

Lucy Hutchinson's  
Translation of  
Lucretius:  
*De rerum natura*

Edited by Hugh de Quehen

Ann Arbor

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Lucy Hutchinson's  
translation of Lucretius,

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## Preface

Lucy Hutchinson is well known for her *Memoirs* of her husband, first published in 1806, but her translation of Lucretius has been largely ignored. This edition of the British Library manuscript makes available a significant seventeenth-century poem, quite probably the first English version of the *De rerum natura*. Some passages omitted at the end of Book 4 are supplied from another early translation, in manuscript in the Bodleian Library. A lengthy commentary could be written on the text in relation to English and Latin poetics, to ancient and modern philosophy and science, and to the theory and practice of translation, especially as Hutchinson used Latin editions that must continually be distinguished from their modern counterparts. I have tried, however, to be concise and, by supplying the more essential information, to produce an affordable edition. I further discuss Hutchinson's verse, comparing hers with other translations, in an article forthcoming in *Studies in Philology* (Summer 1996). What I fail to say about Lucretius may be found in the editions of individual books by Kenney, Brown and Costa and in the complete editions of Munro and Bailey. Those scholars have made my work possible.

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## Introduction

The great verse translations of the seventeenth century, which dawned with Fairfax's *Godfrey of Bulloigne* and closed with Dryden's *Fables Ancient and Modern*, were products of time and erudition that few women writers were in a position to bestow. Ann Fanshawe (1979, p. 136) recalls her family's stay in Yorkshire: 'Here my husband translated Luis de Camoens, and in October the 8th, 1653, I was delivered of my daughter Margaret.' Yet Lucy Hutchinson, like Fanshawe a wife and mother, translated at about the same time Lucretius' long, difficult, controversial *De rerum natura* (hereafter *DRN*): 'I turn'd it into English in a room where my children practiz'd the severall quallities they were taught with their Tutors, and I numbred the sillables of my translation by the threads of the canvas I wrought in, and sett them downe with a pen and inke that stood by me' (Letter to Lord Anglesey, pp. 23-4 below). However one reads this self-deprecating reminiscence, there is no mistaking her determination 'to understand things I heard so much discourse of at second hand'. The Puritan drive towards truth and the concomitant distrust of intermediaries coincide here with the new scientific search for first-hand knowledge. But in the same letter Hutchinson recalls her crisis as a Puritan intellectual at the dividing of the ways of faith and knowledge; indeed, by the time she wrote it she had 'learnt to hate all unsanctified excellence' (p. 26).

Lucretius was celebrated by his successors, most famously in Virgil's *Georgics*:

Blesséd is he whose mind had power to probe  
The causes of things and trample underfoot  
All terrors and inexorable fate  
And the clamour of devouring Acheron.

(2.490-2; tr. L.P. Wilkinson)

But a difficult and irreligious text would not always be well received: as Richard Jenkyns (1990, p. 18) puts it, 'Lucretius, second only to Virgil among Roman poets, has not had an influence proportionate to his quality'. Unknown through the Middle Ages and avoided by most Renaissance readers and teachers, Lucretius spoke out again to the intelligentsia of Hutchinson's day. She translated the *DRN* at the commencement of its greatest influence; and her version, made with no earlier one to guide her,

as a perceptive and imaginative response to a brilliant poem obscured by corruptions and indifferent annotation. Translation itself was changing: literal versions, confined to an equal number of English lines, would soon give way to the looser, expanded reinterpretations perfected by Dryden, and their rhymed couplets would become prosodically more formal. While Hutchinson responds to the new, easy manner of expression that she found in Denham's *Aeneid*, her couplets retain the flexibility he later abjured. She preserves much of Lucretius' conciseness and precision, which tend to be lost in what Hugh Munro (1858, p. 133) calls 'the more ambitious and wordy, but less faithful paraphrase of Creech'. In view of the difficulties, her accuracy is remarkable; indeed, her writing shows the same resourcefulness and purpose as her life.

### Lucy Hutchinson

Hutchinson was born Lucy Apsley on 29 January 1620 in the Tower of London, of which her father, Sir Allen Apsley, was King James I's Lieutenant. In an autobiographical fragment Hutchinson (1973, pp. 283-6) speaks warmly of his generous character. He died in 1630. Her mother, born Lucy St John, was much younger than her husband and died at Hutchinson's home, Owthorpe in Nottinghamshire, in 1659. She set an example in religion and humanity, and in intellectual curiosity too. When Sir Walter Rawleigh and Patrick Ruthven were prisoners in the Tower, she paid for their studies in chemistry, 'partly to comfort and divert the poore prisoners, and partly to gaine the knowledge of their experiments, and the medicines to helpe such poore people as were not able to seeke to phisicians' (pp. 286-7). Hutchinson never mentions the financial difficulties and interfamily tensions after Sir Allen's death, or indeed her mother's remarriage to Sir Leventhorpe Frank, a widower from Essex; these facts are in petitions to the Privy Council from Apsley (later Frank) *et al.* (1635-8) and the Council's subsequent orders. Hutchinson (1973, pp. 287-8) recalls her good fortune in having had parents who believed in women's education: 'As soone as I was wean'd a French woman was taken to be my drie nurse, and I was taught to speake French and English together.... My father would have me learne Latine, and I was so apt that I outstript my brothers who were at schoole, although my father's chaine that was my tutor was a pitifull dull fellow.' Her mother was worried that Hutchinson neglected her music and dancing and 'absolutely hated' her needle; but, as it turned out, her Latin was what attracted her future husband - whose interest her companions increased by telling him 'how reserv'd and studious she was, and other things which they esteem'd no advantage' (pp. 28-9).

The Hutchinsons were married in July 1638, and, after one abortive pregnancy, twin sons were born the following year. In 1641 they settled at Owthorpe, where his family lived. When the Civil War broke out an

initially reluctant Colonel Hutchinson (commissioned in January 1643) found himself Parliament's Governor of Nottingham and its Castle, in which his wife stayed with him throughout the war and tended the wounded as her mother had done the prisoners (Hutchinson 1973, pp. 99, 287). She describes in detail the Colonel's repulse of Royalist attacks and his difficulties with the Committee that was elected to act with him. It was 'very much against his owne will' that he was made one of the judges at the king's trial, but he held himself 'bleig'd by the Covenant of God and the publick trust his country reposed in him' (p. 189). After 'he addressst himselfe to God by prayer', he was confirmed in his judgement and signed the death sentence (p. 190). Having served on the executive Council of State from 1649 to 1651, and as an MP until the dissolution of 1653, he was thankful to retire to Owthorpe. He was no politician: in 1648 he told Cromwell not only 'what others thought of him but what he himselfe conceiv'd, and how much it would darken all his glories if he should become a slave to his owne ambition' (p. 180). So too on other occasions, the last of them towards the end of Cromwell's life, when the Colonel 'tooke occasion, with his usuall freedom, to tell him into what a sad hazard all things were put' (p. 211). Having no desire for public office, he could with his wife enjoy their children and friends, their estate and their intellectual interests. Unwilling to see works of art sold out of the country, 'he lay'd out about 2,000<sup>l</sup> in the choycest pieces of painting' - mostly from Charles I's collection - which he later forfeited (pp. 207, 239). The Hutchinsons read widely, but her providentialist memoir makes only the occasional allusion to Cleveland or to Virgil (pp. 63, 265) and otherwise concentrates on scripture and theology: the books that informed their fear of the subversion of Protestantism in Charles I's three kingdoms (p. 49) and their rejection of infant baptism (p. 169).

When 'the sunne of liberty' set in 1660 and 'gave place to the fowlest mistes that ever overspread a miserable people' (p. 224), the efforts of his friends to save the regicide Colonel and his estate were frustrated by his inflexibility. Hutchinson 'saw that he was ambitious of being a publick sacrifice, and therefore, herein only in her whole life, resolv'd to disobey him'. Having persuaded him to retire out of the way, she sent to Parliament a letter, on which she had written his signature, 'to urge what might be in his favour' (p. 229). She succeeded: he was merely discharged as an MP and barred from all future offices. Some ensuing bureaucratic and legal obstructions had hardly been removed when in October 1663 the Colonel was arrested on suspicion of complicity in the so-called Derwentdale Plot. He was imprisoned, with scant legal process, first in the Tower of London and subsequently in Sandown Castle on the Kent coast. In this wet, dark, comfortless ruin he fell sick and died on 11 September 1664. He was buried at Owthorpe. Throughout his sufferings Hutchinson had accompanied him: in London and then at Sandown, where she was forbidden to lodge and so walked daily to the castle from the nearby town

or deal. She had her eldest daughter Barbara with her, and her husband's sickness and death occurred when she had gone to Owthorpe to fetch the rest of the family. At least two children having died young, eight were then alive: four daughters, the two adult sons and two sons who were 'little children'; she had been pregnant as recently as 1662 (pp. 34, 67, 241, 250, 294).

Although Hutchinson (1973) says less about herself (and that in the third person) than a modern writer might, the stresses of those last months are obvious. She faced antagonistic officials, from the bullying Secretary Bennet, who confronted her with the ridiculous correspondence of another Mrs Hutchinson (p. 254), down to the Captain of Sandown Castle, who retained the dead Colonel's goods – and would have done his body – when the family would not give him money (p. 274). Her difficulties as a widow, with mortgages and debts, are to be seen in the legal papers of Hutchinson *et al.* (1664-75) and the reproving letter of Hutchinson (1671) to an indiscreet Mr Bateman in whom she had confided concerning the sale of Owthorpe. It seems that she was helped, one way or another, by the Earl of Anglesey, to whom she gave her version of Lucretius in 1675. She died in 1681 and was buried at Owthorpe (Race 1938). For 8 October 1682 Anglesey (*Diary*, f. 100<sup>v</sup>) writes, 'The morning was much delighted in reading Mrs Hutchesons diary and put thereby in mind of close walking with God as she did<sup>r</sup>'.

She writes about her husband to inform her children and to console herself. They loved each other with a seriousness uncaptured by Allen [1883] in his mock-Caroline verse drama of their courtship. When he was at Sandown, Hutchinson (1973, p. 264) 'bore all her owne toyles joyfully enough for the love of him, but could not but be very sad att the sight of his undeserved sufferings; and he would very sweetely and kindly chide her for it, and tell her that if she were but chearefull he should thinke this suffering the happiest thing that ever befell him'. In his last illness he thought of her return and determined, 'I will have her in my chamber with me, and they shall not pluck her out of my armes' (p. 270). She had no doubt that he was one of the best of men, and proved so by his sufferings. Surely with that in mind she marks the couplet 3.59-60 in her translation of the *DRN*:

, For only adverse chance doth men declare,  
, And misery truly shews us what they are.

### Hutchinson's writings

*On the Principles of the Christian Religion* (Hutchinson 1817, pp. 1-137) is written to fortify her daughter Mrs Orgill against some proselytizing sect; the daughter's marriage and Hutchinson's reference to her own 'infirmities' (p. 1) suggest its relatively late composition. The companion

work, *On Theology* (*ibid.*, pp. 141-347), has been identified by Narveson (1989) as a partial translation of the Latin *Theologoumena Pantodapa* (1661) by John Owen, the Independent divine. This treatise (like the *DRN*, a substantial work to put into English) helps clarify the remarks on Gentile theology which Hutchinson prefaces to Lucretius. The Greeks and Romans, in Owen's conventional Christian scheme of world history, had some intimation of the Deity, which sprung from the 'double fountain' of 'naturall internal light' and 'revelation made by the workes of God' (Hutchinson 1817, p. 228). In addition, Plato and others retained some notions 'which had run through the world from the very beginning of time'; the Creation, the world's end, judgement after death, and resurrection (pp. 251-3). But after their opinions 'were scoffd and derided by many that pretended to wisdom' – Owen cites Lucretius – only moral philosophy was left (p. 255). 'Tranquillity of soul could never be acquired that way; only 'by the blood of Christ' (p. 244). The same insistence on redemption is expressed by Hutchinson herself as mother and as memoirist.

The manuscript from which *On Theology* was published is lost, but the manuscript of the *Principles* in is the Northamptonshire County Record Office. Three manuscript books known as *Religious Exercises*, *Commonplace Book* and *Elegies* are deposited with the *Memoirs* in the Nottinghamshire Archives. The *Religious Exercises* includes notes out of Calvin's *Institutes* (pp. 7-51, 235-74), with Hutchinson's dissenting comments on Church government and paedobaptism (p. 51); also a statement of 'My owne faith and attainment' (pp. 53-114), which elaborates her belief in gathered churches, in baptism as a 'seal' of adult faith and in the rigid supralapsarian doctrine of predestination (pp. 100-1, 106-7, 62-3). Her belief that individuals' election or reprobation cannot be humanly determined (pp. 63-4) is applied, in a section entitled 'Concerning selfe examination whither wee have interest in Christ' (pp. 150-84), to 'the Quakers and selfe deceived Christians [who] talke of perfection in this life' (p. 171). The *Commonplace Book* too has its religious contents, categorized as the conflicting emotions Love, Hatred, Desire, Aversion, Joy, Sorrow, Hope, Despair (pp. 153-91); but most of that manuscript is devoted to poetry. More than half is taken up by Books 2-6 of the *Aeneid* in an early draft of Denham's translation, and there is also Godolphin's translation from Book 4 (pp. 5-135, 209-32). The belief spread by Firth (1891) that Hutchinson herself translated part of the *Aeneid* may well have originated with these transcripts, if the attributions at the end were overlooked. Such long poems are somewhat unexpected in a commonplace collection, and they suggest a strong interest in translated verse that would find its expression in her own Lucretius.

