Girl behind the woman: Cicero and Tullia, Lucretius and the life of the body-mind

> Logical relations are thus, in a sense, domestic relations.
> – Durkheim and Mauss, *Primitive Classification* (1963 [1903]), 84[1]

Introduction: the figure of experience

In the last chapter, I argued that representative portions of Roman Stoicism recognized the externality of the self from the beginning. In these accounts, the formation of the self in and through others was the condition of its later engagement and fulfillment in social and political life. I argued, further, that feminine personification appeared in the Roman's account of himself as a figure for his dependency on others in general, and especially on women, because of their fundamental role in procreation and early life. While these associations of real women are not, in real life, cirumcumstantial, from the perspective of the philosophical text and its internal operations they are, strictly speaking, external. In this chapter, I argue, in contrast, that there is a substantive reason, intrinsic to the philosophical text, for the incorporation of feminine personification in the account of the person in Roman philosophy. The reason for the Roman's resort to the feminine in his philosophical account (*ratio*) is the irrational role of women in Roman life and the correspondence of that role with the irrational origin of the person in Roman, particularly Lucretian, Epicurean philosophy.

This "irrationality" is most conspicuous in Lucretius' attempt to offer a rational accout of the origin of life and consciousness. Reflecting his radical materialism, I call this constitution of the person the life of the body-mind, arguing that Lucretius' account of its origin need not make sense in the usual manner of analytical philosophy – that is, in terms of

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[1] *Primitive Classification* by Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss, translated by Rodney Needham. © 1963. Reproduced by permission of University of Chicago Press.

coherent and systematic arguments, which make unambiguous reference to real things, and possibly void, which is all that exist in the materialist's universe.[2] In fact, the extent to which he does something different from the usual may be the measure of his success. The reason for this is that, in spite of his materialism, and still somehow within its confines, the decisive body in Lucretius' account of the life of the body-mind is something that is almost not a body. As a result of its strange ontology and even stranger operation, this special element, the *anima animae* or "[grammatically feminine] soul of the [grammatically feminine] soul," is best expressed in metaphor and figurative language. To be clear, I do not argue that Lucretius uses metaphor to *paper over* inadequacies in his account. Rather, building on the deconstructionist approaches of Duncan Kennedy, I argue that Lucretius' theory requires a material with special properties, which in turn requires a special kind of language, a language that can, to use a paradox, speak precisely about indeterminacy.[3]

With attention to the figurative language that Lucretius uses to present the life of the body-mind as a kind of domestic arrangement between masculine and feminine terms, the body-mind of Book 3 appears as household formed by a masculine *animus* and a feminine *anima*. Consistent with the juridical ontology of the domain in question, these two principles come to constitute the "household" of the body-mind, in an almost legally performative fashion, *by* conjunction. Giving the figurative aspect of the grammatical gender its due, Lucretius presents the cognitive part of the soul in masculine terms as the *animus*, and the nutritive part of the soul – the part of the soul that is, in Greco-Roman tradition, closest to the body as the site of matter and necessity – in feminine terms as the *anima*. Lucretius reverses the hierarchies of Mediterranean social life when he suggests that the life of the body-mind cannot be explained exclusively in terms of a dominant masculine *animus* and a subordinate feminine *anima*. On the contrary, Lucretius will posit a kind of fifth element – fourth in the soul, and fifth in the traditionally recognized nature of things – that is neither masculine nor feminine but rather a doubly affirmed negative-negative feminine-feminine *anima animae*. Somehow

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[2] Lucr. 1.419–82=LS5B, 7A; on its context in Hellenistic materialisms, see Sedley 1999.

[3] See, e.g., Kennedy 2002, 34–7; Holmes 2012, 323f., 327–9. For a review of poststructuralist approaches to Lucretius, see Goldberg 2009, 31–62, where note discussion of both Derrida and Kennedy at 48–51. With the advent of the so-called "new materialisms," literary critics and cultural theorists are once more interested in the origin of life (e.g., Bennett 2010, 50–6, 63f.), but the radical materialism of their efforts may (always) founder in deconstruction: see Dubrueil 2011, 242f., with Derrida 1987, 359f., 374.

both inside and outside the house, this super-feminine term supplements its hierarchical construction, presenting a "constitutive outside," not only of the house of the body-mind, but also of Lucretius' masculinist system of *logos-ratio*. It plays, to use the proper word for the strategically unstable in poststructuralist, deconstructionist, and Derridean work, the role of a *supplement*. In ensuring the operation of the system, it ends up challenging the system's operation, such that "what is supposed to produce the positive and eliminate the negative does nothing but *displace* and at the same time *multiply* the effects of the negative, leading the lack that was its cause to proliferate."[4]

