Venus in this invocation is a figure of extraordinary complexity: as well as being the goddess of traditional religion and mythology who was mother of Aeneas and the Roman people, who was loved by Mars, and who appears on the coins of the gens Memmih, she is the Empedoclean principle of Love (as opposed to Mars = Strife), representing the creative forces in the world, and she is the personification of the Epicurean summum bonum, pleasure (voluptas).

Lucr. addresses her not only as the power of physical creation, but also as the giver of charm to his poetry (21-28). Spenser imitates 1-25 in The Faerie Queene 4.10.44-47.
DE RERUM NATURA, I. 16-41

LUCRETIUS

Quae quoniam rerum naturam sola gubernas,

nec sine te quicquam dias in luminis oras

exoritur neque fit laetum neque amabile quicquam,

te sociam studeo scribendis versibus esse

quos ego de rerum natura pangere conor

Memmiadae nostro, quem tu, dea, tempore in omni

omnibus ornatum voluisti excellere rebus,

quo magis aeternum da dictis, diva, leporem.

Effice ut interea fera moenera militiae

per maria ac terras omnis sopita quiescant;

nam tu sola potes tranquilla pace iuvare

mortalis, quoniam belli fera moenera Mavors

armipotens regit, in gremium qui saepe tuum se

reiicit aeterno devictus vulnere amoris,

atque ita suspiciens tereti cervice reposta

pascit amore avidos inhians in te, dea, visus,

eque tuo pendet resupini spiritus ore.

hunc tu, diva, tuo recubantem corpore sancto

circumfusa super, suavis ex ore loquellas

funde petens placidam Romanis, incluta, pacem ;

nam neque nos agere hoc patriae tempore iniquo

[1960 61) that Lucr. uses the archaic form

Mavors to emphasize the connexion between Mars and

mors. Lucr.'s description, which may owe something to a

painting or sculpture, probably had some influence through

Politian, on Botticelli's

Marte e Venere (cf. note on 5.740).

Certainly Byron had it in mind in Childe Harold's

Peregrine on Calabria, where Euryalus (of note on 4.220),

Politian's painting of Cupid, probably had some influence through

the later version, which may owe something to a

Peregrine on Calabria, where Euryalus (of note on 4.220),

Politian's painting of Cupid, probably had some influence through

the later version, which may owe something to a
LUCRETIUS

DE RERUM NATURA, I. 42-63

my part with untroubled mind, nor can the noble

LUCRETIUS

DE RERUM NATURA, I. 42-63
LIBER SECUNDUS

Suave, mari magno turbantibus aequora ventis,
e terra magnum alterius spectare laborem;
non quia vexari quemquamst iucunda voluptas,
sed quibus ipse malis careas quia cernere suave est.

6 suave etiam belli certamina magna tueri
5 per campos instructa tua sine parte pericli.
sed nil dulcius est bene quam munita tenere
edita doctrina sapientum templo serena,
despere undae ques alias passimque videre
errare atque viam palantis quaerere vitae,
certare ingenio, contendere nobilitate,
noctes atque dies niti praestante labore
ad summam emergere opes rerumque potiri.
o miseram hominum mentes, o pectora caeca!
qualibuscum tenebris vitae quantisque periclis
degitur hoc aevi quodcumque! nonne videre
nil aliud sibi naturam latrare, nisi utqui
corpore seintus dolor absit, mensque fruatur
iucundo sensu cura semota metueque?

5-6 transposed by Avancius and all recent editors except
Büchner, who, like Merrill and Bailey, overlooks the fact that
the transposition was rejected by ed. Juntina, Naugertus, and
Wakefield

BOOK 2

Pleasant it is, when on the great sea the winds
trouble the waters, to gaze from shore upon another's
great tribulation: not because any man's troubles are
a delectable joy, but because to perceive what ills
you are free from yourself is pleasant. Pleasant is it
also to behold great encounters of warfare arrayed
over the plains, with no part of yours in the peril.
But nothing is more delightful than to possess lofty
sanctuaries serene, well fortified by the teachings of
the wise, whence you may look down upon others
and behold them all astray, wandering abroad and
seeking the path of life:—the strife of wits, the fight
for precedence, all labouring night and day with sur-
passing toil to mount upon the pinnacle of riches
and to lay hold on power. O pitiable minds of men,
O blind intelligences! In what gloom of life, in
how great perils is passed all your poor span of time!
not to see that all nature barks for is this, that pain
be removed away out of the body, and that the mind,
kept away from care and fear, enjoy a feeling of
delight!

a Cf. Cicero, Fin. 1.19.62 (of the wise man as represented
by Epicurus): cum stultorum vitam cum sua comparat,
magna affectitum voluptate.

b 3.62-63.

c For the darkness of ignorance from which Epicurus
rescued mankind, cf. e.g. 3.1-2, 5.11-12.
ERGO CORPOREAM AD NATURAM PAUCA VIDEMUS

esse opus omnino, quae demant cumque dolorem, delicias quoque uti multas substernere possint; gratius interdum neque natura ipsa requirit, si non aurea sunt iuvenum simulacra per aedes lampadas igniferas manibus retinentia dextris, lumina nocturnis epulis ut suppeditentur, nec domus argento fulget auroque renidet nec citharae reboant laqueata aurataque templarum cum tamen inter se prostrati in gramine molli propter aquae rivum sub ramis arboris altae non magnis opibus iucunde corpora curant, praesertim cum tempestas adridet et anni tempora conspurgunt viridantis floribus herbas. nec calidae citius decedunt corpore febres, textilibus si in picturis ostroque rubenti iacteris, quam si in plebeia veste cubandum est.

