of Plutarch's *De tranquillitate animi* (465 F = Epicurus fr. 555 Usener):

Not even Epicurus thought men who were in love with fame and honour (τοὺς φιλοτίμους καὶ φιλοδόξους) should lead a quiet life, but they should indulge their nature by taking part in politics and public life, because they are constitutionally more likely to be disturbed and corrupted by inactivity, if they do not attain what they want. But he is a fool to encourage to take part in public life not those who are most able but those who cannot live a quiet life...

This is a surprising statement, since we expect the pursuit of fame and glory, *philotimia* and *philodoxia*, to be attitudes of mind that Epicureanism completely removes. The philosophy is in general an intellectualist, Socratic one: once the truth is grasped, 'all the tempest of the soul is dispersed' (Epicurus, *Ep. Men.* 128) and the desire to go wrong is removed with its cause.<sup>31</sup> It is true that in *De rerum natura* 3.307–22 Lucretius admits that *doctrina* cannot completely remove natural proclivities like irascibility and timorousness, but these seem to be affections of a different order to love of glory and fame, and Lucretius claims that the traces left are so small 'that nothing hinders our living a life worthy of gods' (3.322). It is hard to see how the life of a politician actively pursuing glory could be so described by an Epicurean. As always, we sorely miss the context of Epicurus'

<sup>30</sup> See T. Dorandi, *Filodemo: il buon re secondo Omero* (Naples, 1982), 28 n. 22; M. Gigante, 'La biblioteca di Filodemo', *Cron. Exc.* 15 (1985), 5–30, at 28. I avoid with relief discussion of the phrase τῆ[ν ὀ]πουλό[τητ'] ἐκ[ε] καὶ[ὀ]ντων (and wager £5 that it will no longer be there when Kleve publishes his edition).

<sup>31</sup> I am aware that this is a controversial statement and that apparent counter-evidence is not hard to seek: I hope to return to the question elsewhere.

remarks. We do not know whether this one comes from a monograph or a letter, and it is possible that the sentiment represented a hypothetical concession; if anyone was so constituted, he would have to pursue a political life, but normal people are not like that. It is a common tactic of those authors who polemically quote Epicurus to present a *μὲν* clause without its answering *δέ*. Nevertheless, one can see how a concession like this could be congenial to some Roman Epicureans.

A second and more significant qualification is mentioned by Cicero and Seneca: the wise man will not take part in politics *extra quam si eum tempus et necessitas coegerit* ('except when circumstances and necessity compel him', Cic. *Rep.* 1.10), *nisi si quid intervenerit* ('unless there is some obstacle', Sen. *De otio* 3.2 = Epicurus fr. 9 Usener).<sup>32</sup> That is, sometimes political conditions will be so extreme that the Epicurean wise man will act (to which Cicero objects that this action will be ineffectual unless the wise man has studied political theory, something Epicurus enjoins him not to do). Context is again missing, and we can only guess at what sort of emergency might be envisaged as justifying a political act. There are also problems with integrating this injunction into the main body of Epicurean ethics. The wise man will be happy in the brazen bull of Phalaris, so why should, say, a politically authoritarian regime concern the individual?<sup>33</sup> We might look to the doctrine of Epicurean friendship; the wise man will die for a friend, and might *a fortiori* be expected to take part in politics, for example, to protect an Epicurean community from destruction. The problems here are considerable, and take

<sup>32</sup> Cf. I. Dionigi ad loc. in his edition of the *De otio* (Brescia, 1983), 198–9. The exact form of the quotation in Seneca may be influenced by the contrast with the maxim Seneca ascribes to Zeno, *accedet ad rem publicam nisi si quid impeditur* ('[the wise man] will taken part in public life unless there is some obstacle'); that is however a translation of a maxim ascribed in D.L. 7.121 to Chrysippus' *Περὶ βίωσ.*

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Epicurus fr. 601 Usener; A. Ardizzoni, 'Il saggio felice tra i tormenti', *RFIC* 70 (1942), 81–102, at 88–90; Nisbet on Cic. *Pis.* 42. Note Philodemus, *De morte* xxxiv–xxxv with Momigliano, 'Epicureans in Revolt' (n. 27), 154 = 383. Long, 'Pleasure and Social Utility' (n. 12), 286, on the other hand suggests that even the Epicurean 'needs assurances that he or she will not be molested by wild animals, subjected to the privations and continuous torture, it may be, of a concentration camp, or living in an environment where vandalism, assault, mockery, and other forms of psychological pressure are the order of the day'. This perhaps suits Epicureanism in some moods, but not the philosophy at its most austere.



us right to the centre of the difficult question of Epicurean *αὐτάρκεια* (self-sufficiency).<sup>34</sup> But as has often been observed, this doctrine of 'emergency action' could provide a motivation for an Epicurean like Cassius.<sup>35</sup> Whereas the first concession might provide an excuse for normal political action, this might justify a 'heroic' existential choice, say, to kill a tyrant. Such heroic rhetoric was of course well established in the Greek tradition of tyrannicide.<sup>36</sup> The maxim may also provide a context for Lucretius' statement at 1.41–3 that 'neither can I concentrate on my task with untroubled mind in this bad time for our country,<sup>37</sup> nor can the noble offspring of Memmius in such circumstances be wanting to the common weal'. While the poem is composed/read Lucretius asks Venus for peace; as things stand, the times are such that he cannot concentrate on his writing nor Memmius abandon political life. The logic here is not straightforward: it seems that we are to suppose that the prayer is granted, that peace is temporarily established, and that Lucretius can calmly write the *De rerum natura* and Memmius read it. But the allegory of the address to Venus demands that the achievement of the plea be achieved by the reading of the *De rerum natura* and the reader's conversion.<sup>38</sup> Converted to Epicureanism, the reader will cease the civil strife which prevents Lucretius from calmly writing the work of conversion!

<sup>34</sup> See Long, 'Pleasure and Social Utility' (n. 12), especially 301–8; P. Mitsis *ap.* Long, 305 n. 22.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Momigliano, 'Epicureans in Revolt' (n. 27), 151–5 = 379–85, and e.g. M. Bringmann, comments on Long, 'Pleasure and Social Utility' (n. 12), 321–2. Shackleton Bailey (on Cic. *Fam.* 115.17.4 = his 214.4) makes the important point that Cassius did not *convert* to Epicureanism in 46, and there are of course many doubtful identifications in Momigliano's prosopography. But I am here concerned with potentiality, not actuality (discussed by Griffin, 'Philosophy, Politics, and Politicians' [n. 8], 29 ff.).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. H. Berve, *Die Tyrannis bei den Griechen* (Munich, 1967), ii, 742.

<sup>37</sup> It is significant that *patriai tempore iniquo* ('in troubled times for our country') seems to be not a formal political phrase but an educated colloquialism: cf. *TLL* vii.1.1641.6 ff. By contrast *nec... communi desse saluti* ('nor fail to devote himself to the common good') strongly recalls political language: the phrase *communis salus* occurs 39 times in Cicero's speeches according to Merguet (cf. especially *II Verr.* 4.140; *TLL* iii.1970.76 ff.), and Cicero is always talking of 'not betraying the Republic, the Roman people' etc. (cf. *Cat.* 4.18; *Red. pop.* 18; *Phil.* 3.34; Plancius *ap.* *Fam.* 10.21.3; Lepidus *ap.* *Fam.* 10.34.2; Pollio *ap.* *Fam.* 10.33.5; Brutus *ap.* *Fam.* 11.9.2, all from 43 bc; *TLL* v.1.788.5 ff.). Cf. Wiseman, *Cinna the Poet* (n. 6), 32–3.

<sup>38</sup> My discussion here is brief and dogmatic: more elsewhere.

Nevertheless, the doctrine of 'emergency action' might justify the actions of a Lucretius as well as of a Memmius.<sup>39</sup>

The third concession to the injunction *μη πολιτεύεσθαι* (not to take part in politics) needs the most discussion. Although Plutarch (*Adv. Col.* 1126E) says that no Epicurean has ever been an adviser to kings, in the list of things which the wise man will and will not do in Diogenes Laertius' life of Epicurus (10.121b) we are told that the wise man 'will pay court to a king, if occasion demands', and links between Epicureans and various Hellenistic monarchs can be traced.<sup>40</sup> Colotes dedicated the work to which Plutarch devotes the *Adversus Colotem* to a Ptolemy, probably Philadelphus, and perhaps not unconnectedly at the end of his work praised kingship:<sup>41</sup>

Those who established laws and customs and the rule of kings and magistrates in cities brought human life into great security and peace, and freed men from chaos. If someone takes all this away, we shall live the life of wild beasts, and men will all but devour each other when they meet.

