

**CA 2014 Panel Proposal**

**'The cosmos and its creatures: Tradition and innovation in Lucretian structures'**

**Abstract**

*Recent scholarship on Lucretius' engagement with the tradition of philosophical poetry has tended to focus on the figure of Empedocles. Lucretius was undoubtedly familiar with his work, both eulogising and criticising the poet-philosopher by name in the first book of the *De rerum natura*; indeed, he was not alone. Philodemus in his *On piety* mentions an Epicurean polemic treatise, *Against Empedocles*, and Diogenes Laertius records that Epicurus himself wrote specifically about Empedocles. The inscription of Diogenes of Oenoanda mentions Empedocles too. While the influence of Empedocles upon Lucretius (Campbell, Furley), and especially upon the proem to the *DRN* (Sedley), has been suggested and duly accepted, that of another poet-philosopher bears further exploration.*

*The influence of Parmenides upon Lucretius has been relatively neglected and, I argue, underestimated. Rumpf's 1995 article in *Philologus*, *Lukrez und Parmenides*, claims Parmenides' influence upon the first two books of the *DRN*. Gale, on the other hand, has suggested that any influence is indirect. Although Lucretius does not mention Parmenides in the *DRN*, there are nevertheless striking intertextual echoes between their works, such as Parmenides' ἐν δὲ μέσῳι τούτων δαίμων ἢ πάντα κυβερνᾷ (F12) perhaps being answered by Lucretius' quae...rerum naturam sola gubernas (*DRN* I.21) or solis cursus lunaeque meatus...flectat natura gubernans (*DRN* V.76-7).*

*This paper will draw out some of these parallels, and go beyond Rumpf to advocate a Parmenidean influence upon the *DRN* as a whole, with respect to both Lucretius' mode of expression, and the very substance of the *DRN* and the Epicurean physics it imparts. It will thus demonstrate that there really is a Parmenides within Lucretius, and perhaps allow for further illumination of Parmenides, as well.*

## Paper

Very little is known about the poet-philosopher himself, Titus Lucretius Carus, or Lucretius, but in one of the few references accorded him in antiquity, Cicero, in a letter to his brother Quintus, early in 54 B.C., writes: “the poems of Lucretius are, as you write, marked by many flashes of genius, yet show much technical skill. But more of that when you come- I’ll think you no mere human, but a hero if you read the *Empedoclea* of Sallust.”<sup>1</sup>

Sedley (1998, 2) argued that “Cicero’s comparison of the *DRN* with the *Empedoclea* will turn out to be an entirely natural one,” as (10) “numerous echoes of Empedoclean passages have been recognised in Lucretius’ poem.” Sedley (11) suggested “that Lucretius is likely to owe rather more to Empedocles in terms of poetic technique than is generally recognised.” Indeed, (34) that “Lucretius is the servant of two masters. Epicurus is the founder of his philosophy; Empedocles is the father of his genre.”

Sedley’s case rested upon the proem of the *DRN*,<sup>2</sup> writing (22) that it “is, and is meant to be recognised as, an imitation of the proem to Empedocles’ physical poem,” and (16) that “Furley has observed the high level of Empedoclean content to be found in it.” Sedley (17) continued, that Furley “argues that Lucretius’ act of piety to Empedocles is the acknowledgement of a philosophical debt.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Lucreti poemata, ut scribis, ita sunt – multis luminibus ingenii, multae tamen artis. Sed cum veneris- Virum te putabo si Sallusti *Empedoclea* legeris, hominem non putabo” (*Ad Quint.* II.11.5).

<sup>2</sup> *DRN* I.1-49.

<sup>3</sup> The appearance of Venus and Mars in the proem of the *DRN* refers back to Empedocles φιλότης, love, and νεῖκος, hate (F 17), attraction and repulsion, the union and separation of atoms in compounds. Furley (1989, 178) writes that “the Epicureans were certainly followers of Empedocles” philosophically. Furley (179) compares DK F B82 with *DRN* V.788ff and DK F B57 with *DRN* V.837-41 as examples of Lucretius translating Empedocles, the accounts of the development of living forms: “hairs and leaves and the dense feathers on birds are the same | and the scales on stout limbs,” “ταῦτὰ τρίχες καὶ φύλλα καὶ οἰωνῶν πτερὰ πυκνὰ | καὶ λεπίδες γίνονται ἐπὶ σπιβαροῖσι μέλεσσι” (DK F B82) and “as feathers and hair and bristles first grow on the frame of four-footed creatures or the body of strongwinged birds,” “ut pluma atque pili primum saetaque creantur | quadripedum membris et corpore pennipotentum” (*DRN* V.788ff); and “as many heads without necks sprouted up | and arms wandered naked, bereft of shoulders, | and eyes roamed alone, impoverished of foreheads,” “ἢ πολλὰ μὲν κόρσαι ἀναύχενες ἐβλάστησαν. | γυμνοῖδ’ ἐπλάζοντο βραχίονες εὐϊδες ὤμων, | ὄμματα τ’ οἳ ἐπλανᾶτο πενητεύοντα μετώπων” (DK F B57) and “many were the portents also that the earth then tried to make, springing up with wondrous appearance and frame: the hermaphrodite, between man and woman yet neither, different from both; some without feet, others again bereft of hands; some found dumb also without a mouth, some blind without eyes,” “multaque tum tellus etiam portenta creare | conatast mira facie membrisque coorta, | androgynem, interutrasque nec utrum, utrimque remotum, orba pedum partim, manuum viduata vicissim, | muta sine ore etiam, sine voltu caeca reperta” (*DRN* V.837-41). On lines 837 – 54, Campbell (2003, 101-2) writes that “the similarities between Lucretius’ and Empedocles’ accounts are striking...the closeness of the Epicurean and Empedoclean theories seem to have been recognised in antiquity at least as early as Plutarch (*Adv. Col.* 2.1123B), who uses Empedocles’ ‘man-faced ox-creatures’ to criticise the positivist theory of sense-perception of the Epicurean Colotes (“these and many of another stagier variety, resembling the Empedoclean monsters that they deride with *lurching ox-feet, random arms and ox-creatures, fronted like a man*,” “ταῦτα μέντοι καὶ πολλὰ τούτων ἕτερα τραγικώτερα τοῖς Ἐμπεδοκλέους εὐκότα τεράσμασιν ὧν καταγελώσιν, ‘εἰλίποδ’ ἀκριτόχειρα’ καὶ ‘βουγενῆ ἀνδρόπρωρα’;” “with twisted feet and a hundred hands,” “εἰλίποδα ἀκριτόχειρα” (DK F B60); and “oxlike [animals] with human faces,” “βουγενῆ ἀνδρόπρωρα” (DK F B61.2))...I attempt to show that Lucretius follows, at least part of, Empedocles’ zoogony and anthropogony from the *Physics*. There is considerable disagreement over the degree and type of influence Empedocles has over Lucretius. Sedley prefers to see only poetic influence (1998, 16-21), while Furley (1970, 55-64 = 1989, 172-82) argues for Empedocles as a forerunner of Epicurean Atomism,