Her interest in the suspect *DRN* appears less strange in light of her commonplace entries: she translates lines from Ovid's *Heroides* and phrases in English a sonnet by Theophile de Viau (pp. 206-7, 242-3), unexpectedly amorous subject-matter. There is also a ballad that attacks

in explicit language the sexual hypocrisy of 'Parliament men' (pp. 239-41). The attack is compatible with her dislike of Presbyterians, as is a transcription of Cleveland's 'Hue and Cry after Sir John Presbyter' (pp. 247-9). Cleveland's 'Antiplatonick' and three of Carew's choruses to a play (as well as five of his Psalms) are further evidence of catholic taste (pp. 249-50, 233-7, 139-44). Not that broad-mindedness will account for Waller's 'Panegyric to My Lord Protector', the poem a despisser of obsequiousness and Cromwell would least want to preserve (pp. 251-8). Her use for it may be found in the British Library Hyde Papers: *To Mr. Waller upon his Panegyrique to the Lord Protector*, written in a scribal hand and endorsed by Clarendon Mrs Hutchinson's Answer to Mr Waller's Panegyric to Cromwell' (f. 213<sup>r</sup>). Each of the poem's forty-seven quatrains answers one of Waller's, beginning:

Whilst with a smooth but yet a servile Tongue  
You Court all Factions, and have sweetly sung  
The Triumph of your Countreys Overthrow  
Raysing the Glory of her treacherous Foe.

(st. 1, f. 214<sup>r</sup>)

Where Waller compares Cromwell with Edward III, the Black Prince and Henry V, *To Mr. Waller* has Richard III, Henry VIII and 'the false tongu'd Bullingbrooke' (st. 18; f. 215<sup>v</sup>); for his parallel of repose in Augustus' arms it substitutes, 'As by severe Augustus Rome at last / Into Tiberius grinding Jewes was cast' (st. 43; f. 217<sup>r</sup>). It ends with an appeal 'to rescue Liberty':

Let's Storme his Townes, his Armies overcome,  
And when the Flatterer heares our thundring Drumme,  
Then shame and dread your Warbling voice will choake  
And you will all your undue praise Revoake.

(st. 45; f. 217<sup>r</sup>)

*To Mr. Waller*, while typical of its period and very plausibly Hutchinson's work, has no parallel in her manuscript books, except for some drafts at the beginning of the *Religious Exercises* on the same theme of pampered slavery that occurs in sts. 13-15. Another poem, also the only one of its kind, is the Horatian praise of rural retirement that begins, 'All sorts of men through various labours press / To the same end, contented quietness'; deriving from Hutchinson (1806, pp. 445-6), it is reprinted in Hutchinson (1995, pp. 339-40). Her remaining poems bring the classicism of her translations to the bereavement that occasioned the *Memoirs*. These are her *Elegies*: twenty-four poems, transcribed in another hand, among them the epitaph on the Colonel's monument in Owrthorpe church (xxi); printed in Hutchinson 1973, p. 293). They are, as expected, conventional in theme and situations: the sun's intrusion (ii, iii), contrasting portraits (iv-vi, ix), the desolate garden (vii, xii), night thoughts (viii, ix), storm and

calm (x), a house revisited (xi), the painfulness of spring (xiv). They convey sincerity, however, in their resistance to conventional consolations – such as joy in her children, in whom she sees his sought-for image dispersed (p. 32). The verse forms are heroic and octosyllabic couplets and variously rhymed quatrains. 'Night' (viii) is striking for its *In Memoriam* stanza and its metaphysical conclusion in the theory that a straight line when extended becomes circular:

O could I rayse my soule above  
This earthly low perplexing sence  
I might through pure intelligence  
Againne communicate his Love

Our streames in their first head would mix  
Their constant course would them refine  
His and my long extended line  
Would both in one just centure fix

(sts. 13-14; p. 24)

None of Hutchinson's own poems shows the influence of Lucretius; her references in the *Elegies* (pp. 39, 29) to consecrated atoms and to dreams derived from the day's experiences are quite unspecific. Yet her writing's variety certainly enhances one's sense of a person receptive to the *DRN*.

### Lucretius

Our knowledge of Lucretius the man derives almost entirely from his poem's content and tone: apparently well born, obviously versed in Greek as well as Latin literary culture, probably living in Rome but familiar with country life, seemingly disillusioned by contemporary events, and manifestly committed to the doctrines of Epicurus. The lack of surviving comments need not mean that he was a recluse or that his writing was not understood. St Jerome added a sensational one-sentence biography to Eusebius' *Chronicle* under the year 94 BC: 'Thus Lucretius the poet was born, who was driven mad by a love-potion and, after composing in his lucid intervals several books later corrected by Cicero, killed himself in his forty-fourth year.' It is agreed that he was born sometime in the 90s and died in the 50s BC. Cicero at least knew his poetry: writing to his brother in 54 BC, he concurs that it shows much brilliance of genius and much artistry too. As for the rest: if St Jerome aimed to traduce an Epicurean atheist, he certainly succeeded; for the madness and suicide, dramatized by Tennyson (1868), have perplexed the poem's reception history with a problem that the text alone would not suggest.

Modern commentators have found comfort in the belief that clinical insanity is incompatible with writing the *DRN*; but the Renaissance, which perpetuated belief in the Muses and poetic fury, was able to recon-

cile creativity with the madness upon which it bordered. In the poet's lucid intervals, Creech (1682, sig. b1<sup>r</sup>) supposes, 'the strength of Nature had thrown off all the disturbing particles, and his mind (as tis observed of Mad men) was sprightly and vigorous'. With less enthusiasm Hutchinson notes at l.1112, 'Here is one of the Poets abrupt Hiatus for he was mad with a Phitrum his wife gave him and writt this booke but in the intervals of his phrenzie'. The guilty wife (who had come to be called Lucilia) is one of the later additions that had helped to swell St Jerome's brief notice into the eleven-page *Vita* by Gifanius (1565/6) that Hutchinson would have found in her edition of the *DRN* by Pareus (1631).

The *DRN* is 'true to the tradition of personal appeal in Epicurean evangelism' (Brown 1984, p. xiv). The addressee, whom Lucretius wants to make a fellow believer (l.143-8), is presumed to be the politician Gaius Memmius, praetor in 58 BC, patron of Catullus and a writer of poetry himself. He is known to have had little sympathy with the doctrine. Throughout the poem one may see a commitment to teach; at least, as Kenney (1977, p. 27) puts it, 'if words alone can ever demonstrate what the romantic critic calls sincerity, Lucretius was sincere'. Gale (1994, p. 127) wants the *DRN* to be 'considered against the background of mythological/historical/encomiastic epic, and not simply relegated to the sub-genre of didactic'. In writing what she calls 'a non-mythological epic' (p. 128) Lucretius was attempting a more direct approach to truth – an impulse shared by Hutchinson's contemporaries Davenant (in *Gondibert*), Cowley (in the *Davidis*) and Milton when they turned away from classical epic models. In any case, the *DRN* ought to satisfy a seventeenth-century sense of epic as an encyclopaedic account of things.

Like other great works of literature, the *DRN* has through the centuries responded to the changing concerns of readers, whose interest has shifted between doctrine and poetry, with different expectations of each at different times. Like Marolles (1659, p. 531), Munro (1886, 2:5) discounted the doctrine: 'the truth or falsehood of his system is of exceedingly little concern except in so far as it is thereby rendered a better or worse vehicle for conveying the beauties of the language and the graces of his poetical conceptions.' However, modern science became a new orthodoxy against which Lucretius was to be judged: more favourably than against the old Christian orthodoxy, yet equally to the exclusion of the poetry. So when Munro's edition was reissued in 1928 its publishers felt obliged to add an introductory essay on the modernity of the scientific thought, with indelible atoms still counted as modern because atoms could be destroyed only in exceptional circumstances. Even Latham (1951, pp. 9-10), introducing his Penguin translation, finds scientific value in the poem's outlook, despite the atom's having been 'well and truly split' and much of 'the old mechanical materialism' consequently 'shattered'.

Since then, however, science has developed in ways that discourage the assimilation of Lucretius' Epicureanism. West (1969) with his study of the

imagery signalled a new interest in Lucretius' poetry. Kenney (1971, p. 3) reads the *DRN* as 'a personal testimony of the poet', to which the particulars of modern science can have little relevance. The sympathetic reappraisal of the poetry is apparent too in Smith (1982), especially if one compares the preoccupation with atomic theory in the original Loeb version, Rouse (1924). Smith's notes are a useful indication of Lucretius' influence on some familiar, and some less familiar, English writing. So many topoi and tropes derive from Lucretius: for example, lines 3.973-6, which found their way to Virgil's *Georgics* 2.523-4 and to Thomson's *Winter* 311-16 and to Gray's *Elegy* 21-4:

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,  
Or busy housewife ply her evening care:  
No children run to lisp their sire's return,  
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

One aspect of the poetry that did not trouble Hutchinson and her contemporaries is Lucretius' repetitiveness. But from Munro to Bailey (1947) this was a problem: it could not be explained as residue of oral transmission (a feature of epic that the *DRN* is now seen to imitate) and was therefore treated as evidence of the poem's unrevised state or corruption by copyists. But critics today, for whom generic boundaries have shifted and postmodern writing has re-established repetition, are once again prepared to take the repeated lines at face value. This is attractively done by Clay (1983) in relation to the Epicurean and the poetic way of thought; also by Gale (1994) in her analysis of myth in the *DRN*, through which she sees doctrine and poetry – separated by Lucretius in 1.927-54 and 4.1-25, and by the critical tradition – successfully united.

The Epicurean outlook is most enticing when it impartially contemplates competing explanations of the sensory evidence: for example, on the movement of the stars (5.530-59). Yet there is inevitably a fascination in those explanations that happen to make sense today. Although the old mechanical materialism looks crude, there are aspects of the poem that have recently gained in significance, such as the hypothesis of the atomic swerve as the cause of free will (2.249-93; best explained by Furley 1967, pp. 169-83). This belief was derided by rival sects: Cicero, *De finibus*, 1.19, calls it 'a childish fabrication'. Munro (1886, 2:135) excuses it as having 'something grand and poetical in its very simplicity'. But it looks less silly now that physicists are reporting phenomena which defy our sense of predictable behaviour. Similarly, the elusive fourth element of the soul, 'which yett no name in nature ever had' (3.248) suggests those minuscule entities in the universe, detected or inferred, for which science has hitherto made no allowance.

The seventeenth century could appreciate the description of earth's lost fertility (2.1181-1208), as it was widely held – for instance, by Goodman



(1616, pp. 348-82) – that the world was in its old age or decay. Now that Victorian faith in progress has finally waned, the mood of the poem can once more be shared. But the end of Book 6, uncongenial to positivists and Christians alike, has caused perennial unease and prompted the debate, in Gifanius' *Vita* and elsewhere, 'Is the *DRN* unfinished?' The apparent outcome is 'the growing consensus that the poem's present conclusion was planned and completes its design in a satisfying manner' (Brown 1987, p. 55). Moreover, the gruesome plague has become a biologically threatening version of the promised end, and the persistence of human selfishness in the face of annihilation looks uncomfortably like psychological fact. 'The plague's universal terror and misguided violence' are interpreted by Segal (1990, p. 235) as 'a paradigm of what human life can be – unless the *vera ratio* leads us to the serenity that Epicurus and Democritus achieved in the face of death'.

### The intellectual milieu

Hutchinson (1973) does not mention the recipient of her manuscript translation of the *DRN*. Arthur Annesley, first Earl of Anglesey (1614-86), had been a counsellor of moderation in the months after the Restoration, and his 'benigne favour', which Hutchinson tells him she had 'in so many ways experienced', might have begun with his seeking leniency for the regicides. He prospered for twenty years in public office, until at the end of 1680 he sided against the Court in the Exclusion Crisis. He was a Presbyterian: his *Diary* records that he 'did duties' every day in private but conformed occasionally in public like other office-holders. He was also a scholarly man and a great book collector; so his acquisition of Hutchinson's manuscript in 1675 must have been most gratifying. A French translation had already been printed, Marrolles (1650), but no English one except of Book 1 by John Evelyn (1656), the 'masculine Witt' disparaged at the outset of Hutchinson's dedicatory letter. (The rest of Evelyn's version remained unpublished; the manuscript of Books 3-6 is in the British Library.) The first full English translation to be published was Creech (1682), with immediate and lasting success. Dryden (1685) translated five selections, one-twelfth of the poem in all.

Hutchinson tells Anglesey that she made her translation, in her children's schoolroom, 'out of youthfull curiositie, to understand things I heard so much discourse of at second hand'. 'Youthfull' has been taken – most recently by Howard Jones (1989, p. 258) – to mean when she was in her twenties, that is in 'the mid- or late 1640s'. But she must have had children at the school through the 1650s; and if Cokayn's (1658, p. 204) topical lines on translating Lucretius – 'I know a Lady that has been about / The same designe' – refer to Hutchinson, they imply the 1650s, as Jones acknowledges. Most important, there is no corroborating evidence from the 1640s

for what she calls 'so much discourse'; yet from the early 1650s there is a great deal. So the later date seems more likely.

