THE FADING OF MEMMIUS*

In 1884 Ivo Bruns began his *Lucrez-Studien*, on the relationship between Lucretius' treatment of Epicureanism and the exposition by the philosopher himself in the extant *Epistles*, with the question (p.4) for whom did Lucretius write? His answer was to show (p.11) that the general public, who were the poet's real objective, were very different readers from the disciples whom Epicurus addressed in the *Letter to Herodotus* and similar works. This conclusion, and the subsequent investigation of the ways in which this difference affected the treatment of doctrine in the two works, does not concern me. My interest is rather in the manner in which Bruns tackles the problem of the ostensible addressee, Memmius, and the extent to which this man remains in Lucretius' mind throughout the whole six books.

There seems to be little doubt today that this man is Gaius Memmius, the orator and lover of poetry, who was praetor in 58 B.C., went to Bithynia in 57 as propraetor, with Catullus in his retinue, was obliged to leave Italy in 54 as a result of an unusually blatant piece of electoral corruption, and is last heard of in 51 B.C., when Cicero is involved indirectly in Memmius' project to develop the site of Epicurus' original school in Athens.[1] His possible relationship to Lucretius has been exhaustively discussed by T. P. Wiseman,[2] without any final explanation being established. In any case, just as Catullus found Memmius a disappointing patron, financially if not poetically (10. 12–13), and Cicero considered him a disappointing orator (*Brutus* 247), so it is more than likely that Lucretius, writing during the very period when Memmius' political ambitions were becoming more and more dominant and unscrupulous, found that he had picked a very unsatisfactory pupil to lead towards the light of Epicurean wisdom and tranquillity.[3]

Apparently on the basis of little more than a general impression obtained from reading the poem, Bruns concluded that Lucretius' evident enthusiasm for the conversion of Memmius, so pronounced at the start, was beginning to wear thin as early as line 921 of the first book, when the 'second introduction' presents the poet's task in more conventional poetic terminology, with much less emphasis on evangelism; and that, even where Memmius' name occurs in the later books, it plays a much less significant role, while the addressee turns into something more generalized, to be identified as the general public (pp. 5–8). Subsequent scholars appear to have regarded this impression as unduly subjective. In particular, Joachim Mussehl[4] regarded the appearance of Memmius' name as the one sure indication of Lucretius' concern for him, and concluded that the three books 1, 2, and 5 in which Memmius is addressed by name, were actually composed before the others. This conclusion became more or less orthodox doctrine, and

* This paper is based on a lecture delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Classical Association in Liverpool, on 13 April 1977.

[1] Cic. *Att.* 5.11.6 (and less securely in the following year, 6.1.23).

[2] *Cinna the Poet* (1974), pp. 11–43.

[3] D. W. Roller, in *CPh* 65 (1970), 248, suggests implausibly that his very unsuitability led to his choice as dedicatee.

[4] *De Lucretiani libri primi condicione ac retractatione* (Berlin, 1912), p. 136.

is accepted, with the support of certain stylistic arguments, by Cyril Bailey.[5] Bruns's other suggestions, sketchily argued though they were, deserve rather more consideration than has been accorded to them for many years, if indeed they ever made much impact. The strongest opponent of the whole theory of the disappearance of Memmius from the centre of the poet's interest has been Ben Farrington,[6] who holds that, whether named or not, the whole poem centres on Memmius, no matter how bitterly Lucretius at times seems to be attacking conduct very like that of his patron during the period of composition. Between the two extreme positions, of Bruns and Farrington, the position of Mussehl and Bailey rightly commands general approval; but neither its basis nor its consequences appear to have been satisfactorily examined. In this paper I propose to survey the different ways in which Lucretius seems to be addressing his reader, and to see what indications there are of a possible change from Memmius to the general reader.

Apart from the actual references to Memmius by name, four in book 1, two in 2, and five in 5, the whole poem is full of direct second-person words, whether verbs, pronouns, or possessives. They are not at all evenly distributed; and, as Bruns observed, there are evident differences between the degree of personal reference to be found in different passages where such words, and especially the verbs, are to be found. An investigation of the use of these words will lead to certain conclusions, which throw light on Lucretius' whole technique of composition.

Firstly, then, there is an obvious class of second-person verbs which, occurring as they do in contexts where Memmius' personality is in no way felt to be present, can be classified without question as virtually impersonal. Very rarely Lucretius borrows from the Roman historians the device of an imperfect subjunctive, used as a main verb, to indicate what one might have done or observed if one had been present at some time in the past.[7] Thus *cerneres* is often used in historical narrative for 'one (or you) might have seen'. This trick occurs only five times in the whole poem: once in 5.1332, *videres*, of a hypothetical observer of the supposed use of wild animals in warfare at some undefined time in the past; and four times in the last section of the whole work, the account of the great plague at Athens in the early years of the Peloponnesian War. Here we find *posses . . . tueri* (1163), *posses . . . vertere in utilitatem* (1170–1), *posses . . . videre* (1257), and *videres* (1267). Neither context contains other second-person references of any sort, and the main model for the latter, Thucydides, has nothing comparable. Nothing suggests that Lucretius is here attempting to carry Memmius back into such a remote situation, any more than the historians address themselves to any specific individual when they use similar formulas.

Again, there are a large number of present subjunctives, referring to possible eventualities in the present or future, but still with an entirely generalized subject.[8] The clearest of these, and clearly identified by Kenney ad loc., is in 3. 211–13:

[5] *Lucreti de Rerum Natura* (1947), vol. i, pp. 32–7. For supporting arguments based on metrical developments, see G. E. Duckworth, in *TAPA* 97 (1966), 72–9, summarizing earlier work.

[6] *Lucretius*, ed. D. R. Dudley (London, 1965), pp. 27–33.

[7] As opposed to unfulfilled supposition in the present, as *videres* in 1.214 and 357, 2.701 – all in passages where it is difficult to be certain whether the meaning is impersonal or genuine second-person.

[8] E. C. Woodcock, *New Latin Syntax* (1959), p.90, §119; Bailey, i. 99.

quod simul atque hominem leti secura quies est
indepta atque animi natura animaeque recessit,
nil ibi libatum de toto corpore *cernas*.

Likewise in line 370 of the same book:

illud in his rebus nequaquam sumere *possis*.

