

NOTES

Introduction: Designing and Turbulent Epicureans

1. Edmund Burke, *Further Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. Daniel E. Ritchie (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1992), 237.
2. *Ibid.*, 197–198.
3. *Ibid.*, 195.
4. See, Catherine Wilson’s wonderful study, *Epicureanism at the Origins of Modernity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2008); Alison Brown, *The Return of Lucretius to Renaissance Florence* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); W. R. Johnson, *Lucretius and the Modern World* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., 2000). See also, “Part III: Reception” in *The Cambridge Companion to Lucretius*, ed. Gillespie and Hardie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 205–324. Stephen Greenblatt, *The Swerve* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co. 2011).
5. René Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, trans. Donald A. Cross (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1980), 33. See also, Leo Strauss, *Philosophy and Law*, trans. Eve Adler (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995), 36.
6. All references to Lucretius’s poem are by book and line number. I have relied upon W. H. D. Rouse’s translation *De Rerum Natura* (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1992) and occasionally Walter Englert, *Lucretius On the Nature of Things* (Newburyport: Focus Philosophical Library, 2003), with infrequent minor alterations.
7. Helvétius, *De L’Esprit* (London, Dodsley and Co., 1759). The original reads “unde animi constet natura videndum, quae fiant ratione et qua via quaeque gerantur in terris.” Translation my own.
8. *Ibid.*, iv.
9. *Ibid.*, v.
10. Paul-Henry Baron d’Holbach. *The System of Nature*, trans. H. D. Robinson (New York: G.W. & A.J. Matsell, 1835).
11. See Jonathan Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 34.
12. Paul-Henry Baron d’Holbach, *Good Sense* (Whitefish, Montana: Kessinger Publishing, 2004), 96–97.
13. D’Holbach, *The System of Nature*, 309.
14. *Ibid.*, 311–312.

15. *Ibid.*, 313.
16. Pierre Bayle, *Philosophical Commentary on These Words of the Gospel, Luke 14:23 "Compel Them to Come In, That My House May Be Full,"* ed. John Kilcullen and Chandran Kukathas (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2005), 67–68.
17. *Ibid.*
18. Pierre Bayle, *The Dictionary of Historical and Critical of Mr. Peter Bayle*, trans. Pierre Des Maizeaux, vol. 3 (London: J.J. and P. Knapton, 1735), 923.
19. See Robert Bartlett's excellent treatment of Bayle's project "On the Politics of Faith and Reason: The Project of Enlightenment in Pierre Bayle and Montesquieu," *Journal of Politics* 63, no. 1 (Feb. 2001): 1–28.
20. Pierre Bayle, *Various Thoughts on the Occasion of a Comet*, trans. Robert Bartlett (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000), 221–222.
21. *Ibid.*, 223.
22. *Ibid.*, 215.
23. *Ibid.*, 237.

1 The Proem to Book I: Philosophy and the City

1. See Leo Strauss, "Notes on Lucretius" in *Liberalism Ancient and Modern* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989), 76–80.
2. See Cyril Bailey, *Lucretius: De Rerum Natura*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947), 588–591, for a variety of standard interpretations of the invocation of Venus.
3. Pierre Bayle, *The Dictionary Historical and Critical of Mr. Peter Bayle*, trans. Pierre Des Maizeaux, vol. 3 (London: J. J. and P. Knapton, 1735), 922.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, 923.
6. *Ibid.* See Cicero's confirmation of this view in *The Nature of the Gods*, trans. Horace C. P. McGregor. (London: Penguin Books, 1972), 193.
7. Bayle, *Dictionary Historical and Critical*, vol. 3, 922.
8. *Ibid.*, 924.
9. Montaigne, *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Donald Frame (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958), 379–380.
10. Bayle, *The Dictionary of Historical and Critical of Mr. Peter Bayle*, trans. Pierre Des Maizeaux (London: J. J. and P. Knapton, 1735 vol. 3, 923).
11. Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, trans. J. E. King, vol. XVIII, (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 2001) ii, 1, 4. See also St. Augustine, *City of God* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), VI, 10 and IV, 31. Augustine's account of Varro and Seneca reveals that they too had to take measures to hide their true opinions from the multitude. See Ernest Fortin, *Dissent and Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2002), 11.
12. Cicero, *Letters to Quintus and Brutus*, trans. D. R. Shackleton Bailey (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 118–119. See also Clyde

- Murley, "Cicero's Attitude towards Lucretius," *Classical Philology* 23, no. 3 (July 1928): 289–291.
13. Strauss, *Liberalism Ancient and Modern*, 96.
 14. See Bailey, *Lucretius: De Rerum Natura*, vol. 2, 797.
 15. Leonard and Smith note that when Lucretius remarks that at this time of Rome's troubles, he cannot do his part with an untroubled mind he uses an expression that has certain religious connotations: *Agere hoc*. They draw the attention of the reader to a passage in Plutarch's *Life of Numa* where it is remarked that when consuls began to take auspices and make sacrifices they would exclaim these words. It may be that Lucretius, in using such a phrase, invests his own task, the investigation into the nature of things, with a religious sanction. See, Leonard and Smith, *De Rerum Natura* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), 41.
 16. Bailey suggests that there is a lacuna before I, 50 as the transition seems rather abrupt. He hypothesizes that the missing line or lines were "probably" an appeal to Memmius to "leave politics and state affairs and devote himself to philosophy." Bailey, *Lucretius: De Rerum Natura*, vol. 2, 605.
 17. Lucretius will later argue that a rational explanation of lightning would go a long way toward liberating men from fear of gods. See *De Rerum Natura*, II, 385 and 1090–1104, VI, 82–91 and 387–422. Lightning is also a phenomenon that Lucretius associates with man's fear for the stability of the world (V, 1204–1221). Fear of and belief in the gods, and fear for the eternity of the world are, therefore, apparently inseparable.
 18. "Gates to nature" is more literal than "nature's gate" and better captures the essence of Lucretius's meaning here.
 19. Leonard and Smith, *De Rerum Natura*, 207.
 20. Ovid, *Fasti*, trans. Betty Rose Nagle, vol. 2 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 639–684.
 21. Strauss, *Liberalism Ancient and Modern*, 134.
 22. *Ibid.*, 85.