Quapropter quoniam nil nostro in corpore gazae proficiunt neque nobilitas nec gloria regni, quod superest, animo quoque nil prodesse putandum; si non forte, tuas legiones per loca campi fervere cum videbas belli simulacra cerni.

41 Nonius, p. 608 Lindsay, quotes from Lucr. 2 fervere cum videbas classem latere vagari. Some editors insert this line after 43; Munro, following A. G. Roos, places it after 46; others, probably rightly, regard it as a misquotation of 41

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20 Therefore we see that few things altogether are necessary for the bodily nature, only such in each case as take pain away, and can also spread for our use many delights; nor does nature herself ever crave anything more pleasurable, if there be no golden images of youths about the house, upholding fiery torches in their right hands that light may be provided for nightly revellings, if the hall does not shine with silver and glitter with gold, if no cross-beams panelled and gilded echo the lyre, when all the same stretched forth in groups upon the soft grass beside a rill of water under the branches of a tall tree men merrily refresh themselves at no great cost, especially when the weather smiles, and the season of the year besprinkles the green herbage with flowers. And no quicker do hot fevers fly away from your body, if you have pictured tapestry and blushing purple to toss upon, than if you must lie sick under the poor man's blanket.

37 Therefore, since treasures profit nothing for our body, nor noble birth nor the glory of royalty, we must further think that for the mind also they are unprofitable; unless by any chance, when you behold your legions seething over the spacious Plain as they evoke war in mimicry, established firm with

---

a According to Epicurus, pleasure is limited, and the limit of pleasure for the body is reached when the natural and necessary desires are satisfied and the pain caused by want is removed. Cf. e.g. Epicurus, Ep. ad Men. 130-131, Sent. 3, 18, Cicero, Fin. 1.11.38.

b 24-26 are in imitation of Homer, Od. 7.100-102.

c That is, despite the lack of the luxuries listed in 24-28. The desire for such luxuries is neither natural nor necessary, and therefore must be banished. For Epicurus' classification of desires, see Ep. ad Men. 127, Sent. 29, Cicero, Fin. 1.13.45.

d 29-33 are repeated, with minor alterations, in 5.1392-1396. For the significance of the repetition, see B. Farringdon in Hermathena 81 (1953) 59-62.

e campi (40) probably refers to the Campus Martius at Rome. Cf. 323-332.
mighty supports and a mass of cavalry, marshalled all in arms cap-a-pie and all full of one spirit, then these things scare your superstitious fears and drive them in panic flight from your mind, and death's terrors then leave your heart unpossessed and free from care. But if we see these things to be ridiculous and a mere mockery, if in truth men's fears and haunting cares fear neither the clang of arms nor wild weapons, if they boldly mingle with kings and sovereigns of the world, if they respect not the sheen of gold nor the glowing light of crimson raiment, why doubt you that this power wholly belongs to reason, especially since life is one long struggle in the dark? For just as children tremble and fear all things in blind darkness, so we in the light fear, at times, things that are no more to be feared than what children shiver at in the dark and imagine to be at hand.®

This terror of the mind, therefore, and this gloom must be dispelled, not by the sun's rays nor the bright shafts of day, but by the aspect and law of nature.b

62 Listen now, and I will set forth by what motion I. Atomic motion (62-332). Atoms are in constant motion, things and dissolve them once begotten, and by what force they are compelled to do it, and what swiftness

a Cf. the opening words of Francis Bacon's essay Of Death: "Men fear death as children fear to go into the dark; and as that natural fear in children is increased with tales, so is the other."

b 55-61 = 3.87-93, 6.35-41. 59-61 = 1.146-148.
reddita mobilitas magnum per inane meandi, 65
expediam; tu te dictis praebere memento.

Nam certe non inter se stipata cohaeret
materies, quoniam minui rem quamque videmus
et quasi longinquo fluere omnia cernimis aevo
ex oculisque vetustatem subducere nostris,
cum tamen incolmis videatur summa manere
propter qua via, quae decedunt corpora cuique,
unde abeunt minuunt, quo venere augmine donant,
illa senescere, at haec contra florescunt
semper, et inter se mortales mutua vivunt:
augescunt aliae gentes, aliae minuunt,
inque brevi spatio mutantur saecla animantium
et quasi cursores vitæ lampada tradunt.