More striking, however, and considerably more numerous, are examples where there are second-person subjunctives in dependent clauses, but nothing in the basic syntax requires the subjunctive mood. This is unmistakable in 2. 313–14:

quapropter, ubi ipsa
cernere iam *nequeas*, motus quoque surpere debent.

or in 3. 870–3:

proinde ubi se *videas* hominem indignarier ipsum . . .
scire licet non sincerum sonere.

Despite the elements of supposition and of unspecified time in these clauses, it is clear that generalization is the main characteristic of such subjunctives. Similar examples are to be found in 1.515 (*si non . . . relinquas*, with *nil esse potest* as apodosis), 2. 34–6 (*nec decedunt . . . si . . . iacteris*), 2.41 (*fervere cum videas . . .*), 2.774 (*quocumque modo perturbes . . .* with main verb *possunt*), 2.813 (*ea quae tangas*), 4.325 (*sol etiam caecat, contra si tendere pergas*), 4. 1068–72 (*ulcus enim vivescit . . . si non prima novis conturbes vulnera plagis*, with *cures* and *possis* following), 6. 167–9 (*id licet hinc etiam cognoscere, caedere si quem ancipiti videas ferro procul arboris auctum*), 6. 705–7 (*corpus ut examinum siquod procul ipse iacere conspicias hominis, fit ut omnis dicere causas conveniat leti*), 6. 799–801 (*si calidis etiam cunctere lavabris plenior et fueris . . . fit uti des saepe ruinas*). Not quite so easy to classify, but accepted by Bailey and Kenney, is 3. 854–6: *nam cum respicias . . . facile hoc accredere possis*, where the subjunctive in the protasis can hardly be explained as simply attracted by the potential force of the apodosis.

A fair number of other dependent subjunctives, although introduced by conjunctions in circumstances where a subjunctive would in any case be normal, seem to have the same generalizing force. In 1965, where Lucretius is discussing the endlessness of space:

nec refert quibus *adsistas* regionibus eius

the second person seems to be completely indefinite because of the nature of the hypothesis involved. The consecutive clause, *ut videas*, in 3.348, seems to be equally generalizing (and so 4.418). *Dummodo* is regularly accompanied by a subjunctive, but in two passages the generalizing force is apparent:

lacerato oculo circum si pupula mansit
incolumis, stat cernundi vivata potestas,
dummodo ne totum *corrumpas* luminis orbem
et circum *caedas* aciem solamque *relinquas* (3. 408–11)

and

nec refert quicquam quo victu corpus alatur,
dummodo quod *capias* concoctum didere *possis*. (4. 630–1)

The same is true of *quamvis* in 4. 155–7:

et quamvis subito quovis in tempore quamque
rem contra speculum *ponas*, apparet imago;
perpetuo fluere ut *noscas* . . .

where the indefinite sense appears to continue into the consecutive *noscas*. Finally the generic subjunctive in 4.1061, *nam si abest quod ames*, appears to have no specific personal reference at all; and the adverbial sense in the two clauses in the opening of book 2 is not made easier to define by the presence of the possessive *tua* in *tua sine parte pericli* in line 6:

sed quibus ipse malis *careas* quia cernere suave est (4)

and

despicere unde *queas* alios passimque videre. (9)

These last must be considered further in their context.

Not all this latter class can securely be determined as generalizing on purely syntactical grounds; and in a poem so full of usages common to Greek didactic poetry and to Latin satire, such as the virtually impersonal *age*, 'come now', or *vides*, 'you see', but at the same time ostensibly addressed to the actual Gaius Memmius, it must often seem impossible to determine with which addressee we are involved in a specific passage. Nor is it to be expected that an absolute distinction is to be drawn between the two. If Lucretius really did change his objective from the conversion of Memmius to the wider appeal to the reading public, contemporary or centuries later, it is highly unlikely that there came a moment when he made a firm decision that henceforth Memmius was to be forgotten and the general reader be addressed. It still seems possible to detect, in general terms, when the poet is being swept along by his original impulse, as described at the beginning of the work, and when his attitude is different. Something more precise than Bruns's general impression is clearly required.

The criterion is basically one of continuity, based on the close grouping of references to the reader and to the poet's intentions concerning his progress towards understanding. In many passages Lucretius turns round, as it were, to take the reader by the hand and conduct him personally along some tricky section of the journey; and in these passages the language will always be fresh, avoiding stale formulas and generally employing key words found nowhere else in the poem. Such passages can be distinguished securely enough from those in which he employs the odd isolated phrase, conventional in form and impersonal in feeling, and where the relationship with the reader has not for some time been brought forcibly before the mind. Some of the stock words (*age*, *vides*, *adde*, *percipe*, *ne forte putes*, *rearis*) may none the less sometimes be combined to build up a coherent passage in which the reader is closely involved in the argument. For example, 2. 730–3, on the fallacy of believing that things take their colour from atoms of the same colour:

nunc *age*, dicta meo dulci quaesita labore
percipe, ne forte haec albis ex alba *rearis*
principiis esse, ante oculos quae candida *cernis*;
aut ea quae nigrant, nigro de semine nata.

The passage continues with *neve credas* three lines further on, and the novel phrase *procul avius erras* (although composed of elements already employed elsewhere) concludes the eleven-line sequence. The lines quoted also contain the

highly personal reference to the poet's delight in his own work, which supports the indication that there is a real individual addressed here. The passage does not attain the degree of relationship to be found in many others; but it is still entirely different from the majority of places where these second-person building-blocks are found in isolation from anything else of the same kind and nothing more personal is evidently intended than is implied in our common 'you see' or 'you know'. Moreover such isolated expressions are always those whose use is common in almost every part of the poem. The rarer words, especially those occurring only once in the whole poem (e.g. *memento*, *reminiscaris*, *morēris*, *tuēre* and *tuĕre*, *respuis*), are virtually always found in contexts where they combine with other unusual words to build up the impact of a major second-person cluster.

An examination of the distribution of such clusters throughout *de Rerum Natura* must also consider a variety of other indications of the writer's relationship to his reader, named or anonymous.

