DE RERUM NATURA 5.101–103: LUCRETIUS' APPLICATION OF EMPEDOCLEAN LANGUAGE TO EPICUREAN DOCTRINE

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IN ADDITION TO EXPLICIT ASSERTIONS of the divine nature of both Epicurus and his discoveries, Lucretius infuses the *De Rerum Natura* with the suggestion that the veneration of Epicurus and his philosophy is a worthy replacement for the traditional religion.[1] Lucretius' fifth book examines what is mortal and human, as opposed to what is immortal and divine, specifically arguing the mortality of the cosmos against the view that a deity created a divine and immortal universe, and proclaiming the divinity of Lucretius' hero and predecessor Epicurus. The strongest assertions of Epicurus' divine status occur, not surprisingly, in the fifth proem, where Lucretius directly affirms *deus ille fuit, deus* (5.8) and attributes Epicurus' divinity to his discovery of philosophical wisdom. When his gifts to mankind are compared with the *divina reperta* of other, older gods,[2] Epicurus emerges as more deserving of divine status (*quo magis hic merito nobis deus esse videtur* [5.19]) because his discoveries have benefited mankind more. The fifth proem ends with the rhetorical question *nonne decebit / hunc hominem numero divum dignarier esse?* (5.50–51). It is the godlike quality of Epicurus' teachings about nature, and especially about the gods, which makes him divine.

It has long been realized that Lucretius connects his two great predecessors, Epicurus and Empedocles, by describing them with language appropri-

The following are cited by author's name: C. Bailey, ed., *Titi Lucreti Cari De Rerum Natura Libri Sex* 3 vols. (Oxford 1947); P. Boyancé, *Lucrèce et l'épicurisme* (Paris 1963); D. Clay, *Lucretius and Epicurus* (Ithaca and London 1983); C. D. N. Costa, *Lucretius De Rerum Natura V* (Oxford 1984); E. J. Kenney, ed., *Lucretius De Rerum Natura Book III* (Cambridge 1971); P. H. Schrijvers, *Horror ac Divina Voluptas* (Amsterdam 1970).

[1]The process of deification which Epicurus undergoes in the *DRN* has attracted the attention of several scholars. See most recently J. M. Duban, "*Ratio Divina Mente Coorta* and the Mythological Undercurrent in the Deification of Epicurus," *Prudentia* 11 (1979) 47–54, who discusses the language of Epicurus' deification in the proem to book 5 and supplies a thorough bibliography on this topic. The hymnic nature of the proem to book 3 has been noticed by Duban ("In 3.9–10, the repeated pronouns are . . . characteristic of the hymnic style" [174]); by Kenney *ad* 3.1–4 and 9–10; and by J. Pigeaud, "Quel Dieu est Épicure? Quelques rémarques sur Lucrèce, V, 1 à 54," *REL* 50 (1972) 139–162, who shows that Lucretius here intended to represent Epicurus as an Epicurean anti-Hercules, or counterpart to the Stoic hero Hercules. See also W. Fauth, "Divus Epicurus: Zur Problemgeschichte philosophischer Religiosität bei Lukrez," *ANRW* 1.4 (Berlin 1973) 205–225, especially (on book 5) 222–223. For the technique of replacement see Schrijvers.

[2]Deification of Epicurus extends in the proem to book 6 even to his philosophy: his discoveries are *divina reperta* (6.7).

ate to divinities.[3] At 5.101–103, Lucretius uses Empedoclean language to exalt as divine the difficult Epicurean teaching of the mortality and eventual destruction of our world, one of the most important of the *reperta* for which Epicurus deserves divine status.[4] It is Empedocles' description of divinity (Fr. 31 B 133 DK) which Lucretius uses for three lines of his account of Epicurean teaching about the eventual destruction of the world (*DRN* 5.101–103, underlined in the larger context of 5.92–109):[5]

principio maria ac terras caelumque tuere;
quorum naturam triplicem, tria corpora, Memmi,
tris species tam dissimilis, tria talia texta,
una dies dabit exitio, multosque per annos
sustentata ruet moles et machina mundi.
nec me animi fallit quam res nova miraque menti
accidat exitium caeli terraeque futurum,
et quam difficile id mihi sit pervincere dictis;
ut fit ubi insolitam rem apportes auribus ante
nec tamen hanc possis oculorum subdere visu
nec iacere indu manus, via qua munita fidei
proxima fert humanum in pectus templaque mentis.
sed tamen effabor. dictis dabit ipsa fidem res
forsitan et graviter terrarum motibus ortis
omnia conquassari in parvo tempore cernes