Plutarch, however, points out that other Epicurean statements on kingship are less favourable (*Adv. Col.* 1125C–D):

But who are the men who nullify, abolish, and totally destroy these things? Is it not those who withdraw themselves and their companions from the state? Is it not those who say that the crown of an undisturbed mind is incomparably greater than the highest command? Is it not those who declare that to be a king is a mistake and an error, and write in these very words that 'we must tell in what way a person may best observe the purpose of life, and how someone will not in the first place willingly approach public office'? And further that 'there is no need then to be a saviour of the Greeks or to be

<sup>39</sup> See below. For a recent attempt to find a place for philanthropic philosophic exposition in Epicurean ethics, see Long, 'Pleasure and Social Utility' (n. 12), 306–8. Diogenes of Oenoanda frs. 1–2 is of course an important parallel; in part the 'emergency' for him was his approaching death, but his motivation is complex. On the wider issue of Epicurean recruitment, see B. Frischer, *The Sculpted Word* (Berkeley, 1982), 49–50, 67–86; for a possible instance of an Epicurean taking 'emergency action' on behalf of his city, cf. the embassy of the Pergamene Apollophanes to Rome noted by J. and L. Robert, *RÉG* 71 (1958), 198.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. A. Momigliano, 'Su alcuni dati della vita di Epicuro', *RFIC* 63 (1935), 3–16, repr. in *Quinto contributo alla storia degli studi classici* (Rome, 1975); Grimal, 'L'idée de monarchie à Rome' (n. 28), 262–3; Angeli, 'I frammenti di Idomeneo' (n. 17), 87–8.

<sup>41</sup> On the passage see most recently Grimal, 'L'idée de monarchie à Rome' (n. 28), 261, and Long, 'Pleasure and Social Utility' (n. 12), 291–2.

crowned by them for wisdom, but to eat and drink, Timocrates, with pleasure and without harm to the flesh’?

It is not difficult to see how these statements might be reconciled, as R. Westman has again shown.<sup>42</sup> An Epicurean would not be a king, with all the disturbances of office, but he might be glad that there was a king preserving the peace, and might well prefer a benevolent monarchy to a democracy, since in the latter he would be continually pestered by people like Pericles reminding him of his civic duties: *ut satius multo iam sit parere quietum | quam regere imperio res velle et regna tenere* (‘so that it is much better to obey peacefully than to wish to exercise power and rule kingdoms’, *DRN* 5.1129–30). It could be objected that this is the morality of the freebooter:<sup>43</sup> kings are a good thing, but one would not wish one’s daughter to marry one. But early Epicureanism, like early Christianity, presupposes that its supporters will be a minority in a hostile world. If everyone was an Epicurean things would be different; no kings, and no laws, since a community of the wise would not need them.<sup>44</sup> But as it is, monarchy might be the easiest system to live with, and if circumstances required action—the second concession—it might well be right *μόναρχον ἐν καιρῷ θεραπεύειν* (‘to pay court to a king, if occasion demands’).

It has recently been argued however by M. Gigante and T. Dorandi that the Epicureans had a more positive attitude to kingship.<sup>45</sup> Attempting to find a context for Philodemus’ *On the Good King according to Homer*, they discuss a number of fragments, most of which unfortunately involve problems of text. They connect the injunction to pay court to kings *ἐν καιρῷ* (‘if occasion demands’) with the preceding statement in Diogenes Laertius Book 10, which states in the manuscript text that the wise man *χρηματίσσεσθαι, ἀλλ’ ἀπὸ μόνης σοφίας ἀπορήσαντα* (121b). Bailey translates this, ‘He will be ready to make money, but only when he is in straits and by means of his philosophy’, and this is the commonest translation, though

<sup>42</sup> *Plutarch gegen Kolotes* (n. 24), 201–6.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. *Plut. Mor.* 1127A, ‘they enjoy the advantages of society without contributing to them’.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. fr. 530 Usener; on Epicurean utopianism, see below.

<sup>45</sup> M. Gigante and T. Dorandi, ‘Anassarco e Epicuro “Sul regno”’, in F. Romano (ed.), *Democrito e l’atomismo antico*, Siculorum Gymnasium 33 (Catania, 1980), 479–97; Dorandi, *Il buon re secondo Omero* (n. 30), 22–32.

W. Schmid tried to interpret ἀπὸ μόνης σοφίας as ‘secundum scientiae doctrinas’ (‘only according to the principles of philosophy’, Arrighetti).<sup>46</sup> Gigante suggested reading εὐπορήσαντα (‘providing’) for ἀπορήσαντα (‘when in need’), translating the maxim ‘il sapiente cercherà di procurarsi i mezzi per vivere, ma attingendoli dalla sola filosofia’ (‘the wise man will seek to earn a living, but only by drawing on his philosophy’);<sup>47</sup> that is, money-making for the wise man is not seen as emergency act but as normal practice (εὐπορήσαντα going closely with ἀπὸ μόνης σοφίας). Connecting this with the following fragment on courting kings, Gigante and Dorandi then see the wise man as obtaining his income by instructing kings: ‘in exchange for the moral progress which a monarch can achieve, the sage can earn his living as well as happiness.’<sup>48</sup> This is ingenious, but the emended εὐπορήσαντα is redundant and the connection suggested between the maxims overelaborate. Keeping the manuscript ἀπορήσαντα (‘when in need’) there is a link with ἐν καιρῷ (‘if occasion demands’) in the following maxim: both detail things the wise man will not normally do but may be forced into by circumstances. The Gigante interpretation is at best not needed.

In two other passages Gigante and Dorandi are rather on the side of the manuscripts against excisions in the vulgate texts. The manuscript version of *Kuriai Doxai* 6 runs:

ἔνεκα τοῦ θαρρεῖν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων ἢ (ἦν Usener) κατὰ φύσιν ἀρχῆς καὶ βασιλείας ἀγαθόν, ἐξ ὧν ἄν ποτε τοῦτο οἶος τ’ ἦι παρασκευάζεσθαι.

As Bailey points out (ad loc.), this would have to mean ‘To secure protection from men the advantage of rule and kingship is a natural blessing, by which you may be able to attain this end’. The syntax of ἀρχῆς καὶ βασιλείας (‘rule and kingship’) is very awkward, however, and the phrase is normally excised as a gloss on ὧν. Gigante and Dorandi wish to keep the phrase,<sup>49</sup> but, syntax aside, it seems

<sup>46</sup> Doxography in Arrighetti’s apparatus, Gigante and Dorandi, ‘Anassarco e Epicuro’ (n. 45), 484.

<sup>47</sup> *Diogene Laerzio, Vite dei Filosofi*, 2nd edn. (Rome/Bari, 1976), 439, 574 n. 94.

<sup>48</sup> Gigante and Dorandi ‘Anassarco e Epicuro’ (n. 45), 486 (linking also the following fragment in D.L.).

<sup>49</sup> Cf. A. Barigazzi, ‘Sul concetto epicureo della sicurezza esterna’, in ΣΥΖΗΤΗΣΙΣ: *studi sull’epicureismo greco e latino offerti a Marcello Gigante*, 2 vols. (Naples, 1983), i.79–82 (best defence of the syntax, with καί for ἢ instead of Usener’s ἦν); Long, ‘Pleasure and Social Utility’ (n. 12), 324.

unlikely that Epicurus would have declared rule and kingship to be natural goods. The following *Kuria Doxa* criticizes those who think that they can obtain security by becoming famous, and Lucretius inserts his translation of this into the context of the struggle for power within a city.<sup>50</sup> Even if one could find a form of words which enabled ἀρχῆς καὶ βασιλείας to be retained,<sup>51</sup> the maxim would have to be taken as a counterfactual. If rule and kingship provided security, there would be nothing wrong with them but, as *Kuriai Doxai* 7 shows, they do not. There is however a lot to be said in terms of simplicity for the deletion of the phrase.<sup>52</sup>

Two fragments are ascribed by Usener to Epicurus' *On Kingship*. The first records Epicurus' advice to kings to avoid literary symposia, an injunction apparently contradicted by Philodemus in *On the Good King according to Homer*.<sup>53</sup> The second is Plutarch's complaint that the Epicureans

γράφουσι περὶ πολιτείας ἵνα μὴ πολιτευώμεθα, καὶ περὶ ῥητορικῆς ἵνα μὴ ῥητορεύωμεν, καὶ περὶ βασιλείας ἵνα [μὴ] φεύγωμεν τὸ συμβιῶν βασιλεῦσι.

write about politics to prevent us taking part in political life, and about rhetoric to stop us engaging in it, and about kingship to make us [not] flee the court of kings.<sup>54</sup>

The μὴ in the final member of Plutarch's tricolon is usually excised as an intrusion from the first two members; the negative idea the sequence requires is already present in φεύγωμεν ('flee'). Gigante and Dorandi point out the contrast with Diogenes Laertius 10.121b on courting kings, and suggest keeping the μὴ: the Epicureans did *not* wish the wise man to flee the company of kings. However, it is hard to see how Plutarch could have regarded such a view as paradoxical or

<sup>50</sup> DRN 5.1120–6; see below. *Kuriai Doxai* 7 should not be interpreted in a positive sense: cf. Long 'Pleasure and Social Utility', (n. 12), 324, in reply to Gigon.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Bailey ad loc.

<sup>52</sup> ἐξ ὧν represents πάντα ἐξ ὧν and so can probably stand as the subject of ἦν (ἀγαθόν is nominal, 'a good', not 'good').

