

Lucretius and the Epicurean Other

On the Philosophical Background of *DRN* V.1011-1027

1. This paper studies the philosophical background of a pericope of seventeen lines from *DRN* V in which we find Lucretius' account of the beginnings of human social behaviour (V.1011-1027):

- Inde casas postquam ac pellis ignemque pararunt,
et mulier coniuncta viro concessit in unum
[lacuna]
cognita sunt, prolemque ex se videre creatam,
tum genus humanum primum mollescere coepit.
1115 ignis enim curavit ut alsia corpora frigus
non ita iam possent caeli sub tegmine ferre,
et Venus imminuit viris, puerique parentum
blanditiis facile ingenium fregere superbum.
1120 tunc et amicitiam coeperunt iungere aventes
finitimi inter se nec laedere nec violari,
et pueros commendarunt muliebrique saeculum,
vocibus et gestu cum balbe significarent
imbecillorum esse aequum misererier omnis.
1125 nec tamen omnimodis poterat concordia gigni,
sed bona magnaue pars servabat foedera caste;
aut genus humanum iam tum foret omne peremptum,
nec potuisset adhuc perducere saecula propago.

We are here in fact dealing with the second stage in Lucretius' account of the social history (or prehistory) of mankind.¹ The first stage, described in the preceding lines (925-1010), represents the original condition of primitive man (the *durum genus*), a condition in which there appears to be no room for any form of social life whatsoever (V.958-961):

Nec commune bonum poterant spectare, neque ullis
moribus inter se scibant nec legibus uti.
quod cuique obtulerat praedae fortuna, ferebat
sponte sua sibi quisque valere et vivere doctus.

At this stage men are living solitary lives of undiluted egoism (note the words *sibi quisque valere*), unable to take the common interest (*commune bonum*) in whatever form, into account. At the second stage (1011-1104), which covers the passage we are here discussing, we witness the emergence of rudimentary social structures: as

¹ On the the three stages of the *Kulturstehungslehre* see Manuwald (1980) 8-41, esp. 15-18, whose detailed analysis basically vindicates the earlier findings of Barwick (1943).

soon as houses are built and families have been established (1011-1112), and also under the influence of the use of fire and clothing, men, affected by Venus and by the cuteness of their own babies, begin to 'soften' (*mollescere*). As a result, they want to establish friendships (*amicities*) with their neighbours (*finitimi*), consisting in a sort of rudimentary compact not to harm each other, and they begin to pity the weak. It appears that people now no longer act as isolated individuals who have merely their own interests in mind; instead there is room for mutual bonds (contrast the words *amicitiem coeperunt iungere... finitimi inter se* of 1019-1020 with *neque ullis moribus inter se scibant nec legibus uti* of 958-959), and a certain degree of unity or concord (*concordia*) is established. In other words, we are dealing with some sort of non-institutionalized social cohesion on a small scale. At the third and final stage (1105-1457) we are dealing with institutionalized social life, i.e. with states based on laws and magistracies. Now Lucretius makes it quite clear that this stage involves social compacts which are ultimately based on the hedonistic and basically egoistic motives of calculating individuals. These are in fact the motives which have been depicted at the first stage, so that we may observe that the third stage fits in with the first — and indeed with the general tenor of Epicurean hedonism — quite neatly.

By contrast, it has often been claimed that what Lucretius presents as the second stage is not, and cannot be, a true-blue Epicurean account. Here the notion of utility is not prominent, and at any rate not the only factor presented. True, Lucretius' reference to a compact not to harm and not to be harmed has a utilitarian ring, but the desire to engage in such compacts is not based on rational calculation, but on the softening of the people involved and on their strong or proud minds being broken. In addition also Lucretius' invocation of the notion of *concordia* seems to point to something more than a group of calculating individuals.² One rather gets the impression that we are dealing with a kind of naturally developing other-concern,³ although it is clearly a form of other-concern that is limited to family members and close neighbours. At any rate, it is because of the apparently spontaneous, and not explicitly utilitarian, character of the process which governs the second stage that scholars have assumed that Lucretius is here going beyond the limits of Epicurean ethics. Thus Bailey claimed that 'the austere utilitarian doctrine [of Epicurus]... is undoubtedly softened and humanized by Lucretius.' Similar comments were made by Giussani, Ernout & Robin and Boyancé.⁴ On a more specific level others have tried to link this part of Lucretius' story with particular non-Epicurean conceptions that were circulating in Hellenistic philosophy, arguing, for example, that Lucretius' term '*commendari*' represents the Greek οἰκετιοῦσθαι and that Lucretius is here in fact