[3]Cf. L. Edelstein, "Primum Graius Homo (Lucretius 1.66)," *TAPA* 71 (1940) 78–90. Another fragment of Empedocles may have inspired Lucretius in his declaration of the divinity of Empedocles and Epicurus: fragment B 112 in H. Diels and W. Kranz, eds., *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* 3 vols. (Berlin 1952), in which Empedocles himself declares his own divinity (see Boyancé 58). Lines 4–6 read: χαίρετ'· ἐγὼ δ' ὑμῖν θεὸς ἄμβροτος οὐκέτι θνητός / πωλεῦμαι μετὰ πᾶσι τετιμένος, ὥσπερ ἔοικεν, / ταινίαις τε περίστεπτος στέφεσίν τε θαλείοις.

[4]This doctrine—for Epicurus the orthodox or majority opinion—reacts against the Academic, and later the Stoic, assumption of a world-soul; see F. Solmsen, "Epicurus and Cosmological Heresies," *AJP* 72 (1951) 1–23.

[5]The educated Romans likely to read Lucretius' poem knew Empedocles as part of the literary background. A continuous tradition of ancient writings about Empedocles culminates in Cicero's mention (*ad Q. fr.* 2.9.3), apropos of the *ars* and *ingenium* of Lucretius' poem, in close connection with Lucretius' *poemata*, of the *Empedoclea*, a work by Sallustius, writing at the same time as Lucretius. See D. Furley, "Variations on Themes from Empedocles in Lucretius' Proem," *BICS* 17 (1970) 55–64, for further details; Furley shows that through his use of Empedoclean themes, Lucretius hints that Empedocles led the way for Epicurus in both the role of a writer about nature and that of a purifier of human life. Furley enumerates several passages in the proem to Lucretius' first book which clearly echo Empedoclean originals. As Furley has noted, book 1 of the *DRN*, with its Mars-Venus scene, is obviously indebted to Empedocles' Philia and Neikos; clearly, too, its description of the sacrifice of Iphigenia is less obviously but still substantially an imitation of Empedocles, fragment B 137, which laments the bloody sacrifice of a son by his father. See Clay 289, n. 42. To the convincing examples enumerated by Furley should be added Horace *Ars P.* 463–466, which show that not only Empedocles but also the detail of his self-deification was a literary topic.

quod procul a nobis flectat fortuna gubernans,
et ratio potius quam res persuadeat ipsa
succidere horrisono posse omnia victa fragore.

The Empedoclean fragment, cited in Clement Str. 5.12, 694 P, is likely to have belonged to the Περὶ Φύσεως; and Lucretius' imitation of it here in an argument about the world's physical composition supports this attribution.[6]

οὐκ ἔστιν πελάσασθαι ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς ἐφικτόν
ἡμετέροις ἢ χερσὶ λαβεῖν, ἥπερ τε μεγίστη
πειθοῦς ἀνθρώποισιν ἁμαξιτὸς εἰς φρένα πίπτει.