The opening of the poem with the hymn or prayer to Venus means that the eventual addressee, Memmius, is introduced only incidentally, in the third person, as the protégé of the goddess whom the poet is anxious to draw away from the demands of national politics into the tranquillity of philosophy. The way in which this invocation, with its double reference to Memmius (26, 42), turns into a direct address to him is obscured for us by some sort of corruption in the manuscripts, after which we suddenly find a demand for the reader's careful attention (50), as someone already involved in the dialogue. Lucretius is patently not still speaking to the goddess, and some additional vocative must have occurred just before this point.[9] Although the name *Memmi* does not in fact turn up until line 411, virtually every paragraph in the early part of the book includes a cluster of second-person words, bringing out the close relationship between writer and reader, as the latter is urged not to give up without trying (50–3), not to be afraid of impiety (80–2),[10] not to be misled by poetical myths of an after-life (102–6). In line 140 the identity of the addressee is at last made abundantly clear:

> sed *tua* me virtus tamen et sperata voluptas
> suavis amicitiae quemvis efferre laborem
> suadet et inducit noctes vigilare serenas
> quaerentem dictis quibus et quo carmine demum
> clara *tuae* possim praepandere lumina menti,
> res quibus occultas penitus convisere *possis*. (140–5)

It is not only the second-person words which establish the relationship beyond all doubt. The poet in addition here involves us in his own experience as a creative writer, as perhaps nowhere else in the poem. He expresses with great intensity his reasons for writing, emphasizing that his objective is the persuasion of Memmius; and the general reader accepts this persuasion as being applied to himself.

With this position clearly established, the argument is allowed to develop on its own, with no direct appeal to the reader and no second-person verbs, except the entirely conventional *ut noscere possis* in 190 (albeit in its first appearance) and the virtually impersonal *videres* in 214. Only when Lucretius turns to the problem of invisible atoms at 265 does he revive his concern for convincing

[9] For further indications of rearrangement of this whole section, see especially Giussani, vol. ii, pp. 3–5.

[10] Although this in itself contains only *ne forte rearis . . . te . . . indugredi*, the second-person continuity is established by the surrounding clusters.

Memmius, with such words as *nunc age*, *nequa forte tamen coeptes diffidere dictis* (267) and

> *accipe* praeterea quae corpora *tute* necessest
> *confiteare* esse in rebus nec posse videri. (269–70)

This is a good example of the way in which the commonest second-person words (*age*, *accipe*, *tute*, *confiteare* – all, indeed, making their first appearance out of many) combine with the unique *coeptes* to build up an address of strong intensity. Less elaborate appeals to the reader introduce most subsequent paragraphs, but all freshly coined ones, not repeated elsewhere; and at 398 a major section makes a sort of progress-report, with a direct appeal to Memmius, now addressed by name, to recognize how easy the pursuit of knowledge is once the right track is found and to be sure of abundant poetic help in the quest.

The argument proceeds with occasional but still striking phrases which never become stereotyped elsewhere (*ades*, *paucis dum verbis expediamus* in 499, *id quod iam tibi paulo ostendimus ante* in 531), so that the relationship is kept alive all the time. At 803 a new phenomenon occurs: *'at manifesta palam res indicat' inquis* – a method of introducing an imaginary objection which recurs in 897: *'at saepe in magnis fit montibus' inquis*. This looks at first sight like a trick borrowed from satire; but in fact Horace and Juvenal employ only the anonymous third-person *inquit*.[11] For the second person, the nearest parallel in any sort of satirical writing appears to be Petronius, *Sat.*2, *nimis rustice, inquies*. These lines in book 1 are the only examples of words actually put into Memmius' mouth, as if to make the argument something of a Platonic dialogue. It is noticeable that in later books, where single lines are clearly put in the form of comparable objections (3.356, 6.673), both starting with *at*, the pretence of dialogue is completely ignored and no *inquis* is employed.[12] Lucretius appears at this stage to have introduced a completely new device, where the presence of an actual participant in the argument is intended to be kept in mind. The second of these objections opens a section containing a wide selection of second-person expressions of no very striking nature, leading at 921 to the major statement of the poet's task. This starts with the appeal *nunc age, quod superest cognosce et clarius audi* (both imperatives are *hapax legomena* in Lucretius), and ends with the hope

> si *tibi* forte animum tali ratione tenere
> versibus in nostris possem, dum *perspicis* omnem
> naturam rerum qua constet compta figura. (948–50)

These second-person references at beginning and end hold the intervening passage, on the love of the Muses and the honey on the lip of the cup, much

[11] e.g. Hor.*Sat*.1.4.79, 2.2.99, Juv.3.153, 7.242. In the first of these the manuscripts are divided between *inquit* and *inquis*. The latter was preferred by the older editors as the *lectio facilior*, although evidently induced by *gaudes* and *facis* in close proximity. Bentley showed that an almost impersonal *inquit* is common from Cicero onwards, even in contexts with a second person plural verb. See also B. L. Charney, in *CPh* 39 (1944), 110, for its derivation from φησὶ of the Greek diatribe and its common use especially in Seneca's letters, although *inquis* also occurs when Lucilius is directly addressed. Lucretius' imaginary interlocuter recurs in Manil. 4.387, 'multum' inquis 'tenuemque iubes me ferre laborem.' With a retort in 390, just as in Lucr. 1.809.

[12] In 3.898, 900, 900, supposed objections are introduced with *aiunt, addunt, dicant*. In 1.372, by contrast, the use of *aiunt* to introduce a fallacious argument is preceded in 370–1 by a specific claim to protect the reader: *ne te deducere vero possit*.

more effectively together than at the beginning of book 4, where the intitial lines are missing and the *tibi* in 23 emerges out of nothing at all.[13]

As if to assure us that Memmius is still with us to the end of book 1, his name reappears once more in 1052, *illud in his rebus longe fuge credere, Memmi*, although in a context in which he is otherwise not involved in any way and in which there are no other second-person words at all; but even this is enough to ensure that we recognize the personality of the same Memmius in the very last lines of the book, *haec sic pernosces parva perductus opella* (1114),[14] especially if we recall Cicero's verdict in the *Brutus* (247), that Memmius was notoriously lazy in intellectual affairs, *fugiens non modo dicendi sed etiam cogitandi laborem*. Such a man might well need the continual concern exhibited by Lucretius to ensure the progress of his understanding, from start to finish of this first book; which is incidentally the only one of the six to be rounded off with any sort of personal appeal. Lucretius here goes a long way beyond the satiric technique of Horace in such satires as 1 and 6 of the first book, both ostensibly addressed to Maecenas, but falling away into general discourse, or even into invoking a second person who is not Maecenas at all but rather the typical miser who exemplifies the dominant theme of the first satire (e.g. 38–56, 69–95). Lucretius' relationship to Memmius at this stage is much more like that of Horace to Tibullus in his fourth Epistle or to Maecenas in the seventh.