2 The Discovery of Nature and the Problem of the Infinite and Eternal

1. James Nichols, *Epicurean Political Philosophy: The De Rerum Natura of Lucretius* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), 56.
2. Benjamin Farrington, *Greek Science*, vol. 2 (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1949) 119.
3. See also, Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, trans., W. H. D. Rouse (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1992). V, 1183–1193.
4. Consider Lucretius's repeated use of *neccesset* throughout the poem. See especially, I,44,302,385, 399,506,512,539,607,790,795, and 1049 and II,83,231,243,377,442,445,721, and 751.
5. Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 90.

6. The six proofs offered for the impossibility of creation out of nothing do not refute divine intervention, as none can be said to address the possibility that the gods create everything out of something. This possibility was not explicitly ruled out by his initial contention in the proem about the nature of the gods (I, 44–49). The denial of such a possibility will come later in Book II (II, 167). That he chooses not to address that here is in keeping with the spirit of the initial presentation of the first principle. Lucretius presents the belief in the coming into being out of nothing as not only contrary to what we commonly experience, but inherently hostile to life. It is only by positing that all things arise from their own fixed seed that any regularity, stability, and predictability can be discovered in nature. Without such regularity the world would surely inspire fear. See, Strauss, *Liberalism Ancient and Modern* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989), 86, and Bailey, *Lucretius: De Rerum*, vol. 2, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947), 628.
7. Strauss, *Liberalism Ancient and Modern*, 87.
8. See Nichols, *Epicurean Political Philosophy*, 56.
9. Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, 12.
10. Leo Strauss, *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity*, ed. K. Green (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997), 98 and 117. See also, *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism*, ed., Thomas Pangle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 75.
11. Strauss, *Liberalism Ancient and Modern*, 95.
12. See, Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, V, 195–234.
13. The doctrine of the swerve is perhaps the most perplexing aspect of atomic physics. There is no extant writing of Epicurus's that discusses it and in his *Letter to Menoecus*, which outlines the basic principles of his physics, there is no mention of it. Cicero in his criticisms of materialist philosophy in both *De Finibus* (I, 18) and *De Fato* (22 and 46) addresses the doctrine of the swerve. In *De Finibus*, Cicero calls the doctrine a “childish fantasy” and an “arbitrary fiction.” He goes on to suggest that it fails to achieve what it was intended to achieve, the refutation of the possibility of creation out of nothing. He remarks that by positing the swerve, Epicurus has committed “the capital offense” of natural philosophy, which is to speak of something as taking place without a cause. See Cicero, *The Nature of the Gods*, trans., J. M. Ross (London: Penguin Books, 1972). Cicero suggests that the swerve is but a bit of trickery employed to escape criticism of an impossible position (I, 70). The position that Cicero most believed they were trying to avoid was that of denying freedom of thought and movement; see Cicero, *De Fato*, vol. 4 (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press) 10.23. Such a suggestion may be supported by Epicurus's remark in the *Letter to Menoecus* that it would be “better to accept the legends of the gods than to bow beneath the yoke of destiny which the natural philosophers have imposed.” See Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, trans. R. D. Hicks (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), Book X, section 134, 659.

14. The process of thought is part of a larger discussion of sense perception that is largely a passive reception of images (IV, 722–822).
15. Much of the secondary literature seeks to show how the swerve establishes a uniquely human kind of willfulness. Cyril Bailey argues that the doctrine of the swerve is essentially the introduction of chance into the nature of things as an alternative to free will (Bailey, *De Rerum Natura*, vol. 2, 841). Bailey, however, goes on to argue that our ability to act or not act in a given situation is the product of the swerve. The most obvious difficulty with this interpretation is that Lucretius does not speak of such deliberation in his account of the swerve. Additionally, it is difficult to see how such deliberateness can be traced to a source that is anything but deliberate. David Furley argues, the swerve guarantees that we are not simply determined in our character from birth and that we have the ability to change and adapt. See, David Furley, *Two Studies in the Greek Atomists* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 161–237. Aside from the fact that such arguments are not present in Lucretius, he does not provide an account based in atomic principles that would prove that the swerve is within the purview of human control. Absent such a proof, the swerve may show we are changeable but does not provide that such change is willful. We are still left with the determinism that Furley seeks to show we are free of. There are other studies of the swerve similar to Furley that seek to show how the swerve frees man from having a determined character. David Sedley, focusing mostly upon fragments from Epicurus's *On Nature*, which nowhere mention the swerve, tries to argue that the swerve is the source of a willfulness that has nonphysical causes. That the atoms can swerve is, for Sedley, the essential point, it is not that they swerve but the possibility of their swerving that accounts for the voluntariness of our actions, "It will not be so much the actual occurrence of swerves that matters as the mere possibility of their occurrence." David Sedley, "Epicurus' Refutation of Determinism," in *Studi Sull'Epicureismo Greco e Romano offerti a Marcello Gigante* (Naples: Biblioteca della Parola del Passato, 1983), 41. John Masson's account of the swerve is that because we have free will, the atoms of the soul must likewise have free will, "man could not be free unless there exists in the atoms a principle apart from the fall and collision." This of course cannot alone argue for free will so Masson argues that Lucretius distinguishes the world of nature absolutely governed by necessity and the mind of man. Masson, John "Lucretius' Argument for Free-Will," *Journal of Philology* 12, no. 83 (1883): 129–130. Walter Englert in his book length study of the swerve presents the argument that what we find in Lucretius is Epicurus's response to the criticisms of Aristotle and a reply to Aristotle's theory of voluntary action from Book VIII of the *Physics*. Walter Englert, *Epicurus on the Swerve and Voluntary Action* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987). The swerve is, according to Englert's rather complicated argument, able to account for voluntary action, deliberate choice, and moral responsibility. Englert must, however, rely heavily on thinkers other than Lucretius to make his point and