Si cessare putas rerum primordia posse 80
cessandoque novos rerum progignere motus,
aut gravitate sua ferri primordia rerum
aut ictu forte alterius, nam cum cita saepè
confluxerent; neque enim mirum, durissima quae sint
ponderibus solidis neque a tergo ibus obstet.

85 quom (=cum Lachmann) cita Wakefield (in his notes,
but not in his text): cita OQGAB 86 confluxere F
(Lambinus, to whom some modern editors attribute the reading,
found it "in quibusdam libros manuscriptis" and did not
print it in his text, though he thought it a "scriptura proba-
abilis": confluxere OQG: confluxere BL 88 tergo ibus
Isaac Voss: tergibus OQGP, Diels, Martin, Büchner

has been given them to travel through the great
void; do you remember to give heed to my words.
67 For certainly matter is not one packed and
coherent mass, since we see each thing decreasing,
and we perceive all things as it were ebbing through
length of time, and age withdrawing them from
our eyes; although nevertheless the sum is seen to re-
main unimpaired for this reason, that whenever
bodies pass away from a thing, they diminish that
from which they pass and increase that to which they
have come, they compel the first to fade and the
second on the contrary to bloom, yet do not linger
there. Thus the sum of things is ever being re-
newed, and mortal creatures live dependent one upon
another. Some species increase, others diminish, and
in a short space the generations of living creatures
are changed and, like runners, pass on the torch of
life.®

80 If you think the first-beginnings of things can
stand still, and by standing still can beget new
motions amongst things, you are astray and wander
far from true reasoning.© For since the first-begin-
nings of things wander through the void, they must
all be carried on either by their own weight or by a
chance blow from another atom. For when in quick
motion they have often met and collided, it follows
that they leap apart suddenly in different directions;
and no wonder, since they are perfectly hard in their
solid weight and nothing obstructs them from behind.

a The metaphor is from the Athenian lampadedromy
(relay torch-race), as in Plato, Leg. 776 b (quoted by Lam-
binus): γεννώντας τε καὶ ἐκτρέφοντας παιδᾶς, καθάπερ λαμπάδα
has been given them to travel through the great
void; do you remember to give heed to my words.
67 For certainly matter is not one packed and
coherent mass, since we see each thing decreasing,
and we perceive all things as it were ebbing through
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from which they pass and increase that to which they
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second on the contrary to bloom, yet do not linger
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© Epicurus deals briefly with atomic motion in Ep. ad Hdt.
43-44, 61-62.
And to show you more clearly that all the bodies of matter are constantly being tossed about, remember that there is no bottom in the sum of things and the first bodies have nowhere to rest, since space is without end or limit, and I have shown at large and proved by irrefragable reasoning that it extends immeasurable from all sides in all directions. Since this stands firm, beyond doubt no rest is granted to the first bodies throughout the profound void, but rather driven by incessant and varied motions, some after being pressed together then leap back with wide intervals, some again after the blow are tossed about within a narrow compass. And all those which being held in combination more closely condensed collide and leap back through tiny intervals, caught fast in the complexity of their own shapes, these constitute the strong roots of stone and the bulk of fierce iron and the others of their kind. Of the rest, which go on wandering through the great void, a very few leap far apart and pass far back with long intervals between: these supply thin air for us and the gleaming light of the sun. And many besides wander through the great void which have been rejected from combination with things, and have nowhere been able to obtain admittance and also harmonize their motions.†

† Of this fact there is, I recall, an image and similitude always moving and present before our eyes. Do but apply your scrutiny whenever the motion of
Lucilius

inserti fundunt radii per opaca domorum: multa minuta modis multis per inane videbis corpora misceri radiorum lumine in ipso et velut aeterno certamine proelia pugnas edere turmatim certantia nec dare pausam, conciliis et discidiis exercita crebris; conciere ut possis ex hoc, primordia rerum quale sit in magno iactari semper inani. dumtaxat rerum magnarum parva potest res exemplare dare et vestigia notitiai.

Hoc etiam magis haec animum te advertere par est corpora quae in solis radiis turbare videntur, quod tales turbae motus quoque materialis significant clandestinos caecosque subesse. multa videbis enim plagis ibi percita caecis commutare viam retroque repulsa reverti, nunc hue nunc illuc, in cunctas undique partis. scilicet hic a principiis est omnibus error: prima moventur enim per se primordia rerum; inde ea quae parvo sunt corpora conciliatu et quasi proxima sunt ad viris principiorum, ictibus illorum caecis inpulsa scientur, ipsaque proporro paulo maiora lacessunt. sic a principiis ascendit motus et exit paulatim nostros ad sensus, ut moveantur illa quoque in solis quae lumine cernere quimus, nec quibus id faciunt plagis apparat aperte.

115 sun’s rays are let in and pour their light through a dark room: you will see many minute particles mingling in many ways throughout the void a in the light itself of the rays, and as it were in everlasting conflict struggling, fighting, battling in troops without pause, driven about with frequent meetings and partings; so that you may conjecture from this what it is for the first-beginnings of things to be ever tossed about in the great void. So far as it goes, a small thing may give an analogy of great things, and show the tracks of knowledge.