² The utilitarian aspects are rather overstressed in Perelli (1966) 172-182; but even Perelli (*op. cit.* 175) has to admit that a second factor, 'un sentimento di filantropia e di compassione', plays a role as well.

³ Giussani (1896) 126 even speaks of spontaneous and instinctive goodness ('spontanea ed istintiva bontà'), which, I believe, is a bit too much.

⁴ Cf. Ernout & Robin (1962) vol. 3, 139, on the *foedus* of which Lucretius is here speaking: 'à la base de cet accord il y a donc un sentiment, non un calcul réfléchi. Cet aspect sentimental de la doctrine de L. et la nature du sentiment allégué par lui distinguent cette doctrine, et de celle d'Épicure et de celle de Diodore.' Similar remarks in Boyancé (1963) 243; Giussani (1896) vol. II, 125-126.

adapting the allegedly Stoic conception of οἰκειώσις to his otherwise basically Epicurean *Kulturentstehungslehre*.⁵

My paper will pass over the first and third stages of Lucretius' *Kulturentstehungslehre*, and focus on the way in which the second stage applies the idea of a gradual appropriation which is independent of any hedonistic or utilitarian motives. Leaving open the possibility that some of the details of V.1011-1027 (e.g. the occurrence of *Venus* in 1017) are of Lucretius' own making, I want to argue that the main theme of the passage is in line with Epicurean orthodoxy.

2. First a few notes on the wider context. A broader sketch of the cultural and intellectual background of our passage in Lucretius should acknowledge the fact that the conception of gradual 'appropriation' between human beings — as opposed to a more radical form of individualism — plays a prominent role in the work of various Greek philosophers. The idea that there are certain forms of community which emerge spontaneously or naturally and which are not, or at least not directly, based on self-interest occurs prominently in Aristotelian ethics (most notably in the theory of friendship) and it is arguably at the core of the Stoic theory of *oikeiōsis*.⁶ Indeed, as can be inferred from Aristotle's discussion of the subject — which clearly exploits and makes explicit what people commonly think about these matters — it appears to have been regarded as simply a matter of common experience.⁷ Some features of this common picture which are relevant to our present discussion may here be singled out.

First, the conception of community is conveyed by some very specific terms, such as κοινωνία ('community', referring to the sharing of good things, of things in life etc.), οἰκειότης ('familiarity': we regard our friends not as alien beings, but as people who belong to our own personal sphere), and ὁμόνοια ('concord', used of friends or fellow-citizens who to some extent think similarly).⁸

Secondly, members of the kind of communities we are here dealing with do not weigh off their own interests and feelings against those of their fellow-members, but in a morally relevant way they share each other's feelings and interests;⁹

⁵ In Cicero οἰκειώσις is rendered by *commendatio* at *Fin.* III.16; but he also uses *conciliatio* (*ibid.* 122). That Lucretius is here adapting a Stoic concept to an Epicurean context was argued by Pigeaud (1983) 138-141, and again by Schrijvers in an as yet unpublished paper read to audiences in Paris and Berkeley.

⁶ The process of οἰκειώσις involves treating other things or persons as οἰκεῖα, i.e. as belonging to the sphere of the 'self'. A clear recent account of the theory is provided by Annas (1993) 262-276, who however appears to be too ready to use the label 'impartiality' in connection with the Stoic theory, and to force it into a 'Kantian' interpretation; for a critique, see now Inwood (1995).

⁷ The recognition of this fact allows us to solve, or rather to circumvent the old controversy as to whether the theory of οἰκειώσις was taken over by the Stoics from the Peripatetic tradition, as was argued by Von Arnim (1926) and Dirlmeier (1937), or was fully original with the Stoics, as was claimed by Philippson (1932) and Pohlenz (1940) 1-81. Both Peripatetics and Stoics — and as I argue here, even, to some extent, Epicurus — drew on 'facts' of common experience and popular morality. I intend to work out this point more fully elsewhere.