<sup>53</sup> Fr. 5 Usener = 9 Arrighetti (Plut. *Mor.* 1095 c); Phld. *Hom.* xx.9 ff. Dorandi. O. Murray, 'Philodemus and the Good King according to Homer', *JRS* 55 (1965), 161–82, at 173 n. 41, noted the contradiction: Gigante and Dorandi ('Anassarco e Epicuro' (n. 45), 492; cf. Dorandi, *Il buon re secondo Omero* (n. 30), 37) claim that the relationship between the passages is merely 'difficult to determine'.

<sup>54</sup> Fr. 6 Usener (Plut. *Mor.* 1127 A, immediately before Metrodorus frs. 31–2 Körte quoted above).

horrific, and if the point was in the apparent self-contradiction by the Epicureans he would surely have drawn this out more explicitly. The contradiction of Diogenes Laertius 10.121b is lessened by the presence there of ἐν καιρῷ ('if occasion demands'); as Westman remarks, 'the fact that one ought to avoid something does not exclude the possibility that one may do it in special circumstances'.<sup>55</sup> Plutarch's reference is probably not to the *On Kingship* but to the letters to Idomeneus mentioned earlier, which precisely encourage him to flee the court.

Finally, a passage of Lactantius' *Divinae Institutiones*, from a section where Lactantius is attempting to show that Epicurus *ut ad se multitudinem contrahat, adposita singulis quibusque moribus loquitur* ('in order to attract the multitude, says what is appropriate to each person's character'); that is, he tried to be all things to all men, so that for example a weak man was told pain is the greatest evil, a brave one that the wise man is happy even under torture (3.17.2–5). Lactantius' final example concerns Epicurus' attitude to kingship:

qui claritati ac potentiae studet, huic praecipitur reges colere, qui molestiam ferre non potest, huic regiam fugere.<sup>56</sup>

One who is eager for fame and power is advised to pay court to kings; one who cannot bear annoyance to shun the palace.

It would be consistent with Lactantius' rhetoric for the combination of these two injunctions to be his own,<sup>57</sup> but Gigante and Dorandi may be right in seeing them as combined already in Epicurus.<sup>58</sup> I would see this again however as an instance where all the emphasis falls on the δέ clause. If someone wants fame and power, let him court kings, but the true Epicurean will not have such desires, and will know that kingship brings disturbance. It is as if someone said, 'If all you are really interested in is money, by all means rob a bank, but if you do not fancy spending twenty years in gaol, do not take to crime'. The maxim is clearly related to the passage of Plutarch's *De tranquillitate animi* discussed above which contained Epicurus' first concession to political life. Both fragments would fit well into a sequence in, say, a letter to Idomeneus, in which the addressee was told to

<sup>55</sup> Westman, *Plutarch gegen Kolotes* (n. 24), 205.

<sup>56</sup> *Div. Inst.* 3.17.6 = Epicurus fr. 557 Usener.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Usener ad loc.

<sup>58</sup> 'Anassarco e Epicuro' (n. 45), 494.

pursue a political life if he really had to, but to become a true Epicurean if he wanted real happiness and freedom from disturbance.

When one deals with these tiny fragments shorn of their context, nothing is certain. But the case for a positive view of kingship in Epicureanism seems to me not yet to have been made out. This leaves us with the problem of Philodemus' *On the Good King according to Homer* and its relation to orthodox Epicureanism; perhaps we have no alternative but to return to Murray's view of that treatise as not in essence an Epicurean work.<sup>59</sup> Nor can we see Lucretius' address to Memmius in the *De rerum natura* as in a tradition of Epicurean 'advice to the great'; the relation of message and addressee remains problematic, though the scepticism about power that we shall see the work contains is less anomalous than it would be if the Epicurean attitude to kingship were more favourable. I now turn to the *De rerum natura* itself, beginning with those texts which most concern themselves with political life.

First, the description of the *edita doctrina sapientum templa serena* ('tranquil precincts, lofty and well fortified by the teachings of the wise') which opens Book 2 (lines 7–13):

sed nil dulcius est, bene quam munita tenere  
edita doctrina sapientum templa serena,  
despicere unde queas alios passimque videre  
errare atque viam palantis quaerere vitae,  
certare ingenio, contendere nobilitate,  
noctes atque dies niti praestante labore  
ad summas emergere opes rerumque potiri.

But nothing is sweeter than to occupy tranquil precincts, lofty and well fortified by the teachings of the wise, whence you can look down on others and observe them wandering everywhere and straying in search of the path of life, vying in talent, competing in nobility, striving night and day with surpassing effort to reach the pinnacle of wealth and to win power.

The elevation of the wise man is important: the philosophers are continually described as 'looking down from above on the life of

<sup>59</sup> Murray, 'Philodemus and the Good King' (n. 53), 165; id., 'Rileggendo Il buon re secondo Omero', *Cron. Enc.* 14 (1984), 157–60. My agreement with Dorandi in *CR* 36 (1986), 81–5, on the Epicurean context of the work was over-hasty: I hope to return to the question of the date and occasion elsewhere.

those below,<sup>60</sup> but Lucretius is also stealing one of the central metaphors of the political world, the climb through the lower offices to the pinnacle of success, 'making it to the top'. The imagery on which Lucretius draws for his citadel of serenity is complex,<sup>61</sup> but one element is perhaps the view of unphilosophic men as like insignificant ants, scurrying about their tiny tasks: so Philodemus in the passage of *De dis* quoted above seems to talk of 'looking down on everyone else as gnats' (though it has to be said that the phrase  $\kappa\lambda\alpha\tau\alpha\phi\rho[\omicron]\nu\eta\sigma\omicron\nu\tau\alpha$  [ $\pi$ ]άντων [ὡς σ]έρφ[ων] is again just the sort of Greek which tends to disappear when the papyrus is put under the microscope in Naples). The description of the unphilosophic hurly-burly<sup>62</sup> is full of the clichés of politics: *niti* ('strive'), *labore* ('effort'), *emergere* ('to reach the pinnacle'), and especially *rerum potiri* ('to win power') are common in political discourse,<sup>63</sup> and even *noctes atque dies* ('night and day') is pointed. Ancient, like modern, politicians boasted that they never slept; Cicero tells L. Papirius Paetus in a letter of 43 that 'my days and nights are passed in one sole care and occupation—the safety and freedom of my countrymen'.<sup>64</sup> Lucretius however inserts this insomnia not into a tradition of heroic selflessness but into that of the moralists' attacks on the disturbed nights of the careworn.<sup>65</sup> Line 11 is particularly significant for Lucretius' view of

<sup>60</sup> Pl. *Soph.* 216c (after *Od.* 17.485–7 on the gods).

<sup>61</sup> e.g. the citadel of philosophy (cf. Nisbet and Hubbard on Hor. *Carm.* 2.6.21; Lyne on *Ciris* 14–17; Gruber on Boeth. *Cons.* 1.3.13), the flight of the mind (cf. P. Courcelle s.v. *Flügel* (*Flug*) *der Seele*, *RAC* 8 (1972), 29–65), the mount of virtue (cf. West on Hes. *Op.* 287–92; Lucian, *Nec.* 4, *Hermot. passim*); and much else.

<sup>62</sup> Common in 'diatribe': cf. e.g. Dio Chrys. 13.13; Marc. Aur. *Med.* 7.48, with Farquharson ad loc.; Lucian, *Charon* 15, with G. Anderson, *Lucian: Theme and Variation in the Second Sophistic*, Mnemosyne suppl. 41 (Leiden, 1976), 16–17; as a protreptic topos Iambl. *Protr.* p. 13 Pistelli. Important Latin examples from the satiric tradition are Lucilius 1228–34 Marx, and Varro, *Eumenides* and *Endymiones* (cf. Cèbe on his fr. 160).

<sup>63</sup> *niti*: Cic. *Planc.* 67; Sall. *Iug.* 4.7, etc. *labor*: Hellegouarc'h, *Vocabulaire politique* (n. 1), 248–51, 478; D. Lau, *Der lateinische Begriff LABOR* (Diss. Munich, 1975), 122; Vretska on Sall. *Cat.* 2.5. *emergere*: TLL v.477.58 ff. *rerum potiri*: Caelius ap. Cic. *Fam.* 8.14.12; Cic. *Rosc. Am.* 70; *Cat.* 2.19; *Att.* 10.8.4, etc.; Koestermann on Tac. *Ann.* 1.5.4; R. Syme, *Tacitus* (Oxford, 1958), i.412. With *niti* and *labor*, cf. the discussion of *ponos* in L. B. Carter, *The Quiet Athenian* (Oxford, 1986), 11. Carter's first chapter contains much of interest on the Greek roots of the language of glory.

<sup>64</sup> *Fam.* 9.24.4 = 362.4 Shackleton Bailey (his translation).