"It is not possible to bring (the divine) close within reach of our eyes or to grasp him with the hands, by which the broadest path of persuasion for men leads to the mind." (tr. M. R. Wright)

At first, it is difficult to see why Lucretius would choose to imitate these lines on the empirical *unknowability* of the divinity precisely when he is attempting to persuade his reader of the certainty of an Epicurean doctrine which cannot be empirically proved. The Empedoclean lines would seem to emphasize the impossibility of proving the Epicurean doctrine. In addition, ascribing *divinity* to this doctrine might appear to diminish Lucretius' insistence on the world's *mortality:* the atoms, the boundless, and the Epicurean gods are all that are, strictly speaking, immortal; but we shall see that Lucretius does not consider the doctrine divine in the precise Epicurean sense. And to increase the apparent paradoxical character of the lines, Lucretius takes pains to adumbrate at 5.99–109 an antithesis between the world's complexity on the one hand and the suddenness of its destruction on the other. Most critics of Lucretius have seen nothing more in these three lines than a simple homage to Empedocles in the form of an almost literal Latin translation of his Greek that at the same time refers to the Epicurean theory

[6]That Empedocles speaks here of divinity is attested by Clement, who cites it with two other passages (Solon fr. 16 and John 1.18) and identifies all three as concerning the divine as invisible. Whether these lines belong to the Περὶ Φυσέως or the Καθαρμοί has vexed editors. Diels-Kranz assign the fragment to the Καθαρμοί, but recent opinion has tended in the opposite direction (see Clay *ibid.*). M. R. Wright, *Empedocles: The Extant Fragments* (New Haven 1981) 83, assigns fr. 133 with fr. 134 to the *Physics*, because it "seems an obvious predecessor to fr. 134, and since there are not independent indications for its source;" fr. 134, according to Tzetzes, comes from the third book of the *Physics*. Wright (253) comments further, "Theodoretus, no doubt copying him, connects it with 6 (4).1–2 (which supports the assignation to the *Physics*), Solon fr. 16, and Antisthenes fr. 24 in the context of relying on πίστις when the senses prove inadequate. (Solon's fr. 17 is even more relevant: πάντῃ δ' ἀθανάτων ἀφανὴς νόος ἀνθρώποισιν.) The fragment contrasts knowledge within the range of the senses (the senses, for example, perceive the characteristics and activity of earth, air, fire, and water) and knowledge outside the range of the senses, such as that of the nature of the divine, cf. the commentary on Philia, 8 (17).21, 25–26." For the view that they belong to neither work, see F. Solmsen, "Empedocles' Hymn to Apollo," *Phronesis* 35 (1980) 219–227.

of knowledge, since the criterion of sense-perception was for the Epicureans the most reliable test of a proposition's validity.[7] Only Diskin Clay has attempted to explain why Lucretius "adopts and adapts" these Empedoclean lines. Clay correctly observes:

> the allusion behind 5.97–103 is not isolated and local but informs its context and returns the reader to the language that first described the discoveries of Empedocles in book 1. At least one detail of Empedocles' language conveying the remoteness of a conception of the divine comes to be seen as valid for Epicurean theology: no human can lay his hand upon it. This language finds its echo in Lucretius' statement that the conception of a perishable world eludes the touch and blow of the hand (5.150).[8]

Although Clay asserts that the language of 5.97–103 connects these lines with the praise of Empedocles in book one, he does not explain *how* Lucretius' language makes this connection. In fact, he specifically disavows Boyancé's suggestion that Lucretius proclaims himself a new Empedocles by his repetition of the comparison to the Pythia (5.111–112, Lucretius' self-description, = 1.738–739, his description of Empedocles).[9] Clay (52) instead interprets 5.97–103 as prophecy: ". . . the philosopher who has attained to an understanding of [the universe's] eternal laws becomes, like Calchas in Metrodorus' allusion to Homer's conception of prophecy, a prophet." Thus, Clay appears to say, the significance of the Empedoclean allusion at 5.101–103 is that Lucretius, by virtue of his understanding of the eternal laws of the universe, is a prophet in the sense in which Epicurus called his philosophy prophecy.

Can our interpretation of the Empedoclean lines go further? Lucretius has two difficulties with this particular Epicurean doctrine: (1) it is empirically unprovable; (2) it is inherently very difficult for man to accept the idea of the destruction of the universe. Lucretius solves both by transferring Empedocles' description of the divinity to the Epicurean doctrine, thereby elevating

[7]See Epicurus *Kyria Doxa* 24 and Lucretius 2.434–439.

