

II.—Lucretius and the History of Epicureanism

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Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* reflects certain developments that appeared in the Epicurean school after the death of Epicurus. These new developments include (1) a transfer to the controversies with the Stoics of arguments which Epicurus had himself directed against philosophers of an earlier generation; (2) the borrowing of arguments from Carneades to refute the Chrysippean doctrine of providence; (3) the composition of popular philosophical essays. The relation thus established between Lucretius and the later Greek members of the school supports the view that Lucretius' Epicureanism is not derived solely from the works of Epicurus himself.

The exalted position of Epicurus in the minds of his followers served to maintain orthodoxy in the school, and the constant appeal to the master's words must certainly have greatly hindered the introduction of new doctrines. The Epicurean philosophy, therefore, is usually regarded as static,¹ and the novelties that appear from time to time are considered as eccentricities of individuals or limited groups, rather than as progressive steps in the development of the school. Consequently, a particular Epicurean text, such as Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*, is interpreted so far as possible with direct reference to the writings of Epicurus himself, and later Epicurean writings are taken into account only incidentally and at random.

Such an approach is exemplified by Bailey in his recent edition of Lucretius. In Bailey's words, "It may well be that he was in close touch with Epicurean thinkers of the time and here and there he may have taken a hint from them and incorporated it into his poem. But again and again he proclaims his close adherence to his master, Epicurus, and it was from him that the whole main substance of the poem was derived."² Bailey explains differences between Lucretius and Epicurus in terms of Lucretius' "mind and temperament," apparently without considering the possibility that these differences may in some degree have been characteristic of

¹ This view was long ago challenged by R. Hirzel, *Untersuchungen zu Cicero's Philosophischen Schriften* (Leipzig, 1877) 1.98-190.

² *Titi Lucreti Cari De Rerum Natura*, edited by C. Bailey (Oxford, 1947) 1.28.

later Epicureans generally, and not entirely the product of Lucretius' own genius.³

Yet Lucretius brings Epicureanism "up to date," giving it a Roman setting and drawing examples and illustrative material from the experiences of his contemporaries. Other Epicureans of his time could hardly have failed to do the same, and indeed a familiarity with the Roman world is evident in a writer such as Philodemus. One is tempted to believe that two nearly contemporaneous efforts to spread the Epicurean doctrine among the Romans were not unrelated.

In the absence of specific information on this point,⁴ however, I propose an inquiry of a more general character. If some aspect of the presentation of Epicurean doctrine could be found which is shared by Lucretius and other Epicureans — not necessarily the Naples group — and which is subsequent to Epicurus himself, it could be considered as positive evidence of a connection between Lucretius and other members of the Epicurean school; and if several such points could be found, a connection would appear quite probable. At the same time, the identification of points of doctrine that are subsequent to Epicurus himself would help in determining whether Epicureanism had a history; that is, whether there was a continuity in its development.

New elements in the Epicurean school are more easily discerned in the refutation of opponents than in the formulation of orthodox doctrine. The Epicureans were constantly attacked, and they in their turn felt obliged to refute all rival philosophies. This interchange with other schools required occasional innovations, as new schools arose and old schools underwent changes. In particular, the controversy between Epicureans and Stoics (whom Bailey⁵ calls the "natural" opponents of Lucretius) is entirely subsequent to Epicurus. For although the Stoic school was founded long before Epicurus' death,⁶ and some familiarity with Stoic thought is

³ *Ibid.* 1.15–18. Cf. also *T. Lucreti Cari De Rerum Natura*, edited by Leonard and Smith (Madison, 1942) 40–41.

⁴ Attempts to prove a connection between Lucretius and the authors of the Herculean texts have not been convincing. Cf. for example E. Reitzenstein's review (*Gnomon* 9 [1933] 542–549) of W. Lück, *Die Quellenfrage im 5. und 6. Buch des Lukrez* (Breslau diss., 1932) and Bailey, *op. cit.* 1.26–28.

⁵ *Op. cit.* 2.675 f.; cf. 2.660.

⁶ Epicurus died in 271/70 B.C.; the Stoic school was founded not later than 294 B.C.

evident in the writings of Colotes, Epicurus' favorite pupil,⁷ yet, as Bignone⁸ has pointed out (and DeWitt⁹ has concurred), nothing in the extant fragments may be interpreted as a hostile reference to the Stoics. The friendly relations obtaining between the Epicurean Polyaenus and the Stoics is expressly noted in one papyrus fragment.¹⁰ Even in later times the Epicureans and Stoics sometimes found themselves in agreement, in opposition to Peripatetics and Platonists.¹¹ The opposition between Stoics and Epicureans is no more "natural" than that between Stoics and skeptics, or between Epicureans and Peripatetics.