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Nisbet and Hubbard on Hor. *Carm.* 2.11.8; 16.15; Boeth. *Cons.* 4.2.28.



contemporary politics. In *certare ingenio, contendere nobilitate* ('vying in talent, competing in nobility'), *ingenio* ('talent') is the watchword of the *novus homo, nobilitate* ('nobility') that of the established ruling class.<sup>66</sup> Lucretius encapsulates the strife within the aristocratic elite between those inside and those outside the circle of light. Both parties toil in vain: they will never really 'make it', never really 'get to the top', because only *sapientia* ('wisdom') can lead men up to the citadel.

In the prologue to Book 3—linked to that of Book 2 by the repetition of 2.12–13 = 3.62–3—Lucretius is concerned with the effect on men's lives of the fear of death. Though the passage has been criticized as based on an implausible and possibly un-Epicurean psychology, there are in fact Epicurean parallels to what Lucretius says and the role assigned to the fear of death is perfectly in harmony with the Epicurean analysis of human motivation.<sup>67</sup> We should remember that Lucretius is not analysing men's conscious thoughts but their hidden drives, revealed only in extreme circumstances; it is no objection to say that politicians do not all the while have death on their minds. He offers two reasons why he has to treat the fate of the soul and the fear of death at length. In the first place, though non-Epicureans often boast of being free of any fear of death, because their beliefs are not rationally based they give way in the face of adversity.<sup>68</sup> His example is a criminal fleeing into exile (3.48–54):

extorres idem patria longequē fugati  
 conspectu ex hominum, foedati crimine turpi,  
 omnibus aerumnis adfecti denique vivunt,  
 et quocumque tamen miseri venere parentant  
 et nigras mactant pecudes et manibu' divis

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Cic. *Sest.* 136 *vosque adulescentes, et qui nobiles estis... et qui ingenio ac virtute nobilitatem potestis consequi* ('you young men, both those who are of noble birth, and those who may attain nobility through talent and virtue').

<sup>67</sup> See especially D. Konstan, *Some Aspects of Epicurean Psychology* (Leiden, 1973), 11–34. Cf. also P. Shorey, *CP* 7 (1912), 353–5; J. Perret, 'L'amour de l'argent, l'ambition et la crainte de la mort (Lucrèce III 59–86)', in *Mélanges Ernout* (Paris, 1940), 277–84; A. Desmouliéz, 'Cupidité, ambition, et crainte de la mort chez Lucrèce (d.r.n. III 59–63)', *Latomus* 17 (1958), 317–23; E. Pianezzola, 'Lucrezio: sopravvivenza e potere', *RCCM* 19 (1977), 609–24, at 617–19; W. Schmid, 'Lucretius Ethicus', in O. Gigon (ed.), *Lucrèce, Entretiens Hardt* 24 (Geneva, 1978), 137–53; Barrigazzi, 'Sul concetto epicureo della sicurezza esterna' (n. 49). The most important Epicurean parallel is Porph. *De abst.* 1.54.2–3 = Epicurus fr. 458 Usener.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Polystratus, *De irr. cont.* 10.27 ff. Indelli (compared already by Heinze).

inferias mittunt multoque in rebus acerbis  
acrius advertunt animos ad religionem.

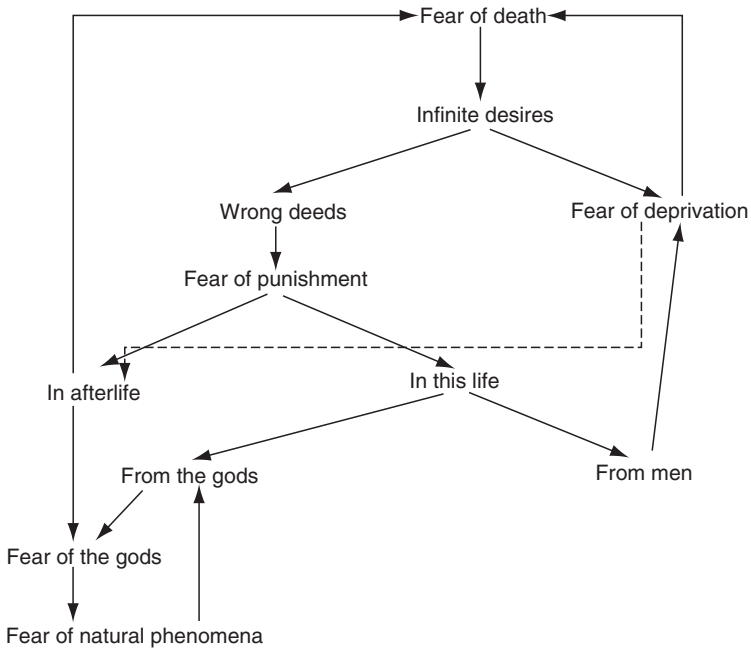
These same people, when driven out from their homeland and exiled far from the sight of men, defiled by a shameful charge and afflicted by every kind of suffering, yet live on; nonetheless wherever these wretches go they perform rites to their ancestors and sacrifice black sheep and send offerings to the spirits of the dead and in adversity turn their attention much more eagerly to religion.

This could be true of any criminal in any country at any time, but the details assimilate the picture to contemporary Rome. In particular the phrases *foedati crimine turpi* ('defiled by a shameful charge') and *omnibus aerumnis adfecti* ('afflicted by every kind of suffering') exactly pervert legal terminology. Strictly it is a *iudicium* ('verdict') which is *turpe* ('shameful'), and the man found guilty is *adfectus* with a *poena* or *supplicium* (i.e. punishment is inflicted on him).<sup>69</sup> Here, as often at Rome, the accused is seen as fleeing before he can be officially condemned, but he is yet punished by the *aerumnae* ('sufferings') of exile. The Epicurean point is insinuated that even the man who escapes formal punishment cannot really get away with—or from—his crime. We do not know whether Lucretius' description would have brought to mind for his readers any particular figure; I can think of no plausible candidate. But they would surely think here of an exiled *politician*, since a political trial is by far the likeliest reason for a Roman to go into exile. The description thus anticipates the picture Lucretius offers of political life in the following lines 59–86, where the reader discovers that if the man had really freed himself from the fear of death he is unlikely to have had to flee before a *crimen turpe* ('shameful charge') in the first place.

In 59–86 Lucretius gives the second reason for his extensive treatment of the soul and death in Book 3. The fear of death is the root cause of the fight for wealth and power which leads directly to the horrors of contemporary politics; terrified of death men try to cling on to 'life', reified as the security of wealth and the bright lights of political success. Their pursuit of these unnatural and unnecessary objects of desire can never satisfy, but leads them further into a paradoxical syndrome of misery, which can be represented graphically as in my figure. In Book 2 Lucretius exposed and subverted the central political metaphor of

<sup>69</sup> *turpe iudicium*: TLL vii.2.612.52 ff., e.g. Cic. *Flacc.* 10 *turpi iudicio condemnatus* ('condemned by a shameful verdict'). *supplicio etc. afficere*: OLD s.v. *afficio* 4 b.

ascent, and here the opposition between the light of success and the dark obscurity of failure receives the same treatment. In conventional thought, the successful politician is again Olympian, raised on high in the regions of light, while the ordinary man lies unseen in the turbid darkness. But to Lucretius the politician is blind (59), a paradigm of unphilosophic man, like a child in the night (87–90); the ultimate paradox of the pursuit of bright fame is *vitae . . . odium lucisque videntae* (79–80), a hatred of light. The moralizing traditions into which the passage inserts itself are again complex, and a purely ‘Roman’ reading would be reductive,<sup>70</sup> but the presence of contemporary political



<sup>70</sup> Much is owed, for instance, to the Hesiodic stance of accumulating vivid descriptions of contemporary (or coming) crimes: cf. *Op.* 176–9, 180–201, and note how Catullus 64.397–406 and Vergil *G.* 2.503–12 combine Lucretius and Hesiod. Hes. *Op.* 176–7 is alluded to in *DRN* 3.62–3 = 2.12–13.

language is not hard to seek: clichés like *caeca cupido* ('blind desire'), *socios scelerum atque ministros* ('partners and accomplices in crime'), *rem conflant* ('they amass wealth'), *incedit* ('flaunts'), *caeno* ('filth'), the commonplace abstracts of political hyperbole like *pudorem* ('sense of shame') and *pietatem* ('devotion to duty').<sup>71</sup> Two details may be singled out. In 70–1 Lucretius describes how men pursue wealth:

sanguine civili rem conflant divitiasque  
conduplicant avidi, caedem caede accumulantes.

They amass wealth by shedding citizen blood, and greedily double their fortunes, heaping slaughter on slaughter.

There is nothing here which cannot be paralleled in Greek, but *sanguis civilis* would be a resonant term for the Roman reader,<sup>72</sup> who might think especially of the Sullan proscriptions. There is a striking parallel in Sallust's description of Catiline's entourage (*Cat.* 14.1–3):

in tanta tamque corrupta civitate Catilina, id quod factu facillimum erat, omnium flagitiorum atque facinorum circum se tamquam stipatorum catervas habebat. nam quicumque inpudicus adulter ganeo manu ventre pene bona patria laceraverat, quique alienum aes grande conflaverat, quo flagitium aut facinus redimeret, praeterea omnes undique parricidae sacrilegi convicti iudiciis aut pro factis iudicium timentes, ad hoc *quos manus atque lingua periurio aut sanguine civili alebat*, postremo omnes quos flagitium egestas conscius animus exagitabat, ii Catilinae proximi familiaresque erant.