Although both Sedley and Furley recognise and acknowledge the Empedoclean influence upon the proem of the *DRN*, this is where the two differ, in that for Sedley the influence is literary, whereas for Furley it is philosophical. For Sedley (18) insists that “it seems certain that Empedocles was not regarded by Epicurus or his successors as any sort of philosophical forerunner.”<sup>4</sup>

Sedley is also convinced (23) though, that “there can be little doubt that it was to Empedocles, rather than to the only other available candidate, Parmenides, that Lucretius looked as his great Greek forebear in the tradition of cosmological poetry. This was certainly the comparison that regularly occurred to Roman readers.”<sup>5</sup>

Gale (1994, 51-9) would agree. Writing that “Lucretius’ models were accordingly much earlier writers, the philosopher-poets of the sixth and fifth centuries B.C., especially Empedocles of Acragas and his predecessor Parmenides,” she continues,

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and as a philosophical source for Lucretius. I incline towards Furley’s view (see Campbell, 2000). Perhaps the main similarities with Empedocles in this section are at 839, 842, 845, 847, and 864-6 (see notes ad loc.). Furley (1970, 61) see 837-41 as a translation of Empedocles DK31 B57. However, as Sedley says (1998, 20 n. 74), the resemblance is too loose to be called a translation...it is perhaps close enough to be called a paraphrase...however, it is not clear to what degree Epicurus himself was influenced by Empedocles.” More generally, Campbell (2003, 1-3) writes that Lucretius “borrows heavily from Empedocles...Lucretius’ presentation of his zoogony is strongly intertextual with Empedocles...Lucretius enlists the aid of Empedocles...and thereby gains both Empedoclean glamour...it seems likely from Epicurus’ famous antipathy towards poetry and mythology that he did not follow Empedocles directly, and that Lucretius has imported extra Empedoclean material into the Epicurean account...suggest[s] strongly that Lucretius consciously chooses to present an ‘Empedoclean’ version of zoogony.” Campbell (2003, 132) offers a better candidate for translation: “on the one hand among the wild species of mountain-roaming beasts, and on the other hand the twofold offspring of men, and in the case of the produce of the root-bearing fields and of the cluster of grapes mounting on the vine,” τοῦτο μὲν [ἄν] θηρῶν ὀριπλάγκτων ἀγ[ρότερ] εἰδῆ, | τοῦτο δ’ ἄν’ ἀνθρώπων δίδυμον φύμα, [τοῦτοδ’ ἄν’ ἀγρῶν] | ῥιζοφόρων γέννημα καὶ ἀμπελοβά[μονα βότρυν]” (Strasbourg fr. A(ii) 26-8 M&P) and “”(DRN II.1081-3).

<sup>4</sup> For Sedley, the proem may pay homage to Empedocles, but recognition of a philosophical influence doesn’t sit well alongside the proems to other books of the *DRN*, in honour of Epicurus, or alongside the criticism of Empedocles either. Sedley (21) continues that it is “only at this level of detail that the Epicureans, Lucretius included, are prepared to applaud the ‘discoveries’ of Empedocles:” *this* being when Epicurus (*Ad Pyth.* 101) [“and lightnings too are produced in several ways,” καὶ ἀστραπαὶ δ’ ὠσαύτως γίνονται κατὰ πλείους τρόπους”] and Lucretius (*DRN* VI.204-12) [“another reason for why that golden colour of flowing fire swiftly flies down to the earth is that in themselves the clouds must have very many seeds of fire; for when they are free from all wetness, their colour is mostly flaming and shining. In truth they must receive many such seeds from the sun’s light, so that there us good cause why they should blush and pour forth fires. When therefore the wind driving these has crushed them together and crowded them up together in a confined space, they squeeze out and pour forth seeds which make the colours of flame to lighten,” hac etiam fit uti de causa mobilis ille | devolat in terram liquidi color aureus ignis, | semina quod nubes ipsas permulta necessust | ignis habere; etenim cum sunt umore sine ullo, | flammeus est plerumque colos et splendidus ollis. | quippe etenim solis de lumine multa necesseset | concipere, ut merito rubeant ignesque profundant. | hasce igitur cum ventus agens contrusit in unum | compressitque locum cogens, expressa profundunt | semina quae faciunt flammae fulgere colores”] seem to adopt Empedocles’ explanation of lightning (DK F A63) [(a) “some say that fire occurs in the clouds. Empedocles says that this is the part of the sun’s rays enclosed (in the clouds),” καίτοι τινὲς λέγουσιν ὡς ἐν τοῖνέφεσιν ἐγγίγνεται πῦρ· τοῦτο δ’ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς μὲν φησιν εἶναι τὸ ἐμπεριλαμβανόμενον τῶν τοῦ ἡλίου ἀκτίνων” (Aristotle *Meteorologica* 2.9, 369b12-14); (b) “Empedocles says it is the impact of light on a cloud, which drives out the air which resists it. Its extinguishing and breakup produce noise, and its gleam the lightning, and the tension of the lightning the thunderbolt,” Ἐμπεδοκλῆς ἐμπρωσιν φωτὸς εἰς νέφος ἐξείργοντος τὸν ἀνθεστώτα ἄερα, οὐ τὴν μὲν σβέσιν καὶ τὴν θραύσιν κτύπον ἀπεργάζεσθαι, τὴν δὲ λάμψιν ἀστραπὴν, κεραυνὸν δὲ τὸν τῆς ἀστραπῆς τόνον” (Aëtius 3.3.7 (*Dox. Gr.* 368))]. This in itself though is an admission of philosophical influence.