120 Even more for another reason it is proper that you give attention to these bodies which are seen to be in turmoil within the sun’s rays, because such turmoil indicates that there are secret and unseen motions also hidden in matter. For there you will see how many things set in motion by unseen blows change their course and beaten back return back again, now this way, now that way, in all directions. You may be sure that all take their restlessness from the first-beginnings. For first the first-beginnings of things move of themselves; then the bodies that form a small combination b and, as one may say, are nearest to the powers of the first-beginnings, are set moving, driven by the unseen blows of these, while they in their turn attack those that are a little larger. Thus the movement ascends from the first-beginnings and by successive degrees emerges upon our senses, c so that those bodies also are moved which we are able to perceive in the sun’s light, yet it does not openly appear by what blows they are made to do so.

125 a inane (116) refers to the air (cf. Virgil, Aen. 12.906) through which the motes move, not to void in the strict scientific sense. But, like corpora in 117, the word is carefully chosen in order to emphasize the parallel with the behaviour of the atoms.

126 b Small atomic aggregates.

130 c For the imperceptibility of the motions of the atoms, see 308-332.
Nunc quae mobilitas sit redditam materiam
corporibus, paucis licet hinc cognoscere, Memmi.
primum aurora novo cum spargit lumine terras,
et variae volucres nemora avia pervolitantes
aera per tenerum liquidis loca vocibus opplent,
quam subito soleat sol ortus tempore tali
convestire sua perfundens omnia luce,
onmibus in promptu manifestumque esse videmus.
at vapor is quem sol mittit lumenque serenum
non per inane meat vacuum ;  quo tardius ire
cogitur, aerias quasi dum diverberat undas.
nec singillatim corpuscula quaeque vporis
sed complexa meant inter se conque globata ;
quapropter simul inter se retrahuntur et extra
oociuntur, uti cogantur tardius ire.
at quae sunt solida primordia simplicitate,
cum per inane meant vacuum nec res remoratur
ulla foris, atque ipsa, suis e partibus unum,
unum in quem coepere locum conixa feruntur
debent nimirum praecellere mobilitate
et multo citius ferri quam lumina solis
multiplexque loci spatium transcurrere eodem
tempore quo solis pervolgant fulgura caelum.
nec persectari primordia singula quaeque,
ut videant qua quidque geratur cum ratione.
LUCRETIUS

At quidam contra haec, ignari materiai, naturam non posse deum sine numine credunt tanto opere humanis rationibus admoderate tempora mutare annorum frugesque creare, et iam cetera, mortalis quae suadet adire ipsaque deducit dux vitae dia voluptas et res per Veneris blanditur saecla propagent, ne genus occidat humanum. quorum omnia causa constituisse deos cum fingunt, omnibus rebus magno opere a vera lapsi ratione videntur, nam quamvis rerum ignorem primordia quae sint, hoc tamen ex ipsis caeli rationibus ausim confirmare alisque ex rebus reddere multis, nequaquam nobis divinitus esse creatam naturam mundi: tanta stat praedita culpa, quae tibi posterius, Memmi, faciemus aperta. nunc id quod superest de motibus expediemus.

Nunc locus est, ut opinor, in his illud quoque rebus confirmare tibi, nullam rem posse sua vi corpoream sursum ferri sursumque meare, ne tibi dent in eo flammarum corpora fraudem; sursus enim versus gignuntur et augmina sumunt, et sursum nitidae fruges arbustaque crescent, pondera, quantum in se est, cum deorsum cuncta ferantur. nec cum subsiliunt ignes ad tecta domorum et celeri flamma degustant tigna trabesque,

167 But some a in opposition to this, knowing nothing of matter, believe that without the gods’ power nature cannot with so exact conformity to the plans of mankind change the seasons of the year, and produce crops, and in a word all else which divine pleasure, the guide of life, persuades men to approach, herself leading them and coaxing them, through the ways of Venus, to beget their generations, that the human race may not come to an end. But when they imagine the gods to have arranged all for the sake of men, they are seen to have departed widely from true reasoning in every way. For although I might not know what first-beginnings of things are, this nevertheless I would make bold to maintain from the ways of heaven itself, and to demonstrate from many another source, that the nature of the universe has by no means been made for us through divine power: so great are the faults it stands endowed with. All this, Memmius, I will make clear to you later b; now I will explain what remains to be said about motion.