frequently argues that what we find in Lucretius is little more than the thought of Epicurus. That there is no discussion in any of Epicurus's extant writings of the swerve and no discussion of Aristotle in Lucretius are difficulties that appear inconsequential to Englert. That aside, we are again left with the difficulty that Englert cannot explain willful choice originating in random capricious movement. Englert argues that the swerve is akin to Aristotle's suggestion that there must be a third kind of motion in addition to forced and passive motion of the elements, "which *somehow* accounts for the ability of living creatures to initiate action." Englert states that we have to go beyond Lucretius to find an answer to this "somehow," as there is no evidence in Lucretius that man is capable of controlling the swerve. Arguments such as Englert's, that man seizes upon a simulacrum and then the mind sets the swerve in motion, fail to account for how the mind is initially focused and how it can control the swerve.

16. Strauss, *Liberalism Ancient and Modern*, 96.
17. *Ibid.*, 96–97. While the swerve initially appears to be a source of comfort and human dignity Lucretius's use of examples and following discussion appear to undermine such intentions. See Leo Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion* (New York: Schocken Books, 1982), 41. Strauss states that the discovery of nature must be such that a "soothing regularity and necessity must prevail. This necessity must not tyrannize over us, it must leave us our freedom. Hence the notorious resort to the theory of the arbitrary movements of the atoms, so that human tranquility may persist, even in the face of the otherwise inexorable necessity of atomic events." Lucretius counteracts the notoriousness of the swerve by limiting it in the way that he does and also by rescinding most, if not all, of what it offers immediately afterwards. See Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, II, 295–308. Compare to Strauss, *Liberalism Ancient and Modern*, 96. See also, Nichols, *Epicurean Political Philosophy*, 66–67.
18. "Philosophy in the strict and classical sense is a quest for the eternal order or for the eternal cause or causes of all things. It presupposes then that there is an eternal and unchangeable order within which History takes place and which is not in any way affected by History. It presupposes in other words than any 'realm of freedom' is no more than a dependent province within 'the realm of necessity.'" Leo Strauss, *On Tyranny* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 212.
19. See Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, V, 1211–1220.
20. When Lucretius takes up the issue of the world's creation and therefore eventual dissolution he claims that lightening points to the divination of the world's fragility. He remarks that once we come to understand lightening, we no longer need to seek after hidden intent of the gods. In the conclusion of the discussion about lightening, he criticizes certain "Tyrrhenian songs" about lightening that are born of the vain search for divine guarantees that the walls of the world will not collapse. The songs are therefore produced from man's reluctance to accept that the world will inevitably die a natural death (VI, 565–566).

21. Bayle, *Dictionary Historical and Critical*, vol. 2, 786.
22. *Ibid.*, 787.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*, 789.
25. See Nichols, *Epicurean Political Philosophy*, 69–70.
26. See Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, II, 437, 472, 505.
27. The procession is of great political importance and we will return to it in [chapter 5](#).
28. Bayle, *Dictionary Historical and Critical*, vol. 2, 789.
29. See Nichols for the rather ironic accusations Lucretius levels against Heraclitus. *Epicurean Political Philosophy*, 31
30. See Plato, *Phaedo*, trans. Eva Brann, Peter Kalkavage and Eric Salem (Indianapolis: Focus Philosophical Library, 1998) 99c.
31. See Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, trans. by W. H. D. Rouse (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1992), 76. See Bailey, *Lucretius: De Rerum Natura*, vol. 2, 744, 954.
32. Strauss, *Liberalism Ancient and Modern*, 101.
33. *Ibid.*, 92.
34. Lucretius uses a similar threat to pursue Memmius in his forcing him into the *reductio ad absurdum* in Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, II, 983.
35. Strauss, *Liberalism Ancient and Modern*, 93.
36. Compare Cicero, *The Nature of the Gods*, 2.95. The passage in Cicero is taken from Aristotle's nonextant *De Philosophia*. Where Aristotle stressed that the first glances upon the heavens convinced men of the existence of the gods, Lucretius is initially silent about any theological conclusions men may have drawn.
37. Strauss, *Liberalism Ancient and Modern*, 103.