Traditionally, and quite contrary to the evidence of his life and doctrines, Epicurus was associated with loose living: 'ruttish in his gardens among young men and women', in the words of St Jerome (*Adversus Jovinianum* 2.36), or more benignly like Chaucer's *bon vivant* the Franklin, who was 'Epicurus owene sone'. Some curiosity about the real Epicurus around the turn of the seventeenth century had come to nothing; but a new wave of interest in atomism as an alternative to neo-scholastic physics was started in France by Pierre Gassendi (1649). His study of Epicurus' life and doctrines influenced, among his other admirers in Paris, the Newcastle Circle of royalist *émigrés*, through whom Epicurean ideas reached England. Gassendi is reflected in their writings: both the atomist poems of the Marchioness, later Duchess, of Newcastle (1653), and the notorious philosophy of Thomas Hobbes (1651). Like his fellow mechanist Descartes, Hobbes was popularly associated with Epicurean materialism, despite his disagreement with Epicurus on so fundamental a question as the duality of matter and void. Hobbes held with Epicurus that the soul is corporeal and (by implication) that a deity has no necessary function in a self-sufficient mechanical universe – an aspect of Epicureanism carefully discounted by both Gassendi and his first English translator, Walter Charleton (1654), another Newcastle associate. In a physico-theological Treatise Charleton (1652) even published an atomistic *refutation* of atheism. He was ridiculed by wits for his eccentric prose and plagiaristic tendencies, but he was an good publicizer of Epicurus and provoked some interesting discussion. As Robert Kargon (1966, pp. 79-83) has shown, the unfriendly contributions of Henry More and others are additional evidence of 'so much discourse' on the philosophy Lucretius advocated.

In the 1650s the Hutchinsons lived a retired life at Owrthorpe, which must have seemed idyllic, even 'youthfull', when looked back on after the trauma of the Restoration years. The Colonel was 'a greate supervisor' of their children's learning, writes Hutchinson (1973, p. 207), 'and indeed himselfe a Tutor to them all, besides all those Tutors which he liberally entertain'd in his house for them. He spar'd not any cost for the education of both his sons and daughters in languages, sciences, musick, dancing, and all other qualities befitting their father's house'. The 1650s were a time of prospective changes in the sciences and their role in the public's education, matters that members of the future Royal Society were debating at their meetings in Oxford and London. Discourse of atomism and its proponents would reach the Hutchinsons via their tutors and visitors – their house being 'much resorted to' and 'as kindly open to those who had in publick contests bene his enemies as to his continued friends' (p. 208). To Hutchinson, disinclined to accept ideas 'at second hand', Lucretius would offer easier access to Epicureanism than the philosopher's life and the selections from his writings in Diogenes Laertius, Book 10. That is not

to say, however, that Lucretius – 'this crabbed poet', as she calls him – was at all easy reading.

By the time of the Restoration atomism was a well known hypothesis, to which Dryden (1660, ll. 31-2) could refer familiarly when he commended a friend's poems: 'No Atoms casually together hurld / Could e're produce so beautiful a world.' Epicurus occupies 173 pages of *The History of Philosophy* by Thomas Stanley (1660), who translated his material from Gassendi (1649a). At the century's end atomism was the common explanation of observed phenomena. Robert Boyle (1674, p. 4), among others, had attempted a distinction: on one hand 'the Mechanical affections of the World', which are 'Physically produc'd by the Mechanical affections of the parts of Matter', on the other the universe's having been 'fram'd by God, and the Laws of Motion being settled and all upheld by His incessant concourse and general Providence'. Yet the implied denial of the Creation continued to embarrass the new scientists and demand rebuttal. Accordingly Richard Bentley (1692/3), advised by Newton, preached the first course of Boyle Lectures against Epicurean atheists, who denied the operation of God in nature. For Hutchinson those 'presumptuously wicked' men, revivers of 'the foppish casual dance of atoms', were only to be expected in 'this drolling degenerate age'; and it would hardly have surprised her that a popular stage play by Thomas Shadwell (1676) should begin with the hero Bruce declaring, 'Thou great Lucretius! Thou profound oracle of wit and sense!' and proceeding to read out in Latin the lines on the indifferent gods that Hutchinson translates as 1.55-60 (or 2.650-5). Shadwell is less imaginative than Caryl Churchill (1982, pp. 27-9), who has Pope Joan declaim the famous opening of Book 2; but the lines he quotes are certainly appropriate and were translated by that real-life Restoration hero, the Earl of Rochester (1984, p. 51):

The Gods, by right of Nature, must possess  
An Everlasting Age, of perfect Peace:  
Far off, remov'd from us, and our Affairs:  
Neither approach'd by Dangers, or by Cares:  
Rich in themselves, to whom we cannot add:  
Nor pleas'd by Good Deeds; nor provok'd by Bad.

Hutchinson knew Rochester. His mother was her cousin and helped the Colonel in 1660 (Hutchinson 1973, pp. 232-3). On 2 September 1676 Hutchinson and the Rochester family were among the guests of Anglesey (*Diary*, f. 15<sup>v</sup>) in Oxfordshire.

A subsidiary cause of offence is the supposed obscurity of the last 250 lines of Book 4. Hutchinson's line-numbers suggest that she had made a draft translation of 1085-1199, which was excised in the fair copy (with an acid note in the margin, indicative of the bad reputation midwives once had). Creech (1682) omits passages as well (Gordon 1985, 331F); in fact he omits some lines that Hutchinson translates (her 1081-2, 1200, 1266-72,

1304-end). Dryden (1685) is truer to his 'lubrique and adulate' 1680s when he picks the end of Book 4 for one of his five selections. But Creech is not really prudish: where Hutchinson omits a reference to Venus (preceding 5.776) he develops it in a suggestive triplet. My Appendix provides, from an anonymous seventeenth-century manuscript in the Bodleian Library, the passages that Hutchinson excises. That translation of the *DRN* (complete and in prose) offers a contrast in attitude as well as in technique: where Lucretius advocates unemotional promiscuity the marginal comment is 'An excellent Admonition touching Love' (f. 99<sup>v</sup>).

### Hutchinson's translation

Philosophy was divided by Epicurus into canonic (a theory of knowledge derived from sense-impressions), physics (a universe of matter and void, in which atoms accidentally cohere) and ethics (avoidance of pain and achievement of tranquil understanding). Lucretius tends to leave the ethics to the reader's realization, but he deals explicitly and logically with the canonic and the physics. Costa (1984, p. xiv) sets out a plan of the books:

- The atoms
  - 1 Atoms and void
  - 2 The characteristics of atoms and their combinations
- The soul
  - 3 The mortality of the soul
  - 4 Thought and sensation
- The world
  - 5 The history of the world and its mortality
  - 6 Celestial and terrestrial phenomena

The drift of each book is fairly clear (and neatly summarized in the Arguments that Hutchinson adds); but there are conceptual and linguistic difficulties, such as the distinction (not entirely consistent) between 'soul' and 'mind' (*anima* and *animus*) in Book 3. To fit the metre or vary the phrase, Lucretius has a confusing range of terms for atoms: *primordia*, *principia*, *corpora prima*, *genitalia corpora*, *semina*, *figurae*, *elementa*. For these Hutchinson uses 'principles', 'first matter', 'first bodies', 'generative bodies', 'seeds', 'figures', 'elements'. Her poetic vocabulary is naturally more copious and ambiguous than the mathematical plainness which the Royal Society would advocate in scientific discourse.

Munro (1858, pp. 135-8) makes the pertinent points about her skill as translator: her mistakes are frequent and show ignorance of things that a professional scholar would know, especially those requiring Greek; yet she is on occasion right where other interpreters of the *DRN* go wrong. Of 1.595-631 he writes, 'In this passage she trips more than once. But how many far more ambitious scholars have completely mistaken its drift' (p. 135). He praises her discovery of the hiatus after 1.1112, of which 'no edition then in existence could have given her any hint' (p. 138), and which was confirmed by manuscript evidence two centuries later (Munro 1886,

1:76). Understandably Munro (1858) does not see lasting value in work that was done in the textual and interpretative confusion from which he, as an editor, was trying to free the *DRN*. Nor can he appreciate her versification: implicitly compared with eighteenth-century couplets, hers lack 'ease' and 'flow', especially as some of them (roughly one line in a hundred) have more or less than five feet. In the 1650s, however, hyper-metric lines were by no means abnormal, and it is easy to find her alexandrines echoing the sense in ways that Dryden's readers will find familiar:

The plenty of the matter would confus'dly flow (1.1028)

With double bodies, and shall double faces weare (4.472)

The Pontick skie, from that of Gades which extends (6.1167)

At least some of her tetrameters must have lost a two-syllable word in transcription. Although these short lines were used on serious subjects (e.g. Marvell's *Upon Appleton House*) before Butler's *Hudibras* associated them with burlesque, they were not a recognized variation in pentameter poems. But they are often appropriate:

Things neither can to nothing fall (1.866)

Almost quencht out, but why retire? (2.977)

Whats without life and motion see (5.134)

She introduces some rhetorically effective triplets:

Wherefore not the suns beames, nor days bright ray,

Can the minds fears and shadows chace away

Till reason natures misteries display.

(1.57-9; repeated, with variations, 3.95-7, 6.39-41)

So many elephants with snake like hands,

Their thousands like an ivory rampart stands

To barr the entrance of those wealthy lands.

(2.536-8)

Now that mid-seventeenth-century poetry is better known than it was in Munro's day, Hutchinson's verse can be thought of as flexible rather than incorrect. Although she uses very few double rhymes (too conversational for Lucretius), she runs the sense on between couplets and often ends sentences in mid-line. Structurally her long paragraphs have more in common with Milton's blank verse (and the *DRN*) than with the epigrammatic closed couplets that Pope perfected. (This and the other aspects of her versification are discussed, in comparison with Creech and Dryden, in de Quehen 1996.) Like other translators she uses some Latin

nate constructions to save space: participial phrases instead of relative clauses (as in 6.525) and adjective-and-noun combinations such as 'savage spoil' to denote wild beasts and their victims' carcasses (5.1292). She tries to make abrupt transitions easier (5.731) and to create balanced contrast where the Latin text that she used is pointlessly repetitious (5.1376-7). But repetitions are usually part of Lucretius' word-play, and they are difficult to translate when they occur as verbal quibbles. Sometimes Hutchinson carries them over into her translation: 'hold' and 'hands' (4.529) for *manifesta* and *manibus*. In the case of *Lignis. Ignis*' (1.921) she resorts to a marginal note.

The translation reflects her own experiences and opinions. From the fighting at Nottingham she knows that fast-moving cavalry are 'light horse' (2.325), that 'sallieports' is apt for the places where the soul leaves the body (3.613), and that time could be said 'by his long batteries' to make a 'breach' (5.329). Lest the 'throes' of childbirth might be taken as a figure of speech, she adds 'paynefull' (4.240), and she specifies that 'amorous layes' are sung by 'wantons' (5.1449). There being no strawberry trees in England, she probably thinks of 'purple wildings' as wild apples (5.981); and as an English highway would hardly have a puddle 'one finger' deep, she substitutes 'a foote' (4.437). Her Lucretius is, on occasion, more of a philosopher in the equanimous sense: instead of inquiring *how* the nearly dead can return to life, he asks, 'Why in deaths porch the leagues of life renew?' (2.977). He is no longer indecent at the end of Book 4: in lines that are not excised conventional romantic language replaces clinical description (1268-9), and she specifies at the close that the couple are wife and husband. Adopting a marginal reading, Hutchinson even contrives 'Prayer's spiritual charriot' as a vehicle of 'proptious Grace' (6.48-9). But these changes, though interesting, are not representative. Unlike Creech (1682), whose paraphrasing avoids both the *DRN*'s obscurity and its brilliance, Hutchinson always tries to translate what Lucretius writes; her failures, surprisingly few, only confirm the difficulty of the task.

#### Latin editions of Lucretius

Lucretius is difficult for modern readers and was vastly more difficult for Hutchinson, whose text of the *DRN* was, among its other deficiencies, not based on the two manuscripts of greatest importance. The earliest printers, in 1473 and 1486, had used inferior transcripts, and the editors who came after them simply reproduced, as was the practice, the most convenient printed text (to which, if they so chose, they made corrections derived eclectically from other printed and manuscript versions). Munro (1886, 1:3-17) has a detailed history of those editions, and Gordon (1962) a bibliography of them. The greatest was by Denys Lambin, or Lambinus (1563/4), who vastly improved the text and wrote a magnificent commentary, later revised and augmented in Lambinus (1570; repr. 1583). His

work, a little altered, was deceptively rearranged as his own by Obert van Giffen, or Gifanius (1565/6), and the revised edition of Gifanius (1595) was in turn adapted (with additions from Lambinus) by Daniel Paré, or Pareus (1631). The next editor to work on the text was Tannegy Lefevre, or Faber (1662), too late to be used by Hutchinson for her translation. In addition to annotated texts, there were plain ones, some in pocket editions such as Jansson (1620, 1626, 1631).

It appeared to Munro (1858, p. 123) that Hutchinson used 'some bare text, very corrupt and closely resembling the second Aldine'. That Aldine text of 1515 had lately been reprinted, with annotation, by Nardi (1647); but, as Munro would have seen on closer inspection, Hutchinson's translation is really quite different from it and from all other texts before Lambinus. Warburg (1937, pp. 66-7) ruled out a plain Latin text when she showed that details from a commentary are sometimes taken into the translation. However, her conclusion that Hutchinson very probably used Pareus (1631) was overhasty: she wrongly assumed that Pareus himself composed the marginal notes which he did not take from Gifanius (1595); in fact the eight notes she cites all originated in Lambinus' commentary, from which some of them had also been reprinted in the *Conlectanea* at the end of Gifanius (1565/6 and 1595).