Insofar as the doctrines of the Stoics resembled those of Heraclitus, Plato, or other early philosophers, the later Epicureans could transfer to their polemic against the Stoics those arguments which Epicurus had used against the philosophers of the earlier period. For example, the basic arguments by which Epicurus undertook to refute the view that the sun, moon, and stars are deities — a view ascribed by the Epicureans to Plato and his pupils¹² — were all in later times turned against the Stoics, who, like the Platonists, called the stars divine.¹³ Epicurus had rejected the stellar gods on the grounds that the gods are animate, whereas the stars are inanimate; the gods are immortal, whereas the stars are destructible; and the gods are blessed, that is, enjoy a life of eternal pleasure, whereas the stars are not.¹⁴ Similar arguments were

⁷ Cf. Plut. *Moralia* 1122AB and W. Crönert, *Kolotes und Menedemos* (Leipzig, 1906) 9.

⁸ E. Bignone, *L'Aristotele Perduto e la Formazione Filosofica di Epicuro* (Florence, 1936) 1.57 note 1, and 2.532 f.

⁹ N. W. DeWitt, "The Gods of Epicurus and the Canon," *Trans. Roy. Soc. Can.* (Section 2, 1942) 34.

¹⁰ *Epicuri et Epicureorum Scripta in Herculanensibus Papyris Servata*, edited by A. Vogliano (Berlin, 1928) 50; cf. 117 f. It is significant that Plutarch does not include the Stoics among those attacked by Colotes (*Moralia* 1086EF, 1108B), nor does Cicero include them among Epicurus' opponents (*Nat. Deor.* 1.93).

¹¹ Cf. Philod. *De Ira*, ed. Wilke (Leipzig, 1914) xl. Wilke points out that in Col. 31.31 ff. of this work Philodemus agrees with the Stoics that anger is a source of weakness rather than of strength, as the Peripatetics had maintained.

¹² The Epicureans ascribed this view not only to Plato (*Cic. Nat. Deor.* 1.30), but also to Xenocrates, Heraclides, and Theophrastus (*ibid.* 1.34–35), who were linked with Plato in Colotes' polemic (Plut. *Moralia* 1115A).

¹³ Cf. *Cic. Nat. Deor.* 2.43, 55. Diels maintained that Epicurus himself admitted the visible gods: "Philodemos über die Götter, Drittes Buch. II. Erläuterung des Textes," *APAW* 1916, 6, pp. 29 ff. He was answered by R. Philippson, "Nachträgliches zur Epikureischen Götterlehre," *Hermes* 53 (1918) 358–360.

¹⁴ Epicurus' argument, in very condensed form, appears from the following two passages: *Epist. ad Menoec.* 123: . . . τὸν θεὸν ζῶντα ἄφθαρτον καὶ μακάριον; and *Epist.*

used in later times against the view — also ascribed by the Epicureans to Plato and the Platonists¹⁵ — that the universe as a whole is a deity.

These arguments were all easily adapted to the polemic against the Stoics. Velleius, the Epicurean spokesman in Cicero's *De Natura Deorum*, even links Plato with the Stoics in his argument that a circular and continuously revolving deity could not have a happy life.¹⁶ He says that life and intelligence can exist only in certain forms, and that the universe is not one of these.¹⁷ Elsewhere he says that the gods of the Stoic Zeno lack life and sensation.¹⁸ So Philodemus, rejecting astral deities, says that eternal circular motion cannot produce happiness¹⁹ and criticizes the Stoics for accepting destructible things as divine.²⁰

Lucretius' chief argument against the divinity of the universe and its parts is that the constituent parts of the universe are not appropriate dwellings for life and thought; and that since they are not animate, they cannot be divine (5.110–145). This argument, which, as the editors inform us, is directed in part at least against the Stoics,²¹ is essentially the same as one of the arguments used by Velleius,²² and of course it is a development of Epicurus' declaration that the gods are animate, but heavenly phenomena are not. Lucretius here joins his fellow-Epicureans in turning against the Stoics arguments which Epicurus had used against philosophers of an earlier period.