3 Philosophic Resignation: Living beyond Hope and Fear

1. While Lucretius may simply want to give credit where credit is due and the reader must therefore understand the teaching of Book III is not his own, the strength of the statement is striking. Could it be that Lucretius wishes to attribute the bitterness of what we will be shown to another as it may have some consequence for his own reception?
2. See James Nichols, *Epicurean Political Philosophy: The De Rerum Natura of Lucretius* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), 75.
3. Leo Strauss, *Liberalism Ancient and Modern* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989), 85.
4. *Ibid.*, 107.
5. It is worth mentioning here that this was also true of Lucretius's discussion of the swerve in Book II.
6. Bailey, *Lucretius: De Rerum Natura*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947), 1038–1039.

7. James Nichols makes the interesting observation that given that the ideal state according to Epicureanism is perfect tranquility, it is curious that Lucretius should remark that some are too calm. See Nichols, *Epicurean Political Philosophy*, 81.
8. Compare Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Robert Bartlett (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 1177b 32–35.
9. Nichols rightly points out that the statement is “surprisingly strong” and that it lowers the life of the gods. The argument here is that it elevates the life of man. Nichols, *Epicurean Political Philosophy*, 81.
10. In the proem to Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, trans., W. H. D. Rouse (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1992) Book V the man from Greece is referred to as a god (V, 8). This praise is however modified and hence corrected by the proem to Book VI where we are reminded that he was a mortal.
11. There is also the question of the desirability of such a universalization of the philosophic life even if it were a possibility. See Strauss, *Liberalism Ancient and Modern*, 94. As the pleasure of philosophy is at least partly dependent on observing the pains one is spared one might wonder if such pleasure would be lost by the universalization of the philosophic life.
12. Nichols, *Epicurean Political Philosophy*, 82.
13. *Ibid.*, 81–82. Nichols argues that Lucretius must address those that have not as of yet been persuaded of the materialist physics. If such is the case it seems rather unlikely that more arguments for the soul’s mortality will succeed as the proofs are dependent upon a prior acceptance of the material composite nature of the soul.
14. *Ibid.*
15. See Plato, *Phaedo*, trans. Eva Brann, Peter Kalkavage, and Eric Salem (Newburyport: Focus Classical Library, 1998), 70a. There the concern is raised that the soul upon death is scattered like smoke.
16. See also Charles Segal, *Lucretius on Death and Anxiety* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 99.
17. Strauss, *Liberalism Ancient and Modern*, 109.
18. *Ibid.*, 110.
19. This is the rather infamous symmetry argument that has been the subject of any number of articles in classical and philosophic scholarship. See Rosenbaum, “The Symmetry Argument,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 50, no. 2 (Dec. 1989): 353–373. David Furley, “Nothing to Us?” *The Norms of Nature*, ed. Schofield and Striker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
20. Compare Plato, *Phaedo*, 65b and 66b–67b. “Therefore it is a necessity,” he said, “that for all these reasons the true-born philosophers would be won over to some such opinion as this and so would say something like the following to one another: ‘It looks like there’s a shortcut that brings us to this conclusion—that as long as we have the body accompanying the argument in our investigation, and our soul, is smushed together with this sort of evil, we’ll never sufficiently attain what we desire. And this,

- we affirm, is the truth. For the body deprives us of leisure . . . and it fills us up with erotic loves and with desires and terrors.”
21. Compare Plato, *Phaedo*, 65a, “And certainly, Simmias, the majority of men are of the opinion that the man for whom none of these things is pleasant and who doesn’t have a share in them doesn’t deserve to live. In fact, the man who thinks nothing of these pleasures that come through the body is pretty much already dead.”
 22. See Plato, *Phaedo*, 64a “Others are apt to be unaware that those who happen to have gotten in touch with philosophy in the right way practice themselves nothing else but dying and being dead.” See also, Montaigne, *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Donald Frame (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958), I, 20: “That to philosophize is to learn how to die” “Let us have nothing on our minds as often as death.”
 23. Compare Plato, *Phaedo*, 95c–96a. That investigation as noted ran up against the obstacle of our bodies, an obstacle that appears insurmountable. See *Phaedo*, 67a–b. The task is to be as free of the body as possible, but the degree of freedom one can hope to attain is questionable.
 24. It may be something of a paradox that fear of death so controls some men (if not the majority of men) that they are completely ignorant as to its control over them. Such a paradox is seen in those who are so frightened of death that they kill themselves (III, 79–82).
 25. As Strauss points out this is a rather curious claim in light of the praise of Empedocles. As our analysis of Empedocles highlighted, the fact that his philosophy collapses into creation out of nothing may disqualify him as having written a genuinely philosophic poem. See Strauss, *Liberalism Ancient and Modern*, 91.
 26. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), Vol. 2, 647.
 27. For a discussion of the need for poetry as a consequence of the condition of the human soul see Allan Bloom’s interpretation of Plato’s *Ion*. *The Roots of Political Philosophy*, ed. Thomas Pangle (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 371–395.
 28. One might wonder if there is more to the vulgar “shrinking” from the truth about the nature of things. Given the accusations leveled against philosophy perhaps such shrinking is not as benign as it may here appear. The frenzy and madness that attend the procession of the Magna Mater may indicate as much. Compare Socrates’ discussion of Corybantic frenzy in the *Ion* (534 a–b) with Lucretius’s mention of the same in the procession (II, 629–635).
 29. See, Nichols, *Epicurean Political Philosophy*, 91.
 30. Bailey, *Lucretius: De Rerum Natura*, vol. 3, 1241.
 31. One might wonder how the lives of the men in the hills would be different if they were convinced of their isolation. Compare to Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, V, 1156–1160.
 32. How much of the soul is forced outside he does not say. The previous discussion of the nature of the soul emphasized how tenuous and slight it