[8]Clay 51. Bailey (3.1336) comments on the parallel, "Probably an intentional reminiscence of Empedocles (Diels B.133)," but does not speculate as to Lucretius' particular intention. Costa (59), although he does not mention Lucretius' reference to the destruction of the world, notes his transference of the Empedoclean lines to a non-Empedoclean topic: "The highway to the mind recalls Empedocles (on apprehending divinity) . . . , though L. alludes of course to the Epicurean theory of knowledge."

[9]"Ce sont les mêmes vers [1.736 ff.], les mêmes images, qu'il reprendra au chant V, v. 100 et suiv., pour se les appliquer à lui-même, porte-parole de la révélation épicurienne sur la mortalité du monde. N'est-ce pas comme une façon de se proclamer un nouvel Empédocle?" (Boyancé 60). "The language Lucretius used earlier to praise Empedocles and his followers he now turns around to describe his own argument, and one reader of the poem has very properly asked if this significant repetition is not Lucretius' way of proclaiming himself a new Empedocles. On reflection, it seems not. Lucretius' proclamation is even more ambitious . . . to impress upon his reader's mind the difficulty of imagining the death of a world that has lost all of its divinity" (Clay 50).

the doctrine itself to divine status and at the same time augmenting one of his central themes as noted above, the replacement of traditional religion with the veneration of Epicurus and his philosophy. Support for this interpretation will come from an examination of both the immediate and larger contexts of the passage since, in analyzing Lucretius' intent in any specific passage, one must keep in mind that *context* largely determines the function of the "affective" or "poetic" elements.[10]

The immediate context, 92–109, emphasizes directly and through rhetorical devices the marvelous but difficult character of this doctrine. The three Empedoclean lines are embedded in its central section, a self-contained passage of tripartite structure (91–109): 5 lines stating the premise that the world will end (92–96); 7 lines confessing the doctrine's difficulty of acceptance (97–103); and 6 lines expressing a wish that the reader be persuaded by *ratio* rather than experience of the world's destruction. After a didactic address (*ne te in promissis plura moremur*, 91), the first section's dramatic and portentous style, typically Lucretian in its emphasis on the apparent paradoxical implausibility of the doctrine under discussion, opposes our world's variety (instead of *mundus*, a periphrasis, *maria ac terras caelumque;* and 93–94 offer *four* statements of its complexity) and long duration (*multosque per annos / sustentata*, 95–96), to the instantaneous simplicity of its violent end (*una dies*, 95),[11] a contrast enhanced by an apostrophe to Memmius (93); anaphora with alliteration of *t* (93–94); and alliteration of *m* (95–96). The sudden violence of the world's end is not in accord with the gradual processes of decay described elsewhere.[12]

With the second section comes a slight change in style: these seven lines, including the Empedoclean borrowing which comprises the last three, are a self-conscious didactic reflection on the difficulty of persuading the reader of the doctrine, a didactic meditation in itself reminiscent of Empedocles, whose fragment B 133's original context may have been such a comment on

[10]This view developed as a reaction to an earlier type of interpretation but is useful in its own right. That occurrences of remarkable or emotionally evocative descriptive language in Lucretius' poem can be better explained by examination of its context and of its persuasive purpose in conversion of the reader to Epicureanism than by resort to the poet's personality traits is one of the most important contributions of recent Lucretian criticism; see Schrijvers *passim*. O. R. Bloch defined this development in his review of Schrijvers (*Gnomon* 45 [1973] 27–34). Although it is unlikely that any critic would choose to explain Lucretius' translation of Empedocles at 5.101–103 from a romantic or psychoanalytic standpoint, it is this article's contention that these lines serve a didactic and protreptic purpose and can be shown to contribute to the poem's purpose of converting the reader to Epicureanism.

[11]The striking phrase made its intended impression upon Ovid whose borrowing of it at *Amores* 1.15.24 is proof of its memorable quality.