What we find in Lucretius is two forms of personification : **literary personification**, or the use of human attributes to describe ostensibly non-human or, in this case, pre-human phenomena; and **philosophical personification**, or the philosophical account of the conditions of personhood. **Personhood** is, again, the capacity to incorporate a third-person perspective on oneself, and thus to "personify" oneself as others do.[5] In Lucretius' radical materialism, these two forms of personification are somehow both integrated and held apart, revealing the antinomian character of gender difference in the social historical context of Republican Rome. Before considering the chain of contradictory effects that unites these two forms of personification along with the two genders in Lucretius (hereafter *DRN*), I discuss, in the next section, the epistolary record of the grief that Cicero, Lucretius' contemporary, experienced at the loss of his daughter in 45 BCE. Revealing the ambivalent position of the Roman "girl" in "real life," Cicero's correspondence will play the part of the social historical background against which Lucretius' super-feminine soul of the soul stands as figure. In the same section, I insert the social historical background of gender difference preserved in Cicero's post-Tullia writing into the framework of the relation of gender and aesthetics in classical studies. To do this, I use the conspicuous example of Roman sexual discontents that the philosopher Seneca provides in his treatment of the Augustan aesthete and sometime effeminate Gaius Maecenas. Combined with some seminal moments from modern and postmodern feminist philosophy, Seneca's discussion of Maecenas will further evince the binary character and structural instability – in fact, deconstruction – of the social historical background of gender difference that enters Roman philosophy through literature.

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[4] Derrida 1981a, 101; for the history, see 1974, 6–26, 141–64, 268–316, also 1973, 88–104.
[5] See above, Chapter 2.

In the end, the decisive part that Lucretius' unleashing of the supple-
ment of the *anima animae* must play in our own continuing engagement
with this text as living readers will demand the interrogation of our own
role as interpreters. In the final section of this chapter, I therefore intro-
duce a discussion of hermeneutics, the art/science of interpretation that
Paul Ricoeur called the "instrument of thought for apprehending the con-
nection between language and speaking, the conversion of system into
event" – that is to say, in the present instance, the conversion of the poem as
an object of history into a living document, a subject of our own interpre-
tative act, and an agent in our philosophical understanding of ourselves.[6]

The ambivalent social position of the Roman girl: Cicero and Tullia, Seneca and (the soul of) the good man

Just as Seneca the Younger will one day accord his young wife a consti-
tutive part in his relationship with himself, Cicero talks about his grown
daughter, Tullia, and the grandson whose birth killed the mother, Cicero's
daughter, and devastated the grandfather, Cicero himself, in 45 BCE.[7]
Combined with what one scholar has called the "paradox" of "female for-
midability" in a "patriarchal society,"[8] Cicero's experience of personal vul-
nerability through the vulnerability of his daughter exemplifies the social
context in which, as discussed above in Chapter 2, the feminine becomes,
through **literary personification**, the figure of **philosophical personifi-
cation** in Roman philosophy. Consistent with the argument of Chapter 1,
ownness proves a pervasive part of this philosophy and, to judge by
Cicero's ostensibly unphilosophical letters, Roman life as well. In parts
of the *Tusculans* on which I touched in the earlier chapters, Cicero's use
of figure, rhetoric, and other non-literal, improper features of discourse
reveals the important role of **identification** across the boundary of gender
difference in the Roman concept of ownness. In particular, by using lan-
guage of dismemberment, a species of oikeiotic language familiar from the
anatomical catalogues of the philosophical accounts,[9] Cicero suggests that

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[6] Ricoeur 1989, 398.

[7] On Seneca and Paulina, see *Ep.* 104.2, as discussed in the Introduction. On Cicero, Tullia, and the
late philosophy, see Treggiari 2007, 118–54, Altman 2008b, Baraz 2012, 48–67, 86–95.

[8] Hallett 1984; for further documentation and discussion, see Hemelrijk 1999, 9.