- was and how it could not be held together in the air. Moreover, Lucretius has repeatedly stressed that “that which leaves its bounds is instant death to that which was before” (I, 670–671 and 792–793, II, 753–754, and III, 519–520). It is difficult to see how that part of the soul leaves it “own bounds”, the body, can possibly return.
33. For the other dislocations of the soul in Book III, all of which correspond to some kind of ailment, see, Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, III, 168–176, 487–509, and 526–547.
 34. Compare Aristotle, “Prophesying By Dreams,” *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941), 463a22–32. Aristotle suggests that not only does our waking concern influence our dreams but in turn such dreams may then determine our waking interests and actions.
 35. It is of interest that Lucretius’s own dream indicates that the quest for the truth about the nature of things is presented as unfinished. It is also of note that does not dream about the composition of verses but simply transcribing his discoveries into Latin. This is an important admission insofar as the tone of the poem as a whole suggests that Lucretius has a completed account of the whole. By claiming here that his quest is unfinished, one is left to wonder whether the general tone is an embellishment and what purpose that would serve.
 36. Compare Aristotle, “Prophesying By Dreams,” 463b12–13.
 37. See H. St. H. Vertue, “Venus and Lucretius,” *Greece & Rome*, 2nd ser., vol. 3, no. 2, Jubilee Number (Oct. 1956), 148. See also Robert D. Brown, *Lucretius on Love and Sex* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1987), 63.
 38. Strauss, *Liberalism Ancient and Modern*, 119.
 39. Martha Nussbaum argues that Lucretius wishes to lead his reader beyond erotic frenzy where he may see his beloved more clearly and with genuine affection. Nussbaum argues that Lucretius is engaged in delivering to his readers erotic “therapy.” However, she claims that Lucretius ultimately has not seen his therapy through to its end as Lucretius has failed to see the beauty in our neediness and vulnerability; “In other words, Lucretius fails to ask whether there might not be intense excitement and beauty precisely in being needy and vulnerable before a person one loves.” How far this notion is from Lucretius will be made apparent in what follows. It is not that Lucretius fails to see what Nussbaum accuses him of: the account is largely a warning against what Nussbaum contends is beautiful. Our vulnerability and neediness are not, for Lucretius, a cause for celebration. See Martha Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), 190.
 40. Brown, *Lucretius on Love and Sex*, 63. “Sexual desire is reduced to a conspiracy of sight and semen.”
 41. Compare Brown, *Lucretius on Love and Sex*, 98–99. “What he cannot conceive is that the irrational love of individuals, like the love of life itself, might (through physiological and social evolution) be as ‘natural’ or endemic in human beings as the copulatory urge in animals. Under

- the guise of fear of death and the passion of love it is actually human nature itself which Lucretius finds unacceptable, and it is thus no wonder if he fails to produce convincing arguments against such powerful and basic impulses.”
42. See in particular the discussion of the soul (III, 296–309) and “freedom” (II, 262–284).
 43. Compare Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, IV, 1160–1169 with Plato, *Republic*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968) 474d–475a. The use of several similar examples may be coincidental but remains striking.
 44. Leo Strauss, *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism*, ed. Thomas Pangle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 206. See also Victor Brochard, “The Theory of Pleasure According to Epicurus,” *Interpretation* 37, no. 1 (Fall 2009): 81.
 45. Strauss, *Liberalism Ancient and Modern*, 119.
 46. Compare Xenophon, *Symposium*, ed. Robert Bartlett (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 150. Socrates remarks that “there is no more fearsome spark of love than this [the kissing of a beautiful boy], for it is insatiable and supplies certain sweet hopes.”
 47. See *Republic*, 329a–329d. One might compare Lucretius’s account of the effect that eros has on men and their possibility to be initiated into philosophical education with the speech of Cephalus when he remarks about his youth and the degree to which eros was a kind of “mad master” over him. He does not partake of the conversation, and the conversation cannot go forward until he leaves, as he must attend to his sacrifices, as he approaches death uneasily.

4 O’ Mortal, O’ Fool, O’ Criminal, O’ Memmius

1. Suetonius, *On Grammarians*, trans. J. C. Rolfe, vol.2 (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1914), 14.
2. Plutarch, *Lives*, trans. Dryden (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), 690–691.
3. Cicero, *Letter to Atticus*, trans. D. R. Shackleton Bailey, vol. 24 (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1999), I.18.
4. Cicero *Letters to Quintus and Brutus*, trans. D. R. Shackleton Bailey, vol. 28 (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 2002), 70; Ovid, *Tristia*, trans. G. P. Gould (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1924), 2, 433.
5. Catullus, *The Poems of Catullus*, trans. F. W. Cornish (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1950), 13 and 33.
6. Smith W., *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology* (London: John Murray, 1873); Cicero, *Letter to Atticus*, vol. 24, II, 12; Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, trans. J. C. Rolfe, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1914), 15.
7. Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, vol. 1, 39.