Warburg's instincts were right nonetheless. As a rule, Hutchinson follows what Real (1970, p. 41) calls Group Y, which includes Pareus (1631) and Gifanius (1565/6 and 1595), in its fairly frequent textual differences from Group X, which includes Lambinus (1563/4, 1565, 1570 and 1583). Pareus (1631) has occasional emendations, or substantive misprints, of its source, Gifanius (1595). Some of those Hutchinson unmissably translates: most notably, 3.595 'a mind' (*animus*); 3.747 'sprung up' (*parita*); 4.395 'wool by spinsters drawn' (*carnine lana trahatur*); 6.141 'Laurus'. This shows that she used Pareus. And yet in Book 6 some lines translate instead of Pareus the quite different text of Lambinus, specifically Lambinus (1570; repr. 1583): most obviously, 6.848, an interpolated line; 6.1084 'first' (*primas*). Perhaps in reviewing her work Hutchinson made an occasional change that Lambinus prompted – 3.915 'move' (*move*); 4.230 'air' (*auras*) – but I cannot imagine her having had Lambinus earlier without consulting his superior edition as much as she did in Book 6.

### The text of this edition

At the Arley Castle sale of 1853 the British Museum bought Hutchinson's manuscript from the widow of Anglesey's last patrilineal descendant. It is a quarto book, with leaves 22.3 x 17.8 cm, in a contemporary English black gold-tooled morocco binding. The collation is

4<sup>o</sup>: [r1 1<sup>o</sup>–15] 2-8<sup>16</sup> 9<sup>16</sup>(98+X1.2) 10<sup>16</sup>(–1016)]; 153 leaves, ff. [3] 1-99  
[1] 100-147 148-9, the first and last of those leaves being paste-downs.

The watermark is a single fleur-de-lis placed in a crowned shield. On f 1<sup>v</sup> is the inscription 'Anglesey. Given me June 11 1675 by the worthy author Mrs Lucie Hutchinson.' Books 1-5 of the poem are in the angular hand of a professional scribe, who also writes the line numbers in Book 4 (the others having none). Book 6, the Arguments before the books, the marginalia, and the letter to Anglesey are in Hutchinson's own rounded and flowing hand, uniformly italic except for the Greek ε that she sometimes uses. Hutchinson adds a lot of punctuation to the scribal copy and also to her own, these later additions being recognizable by their heavy inking. Roughly once in twenty lines she alters what the scribe has written: rectifies omissions, corrects mistaken words and misspellings, capitalizes the initial letters (e.g. 4.607 'Nymphs') and changes punctuation marks. Much less frequently she alters her own fair copy. (It may not have been the only fair copy; she does mention a 'lost copie' to Anglesey.)

I have normalized the usage of *u* or *v* and of *i* or *j*, but not of *i* and *y* (noticeable in, say, 'fling' or 'varying'), and I have expanded ampersands and other abbreviations. I have not modernized spelling. The context will as a rule make clear when 'of', 'then' and 'whither' mean 'off', 'than' and 'whether'; so too with less common ambiguous forms such as 'heard' and 'power' for 'herd' and 'pour'. I have, however, corrected obviously miswritten words – almost all the scribe's – that Hutchinson overlooked. (I have left the few abnormally spelt words that appear only in that form, such as 1.700 'existence'.)

Punctuation marks are often lacking or used in unfamiliar ways. I have not reprinted the text, as James Sutherland does Hutchinson (1973), because the poetry's successive lines with their repeated rhythm and syntactic similarities provide a structure for the long, loosely coordinated sentences. Pauses occur naturally at the end of lines – unless the sense directs that one read straight on – and Hutchinson does nothing unusual when she treats line-end punctuation as optional. Shortened, simplified sentences would not reflect the mind of Hutchinson as a seventeenth-century writer and poet, whose train of thought can follow without interruption a whole sequence of occurrences (e.g. 6.728-41 on Etna). Meaning would be lost by arbitrary new divisions of the text: some sentences are syntactically too unclear to divide (e.g. 6.122-35), and in many instances a word or group of words can belong either with what precedes or what follows. (The same difficulty occurs in the Latin original, of which punctuation is changed from edition to edition.) Where Hutchinson does not punctuate, it is hard to be sure what her choice of meaning would be, or even that she would feel pressed to make a choice. Nor are the choices of Pareus or Lambinus, or of modern editors, reliable guides to her sense of

a passage. In short, just as the *DRN*'s Latin is open to a range of interpretations, which added punctuation restricts, so is Hutchinson's English.

Occasionally I have removed or altered punctuation marks that are misplaced and impede the reader. More often, I have added a period where there is no punctuation but the sense enforces a long pause. Book 6 needs more added periods than Books 1-5, as Hutchinson seems not to have checked her own transcription as carefully as she checked the scribe's. My corrections of punctuation, and of misspelt or miswritten words, are recorded in the List of Emendations: they occur overall about once every forty lines. Of course most of the scribe's errors have already been corrected by Hutchinson. Book 5 is noticeably more faulty than Books 1-4, which may bear on her decision to transcribe Book 6 herself.

In my commentary I have tried to provide both essential explanations and some references to interesting analogues in Epicurus (in Diogenes Laertius) and other classical writers. Towards the end, where Hutchinson used his edition, I have included references to Lambinus (1570; repr. 1583). There is not room for detailed comment on Hutchinson's construal of her Latin text, but I have selected a few of the more striking examples. The reader of Lucretius is fortunate to have the commentary of Munro (1886), whose excellences include unrivalled familiarity with the old scholarship that Hutchinson knew; also of Bailey (1947). To help reference from Hutchinson's text to those and other commentaries, I include at the head of the page the corresponding line numbers of Munro. Those indicate fairly well the discrepancies of numeration that arise from her using rather more lines than the original. But there is no economical way of showing the line-by-line discrepancies between the Latin editions she used and those read today: the lines added, or omitted, or repeated, or arranged in another order. Nor does the divergence of old from modern readings appear in a modern apparatus, even Munro's: he includes only variants with some pretence to plausibility, whereas most in Pareus (1631) have none. What look like mistranslations by Hutchinson may therefore be accurate renderings of different lines or variant phrasings, and this fact should be borne in mind when comparisons are made.

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Lucretius

*De rerum natura*

Translation by

Lucy Hutchinson

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE ARTHUR EARLE OF ANGLESEY  
LORD KEEPER OF HIS MAJESTIES PRIVIE SEALE  
AND ONE OF HIS MAJESTIES MOST HONORABLE PRIVIE COUNCELL

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My Lord

When I present this unworthy Translation to your Lordship, I sacrifice my shame to my obedience, for (though a masculine Witt hath thought it worth printing his head in a Lawrell crowne for the version of one of these bookes) I am so farre from gloriing in my six, that had they not by misfortune bene gone out of my hands in one lost copie, even your Lordships command, which hath more authority with me, then any humane thing I pay reverence to, should not have redeemd it from the fire. Had it bene a worke that had merited glory, or could my sex (whose more becoming vertue is silence) derive honor from writing, my aspiring Muse would not have sought any other Patrone then your Lordship, the justly celebrated Mecenas of our dayes, where Learning and ingenuitie finds its most honorable, I had almost sayd, its only refuge in this drolling degenerate age, that hath hissd out all sober and serious studies; which your Lordship not only cherisheth in others, but are your selfe so illustriously eminent in that most honorable acquisition of Learning, that tis the noblest crowne of any worke, to gaine your Lordships approbation. And therefore, since I did attempt things out of my owne Sphere, I am sorry I had not the capacity of making a worke, nor the good fortune of chusing a subject, worthy of being presented to your Lordship, whose dedication, might gratefully have rendered some of the honor it receives in its acceptance. As your Lordships command will vindicate me from arrogance in offering so unworthy a peice, to such a hand; So I beseech your Lordship to reward my obedience, by indulging me the further honor to preserve, wherever your Lordship shall dispose this booke, this record with it, that I abhorre all the Atheismes and impieties in it, and translated it only out of youthfull curiositie, to understand things I heard so much discourse of at second hand, but without the least inclination to propagate any of the wicked pernicious doctrines in it. Afterward being convind of the sin of amusing my selfe with such vaine Philosophy (which even at the first I did not employ any serious studie in, for I turnnd it into English in a roome where my children practizd the severall quallities they were taught with their Tutors, and I numbred the syllables of my

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translation by the threads of the canvas I wrought in, and sett them downe with a pen and inke that stood by me; How superficially it must needs be done in this manner, the thing it selfe will shew) but I say afterward as my judgement grew riper, and my mind was fixt in more profitable contemplations, I thought this booke not worthy either of review or correction, the whole worke being one fault. But when I have throwne all the contempt that is due upon my author, who yet wants not admirers, among those whose religion little exceeds his, I must say I am not much better satisfisd with the other fardle of Philosophers, who in some pulpitts are quoted with devine epitheses. They that make the incorruptible God part of a corruptible world, and chaine up his absolute freedome of will to a fatal Necessity: That make nature, which only is the Order God hath sett in his workes, to be God himselfe, That feigne a God liable to Passion, impotence and mutability, and not exempt from the vilest lusts; That believe a multiplicitie of Gods, adore the Sun and Moone and all the Host of Heaven, and bandy their severall deities in faction one against another; All these, and all the other poore deluded instructors of the Geniles, are guilty of no lesse impiety, ignorance and folly then this Lunatick, who not able to dive into the true Originall and Cause of Beings and Accidents, admires them who devizd this Casuall, Irrationall dance of Atomes. So farre yett wee may usefully be permitted to consider the productions of degenerate nature, as they represent to us the deplorable wretchednesse of all mankind, who are not translated from darknesse to light by supernaturall illumination, and teach us that their wisdom is folly, their most vertuous and pure morallity fowle defilement, their knowledge ignorance, their glorie shame, their renowne contemptible, their industry vaine, all their attainments cheates and delusions, their felicities unsubstantiall dreames and apparitions, and their lives only a varied scene of perpetuall woe and misery. This is the best account I can give of the best of them, who toyld themselves in vaine to search out Truth, but wandred in a Maze of Error, and could never discover her by Natures dimme candle, which proovd only an Ignis fatui to lead them into quagmires and precipices, and to this day is no better to their admirers, who manifest they are still in their naturall blindnesse, and never saw the Sun, that can soe extoll corrupt glowworms. I am perswaded, that the Encomiums given to these Pagan Poets and Philosophers, wherewith Tutors put them into the hands of their pupills, yett unsettled in the Principles of Devine Truth, is one greate means of debauching the learned world, at least of confirming them in that debauchery of soule, which their first sin led them into, and of hindring their recovery, while they puddle all the streames of Truth, that flow downe to them from devine Grace, with this Pagan mud; for all the Hereses that are sprung up in Christian religion, are

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but the severall foolish and impious inventions of the old contemplative Heathen revvd, and brought forth in new dresses, while men wreck their witts, striving to wrest and pervert the sacred Scriptures from their genuine meaning, to comple with the false and foolish opinions of men. Some of them indeed acknowledge Providence, A devine Originall and Regiment of all things, an internall Law, which obliges us to eternall Punishment if wee transgresse it, and shall be rewarded with present peace of conscience, and future Blessednes if wee obey it; But though they have generall notions, wanting a revelation and guide to lead them into a true and distinct knowledge, of the Nature of God, of the Originall and Remedie of Sin, of the Spring and nature of Blessednes, they set up their vaine imaginations in the roome of God, and devize superstitions foolish services to avert his wrath, and propitiate his favour, suitable to their devized God, inventing such fables of their Elizium and Hell, and the joyes and tortures of those places, as made this Author and others turne them into allegories, and thinke they treated more reverently of Gods, when they placd them above the cares and disturbances of humane affaires, and set them in an unperturbed rest and felicity, leaving all things here, to Accident and Chance, denying that determine wise Councell and Order of things they could not dive into, and deriding Heaven and Hell, Eternall Rewards and Punishments, as fictions in the whole, because the instances of them in particular were so ridiculous, as seemd rather stories invented to fright children, then to perswade reasonable men; therefore they fancied another kind of heaven and hell, in the internall peace or horror of the conscience, upon which account they urgd the persuite of vertue and the avoyding of vice, as the spring of joy or sorrow, and defin'd vertue to be all those things that are just equall and profitable to humane Society, wherein this Poet makes true religion to consist, and not in superstitious ceremonies, which he makes to have had their originall from the vaine dread of men, imputing those events to the wrath of Gods, which proceeded from naturall Causes whereof they were ignorant, and therefore sings high applause to his owne wisdom, for having explord such deepe misteries of Nature, though even these discoveries of his are so silly, foolish and false, that nothing but his Lunacy can extenuate the crime of his arrogant ignorance. But 'tis a lamentation and horror, that in these dayes of the Gospell, Men should be found so presumptuously wicked, to studie and adhere to his and his masters ridiculous, impious, execrable doctrines, reviving the foppish casuall dance of atomes, and denying the Sovereaigne Wisdom of God in the greate Designe of the whole Universe and every creature in it, and his eternall Omnipotence, exerting it selfe in the production of all things, according to his most wise and fixed purpose, and his most gracious, ever active Providence, upholding,