In so great and so corrupt a state, Catiline surrounded himself, so to speak, with a close-packed retinue of the vicious and criminal, something very easy to achieve. For every debauchee, adulterer, or glutton who had frittered away his inheritance on gambling, food, and sex, who had run up huge debts in order to redeem his vicious and criminal acts; all those, too, who had been convicted in the courts of murder or sacrilege, or who feared a conviction for their misdeeds; in addition, those whose hands and tongues maintained them, through perjury or the shedding of citizen blood; and finally, all those plagued by vice, want, or a bad conscience; these were Catiline's friends and associates.

<sup>71</sup> *caeca cupido*: TLL iii.44.30 ff., e.g. Cic. *Pis.* 57 *socios scelerum atque ministros*: Hellegouarc'h, *Vocabulaire politique* (n. 1), 88 nn. 5–6; TLL viii.1003.68 ff., e.g. Cic. *Phil.* 12.17. *rem conflant*: Reid on Cic. *Sull.* 13, e.g. *Sest.* 66. *incedit*: TLL vii.1.853.70 ff., e.g. Sall. *Jug.* 31.10. *caeno*: A. Otto, *Die Sprichwörter und sprichwörtlichen Redensarten der Römer* (Leipzig, 1890), 63, e.g. Cic. *Vatin.* 17, 23. *pudorem* and *pietatem*: Hellegouarc'h, *ibid.*, 283, 276–9, e.g. Cic. *Cat.* 2.25.

<sup>72</sup> TLL iii.1216.27 ff., e.g. Cic. *Phil.* 2.71.

Catiline's supporters include those *quos manus atque lingua periurio aut sanguine civili alebat* ('those whose hands and tongues maintained them, through perjury or the shedding of citizen blood'). E. Wistrand drew attention to a tendency in Latin political rhetoric to talk hyperbolically of disgrace in the courts as death and murder, and suggested that the reference in Sallust was not to banditry but to 'men who make their living out of ruining their fellow citizens through false-swearing and forged documents'.<sup>73</sup> This thesis certainly cannot be accepted without reservation: questions of Latinity aside, it is important to note that Sallust's model in this passage<sup>74</sup> is Theopompus' account of Philip's followers (*FGrH* 115 F 225), and the reference there to men who are 'murderers by nature' is clearly not metaphorical. In the *De rerum natura* the meaning is of course made clear by *caedem caede accumulantes* ('heaping slaughter on slaughter'), but it is to Lucretius' point if the reader initially takes *sanguine civili rem conflant* ('they amass wealth by shedding citizen blood') more loosely and vaguely. Judicial 'murder' becomes real murder with dispiriting ease.

Sallust and Catiline are perhaps relevant also to 74–7:

consimili ratione ab eodem saepe timore  
macerat invidia ante oculos illum esse potentem,  
illum aspectari, claro qui incedit honore,  
ipsi se in tenebris volvi caenoque queruntur.

In the same way, owing to the same fear, envy often torments them because *that man's* power is plain to see, *that man*, who flaunts his glorious honours, is conspicuous, while they themselves—they complain—are wallowing in darkness and filth.

That political life is inevitably the subject of *invidia* or *φθόνος* ('envy') is not a novel thought, and as if to underline this Lucretius' metaphor in *macerat* ('torments', 'wastes away') is not a Roman cliché but an adaptation of the common Greek use of *τήκω* ('waste away') with *φθόνος*.<sup>75</sup> Philodemus in his *Rhetoric*<sup>76</sup> singles out envy as the great disadvantage of political life, 'most hostile to friendship and most

<sup>73</sup> *Sallust on Judicial Murders at Rome* (Göteborg, 1968), 23.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. K. Büchner, *Sallust*, 2nd edn. (Heidelberg, 1982), 329; McGushin ad loc.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Pfeiffer on Callim. *Aet.* fr. 1.8.

<sup>76</sup> *Rhet.* 2.158 ff. Sudhaus.

productive of enmity'; Lucretius returns to the subject in 5.1125–9. It is instructive however to compare Lucretius' description with part of Catiline's great speech in Sallust (*Cat.* 20.7–8):

nam postquam res publica in paucorum potentium ius atque dicionem concessit, semper illis reges tetrarchae vectigales esse, populi nationes stipendia pendere; ceteri omnes, strenui boni, nobiles atque ignobiles, vulgus fuimus sine gratia, sine auctoritate, iis obnoxii, quibus, si res publica valeret, formidini essemus. itaque omnis gratia potentia honos divitiae apud *illos* sunt aut ubi *illi* volunt; nobis reliquere pericula repulsas iudicia egestatem.

For ever since the state was yielded up to the jurisdiction and authority of a few powerful men, kings and tetrarchs have been their tributaries, peoples and nations have paid taxes to them; but all the rest of us, however hard-working and patriotic, noble and commoner alike, have been a mob without influence or authority, subject to those who—if the state were healthy—ought to fear us. And so all influence, power, office and wealth are in *their* hands, or go where *they* wish; to us they have left danger, rejection, condemnation, and poverty.

Apart from the general resemblance of thought between the two passages, there is one stylistic trick in common, the *illum... illum* of *De rerum natura* 3.75–6 and the *illos... illi* in Sallust.<sup>77</sup> In Lucretius the repetition conveys 'the ambitious man's obsession with his rival' (Kenney ad loc.), and in Sallust too *gratia, potentia, honos, divitiae* ('influence, power, office, and wealth') are seen as being in *their* hands or where *they* want them to be. Of course the resemblance between the two passages functions for the reader of the *Catiline* as a pointer back to the context in the *De rerum natura*; Catiline unconsciously shows himself to be one of Lucretius' bitter madmen. But the sentiment is not an implausible one, and it does the modern reader of Lucretius no harm to be reminded that the Catilinarian 'conspiracy' was less than a decade in the past when the poem was published, and that memories of it must inevitably have conditioned the poem's reception.

The most direct reference to contemporary political life comes in the allegorical interpretation of Sisyphus in 3.995–1002:

Sisyphus in vita quoque nobis ante oculos est  
 qui petere a populo fascis saevasque securis  
 imbibit et semper victus tristisque recedit.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Cic. *Off.* 2.44, though that is less obviously parallel.

nam petere imperium quod inane est nec datur umquam,  
 atque in eo semper durum sufferre laborem,  
 hoc est adverso nixantem trudere monte  
 saxum quod tamen e summo iam vertice rursus  
 volvitur et plani raptim petit aequora campi.

Sisyphus too is here in life for all of us to see, the man who thirsts to seek the *fasces* and cruel axes from the people, and always retreats, sadly, in defeat. For to seek power which is empty and never granted, and always to undertake hard toil in the process, is to push a rock, straining, up a mountain slope, a rock which nevertheless rolls back down again from the very summit and rapidly seeks the flat surface of the level plain.

Again we meet Lucretian subversion of the metaphor of the climb to fame, and there are other resemblances to the prologue to Book 2. Sisyphus is perhaps present there too as an ‘implicit myth’.<sup>78</sup> The *fasces* which are the goal of every Roman politician—though no one would *say* they were his goal<sup>79</sup>—become merely a burden, and power rolls away back to the Campus which is its source. As David West pointed out in his discussion of this passage,<sup>80</sup> although the primary reference is to failure (*victus tristisque recedit*, ‘he retreats, sadly, in defeat’) even a successful Roman politician only held office for a year. The stone always rolls back to the Plain, and even the successful candidate never receives true *imperium* (‘power’). In this passage of dense allegory one term stands out, *imbibit* (‘thirsts’). This is conspicuous precisely because it does not cohere with the major metaphors of the description.<sup>81</sup> The evidence is not strong, but this could be a political cliché;<sup>82</sup> if so, it derives its force from its lack of poetic coherence. It is the ambitious hack’s own word. There is also, however, an Epicurean point. The Epicurean classification of

<sup>78</sup> On the term ‘implicit myth’, see R. O. A. M. Lyne, *Further Voices in Vergil’s Aeneid* (Oxford, 1987), 139–40. The politicians strive night and day to ‘get to the top’: but Odysseus is also present in 2.12–13, since *emergere* suits a swimmer, cf. *Od.* 5.388–9, with Prop. 3.12.32.

<sup>79</sup> *petere fasces* (‘to seek the *fasces*’) is a perversion of the normal *petere consulatum* (‘to seek the consulship’), etc. On the *pulchros fasces saevosque securis* (‘the fair *fasces* and cruel axes’), cf. *DRN* 5.1233–5.

<sup>80</sup> *The Imagery and Poetry of Lucretius* (Edinburgh, 1969), 100–2.

<sup>81</sup> The other occurrence of *imbibo* in the *DRN* is 6.72; note there *delibata* (‘detract from’; ‘taste (food or drink)’), 70) and *respuit* (‘spit out’, 68).