⁸ Cf. Aristotle *EN* 1167a26: ἀλλὰ τὰς πόλεις ὁμονοεῖν φασίν, ὅταν περὶ τῶν συμφερόντων ὁμογνωμονῶσι καὶ ταῦτα προαιρῶνται καὶ πράττωσι τὰ κοινῇ δόξαντα ... πολιτικὴ δὴ φιλία φαίνεται ἢ ὁμόνοια.

⁹ Cf. Aristotle *Rhet.* 1381a8-11: τοῦτων δὲ ὑποκειμένων ἀνάγκη φίλον εἶναι τὸν συνηδόμενον τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς καὶ συναλγοῦντα τοῖς λυπηροῖς μὴ διὰ τι ἕτερον ἀλλὰ δι' ἑκείνων· γιγνομένων γάρ

hence in these cases the modern labels ‘egoism’ and ‘altruism’ are rather inappropriate.¹⁰

Finally, ‘community’ (κοινωνία) and ‘appropriation’ (οἰκειότης) may come in degrees; the strongest possible form involves a complete identification with the other person or persons; a weaker form involves only a limited identification.¹¹ Although these features were integrated in the various philosophical systems in different ways — particularly the question to what extent the whole process might count as ‘natural’ admitted different answers¹² — they themselves represented a common ground between these theories. The question which we now have to face is whether and to what extent Epicurean ethics may count as an exception.

3. It is usually believed that Epicurean hedonism involves a basically and invariably individualistic conception of man — a conception which supposes that people only engage in those forms of social compact which are ultimately based on a rational calculation and on their own interest, and that they regard all others as people whose interests and wishes are to be weighed off against their own. Thus regarded the Epicurean position would resemble the almost paradigmatic egoism usually associated with the philosophy of Hobbes.¹³ In the present section I want to qualify this common view. I shall try to show that also the Epicurean school, in its own way, adopted several elements of what I have described above as the common ground among various ancient ethical theories, and that its social ethics was accordingly less straightforwardly egoistic than has often been assumed.

Let us note, to begin with, that the idea of an independently working appropriation — independently, that is, from any hedonistic motivation — was invoked by later Epicureans in defending their theory of friendship against anti-hedonistic attacks

ὅν βούλονται χαίρουσιν πάντες, τῶν ἐναντίων δὲ λυποῦνται, ὥστε τῆς βουλήσεως σημεῖον αἱ λύπαι καὶ αἱ ἡδοναί. καὶ οἷς δὴ ταῦτά ἀγαθὰ καὶ κακά, καὶ οἱ τοῖς αὐτοῖς φίλοι καὶ οἱ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἐχθροί· ταῦτά γὰρ τούτοις βούλεσθαι ἀνάγκη, ὥστε ἄπερ αὐτῶ καὶ ἄλλω βουλόμενος τούτῳ φαίνεται φίλος εἶναι. See also the Stoic definition of friendship at D.L. VII.124: φασὶ δ’ αὐτὴν [scil. φιλίαν] κοινωνίαν τινὰ εἶναι τῶν κατὰ τὸν βίον, χρωμένων ἡμῶν τοῖς φίλοις ὡς ἑαυτοῖς.

¹⁰ For an extensive discussion of some of the problems connected with the application of the label ‘egoism’ to Aristotelean ethics, see Kraut (1989) 78-154.