<sup>5</sup> “tum vel propter Empedoclea in Graecis, Varronem ac Lucretium in Latinis,” “while among the Greeks we have Empedocles and among our own poets Varro and Lucretius” (Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, I.4.4; DK F A24). Also: “Empedocles, whom one would be uncertain whether to count as a poet or philosopher, since he wrote about nature in verse, as Lucretius and Varro did among the Romans,” “Empedocles, quem nescias utrumne inter poetas an inter philosophos numeres, quia de rerum natura versibus scripsit ut apud Romanos Lucretius et Varro” (Lactantius, *Institutiones Divinae* II.12.4; DK F A24).

however, that “there is no direct evidence that Lucretius was actually familiar with Parmenides’ poem.”<sup>6</sup> Unlike Democritus and Empedocles, he is not specifically mentioned in the *DRN*.<sup>7</sup> And she concludes that “on the whole, any influence seems more likely to be indirect: much may have come to Lucretius through Empedocles, with whose writings he was unquestionably familiar.”

However, Gale (1994, 51-9) cites Henderson, who “notes that Parmenides’ views were criticized in ‘the traditional Epicurean review of earlier philosophers’, and this, or his admiration for Empedocles, might have led Lucretius to read Parmenides himself,” and making a comparison between the poems of Parmenides and Lucretius, Gale acknowledges the epic motifs in each, with Homeric, Hesiodic and Ennian influences, as well as the *light and darkness* symbolism and *travel imagery*, and though she insists that “it is difficult to find examples of Parmenidean influence,” she does admit that there is one “striking exception.”

I will argue, however, that the direct influence of Parmenides upon Lucretius has not only been neglected, but underestimated. Sedley (1998, 11) writes that “Lucretius is thus, in West’s terminology, a practitioner of the ‘multi-correspondence simile’,” and I will demonstrate that this is Parmenidean as well as Empedoclean. I will draw out some of the parallels between Parmenides and Lucretius, parallels that don’t exist between Empedocles and Lucretius.<sup>8</sup> And I will suggest that the influence which

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<sup>6</sup> Gale writes that “Simplicius’ remarks on the scarcity of manuscripts of Parmenides’ poem (admittedly several centuries later) perhaps tell against a direct acquaintance.” The *caveat*, though, is important.

<sup>7</sup> For instance, Sedley (1998, 11) refers to the “paean of praise” for Empedocles (*DRN* I.716-41): “foremost among whom is Empedocles of Acragas,” “quorum Acragantinus cum primis Empedocles est” (*DRN* I.716).

<sup>8</sup> For otherwise it could be argued that Lucretius resembles Parmenides only as Empedocles did, and that anything Parmenidean only came to Lucretius through Empedocles. For Diogenes Laertius writes that “Theophrastus affirms that he [Empedocles] was an admirer of Parmenides and imitated him in his verses, for Parmenides too had published his treatise on nature in verse” (“ὁ δὲ Θεόφραστος Παρμενίδου φησὶ ζηλωτὴν αὐτὸν γενέσθαι καὶ μιμητὴν ἐν τοῖς ποιήμασι· καὶ γὰρ ἐκέϊνον ἐν ἔπεισι τὸν Περὶ φύσεως ἐξενεγκεῖν λόγον” (DK F B89: DL VIII.55)). Of the link between Empedocles and Parmenides, also: DK F A10: Simplicius, commentary on *Physics* (*Comm.Arist.Gr.IX.25*); DK F A11: Eusebius, *Chronica* [for the year 456 B.C.]; DK F A11: Eusebius *Chronica* [for the year 436 B.C.]; DK F A15: Plutarch, *How a young man should study poetry*, 16c; DK F A20: Menander or Genethlius, *On Epideictic* (Spengel 333); DK F A45: Aëtius IV.5.12 (*Dox.Gr.392*); DK F A46: Theophrastus, *On sense* 1-4 (*Dox.Gr.499-500*); DK F A46b: Tertullian, *De Anima* 43.2; DK F A47: Aëtius IV.9.6 (*Dox.Gr.397*); DK F A49: Aëtius, IV.9.1 (*Dox.Gr.396*); DK F A50: Aëtius IV.19.4 (*Dox.Gr.398*); DK F A52: Aristotle, *On parts of animals* II.2, 648a25. And Censorinus writes that “the same view is also found in Parmenides of Elea, who did not differ from Empedocles, except on a very few points” (DK F A51: Censorinus, *De Die Natali* 4.7.8). Gallop (1984, 122) writes that the text is corrupt. The translation is based on Diels’ conjecture <non> *dissentiente* for *dissensus*: “haec eadem opinio etiam in Parmenide Veliensi fuit pauculis exceptis ab Empedocle x dissensus” (Diels & Band, 1906, 112). Diogenes Laertius, of Empedocles’ doctrines, writes that “his doctrines were as follows, that there are four elements, fire, water, earth and air, besides friendship by which these are united, and strife by which they are separated. These are his words: ‘shining Venus and life-bringing Hera, Aidoneus and Nestis, who lets flow under her tears the source of mortal life,’ where by Zeus he means fire, by Hera earth, by Aidoneus air, and by Nestis water. ‘And their continuous change,’ he says, ‘never ceases,’ as if this ordering of things were eternal. At all events he goes on: ‘at one time all things uniting in one through Love, at another earth carried in a different direction through the hatred born of strife,’” “Ἐδόκει δ’ αὐτῷ τάδε· στοιχεῖα μὲν εἶναι τέτταρα, πῦρ, ὕδωρ, γῆν, ἀέρα· Φιλίαν θ’ ἢ συγκρίνεται καὶ Νείκος ὧ διακρίνεται. φησὶ δ’ οὕτω· Ζεὺς ἀργῆς Ἥρη τε φερέσβιος ἢ δ’ Αἰδωνεύς Νῆστις θ’, ἢ δακρύσις τέγγει κρούνωμα βρότειον· Δία μὲν τὸ πῦρ λέγων, Ἥρην δὲ τὴν γῆν, Αἰδωνέα δὲ τὸν ἀέρα, Νῆστιν δὲ τὸ ὕδωρ. “Καὶ ταῦτα,” φησὶν, “ἀλλάττοντα διαμπερές οὐδαμὰ λήγει,” ὡς ἂν αἰδίου τῆς τοιαύτης διακοσμῆσεως οὐδης· ἐπιφέρει γοῦν· ἄλλοτε μὲν Φιλότητι συνερχόμεν’ εἰς ἐν