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Cic. *Quinct.* 27; Livy 2.47.12.

desires<sup>83</sup> drew a contrast between those whose satisfaction involved the physical ingestion of substances into the body (natural and necessary) or at least a variation of the state of the sense organs (natural but not necessary), and those whose satisfaction was impossible because they involved nothing real (unnatural and unnecessary). So at the end of Book 4 Lucretius contrasts the natural and necessary desires for food and drink and the natural but unnecessary desire for sex with the unnatural and unnecessary passion of love (4.1091–1101):

nam cibus atque umor membris assumitur intus;  
 quae quoniam certas possunt obsidere partis,  
 hoc facile expletur laticum frugumque cupido.  
 ex hominis vero facie pulchroque colore  
 nil datur in corpus praeter simulacra fruendum  
 tenuia; quae vento spes raptast saepe misella.  
 ut bibere in somnis sitiens cum quaerit et umor  
 non datur, ardorem qui membris stinguere possit,  
 sed laticum simulacra petit frustra laborat  
 in medioque sitit torrenti flumine potans,  
 sic in amore Venus simulacris ludit amantis . . .

For food and drink are absorbed into the body; since they can occupy specific places, this desire for water and bread is easily satisfied. But from the face and lovely complexion of a human being, nothing is given to the body to enjoy but insubstantial images; and this frail hope is often snatched away by the wind. Just as when a thirsty man seeks to drink in his dreams, and no moisture is granted him to put out the fire in his body, but he pursues images of liquid and toils in vain, and thirsts even as he drinks in the midst of a rushing river, so in love Venus deludes lovers with images . . .

The Sisyphan politician ‘drinks in’ an object which is *inane* (‘empty’) and never granted: the use of a verb which normally refers to the satisfaction of a real desire points the inanity.

<sup>83</sup> I follow Diano’s account of Epicurean pleasure as expounded in his famous exchange with Bignone: see his *Scritti epicurei* (Florence, 1974), 23–66, 67–128. This has been much assailed, most recently by J. C. B. Gosling and C. C. W. Taylor, *The Greeks on Pleasure* (Oxford, 1982), 365–96, and G. Giannantoni, ‘Il piacere cinetico nell’etica epicurea’, *Elenchos* 5 (1984), 25–44: I think Diano’s theory survives these criticisms, and remains the most important contribution to Epicurean ethics in modern times: argument (perhaps) elsewhere.



If 3.995–1002 contain the most explicit reference to contemporary Roman politics, the most extensive treatment of the political world in general comes in the account of the rise of civilization in Book 5. To be dogmatic about a much discussed passage,<sup>84</sup> Lucretius' account seems to be structured around a division between an early stage where society developed naturally under the promptings of nature, and a later one where man's reasoning played a decisive role. The discussion of specifically social developments is split between these stages and is not continuous. Nevertheless, a five-stage analysis of social development is clear:

- (1) Man is *durus* ('tough'), lives outdoors, and has no marriage nor any kind of law (925–1010).
- (2) Houses, fire, and marriage lead to *amicitia* ('friendship') between neighbours (1019–20) who form a *foedus* ('pact', 1025).
- (3) Men who *ingenio... praestabant et corde vigeabant*<sup>85</sup> ('were of outstanding intelligence and mental vigour', 1107) become kings and create cities (1109); they distribute property on the basis of beauty and strength (1110–11) until wealth becomes more important (1113–16).
- (4) The rich desire power and fame as a safeguard for their wealth<sup>86</sup> (1120–2) and in the resulting strife the kings are overthrown and a state of anarchy results (1141–2).

<sup>84</sup> For bibliography on the whole *Kulturgeschichte* see D. J. Furley, 'Lucretius the Epicurean: On the History of Man', in O. Gigon (ed.), *Lucretius*, Entretiens Hardt 24 (Geneva, 1978), 1 n. 1 [= Ch. 7 n. 1 in this volume]; there is an excellent survey in B. Manuwald, *Der Aufbau der Lukrezischen Kulturentstehungslehre* (Mainz/Wiesbaden, 1980). On the specifically political aspects, see most recently Long, 'Pleasure and Social Utility' (n. 12), 309–11. I recapitulate here some material published for a different audience in *Omnibus* 10.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Hermarchus *ap. Porph. De abst.* 1.8, contrasted with Polybius 6.5.7 by Goldschmidt, *La doctrine d'Épicure et le droit* (n. 12), 289 n. 5. The Epicurean kings excel in intellect, not bodily strength; contrast Grimal, 'L'idée de monarchie à Rome' (n. 28), 261, though he is talking of a later stage. Cf. also Cic. *Rep.* 2.24.

<sup>86</sup> It is tempting to take *opulenti* in 1122 as meaning 'by being wealthy', that is, it is their wealth which is to assure them of a *placidam... vitam* ('tranquil life'). But the men are already wealthy (1113–16); what they need now is security to enjoy their wealth, and they seek this in glory and fame. T. Cole, *Democritus and the Sources of Greek Anthropology* (Ann Arbor, 1967), 75 n. 11, is wrong to say that 'monarchy... is the result of the attempt on the part of individuals to guarantee themselves security': monarchy precedes the competitive phase.

- (5) Eventually magistrates and laws are introduced by some men (1143 *partim*) because mankind is *defessum vi colere aevum* ('tired of living life in violence', 1145).

As Momigliano noted,<sup>87</sup> this is a more complicated account than we find in the only other Epicurean text of any length on the subject, the summary of Hermarchus' views given in Porphyry's *De abstinentia* (1.7–12 = Hermarchus fr. 24 Krohn). In that account there are only three stages, anarchy, social contract, and the intervention of legislators. Similarly Colotes contrasts a preceding state of anarchy with the peace brought by 'those who appointed laws and customs and established the government of cities by magistrates and kings'.<sup>88</sup> By contrast, Momigliano claimed, 'to Lucretius, magistrates and laws, not kings are able to ensure durable peace'. Thus Momigliano concluded that the *De rerum natura* was favourable to the politics of the Republic and likely to encourage men to stand against the sort of domination represented by Caesar.

We should be careful not to assume that Hermarchus and Colotes represent the whole of the Epicurean theory of the development of law. In each case the context of the argument might justify a compression of the different stages of development. But Momigliano is quite right that the account in the *De rerum natura* is more complicated than the other versions we have. It is also true that a social contract theory of law as held by the Epicureans will tend to be opposed to absolutism;<sup>89</sup> and there is an important difference between Lucretius' account and those of non-Epicurean thinkers who have a similar pattern of development from the family to the city. In Plato's post-deluge state in the *Laws* and in Aristotle's *Politics* kingship is already present in the earliest developments as a natural progression from the authority of the father in the family.<sup>90</sup> The *padre* is the prototype of the *padrone*. By contrast, in Lucretius' account kings only begin to appear at the start of the stage

<sup>87</sup> 'Epicureans in Revolt' (n. 27), 57 = 388.

<sup>88</sup> See above, p. 407.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Denyer in ΣΥΖΗΤΗΣΙΣ (n. 49)—though note the special case of Hobbes. A. A. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy: Stoics, Epicureans, Sceptics*, 2nd edn. (London, 1986), 70, and Goldschmidt, *La doctrine d'Épicure et le droit* (n. 12), 240 n. 1, rightly point out the differences from Rousseau, but this does not prevent us continuing to use the term 'social contract' for the Epicurean theory.

<sup>90</sup> Pl. *Leg.* 676a ff.; Arist. *Pol.* 1252<sup>b</sup>19 ff.

of development where man's reasoning about his development is becoming important.

Nevertheless, Momigliano's analysis requires some modification. The development from kingship to anarchy parallels those theories which see a degeneration in the progress of society through the different polities, an idea already implicit in the *Republic* but finding its most developed expression in Polybius.<sup>91</sup> In contrast to these, Lucretius' account is optimistic; anarchy is not permanent, nor does the cycle begin again with monarchy, but constitutional government by magistrates results. But the description of the breakdown of kingship in 1113–42 is full of the language of contemporary Roman politics,<sup>92</sup> and the injunction of 1131–5 explicitly indicates that the struggle for *imperium . . . ac summatum* ('power and supremacy') is still continuing in Lucretius' day:

proinde sine incassum defessi sanguine sudent,  
angustum per iter luctantes ambitionis;  
quandoquidem sapiunt alieno ex ore petuntque  
res ex auditis potius quam sensibus ipsis,  
nec magis id nunc est neque erit mox quam fuit ante.

So let them wear themselves out for nothing and sweat blood as they struggle up the narrow path of ambition; since indeed their wisdom comes from another's lips and the object of their search is based on hearsay rather than their own senses, and this does not avail them any more now, nor will it in future, than it did in the past.

The *summus honor* ('highest honour') which men seek would suggest above all the consulship for Lucretius' readers,<sup>93</sup> and the whole description is obviously parallel to the accounts of contemporary political strife already examined. For Polybius Rome's mixed consti-

<sup>91</sup> Cf. Walbank on Polybius 6.4.7–9, 14.