¹¹ On degrees of κοινωνία, see Aristotle *EN* 1159b30: καθ’ ὅσον δὲ κοινωνοῦσιν, ἐπὶ τοσοῦτόν ἐστι φίλια. There are also degrees in familiarization (οἰκειότης) — indeed the strongest form of familiarization involves that we regard the fortunes and misfortunes of the person at issue as our own. Accordingly, if such a person is afflicted by disaster, we do not regard the situation as pitiful, but as downright terrible (i.e. to ourselves). Cf. Aristotle *Rhet.* 1386a19-25: ἐλεοῦσι δὲ τοὺς τε γνωρίμους, ἂν μὴ σφόδρα ἐγγὺς ὧσιν οἰκειότητι (περὶ δὲ τούτους ὥσπερ περὶ αὐτοὺς μέλλοντας ἔχουσιν· διὸ καὶ ὁ Ἀμάσιος ἐπὶ μὲν τῷ υἱεὶ ἀγομένῳ ἐπὶ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν οὐκ ἐδάκρυσεν, ὡς φασίν, ἐπὶ δὲ τῷ φίλῳ προσαιτοῦντι· τοῦτο μὲν γὰρ ἐλεεινόν, ἐκεῖνο δὲ δεινόν. It must be a much more limited identification which Aristotle has in mind when he maintains that οἰκεῖον ἅπας ἄνθρωπος ἄνθρώπῳ καὶ φίλον (*EN* 1155a21).

¹² Thus the Stoic theory of οἰκειώσις had explicit recourse to the concept of cosmic nature and was highly systematic. Its Aristotelean counterpart stayed closer to common sense notions, was less systematic and invoked the concept of nature only indirectly and only in the relatively weak sense that ‘man is by nature a gregarious animal’.

¹³ Cf. Mitsis (1988) 101 for an example of such an ‘Hobbesian’ interpretation. It is worth pointing out, incidentally, that Hobbes’ own position on psychological egoism was less straightforward than is usually assumed; on which see now Gert (1996) 167 with n. 4.

(such as were launched by Chrysippus).¹⁴ In the first book of the *De Finibus* (I.69) Cicero paraphrases their arguments:

Sunt autem quidam Epicurei timidiore paulo contra vestra convicia sed tamen satis acuti, qui verentur ne, si amicitiam propter nostram voluptatem expetendam putemus, tota amicitia quasi claudicare videatur. Itaque primos congressus copulationesque et consuetudinum instituendarum voluntates fieri propter voluptatem, cum autem usus progrediens familiaritatem effecerit, tum amorem efflorescere tantum ut, etiamsi nulla sit utilitas ex amicitia, tamen ipsi amici propter se ipsos amentur. Etenim si loca, si fana, si urbes, si gymnasia, si campum, si canes, si equos, si ludicra excercendi aut venandi consuetudine adamare solemus, quanto id in hominum consuetudine facilius fieri poterit et iustius?

These later Epicureans, then, explicitly played down the importance of the hedonistic basis of Epicurean friendships (which, according to their opponents, would only make for ‘crippled’ friendships (*claudicare*)), by arguing that hedonistic motives only play a role at the first stage (*primos congressus fieri propter voluptatem*), but that once friendships are well under way, utilitarian motives are superseded (*etiamsi nulla sit utilitas ex amicitia*) by a gradual process of appropriation (*usus progrediens familiaritatem effecerit*), based on *consuetudo* (*consuetudine adamare*). It is precisely in virtue of the independent, non-utilitarian status of this process that this passage in Cicero resembles what we find in Lucretius.

It is worth noting that the mechanism of familiarization by *consuetudo* which is here described appears in Lucretius as well. At the end of the famous *finale* of book IV on love and sex, Lucretius adds a few low-key remarks on non-passionate love. There is nothing miraculous in the fact that men sometimes love physically unattractive women. No need to have recourse to an explanation in terms of divine intervention (*divinitus, Venerisque sagittis*) which is of course anathema to Lucretius the Epicurean. Instead the principle that *consuetudo concinnat amorem* is here explicitly invoked as a perfectly viable alternative explanation (IV.1278-1287):

1180 Nec divinitus interdum Venerisque sagittis
deteriore fit ut forma muliercula ametur;
nam facit ipsa suis interdum femina factis
morigerisque modis et munde corpore culto,
ut facile insuescat <te> secum degere vitam.
quod superest, consuetudo concinnat amorem;
nam leviter quamvis quod crebro tunditur ictu,
1185 vincitur in longo spatio tamen atque labascit.
nonne vides etiam guttas in saxa cadentis
umoris longo in spatio pertundere saxa?