Parmenides has upon Lucretius is not only literary, but also philosophical, and that this influence is evident throughout the *DRN*. There really is a Parmenides within Lucretius, and that this will perhaps allow for further illumination of Parmenides as well.

My case will also centre upon the proem of the *DRN*, to suggest that it might be even more complex than previously considered.

The first words of the *DRN*, the most conspicuous of places, are an invocation, following epic tradition, but not only to a muse, but to an Olympian goddess, Venus:<sup>9</sup> “mother of Aeneas and his race, darling of men and gods, nurturing Venus,”<sup>10</sup> and thereafter in the proem Lucretius refers to Venus alternately as *dea* or *diva*, *goddess*.<sup>11</sup> This is especially odd as, almost immediately after the proem, Lucretius begins to debunk the Olympian pantheon.

Accordingly, the proem and the appearance of Venus in it in particular have attracted much discussion and debate. As Smith (1975, 2-3) puts it, Venus here “is a figure of extraordinary complexity.” She is, beyond the goddess of traditional religion and mythology, mothering Aeneas and the Roman people, and being loved by Mars:

- The Empedoclean principle of Love (as opposed to Mars = Strife), representing the creative forces in the world.
- The personification of the Epicurean *summum bonum*, pleasure (*voluptas*).
- The giver of charm to his poetry.<sup>12</sup>

The proem and the appearance of Venus in it can only be understood given this level of complexity.<sup>13</sup>

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ἅπαντα, ἄλλοτε δ' αὖ διχ' ἕκαστα φορεύμενα Νείκεος ἔχθει” (DL VIII.76). Therefore nothing comes from nothing, and there is no creation or destruction: the one world stuff is the sum total, unalterable and eternal.

<sup>9</sup> Lucretius, then, goes beyond tradition. For example, Homer begins his *Odyssey*, *Ὀδυσσεύς* with “Ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, μοῦσα πολύτροπον,” “tell me, O Muse, of the man of many devices,” (1). Lucretius can be seen to be asserting his superiority to those preceding him, by invoking an Olympian goddess rather than a muse, or alternately as admitting his inferiority to them, by needing more assistance with his poetry.

<sup>10</sup> “Aeneadum genetrix, hominum divomque voluptas, | alma Venus” (*DRN* I.1-2).

<sup>11</sup> Lewis, 1996, 209, 255.

<sup>12</sup> *DRN* I.21-8: “therefore all the more grant to my speech, goddess, an ever-living charm,” “quo magis aeternum da dictis, diva, leporem” (*DRN* I.28).

<sup>13</sup> Lucretius' use of Venus in the proem can be understood in three ways:

- (a) The inclusion of Venus alongside her extramarital lover Mars, rather than her husband Vulcan, is perhaps a thinly-veiled attack against the Olympians and their baseness. Indeed Masson (1907, 262) writes that “according to him (Buchanan), this invocation (proem) is merely ‘in the highest sense a parody’.”
- (b) The proem is a methodological ploy, in much the same way as Plato arranges his *Συμπόσιον*, *Symposium*, where something is erected, in Plato's work opinions about love, which can thereafter be systematically

Let us, though, consider Venus as the Empedoclean principle of Love, and the precedent for Venus, in Empedocles' own poem.

Trépanier (2004, 45) reconstructs the proem of Empedocles' philosophical poem *Περὶ φύσεως*, *On nature*, from the fragments.<sup>14</sup> If he is correct with his ordering though, Venus, or rather Aphrodite, doesn't appear once in Empedocles' proem, and more than this, neither does the Empedoclean principle of Love,<sup>15</sup> and I recall Sedley, that "the proem of the *DRN* is, and is meant to be recognised as, an imitation of the proem to Empedocles' physical poem."

Trépanier's reconstruction does include an invocation to a muse: "and you, maiden muse of the white arms, much-remembering, | I beseech you,"<sup>16</sup> and Empedocles identifies her: "immortal muse | ...Calliopeia."<sup>17</sup> Of course, Venus is also the giver of charm to Lucretius' poetry, but I would suggest that she is more complex than merely

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criticised and rejected, by Socrates. In the *DRN*, it is *religio* that is raised in the proem, and shortly after, Venus and Mars are displaced by *natura*.

- (c) Venus also represents birth and thus beginnings, whereas the sixth book ends with the Thucydidean plague of Athens (Smith, 1975, 578-9) and thus death and closure, giving completion to the *DRN* and perhaps emphasising the perfection of Epicurean physics and philosophy, and thus plausibility.