It is not so easy to trace Lucretius' concern for the ever-present reader throughout the second book. If it is true that he has never allowed the momentum of the first book to lapse from first to last, so that (to use his own metaphor) the hound can follow the trail without being checked (1. 404–9), we should expect him to pick up speed again as soon as the new book opens. In fact, the continuity appears to be broken rather abruptly. Not only does the opening outburst on the joys of philosophical abstraction contain no sort of invocation to Memmius or anyone else; the second-person references are different in kind from those which have occurrred throughout the first book, which consistently retain contact with Memmius as the disciple to be led through the difficulties of the argument. In the three phrases in these opening lines – *quibus ipse malis careas quia cernere suave est* (4), *tua sine parte percli* (6), and *despicere unde queas alios* (9), the poet is no longer addressing the initiate who is supposed to be learning the truths of philosophy. He is speaking as the moral teacher, without reference to any sort of pupil as such. Here, if anywhere, the second person is to be rendered 'one', as Bailey takes it in his note ad loc., with the further assumption that the subjunctive is justified thereby rather than by the indirect question which Bailey rather questionably renders in his translation ('perceive from what misfortunes you yourself are free', rather than 'perceive those misfortunes from which . . .'). Likewise in 35–6, *textilibus si in picturis ostroque rubenti iacteris*, in 40–1, *si non forte tuas legiones per loca campi fervere cum videas* (where the subjunctives can only be explained as generalizing), and in 44, *his tibi tum rebus timefactae religiones effugiunt* . . . , the second person is in no way the pupil

[13] L. Lenaghan, in *TAPA* 98 (1967), 221–51, provides a thorough justification of the relevance of these lines to their context in the first book.

[14] Lenaghan, p.236, comments on these lines 'Second person immediacy recurs', and suggests (n.47) that '*parva opella* may be a diminutive of affection'. There is unfortunately little support for the latter idea in the four other genuine diminutive nouns in the poem (2.428, 4.1080, 1165, 1279), the last three of which have a clear suggestion of satire.

and his process of learning and understanding. It is the *alter ego* so familiar in satire who will reappear most distinctly in the recognizably satiric parts of *de Rerum Natura*: 3. 668–9 and 1024, *hoc etiam tibi tute interdum dicere possis* and 4. 1149–52:

> et tamen implicitus quoque *possis* inque peditus
> effugere infestum, nisi *tute tibi* obvius *obstes*
> et praetermittas animi vitia omnia primum
> aut quae corpori' sunt eius, quam *praepetis* ac *vis*.

The tone is purely admonitory, concerned with moral follies and not with the disciple's understanding or philosophical principles. Close though wisdom and virtue may be to one another in the greater part of ancient philosophical thought, the difference of approach is clear in these passages. In the opening of book 2, it it underlined by Lucretius' general attitude. In lines 11–13, among the follies in which others may be observed indulging, occur the following:

> certare ingenio, contendere nobilitate,
> noctes atque dies niti praestante labore
> ad summas emergere opes rerumque potiri.

This is not the way in which Lucretius might be expected to appeal to the specific reader and disciple, Gaius Memmius; for he must have known, and must have expected the general reader to recognize, that this is a close description of his activities during the very period when *de Rerum Natura* was being composed. It is still possible that he has Memmius in mind to some extent; but Memmius is not the specific addressee at this point.

This is doubly clear when in lines 29–33 Lucretius balances the picture of useless luxury with that of the Epicurean's simple delights:

> cum tamen inter se prostrati in gramine molli
> propter aquae rivum sub ramis arboris altae
> non magnis opibus iucunde corpora curant,
> praesertim cum tempestas arridet, et anni
> tempora conspergunt viridantis floribus herbas.

Despite the vivid visualization of the scene, Lucretius could hardly have made less effort to involve the reader directly. This is an essential part of the scene of bliss in the company of friends, in true Epicurean terms, but the poet does not even employ the first person plural, which can sometimes at least be taken as implying a true 'you and I'. The participants are viewed from some distance, and identified only by the unspecified 'they' of *curant*; while their shared experience emerges only through the words *inter se*. It is noticeable that, where the same lines recur in 5. 1392–6, in the discussion of the origins of music, not only is the subject of the verb fully explained by the repeated reference to mankind in the preceding lines, but what follows contains precisely the invocation of shared joys which is lacking here:

> tum ioca, tum sermo, tum dulces esse cachinni
> consuerant.

If Memmius is supposed to underlie the second-person references shortly after this, as the rich man in 35–6 or the commander of legions[15] in 40 ff., it is not

[15] He appears to have claimed the title *imperator* for some military activity in Bithynia (Broughton, *MRR* ii. 203).

surprising that he has no part in this picture of philosophical contentment. If, as seems more likely, there is nobody at all implied in those expressions, we must accept the conclusion that throughout these first 50 lines of book 2 Lucretius is simply not conscious of Memmius as addressee.[16] *quid dubitas* in 53 for the first time brings back some sort of dialogue with the disciple, and this continues on much the same lines as it was in book 1, with *tu te dictis praebere memento* in 66 as a more definite appeal, in a novel phrase which occurs nowhere else, to re-establish the relationship beyond doubt.

From this point second-person references of some weight continue at fairly regular intervals with *si cessare putas . . . avius a vera longe ratione vagaris* in 80–2, *reminiscere* in 90 (and nowhere else in the poem), and so on to the forceful appeal to immediate experience of the dance of motes in a sunbeam in 114–17:

> *contemplator* enim, cum solis lumina cumque
> inserti fundunt radii per opaca domorum:
> multa minuta modis multis per inane *videbis*
> corpora misceri.