A similar role for *consuetudo* in the *Kulturentstehungslehre* of book V would be perfectly apposite insofar as it would fit in with the overall explanatory strategy of this account. After all Lucretius envisages the emergence of civilisation as something which can be explained without reference to divine intervention,¹⁵ or to any kind of teleology; instead it is presented as a process of trial and error, of gradual evolution

¹⁴ On Chrysippus' attacks against Epicurean hedonism and their aftermath see Algra (1997).

¹⁵ Cf. also Diogenes of Oenoanda fr. 12, col. II-III Smith: neither the *technai* (which are said to have developed μετά τοῦ χρόνου) nor language are to be regarded as divine gifts.

driven by a number of spontaneous reactions to particular circumstances, *usus* and *experientia mentis*.¹⁶

Now it might be thought that these views on gradual appropriation represent an heterodox strand within the Epicurean school. After all, they are explicitly ascribed by Cicero to *later* Epicureans. On closer view, however, matters are more complicated. What was heterodox about this later theory described by Cicero was presumably not the introduction of appropriation as an independent explanatory factor, but rather the playing down of the importance of hedonism as the second explanatory factor next to it. Indeed in *Fin.* I.67-68 Cicero himself suggests that the element of a community transcending the limits of individualism was present in the *orthodox* Epicurean account of friendship as well. For he has the Epicurean spokesman Torquatus speak of friends sharing each other's pleasure and pain (*laetemur amicorum laetitia aequae atque nostra* etc.) and as taking on some laborious tasks *propter amici voluptatem* as well as *propter suam voluptatem*, and claim that according to Epicurus people love their friends *as they love themselves*.¹⁷ This suggests that — like Aristotle and the Stoics, on which see above, 143 — Epicurus was willing to envisage the possibility of a situation where the boundaries between self-interest and other-interest get blurred. What is particularly interesting is that Cicero's Epicurean spokesman suggests that this growing tendency to love our friends as we love ourselves, is a second factor which, next to pleasure as a motive (i.e. as a factor independent of hedonistic or utilitarian considerations), explains how friendships work according to Epicurus (*et hoc ipsum efficitur in amicitia et amicitia cum voluptate connectitur*). Again, such an independent process of familiarization also appears to be what we find in Lucretius.

But there is also evidence — and in part *direct* evidence¹⁸ — of Epicurus' own use of the conceptions of *κοινωνία* and *οἰκειότης* and of the idea of a gradual appropriation which leads to such forms of community as we are here talking about. The relevant texts present a number of difficulties that will have to be passed over here, but the main points stand out clear enough. First, there is the brief characterization of Epicurean friendship provided by Diogenes Laertius. It features the notion of an emerging *koinônia*. We are told, at D.L. X.120 that Epicurean friendship, in spite of the fact that it takes its start in what is useful (*διὰ τὰς χρείας*), grows into a kind of community (*συνίστασθαι δὲ αὐτὴν κατὰ κοινωνίαν τοῖς ταῖς ἡδοναῖς ἐκπεπληρωμ(ένοις)*).¹⁹ Secondly, and more importantly, in one of Epicurus' own *sententiae*,

¹⁶ Cf. V.1452-1453: *usus et impigrae simul experientia mentis / paulatim docuit pedetemptim progredientis*. A case in point is of course the account of the origin and development of language; cf. V.1028-1090 and *Ep. Hdt.* 75-76.

¹⁷ *Fin.* I.67-68: [...] neque vero ipsam amicitiam tueri nisi aequae amicos et nosmet ipsos diligamus, idcirco et hoc ipsum efficitur in amicitia et amicitia cum voluptate connectitur. [...] Nam et laetemur amicorum laetitia aequae atque nostra et pariter dolemus angoribus. Quocirca eodem modo sapiens erit affectus erga amicum quo in se ipsum, quosque labores propter suam voluptatem susciperet, eosdem suscipiet propter amici voluptatem.

¹⁸ Even if both the *KD* and the *RS* appear to contain material coined not by Epicurus himself, but by later Epicureans, they must have reflected the Epicurean orthodoxy — note that the *KD* were memorized by faithful Epicureans as a kind of catechism (cf. Cicero *Fin.* I.20). On the composition of the two collections see now the convenient survey in Erler (1994) 81-82.