164 This is now the place, as I think, in my theme to establish for you another principle: that no bodily thing can of its own power be carried upwards and move upwards. The particles of fire should not lead you into a mistake; for in an upward direction flames are born and win increase, upwards grow trees and the bright crops, although all weights tend downwards as far as in them lies. And when fires leap up to the roofs of houses and with swift flame devour

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108
sponte sua facere id sine vi putandum est.
quod genus e nostro cum missus corpore sanguis
emicat exultans alte spargitque cruorem. 195
nonne vides etiam quanta vi tigna trabesque
respuat umor aquae ? nam quo magis ursimus altum
directa et magna vi multi pressimus aegre,
tam cupide sursum vomit magis et remittit,
plus ut parte foras emergant exilantiumque. 200
nec tamen haec, quantum est in se, dubitamus, opinor,
quin vacuum per inane deorsum cuncta ferantur.
sic igitur debent quoque flammae posse per auras
aeris expressae sursum succedere, quamquam
pondera, quantum in sest, deorsum deductae pugnet.
nocturnasque faces caeli sublime volantibus 206
nonne vidis longos flammae ducere tractus
in quasque dedit partis natura meatum ?
non cadere in terras stellas et sidera cernis ?
sol etiam caeli de vertice dissipat omnis 210
ardorem in partis et lumine consertat arva ;
in terris igitur quoque solis vergitur ardom.
transversaque volare per imbris fulmina cernis :

193 sine OQGP : nisi D. A. West, CQ N.S. 14 (1964) 96
subjecta (sc. flammarum corpora 187) OQGP (cf. Virgil, G.
4.385) : subigente Lambinus, who notes “sic restituit ab uno
codice manuscripto adiutus” 197 altum seemingly first
printed in ed. Juntina (notes) : alta OQGP : alta
ABL 199 vomit Pontanus : removet OQGP, Bocke-
müller, Merrill (1917), Martin, D. A. West, CQ N.S. 14
(1964) 97, but the more violent and vivid word seems more
probable, and for the corruption cf. 6.828, where QU have
movenda for vomenda, and (e.g.) Lucan 6.24
203 debent quoque flammae Wakefield (notes only). It seems
preferable to the readings of ed. Aldina and Q corr. because
the transposition affects only two words instead of three:
quoque debent flammae OQGP : debent flammae quoque ed.
Aldina (cf. 1.290, but 6.317 shows that a different order is
possible) : flammae quoque debent Q corr., D. A. West, Rh.
timbers and beams, we must not think they do this
of themselves, being shot up without a force. Even
so when blood is let out from our body, out it spirts,
leaping forth on high and sprinkling its red drops.
Do you not see also with what force liquid water
spits out timbers and beams? For the deeper we
have thrust them and pushed them right down, pressing
laboriously with full force and many together,
the more eagerly does the water vomit them back
and shoot them back up, so that they issue forth and
leap out more than half their length. Yet we do not
doubt, I think, that, as far as in them lies, these are
all carried downwards through an empty void. In
this way, therefore, flames also must be able to rise
up, squeezed out upwards through the breezes of the
air, although, as far as lies in them, their weights
fight to draw them down; and do you not see how
the nightly torches of the sky fly up aloft and draw
their long trails of flame in whatever direction nature
has given them a way? how stars and luminaries
fall to the earth? The sun also from the pinnacle
of heaven disperses his heat abroad in all directions and
sows the fields with light; therefore the sun’s heat
tends towards the earth also. And you perceive
lightnings to fly crosswise along the rain clouds:

Wakefield quotes Milton, Paradise Lost 5.1-2: “Now
Morn, her rosy steps in th’ eastern clime | Advancing, sow’d
the earth with orient pearl.”
nunc hinc nunc illinc abrupti nubibus ignes concursant; cadit in terras vis flammea volgo. 215

Illud in his quoque te rebus cognoscere avemus, corpora cum deorsum rectum per inane feruntur ponderibus propriis, incerto tempore ferme incertisque locis spatio depellere paulum, tantum quod moment mutatum dicere possis. 220

quod nisi declinare solerent, omnia deorsum, imbris uti guttae, caderent per inane profundum, nec foret offensus natus nec plaga creatae principiis: ita nil umquam natura creasset.

Quod si forte aliquis credit graviora potesse corpora, quo citius rectum per inane feruntur, incidere ex supero levioribus atque ita plagas gignere quae possint genitalis reddere motus, avius a vera longe ratione recedit. 225

nam per aquas quaecumque cadunt atque aera rarum, haec pro ponderibus casus celerare necessest, propterea quia corpus aquae naturaque tenuis aeris haud possunt aequem rem quamque morari, sed citius cedunt gravioribus exsuperata; at contra nulli de nulla parte neque ullo tempore inane potest vacuum subsistere rei, quin, sua quod natura petit, concedere pergat; 230

214 abrupti OQGP: abruptis Macrobius, Sat. 6.1.27 (cf. Virgil, Aen. 3.199), D. A. West, CQ N.S. 14 (1964) 97, n. 1, perhaps rightly, but see Statius, Theb. 1.353-354 quoted by Wakefield.

a For a detailed discussion of 184-215, see D. A. West, CQ N.S. 14 (1964) 94-99.

b The theory of the swerve (παρέγκλισις, clinamen, declinatio, inclinatio) of atoms is not described by Epicurus in his extant writings, but is mentioned by Cicero, Philodemus, Plutarch, Diogenes of Oenoanda, and others.

now from this part, now from that, burst the fires out of the clouds and rush along; it is a common thing for the fiery bolt to fall on the earth. 216

One further point in this matter I desire you to understand: that while the first bodies are being carried downwards by their own weight in a straight line through the void, at times quite uncertain and uncertain places, they swerve a little from their course, just so much as you might call a change of motion. For if they were not apt to incline, all would fall downwards like raindrops through the profound void, no collision would take place and no blow would be caused amongst the first-beginnings: thus nature would never have produced anything.