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ordering and governing the whole Creation, and conducting all that appears most casual to us and our narrow comprehensions, to the accomplishment of those just ends for which they were made. As by the study of these I grew in Light and Love, the little glory I had among some few of my intimate friends, for understanding this crabbed poet, became my shame, and I found I never understood him till I learnt to abhorre him, and dread a wanton dalliance with impious bookes. Then I reaped some profit by it, for it shewed me that senselesse superstitions drive carnall reason into Atheisme, which though Policy restrains some from avowing so impudently as this Dog, yet vast is their number, who make it a specious pretext within themselves, to thinke religion is nothing at all but an invention to reduce the ignorant vulgar into order and Government. My Philosophers taught me, by their owne instance, that unregenerate, unsanctified reason makes men more monstrous by their learning, then the most sottish brutish idiots; while they employ the most excellent gifts of humane understanding, witt, and all the other noble endowments of the soule, as weapons against him that gave them. This gave me a dreadfull prospect of the misery of lapsed nature, whereby I saw, with sad compassion, the uncomfortable shadow of death wherein they consume their lives, that are alienated from the knowledge of God. I saw the insufficiency of humane reason (how greate an Idoll soever it is now become among the gowne-men) to arrive to any pure and simple Truth, with all its helps of Art and Studie. I learnt to hate all unsanctified excellence, if that impropriety of expression may be admitted, and to run out of my monstrous selfe, to seeke Light, Life, knowledge, tranquillity, rest, and whatever else is requisite to make up a compleate blessednesse, and lasting felicity, in its only true and pure devine fountainne. As one that, walking in the darke, had miraculously scaped a horrible precipice, by daylight coming back and discovering his late danger, startles and reviews it with affright, so did I, when I, in the mirrour of opposed truth and holinesse and blessednes, saw the ugly deformitie, and the desperate tendency of corrupted nature, in its greatest pretences, and having by rich grace scaped the shipwreck of my soule among those vaine Philosophers, who by wisdom knew not God, I could not but in charity sett up this seamarke, to warne incautious travellers, and leave a testimony, that those walkes of witt which poore vaine glorious schollars call the Muses groves, are enchanted thickets, and while they tripple at their celebrated Helicon, they loose their lives, and fill themselves with poyson, drowning their spirits in those pudled waters, and neglecting that healing spring of Truth, which only hath the vertue to restore and refresh sick humane life. To conclude, let none, that aspire to eternall happines, gaze too long, or too fixedly on that Monster, into which man by the sorcerie of the devill is converted,

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least he draw infection in att his eyes, and be himselfe either metamorphosed into the most ugly shape, or stupified and hardened against all better impressions, as dayly examples too sadly instance. But I say not this to your Lordship, though I leave it in your booke, as an antidote against the poyson of it, for any novice who by chance might prie into it. Your Lordship hath skill to render that which in it selfe is poysonous, many wayes usefull and medicinall, and are not liable to danger by an ill booke, which I beseech your Lordship to conceale, as a shame I did never intend to boast, but now resigne to your Lordships command, whose wisdomme to make the defects and errors of my vainly curious youth pardonable, I relie on much more then my owne skill in searching out an apologie for them, and your Lordships benigne favour to me, I have so many wayes experienced, that it would be greate ingratitude to doubt your Lordships protection against all the censures a booke might expose me to. And while I am assur'd of that, I bid defiance to anie thing that can be sayd against,

My Lord,

Your Lordships  
most devoted obedient  
humble servant

LH

# BOOK 1

## The Argument of the first Booke

The Poet Venus invocates and sings  
To Memmius, the originall of things  
To Gods untroubled quiet attributes  
To Superstition heinous crimes imputes  
Then shewes that nothing without seed can rise  
That the immortal matter never dies  
That unseene Bodies & Vacuities  
The two first principles of all things be  
That Time is nothing but the accident  
Of mortall Bodies sollid since is spent  
That all first Bodies sollid are and firme,  
Eternall, bound to no prefixed terme,  
Exempt from change, & without parts, entire.  
That neither the foure elements, nor fire  
Are the first Matter whence all things are brought  
The equall parts by Anaxagoras taught  
He by evincing arguments orethrows  
Prooves that no bounds the world enclose  
That Bodies and Vacuities confine  
Each other only. That by no designe  
The world was made, but moving atoms hitt  
On that conjunction which produced it  
And such like bodies ever wandering  
From the vast Deepe, supplies to nature bring  
That there's no Centre to which all things tend  
And thus doth this first booke abruptly end.

The Argument of the first Booke in Lucy Hutchinson's hand. British Library, Add. MS 19333, f. 5<sup>v</sup> (text reduced in size).

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### Lucretius de Rerum natura Liber primus

Faire Venus mother of Eneas race  
Delight of gods and men thou that doest grace  
The starrie firmament, the sea, the earth  
To whom all living creatures owe their birth  
By thee conceivd, and brought forth to the day,

When thou (O Goddess) comest stormes flie away  
 And heaven is no more obscur'd with showers.  
 For thee the fragrant earth spreads various flowers  
 The calmed ocean smiles, and att thy sight  
 The serene skie shines with augmented light.  
 Then doth the spring her glorious days disclose  
 And the releast, life-giving westwind blows.  
 Thy power possessing first birds of the ayre  
 They thy approach with amorous noates declare,  
 Next when desires the savage heard incite  
 They swim through streames, and their fat pastures slight  
 To follow thee, who in seas, rivers, hills  
 In the birds leavie bowers, and in greene fields  
 Instilling wanton love into each mind,  
 Mak'st creatures strive to propagate their kind.  
 Since all things thus are brought to light by thee,  
 By whom alone their natures governd bee,  
 From whom both lovelinesse and pleasure springs,  
 Assist me while the nature of these things  
 I sing to Memmius whom thou (Goddesse) hast  
 With all excell'g gifts and vertues grac't;  
 Wherefore sweete language in my thoughts infuse  
 And let not warrs harsh sounds disturbe my muse:  
 Make sea and land a quiet calme possesse  
 For only thou with peace canst mortalls blesse,  
 Since Mars, the mighty God that rules in armes,  
 Lies in thy lap, bound with loves powerfull charmes,  
 And resting there his head in full delight,  
 On thy rich beautie feeds his greedie sight;  
 Hanging with amorous kisses on thy face,  
 Whilst thou (O Goddess) doest this God embrace,  
 While he doth in thy sacred lap remaine,  
 Sweete peace for Rome by gentle prayers obtaine,  
 For neither can we with a quiet mind  
 In time of warre, persue the worke design'd,  
 Nor can brave Memmius, full of pious cares  
 For publique good, neglect those greate affaires.

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*The Argument  
 of the Poem.*

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To all, whither their dissolv'd frames revert,  
 What we in reasoning the first matter call  
 Generative bodies, and the seeds of all,  
 How these first bodies include every thing,  
 How out of them all other bodies spring.

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7

The devine nature doth it selfe possesse  
 In immortalitie, and everlasting peace,  
 Removd farre of from mortall mens affairs,  
 Neither our sorrows, nor our dangers shares,  
 Rich in it selfe, of us no want it hath,  
 Nor movd with merits, nor disturbd with wrath.

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*A description of  
 the devine  
 Nature*

When humane life on earth was much distress,  
 With burth'nsome superstition sore oppress,  
 Who from the starry regions shewd her head,  
 And with fierce looks poore mortalls menaced,  
 A Greeke it was that first durst lift his eyes  
 Against her, and oppose her tyrannies;  
 Whose courage neither heav'n's loud threatnings quelld,  
 Nor tales of Gods, nor thunder bolts repelld,  
 But rather did his valour animate,  
 To force his way through natures closebard gate;  
 Wherefore his vigorous soule prevaild, and farre  
 He went beyond those flaming walls which are  
 Bounds to the Universe, his conquering thought  
 Searcht into every depth, from whence he brought  
 The knowledge of all things to light, and taught  
 What could admit beginnings, what could not,  
 What powers are limited, and what are free,  
 And why the bounds of things still fixed be.  
 Thus in her turne now superstition lies  
 Trod downe, while victorie heav'n's us to the skies.

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*A Mention of  
 Epicurus whose  
 philosophie our  
 Poet translates.*

But here I feare these principles to thee  
 May wricked seeme, leading t'impetie:  
 Yet often superstition in old times  
 Hath bene an author of foule impious crimes.  
 The Grecian Chefes, the worlds choyce men, constreind  
 By a too cruell zeale, at Aulis staid  
 The Goddessse knives in Iphanassas blood,  
 While she poore victime in the Temple stood,  
 With sacred fillets flowing on each side  
 Of her sad cheekes, and all at once espied  
 Her much griev'd father, the sad officers,

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*An Apologie for  
 his doctrine  
 shewing the  
 mischeife  
 superstition  
 hath brought  
 forth*

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The sheathed Steele, and the spectators teares.  
 Struck mute with feare, she bent her knees on earth,  
 Yet neither this, nor that her royall birth  
 First gave a fathers title to a king,  
 Could to the wretch reliefe at that time bring,  
 Whom trembling to the alter mens rude hands  
 With violence hal'd, not to compleate the bands  
 Of glorious nuptials, with th'acustomd rite,  
 But that the virgin, ripe for marriage, might  
 A wofull victime, by her father slaine,  
 A prosperous voyage for his fleete obtaine.  
 Such mischeifes superstition could perswade.  
 Even you your selfe attempts have sometimes made,  
 Vanquisht with terror, when the priests did tell  
 Their frightfull tales, from our truths to rebell.  
 For I could easily many dreames invent,  
 Which would quite overthrow and change th'intent  
 Of all your life, perplexing with just feare  
 Your whole estate; for if men saw there were  
 A certaine bound to there calamitie  
 Then superstitious formes and threats would be  
 Withstood by all, which none dares now oppose,  
 Since after death they dread eternall woes.  
 For the soules nature is misterious,  
 Whither at our birth infusd, or borne with us,  
 Whither in death it with the bodie ends,  
 Or after death to hells vast caves descends,  
 Or into other beasts it selfe conveighs,  
 As our greate Ennius mentions in his lays,  
 Who Helicon, first of th Italians, found,  
 Whence he with never fading lawrell ground,  
 In his immortal verse these secretts brought;  
 Who singing of th'Achernian Temples, taught  
 That not our soules nor bodies there remaine,  
 But pale ghosts which our images retaine.  
 Hence, sayd he, Homers weeping shadow came,  
 Homer, who still survives in lasting fame,  
 And natures misteries with salt tears told.  
 Since then our thoughts doe labour to behold  
 Superior things, the motion of the sunne  
 And moone, the power by which all things are done,  
 On earth, let subtle reason search to find  
 The cause of soules, the nature of the mind,  
 And what's that obvious thing which doth affright  
 Our thoughts, sick, sleeping, waking to our sight

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And eares presenting shapes, and sounds of those  
 Whose drie bones, long since dead, dark graves enclose.  
 How hard a task I've taken to rehearse  
 The Greeke obscurities in Latine verse,  
 The scantnesse of the tongue, and noveltie  
 Of things whereof I treat, makes me well see,  
 Yet doth your vertue, and the hope t'obtaine  
 Your pleasing friendship, lessen all the payne,  
 Inducing me to spend my wakefull nights  
 In searching words, which may convey cleare light  
 Into your mind, that soe you may discern  
 All hidden things, and natures misteries learne;  
 For not the sunne, nor the bright beames of day,  
 Can the minds mists and terrors drive away,  
 But natures contemplation, wherein  
 Our disquisitions we from hence begin.

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*That nothing  
 springs of it  
 selfe without  
 principles.*

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God never anieathing of nothing made:  
 But soe are mortall men restraind with dread,  
 As seing severall works in heaven and earth,  
 And ignorant of the cause that gives them birth,  
 They thinke a power devine brings forth those things;  
 But grant that nothing out of nothing springs,  
 Then we shall soone perceive how things are made  
 And whence they flow, without deviner ayd.  
 If things were made of nothing, they would need  
 Noe proper seeds, all things would all things breed.  
 The sea would men produce, from earth would rise  
 Birds, and the scaly race; flocks, from the skies,  
 And hearsd from heaven would come, beasts would confound  
 Their severall kinds, in wild and pasture ground.  
 Trees would not still yeild the same fruites, but bring  
 Forth change, and all things would from all things spring.  
 If generative bodies were not in each kind,  
 How could a certaine mother be to things assignd?  
 But since each species from its owne seed grows  
 Only first bodies things to light expose,  
 Who take their being where their matter flows.  
 Thus all things cannot out of all things rise,  
 Since each retaine their proper facultes.  
 Why only in the spring are roses borne?  
 Why ripens summer fruite, and Autumne corne?  
 But that all creatures are, at times disposd  
 By the due confluence of their seeds, disclosed  
 In fitting seasons, when the quickning earth

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May give her tender offspring a safe birth;  
 Which if they were of nothing made, would be  
 Suddaine productions, sprung uncerteinly  
 In seasons not their owne, for if there were  
 No principles, which by geniall councells are  
 Kept back from killing seasons, there would need  
 No space for growth, or junctures of the seed.  
 If creatures out of nothing sprung: for soe  
 Men suddenly would from small infants grow  
 Young shoots would trees become, but that all these  
 Are otherwise we know for by degrees  
 From certeine seeds they grow, and still reteine  
 Their owne kind in their growth, which makes it plaine  
 That all the creatures in this manner bred,  
 By their owne matter are encrease and fed.  
 To this, even as without due showers the ground  
 Cannot with new and happie births abound,  
 Soe without food no creatures nature can  
 Encrease their kind, or their own lives susteine.  
 Wherefore of things, it rather may be sayd  
 As words are out of many letters made,  
 That common bodies doe their beings give  
 Then that ought without principles can live.  
 Lastly why should not nature frame a race  
 Of mighty men, outliving mortall space  
 Who on their feete could travell through the deepe,  
 And with their hands could levell mountains steepe,  
 But that a proper matter is assignd  
 To all things, which distinguisheth their kind.  
 Tis proovd that nothing out of nothing springs;  
 Since there's requir'd to all created things  
 A seed which doth their tender births unfold  
 To the life cherishing ayre. If we behold:  
 How manur'd lands exceed the untilld ground,  
 And by mans toyle with better fruite abound,  
 Th'originals of all things we shall see  
 Hid in th'earths entrailles, whence mans industrie,  
 Plowing the glebe, makes way for the new birth,  
 For elce, if such seeds were not in the earth,  
 Without mens payns things of their owne accord  
 Would better grow, and more encrease afford.