ad Herod. 81: . . . τὰραχος ὁ κυριώτατος ταῖς ἀνθρωπίναις ψυχαῖς γίνεται ἐν τῷ ταῦτα (i.e. celestial phenomena) μακάριά τε δοξάζειν <εἶναι> καὶ ἀφθάρτα, καὶ ὑπεραντίας ἔχειν τοῦτοις ἅμα βουλήσεις καὶ πράξεις καὶ αἰτίας. . . . Cf. also *ibid.* 76; Usener, *Epicurea*, 229.5 ff.; H. Diels, "Philodemus über die Götter, Erstes Buch," *APAW* 1915, 7, col. 2; and Cic. *Nat. Deor.* 1.34, 44–52.

¹⁵ Cic. *Nat. Deor.* 1.30, 34–35.

¹⁶ Cic. *Nat. Deor.* 1.24; cf. the use of the same argument against the Stoics in 1.52.

¹⁷ Cic. *Nat. Deor.* 1.23; cf. 46–48.

¹⁸ Cic. *Nat. Deor.* 1.36.

¹⁹ H. Diels, "Philodemus über die Götter, Drittes Buch. I. Griechischer Text," *APAW* 1916, 4, cols. 9–10; cf. Philippson, *Hermes* 53 (1918) 366. Philodemus' opponents here are presumably Stoics.

²⁰ Philod. *Piet.* col. 19.25–29 (p. 86 Gomperz).

²¹ Bailey, *op. cit.* (see note 2) 3.1340; Ernout-Robin, *Lucrèce, Commentaire* (Paris, 1925–1928) 3.18–21.

²² Cf. Cic. *Nat. Deor.* 1.23: Qui vero mundum ipsum animantem sapientemque esse dixerunt, nullo modo videntur animi natura intelligentis in quam figuram cadere posset; and Lucr. 5.126 f.: Quippe etenim non est cum quovis corpore ut esse Posse animi natura putetur consiliumque. . . .

A careful examination of Epicurean texts would reveal many other instances of such transfers. In the first book of the *De Rerum Natura*, for example, Heraclitus is refuted in conjunction with certain unnamed philosophers, readily identified as Stoics.²³ These transfers were no doubt a conspicuous feature of later Epicureanism. Mere transfer, however, was not enough when a controversy involved some doctrine that was not dealt with in the writings of Epicurus. Such is the Stoic doctrine that Divine Providence has designed everything in the universe for the benefit of mankind. Chrysippus was the great champion, if not the originator, of this doctrine;²⁴ and although it would be refuted in a general way by Epicurus' arguments against providence, yet it is unlikely that Epicurus ever had the occasion to answer it directly.²⁵

Among the later Epicureans, Velleius and Lucretius both attack this Stoic doctrine. Velleius' first argument against it turns on the Stoic distinction between wise and stupid men. If the universe was designed for the wise, providence went to an immense amount of trouble for a very few men; if it was designed for the stupid, the design was in vain, because the stupid are made wretched by their very stupidity.²⁶ This argument is basically an attempt to refute the Stoics by pointing out an inconsistency in their system. It suggests Plutarch's essay *De Stoicorum Repugnantiiis*; and indeed Plutarch in this essay states that Chrysippus' doctrine of the beneficence of providence is inconsistent with the Stoic doctrine of the stupidity of men (1048F). The gifts of providence are without value if men do not use them wisely. Cotta, expressing the Carneadean criticism of Stoicism in the third book of Cicero's *De Natura Deorum*, makes the same point: the gifts of providence are beneficial only to those who possess reason; but these are very few, and the gods would not be concerned with the welfare of only a few (3.70).

It is significant that Velleius, Cotta, and Plutarch use variations of the same argument in their attacks on the Stoic providence. Plutarch was a Platonist, and he probably derived his criticism of

²³ Lucr. 1.635 ff.; cf. Ernout-Robin, *op. cit.* 1.135; Bailey, *op. cit.* 2.711.

²⁴ Cf. Von Arnim, *Stoic.* 2.332-334.

²⁵ Chrysippus was leader of the Stoic school in the second half of the third century B.C.; he was only a child at the time of Epicurus' death.

²⁶ Cic. *Nat. Deor.* 1.23.

the Stoics from the tradition of the New Academy.²⁷ The later Epicureans apparently joined forces with the Academic skeptics in an offensive against their common enemy, the Stoics.