<sup>92</sup> e.g. *sectam*: OLD s.v. 1b, e.g. Cic. *ad Brut.* 1.3a (4) *claros atque potentis*: TLL iii.1274.7 ff., e.g. Sall. *Cat.* 38.1. *quietum*: OLD s.v. 3a, e.g. Caesar *ap.* Cic. *Att.* 10.8b.2; Cic. *Comment. pet.* 9; Sall. *Hist.* 1.55.26. *regere imperio*: famously Verg. *Aen.* 6.851, and often thought Ennian, but the allusion may be to Lucretius; and cf. Cic. *Rep.* 2.15; Sall. *lug.* 18.2; Hor. *Carm.* 3.4.48; Livy 1.7.8. *sudent*: Cic. *Sest.* 139; *Fam.* 3.12.3. *ambitio*: Hellegouarc'h, *Vocabulaire politique* (n. 1), 208–11. *faecem*: TLL vi.1.171.11 ff.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Hellegouarc'h, *Vocabulaire politique* (n. 1), 385; note 1123 *summum*, 1125 *summo*, 1127 *summa*, 1138 *summi*, 1141 *summam*, and the ironic coinage *summatum* in 1142.

tution enabled it to stand outside of the cycles of decline he expounded; Lucretius associates present realities with his period of degeneration.

Moreover, it has often been observed that Lucretius' account alludes to the history of Rome itself. A period of regal power is followed by republican magistracies and laws. The Roman elements are particularly clear in 1136–9:

ergo regibus occisis subversa iacebat  
 pristina maiestas soliorum et scepra superba,  
 et capitis summi praeclarum insigne cruentum  
 sub pedibus vulgi magnum lugebat honorem.

So the kings were slaughtered, the former majesty of thrones and proud sceptres lay overturned, and the glorious emblem of the highest head, trodden in blood beneath the feet of the mob, mourned for its great honour.

The throne, the sceptre, and the crown are the three most important of the regal insignia Rome derived from Etruria,<sup>94</sup> the one missing element, the purple robes, appearing later (1418–29). It has also been suggested that *superba* ('proud') alludes to Tarquinius Superbus and perhaps *pristina* ('former') to Tarquinius Priscus.<sup>95</sup> But there is an important difference between Lucretius' account and the traditional Roman one. In the history of Rome, the Republic followed directly on the expulsion—not the murder—of the kings, and there is no intervening period of anarchy.<sup>96</sup> In the *De rerum natura*, however, magistracies and constitutional government come into being only because the human race is 'tired of living in violence'. They are a refuge from something worse, not an ideal state of human society, and Lucretius' imagery reflects this: like an animal worn out by living in the wild, mankind *sponte sua cecidit sub leges artaque iura* ('fell

<sup>94</sup> Cf. D.H. 3.61.1; 4.74.1; L. Bonfante Warren, 'Roman Triumphs and Etruscan Kings: the Changing Face of the Triumph', *JRS* 60 (1970), 49–66.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. J. M. Snyder, *Puns and Poetry in Lucretius' De rerum natura* (Amsterdam, 1980), with D. A. West's review, *CR* 32 (1982), 25–7, at 27.

<sup>96</sup> It is true that Cicero and Sallust can describe the early days of the Republic as particularly turbulent (cf. Cic. *Rep.* 1.62, with Büchner ad loc.; Sall. *Hist.* 1 fr. 11 Maurenbrecher). But Lucretius' picture of a time when there were no magistrates at all is much more extreme.

spontaneously under laws and strict statutes', 1147).<sup>97</sup> The metaphor is continued in the following lines (1151–60): in established society crime itself 'enmeshes' (*circumretit*) the criminal with fear. The law-abiding are of course free of this constriction, but the tone of the passage shows that if law is a saviour for men it is a harsh and forbidding one.<sup>98</sup> A constitutional republic imperfectly realized and beset by the evils of ambition might be preferable to anarchy or straight tyranny. But it is not enough of an ideal to form the object of 'magnanimous enthusiasm', to misuse a phrase of Momigliano's. Lucretius is no more a republican by principle than Epicurus was a monarchist. What matters for the Epicurean is the chance to lead a quiet life; human societies are very imperfect instruments for attaining this end, but one has to do the best one can.

So far I have examined those passages of the *De rerum natura* whose subject matter is most obviously connected with contemporary Roman politics. There is however another area where the poem draws heavily on political discourse and one that cannot be neglected in an examination of the stance of the work towards politics. This is the area of what G. Cabisius has called 'social metaphor', the use of metaphors from political life for the physical processes of the Epicurean universe.<sup>99</sup> This is a device which goes back to the origins of Greek philosophy and can be traced in most ancient scientific systems; it is by no means absent from modern science.<sup>100</sup> The role the metaphors play

<sup>97</sup> Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 3.28 *acriora ex eo vincla* ('from then on, harsher bonds were imposed') used as an epiphonema by P. Brunt. *Social Conflicts in the Roman Republic* (London, 1971), 156. For a comparison of Tacitus' account with Lucretius', cf. M. d'Eufemia, 'Note sul pensiero politico dell' epicureismo romano', *RCCM* 16 (1974), 87–96.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. Cole, *Democritus* (n. 86), 77. Goldschmidt, on the other hand, stresses that in Hermarchus' account (Porph. *Abst.* 1.7) there is 'a broader and more optimistic view of law: most people obey the law spontaneously, because they find in it the guarantee of their own interests, properly understood' (*La doctrine d'Épicure et le droit* (n. 12), 289 n. 2). Lucretius is not 'un-Epicurean' here, but the emphasis is his own.

<sup>99</sup> G. Cabisius, 'Social Metaphor and the Atomic Cycle of Lucretius', *CJ* 80 (1984/5), 109–20. Cf. H. Sykes Davies, 'Notes on Lucretius', *The Criterion* 11 (1931/2), 25–42, at 36–8; E. J. Kenney, *Lucretius*, *Greece and Rome New Surveys in the Classics* 11 (Oxford, 1977), 33.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. for the pre-Socratics especially G. Vlastos, 'Equality and Justice in Early Greek Cosmologies', *CP* 42 (1947), 156–78 = D. J. Furley and R. E. Allen, *Studies in Presocratic Philosophy*, vol. 1 (London, 1970), 56–91; 'Isonomia', *AJP* 74 (1953), 337–66, at 361; C. Kahn, *Anaximander and the Origins of Greek Cosmology* (New York, 1960), 192–3; and the full discussion in G. E. R. Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy* (Cambridge, 1966), 210–32.

varies between systems, and in some versions the link between the physical and social worlds will be such as to constitute more than simply an analogy (as for instance in Stoicism). But even where the two spheres are kept formally apart the uses made of social metaphor are likely to affect the reader's view of society as well as of physics. To many ancient writers the striking thing about Epicurean physics was the absence of a divine ruler; it all looked very democratic. The point is made explicitly by the Christian writer Dionysius of Alexandria:<sup>101</sup>

But if no ruler laid upon the atoms any word of command, or selection, or ordering, but of their own accord they directed themselves out of the great tumult of their flow, and crossed the great mêlée of their collisions; and it was not by the guidance of god (as Homer says) that like was attracted to like but they themselves ran together and gathered in groups, recognizing their kin; then the democracy of the atoms must have been truly amazing, friends shaking hands and embracing, hurrying to set up home together. Some of them presumably rounded themselves off of their own accord into that great luminary the sun, to make day, while others flared up into many pyramids, it may be, of stars, to crown the whole heaven; and others again must have taken station around to make the heaven firm at random, and to arch over the ether to enable the luminaries to ascend, while the confederacies of the ordinary atoms chose their own dwellings and divided up heaven by lot into houses and habitations for themselves.

The anti-theological context is important: Lucretius continually stresses the way the atoms act like free agents in forming their *concilia* ('assemblies') in order to eliminate any notion of divine control (2.1090–2):<sup>102</sup>

quae bene cognita si teneas, natura videtur  
libera continuo dominis privata superbis  
ipsa sua per se sponte omnia dis agere experts.

If you understand this and keep it firmly in mind, it is clear that nature conducts all its affairs freely and spontaneously of its own accord, unconstrained by divine interference and emancipated from proud masters.

The analogy is so frequent that Lucretius has to remind the reader that it is only partial: it must not be thought that the atoms are really animate (1.1021–8):

<sup>101</sup> Ap. Euseb. *Praep. Evang.* 14.25.9.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. J. Masson, *Lucretius: Epicurean and Poet*, 2 vols. (London, 1907, 1909), i.126–7; P. Boyancé, *Lucrèce et l'Épicurisme* (Paris, 1963), 111 n. 4.

nam certe neque consilio primordia rerum  
 ordine se suo quaeque sagaci mente locarunt  
 nec quos quaeque darent motus pepigere profecto,  
 sed quia multa modis multis mutata per omne  
 ex infinito vexantur percita plagis,  
 omne genus motus et coetus experiundo  
 tandem deveniunt in talis disposituras,  
 qualibus haec rerum consistit summa creata . . .