*That Nature  
 annihilates none  
 of her workes.*

Out of our eies would vanish suddenly,  
 And would not need any exterior force,  
 Which might dissolve the bands and parts divorce.  
 But since immortal seeds susteine them now,  
 Nature by no means will their death allow,  
 Till force by outward stroakes drive life away,  
 Or secret penetrations death convey.  
 Besides, if substances of things should wast  
 With aged time, and wholly faile at last,  
 Whence should new generations then succeed,  
 Or whence should earth the restord creature feed,  
 Whence springs and floods supplie the Ocean,  
 What food should the Ætheriall flames maintaine?  
 For the past age would have consum'd whatere  
 In former times did mortall bodies beare.  
 But if we may derive the present race  
 From those who livd in that foregoing space,  
 All creatures then immortal natures share  
 And into nothing, none reverted are.  
 Lastly, unlesse eternall matter should  
 The complicated frame of things uphold,  
 Or more or lesse, one force, one cause, would bring  
 Like death, with the same touch to every thing.  
 Against those, where th'eternall mixture failes  
 Every assault of outward force prevales;  
 But since we now eternall matter find,  
 And principles with different links combind,  
 Each bodie, while it equall strength retains  
 To its composure, only firme remains.  
 Thus nothing into nothing turns, but soe  
 Disjoynd all back to their first bodies goe.  
 Further when the paternall heaven powers  
 On the greate mother earth engendering showers  
 They perish in her womb, but thence comes out  
 The shining blade, plants grow, Greene branches sprout,  
 Thence doth she both wild beasts and mankind nourish,  
 And thence with growing youth greate cities flourish.  
 Thence doe new birds the shadie groves supplie.  
 Hence while the heard in their rich pastures lie  
 And on ranck grasse their wearie limbs repose  
 White milke from their extended udders flows.  
 Hence sportfull younglings in the grounds we find  
 Helping their weake joynts with their vigorous mind.  
 Thus nothing perisheth that to our eies  
 Appears, for nature makes new creatures rise

From those which were dissolv'd, and all that live  
 Their beings out of others deaths receive.  
 Since things are not of nothing made, I've taught  
 They cannot be againe to nothing brought.  
 Yet least my sayings find no faith with you,  
 Because first bodies are from outward view  
 Conceald, attend and you your selfe shall learne  
 There are some bodies eies cannot discern.  
 The wind ruffles the clouds, beats on the sands,  
 Orewhelms tall ships, and passing through the land  
 Strews it with torne up trees, the groves destroys  
 And rages through the hills with horrid noyse  
 And furious blasts, not in the Oceans waves  
 With milder gusts or lesser terror raves;  
 And yet the winds concealed bodies be  
 Which passe unseene through heaven, earth and sea;  
 But with no lesser force and fury goe  
 The inundations which from mountains flow  
 When store of raine the rapid torrent fills  
 Whose violent streame descending the high hills  
 Bears downe the groves, and vineyards, overthrows  
 Bridges, whose vanquisht strength cannot oppose  
 The suddaine furie of the waters fall,  
 Which carries downe greate stones, banks, rubbish all  
 That in their passage lies; thus with loud noyse  
 The rolling flood whatere it meetes destroys,  
 Nor with lesse force then swiftest rivers flow  
 Doe the impetuous winds of heaven blow  
 Whose iterated gusts teare and confound  
 Whatere they meete, and often turning round  
 With boysterous whirlwinds, vast destructions make.  
 Wherefore we winds for unseene bodies take,  
 Whose qualities and effects proportion beare  
 To those of watry bodies, which appeare.  
 We take in many smells, but no man knows  
 Which way those various sentis approach the nose.  
 We see not heate, nor to our eies doth cold  
 Appeare, nor can we any voyce behold  
 Yet that all these corporiall natures share  
 Even the touches which they give declare.  
 For bodies only have the proprietie  
 That they can touch, and touch againe can be.  
 Garments grow moyst, hung out neere the sea side,  
 But are againe, spread in the sunshine, dried;  
 Yet we perceiue not how the wett comes in,

*That there are  
 unseene bodies*

270

280

290

11'

300

310

And how the heate expells it, is not seene;  
 For the moyst humor in small atoms flies  
 Which cannot be discerned by our eies.  
 Besides in revolution of some yeares  
 The ring of mettall on the finger weares,  
 The drops of water harder stones decay,  
 The iron of the plow time weares away  
 And with the frequent tread of vulgar feete  
 The solid stones decay, that pave the streete.  
 Passengers kisses weare the brazen hand  
 Of statues which before the cite stand.  
 That these decrease and weare away we know,  
 But in what time, or how the bodies goe  
 Envious nature from our sight with-holds,  
 Nor ever to our peircing eies unfolds  
 The slow degrees, which time and nature both  
 Make use of in each living creatures growth.  
 Nor know we more the times of their decay,  
 How old age comes, and salt waves weare away  
 The ragged cliffes, all this doth then declare  
 That unseene bodies natures agents are.

330

12'

320

*Vacuitie*

340

12'  
 350

Yet condentst bodies not all in nature be  
 But there's besides them a vacuitie;  
 Which open'd to your search will usefull prove,  
 Confirme my sayings, and your doubts remove.  
 There is a place untoucht, emptie and voyd  
 Which if it were not, motion were destroyd;  
 For since we motion and resistance find  
 The functions of all bodies, in one kind  
 They all would strive at once, and where there were  
 No yeilding principles, nothing could there  
 Proceed, but now with much varietie  
 Both in the earth and sea and heaven high  
 We see things moove, which if we doe oppose  
 Vacuitie, will not only motion loose,  
 But even their very beings too would faile,  
 For universall quiet would prevale  
 With the condentst bodies, wherefore, although  
 Some things may solid seeme, they are not soe.  
 We see the rockie caves with moysture filld,  
 And frequent dropps from weeping stones distilld.  
 All creatures food dissolves into their flesh  
 The trees grow up, their branches greene and fresh  
 With nourishment they suck up from their roote

360

In their due seasons bring forth pleasant fruite.  
Voyces flie through the house, through walls of stone  
And penetrating cold goes to the bone.  
Unto all which, there could no passage be  
Unlesse in bodies were vacuitie.

Againe, except such certeine vacuums were  
Why should not things of like bulk like weight beare?  
For if a ball of wooll within it had

As much of bodies, as a ball of lead,  
The weight would equal be, for bodies presse  
But vacuums doe not the weight encrease.

Wherefore what's greate and light much vacuum hold,  
And heaue lumps more bodies doe infold;  
Which prooves the thing that we by wisdom trace,

Even that in nature theres an unfilld place.  
But here let me prevent what some may say  
Least their feignd words should draw your mind astray

Wh'object, as fishes in their passage cleave  
The floods, and certeine tracks behind them leave,  
In which the parted waters meete againe,

Soe though the world a fullnesse still reiteine,  
Yet things may change their place, and may be moovd;  
All which, by reason is a falsehood provd.

For if the waves should not give way, how could  
The fish then swim and whither could the flood  
Retire, when fishes could not passe, so then

Motion must cease, or vacuum must remaine  
Whence motion takes its first originall.  
Lastly if two greate bodies meete, and fall

Insunder, though ayre then fills up the place  
Betweene those bodies, yet cannot that space  
Be all at once, but by degrees, possesst

While part makes way to let in all the rest.  
But if perhaps some thinke this may be done  
Even when they part, by th'ayres condensation,

They erre, for then there would a vacuum be  
More then before, and the vacuitie  
That was before would be filld up, nor could

The ayre be thus condensd, or if it should,  
Without an emptinesse could not this act  
Produce, nor its dispersed parts contract.

Wherefore although you may use argument  
You must at last to vacuum assent.  
I could adde many other things beside

But these small footsteps are enough to guide

410

You in the way, whose wise discerning mind  
Without my helpe, the rest will easily find.  
As hounds, having once sented out their way  
Run swifly ore the shadie hills till they  
In its owne covert seize the chased deare,  
So while things thus successively appeare  
You may the track of truths retirements have,  
And draw the Goddessse forth from her darke cave.  
And if your owne delays no stop procure  
This (Memmius) dare I faithfully assure,  
From my sweete tongue, and rich invention shall  
Such plenteous streames of sacred liquor fall,  
As that slowfooted age will first, I doubt,  
Into my bodie creepe, and let life out,  
Ere I can each particular forme in verse  
And my conceptions in due words rehearse.

*That Bodies  
and Vacuitie  
comprehend  
all things in  
nature, and  
their definition*

13\*

380

But that I may my first intent persue  
All nature lookt on with a single view  
Consisteth only of two parts, which be  
The bodies and th'immense vacuitie,  
In which bodies are plac'd, and exercise  
Their divers motions; now the sence descries  
What simply is a bodie, for all such  
A common propertie have t'endure the touch.  
But except you to these foundations give  
A strong believe, you never will conceive  
The misteries we declare. Now if the space  
We call vacuitie be not, noe place,  
As we before declar'd, will then remaine  
Which all these mooving bodies can containe.  
In nature theres no third capacitie  
Wherein things can consist, which equallie  
Nothing of bodies, or of vacuums share;  
For whatsoever it be, they either are  
Of lesse or greater bulk, which if it may  
In the least sort admitt the touch, then they  
With bodies must be rancked, but if againe  
It no resisting facultie reiteine

429  
14\*

390

But easie passage to all things permitt,  
We then amongst the vacuums number it.  
And farther each thing with a simple view  
Considerd, either doth some action doe,  
Or is the action of some other thing,  
Or else the place where acts and motions spring.

44\*

400

13\*

Now all that suffer, bodies be  
And all that gives them space, vacuitie.

Wherefore besides, there is no third  
Which sence can reach, or nature can afford.

For unto these whatever else we see  
Either conjoynd, or accidentall be

Those are conjunctions which at no time force  
Without pernicious injury can divorce

As wet, heate, weight, from water, fire and stone  
From bodies touch, from incorporealls none.

But bondage, libertie, wealth, want, war, peace  
And all, by whose departure or accesse

Nature remains the same, not chang'd nor spent  
These we more fitly may terme accident.

*Of Accidents and  
Conjunctions*

14<sup>v</sup>

460

*Of Time*

Time alsoe nothing is, but what sence brings  
Out of the series of transacted things,

Collecting former acts, with those which wee  
At present doe, and shall hereafter see.

But cannot be alone, by sence defin'd,  
From motion and from calme of things disioynd.

For when of the faire Helens rape they tell,  
And how in fight the vanquisht Trojans fell,

We cannot call these anieathing alone  
Since the past age irrevocably gone

Hath swept them hence who shared those accidents;  
For all former transactions were th'events

Some of the places, of the persons some.  
Lastly if things no matter had, no roome,

Nor space wherein each might transacted be  
The fire which Helens beauty secretly  
Conveyd to Paris brest, had never there

Engenderd lust, that flamed in cruell warre,  
Nor had the Grecian horse brought forth by night

The fatall brands that did Troys funeralls light.  
Thus then transacted things you may perceiue,  
Noe beings by themselves, like bodies, have

Nor can be reckond as vacuitie,  
But accidents of place and bodies be.

Bodies are partly the first ground of things  
And partly what out of that first ground springs.

Bodies which are of things th'originall held  
Being solid, to noe outward violence yeild

470

480

15<sup>r</sup>

*That the first  
bodies are solid*

40

Although tis very hard to gaine a faith  
That anieathing a solid body hath.

For heavens loud sounding thunder passes through  
The thick walld house, as noyse and voyces doe,  
It'n in the fire becomes red hot, and by  
The force of heate greate stones insunder flie.

The solid masse of gold melts in the flame:  
And lumps of brasse turne liquor in the same.  
The silver cup that in your hands you hold  
Is penetrated by the heate or cold

Of the infused drinke, all which being thus  
Theres nothing can seeme solid unto us.

Yet since reason and th'nature of things constreine  
Us soe to thinke, attend while I explaine  
How from immortal solid bodies, all  
Created things draw their originall.

First then a twofold nature being assignd  
To these two things, which we soe different find  
Even bodies and the place wherein they moove  
These needs must pure and selfe-subsisting proove.

For wheresoere that emptinesse is, which wee  
Doe vacuum call there bodies cannot be  
Where bodies are, theres noe vacuitie.

Therefore first bodies uncompounded are  
And solid in themselves, no Vacuums share.

Further since generated things abound  
With vacuums some firme matter must be found  
Which these enclose, for whatere doth containe  
Vacuums within it, must it selfe remaine

A solid bodie, which cannot be done  
But by the matters condensation.  
Thus then though generated bodies die  
The first being solid, last eternally.