This is one of a very small number of such appeals, despite the frequent use of everyday experience in the poem, which really attempts to involve the reader himself. Another, though not so clear, is to be found in 440–1:

> ut si forte manu quamvis iam corporis ipse
> *tute tibi* partem *ferias* atque *experiare* . . .

although here the subjunctives make it difficult to decide whether a specific addressee is intended. More definite is the challenge in 485–99 to imagine an infinite variety of shapes of atoms, with *fac enim, auge, expertus eris, si tu forte voles*, and the less striking *credere possis* and *ne . . . cogas*, scattered through the passage. Other phrases occur often enough to keep the relationship with the reader constantly alive, and Memmius is addressed by name in a demand that he consider the phenomenon of dawn (143), although there is no further second-person reference in the ensuing picture; while his name appears again in 182, with a promise (to be fulfilled in book 5) that the question of the imperfections of the world will be dealt with in due course:

> quae *tibi* posterius, Memmi, faciemus aperta.

Memmius happens not to be addressed by name again in book 2, but the appeals continue in much the same way, despite a prolonged gap from 500 to 730; and, after the major appeal for attention and understanding in 1023 to 1043, including the challenge in this final line, *dede manus, aut, si falsum est, accingere contra*, there is nothing at all throughout the relatively emotive account of growth and decline in the world, except for an isolated *vides* in 1122.

At the beginning of the third book it is not surprising that there is no mention of the reader at all for a considerable time; since here alone of the four introductions in which Epicurus plays a major part (1, 3, 5, 6) the philosopher himself is directly addressed, although not by name. He remains at the centre of Lucretius'

[16] So Bruns, p.6. Since there is some reason to suppose that lines 29–33 were first written as 5.1392–6, and 55–62 as 6.35–41 (with 54 added in the new context as what Bailey calls 'a rather clumsy and awkward link of connection'), the whole of the opening of 2 looks like a relatively late addition.

thought throughout the first thirty lines, receiving all the enthusiasm which in book 1 was accorded to Memmius. After such an opening, a clearly marked return from Epicurus to Memmius seems even more vital than is the change from Venus to Memmius in the early part of book 1. In fact, of course, there is no such return at all. Memmius is not named in the following passage, nor elsewhere in the book. In the passage on the fear of death (59–84), there is an extended account of the effects of political ambition, already noted at the start of book 2, again vividly recalling some of Memmius' attested activities during this period; and again there is no attempt to establish a relationship with Memmius or any other reader.

In the following account of the nature of the soul, it is no surprise that the role of the reader is reduced to a minimum, with little but the most commonplace of second-person expressions (*vides*, *si forte putes*, *ne dubites*) at very wide intervals. At 135 occurs the striking half-line, *tu cetera percipe dicta*; and the slightly stronger *id ita esse hinc licet advertas animum ut pernoscere possis* in 180–1. But at 206 the important passage on the movement of particles, where parallels are drawn with the behaviour of such substances as water and honey, poppy-seeds and ears of corn, concludes with the remark:

> quae *tibi* cognita res in multis, *o bone*, rebus
> utilis invenietur et opportuna cluebit.

Bailey and Kenney, following Merrill, are agreed that 'this is certainly not Memmius', but they do not discuss the phrase *o bone*. It seems in fact to be extremely rare, being attested only in Horace *Sat.*2 3.31, where the relatively unknown Damasippus upbraids Horace for claiming to be sane; ibid. 6.51, of a casual acquaintance accosting Horace and treating with incredulity his profession of ignorance about the latest rumour; and in Persius 6.43 of an identical encounter: *o bone, num ignoras*? Whether or not these somewhat later colloquialisms are any guide to Lucretius' usage, the phrase is totally inappropriate to the continuation of a debate with a close friend or disciple, even an estranged one.[17] It may be taken as a clear indication that the discussion is now on an entirely different level.

The long series of proofs of the mortality of the soul (417–829) contains a very small number of almost unnoticeable second-person references, apart from the opening two sentences, to which Farrington (op.cit., p.28) draws particular attention. I shall return to this passage in due course. The final division of book 3, the diatribe on the acceptance of annihilation (830–1094), is almost equally impersonal; although Lucretius adopts the satiric device of actual dialogue, sometimes with an undefined interlocutor (894–915), sometimes conjuring up Nature (931–49, 955–62), who addresses *alicui nostrum* with some such abusive title as *balatro* (955). In the lines following the last of these passages, there are two second-person pronouns (968–9):

> quae tamen omnia *te* vita perfuncta sequentur;
> nec minus ergo ante haec quam *tu* cecidere cadentque.

These appear to be a continuation of the tone of the preceding dramatic speech: certainly the addressee is not the philosopher's disciple of book 1, but the satirist's butt. This character reappears at 1024, where he is invited to admonish himself:

> hoc etiam *tibi tute* interdum dicere *possis*.

[17] Giussani, ad loc., tries to explain the anomaly by supposing that Lucretius found something similar in the text of Epicurus.

And in the ensuing speech he is made to address himself as *improbe* (1026), and to use typical satiric criticism, as in 1045 ff.:

> *tu* vero *dubitabis* et *indignabere* obire;
> mortua cui vita est prope iam vivo atque videnti,
> qui somno partem maiorem *conteris* aevi
> et vigilans *stertis* nec somnia cernere *cessas* . . .

The language closely recalls that used by Horace in such addresses to an imaginary butt, as in *Sat.* 1. 1. 70–2 – a poem which starts with an apostrophe to Maecenas but wanders away inconsequentially into addressing this anonymous miser. Lucretius' remarks here concern Memmius no more than Horace's concern his patron.

Things are very much the same in book 4, where again Memmius' name does not occur at all. Despite the continual references to common experience, in which direct appeals could have been made, the reader is hardly brought into it at all. Even the practical experiment of pressing the eye with the finger to induce double vision (447–52) is described without a personal subject at all: *at si forte oculo manus uni subdita subter pressit eum* and so on to *fit ut videatur*. There is nothing here of the invitation in 2.114, *contemplator enim*. All the experiences are appropriated, as it were, by the author, with nothing more out-going than such first person plurals as *qua vehimur navi* (387), the ship in which we are travelling, which in no way suggests an actual experience shared by Lucretius and Memmius. If the two men ever sailed together, as Catullus presumably sailed to Bithynia with his propraetor, there is no trace of it here, the present tense of the verb avoiding specific reference to any particular occasion.