¹⁹ The most important MSS have *κατὰ κοινωνίαν τοῖς ταῖς ἡδοναῖς ἐκπεπληρωμ*. Bignone's restoration *ἐκπεπληρωμ(ένοις)* is now commonly accepted. Usener's emendation *κατὰ κοινωνίαν*

KD 40, we find the concept of *oikeiotês*: people living together in safe and close communities are said to have reached the strongest possible degree of familiarization (πληρεστάτην οικειότητα). I here give the text as printed by Arrighetti:

“Ὅσοι τὴν δύναμιν ἔσχον τοῦ τὸ θαρρεῖν μάλιστα ἐκ τῶν ὁμορροῦντων παρασκευάσασθαι, οὗτοι καὶ ἐβίωσαν μετ’ ἀλλήλων ἥδιστα τὸ βεβαιοτάτον πίστωμα ἔχοντες, καὶ πληρεστάτην οικειότητα ἀπολαβόντες οὐκ ᾠδύραντο ὡς πρὸς ἔλεον τὴν τοῦ τελευτήσαντος προκαταστροφῆν.”²⁰

Perhaps the most interesting parallel to Lucretius’ account is provided by *SV* 61 (text basically as printed by Arrighetti):

Καλλίστη ἡ τῶν πλησίων ὄψις τῆς πρώτης συγγενείας ὁμοιοῦσης ἢ καὶ πολλὴν εἰς τοῦτο ποιουμένης σπουδῆν.

Here again the constitution of the text is controversial,²¹ but according to a plausible reconstruction the text speaks of the sight of our neighbours (compare Lucretius’ *finitimi*) being very beautiful, once the first stage of familiarity (συγγένεια) has made them and us one in mind (the verb ὁμοιοέω is related to δμόνοια = *concordia*).

Finally, the idea that there can be various *degrees* of appropriation — an idea to which, as we saw in the previous section, Aristotle and the Stoics were committed as well — is expressed by the distinctive application of the adjectives δμόφυλον and οὐκ ἀλλόφυλον in *KD* 39 (I here render the text as printed by Von der Muehl):

“Ὅ τὸ μὴ θαρροῦν ἀπὸ τῶν ἔξωθεν ἄριστα συστησάμενος οὗτος τὰ μὲν δυνατὰ δμόφυλα κατεσκευάσατο, τὰ δὲ μὴ δυνατὰ οὐκ ἀλλόφυλά γε· ὅσα δὲ μηδὲ τοῦτο δυνατὸς ἦν, ἀνεπίμεικτος ἐγένετο, καὶ ἐξερείσατο ὅσα τοῦτ’ ἔλυσιτέλει πράττειν.

The text says that whoever has best succeeded in procuring safety from outside influences has made akin all that he could (τὰ μὲν δυνατὰ δμόφυλα κατεσκευάσατο), and what he could not make akin he has made at least not inimical (οὐκ ἀλλόφυλά γε). And in those cases where he could not even do that, he has kept himself aloof (ἀνεπίμεικτος), and expelled everything which it would be profitable to expel. Further details must be left undiscussed, but I think it is not too bold to suggest that what we have here is an Epicurean equivalent to the conception of concentric circles representing our relative dispositions towards our fellow men which is such a prominent feature in the Stoic account of *oikeiôsis* as presented by Hierocles.²²

ταῖς ἡδοναῖς ἐκπεπληρωμ(ένην) involves more changes in the transmitted text, but is surely acceptable *ad sententiam*.

²⁰ It is worth noting — although my argument certainly does not hinge on this — that the aorists, which are usually interpreted as gnomic, may have been meant to function as properly historical, in which case this text could reflect a particular stage of an original Epicurean *Kulturentstehungslehre*. The same goes for the aorist tenses of *KD* 39, discussed below. On the interpretation of the tenses in these *sententiae* see also Blickman (1989) 168.

²¹ I have printed the reading συγγενείας of the MS. — I do not see any reason to change it — instead of Diano’s conjecture συγγενήσεως (accepted by Arrighetti).