[12]The death of all that is mortal is elsewhere described by Lucretius as a gradual process. See 2.68–70 (*longinquo . . . aevo*); 2.1131–1132 (*minutatim*); but at 3.898–899, in the satiric mode, Lucretius uses the antithesis of the end of human life: *"misero misere" aiunt "omnia ademit / una dies infesta tibi tot praemia vitae."*

the poet's task, given the number of similar statements in the extant fragments.

With *res nova miraque menti* (97) Lucretius anticipates and sympathetically acknowledges the reader's initial disbelief at the doctrine of the world's mortality. Line 99 admits the doctrine's difficulty of proof and recalls the proem's praise of Epicurus, the hero who conquered mankind's troubles *dictis, non armis* (50), assimilating Lucretius' mission, especially in this paragraph, to that of Epicurus. Because of this doctrine's strangeness and newness (96), and inaccessibility to empirical investigation (99), Lucretius' task is here unusually demanding. At this point he introduces his citation of Empedocles (as a subordinate clause—101–102). Comparison of 101–103 with B 133 shows that Lucretius has, as usual with his imitations of Empedocles, followed the Greek closely: as Kranz realized, ἦπερ = *qua*, ἀμαξιτὸς = *via munita*, πειθοῦς = *fides*.[13] But Lucretius' use of *fidei* (102) and *fides* (104) to translate Πειθώ (the goddess of persuasion as well as its faculty or power) reminds us that the doctrine cannot be tested by the senses (indeed the latter two-thirds of our passage digresses on the difficulty of persuading the reader of its truth): *belief* becomes all-important when verification by the senses is impossible. Empedocles' Πειθώ is personified as a goddess conveyed in a wagon along a road, and Lucretius adapts the Empedoclean fragment to show the "paved way" of *fides*—but in its Epicurean sense of credibility, belief, proof, or confirmation (exactly his concern here) leading into the human heart and the regions of the mind. This repetition of *fides* leads to Lucretius' use of a verb often used of solemn oracular utterance, one which, as Clay noticed, when taken closely with 110–112, connects Lucretius with Empedocles as a prophet.[14]

In addition to this use of *fides* Lucretius translates ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς (= *oculorum subdere visu* [101]); χερσὶ λαβεῖν (= *iacere indu manus* [102]); and ἀνθρώποισιν (= *humanum* [103]). This last phrase carries a religious, augurial connotation, in keeping with the poet's purpose here: the divine teachings of Epicurus find a suitable residence in the *templa* of the adherent's mind.

The oracular *effabor* returns us in the third section of this short passage to the elevated, rhetorical, descriptive style which here describes dramatically the end of the world: he thus ends the passage on an emotional high note and also forces the reluctant reader to confront (*cernes*, 106) the inevitable. Alliteration of *d* (104), *f* (107), and *r* (108) and repetition of *t* (105) and *r* add sound effects to the shocking picture, which derives part of its vivid violence from the antithetical suddenness and swiftness of the destruction of such a vast body as our world (*omnia . . . in parvo tempore*, 106), and such appeals

[13]W. Kranz, "Lukrez und Empedokles," *Philologus* 96 (1944) 68–107.
[14]*OLD* s.v. *effor*; Clay 49–52.

to the reader's sense of hearing (*insolitam rem apportes auribus ante*, 100) compensate for the admitted impossibility of proof through the senses of sight and touch.

The last three lines are a wish that this possibility may be averted by *fortuna gubernans* (107). Obviously an echo of *expediam qua vi flectat natura gubernans* (77), in which Lucretius asserted that the movements of heavenly bodies are steered by the power of *nature*, i.e., not the gods, *fortuna gubernans* reasserts the gods' lack of involvement both in causation of the heavenly bodies' movements and in the eventual end of the world. The actual experience of the world's destruction (*res ipsa*, 108) is the only way to test by sense-perception the theory of its mortality, but *ratio* is the recommended and desirable means of persuasion. The entire passage ends in a violent and climactic description of what Lucretius wishes the reader to believe through *ratio* alone: *succidere horrisono posse omnia victa fragore*. With its archaic language and onomatopoeia, the line stands as a memorable summary of the doctrine.