[9] See on *Fin* 3.18 and 62 in Chapter 1 and, in Chapter 2, on Sen. *Ep.* 89.1, but note also *Tusc.* 3.63,
with the dismemberment of Medea, connected directly to *oikeiôsis* by Gill 2009, 71–4 (cf. Graver
2002, 112, Hinds 2007, 199–204), and Cicero's own fate at the hands of Antony's soldiers (Livy in
Sen. *Suas.* 6.17).

personal and political identity are normally connected and that, in times of grief and vulnerability, the third-person perspective of personhood that ensures their connection must be imposed (*Tusc. Disp.* 3.61):

> Omnibus enim modis fulciendi sunt qui ruunt nec cohaerere possunt propter magnitudinem aegritudinis. Ex quo ipsam aegritudinem *lupê* Chrysippus quasi solutionem totius hominis appellatam putat. Quae tota poterit evelli explicata … causa aegritudinis; est enim nulla alia nisi opinio et iudicium magni praesentis atque urgentis mali. Itaque et dolor corporis, cuius est morsus acerrumus, perferetur spe proposita boni, *et acta aetas honeste ac splendide tantam adfert consolationem*, ut eos qui ita vixerint aut non attingat aegritudo aut perleviter pungat animi dolor.

> For in every way we must brace those who fall apart and cannot cohere on account of the magnitude of their grief. For this reason, Chrysippus thinks grief, or *lupê*, itself was named after a kind of dissolving [*solutionem*] of the entire human being; but the whole cause of the grief can be excised, once explained … because it is nothing except belief in and judgment about a present and pressing evil. So too bodily pain, which has the fiercest gnawing, can be tolerated with hope of good put forward, *and a life lived nobly and conspicuously brings so much consolation* that those who have lived in such a way grief leaves untouched and pain in their souls only very lightly stings.

The opening of the passage describes the **ambivalence condition of subjectivity**: the person appears now a body, broken; now, beyond the body, a subject of incorporeal descriptions – the capacity to recognize causation, to respond to hope. Cicero presents this ambivalent ontology with the chemical language of different states: the word *solutio* evokes fluid dissolution while the etymology of pain, *lupê*, and its Latin cognate *rumpo* (suggested by *ruunt*, which adds speed and motion to the mix) hint at the shattering of solids.[10] This physical imagery centers on the "whole human being" (*totius hominis*), partly but not exhaustively embodied when grief reveals the problematic contingency of the **person** in his **subjectivity**: that is, again in the terms established in Chapter 2, grief *disorganizes* the person and reveals the originally ambivalent aspect of subjectivity as, not only the

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[10] Chantraine 1968, s.v. *lupê*. In a passage reminiscent of Cicero's Tusculan psychology, Vergil explicates the etymology suggested by the paranomasia, where note the proliferation of the key u-sound (12.526–8): "Aeneas and Turnus rush through battle [*Aeneas Turnusque ruunt per proelia*]; now, now [*nunc, nunc*] | anger floods their insides [*fluctuat ira intus*], sundered are the hearts, unused to be conquered [*rumpuntur nescia uinci/ pectora*]"; the image is reversed in programmatic fashion in Statius' description of natural catastrophe at *Pun.* 5.613–6, true to the assimilation of systems of storm and self in both ancient and Romantic literary theory (see n. 40 in Chapter 2); cf. Lucr. 3.294–8.

precondition of personal *agency*, but also the condition of *subjection*. Finally, the *omnibus modis* by which the afflicted person is to be shored up against his ruin are not only the consolations of friends (social), but also reminders of the mourner's social *and political* existence: *acta aetas honeste ac splendide.*

Cicero's experiences and expressions of loss are thus individual and social to the extent that they involve alternating mediations of subjectivity and personhood. By reminding the mourner of himself, his friends are attempting to elicit his own ownness of himself, as it once encompassed the third-person perspective of personhood and subsumed the ambivalence of subjectivity in the "splendor" of one's life in others' eyes.[11] The word *homo*, "human being," suggests the extent to which the normative assumptions of Cicero's therapy are masculinist. Here *homo* denotes the human being in his *personal* aspect, that is, his personhood; it is this that is falling apart in, and disorganized by, grief. Elsewhere, as when Cicero will encourage the man of "great spirit" to despise "human things" in the first book of *On Duties, homo* picks out, against a background of reification, the subjective aspect of the person in its thing-like contiguity with the conditions of its subjection.[12] In a similar way, Laelius spoke, in *On Friendship*, of the need to be attached to others that followed from the frailty of "human things" (*res humanae*). So too elsewhere in the *Tusculans*: "There is, in the souls of all, by nature something soft [*molle*], depressed, lowly, spineless [*enervatum*] in some way, and dissolute [*languidum*]. If there were nothing else, nothing would be uglier [*deformius*] than a human being."[13] As discussed in Chapter 2, this evaluation of the human being centers on the ambivalent quality of the feminine aspect of the subject: "If there were no [personhood], nothing would be uglier than the [subject: *homine*]."[14]

The person is, in these accounts, as we'll see at the level of atoms in Lucretius, a construct of two genders, or two gendered aspects. The vacillation between concrete and abstract comprises much else that Romans evidently also associated with gender: a subjective dimension expressed in being recognized by others as good, the incorporation of that recognition by others

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11 Cf. Hammer 2008, 50f. For Ciceronian therapy, see *Tusc.* 2.11, 3.1–6, with White 1995, 226, Gorman 2005, 68f., more generally Graver 2002, 121–3, 171–3, 182f., Gill 2008, cf. 1985; generally and seminally, Nussbaum 1994, 13–47.