But one passage, which may be taken as fairly decisive, appears at first sight to contain a distinct second-person reference, as if to a definite reader:

> quae bene cum *videas*, rationem reddere *possis*
> *tute tibi* atque aliis, quo pacto per loca sola
> saxa paris formas verborum ex ordine reddant,
> palantis comites cum montis inter opacos
> quaerimus et magna dispersos voce ciemus.
> sex etiam aut septem loca vidi reddere voces
> unam cum *iaceres*. (572–9)

This can fairly be taken as a genuine reminiscence of personal experience; yet it is very difficult to understand it, as Wiseman does,[18] as a real occasion, or occasions, shared with Memmius, when the two men were out hunting together, lost the rest of the party, and tried to call to them in a place of many echoes. In the first place, the subjunctive *videas* is difficult to explain as a normal personal use, for which the appropriate verbs would surely be *cum videris . . . poteris*. It is most easily explained as parallel to the generalizing subjunctives, such as *ubi videas* (2.314, 3.870), discussed on pp. 268–9 above; although here the subjunctive of the apodosis rather resembles that in 3. 854–6, *cum respicias . . . possis*, which may have some elements in common with a potential conditional sentence. More significant is the imperfect subjunctive *iaceres* (529), which would be the only example of any past tense recalling a past activity of Memmius. On examination, such an explanation is seen to hold no water. 'I have observed' (a curious meaning of *vidi* for the act of hearing, on any reckoning) 'six or seven

[18] *Cinna the Poet*, p.31.

echoes when you uttered one shout.' If, as is suggested, this is an appeal to Memmius to remember a common experience in the past, it is remarkable that Lucretius still contrives to appropriate the experience to himself, as if Memmius had not heard the echoes and could not be invited to draw on an experience of his own to satisfy himself and others. Reference to Memmius' participation in the event, or events (for Lucretius appears to be describing something frequent, as the verbs *quaerimus* and *ciemus* suggest), is reduced beyond a credible minimum; and this is hardly surprising in a context in which Memmius has played no part whatsoever. The indefinite 'one' who must be understood as the subject here corresponds closely to the implied agent of *non est mirandum* at the beginning of the previous paragraph (595). It is indeed striking how many paragraphs throughout this book have similarly impersonal or passive verbs to introduce them, as if to reduce the involvement of the reader as participant: e.g.

> multaque in his rebus *quaerunter* multaque nobis
> *clarandumst*, plane, si res exponere avemus.
> *quaeritur* in primis . . . (777–9)

This makes a strong contrast with the great variety of personal openings in book 1 and 2, where objections and difficulties are raised or anticipated, always as if originating in the mind of Memmius. At least the passage on echoes, concerned as it is with the reader's use of observation to understand natural phenomena, involves the reader more directly than most surrounding paragraphs, even if *iaceres* has no reference to him at all.

For the most part, book 4 continues to exclude the reader's participation even from such personal spheres of experience as sleep and sex – the more strikingly so in view of Memmius' reputation for indolence and gallantry. In particular, the notorious reference in 1277, *coniugibus quod nil nostris opus esse videtur*, to the sexual passivity of the Roman wife, is singularly inept if it is meant to refer in any way to Sulla's famous daughter Fausta, Memmius' wife until 54 B.C. and even more involved in scandal than he was.[19] Even if he now had a more respectable and subservient wife, Lucretius can hardly have intended this remark to have this specific reference. In the course of the preceding warning against the perils of sexual passion (1058–1191), on the other hand, two sections might be taken as applying all too well to Memmius. 1068–72, recommending recourse to prostitution as a way of diverting the mind from the wound of passion, has already been noted (p.269), as containing a series of subjunctives (*conturbes . . . cures . . . possis*) only to be explained as generalizing; and both here and in the more extensive 1141–52, containing no less than seven second-person verbs, we have to recognize no longer the disciple of books 1 and 2, but the recipient of moral exhortation, just as in 3. 968–9 (p.276 above). The one passage in the whole book where the poet has to do with the disciple and his progress to understanding (912–15), will be dealt with in due course.

In book 5, we are back with Epicurus as the subject of enthusiasm once more; but he is in the third person again, and this time Memmius is personally appealed to in line 8 to witness the philosopher's claim to divinity for his benefactions to mankind: *deus ille fuit, deus, inclute Memmi.* After this forceful introduction, Memmius does not in fact reappear throughout the opening ninety lines of the book, even in the passage where Lucretius is imagining the initiate as slipping

[19] e.g. Horace, *Sat.* 1.2.64.

back into superstition through misinterpreting meteorological phenomena. But he is with us again most effectively once Lucretius takes up the main argument in 91, with the invitation

principio mare ac terras caelumque tuere

(a unique imperative which ensures that this is no casual formula), and is actually addressed in the following line. The second-person subjunctives in the middle of the paragraph are indecisive, although the phrase

ut fit ubi insolitam rem *apportes* auribus ante

is a new and striking one, and there may be some significance in the fact that these lines contain a strong reminiscence of Memmius' other poet, Catullus. But the conclusion of the paragraph, where Lucretius is emphasizing the possibility that the world may collapse in ruin any day, is made unusually personal, even without much in the way of second-person language:

dictis dabit ipsa fidem res
forsitan et graviter terrarum motibus ortis
omnia conquassari in parvo tempore *cernes*.
quod procul a nobis flectat fortuna gubernans,
et ratio potius quam res persuadeat ipsa
succidere horrisono posse omnia victa fragore. (104–9)

This is some way from being a proper philosophical reflection, and is as near to a joke as Lucretius ever gets. 'Perhaps you will be convinced of the truth of what I say, when you see the world collapsing with a frightful crash; but I hope that chance will preserve it for us and, good empiricists though we are, we may accept *a priori* proof rather than actual experience to guarantee that the world must come to an end one day.' In strict philosophical terms, the end of the world should be a matter of indifference, no less than the death of an individual; and there seems to be some impropriety in the appeal to *fortuna gubernans* as something like a benignant deity. But that is how one talks to a friend, especially one with whom one is hoping to share the joys of Epicurean friendship, and who is clearly included in the personal 'you and I' of *nobis*. Lucretius would never address the general reader in these affable terms. We clearly have here the same Memmius whom we met at the beginning of the poem, and whom we have hardly seen since early in the book. He remains before the poet's mind in the following argument, although the second-person phrases at the beginning of successive paragraphs are of the most commonplace type. At 155 the definite promise, *quae tibi posterius largo sermone probabo*, whether ever redeemed or not, reads like a personal guarantee; and this is established by the further invocation of Memmius' name in 164.