Now if there were no such vast emptinesse  
Each thing a solid bodie would possesse.  
If certeine bodies did not fill the place  
Vacuitie would take up all this space.

Which now these two by mutuall courses share  
And things nor wholly filld, nor empty are;  
But certeine bodies a distinction make  
Of space, which vacuums fill, and which they take.

To destroy these all outward stroaks will faile  
Nor will more penetrating force prevaile.  
Nor can they anieaway dissolv'd be  
As I a while before instructed thee.

510

15<sup>v</sup>

41

530

490

500

510  
15<sup>v</sup>

520



For nothing can without a vacuum cleave  
Nor breake, nor part insunder, nor receive  
Wet, cold, or penetrating fire, whose ayd  
Is requisite to all things that are made,  
And where more vacuums remaine in things  
All force more easie dissolution brings.

16<sup>r</sup>  
540

*That the Principles  
are eternall*

But if first bodies without vacuumms be  
And solid, they must have eternitie.  
Besides unlesse eternitie had bene  
In the first matter, we had long since seene  
All things reduc'd to nothing, and soe had  
Againne from nothing sprung, which we have made  
So much impossible we must conclude  
The principles of all things are indued  
With immortality, and the last day

550

Dissolves all creatures into them, that they  
To the next births new matter may supplie  
And still preserve their firme simplicitie.  
Time from eternitie could on no score  
But this the race of humane things restore.  
If nature did not things some terme allot  
To die, materiall bodies then could not  
Worne out in the first age, make the next spring  
In proper seasons, or to ripenesse bring  
The new formd creature; for we see it plaine  
These sooner are destroyd then built againe.  
So no succeeding time could have restored  
That which the first long lasting age devourd,  
In whose unfixt, disorderly decay

560

All principles would have consumd away.  
But since we now behold all things renewd  
That they have ends prefixt we hence conclude.  
Nor only that, but an appointed date  
In which their age attains its perfect state.

16<sup>v</sup>

Though the materiall bodies solid are  
Yet all which fire, ayre, earth or water share  
How ere they a're made, or moovd (since there reside  
Vacuums in bodies) may be mollified.  
Yet if th'first principles this softnesse had,

570

Whence ir'ne or hard rocks should be made,  
Reason could not resolve, for soe noe ground  
Would be for natures operations found.  
And therefore all the principles possesse  
An everlasting, solid simplenesse,

42

By whose strong combination all things grow  
Closely compact, and solid firmnesse shew.

580

*That the Principles  
cannot admitt of  
change*

Lastly since generations are confin'd  
To termes of life and growth strictly assign'd,  
And natures laws prescribe them limits too  
What each one may and what they may not doe,  
And all unalter'd in their bounds remaine  
The bodie of 'th matter can no change susteine.  
As wee in severall featherd birds may find  
Whose various coulors alter not their kind.  
If natures principles could vanquish't be  
Leaving productions to uncerteintie  
What might, or might not be, and were there found  
Noe power which makes all creatures keepe their bound,  
Successive races had not oft renewd  
Their parents natures, motions, manners, food.  
Againne all bodies from one poynt arise  
Which cannot be discerned by our eyes  
But individuall is, of substance small  
Which never wholly did, nor never shall  
Subsist alone, being the first inwardst part  
Of every frame, to which the rest resort  
And in their orders here disposd, from hence  
Perfect the bodies by their confluence;  
These since they cannot by themselves abide  
Must stick there, where noe power can divide  
Their strick conjunction: Thus first bodies are  
Solid and simple, and doe still adhere  
To smallest parts, by noe new things accesse  
But by their owne eternall simplenesse.  
Whose lessning, or division nature now  
Preserving seeds of things, will not allow.

600

*That the principles  
are not subject to  
division.*

Againne were there noe individuall least,  
The smallest would of infinite parts consist  
And nothing could a certeine end attraine  
While halfe of the halfe part would still remaine.  
What difference then could there have bene betweene  
Little and great; for though the greate had bene  
Made up of infinite parts, the smallest yett  
Would equall multiplicitie admitt.  
Which since our reasons and our faith oppose  
Convinc'd, we must with this opinion close,  
That there are bodies with no parts indued

17<sup>v</sup>  
620

43

Most small in nature; this if we conclude,  
 We them both solid and eternal yeild.  
 Againe if things are usually compell'd  
 By all-forming nature still to seperate  
 In smallest parts, she could from them create  
 Nothing anew, for all whose parts may be  
 Encreast, admit not that varietie  
 Of joynts, weights, strokes, concourse, and motion, which  
 The generative matter still enrich,  
 Whereby all things are perfected. Againe  
 If bodies fracions could no end attaine,  
 Now from eternitie there must be some  
 Which never yett did into hazard come;  
 But being of fraile constitutions made,  
 Whom new assaults successively invade,  
 They could not everlastingly contend,  
 But force would overcome them in the end.

630

*Arguments against  
 their opinion who  
 hold fire to be the  
 first matter.*

Wherefore they erre, who fire first matter call  
 And unto it ascribe th'originall  
 And cause of every thing. In which van came  
 The old Heraclitus of nobler fame  
 With empty men, for language darke and new,  
 Then with sage Greekes, who did the truth persue.  
 All things which in ambiguous words lie hid  
 Only foolles love, and admiration breed,  
 Who for the pleasant sound the matter prize  
 And thinke all truth which welltund words disguise.  
 If from pure unmixt fire each creature springs  
 From whence comes this varietie of things?  
 The lower fires to litle purpose were  
 Condens't or rarefied, if all parts here  
 The nature of the element possess't,  
 For heate contracted soe, would be, encreast  
 Amongst th'united parts, more vehement,  
 But amongst those disperst, faint and soone spent.  
 No more then this can fancy hence contrive;  
 Nor the varietie of things derive  
 From thin and thicker fires. Could these men yett  
 Allow vacutie mingled with it,  
 Fire might be so condens't or rarefied,  
 But since their principles will not abide  
 Such doctrins, rejecting Vacuum, they  
 T'avyoyd the rougher paths, quite loose their way.  
 Nor yett discerne how by denying Vacuum

18-

650

660

44

All things one condens't bodie will become;  
 Which from it selfe could no swift rayes emit,  
 As summer bringing starres doe light and heate.  
 Whence we perceive they are not of firme parts made  
 And if some say, this argument t'evade,  
 The fires are quencht and chang'd in natures crowd,  
 And a new forme to every part allow'd,  
 Then heate will vanish quite away, and all  
 Created things loose their originall.  
 For whatsoere passing its bound receives  
 New forme, causeth the death of that it leaves.  
 Wherefore something must needs remaine entire  
 Or else the whole world would at once expire;  
 And chang'd to nothing, the varieties  
 Of creatures would againe from nothing rise.  
 But now since certeine bodies must remaine  
 Which their unalter'd natures still reteine  
 Who as they change their course, come, or depart,  
 So things themselves to other shapes convert  
 And vary natures; yett we here must know  
 That fiery bodies cannot operate soe,  
 That they should come, goe, change their course, succeed  
 In others vacant roomes, it would not neede;  
 For as they all a fiery nature had,  
 All would be fire, however it were made.  
 But this I thinke, there is a confluence,  
 Forme, motion, place of certeine bodies whence  
 Heate is begott, and that these bodies doe  
 Varying their order change their nature too  
 Yett are not form'd like fire, or anything  
 Which to our senses can a substance bring  
 Or by our touch discerned be. 'Tis then  
 Madnesse with Heraclitus to maintaine  
 All things are fire, and that in nature none  
 Hath true existance but the fire alone.  
 For here the senses will the sence confute  
 And overthrow the ground of the dispute.  
 For that which he termes fire, how can he know?  
 The sence, they say, confirms tis truly soe.  
 How vaine a dotage will it then appeare  
 Not to trust sence in things as cleare?  
 Where shall we goe? is there an evidence  
 Whats true, or false, more certeine then the sence?  
 Further as some no principle admitt  
 But only heate, ascribing all to itt;

670

18-

680

690

19-  
700

45

Others doe fire as madly disavow  
And yet in nature a supream allow.  
Wherefore who the worlds matter fire conceives  
Whence nature her originall derives,  
Who ayre the cheifest principle suppose  
Of generation, or who thinke it flows  
From all creating moysture, or that earth  
Changed to each nature, gives the creatures birth,  
These erre from truths, as those doe, who designe  
The world a double principle, and joyne  
To the fire ayre, to water earth, and they  
Who teach foure elements, from whence they say  
All things proceed, earth water ayre and flame.

720

Empedocles of Agrigentum fame

First to this doctrine gave, whose birth renownd  
The Isle of Sicily, embraced round

19<sup>v</sup>

*A Mention of Empedocles and his Countrie*

By the Ionian sea, whose blew waves beate  
On all her coasts, and make a narrow streight,  
Which flowing still with rough and rapid tides  
The Island from th'Italian shore divides.

730

Here is the vast Charibdis, *Aetna* here  
With horrid thunders keepe the plains in feare,  
While the imprisond flames expresse their ire  
By those lowd threats, till the enraged fire  
Breakes through the hills disclosed jaws, and flies  
With dreadfull lightnings to the arched skies.

740

Although this Island justly be renownd  
For men, wealth, wonders, which doe there abound,  
Yet none of all that plenteous happie birth  
Adds soe much glory to the native earth,  
As this mans deare and venerable name,  
Whose sacred verses, his greate soule proclaime;  
Where we soe high and rich inventions trace  
He scarcely seemes to spring of mortall race.  
Yet both this man and those we nam'd before,  
Illustrious many ways, who did explore  
Misterious truths, and from their sacred mind  
More certeine answers brought, then are devind  
On Phoebus Tripos by his lawreate priest,  
Yet in the principles of things they mist.  
And greate men there into grosse error fell,  
Who first maintaining motion, did expell  
Vacuitie; though they did constitute  
Things thin and soft, as fire, earth, beasts, and fruite,

750

20<sup>r</sup>

46

The ayre, and sun, but with these bodies yet  
No mixtures of vacuitie admitt.

Next they an end of fractions disavow  
And unto bodies will no pause allow  
Where their division in the end shall cease,  
Nor certeine poynts that cannot be made lesse.  
Yet see we all things terminated are

760

In that which to our senses doth appeare  
The smallest poynt; whereby we may conceive  
Those which we see not, like small endings have.  
Further while to the creatures they assigne  
Fraile principles which spring up and decline  
And with the bodie die, all things must soe  
Returne to nothing, and from nothing flow;  
Which fancies from the truth are distant farre.  
Againne amongst themselves these eliments are  
Adverse and poyt'nous, soe that when they meete  
They either perish, or each other greeke

770

As winds, showers, lightnings doe, in stormie weather,  
When furious tempests drive them all together.  
Last if all things are of foure elements made  
And into them resol'v'd, why is't not sayd  
Aswell their beings from the creatures springs  
As that they are the principles of things.  
For that, changing their natures and their hiew,  
Successively each other still renew.

20<sup>v</sup>

But if you should perhaps suppose that when  
Fire, ayre, earth, water mix, they might retaine  
Their proper natures still unchang'd, they yet  
No creature by that mixture could begett;  
Whither the bodie had a soule or none,  
As trees, for in that heapt confusion  
We should each eliments various nature see.  
Ayre mixt with earth, fire would with water be.  
But principles in generations still  
Endeavour their owne natures to conceal,  
Least soe the jarring seeds which they disclose  
The creatures proper being should oppose.

790

Besides from heaven, they say, and those fires there  
Fire first descends, that turns it selfe to ayre;  
Ayre moystring raine engenders, and that raine  
Resolves to earth, from whence they all againe,  
With an inverted order, backwards flow.

*How the 4  
Elements change  
into each other.*

47

First showers, then ayre, then fire, not ceasing soe  
To change themselves, and gently to remoove  
From heav'n to earth, from earth to heav'n above.  
Which the first principles by noe meanes can

800

For something must immutable remaine  
Least all things wholly into nothing turne.  
For whatsoere goes forth of its owne forme  
And changes to a new, it needs must kill  
That which it left, then those who still

21<sup>r</sup>

Exchange their nature as before was taught  
Must under other principles be brought,  
Which can no change admitt, least all things should  
To nothing turne; but if you rather wou'd  
Affirme that certaine bodies were indued

810

With such a nature should they fire create  
Adding, subtracting, changing but the state,  
Order, and motion they might change to ayre,  
So all things elce might like mutations share.  
But you may say, tis seene all things are bred  
Out of the earth, and by the ayre are fed,  
And when due showers doe not the greene plants cherish,  
They, with the drought of heaven infected, perish.

820

Soe when the sun doth not his heate bestow,  
Neither plants, animals, nor fruite can grow.  
And were not wee with meate and drinke upheld  
Life from our members would be soone expell'd.  
But as from divers things we food receive  
So others, ayd to other creatures give.

For common principles mixt variously,  
In various things, afford a reason why  
Those various things the severall creatures feed.

*That the same principles  
variously disposed  
produce various things.*

Againe these principles doe oft proceed  
As their positions and conjunctures proove,  
As they themselves are moov'd, or others moove.  
For the same principles doe constitute  
Heav'n, earth, sea, sun, floods, creatures, plants and fruite.

21<sup>v</sup>

But divers ways their divers beings compound.  
So in our verse are common letters found  
In severall transpositions sett, from whence  
Words are produced, of severall sounds and sence.  
Such change the order of the letters brings  
And more flow from the principles of things.