8. Cicero, *Letters to Quintus and Brutus*, 3, 2; See also, Gruen, "The Consular Elections for 53 B.C." *Hommages a Marcel Renard*, ed. J. Bibauw, (Brussels: Latomus, 1969).
9. Cicero, *Letter to Friends*, trans. D. R. Shackleton Bailey, vol. 13 (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 2001), I, 7, note a.
10. *Ibid.*
11. See Cyril Bailey, *Lucretius: De Rerum Natura*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947), 623.
12. G. B. Townsend, "The Fading of Memmius," *The Classical Quarterly* 28, no. 2., (1978): 267; Walter Allen, "On the Friendship of Lucretius with Memmius," *Classical Philology* 33, no.2 (1938): 181; Duane Roller, "Gaius Memmius: Patron of Lucretius," *Classical Philology* 65, no. 4 (1970): 247; and T. P. Wiseman, *Cinna the Poet and Other Roman Essays* (Leicester: Leicester University Press 1974), 38–43.
13. Benjamin Farrington, "Lucretius and Memmius," *Anales de Filologia* 7, Bueno Aires, (1959): 13.
14. *Ibid.*, 29.
15. *Ibid.*, 21–23.
16. *Ibid.*, 22.
17. James Nichols, *Epicurean Political Philosophy: The De Rerum Natura of Lucretius* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), 45.
18. *Ibid.*
19. See Strauss's suggestion that Memmius is a new Paris. Leo Strauss, *Liberalism Ancient and Modern* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989): 89.
20. See also Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, trans., W. H. D. Rouse (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1992), V, 1–5, I, 925–929. Strauss, *Liberalism Ancient and Modern*, 102.
21. Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 112.
22. Compare Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, trans. Harvey Mansfield (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 10–14.
23. Strauss, *Liberalism Ancient and Modern*, 127.
24. *Ibid.*, 76.
25. Plutarch, *Moralia*, trans. Einarson and De Lacy, vol. 14 (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 2004), 1126e–1127e.
26. Strauss, *Liberalism Ancient and Modern*, 107.
27. Montaigne, *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Donald Frame (Stanford: Stanford University Press 1958), 379–380.

5 Gods of the Philosophers and Gods of the City

1. This chapter was originally published as "Lucretius on Religion," *Perspectives on Political Science* 38, no. 4 (Fall 2009): 228–239.
2. The military metaphor is sketched by David West in his *The Imagery and Poetry of Lucretius* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1969), 57–67.

3. To say that religion is “more commonly” responsible for crime is to say that it is obviously not the only source of crime.
4. For a good historical treatment of the procession see Erich S. Gruen, *Greek Culture and Roman Policy* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 5–33.
5. When Lucretius takes up this cosmological teaching later in Book V he appears reluctant to overthrow the pleasing fiction depicted in the procession. See Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, trans., W. H. D. Rouse (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1992) V, 536–564.
6. Compare Cyril Bailey, *The Greek Atomists and Epicurus* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1928), 477. As with much of the classicist writing on Lucretius Bailey’s primary focus is on Lucretius’s physical doctrines. The classicists’ literature treats Lucretius exclusively as a natural philosopher. This focus necessarily fails to justice to Lucretius’s intention. To fully appreciate the place of the physics in Lucretius one must begin with the political and religious difficulties that attend his primary intention. On this score the classicists are not very helpful.
7. Compare the placement of Plato’s elaboration of the theology immediately after the penal code in Book X of *The Laws*. The placement of the discussion, as with Plato, should not lead one to see Lucretius’s interest in the theology as limited only to its political usefulness.
8. See René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 14.
9. Leo Strauss, *Liberalism Ancient and Modern*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989), 131.
10. See James Nichols, *Epicurean Political Philosophy: The De Rerum Natura of Lucretius* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), 165–166. Nichols’s book is the only other full length study of Lucretius’s poem that argues explicitly that Lucretius’s poem is a work of political philosophy. Nichols rightly argues that Lucretius is more than an elaboration of epicurean physics and is primarily a study of man and society. Nichols, however, remains with the traditional understanding of the address to Memmius as motivated by a desire for philosophic friendship. This limitation in Nichols’ study leads him to overemphasize the didactic and pedagogical nature of the poem and not appreciate the extent of the limitations to leading men towards the truth. Nichols, therefore, does not sufficiently detail the tension between philosophy and the city.
11. See Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, II, 1133–1150 and IV where an account of food occupies the center of the two halves. See also Strauss, *Liberalism Ancient and Modern*, 117.
12. Strauss, *Liberalism Ancient and Modern*, 119.
13. Compare Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, V, 1210–1217, with 821–827, and 432–454. It is also interesting to compare Lucretius’s own attachment to the man from Greece from the proems to Books V and VI. He begins in V with the statement that “He is a god” (V, 8), but concedes he is a mere mortal in VI, “He is dead” (VI, 7).