A second argument against the Stoic doctrine that providence designed the universe for the benefit of mankind appears in Lucretius as well as in Velleius and the New Academy. In Cicero's words (*Acad.* 2.120): <Quaero enim> cur deus, omnia nostra causa cum faceret (sic enim vultis) tantam vim natricum viperarumque fecerit, cur mortifera tam multa <ac> perniciosa terra marique disperserit. Cicero is here speaking as a follower of the New Academy. Plutarch, also drawing on this tradition, makes a very similar criticism of the Stoics (*Frag.* 145.3 Bern.): καὶ μὴν εἰ πρὸς ἀνθρώπων χρῆσιν ὁ θεὸς μεμηχάνηται τὰ ζῶα, τί χρησόμεθα μύλαις, ἐμπίσι, νυκτερίσι, κανθάροις, σκορπίοις, ἐχίδναις; In later times, as Reid has pointed out, the argument was widely used.²⁸ It appears in Lucretius 2.167–181, where the view that the universe was designed by providence for the benefit of man is rejected because of the many evils in the world: tanta stat praedita culpa. The same reasoning appears in expanded form in 5.195–234, where the evils that beset man are enumerated at length.²⁹ Velleius makes only a passing allusion to this argument with the words (*Nat. Deor.* 1.23): ita multa sunt incommoda in vita . . .

To these instances of similarity in arguments used by Epicureans and Academic skeptics in their attacks on providence, two more may be added. The dialogue in Plutarch's essay *De Sera Numinis Vindicta* is provoked by an Epicurean's tirade against providence.³⁰ In reply to the question, which of his charges was most impressive, Patrocleas, one of the speakers in the dialogue,

²⁷ Cf. Von Arnim in *RE* s.v. "Karneades." At several points in the essay Plutarch is concerned with Stoic criticisms of Plato: 1034F, 1039D–1041C, 1046A, 1047CD. Twice he mentions controversies between Chrysippus and the New Academy (1036AB, 1057A), and he mentions both Carneades and Arcesilaus by name (1036B, 1037A). The Epicureans are also mentioned, but not favorably: cf. 1052B.

²⁸ Cicero, *Academica*, ed. J. S. Reid (London, 1885) 318.

²⁹ Cf. Bailey's note (*op. cit.* 3.1353) to *Lucr.* 5.218–221: "This has more the look of an academic argument." As Bailey writes "academic" without a capital, he may be paraphrasing Ernout's phrase, "autre argument d'école" (Ernout-Robin, *op. cit.* 3.33).

³⁰ *Moralia* 548A. The Epicurean is not named. The MSS here read ἐπίκουρος, but Fabricius' emendation to Ἐπικούρειος has been accepted by Pohlenz in the Teubner edition of 1929. In any case, as the man is contemporary with Plutarch, he cannot be identified with the founder of the school.

answers that it was the argument from the delay in the punishment of the wicked (548c). Patrocleas then proceeds to restate the argument; and although his formulation cannot be taken as a precise reproduction of the Epicurean charges, yet it may well be based on some Epicurean discussion with which Plutarch was acquainted.

The delay in the punishment of the wicked does not appear, so far as I know, as an argument against providence in any extant Epicurean writing; it does appear, however, in the Academy. Cotta says in the *De Natura Deorum* (3.81): *Cur enim Marius tam feliciter septimum consul domi suae senex est mortuus, cur omnium crudelissimus tam diu Cinna regnavit? "At dedit poenas."* *Prohiberi melius fuit impediri ne tot summos viros interficeret quam ipsum aliquando poenas dare.* And a little later he continues: *Duodequadragesima Dionysius tyrannus annos fuit opulentissimae et beatissimae civitatis; quam multos ante hunc in ipso Graeciae flore Pisistratus. "At Phalaris, at Apollodorus poenas sustulit."* *Multis quidem ante cruciatis et necatis* (3.81-82).

It is just such charges as these that Plutarch has in mind. Indeed, in his defense of providence he appears to be answering Cotta. As for Marius and Phalaris, Plutarch explains that they served as a bitter medicine to purge the people of Acragas and Rome (*Moralia* 553A). Dionysius prevented the Carthaginians from driving the Greeks out of Sicily (552E). Peisistratus turned from vice to virtue after coming to power, and his reign was a benefit to the Athenians (551F-552A). Apollodorus was sufficiently punished by the misery and disorder attendant upon his own viciousness (556D). If Plutarch is here answering an Epicurean, as he implies, it must be concluded that the Epicurean used the same arguments as the Academic skeptics.