But, if Memmius is as constantly present in the book up to this point as he ever was in book 1, there is a remarkable falling off in what follows. There are scattered examples of the more formulaic second-person expressions (*ne rearis, tibi, id licet hinc cognoscere possis, ne credas*), but nothing in the way of clusters of such words which seem to build up contact with the reader. At 305 there is the slightly more striking *denique non . . . cernis?* which is picked up in 318 by the other imperative *tuĕre* (the more normal *tuēre* we have observed already) at the start of a curious passage strongly reminiscent of a fragment of the poet Pacuvius. Is this, together with the reference in the following paragraph to the myths of heroic epic and in 395 to the story of Phaethon, some indication that

Lucretius is deliberately appealing to the would-be poet and patron of poets? In any case, open references to the reader simply cease to appear throughout the whole section from 416 on the birth of the world and the development of its occupants. There are virtually no second-person verbs or pronouns, even as isolated formulae. The narrative, as it now becomes, is related in extraordinarily straightforward past indicatives, with very little argumentation. Even in passages such as that beginning in 1063, on the noises made by various creatures as evidence for primitive human language, the whole argument is set out entirely impersonally – *quippe etenim licet id rebus cognoscere apertis*. The striking outburst in 1194 on the folly of superstition does not bring the reader into it all, even when Lucretius describes the common sensation of awe on looking up at the starry sky or in the middle of a thunderstorm or earthquake. It has ceased to be 'Do you not feel . . . ?' and become *cui non animus . . . contrahitur?* (1218) and *non populi gentesque tremunt?* (1222) Even when the poet's confidence in his argument does momentarily falter, in the incoherent passage at 1341 on the use of wild beasts in warfare, he worries it out on his own, with only the impersonal *possis contendere* in 1344, when the conflicting views expressed might so easily have been developed in some sort of dialogue. Once restored to more orthodox matters, the poet conducts his story to its close, with the triumph of civilization in 1457, without further concesssions to the reader.

But two concessions have been made, however unobtrusively. At 867, in the course of the discussion of the Survival of the Fittest among animals, he observes that dogs and domestic beasts of various kinds

> omnia sunt hominum tutelae tradita, Memmi.

Why should Memmius be called upon to witness this particular assertion? There is no second-person verb or pronoun in the vicinity, and there seems to be no precedent for Memmius to be addressed without some clear reference to his grasp of the argument. Are we to suppose that Memmius had some particular concern for dogs, or for horses? Yet we observed that he was not appealed to to witness the much more detailed description of the various noises that these animals make. And the second example in the latter part of book 5 is not much more self-explanatory. After describing the invention of metallurgy, Lucretius goes on in 1281 to ironworking, with the words

> nunc *tibi* quo pacto ferri natura reperta
> sit, facilest ipsi per *te* cognoscere, Memmi . .

This is at least a normal type of passing exhortation to work out the argument for himself, since it is so easy[20] – much the same line of thought as in the reference to the *parva opella* required at the end of book 1. But both references are remarkably casual. It is as if Lucretius is having to remind himself that his friend is supposed to be on the receiving end of everything he is saying, and inserts his name almost as if he needed the odd spondee to complete a line.[21]

[20] F. Solmsen, in *Philologus* 114 (1970), 256–61, makes heavy weather of Lucretius' failure to provide a distinct account of the discovery of iron. The poet surely felt that a second metallurgical section, after 1241–80, would be tiresome and largely repetitive. Hence, presumably, the unusual appeal to Memmius.

[21] W. A. Merrill (p.25) suggests that all these vocatives throughout the poem were inserted in this casual manner, and that the poet intended to add others in 3, 4, and 6 in due course. Roller (cit. above, n.3) 247–8, pushes this view even further, without

And Memmius will not reappear at all in the sixth and last book. I find three passages only where a little cluster of second-person words suggests that someone is envisaged as listening.[22] But for the most part the language is more and more impersonal, very much as in the last 1,200 lines of book 5, but without even the cursory appeals to Memmius' name which make an ineffectual pretence of conjuring him up in that book. The closing description of the Plague of Athens with which the poem concludes is even more historical in manner than the story of evolution in 5, with only the indefinite historical second-person subjunctives, *videres* and so forth, to which I referred before as an indication that there is no other second person in the poet's mind at all.

This survey suggests that Mussehl and others were right in arguing that books 1, 2, and 5 were composed before the other three; but indicates in addition that the concentrated appeal to Memmius throughout the first book is only rather intermittently sustained in the second; while the renewed burst of enthusiasm for encouraging the disciple, so prominent in the first 200 lines or so of book 5, fades away very quickly and is kept going only perfunctorily by the two further invocations of Memmius' name, but by virtually nothing else. It is as if for a time nothing but deliberate determination reminds Lucretius at intervals that he is supposed to be attempting the conversion of this unpromising pupil. After the end of book 5 he accepts the fact that he is on his own, free to pursue his argument with no pretence of addressing anyone but the anonymous reader who is so common in satire, but with whom no clear and continuous relationship is possible.

Farrington in particular refused to accept this interpretation of the evidence (cit. above, n.6, pp. 28–9). Apart from the close of the opening to book 4 (18–25), which is of course the same as 1. 943–50 and must be discussed in connection with the composition of the whole poem, he concentrates on the one passage in book 3 which I mentioned above (p.276) as suggesting close contact with the reader as a person. It occurs at the major transition, from the nature of the soul to its inevitable mortality:

> nunc age, nativos animantibus et mortalis
> esse animos animasque levis ut noscere *possis*,
> conquisita diu dulcique reperta labore
> digna *tua* pergam disponere carmina vita.
> *tu* fac utrumque uno *subiungas* nomine eorum . . . (417–21)

In the remaining 24 lines of the paragraph there follow *credas* (423), *cernis* (435), *crede* (437), and *credas* again (443) – of which only the last could be explained as a generalizing 'one'. Most strikingly personal, although not in itself containing second-person elements, is the phrase *dulcique reperta labore* (419), echoed, as Farrington points out from *dulci quaesita labore* in a relatively personal paragraph-opening at 2.730, and recalling the reference to *quemvis efferre laborem* in the

attempting to work out any real rationale for this procedure nor to indicate what must have happened when Memmius was first addressed by name in the lacuna before 1.50.