<sup>14</sup> Suggested order: DK F B112-23; 125-6; 129a; 135; 124; 141; 144-5; 136-7; 3.1-5; 131a; 3.6-8; 1; 2.8-9; 2.1-7; 111a; 110a; 11; 15; 4; 12-14; 3.9-13. These 133 lines cover several themes: an address to the 'friends from Acragas'; exile of the daimon, description of the 'cave' and of reincarnation; invective with plural addresses; address to the Muse and to Pausanias; critique of mortal thought and promises of things to come; and eleatic laws. Sedley (1998, 23) accepts that "a glaring weakness of this hypothesis will already be obvious. We do not have the proem to Empedocles' *On nature*." However, rejecting Van der Ben's (1975) reconstruction on the basis of guesswork, Sedley insists that some of the fragments available to us are from the proem, and that he can reconstruct it based largely on Lucretius, and that by "explaining features of Lucretius' proem that otherwise remain inexplicable, that in itself would provide some degree of confirmation." And so Sedley (24) writes that "it would be easy to imagine 'Κύπρι φωτάμιε' as an Empedoclean line-beginning," and (29) that "it begins to look highly plausible that Empedocles' proem to *On nature*, [having] opened with a hymn to Aphrodite," and (32) "a little earlier we arrived at the informed guess that Empedocles' proem to *On nature* opened with a hymn to Aphrodite." Like Van der Ben, though, this too is, admittedly, guesswork, and Trépanier (2004, 40) rejects this for the lack "of any corroborating ancient evidence for such an opening hymn," and he also writes (41) "of the general difficulty of excluding other influences upon Lucretius than Empedocles." Trépanier's (2004, 36) evidence is stronger, for having DK F B115 opening the proem: "Plutarch's statement, *De exilio*, 607c, that fragment B 115 occurred at the beginning of Empedocles' poem: 'But Empedocles, making an opening proclamation at the beginning of his philosophy..., 'ὁ δ': Ἐμπεδοκλήης ἐν ἀρχῇ τῆς φιλοσοφίας προαναφωνήσας;" and DK F B112: "which Diogenes tells us opened the *Katharmoi*, VIII 54: 'ἐναρχόμενος τῶν Καθαρμῶν,'" (here is not the place to discuss whether Empedocles wrote one or two poems). Trépanier also places DK f B17 just after the proem, on the basis of its content, beginning a doctrinal section. Even if Trépanier is wrong, I will demonstrate that there is more of a connection between Lucretius' Venus and *natura* with Parmenides' unnamed goddess than with Empedocles' Venus or Love.

<sup>15</sup> Aphrodite or Love does appear in Empedocles beyond the proem: "calling her [*φιλότης*: Love] by the names Joy and Aphrodite," "Γηθοσύνην καλέοντες ἐπώνυμον ἢ δ' Ἀφροδίτην" (DK F B17.24); "in the same way, as many as are more apt for blending | have come to be loved by each other, made alike by Aphrodite," "ὡς δ' αὖτως ὅσα κρήσιν ἐπαρκέα μᾶλλον ἔασιν | ἀλλήλοις ἔστερκται ὁμοιωθέντ' Ἀφροδίτῃ" (DK F B22.4-5). She is also named in DK F B66, 86 and 94, and as *Κύπρις*, *Kupris*, in DK F B73, 75, 98, 95 and 128. In these instances she is creative, and as *Kupris* especially so with association to the earth, bearing parallel with *DRN* II.991-8, where heaven is the father and earth the mother: "lastly, we are all sprung from celestial seed; all have that same father, from whom our fostering mother earth receives drops of water," "denique caelesti sumus omnes semine oriundi; | omnibus ille idem pater est, unde alma liquentis | umoris guttas mater cum terra recepit" (*DRN* II.991-3).

<sup>16</sup> "καὶ σέ, πολυμνήστη λευκῶλενε παρθένε μοῦσα, | ἄντομαι" (DK F B3.3-4). She also appears in DK F B4.

<sup>17</sup> "ἄμβροτε | ...Καλλιόπεια" (DK F B131.3).

representing inspiration. Regardless, an inspirational Venus on its own would not be enough to suggest Empedoclean influence.<sup>18</sup>

And so in the absence of a strong precedent for Lucretius' Venus in Empedocles' proem, I look elsewhere for a potential candidate.

Gallop (1984, 5-7) alleges that DK F B1 is the proem of Parmenides' *Περὶ φύσεως*. Here, there is not only a goddess, but in fact the proem is dominated by her. Parmenides, writing in the first person, is taken to a goddess: "when they brought and placed me upon the much-speaking route ἵ of the goddess,"<sup>19</sup> and "the goddess received me kindly."<sup>20</sup> This goddess then promises to impart the true nature of things to him, which she does from DK F B2 onwards.<sup>21</sup>

Tarán (1965, 31) considers who this goddess is meant to be: "the fact that the goddess remains anonymous shows that she represents no religious figure at all and only stands as a literary device implying that the 'revelation' is the truth discovered by Parmenides himself. Parmenides could not have attributed any reality to the goddess because for him there existed only one thing, the unique and homogeneous being. This definitely settles the question that the proem is only a literary device."

Therefore, not only are there two proems dominated by two goddesses, but each of these goddesses, Venus in the *DRN* and the unnamed one in *Περὶ φύσεως*, are evidently, for the authors, literary devices rather than goddesses in their rights.

In order to continue with this comparison, I need to learn more about Parmenides' unnamed goddess. She reappears again in that one striking exception mentioned by Gale: "in the midst of these is the goddess who steers all things; for she rules over hateful birth and union of all things."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> According to Leonard (1973, 74), "*the goddess*: lit., 'divinity' (*θεοῦ*), [is] undoubtedly the muse," on DK F B23, beyond the proem; and equally 4.2: "μούσης," "muse;" and 131. At *DRN* VI.93-4, the muse mentioned is Calliope: "Musa ἢ Calliope," also strongly positioned at the end and beginning of the lines respectively, drawing this parallel, with the muse in DK F B131 being *Καλλιόπεια*, Calliopeia.

<sup>19</sup> "ἔπει μ' ἔς ὁδὸν βῆσαν πολύφημον ἄγουσαι ἢ δαίμονος" (DK Fr B1.2-3).

<sup>20</sup> "καί με θεὰ πρόφρων ὑπεδέξατο" (DK F B1.22).

<sup>21</sup> In the first instance Parmenides refers vaguely to a *δαίμονος*, a *deity* (LS, 1997, 148), before being more emphatic in the second instance with *θεὰ*, a *goddess* (LS, 1997, 313).