A final parallel appears in an argument assigned to Epicurus by Lactantius (*Ira* 13.20-21): *Deus, inquit, aut vult tollere mala et non potest, aut potest et non vult, aut neque vult neque potest, aut et vult et potest. Si vult et non potest, inbecillus est, quod in deum non cadit; si potest et non vult, invidus, quod aequè alienum est a deo; si neque vult neque potest, et invidus et inbecillus est ideoque nec deus; si et vult et potest, quod solum deo convenit, unde ergo sunt mala aut cur illa non tollit?*

This same argument appears in Sextus, *Pyrrh. Hyp.* 3.10-11. It has been supposed that Sextus was borrowing here from Epi-

curus;³¹ but surely Epicurus would not have used such an argument, for it rests on a conception of god that is not Epicurean. In terms of this conception, the gods of Epicurus must be either malevolent or impotent or both, inasmuch as they do not remove evil from the world. Moreover, the argument has a dialectical form that is alien to Epicurus but quite characteristic of the New Academy. Moved by such considerations, Schwenke³² suggested that Lactantius erred in assigning the argument to Epicurus; it should rather be assigned to the speech of Cotta in the third book of the *De Natura Deorum*.³³ Yet in view of the other similarities found between Epicureans and Academic skeptics, one might more probably conjecture that the argument was used, not by Epicurus, but by some later Epicurean, who took it over from the Academy. This later Epicurean, in his eagerness to refute the Stoics, went too far in accepting an argument that could not be reconciled with the teachings of his own school. But he was not the only one to fall into such an error. Even Lucretius went to an extreme in pointing out the evils that providence has not removed from the world, and so committed himself to a pessimism that is quite alien to Epicurus.³⁴

The evidence of similarity between later Epicureans and followers of Carneades in their polemic against the Stoic doctrine of providence is sufficient, I think, to justify the conclusion that there was an actual borrowing by one school from the other; and although it is conceivable that Carneades borrowed from the Epicureans, yet the dialectical form visible in some of the arguments and the difficulty of reconciling them with Epicurus' teaching indicate that the arguments were non-Epicurean in origin. But if this is granted, then it must be recognized that the use of Academic arguments characterizes a period in the history of Epicureanism that is at least a century later than Epicurus.³⁵ And since this use of Academic arguments appears in Lucretius, it constitutes a link between him and his fellow-Epicureans.

Still another link may be discerned in the manner of presenting the Epicurean philosophy. Epicurus himself, writing for students

³¹ Cf. Sext. Emp. ed. Mutschmann (Leipzig, 1912-1914) 1.135.

³² *PhW* 8 (1888) 1308-1309; cf. Zeller, *Philos. der Griechen* 3.14, 443 note 1.

³³ Cf. Cic. *Nat. Deor.* ed. Plasberg-Ax (Leipzig, 1933) 146 f.

³⁴ Cf. Ernout-Robin, *op. cit.* (see note 21) 3.33 f.

³⁵ Carneades' activity falls in the first half of the second century B.C. The use of Marius as an example of delay in the punishment of the wicked indicates that the contact between the two schools may have continued into the first century B.C.

and friends, either presented to the reader a detailed and technical discussion of a philosophical problem (as in the *Περὶ φύσεως*), or took it for granted that the reader was familiar with his teaching (as in the letters). Even the *Letter to Herodotus*, containing a summary of his physical theories, is intended for those already well acquainted with his system: it is in no sense a popularization. The later Epicureans, however, undertook to transmit the teaching of their master to a wider audience. They therefore composed works designed to introduce the reader to the Epicurean system and to persuade him of its superiority over other systems. Lucretius' poem has much of this protreptic character; and when Diogenes of Oenoanda had his writings inscribed on a high wall he hoped, no doubt, to attract the attention and the interest of the casual passer-by.

The problem of popularization was not peculiar to the Epicureans. Plato and Aristotle had both written works for the general reader, as distinct from the professional philosopher; and among the Socratic schools the Cynics were especially noted for their propaganda. The Stoic school from the first attempted to attract large audiences, holding its meetings in public buildings,³⁶ not, like the Epicureans, retreating to the seclusion of a private estate. In the third and second centuries the literary techniques of popularization became common property of the schools, each producing consolations, essays on friendship and old age, protreptic discourses, praises of virtue and condemnations of vice, with only the variations needed to adapt the commonplaces to the particular tenets of any given school.