[22] The clusters referred to are as follows: iii.417–23; iv.912–15; vi.67–79, 187–94, 647–54. In book i the following passages are significant: 50–5, 102–6, 140–5, 265–70, 331–3, 398–417, 921–50, 972–6, 1114–18; in book ii: 80–90, 114–31, 184–97, 440–1, 485–500, 730–40, 1023–43; and in book v: 91–109, 146–65 (the last containing only a vague *ut possis* in 146, *quae tibi posterius largo sermone probabo* in 155, and an unsupported appeal to Memmius in the vocative in 164).

major appeal to Memmius' friendship in 1.140. And if this may be regarded as the less significant for being a repetition of a more forceful original appearance, the words *digna tua vita* (420) are entirely novel and compulsive, especially if they are to be taken as implying 'worthy of a man in your position', rather than 'worthy to shape your life in future', as Giussani takes them, although Kenney regards this as impossible. Either way, this sort of language has belonged to the noble Memmius as the favoured disciple, and stands out most oddly in a book in which Memmius has no other place at all.

Likewise in book 4, apart from the two passages mentioned above (1072–3 and 1141–52) as belonging rather to the satiric than to the didactic tradition, there are two brief personal injunctions: *tu percipe dicta* (880) and *tu fac ne ventis verba profundam* (931) – neither striking enough to rank as a second-person cluster. But in between them occurs the further reminder, in much the same admonitory spirit:

> *tu* mihi da tenuis auris animumque sagacem,
> ne fieri *negites* quae dicam posse retroque
> vera repulsanti *discedas* pectore dicta,
> *tutemet* in culpa cum *sis* neque cernere *possis*. (912–15)

Like the unique passage in book 3, this occurs at what may be regarded as a major transition, from ordinary mental processes to sleep, dreams, and sex, topics which play an unexpectedly large part in book 4. It differs from otherwise comparable addresses to the pupil in book 1 only in respect of the degree of hostility displayed, and what seems to be an expectation of disagreement, quite distinct from Memmius' hesitation to consent (1.398 ff.) and liability to fall into popular error (1.1052). If the reference here is to Memmius, unlike any other lines in the whole book, it is as anomalous as the passage in book 3.

Finally, the three passages in 6 which appear to involve the reader directly include one which recalls the appeal to the dust-motes in 2.114:

> ne *tibi* sit frudi . . .
> *contemplator* enim, cum montibus assimulata
> nubila portabunt venti transversa per auras,
> aut ubi per magnos montis cumulata *videbis* . . .
> tum *poteris* . . . cognoscere . . . (187 ff.)

and a further appeal for reflection (647–54), including such unusual second-person forms as *reminiscaris*, *contueare*, *relinquas* – a cluster which stands comparison with almost anything in book 1 or 2, in respect both of density of freshness of vocabulary. But unique in the whole poem is the outburst in the course of the general discussion of materialism:

> quae nisi *respuis* ex animo longeque remittis
> dis indigna putare alienaque pacis eorum,
> delibata deum per *te tibi* numina sancta
> saepe oberunt; non quo violari summa deum vis
> possit, ut ex ira poenas petere imbibat acris,
> sed quia *tute tibi* placida cum pace quietos
> *constitues* magnos irarum volvere fluctus,
> nec delubra deum placido cum pectore *adibis*,
> nec de corpore quae sancto simulacra feruntur
> in mentis hominum divinae nuntia formae,
> suscipere haec animi tranquilla pace *valebis*.
> inde videre licet qualis iam vita sequatur. (67–79)

To say nothing of the unique content of these lines, the personal address here involves an unusual concern for what can almost be called the reader's spiritual welfare; yet its limitations are indicated by the fact that, within a few lines of the last second-person reference in the paragraph (*ne trepides* in 86), the poet suddenly bursts out:

> *tu* mihi supremae praescripta ad candida calcis
> currenti spatium *praemonstra* (92–3)

and we find that he has turned without warning to address the Muse – *callida musa Calliope* – to ask for her assistance in the last lap of the race. From this apostrophe he is able to turn back, with no further indication in the shape of a vocative, to invite the reader to consider the behaviour of the clouds. If there is a specific person in Lucretius' mind in the early part of this book, he remains inexplicably anonymous.

There are still problems concerning the opening of book 6, which must be discussed in another connection. In general, however, it is clear that no reader, starting book 3, 4, or 6 at the beginning and reading through to the end, can emerge with the impression that the poet is addressing himself to any specific person – or indeed that he is much concerned with even the most anonymous reader. The number of significant clusters of second-person references – one in 3, one in 4, and three in 6 – when compared with the distribution in the other books, may be closely correlated with the total disappearance of Memmius' name. In books 3 and 4 in particular Lucretius is adopting much more the typical manner of the satirist, where the general reader is likely to be apostrophized at any point, as in Horace's *rides? mutato nomine de te fabula narratur* (*Sat.* 1. 1. 69–70); and both of these books end with extended passages bearing a close resemblance to the diatribe, as we find it in Horace's first three satires.

Bruns, as we have seen, recognized the falling away of personal addresses to Memmius after book 1 (pp. 5 ff.), and indeed argued that the change to the general reader was already taking place well before the end of that book, as indicated by the 'second introduction' at 1.921, where a fresh objective, of poetic glory, is introduced to stand beside, if not to supersede, the original purpose of converting Memmius to Epicureanism. This claim is too sweeping. Despite some decline in intensity, particularly at the opening of 2 (where Bruns rightly observed that Memmius is not in the poet's mind at all), Lucretius' concern with the disciple's progress continues almost uninterrupted through the rest of 2 and the first 200 lines of 5; after which it is difficult to take even the two appeals to Memmius by name as indicating any real awareness of his presence. There is enough of a difference between the early part of 5 and the whole run of 3, 4, and 6 to justify the conclusion drawn by Mussehl and accepted by Bailey and many others, that 1, 2, and 5 were written first, while Lucretius still entertained hopes of winning Memmius' full support, to be followed by the other three on a rather different basis . The detailed evidence considered in this paper makes it possible to place greater weight on this conclusion than appears to have been attempted in the past. Its full implications will be discussed in a subsequent paper.[23]

University of Durham G. B. TOWNEND

[23] 'The Original plan of Lucretius; *de Rerum natura*', to be published in the first number of *CQ* N.S. 29 (1979). Ed.