For certainly the first beginnings of things did not arrange themselves, each in its own place, according to a plan and a wise purpose, nor, assuredly, did they agree what movements each should make; but because in their multitudes through infinite time they were disturbed and driven by blows, exchanging their configurations throughout the universe in many different ways and trying out every kind of motion and assembly, at last they happened to fall into the structures of which this cosmos of ours is made up . . .

Pursuing the metaphor, however, Lucretius talks not of the laws of nature but of *foedera*, 'compacts'.<sup>103</sup> The behaviour of the atoms is not governed by an external law laid down by a divine ruler but is controlled by pacts they have freely entered into. In this respect atomic society is strongly republican, and the metaphors suggest a favourable view of the cohesive force of social institutions.

There are however complications. If god is dethroned, his place is taken by *Natura*.<sup>104</sup> Nature does all the things god would otherwise do, and Cabisius suggests that the world of atomic compounds is not in fact entirely one of pacts between equals:<sup>105</sup>

<sup>103</sup> Cf. 1.586; 2.302; 5.310, 924; 6.906–7; 5.57–61. As Long points out ('Chance and Natural Law in Epicureanism', *Phronesis* 22 (1977), 63–88, at 81), 'Lucretius is playing on the meaning of *foedus* as both something concrete—a bond or union of atoms with congruent shapes—and the more abstract notion of law'; contra, K. Reich, 'Der historische Ursprung des Naturgesetzbegriffs', in *Festschrift E. Kapp* (Hamburg, 1958), 121–34, at 125. See also Heinze on 3.416.

<sup>104</sup> See especially K. G. Sallmann, *Die Natur bei Lucretz* (Bonn, 1962), with W. Schmid's review in *Gnomon* 39 (1967), 464–95, at 489–93. Of the older bibliography, W. A. Merrill, 'The Signification and Use of the Word *natura* by Lucretius', *TAPA* 22 (1891), xxxii–xxxv, is still worth consulting. More recently, see G. Berns, 'Time and Nature in Lucretius' *De rerum natura*, *Hermes* 104 (1976), 477–92, at 480–3, and E. Zellmer, *Die lateinische Wörter auf -ura*, 2nd edn. (Frankfurt, 1976), 212–30, 231–9. Cf. also Pease on Cic. *ND* 2.81; R. M. Grant, *Miracle and Natural Law in Greco-Roman and Early Christian Thought* (Amsterdam, 1952), 3–18; A. Pellicer, *Natura, étude sémantique et historique du mot latin* (Paris, 1965).

<sup>105</sup> Cabisius, 'Social Metaphor' (n. 99), 113.

Strictly speaking, the *foedera* are not pacts made among the atoms themselves; they apply only to atoms when they have formed a *concilium* ['assembly']. Then, like men who have banded together in a society, the atoms are bound to specific aims and interests that result from the identity of the group as a whole. The other party to the agreement is *natura* whose position of superiority is suggested by the possessive in the phrase *foedera naturai* ['pacts of nature'].

But though there is a sense in which the atoms and Nature are the parties to the pact, the genitive in *foedera naturai* is not simply possessive. The pacts the atoms make *are* nature, constitute the natural process. Although opponents constantly misconstrued the Epicurean use of *Physis* and *Natura*, in the end there is of course no figure over and above the atoms and the void.<sup>106</sup> Lucretius personifies Nature as a dramatic device to polarize the conflict between theism and Epicureanism and to wean the reader away from belief in a providential deity, but it is a device the reader must eventually discard. The role assigned to *Natura* has no obvious lessons for the reader's view of society and does not affect the basic picture of freely cooperating atoms. Other elements perhaps do. Once the atoms have entered into their pacts, their behaviour is controlled: as A. A. Long has stressed, the Epicurean universe is one of order and stability.<sup>107</sup> The Epicureans delighted in turning back on their opponents the accusation that without a controlling god there would be cosmic anarchy: on the contrary, if the gods did interfere in the world, they could act with the arbitrary whimsy of tyrants and nothing would be certain.<sup>108</sup> The *foedera naturai* ('pacts of nature') determine the stability and order of the world. Nevertheless, there is a sense in which the pacts of nature are more precarious and less perfect than immutable divine decrees. Apart from the gods in the *intermundia*, no compound lasts forever. Eventually the harmonious motions of the constituent atoms become so disturbed that the compound falls apart. No pact is truly eternal. From this point of view the atoms in a compound are also at war, a civil war (2.125–8):<sup>109</sup>

<sup>106</sup> Criticisms: cf. Sen. *Ben.* 4.7.1; Min. Fel. 19.8; and the equivalent fate of Strato of Lampsacus (frs. 32–9 Wehrli; cf. Pease on Cic. *ND* 1.35). For a classic demonstration that the claim that natural process *is* divine action is an empty one, see 'Epicurus' in Chapter 11 of Hume's *Inquiry*.

<sup>107</sup> Long, 'Chance and Natural Law' (n. 103).

<sup>108</sup> Cf. 1.159–214; 5.87–8, etc.

<sup>109</sup> On the political language, see Cabisius, 'Social Metaphor' (n. 99), 116.



hoc etiam magis haec animum te advertere par est  
 corpora quae in solis radiis turbare videntur,  
 quod tales turbae motus quoque materiai  
 significant clandestinos caecosque subesse.

It is even more appropriate that you should observe those bodies which are seen tumbling in sunbeams, because this tumult indicates that there are hidden and invisible underlying movements of matter.

Modern writers often talk of the dance of the atoms; it is perhaps significant that Lucretius' metaphors are more harsh.

What are the implications of this for the Lucretian view of political life? I would suggest again that it implies a realistically sceptical view of social institutions. Without the *concilia* ('assemblies') of the atoms and the *foedera naturai* ('pacts of nature') there would be no world, but the order they bring is not eternal. Even the world will one day fall apart. The political institutions of Rome are better than anarchy, but they are imperfect, and the wise man will avoid getting involved in them unless he has to. To be a little anarchonistic (but not much<sup>110</sup>), like the 'radicals' in the 50s BC Lucretius has no time for the pomp and empty glory of Roman political life, the ideal and goal of a Cicero. But like the 'conservatives' he sees the opposition to this as motivated by no more than psychological aberration, greed, and envy ultimately grounded in the fear of death. He is concerned with the state of Rome, but the solution is a personal one: everyone should become an Epicurean. Or perhaps we cannot even go as far as that. Such a social solution—the conversion of the world—is suggested by Cassius in the famous letter in which he gives his reasons for becoming an Epicurean (*Fam.* 15.19.2), and we now know from a new fragment of Diogenes of Oenoanda that Epicureans did speculate in detail about what the world be like if everyone were converted:<sup>111</sup>

<sup>110</sup> Cf. Grimal, 'L'idée de monarchie à Rome' (n. 28), 269.

<sup>111</sup> Diogenes of Oenoanda NF 21, published by M. F. Smith, *Thirteen New Fragments of Diogenes of Oenoanda*, Denkschriften der öst. Akad. der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Klasse 117 (Vienna, 1977), 21–5 (his translation). Cf. A. Barigazzi, 'Un pensiero avveniristico nel Giardino di Epicuro', *Prometheus* 4 (1978), 1–17; Long, 'Pleasure and Social Utility' (n. 12), 314–15. Diogenes' belief that Epicureanism will one day triumph is shown by this use of the future indicative: see Smith on NF 21.1.6.

... then truly the life of the gods will pass to men. For all things will be full of justice and mutual love, and there will come to be no need of fortifications or laws and all the things which we contrive on account of one another. And with regard to the necessities derived from agriculture, as we shall have no farm labourers—for indeed we shall all plough and dig and mind flocks and divert rivers and watch... And such activities will interrupt the continuous study of philosophy for needful purposes; for the farming operations will provide us with the things which our nature wants.

As Long points out, such speculation may help to provide a motive for the exposition of Epicureanism: 'the prudent Epicurean will want his neighbours to share his commitment to justice; i.e. to perceive the utility of the social contract'.<sup>112</sup> And that is one element in the allegory of Venus and Mars in the prologue to the *De rerum natura*: if men became Epicureans, they would stop killing each other and bring peace to the world.<sup>113</sup> But in many ways the *De rerum natura* seems still focused upon individual salvation, how an individual Epicurean might survive in a hostile world. And the answer is the same as it has always been: stay away from politics.

This attitude to political life is widespread in modern democracies, not of course as a reasoned philosophical belief but as a cynicism towards the political process. It is usually treated as a problem, to be solved either by persuasion that politics does not deserve the cynicism<sup>114</sup> or more radically by changing society. It would be a bold person who would argue that the Epicurean position is simply correct. But it will not do to dismiss it with loose talk of politics being a natural activity, or inescapable, or necessary for the full development of the person: all such arguments re-define 'politics' away from the institutional reality. It is less easy than it looks to argue that, say, standing for parliament is other than the manifestation of a psychological aberration.

<sup>112</sup> Long, 'Pleasure and Social Utility' (n. 12), 302.

<sup>113</sup> See above, p. 406; cf. 5.42–8; 6.19–34, etc.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. e.g. B. Crick, *In Defence of Politics* (London, 1962, 1982).

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