But if by chance anyone believes it to be possible that heavier elements, being carried more quickly straight through the void, fall from above on the lighter, and so deal blows which can produce generative motions, he is astray and departs far from true reasoning. For whatever things fall through water and through fine air, these must speed their fall in accordance with their weights, because the body of water and the thin nature of air cannot delay each thing equally, but yield sooner overcome by the heavier; but contrariwise empty void cannot offer any support to anything anywhere or at any time, but it must give way continually, as its nature Lucr.'s account (216-293) is the fullest which we have. Epicurus, influenced above all by Aristotle, rejected the determinism of Democritus and believed in the freedom of the individual will, and the theory of the atomic swerve was designed to explain free will (see 251-293) as well as to account for collisions between atoms moving through the void. See Introduction pp. xxxiii-xxxiv.

All atoms fall at the same speed through the void;
The country of the Pierides I traverse, where no other foot has ever trod. I love to approach no other foot path ever trod. I love to approach a pastoral country of the Pierides I love to approach. 

Ave Peryne! Perpetuo loca nullius alate.
...
LUCRETIUS

Sed quoniam docui cunctarum exordia rerum
qualia sint et quam variis distantia formis
sponte sua volitent aeterno percita motu
quoque modo possit res ex his quaeque creari,
nunc agere incipiam tibi, quod vementer ad has res
attinet, esse ea quae rerum simulacra vocamus,
quae quasi membranae vel cortex nominandast,
quod speciem ac formam similem gerit eius imago
cuiuscumque cluet de corpore fusa vagari.

Principio quoniam mittunt in rebus apertis
corpora res multae, partim diffusa solute,
robora ceu fumum mittunt ignesque vaporem,
et partim contexta magis condensaque, ut olim
cum teretis ponunt tunicas aestate cicadae,
et vituli cum membranas de corpore summo
nascentes mittunt, et item cum lubrica serpens
exuit in spinis vestem (nam saepe videmus
illorum spoliis vepres volitantibus auctas)—quae
quoniam fiunt, tenuis quoque debet imago
ab rebus mitti summo de corpore rerum,
nam cur illa cadant magis ab rebusque recedant
quam quae tenvia sunt, hiscendist nulla potestas,
praesertim cum sint in summis corpora rebus
multa minuta, iaci quae possint ordine eodem
et formai servare figuram,
et multo citius, quanto minus indupediri

[Arguments for the existence of films: (1) smoke and heat are discharged from certain things, (2) crickets and snakes cast their skins, calves their caul, from the surface; and a thin external film would meet with less resistance.

But if coarse things are thrown off, as they are, there is the more reason to suppose that fine films are discharged. Few in comparison with the many that compose a solid mass like a cast-off skin.

Few in comparison that may be considered as there is the image of all things, which are composed of the many that compose a solid mass like a cast-off skin.

.c.f. J. Mewaldt, Hermes 43 [1908] 286-295.)

If coarse things are thrown off, as they are, there is the more reason to suppose that fine films are discharged.

Few in comparison with the many that compose a solid mass like a cast-off skin.

But if coarse things are thrown off, as they are, there is the more reason to suppose that fine films are discharged. Few in comparison with the many that compose a solid mass like a cast-off skin.
pauca queunt et quae sunt prima fronte locata, nam certe iacere ac largiri multa videmus, non solum ex alto penitusque, ut diximus ante, verum de summis ipsum quoque saepe colorem, et volgo faciunt id lutea russaque vela et ferrugina, cum magnis intenta theatris per malos volgata trabesque trementia flutant; namque ibi consessum caveai subter et omnem scaenai speciem patrum matrumque deorum fpatrum turbamque decorum, inficiunt coguntque suo fluitare colore. 

et quanto circum mage sunt inclusa theatri moenia, tam magis haec intus perfusa lepore omnia conrident correpta luce diei, ergo lintea de summo cum corpore fucum mittunt, effigias quoque debent mittere tenvis res quaeque, ex summo quoniam iaculantur utraque. sunt igitur iam formarum vestigia certa quae volgo volitant subtili praedita filo, nec singillatim possunt secreta videri. Praeterea omnis odor fumus vapor atque aliae res consimiles ideo diffusae e rebus abundant, ex alto quia dum veniunt intrinsecus ortae, scinduntur per iter flexum, nec recta viarum ostia sunt qua contendant exire coortae. 

The reference is to 56, where Lucr. mentions smoke and heat, but not until 90-94 does he explain that they come from deep inside things. 

Besides, all small, smoke, heat and other such
Now listen and learn how thin the structure of this image should be. For the unsurpassed fineness of the images, often mirrors too will be my witnesses. For what I say here will be my witnesses that gather things together. But contrariwise, when a thin surface colour is thrown off, there is nothing to tear it up, since it lies in front and on the very outside.