Since Lucretius will face the same difficulties in the arguments of 235–415, it is no wonder that in this brief foreword (91–109) he is particularly concerned to employ persuasive language;[15] we have seen that much of the larger context surrounding 101–103 is amplified description which is especially "psychagogic" or appealing to the emotions, emphasizing the difficulty of the doctrine, the oracular quality of his poetry, the violence of the imagined end of the world. Through its appeal to the reader's emotions, such description inspires the reader to agreement with the doctrine propounded in it.[16]

Lines 101–103 enhance the persuasive force of their immediate context merely with the weighty authority of the divine and prophetic Empedocles, which strengthens Lucretius' assertion of the world's mortality. Empedocles' power lay in his mastery of the art of writing philosophical poetry; small wonder that Lucretius translated three of his verses at a point in his own poem where he needed all available persuasive aid. Second, through this application of Empedocles' description of divinity to one of Epicurus' most difficult *reperta*, Lucretius deifies the doctrine itself, and this is a strong recommendation to the reader to accept it.

The larger context of these lines also bears out my contention that Lucretius intended to apply to the doctrine of the world's mortality the original

[15]For this technique of composition (assertion of the *demonstrandum;* suspension of thought over a digression; return to the *demonstrandum*) see K. Büchner, *Beobachtungen über Vers und Gedankengang bei Lukrez* (Berlin 1936).

[16]See C. J. Classen, "Poetry and Rhetoric in Lucretius," *TAPA* 99 (1968) 77–118. Whereas Schrijvers' valuable general analysis of passages of this type is that they are negative comparisons (*ratiocinationes*) which magnify Epicurus and his doctrine, no such explanation is needed here; this amplified description is persuasive in itself.

Empedoclean reference to the deity as well as that to testing by sense-perception. The oracular lines 5.111–112 immediately follow our passage and associate Lucretius with Empedocles as someone who speaks prophetically, for these very lines occurred at 1.738–739 in Lucretius' praise of Empedocles.[17] Furthermore, this repetition is joined to our passage by a transitional line (110) in the same oracular language: *qua prius aggrediar quam de re fundere fata.* The notion of the divine human being and his prophetic utterances, words which came from a god, is thus present almost immediately after the translation of the Empedoclean description of the divinity. It is most likely that Lucretius closely followed 101–103 with 110–112 because he wished to influence his reader to consider his words divinely inspired; the deification of the doctrine of the world's mortality in 101–103 is reinforced by the implication of 110–112, that Lucretius, like Empedocles, is an oracle more reliable than the Pythia. The god inspiring Lucretius' words is of course not Apollo but Epicurus.

A subsequent passage, the short description of the Epicurean gods at 5.148–151, supports this interpretation:[18]

Illud item non est ut possis credere, sedis
esse deum sanctas in mundi partibus ullis.
tenuis enim natura deum longeque remota
sensibus ab nostris animi vix mente videtur;
quae quoniam manuum tactum suffugit et ictum,
tactile nil nobis quod sit contingere debet.
tangere enim non quit quod tangi non licet ipsum.
quare etiam sedes quoque nostris sedibus esse
dissimiles debent, tenues de corpore eorum;
quae tibi posterius largo sermone probabo.

Here one would reasonably expect to find the Empedoclean language of 5.101–103; Lucretius is clearly saying what Empedocles said in fr. B 133, that the nature of the divine is inaccessible to the senses. And indeed, Lucretius clearly imitates elements of Empedocles' teaching: *manuum tactum suffugit et ictum* = οὐκ ἔστιν . . . ἡμετέροις . . . χερσὶ λαβεῖν; and *animi vix mente videtur* reminds us of Empedocles' description of sense-perception as a highway falling into the mind. The promise (unfulfilled in the *DRN*) of 155 recalls Empedocles' promise in his invocation to Calliope (B 131).