<sup>22</sup> "ἐν δὲ μέσῳ τούτων δαίμων ἢ πάντα κυβερνᾷ: πάντων γὰρ συγεροῖο τόκου καὶ μίξιός ἄρχει" (DK F B12). Simplicius, *Commentary on Physics (Comm. Arist. Gr. IX, 31)*: "and Parmenides has clearly indicated the active agent responsible not only for corporeal things in the world of coming-to-be, but also for incorporeal things which complete that world," "καὶ ποιητικὸν δὲ αἴτιον οὐ σωματίων μόνων τῶν ἐν τῇ γενέσει ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀσωμάτων τῶν τὴν γένεσιν συμπληροῦντων σαφῶς παραδέδωκεν;" and Simplicius, *Commentary on Physics (Comm. Arist. Gr. IX, 34)*: "and he [Parmenides] posits a single common active agent as

Gale draws a parallel between this and the *DRN*: “since therefore you alone govern the nature of things.”<sup>23</sup> The striking parallel is of course Parmenides’ use of the word *κυβερνᾶι*, and Lucretius’ *gubernas*.<sup>24</sup> Now Gale argues that “the image of god as helmsman is common in Greek and Latin literature,” and she provides an example from Cicero’s *DND*: “if on the other hand some god resides within the world as its governor and pilot, maintaining the courses of the stars, the changes of the seasons and all the ordered processes of creation.”<sup>25</sup> It must be noted, though, that it is Cicero’s Epicurean interlocutor, Gaius Velleius, speaking here.

Furthermore, it must also be pointed out that the parallel in the *DRN* is in the proem, and that *you alone* is Venus, both of which support my claim of a point of comparison between Parmenides’ unnamed goddess and the Venus of Lucretius’ proem.

I can further enhance this parallel with two instances of the associated *gubernans* in the *DRN*: “may pilot fortune steer this far from us,”<sup>26</sup> and “I will explain by what force pilot nature steers the courses of the sun and the goings of the moon.”<sup>27</sup> It might also be emphasised that the three instances of these words all occur in prominent positions at the ends of their lines. The second reference here in particular is of paramount importance to my claim of not only a literary but also a philosophical debt of Lucretius to Parmenides.

Beyond the proem of the *DRN*, in an endeavour to explain the nature of things without recourse to gods, *natura* appropriates the creative Venus<sup>28</sup> and the destructive Mars of the proem.<sup>29</sup> This appropriation is made most clear by two of these three references, as Venus was *quae gubernas* in the proem of the first book,

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responsible, the goddess situated ‘in the midst of all things,’ and responsible for all coming-to-be,” “καὶ ποιητικὸν αἴτιον ἐκεῖνος μὲν ἐν κοινὸν τήν ἐν μέσῳ πάντων ἰδρυμένην καὶ πάσης γενέσεως αἰτίαν δαίμονα τίθησιν.”

<sup>23</sup> “Quae quoniam rerum naturam sola gubernas” (*DRN* I.21).

<sup>24</sup> Lewis (1996, 358) translate *guberno* as “to steer, pilot...to direct, manage, conduct, govern, guide, control.” Etymologically, it is said to derive from the Ancient Greek *κυβερνᾶω*, which Liddell & Scott (1997, 397) translate as “to steer...to hold the helm of the state, guide, govern.”

<sup>25</sup> “sive in [ipso] mundo deus inest aliquis qui regat, qui gubernet, qui cursus astrorum mutationes temporum rerum vicissitudines ordinesque conservet” (*DND* I.52).

<sup>26</sup> “quod procul a nobis flectat fortuna gubernans” (*DRN* V.107).

<sup>27</sup> “solis cursus lunaeque meatus | expediam qua vi flectat natura gubernans” (*DRN* V.76-7).

<sup>28</sup> The proem of the *DRN* is almost dedicated to Venus, but the goddess then only appears on 33 occasions in the rest of the 7,366 lines of hexameter verse, almost all as a metaphor rather than as a divinity in her own right. Indeed the very mention of *Veneres*, *Venuses* (*DRN* IV.1185) defies traditional mythology. Conversely, *natura*, mentioned on only three occasions in the proem of the *DRN*, then appears on 149 occasions thereafter.

<sup>29</sup> “Mars mighty in battle,” “Mavors | armipotens” (*DRN* I.32-3). Indeed, Mars is only mentioned on one more occasion in the *De rerum natura*: “were taught by the Carthaginians to endure the wounds of war, and to confound the great hosts of Mars,” “belli docuerunt volnera Poeni | suffere et magnas Martis turbare catervas” (*DRN* V.1303-4), where Mars is merely a metaphor for war.



but then *natura* is *gubernans* in the fifth book, directly assuming her role.<sup>30</sup> No sooner does the proem close, when we find the following: “from which nature makes all things and increases and nourishes them, and into which the same nature again reduces them when dissolved.”<sup>31</sup> And it is *natura* who issues the *foedera naturae*, laying laws and imposing limits.<sup>32</sup>

Let us return to the previous fragment from Parmenides: “in the midst of these is the goddess who steers all things; for she rules over hateful birth and union of all things.”

Gallop (1984, 83) advises reading “this fragment...in conjunction with the paraphrase of Aëtius,”<sup>33</sup> where Aëtius writes that “the midmost of the mixed bands is the <origin> and <cause><sup>34</sup> of movement and coming-to-be for all of them, and it is this that he calls ‘the goddess who steers,’ ‘holder of the keys,’<sup>35</sup> ‘Justice,’ and ‘Necessity.’”

Aëtius, then, equates the goddess with the *holder of the keys*, *Justice*<sup>36</sup> and *Necessity*. Returning to the fragments, Parmenides writes: “and for these Justice, much-avenging, holds the keys of retribution;”<sup>37</sup> “therefore neither [its] coming-to-be ; Nor [its] perishing has Justice allowed, relaxing her shackles, ; But she holds [it] fast;”<sup>38</sup> “for strong Necessity ; Holds [it] fast in the chains of a limit, which fences it about;”<sup>39</sup> and “whence it grew and how Necessity did guide and shackle it ; To hold the limit of the stars.”<sup>40</sup>

Furthermore, Gallop (1984, 89) understands this goddess as being the subject of the following fragments: “<she placed> young males on the right side [of the womb], young females on the left;”<sup>41</sup> and “she devised Love first of all the gods.”<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> The explanation for the occurrence of *fortuna gubernans* is a little more complex, but with a determinate *natura* determining through the deterministic *foedera naturae* the indeterminate swerve of the atom, then *fortuna gubernans* can be understood as *natura gubernans*.