These popular, half-literary, half-philosophical forms were entirely alien to Epicurus. There is no evidence that he ever tried to gain a wide audience for his philosophy by the use of such literary devices as dialogue, anecdote, frequent quotation from the poets, or lists of examples drawn from mythology and history.³⁷ It is probable, indeed, that he would have condemned these tech-

³⁶ The Odeum as well as the Stoa Poikilē was used by the Stoics: cf. Diog. Laert. 7.184.

³⁷ The *Letter to Pythocles* (the genuineness of which has been questioned) is intended for new converts (85), but it is quite devoid of rhetorical devices. The *Letter to Menoeceus* begins with a slight protreptic note on the need to pursue philosophy (122), and it is written in a literary style (cf. Usener, *Epic.* xli); yet it presupposes familiarity with the Epicurean system. At most, Epicurus may have borrowed a few metaphors from Bion: cf. Usener, *Epic.* 402 s.v. "Bio"; and *Lucretius III*, edited by R. Heinze (Leipzig, 1897) 175.

niques as literary devices unbecoming a philosopher,³⁸ just as his pupil Colotes condemned Plato's use of myths.³⁹

The later Epicureans, however, adopted from other schools the popular philosophical essay as a means of presenting their philosophy to a broader audience.⁴⁰ As early as the second half of the third century the scholarch Polystratus wrote a work *On Irrational Contempt*, which is largely protreptic in character.⁴¹ Philodemus' work *On Death* has many of the characteristic elements of a consolation;⁴² his essay *On Frankness* contains material found also in Plutarch's *Moral Essays*;⁴³ and his book *On Anger* is in some passages remarkably similar to Seneca's *De Ira* and Plutarch's *De Cohibenda Ira*.⁴⁴ At one point in this last essay Philodemus even mentions the writings of Bion and Chrysippus on anger, without any suggestion of hostility.⁴⁵ Diogenes of Oenoanda wrote a work on old age, apparently in the form of a discourse addressed by an older man to young listeners;⁴⁶ and he also wrote a letter to a certain Antipater, within which he reported a dialogue on Epicurus' doctrine that the number of universes is infinite.⁴⁷

Lucretius' use of devices found in popular philosophical literature has long been recognized. Heinze pointed out the similarity between Lucretius and Sallust in the treatment of vices,⁴⁸ and studies have been made of themes shared by Lucretius with diatribe⁴⁹ and satire.⁵⁰ The consolation which concludes the third

³⁸ For Epicurus' condemnation of rhetoric cf. Usener, *Epic.* 109, 330.

³⁹ Cf. Macr. *Somn.* 1.2.3-4; Proclus, *In Rem Publicam* 2.105 Kroll; Crönert, *op. cit.* (see note 7) 12.

⁴⁰ T. Kuiper, *Philodemus over den Dood* (Amsterdam, 1925) 9 f. discusses Philodemus' use of a popular literary method.

⁴¹ Cf. Heinze, *op. cit.* (see note 37) 55 f.

⁴² Parallel passages have been collected by Kuiper, *op. cit.*

⁴³ Cf. the notes in Olivieri's edition (Leipzig, 1914).

⁴⁴ The mutual relationship of these three works is discussed at some length by Wilke in his introduction to Philod. *De Ira* (Leipzig, 1914, pp. xxxi ff.); he concludes that Chrysippus is the common source. On the influence of Chrysippus on the later Epicureans cf. also R. Philippson, "Papyrus Herculanensis 831," *AJPh* 64 (1943) 148-162.

⁴⁵ Wilke (p. liv), following Hense, detects influence of Bion in *Ira* 8.15-19, 15.12 ff., 18.22-32, 21.23 ff.

⁴⁶ P. 62 William.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 21-27.

⁴⁸ *Op. cit.* (see note 37) 57.

⁴⁹ Cf. A. Oltramare, *Les Origines de la Diatribe Romaine* (Lausanne, 1926) 111-115; P. Vallette, "Lucrèce et la diatribe," *REA* 42 (1940) 532-541.