[17]Cf. 1.730–733. E. D. Kollmann, "Lucretius' Criticism of the Early Greek Philosophers," *Studii Clasice* 13 (1971) 79–93, states "The climax of Empedocles' feats are his *carmina,* which are mentioned almost against the uses of syntax, at the beginning of verse 731 . . . Lucretius the *poet* is now speaking of Empedocles the *poet*" (89–90).

[18]The close parallel in thought between 101–103 and 148–151 strengthens our suspicion that Lucretius had in mind the original reference of Empedocles' lines when he wrote 5.101–103. Cf. Clay 51, "This language finds its echo in Lucretius' statement that the conception of a perishable world eludes the touch and blow of the hand (5.150)."

Further corroboration of my interpretation comes from a brief parallel at 5.622, in a discussion of the causes of the sun's and moon's revolutions (= 3.371, on Democritus' teaching about the alternating order of *primordia* composing soul and body), where Lucretius actually calls Democritus' theory "holy:" *Democriti quod sancta viri sententia ponit.* Most commentators are mistaken in their transference of the epithet *sancta* from *sententia*, its proper attribution, to *viri*,[19] denying Lucretius' obvious intent to call the *opinion* itself holy. The use of *sancta* to modify *sententia* shows once again that a philosophical doctrine can, in Lucretius' mind, partake of divine status. Furthermore, references in the fifth proem to the divinity of Epicurus and comparisons there of Epicurus with the gods of traditional mythology, augmented by our interpretation of 5.101–103, suggest that Lucretius wished to emphasize the divinity of Epicurus and his doctrines in the first part of book 5. (Already noted above were *deus ille fuit, deus* [5.8]; the favorable comparison of Epicurus with Ceres and Bacchus [5.13–15] and Hercules [5.22–36]; and the rhetorical question asserting Epicurus' right to divine status [5.49–51].)

This recurrent deification of Epicurus and his doctrine is, of course, like much that is allegorical in the poem, part of Lucretius' polemic and protreptic arsenal.[20] In general, the replacement of traditional mythological figures with Epicurus and his *ratio*, a process exemplified in large by the promise to speak with surer reasoning than the Pythia as he announces refutation of the theological view of creation, and in miniature at 5.101–103, indirectly persuades the reader to venerate the Epicurean doctrine and to cease the worship of unsuitable objects such as mythological figures or heavenly bodies. The apparent paradox of attaching divinity to the doctrine of the world's mortality only enhances its effectiveness as persuasion. Epicurus and his philosophy cannot of course be divine in the true Epicurean sense defined by, for example, *Kyria Doxa* I and *Ep. ad Hdt.* 76, which would in fact *exclude* Epicurus from divine status by virtue of his having conferred benefits on mortals. It is not in this strict sense, but to serve his protreptic purpose, that Lucretius applies words used by Empedocles of divinity to elevate this difficult Epicurean doctrine to divine status and attempts to

[19]So Bailey 2.1057, A. Ernout and L. Robin, *Lucrèce: De Rerum Natura* (Paris 1925) 2.63, and Costa 89. But Kenney's more sensible view supports my contention that the Empedoclean lines deify the Epicurean doctrine. "The commentators tend to treat *sancta* as a 'transferred' epithet referring to Democritus. However, the natural respect which Lucretius felt for Democritus (cf. [3].1039–41) would attach also to his opinions, even when erroneous; and the phrasing may have been suggested by Lucil. 1316 M. *Valeri sententia dia* (imitated by Horace, *Sat.* 1.2.32 *sententia dia Catonis*)" (Kenney *ad* 3.1039–41).

[20]See H. Reiche, "Myth and Magic in Cosmological Polemics," *RhM* NF 114 (1971) 296–329, esp. 320–325; and, on Lucretius' attachment to Epicurus' doctrine of qualities appropriate to the divine and the *rerum maiestas*, Schrijvers 63.

circumvent both the problem of the doctrine's inaccessibility to empirical testing and that of its inherent unpalatability to the unconverted who would not envision their world's end.[21]

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