14. An interesting comparison can be found in Ptolemy, Book I Chapter I of *Claudius*. There Ptolemy argues that by investigating astronomical phenomena one can put theology on a more rational and solid footing without taking away from the dignity of theology.
15. Strauss, *Liberalism Ancient and Modern*, 85.
16. Compare Plato's *Phaedo*, trans. Eva Brann, Peter Kalkavage, and Eric Salem (Newburyport: Focus Classical Library, 1998) 68c–d and *Apology*, trans. G. M. A. Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1998) 28b–d.
17. A tradition of the pious labeling atheists and their philosophic opponents as Epicureans is well known. See Leo Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion* (New York: Schocken Books, 1982), 29. See also the understanding of the roots of atheism as professed by Kleinias in Plato's *Laws*, trans., Thomas Pangle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988) 886a8–b2.
18. Compare Socrates's challenge to the life of Achilles in Plato's *Republic*, trans., Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 379a–383c and *Apology*, 28b–d. Compare also the theology of Book X, Chapter 8, 1178b7–22 of Aristotle's *Ethics*, where the notion of the Gods' awareness or concern for man is less than clear. The inactivity of the Gods and the fact that they may not concern themselves with the ordinary affairs of men may begin to suggest the ways in which the contemplative life is most properly divine.
19. See, Eve Adler, *Vergil's Empire* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2003). The thesis of Adler's book is that Vergil, while agreeing with Lucretius's account of the nature of things, sought to correct its negative political consequences by creating a new myth of the founding of Rome. The thesis of Vergil as an improvement on Lucretius relies heavily upon the idea that Lucretius is not mindful of his own dependency upon the city's religious foundation. The purpose here is to reveal the extent to which Lucretius is not only mindful of this problem but that the theological-political problem within Lucretius thought emerges out of his awareness of the problem.
20. See, J. D. Minyard, *Lucretius and the Late Republic* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985), 18. Minyard's thought-provoking book argues that this acceptance of the materialist physics without the ethics can be seen in action through an analysis of the speeches of Caesar in Sallust's recounting of the trial of the Cataline conspirators. Another example of an Epicurean who appears to adopt the physics as it can be applied to politics but not the ethics is Shakespeare's Cassius from *Julius Caesar*. See, Allan Bloom, *Shakespeare's Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 75–112.
21. Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, trans. Thomas Hobbes (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1959). See Book II, sect. 48 for Thucydides' own affliction and 47 for the effectiveness of medicine. See also Sect. 51 where it is held that medicine benefited some but not others.
22. *Ibid*, Book II, Section 51.
23. *Ibid*.

Conclusion: The Modern Reversal

1. See Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, 3.2 and *The Prince*, trans. Harvey Mansfield (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), Ch. xv. See also, Harvey C. Mansfield, *Machiavelli's New Modes and Orders* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 307–308. For the transformation, and corruption, of the Lucretian ideal by Machiavelli see Paul Rahe's "In the Shadow of Lucretius," *History of Political Thought* 28, no.1 (Spring 2007): 30–55. What Machiavelli sees as a contradiction in Lucretius's teaching is in fact necessity. Rahe suggests that Machiavelli renders the Lucretian teaching consistent.
2. Plato, *Republic*, trans., Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 496d, given the "madness of the many" the philosopher "keeps quiet and minds his own business—as a man in a storm . . . stands under a little wall."
3. See Jonathan Israel, *Radical Enlightenment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), Introduction, 10. Leo Strauss, *What is Political Philosophy?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 43–44, "By Machiavelli's time the classical tradition had undergone profound changes. The contemplative life had found its home in monasteries."
4. Francis Bacon, *Essays* (London: A. L. Burt Company Publishers, 1883), 49.
5. Francis Bacon, *The New Organon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 4.
6. Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise* (New York: Dover Publications, 1951), 11.
7. Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 107, n.33. Commenting on Halevi's perception of Socratic irony in Socrates' polite denial of his grasp of Divine Wisdom Strauss remarks that "the attitude of the philosophers is not altered if the people of Socrates' time are replaced by the adherents of revealed religion."
8. Montaigne, *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Donald Frame (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958), 379–380.
9. Leo Strauss, *What is Political Philosophy?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 127. Christopher Nadon's analysis of this passage is particularly instructive. Christopher Nadon "Leo Strauss' Restatement on Why Xenophon," *Perspectives on Political Science* 39, no. 2 (Apr.–June 2010): 77–81.
10. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 463. Hobbes's confrontation with the "schooles" and their devotion to Aristotle would seem to follow Descartes. See, Descartes *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1980), Pt. VI, 33, and "Preface."
11. Pierre Bayle, *The Dictionary of Historical and Critical of Mr. Peter Bayle*, trans. Pierre Des Maizeaux, vol. 3 (London: J.J. and P. Knapton, 1735), 923. Bayle's characterization of the nature of religious devotion in Rome is shared by Fustel de Coulanges in *The Ancient City* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 138–139.