⁵⁰ Cf. H. P. Houghton, "Lucretius as Satirist," *PAPhA* 43 (1912) xxxiv-xxxix; C. Murley, "Lucretius and the History of Satire," *TAPhA* 70 (1939) 380-395.

book is especially rich in commonplaces, and the editors point out parallels with Bion, Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations*, the *Consolatio ad Apollonium* ascribed to Plutarch, and many others. It is of course difficult to draw any conclusion from the use of commonplaces; but this much at least is certain, that Lucretius and the later Greek Epicureans were alike in writing works designed to attract the reader to the Epicurean philosophy, and that in these works they used literary and rhetorical devices similar to those used by Cynics, Stoics, and other popular moralists.

One device of special importance for Lucretius is the treatment of poets and poetry. Epicurus had made a sharp distinction between poetry and philosophy; he ridiculed the poets and seldom found occasion to quote a line of verse.⁵¹ Verse quotations, however, were a standard device of the writers of popular works, and some skeptics and moralists even composed verses.⁵² Seneca remarks on the rival attempts to identify Homer with one or another of the philosophical schools,⁵³ and Galen says that Chrysippus' writings on the soul were filled with lines from the poets.⁵⁴ No doubt the appeal to the poets was felt to be an effective device for holding the reader's interest.

The later Epicureans, abandoning Epicurus' stand against the poets, shared with their rivals the use of poetic quotations. Poets mentioned by Philodemus include Homer, Hesiod, Tyrtaeus, Archilochus, Anacreon, Pindar, Simonides, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, Menander, and others. These poets are, moreover, often cited as illustrating philosophical problems or having opinions that deserve serious consideration. In the essay *On Piety*, to be sure, Philodemus criticizes the poets for holding beliefs that are neither pious nor beneficial;⁵⁵ but in this same work he quotes with approval the comic poet Timocles.⁵⁶ In the essay *On Anger* he uses Cadmus, the children of Niobe, and the sons of Oedipus as examples⁵⁷ and he quotes Homeric lines on anger from both the

⁵¹ Cf. Usener, *Epic.* 171.31, 331.1. Poets are quoted or alluded to on pages 52.12 (cf. Usener's note) and 61.23.

⁵² E.g. Timon the Skeptic and the moralizing poets Cercidas of Megalopolis and Phoenix of Colophon.

⁵³ *Epist. Mor.* 88.5.

⁵⁴ Von Arnim, *Stoic.* 2.252.18.

⁵⁵ P. 20 Gomperz.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 87.

⁵⁷ Pp. 34, 38 Wilke.

Iliad and the *Odyssey*.⁵⁸ In his work *On Death* he criticizes the Homeric account of the afterlife;⁵⁹ but he makes effective use of situations from tragedy and comedy in developing the argument of the work *On Frankness*.⁶⁰ Most striking of all is the essay devoted to an exposition of Homer's views on kingship — as if Homer were an authority on political matters.⁶¹

In the light of the increasing importance of poets in the literature of the Epicurean school, Lucretius' didactic epic appears less incongruous. Lucretius himself tells us (1.943–950; 4.18–25) that his verse is the sweet honey of the Muses which overcomes the reader's distaste for the Epicurean doctrine and holds his attention long enough for the poet to explain to him the nature of things. This statement of the proreptic function of poetry suggests the Stoic view that the pleasure which poetry gives may entice or lure the reader to a study of philosophy.⁶² One might well protest that Lucretius does not do justice to his own work, and that the opening hymn, the rural scenes, and the moving portrayal of the evils that beset mankind are something more than mere devices to spread the propaganda of the school. Yet the author's claim that poetry is a means of popularization links him with his Greek contemporaries, and the use of poetic quotations by the later Epicureans provides a kind of middle ground between Lucretius' poem and Epicurus' hostility to poetry.⁶³

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 26, 61, 88; cf. xxxvi.

⁵⁹ Pp. 153–154, 158 Kuiper (see note 40).

⁶⁰ Cf. pp. 15, 48, 50, 58, 64 Olivieri.

⁶¹ Philodemus' epigrams are not relevant here, as they are not philosophical. Diogenes of Oenoanda quotes from Homer and perhaps from a tragedian in support of his praise of old age (pp. 64–65 William; the text is very fragmentary).

⁶² Cf. my article, "Stoic Views of Poetry," *AJPh* 69 (1948) 269–270.

⁶³ To Professor Benedict Einarson, my colleague, I wish to express my appreciation of the helpful suggestions, too numerous to acknowledge in detail, that he has given me in our many conversations on problems of Hellenistic philosophy.