<sup>31</sup> “unde omnis natura creet res auctet alatque ; quove eadem rursum natura perempta resolvat” (DRN I.56-7).

<sup>32</sup> “nature had provided a limit,” “finem natura parasset” (DRN I.551); and “by fixed law of nature,” “foedere naturae certo” (DRN V.924).”

<sup>33</sup> Aëtius, DK F A37: Aëtius II.7.1 [Dox.Gr.335-6]: “τῶν δὲ συμμιγῶν τὴν μεσαιτήτην ἀπάσαις ἀρχήν> τε καὶ αἰτίαν> κινήσεως καὶ γενέσεως ὑπάρχειν, ἦντινα καὶ δαίμονα κυβερνήτην καὶ κληροῦχον ἐπονομάζει Δίκην τε καὶ Ἀνάγκην.”

<sup>34</sup> Gallop (1984, 116): “the text is corrupt. The translation follows DK, supplying < ἀρχήν> and < αἰτίαν>. Diels restored the text differently in *Dox.Gr.*”

<sup>35</sup> Gallop (1984, 116): “reading with DK κληιδούχον for the mss’ κληροῦχον.”

<sup>36</sup> Furley (1989, 28) doesn’t accept that the goddess is Justice, as “she refers in line 28 to θέμις τε δίκη τε (right and justice) in the third person, though I feel that this doesn’t necessarily preclude her from talking about herself, or an aspect of herself.

<sup>37</sup> “τῶν δὲ Δίκη πολύποινος ἔχει κληῖδας ἀμοιβούς” (DK F B1.14).

<sup>38</sup> “τοῦ εἶνεκεν οὔτε γενέσθαι ; οὐτ’ ὀλλισθαι ἀνήκε Δίκη χαλάσασα, ; ἀλλ’ ἔχει” (DK F B8.13-15).

<sup>39</sup> “κρατερὴ γὰρ Ἀνάγκη ; πείρατος ἐν δεσμοῖσιν ἔχει, τό μιν ἀμφὶς ἐέργει” (DK F B8.30-1).

<sup>40</sup> “ἐνθεν ἔφυ τε καὶ ὡς μιν ἀγούσα) ἐπέδησεν Ἀνάγκη ; πείρατ’ ἔχειν ἄστρων” (DK F B10.6-7). There is also: “since it was just this that Fate did shackle ; To be whole and changeless,” “ἐπεὶ τό γε Μοῖρ’ ἐπέδησεν ; οὔλον ἀκίνητόν τ’ ἔμμεναι” (DK B F8.37-8).

<sup>41</sup> “δεξιτεροῖσι [μὲν] κόρους, λαιοῖσιν δ’ αὖ <κτίσε> κούρα” (DK F B17).

What we now have is a goddess who steers all things, ruling over the creation of all things, and limiting and destroying, which is precisely the language we have seen associated with *natura* by Lucretius.<sup>43</sup>

To my hypothesis: *Venus, and more so natura, are, and are meant to be recognised as, Parmenides' goddess.* This is a much stronger precedent than Empedocles' muse.

And this is as much a philosophical as a literary influence, whether the Epicureans would admit it or not, for *natura* is at the heart of Epicurean physics,<sup>44</sup> and can be traced back to Epicurus' own use of *φύσις*.<sup>45</sup> My hypothesis is that Epicurus *φύσις* and thus Lucretius' *natura* were influenced by Parmenides' unnamed goddess, and that Lucretius makes this clear in the proem of, and indeed throughout, the *DRN*. This leads me to believe that there really is a Parmenides within Lucretius, and also

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<sup>42</sup> “πρώτιστον μὲν Ἐρωτα θεῶν μητίσαστο πάντων” (DK F B13). Aristotle (*Metaphysics* A4, 984b23): “one might suspect that Hesiod was the first to look for such a thing- or someone else who put love or desire among existing things as a principle, as Parmenides also does;” Plutarch, *Amatorius* 756f: “hence Parmenides declares Love to be the oldest of the works of Aphrodite,” “διὸ Παρμενίδης μὲν ἀποφαίνει τὸν Ἐρωτα τῶν Ἀφροδίτης ἔργων πρεσβύτατον;” and Simplicius, Commentary on *Physics* (*Comm. Arist. Gr.* IX,39): “and he says that she [the goddess] is also the cause of the gods,” “ταύτην καὶ θεῶν αἰτίαν εἶναι φησι.”

<sup>43</sup> Rules and limitations are hinted at by Empedocles beyond the proem: “for these things [Love and Strife] are all equal and are of like age in their birth, | but each rules over a different prerogative and each has its own character and they dominate in turn as time circles around,” “ταῦτ γὰρ ἴσα τε πάντα καὶ ἡλικά γένναν ἔασι, | τιμῆς δ' ἄλλο μέδει, πάρα δ' ἦθος ἐκάστω, | ἐν δὲ μέρει κρατέουσι περιπλομένοιο χρόνοιο” (F 17.27-9); “as the time was being accomplished which has been established for each in turn by a broad oath,” “τελειομένοιο χρόνοιο, | ὅς σφιν ἀμοιβαῖος πλατέος παρ' ἐλήλαται ὄρκου” (F 30.2-3); “but what is lawful for all extends continuously | through the wide-ruling aither and through the boundless gleam,” “ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν πάντων νόμιμον διὰ τ' εὐρυμέδοντος | αἰθέρος ἠνεκέως τέταται διὰ τ' ἀπλέτου αὐγῆς” (F 135); but also a lack of limits too: “and as they were mixed ten thousand tribes of mortals poured forth, | fitted together in all kinds of forms, a wonder to behold,” “τῶν δὲ τε μισογμένων χεῖτ' ἔθνεα μυρία θνητῶν, | παντοίαις ἰδέησιν ἀρηρότα, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι” (F35.16-17).