12. Bayle, *Dictionary Historical and Critical*, vol. 3, 922–923.
13. Montesquieu, *Pensées* (Bordeaux: Imprimerie De G. Gounouilhou, 1901), No. 2097, 491; Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, trans. Donald A. Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 2000), 39.
14. Gassendi, *Vie et Moeurs D'Epicure*, trans. Sylvie Taussig, vol. 2, pt. 4.4 (Paris: Les Belle Lettres, 2006), 239–240.
15. Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, 39.
16. Richard Kennington, *On Modern Origins* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2004), 106–107.
17. Bacon, *The New Organon*, 74.
18. Bacon, “The Refutation of Philosophies,” *The Philosophy of Francis Bacon*, ed. Benjamin Farrington (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1964), 115.
19. Bacon, *The New Organon*, 53.
20. Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, 213–214. See also, Kennington, *On Modern Origins*, 126.
21. See Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 46, and John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 291, 372.
22. Maimonides, “Guide for the Perplexed,” *Medieval Political Philosophy*, ed. Ralph Lerner and Mushin Mahdi (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 204.
23. Compare *Republic*, trans., G. M. A. Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1998), 497b, and *Apology*, 32e.
24. See Bacon, *The New Organon*, 20 and 8.
25. *Ibid.*, 13; Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, pt. VI.
26. See Montesquieu’s advice on how to detach the soul from religion in *Spirit of the Laws*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 489.
27. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Ch. 25.
28. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 70.
29. See Locke’s account of the ratio of what nature gives to what man adds by his own labor. Locke by suggesting the ratio is 1:10, subsequently reduces nature to 1:100, then to 1:1000 and finally refers to nature left to itself as waste. Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*, 294–297.
30. See Leo Strauss, *Spinoza’s Critique of Religion* (New York: Schocken Books, 1982), 86; and *Philosophy and Law*, trans. Eve Adler (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995), 35–36.
31. See Bacon’s request and advice to James I in the Epistle Dedicatory to the “Great Renewal” in *New Organon*, 4–5.
32. Machiavelli’s call for the conquest of fortune in the penultimate chapter of the *The Prince* would have been unthinkable to Lucretius. It may not be unthinkable for Machiavelli but only a useful fiction, “And truly anyone wise enough to adapt to and understand the times and pattern of events would always have good fortune or would always keep himself from bad fortune; and it would come to be true that the wise man could control the stars and the Fates. But such wise men do not exist: in the first

- place men are shortsighted; in the second place, they are unable to master their own natures; thus it follows that Fortune is fickle, controlling men and keeping them under her yoke.” Machiavelli, *Machiavelli and His Friends*, ed. James Atkinson and David Sices (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996), 135. Thanks to Robert Bartlett for bringing this to my attention.
33. See Hobbes, *Leviathan*, XII and LXVI, 459. Uncertainty about what becomes of us after death leads to “perpetual fear” which leads to war. In chapter LXVI, Hobbes suggests that the origin of philosophy is in leisure. He, however, goes on to attack the idea of leisure as it appears to be responsible for increased understanding of our mortal condition. See Peter J. Ahrens Dorf, “The Fear of Death and the Longing for Immortality: Hobbes and Thucydides on Human Nature and the Problem of Anarchy,” *The American Political Science Review* 94, no. 3 (Sept. 2000): 579–593.
 34. Hobbes, *De Corpore* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 189.
 35. Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, 33. See also the emphasis on the arts of medicine for the prolongation of life, and the resuscitation of the dead in Salomon’s House in Bacon’s *New Atlantis*, ed. Jerry Weinberger (Arlington Heights: Harlan Davidson, 1989), 73.
 36. Bacon, *The New Organon*, 8.
 37. *Ibid.*
 38. Compare Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning* (Philadelphia: Paul Dry Books, 2001), 55, with Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, trans., W. H. D. Rouse (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, 1992) Book II, 1–13.
 39. Bacon, *The New Organon*, 99.
 40. See also Bacon’s essay “On Truth” and Robert Faulkner’s commentary on it in *Francis Bacon and the Project of Progress* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1993), 95.
 41. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch. 12, 76.
 42. *Ibid.*, Ch.6, 42.
 43. See Thomas Pangle, *Montesquieu’s Philosophy of Liberalism* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1973), 238.
 44. Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, 466.
 45. *Ibid.*, 489.
 46. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch.11, 70.
 47. See Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 70, and John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government*, 296–298.
 48. In Strauss’s correspondence with Eric Voegelin he remarks “I want to say only this about Lucretius today: his poem is the purest and most glorious expression of the attitude that elicits consolation from the utterly hopeless truth, on the basis of its being only the truth – there is no idea of the use of the hopeless, godless truth for some social purpose, as is almost always the case with other fashions and trends; nor is there any aestheticism or sentimentality” in *Faith and Political Philosophy: The Correspondence between Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin 1934–1964.*, and ed. P. Emberley and

- B. Cooper (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 62. These remarks about Lucretius should be compared to what Strauss says about Plato in his review of John Wild's *Plato's Theory of Man*, "Plato composed his writings in such a way as to prevent for all time their use as authoritative texts. . . . In the last analysis his writings cannot be used for any purpose other than philosophizing. In particular, no social order and no party which ever existed or which ever will exist can rightfully claim Plato as its patron." Leo Strauss, "On a New Interpretation of Plato's Political Philosophy," *Social Research* 13, no. 3 (Sept. 1946): 351.
49. See Robert Bartlett "On Politics of Faith and Reason: The Project of Enlightenment in Pierre Bayle and Montesquieu," *Journal of Politics* 63, no. 1 (Feb. 2001): 25. See also Thomas Pangle, *The Theological Basis of Liberal Modernity in Montesquieu's Spirit of the Laws* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 144–146. "In his fullest statement of the effect of the classical rationalists' open, public insistence on the primacy of the theoretical or speculative over the political or practical virtues, Montesquieu makes it quite clear that he sees in that insistence a slippery slope towards religious asceticism and in particular Christianity. . . . In order to do what he thought he had to do to liberate the life of the mind, Montesquieu found himself impelled to obfuscate profoundly the meaning of the life of the mind."
50. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Ch.9, 61. An example worthy of note is Hobbes's table of the "Several Subjects of Knowledge" where there is no theology.

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