Lastly, whatever simulated things we see in mirrors, that simple "and when mirrors too will be my witnesses that gather things together, but contrariwise, when a thin surface colour is thrown off, there is nothing to tear it up, since it lies in front and on the very outside."
LUCRETIUS

und anima atque animi constet natura necessit?
nonne vides quam sint subtilia quamque minuta?
Praeterea quaecumque suo de corpore odorem
expirant acrem, panaces absinthia taetra
habrotonique graves et tristia centaurea,
quorum unum quidvis leviter si forte duobus
quin potius noscas rerum simulacra vagari
multa modis multis nulla vi cassaque sensu?

Sed ne forte putes ea demum sola vagari,
quaecumque ab rebus rerum simulacra recedunt,
sunt etiam quae sponte sua gignuntur et ipsa
constituuntur in hoc caelo qui dicitur aer,
quae multis formata modis sublime feruntur;

ut nube facile interdum concrescere in alto

cernimus et mundi speciem violare serenam,
aera mulcentes motu; nam saepe Gigantum
ora volare videntur et umbram ducere late,
interdum magni montes avolsaque saxa
montibus anteire et solem succedere praeter,
inde alios trahere atque inducere belua nimbos. 140
nec speciem mutare suam liquentia cessant
et cuiusque modi formarum vertere in oras.

... but that you may not think these images which
are sentient and rational. Cf. Diogenes of Oenoanda
fr. 10, 43 Smith, and see A. Barigazzi,

The formation of compound images in the air is
mentioned by Epicurus, Ep. ad Hdt. 48. The present passage should be
compared with 732-748.

Other images are
formed in the air,
as we see
clouds and other
shapes.

ibid.
form
forms.

Other images are formed in the air,
as we see
some clouds and other shapes.

... but that you may not think these images which
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LUCRETIUS

DE RERUM NATURA, 4. 143-168

Nunc ea quam facili et celeri ratione genantur perpetuoque fluant ab rebus lapsaque cedant semper enim summum quicquid de rebus abundat. et hoc alias cum pervenit in res, transit, ut in primis vitrum, sed ubi aspera saxa aut in materiam ligni pervenit, ibi iam scinditur, ut nullum simulacrum reddere possit, at cum splendida quae constant opposta fuerunt densaque, ut in primis speculum est, nil accidit horum; nam neque, uti vitrum, possunt transire, neque autem scindi; quam meminit levor praestare salutem, quapropter fit ut hinc nobis simulacra redundent, et quamvis subito quovis in tempore quamque rem contra speculum ponas, apparet imago; perpetuo fluere ut noscas e corpore summo texturas rerum tenuis tenuisque figuras, ergo multa brevi spatio simulacra genuntur, ut merito celer his rebus dicatur origo. et quasi multa brevi spatio summittere debet lumina sol ut perpetuo sint omnia plena, sic ab rebus item simili ratione necessest temporis in puncto rerum simulacra ferantur multa modis multis in cunctas undique partis, quandoquidem speculum quocumque obvertimus oris, res ibi respondent simili forma atque colore.

Praeterea modo cum fuerit liquidissima caeli...
LUCRETIUS

DE RERUM NATURA, 4. 169-193

170

undique ut enemuras omnes adventu norum

eminentemque pedem, quern subito ut tubida dedece,

175

qui possit neque eam rationem reddere dictis.

176

Nunc age, quam celeri motu simulacra ferantur

et quae mobilitas ollis tranantibus auras

reddita sit, longo spatio ut brevis hora teratur,

in quem quaeque locum diverso numine tendunt,

parvus ut est cycni melior canor, ille gruum quam

clamor in aetheriis dispersus nubibus austri.

180

Principio persaepe levis res atque minutis

corporibus factas celeris licet esse videre,

in quo iam genere est solis lux et vapor eius,

propterea quia sunt e primis facta minutis

qua quasi cuduntur perque aeris intervallum

non dubitant transire sequenti concita plaga;

suppeditatur enim confestim lumine lumen,

et quasi protelo stimulatur fulgere fulgur.

185

quapropter simulacra pari ratione necesse est

inmemorabile per spatium transcurrere posse

temporis in puncto, primum quod parvola causa

°

Cf. I.43-66 and see I. W. West. The Imagery and Poetry of

Lucretius. 2. 169-193, 6.251-254 with one minor variation.

6  The argument of 174-175 is compressed. The idea is

that, if clouds can be formed so swiftly, the images (which

are far, far smaller than clouds) will be formed with almost

unimaginable rapidity.

1 7 0 - 1 7 3 = 6.251-254 with one minor variation.