²² Hierocles *ap.* Stob. *Flor.* 84.23; on this text see now Annas (1993) 267-270.

4. A closer investigation of the material discussed so far would no doubt prove rewarding, but it would also outstep the limits set to this paper. Let us therefore try to draw some provisional conclusions. The first is about Epicurus. I think it is legitimate to infer from the texts discussed here that there was such a thing as an Epicurean equivalent to the Stoic theory of *oikeiôsis*.²³ I deliberately use the vague term ‘equivalent’, because the mechanism at work is clearly not the same in both cases. There are two crucial differences. The first important difference is that the Epicurean *oikeiôsis* is based on *consuetudo*, on habit. As such it is not natural — if, that is, by ‘natural’ we mean *instinctive* or *inborn*, and there is no teleology involved.²⁴ A second crucial difference is that unlike the Stoics, Epicurus does not confront us with the claim that we should extend the way we are disposed towards people who are near to us and therefore have become familiarized, to all other people. The Stoic claim that there can be, and indeed should be, a strong appropriation between the wise man and even the remotest Mysian is as alien to Epicureanism as it is to common sense.²⁵ It is quite another matter — rather a matter of philosophical evaluation — whether this Epicurean theory of appropriation is ultimately compatible with a strict form of hedonism. This is not the place to discuss that question — a question which anyway does not appear to have greatly bothered the first generations of the Epicurean school.²⁶

We may now return to Lucretius. We should note, to begin with, that the claim that a particular element in Lucretius does not reflect Epicurean orthodoxy should in general be approached with caution and that at any rate such a claim requires strong evidence. There are no *a priori* reasons to believe that Lucretius incorporated a significant amount of heterodox — i.e. non-Epicurean — material. He himself stresses time and again that he is following in the footsteps of Epicurus.²⁷ Moreover, we should note that the few extant ancient testimonia on his life describe him as a *poeta*,

²³ This may have been what allowed Epicurus’ friend and successor Hermarchus (as reported by Porphyry *De Abstinentia* 1.7 = Hermarchus fr. 34 Longo Auricchio) to concede to the Stoics, in the debate about justice, that the ancient legislators’ prohibition of murder might be due in part (though not primarily) to ‘a certain *oikeiôsis*’ between men. For an interpretation of the fragment in terms of a debate with the Stoics, see Vander Waerdt (1988). On the status of the testimony of Porphyry (probably not a *verbatim* quotation) see Gigante (1983); Bouffartigue & Patillon (1977) 14–18; Longo Auricchio (1988) 137–141.

²⁴ Compare what Demetrius of Laconia (PHerc. 1012 col. LXVIII) has to say about parental love not being something which occurs ‘by nature’: ἀλλ’ οὐ φύσει ἐστὶν ἡ πρὸς τὰ τέκνα στοργή, ἐπειδήπερ οὐ κατηναγκασμένως στέργουσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι τὰ ἐκγ[ο]να (text as printed by Puglia (1988)). In a similar vein Epicurus may well have argued that appropriation does not occur *invariably*.

²⁵ The point that familiarization can be more or less intense and that common sense does not allow us to claim that we have it equally with ourselves and with the remotest Mysian, was made, presumably against the Stoics, by the Anonymous *In Theaetetum*, col. V, 24 ff., to be consulted in the new edition of Bastianini & Sedley (1995) 274 (text) and 492 (commentary). For a philosophical analysis of the relevant passage see Annas (1993) 270–275.

²⁶ According to Annas (1993) 236–244 the other-concern apparent in Epicurean friendships shows that Epicurus had actually broadened his *telos* and recognized the intrinsic value of other things next to pleasure. The reconstruction provided in this paper would seem to leave Epicurus with yet another way out. On this interpretation, what allowed Epicurus to make room for other-regarding behaviour was rather that he so to speak broadened his conception of the moral subject whose pleasure was to be the criterium. In some cases the pleasure of person B could be the criterium for person A, if person B could be regarded as in some sense belonging to the sphere of A’s ‘self’.