<sup>44</sup> Colour: “to shift place and to exchange bright colour,” “καὶ τόπον ἀλλάσσειν διὰ τε χροῖα φανὸν ἀμειβεῖν” (DK F B8.41); *DRN* II.730-841, including: “because it is of great moment with what and in what position they are held together,” “magni quod refert semina quaeque | cum quibus et quali positura contineantur” (*DRN* II.761-1); also: I.767; and II.1005.

<sup>45</sup> Epicurus mentions *φύσις* on 41 occasions throughout the fragments, including: “we must not violate nature, but obey her,” “Οὐ βιαστέον τὴν φύσιν ἀλλὰ πειστέον” (Sent.Vat.XXI); and: “thanks be to Nature in her blessedness that she has made the things that are necessary easy to come by and things that are not, difficult,” “χάρις τῇ μακαρίᾳ Φύσει, ὅτι τὰ ἀναγκαῖα ἐποίησεν εὐπόριστα, τὰ δὲ δυσπόριστα οὐκ ἀναγκαῖα” (*Incertae sedis fragmenta, De sapientia et sapiente, Fragments from uncertain sources, On philosophy* F67). There is perhaps also a precedent for Lucretius' *foedera naturae*. Epicurus writes that “therefore we must believe that it is due to the original inclusion of matter in such agglomerations during the birth-process of the world that this law of regular succession is also brought about,” “ὅθεν δὴ κατὰ τὰς ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐναπολήψεις τῶν συστροφῶν τούτων ἐν τῇ τοῦ κόσμου γενέσει δεῖ δοξάζειν καὶ τὴν ἀνάγκην ταύτην καὶ περίσδοον συντελεῖσθαι” (Ad Herod. 77ff). Considering Lucretius again, he writes: “since all things grow little by little, as is proper, from a fixed seed, and in growing preserve their kind; so that you may infer that every kind grows and is nourished from its own proper material,” “omnia quando | paulatim crescunt, ut par est, semino certo, | crescentesque genus servant; ut noscere possis | quidque sua de materie grandescere alique” (*DRN* I.188-91). In both references, there, there is the notion of similar things being continuously produced, with regular succession and preservation of kind. In the *DRN*, kind is preserved because of the influence of the *foedera naturae*, imposing laws and moreover setting limits. And therefore I would understand the same of regular succession, and that this occurs due to the imposition of laws and limits, indeed due to what become known as the *foedera naturae*, and due to *φύσις* and *natura*. And Sedley (1998, 102) refers to Lucretius as a fundamentalist- that, whereas other Epicurean philosophers have developed Epicurus' philosophy in the two hundred years since his death, Lucretius remains true to Epicurus. In this way, the philosophy of Lucretius would seem to be that of Epicurus.

elucidates exactly what the unnamed goddess is in Parmenides, in fact not a goddess at all, but standing for *nature*.<sup>46</sup>

My case has rested upon the proems of the works of Lucretius, Parmenides and Empedocles, though there are numerous other points of comparison I could draw from, as Rumpf has in his 2005 article *Lukrez und Parmenides*, and as Gale also has, in terms of light and darkness symbolism<sup>47</sup>. But I feel that my case in point is sufficient to at least draw attention to this neglect and underestimation.

**Word Count:** 2,091

**To do:** use translated Rumpf article, but keep quotes from him in German in footnotes; print; edit; structure; word count; save x 2; send; handout with paper annotated accordingly. (need 2,500: Rumpf?)

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<sup>46</sup> Mourelatos (1970, 44) writes that "at every turn, the story of the Kouros' encounter with the divine- the Heliades, Dike, the goddess- lacks any hint of worship."

<sup>47</sup> Gale (1994, 58) writes that "light and darkness in the *DRN* often symbolize the contrast between the saving philosophy of Epicurus and the ignorance and consequent fears of the majority of the human race, especially in the proems" (also *DRN* II.15: "in what gloom of life," "qualibus in tenebris vitae;" III.1-2: "o you who first amid so great a darkness were able to raise aloft a light so clear, illuminating the blessings of life," "o tenebris tantis tam clarum extollere lumen | qui primus potuisti inlustrans commoda vitae;" IV.8, l.933: "next because the subject is so dark and the verses I write so clear," "deinde quod obscura de re tam lucida pango | carmina;" and V.11: "who by his skill brought life out of those tempestuous billows and that deep darkness, and settled it in such a calm and in light so clear," "quique per artem | fluctibus e tantis vitam tantisque tenebris | in tam tranquillo et tam clara luce locavit"). "even while maidens, Daughters of the Sun, were hastening | To escort me, after leaving the House of Night for the light," "ὄτε σπερχοῖατο πέμπειν | Ἡλιάδες κοῦραι, προλιποῦσαι δώματα Νυκτός | εἰς φάος" (DK F B1.8-10); "there are the gates of the paths of Night and Day," "ἐνθα πύλαι Νυκτός τε καὶ Ἡματός εἰσι κελεύθων" (DK F B1.11); Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians*, VII.111-14 explains the fragment: "and the maidens that lead him on are the senses...and visual faculties he calls 'maidens, Daughters of the Sun, leaving the House of Night' and 'hastening into the light,' because it is impossible to make use of them without light," "κούρας δ' αὐτοῦ προάγειν τὰς αἰσθήσεις...τὰς δὲ ὁράσεις Ἡλιάδας κούρας κέκληκε, δώματα μὲν νυκτός ἀπολιπούσας, ἐς φάος δὲ ὠσαμένας διὰ τὸ μὴ χωρὶς φωτός γίνεσθαι τὴν χρῆσιν αὐτῶν;" "on the one hand, aetherial fire of flame, | ... In contrast, dark night," "τῆι μὲν φλογὸς αἰθέριον πῦρ, | ... τάντ' ἅνυκτ' ἀδαῆ" (DK F B 8.56-9); and "but since all things have been named light and night... | ... All is full of light and obscure night together," "αὐτὰρ ἐπειδὴ πάντα φάος καὶ νύξ ὀνόμασται... | πᾶν πλέον ἐστὶν ὁμοῦ φάεος καὶ νυκτός ἀφάντου" (DK F B9.1-3).

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