LUCRETIUS

DE RERUM NATURA, 4. 169-193

190

et quas propeo simulacrum specieris hinc

non dubitant transire sequenti concita plaga;

ane quis constituit perge aeris intervallum

praeterea quia sunt e primis facta minutis

qua quasi cuduntur perque aeris intervallum

non dubitant transire sequenti concita plaga;

suppeditatur enim confestim lumine lumen,

et quasi protelo stimulatur fulgere fulgur. 190

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1 7 0 - 1 7 3 = 6.251-254 with one minor variation.
cause there is a very small impulse far behind which

cause there is a very small impulse far behind which

cause there is a very small impulse far behind which

cause there is a very small impulse far behind which

cause there is a very small impulse far behind which

cause there is a very small impulse far behind which
corpora quae feriant oculos visumque lacessant, perpetuoque fluunt certis ab rebus odores; frigus ut a fluviis, calor ab sole, aestus ab undis aequoris exesor moerorum litora circum; nec variae cessant voces volitare per auras; denique in os salsi venit umor saepe saporis, cum mare versamur propter, dilutaque contra cum tuimur misceri absinthia, tangit amaror, usque adeo omnibus ab rebus res quaeque fluenter fertur et in cunctas dimittitur undique partis, nec mora nec requies interdatur ulla fluendi, perpetuo quoniam sentimus, et omnia semper cernere odorari licet et sentire sonare.

Praeterea quoniam manibus tractata figura in tenebris quaedam cognoscitur esse eadem quae cernitur in luce et claro candore, necessest consimili causa tactum visumque moveri, nunc igitur si quadratum temptamus et id nos commovet in tenebris, in luci quae poterit res accidere ad speciem quadrata, nisi eius imago? esse in imaginibus quapropter causa cernundi neque posse sine his res ulla videri.

Nunc ea quae dico rerum simulacra feruntur undique et in cunctas iaciuntur didita partis; verum nos oculis quia solis cernere quimus, 0

On the lacuna and its probable contents, see critical note on 216.
DE RERUM NATURA, 4. 242-269

From the example, we never see an object itself, but only the image produced by the continuous stream of stimulation from the object. Strictly speaking, we never see an object itself, but only this stream of stimulation.

Now let us consider why the image is seen at a distance.

LUCRETIUS

LUCRETIUS
percipe; nam certe penitus remmota videtur. 270
quod genus illa foris quae vere transpiciuntur,
ianua cum per se transpectum praebet apertum,
multa facitque foris ex aedibus ut videantur;
is quoque enim duplici geminoque fit aere visus:
primus enim citra postes tum cernitur aer,
dinde fores ipsae dextra laevaque sequuntur,
post extraria lux oculos perterget et aer
alter et illa foris quae vere transpiciuntur,
sic ubi se primum speculi proiecit imago,
dum venit ad nostras acies, protrudit agitque 280
aera qui inter se cumquest oculosque locatus,
et facit ut prius hunc omnem sentire queamus
quam speculum; sed ubi speculum quoque sensimus
ipsum,
continuo a nobis illuc quae fertur imago
pervenit, et nostros oculos reiecta revisit,
atque alium prae se propellens aera volvit,
et facit ut prius hunc quam se videamus, eoque
distare ab speculo tantum semota videtur.
quare etiam atque etiam minime mirarier est par,
illis quae reddunt speculorum ex aequore visum,
aeribus binis quoniam res confit utraque.
Nunc ea quae nobis membrorum dextera pars est
in speculis fit ut in laeva videatur eo quod,
planitiem ad speculi veniens cum offendit imago,
270 remmota
288 illuc
in id haec
in eum
itidem
in idem
Lambinus (1570):
Munro:
A lacuna after this line noted by P. E. Goebel. Bailey suggests e.g. hoc illis Heri,
quae transpiciuntur, idemque
298 "in idem"
DE RERUM NATURA, 4. 270-294
LUCRETIUS
Lucr. de Rerum Natura, 4. 299-320

By Lucr. in 311-317, see especially Munro, Lyne-Roberts.

From whatever part of the mirror you may move at first, especially if there be an edge, you may observe the reason to be that certain images are thrust out straight backwards, just as if someone should dash upon a pillar or beam some mask of plaster before it were dry, and it should not keep its place. Then a pillar or beam some mask of plaster is not turned round unaltered, but is thrust into the mirror, as is the image, and therefore reverses what it sees.

Moreover, all mirrors that have little sides begin again and return to the same position. Since, if the right eye becomes the left, when it has been presented to the mirror, and when it has been presented to the mirror, so only does the image throw the house. Moreover, the same thing happens when mirrors are placed behind in the same way, and the image is carried across from one side of the mirror to the other, and then to us after being brought in the same degree as our sides return by the mirror, or by its reflection back to the mirror, or by its reflection back to the mirror, or by its reflection. The same thing is also true of images seen by Lucr. in 311-317, see especially Munro, Lyne-Roberts.

Moreover, all images that have little sides begin to turn round to throw the image of the mirror across the eye. So it is seen that the image is carried across from one side of the mirror to the other, and then to us after being placed behind in the same way, and the image is carried across from one side of the mirror to the other, and then to us after being brought in the same degree as our sides return by the mirror, or by its reflection back to the mirror, or by its reflection. The same thing is also true of images seen by Lucr. in 311-317, see especially Munro, Lyne-Roberts.

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LUCRETIUS

DE RERUM NATURA, 4. 321-347

...equal to the angle of incidence...