²⁷ Cf. *DRN* III.1–3; V.55–56.

not as a philosopher in his own right. Of course this does not fully exclude the possibility that he incorporated material from later and contemporary Epicureans or from the cultural or philosophical *koinê* of his days, but it is certainly not suggestive of strong philosophical independence or massive innovation. Furthermore it is to be noted that the relatively poor state of the evidence on Epicurus leaves little room for arguments from silence. Indeed, we are only entitled to conclude that a particular element in Lucretius is non-Epicurean, if it is not only absent from, but also positively incompatible with what remains of Epicurus' writings.

Now it is clear that in the case of Lucretius' account of the beginnings of social cohesion a fully-fledged Epicurean original is lacking. It is possible, and even plausible, that Epicurus discussed the subject in the course of a *Kulturentstehungslehre*. We know that he did discuss at least some elements of the history of civilisation in book XII of his *On Nature*, but only a few fragments survive,²⁸ and the corresponding section of the *Letter to Herodotus* mainly focuses on the origins of language. Yet, as we have seen, there is other evidence, in particular from Epicurus' *KD* and *SV* — indeed, as noted, some of these sayings may themselves derive from a fuller *Kulturentstehungslehre* — which shows that the general idea of *DRN* V.1011-1027 is not incompatible with orthodox Epicurean social theory. In fact what I have called the Epicurean equivalent to the Stoic theory of *oikeiôsis*, constitutes the most plausible background for Lucretius' account of the second stage of social development in his *Kulturentstehungslehre*. Also in Lucretius there is a gradual appropriation leading to *concordia*, which is not natural in the sense of inborn or instinctive — at the first stage of social development it simply was not there — but which starts out as soon as people effectively live together and get used to one another. That it is only a limited appropriation,²⁹ and that it is restricted to family members and *finitimi* also fits in well with what we know of Epicurus' theory. Moreover, in these respects the mechanism at work in Lucretius' account is crucially different from the mechanism of Stoic *oikeiôsis*.

A possible objection against my reconstruction is that the respective roles of pleasure and appropriation are less clearly marked off in Lucretius than in the relevant Epicurean texts on friendship. In the Epicurean texts which have been discussed above appropriation only starts working once the first contacts between individuals have already been established for purely hedonistic reasons. It is possible that Lucretius means to present the same sequence when he suggests that in the case of family life the process of appropriation starts out with pleasure as a motive (note the role of *Venus* who *imminuit vires*, and of the *blanditiae* of children), whereas real

²⁸ We know, at any rate, that Epicurus discussed the origin of religion — and that he attacked the views of Diagoras, Critias and Prodicus on this account — in book XII; fragments of this discussion are preserved in what remains of Philodemus *De Pietate*; cf. line 226 ff. and 519 ff. in the new edition of Obbink (1996).

²⁹ Note that what is here called *amicities* is indeed a fairly minimal form of friendship as compared to what is otherwise attested about Epicurean friendships. Indeed the words *nec laedere nec violari* appear to echo the formula which Epicurean texts use to describe the contents of contractual justice, rather than friendship (see e.g. *KD* 31-32). But why should not Epicurus be committed to common sense view (on which see above, n. 11) that there are *degrees* in friendship — and in general, degrees in familiarization? Such a view would certainly seem to leave room for rather modest first beginnings.

appropriation and other-concern then follow. On the other hand, in the case of the further friendships with *finitimi*, appropriation appears to work on its own. But the problem more or less disappears, once we recognize that the evidence on Epicurus suggests that he thought of appropriation as an *independent* process,³⁰ and that this is also how we see it working in the case of Lucretius' ugly woman in book IV. We may therefore stick to our guns. Of course it would be jejune to deny Lucretius any claim to originality in the way he presents the material. But there is no reason to deny that the material itself was Epicurean.³¹

³⁰ This also explains why the occurrence of the rather rudimentary friendships between *finitimi* — which, as was pointed out in the previous note, rather resemble what is elsewhere called 'justice' (i.e. the agreement not to harm each other) — can actually precede the emergence of forms of contractual justice, based on purely utilitarian motives, which are no longer confined to small groups but in principle concern *all* members of a given society.

³¹ I would like to thank Irma Croese and Jaap Mansfeld for their critical remarks on an earlier draft of this paper.