839

Letts now examine Anaxagoras  
And unto his Homeomerion passe;  
For which Greeke terme our narrow language can.  
No fit word yeild, but yet we may explaine  
In other words, what that word doth contene.  
He says, small parts of bones doe bones compose,  
That flesh from little fleshie peices grows,  
Blood from small drops of blood, soe gold from gold,  
Soe earth, fire, water, all that we behold,  
From little parts of the same kind arise;  
Yet, while the bodies fractions he denies,  
Nor will admitt vacuities, to me

850

His errors seeme as greete, as those which we  
Before condemnd; he constitutes withall  
Too slender principles, if we may call  
Those principles which the like nature share,  
Which toyle and end alike, whereof none are  
Exempt from perishing; for which of them  
Shall hope to vanquish in the last extreme  
Of natures conflict; shall ayre, water, fire,  
Or bone, or blood, that priveledge aspire?  
No sure, for all their constitutions be  
As liable unto mortallitie,

860  
22<sup>r</sup>

As those who in our sight doe every day,  
Subdued with strong assaults, consume away:  
But tis allreadie manifest, that all  
Things neither can to nothing fall,  
Nor out of nothing rise, and then beside,  
Since growth and nourishment, by food supplied,  
Maintaine the bodie, it must be confest,  
That all the veines, blood, bones and nerves consist  
Of unlike parts; whither they say all food  
Be a mixt bodie, wherein bones, nerves, blood,  
And veines in small parts congregated be,  
From whence 'twill follow of necessitie

870

That unlike parts, all meates and drinks compose,  
As bones, blood, veines, and nerves; further what grows  
Up from the fertile ground, declares the earth  
Consists of unlike parts, which there take birth;  
The same to all things elce may be applied,  
As if we see wood; flame, smoke, ashes, hide  
We must conclude, that unlike parts compound  
That wood. Some here have a small shelter found,  
Who with the learned Anaxagoras hold,  
Each severall thing, doth all things elce infold

880

But one alone it selfe in front doth shew,  
 Whose parts being most, are most exposd to view.  
 But reason here with-stands; for if this were,  
 In corne, by mill-stones broken, would appeare  
 The plaine exterior signes either of blood,  
 Or something elce that is the bodiees food.  
 So herbes and fountains would white drops distill,  
 As sweete in tast, and fragrant in the smell,  
 As that the ewes from their full udders yeild;  
 So clotts of earth, oft crumbled in the field,  
 All sorts of leaves and frutes, and every greene  
 In small dispersed parts, would there be seene;  
 So should we in the wood, when it were broke,  
 Behold the hidden fire, ashes and smoke:  
 Of which, nothing being soe, we know  
 That all things are not mixt together soe:  
 But common seeds of things may be enclosed,  
 And severally in secret ways disposd.  
 Yet you may say, doe we not often see,  
 When neighbouring trees upon the mountains be  
 Forc'd by strong winds, they rude collisions make  
 Till from their chafed boughs the bright flames brake?  
 Tis true; yet hath not fire a proper seate  
 Within the wood, but certeine seeds of heate  
 Inhabite there, which motion congregates,  
 And by their confluence that light fire creates.  
 For should there so much hidden fire abide  
 Within the trees, no time could those flames hide,  
 Which would all forrests and all groves devoure.  
 This then confirms, that which was sayd before  
 That the same principles, as they are joynd,  
 Moove, or are moovd, or have their place assignd,  
 Divers effects produce; thus there will need  
 But a small change, to make the fire proceed  
 Out of the wood, as in our writings wee,  
 By altring their positions variously,  
 Of the same letters these two words compose.  
 Last when you see, things various forms disclose,  
 If you believe those shapes could not appeare,  
 Except the bodiees of the matter were  
 With such like natures too indued, this way  
 Makes all the principles of things decay.

22<sup>v</sup>  
 890

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910

23<sup>r</sup>

920  
*Lignis. Ignis.*

Now letts proceed, attend and heare the rest,  
 I know how darke it is, but in my brest,

*A digression applauding  
 his owne worke from the  
 difficultie of the subject*

50

My Goddesses eagre thirst of prayse inspires,  
 And love of learning prompts my strong desires  
 The muses secretest retreats to find,  
 And search those untrackt paths with vigorous mind.  
 I long to drinke the springs untasted yet,  
 To crop the newborne flowers, and get  
 A fresher wreath, my temples to adorne,  
 Then any of the poets yet have worne.  
 Because I first greate misteries disclose,  
 And soules from superstitions fast knots loose;  
 And next, because in such sweete verse I sing,  
 With easie words, soe difficult a thing,  
 Nor is this labour spent in vaine; soe strive  
 Phisicians childrens weak age to deceive,  
 And when they give a bitter potion, baite  
 The verges of the cup with honie, that  
 While th'outward sweetnesse doth their lips invite,  
 They may receive their cure with their delight;  
 So I, because these arguments are grave,  
 To which the vulgar strong aversions have,  
 As things not treated yet, chose to declare  
 Harsh theames harmoniously, and as it were  
 With the mellifluous sweetnesse of my verse  
 Alluring your attention, to rehearse  
 The misteries of things, by which you should  
 All nature in her comliest forme behold.

930

940

23<sup>v</sup>

950

We have proovd materiall bodiees solid be,  
 And uncorrupted moove eternally;  
 Now letts enquire, whither they have a bound,  
 Or are unlimited; Againe we've found  
 Vacuitie an open empty space,  
 Where each thing mooves, and hath its proper place;  
 Let's then consider too, whither this be  
 An universall vast profunditie,  
 Or elce enclosed with bounds; the world hath none;  
 For whater yeilds to circumscription,  
 It selfe hath an extreame, that must admitt  
 Of something elce beyond, that limitts it.  
 And when our sence arrives at that extreame,  
 Which doth the utmost terme of allthings seeme,  
 It matters not, where we that region site,  
 Which must unbounded be, and infinite;  
 Since nothing can those utmost limitts passe,  
 Soe that though parts may be assignd to place,

*That the vast Universe  
 hath no bound.*

960

24<sup>r</sup>  
 970

51

Th'immense universe yet must we leave  
 Unlimited, and free; but now conceive  
 All space could be compriz'd in bounds, and soe  
 Some man might to those utmost regions goe,  
 Should he there hurle his dart, with nimble force,  
 Would it flie on, in the designed course,  
 Or opposition find? one of these two  
 Must be confest; and granting either, you  
 Barre all retreat, and both ways are compell'd,  
 T'allow the world, within no limitt held;  
 For whither anie thing the shaft oppose  
 Or stop its flight, and it with bounds enclose,  
 Or whither it be carried forth, it will  
 Not finde an utmost terme, for we shall still  
 Persue it wheresoere it flies, and when  
 Tis brought to the extreamest region, then  
 Enquire where you att length the shaft will place,  
 Which wheresoere it flies, will still find space;  
 Besides, were the worlds utmost space assign'd  
 A limitt, and in certaine bounds confin'd,  
 Th'abundance of the solid matter would  
 With weight sinke to the lowest parts, nor could  
 There anie thing in th'arch of heaven be done,  
 Nor would there be a heaven, or light, or sun,  
 For soe the matter which did still descend  
 Throughout all ages, would be there reteind  
 In one congested heape; but we allow  
 No rest to the materiaall bodies now;  
 Leaving no lowest part for their retreat,  
 Where being assembled, they might fix their seate,  
 Who by their dayly motions doe supplie  
 All parts, and from that vast immensitie,  
 Eternall matter to the whole world rise.  
 Lastly we doe behold before our eyes,  
 How things each other bound, the ayre doth hemme  
 The mountains, and is limited by them,  
 The earth the sea, and seas doe all shores bound,  
 Only no wall without the world is found,  
 Therefore the nature of place, the immense space,  
 Is such, as rivers with their swiftest pace  
 In many ages neither can passe through,  
 Nor by their journey leave lesse way to goe;  
 Soe is the roome of things extended wide,  
 Boundlesse, and unenclosd on every side.

980

990

24<sup>v</sup>

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1010

52

Yet to it selfe, the highest nature gives  
 A certaine measure, within which it lives;  
 Thus bodies terminate vacuities,  
 Vacuities the termes of bodies be;  
 That soe, these two by mutuall courses might  
 Successively make all things infinite;  
 For except they, termes to each other gave,  
 Bare simple nature, would no measure have;  
 Thus sea and earth, and the bright arch above,  
 And all that both in earth and heaven moove,  
 Could not one moments space subsist, for soe  
 The plenty of the matter would confus'dly flow,  
 Through the vast space, and dissipated there,  
 No more could that dissolved heape repayre,  
 Nor could new creatures now againe create,  
 Having no power those parts to congregate.

25<sup>r</sup>

1030

*That the world was  
 made by the casual  
 conjuncture not the  
 designe of Principles.*

1040

For sure, the principles did neither joyne  
 In councill, nor deliberately assigne  
 Each others place, nor mutually agreed,  
 How orderly their motions should proceed;  
 But from the multiplied varieties  
 Of change, and regions, where they exercise  
 All motions, and conjunctures, they at last  
 Are into that most perfect order cast,  
 By which subsists this universall frame,  
 Whose motions thus dispos'd, remaine the same  
 In the long tract of time; thus rivers doe  
 The greedie Ocean with their floods renew;  
 Hence with the suns heate cherish't earth revives  
 Her various of-spring, hence the creature thrives,  
 And ever blazing fires in heaven reside,  
 All which would vanish, were they not supplied  
 With plenteous matter, which for evermore  
 Repaires their wasts, from natures infinite store.  
 For as each creatures bodie, kept from food,  
 Would perish, and dissolve, soe allsoe wou'd  
 The universe it selfe consume away,  
 If matter did not feed that vast decay.  
 Further if regions of the matter never can  
 All parts contracted in themselves reteine,  
 They oft may mint new parts, sometimes stope some,  
 Till others to compleate the whole worke come;  
 And oft to shrinke together are compell'd,  
 That soe they to the principles may yeild

*The supreme nature  
 gives bound to it selfe*

1020

25<sup>v</sup>  
 1050

1060

53

A space and time of issue, who being freed  
 From the thick crowd, more easily may proceed.  
 Wherefore againe things needs must be restored,  
 And that these regions may supplies afford,  
 An infinite matter needs in this respect.

*Arguments against  
 the Centre*

But their opinion (Memmius) farre reject,  
 Who say, that all things to the centre moove  
 Whereby the world doth self-subsisting proove,  
 Nor propit, nor yet dissolv'd by outward force,  
 Since high and low things all have their recourse  
 Into the middle part, thus they maintaine  
 All heavie things moove upwards, and againe  
 Downe to the centre falling, all rest there,  
 As images of things which here appeare  
 Through liquid streames, and this way strive to proove  
 Antipodes, which underneath us moove,  
 Whose bodies thence, to their inferior skies,  
 Can fall no more, then ours to heaven rise,  
 When they the sunne, the evening starrs, we see  
 Theirs and our seasons enterchanged be;  
 Error in fooles this vaine opinion bred,  
 Through ignorance of the principles misled,  
 For where place and vacuities infinite are,  
 The centre nothing is, or if it were  
 Is not a cause why things should there abide,  
 Rather then in more distant parts reside;  
 For whatere space we call vacutie,  
 Both in the midst, and out of it, must be  
 Compell'd to give the solid bodies way,  
 Whereere their equall poyssures them convey.  
 Now to whatever place they have recourse,  
 They neither can loose their owne solid force,  
 And in vacutie subsist, nor yet  
 Can that its yeilding property remitt,  
 And in bodies subsisting, cease to doe  
 Those acts which nature makes them still persue.  
 This argument then, will never win the field,  
 To proove that things are in the centre held,  
 By the strong cords of an all-conquering love;  
 Againe they doe not make all bodies moove  
 Downe to the centre, where they carrie those  
 Which waters forme, or earthy molds enclose  
 But on the other side, ayre upwards tends,  
 And fire out of the centre still ascends,

1070

26<sup>r</sup>

1080

1090

26<sup>r</sup>

Thus the hot vapors which the earth expires,  
 In heaven collected, feed th ætheriall fires,  
 The sunns bright taper, there with flames maintaine,  
 And that high heaven where constellations reigne.  
 Neither could humane generations thrive,  
 Nor greene trees flourish, did they not derive,  
 Continuall nourishment from what ascends  
 Out of earths fertile womb \* \* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 Least the worlds walls should vanish like quick flame,  
 And soe dissolve the universall frame.  
 Soe heavens high pallaces destroyd, above,  
 Earth from her fast foundations should remove,  
 And in their confusd heape of ruine involve,  
 All other bodies, and their frames dissolve,  
 Whose parts in that vast Chaos would ever stray  
 And thus one moments space would beare away  
 All humane things, nor any reliques leave  
 But desolate space, which their darke seeds should have.  
 In whatere parts bodies first passe away,  
 A breach is made for natures whole decay,  
 Where all th'assembly of the matter joynd,  
 Doth through those gates an open passage find.  
 This knowledge, if you perfectly attaine  
 By my small worke, where each makes th'other plaine,  
 Nights mists no more shall from your eies conceal  
 Natures last bounds soe things doe things reveale.

1110

*Here is one of the  
 Poets abrupt Hiatus  
 for he was mad with  
 a Philtrem his wife  
 gave him and writt  
 this booke but in the  
 intervals of his  
 phrenzie.*

1120

27<sup>r</sup>

1130