12 *Off.* 1.61: "It must be understood, however, that when there have been proposed four [virtues] from which morality and right action emanate, the most refulgent [*splendidissimum*] in appearance is that which is done with a great and elevated soul *that holds human things in contempt* [*humanasque res despiciente*]"; cf. 1.67, 68 of money, 71 of *imperia et magistratus* (in bad faith), 72, 90.

13 Compare *Tusc.* 2.47 in Chapter 2 above.

14 See L'Hoir 1992, 11, "*uir* implies active participation in public affairs, and … *homo* connotes passivity"; cf. 13 with *Fam.* 5.17.3; and 22 with *Mil* 82: *homo effeminatus*, etc. See further Clark 1998, 173f.

into oneself, and the use of the incorporated ascriptions as a basis for feeling and acting. Some of these aspects, such as the soul perhaps (in the first book of the *Tusculans* Cicero productively, "eclectically" vacillates on this point),[15] are material. Some, such as the body, are unquestionably so. Some may be something altogether different, such as the recognition of others' view of oneself as splendid, glorious, good, and masculine. With these altogether different, neither corporeal nor incorporeal aspects of the person, Lucretius too will grapple in what follows.

In the meantime, the constructed, partly feminine, mediated character of the person already entered Cicero's writing in the form of a relation of signification between the father and the daughter, long before her death, in 58 BCE (*QFr.* 1.3.3): "What about the fact that, at the same time, I miss my daughter [*desidero filiam*]? What devotion she has, what modesty, what character! The *image* of my face, my speech, my mind [*effigiem oris, sermonis, animi mei*]!" With the aesthetic language discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, the language of appearance and the symbolic mediation of absence and presence, Cicero suggests that the third-person aspect of individuals need not be narrowly "political" (that is, exclusively masculine), but that it is still one's reference to relations with others (here women and children, perhaps "the social") that grounds him, not as a self or subject, but as a *person*. His subjectivity can exist, as in the throes of grief with the loss of Tullia, with or without such externalizing recognition of himself in the eyes of others. But when that happens, as he tells us himself with the image of the *effigies*, he becomes a signified in search of a signifier, and thus unintelligible.[16] Generations later, the younger Pliny expresses the same sentiments on behalf of his friend Fundanus (*Ep.* 5.16.9): "For he lost his daughter, who represented [*referebat*] his character no less than his looks and features and who was the offprint [*exscripserat*] of her father with astonishing likeness." Father and other, particularly father and daughter, constitute a signifying pair in which various parts – looks, features, limbs, and even characteristics – are coordinated, unified, and made meaningful in a relation of representation and *relata*: here *relata* (fem.) and *relatus*.[17]

These passages reveal the extent to which, not only in philosophy, but also in experience, Roman thinking predicates personal identity in society and politics on ownness, the affectively rich incorporation of others that constitutes the self. Itself predicated on the vulnerability of a *feminine*

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[15] *Tusc.* 1.9, 11, 22, 38.
[16] Cf. Butler 1993, 22–4, 200–3.
[17] To some extent, the gender is fluid, but the subaltern status is essential: Plin. *Ep.* 5.19.4, 8.1, cf. 8.24.4, cf. Hallett 1984a, 66f.

being, this particular form of ownness transpires in the aesthetic terms of reference and representation, presence and absence. On the one hand, the referential aspect of aesthetic mediation (Cicero's signification through the *effigies* of Tullia) represents the partly external, third-person character of personhood. On the other hand, once it crosses the boundary of gender difference, it traces the "outsourcing" of the work of subjection in the gender-based division of labor in classical Rome.[18] In other words, with the *effigies* of their daughters, these men used women, not only "to think," but also to feel and exist. That they would vilify the feelings that undermined their patriarchal claims to supremacy and ideologically relegate those aspects of their identity to others is not suprising. What *is* surprising is that, in the form of the aesthetics of their thus mediated affections, they admit to their feelings at all.[19] Moreover, the idea that the Roman "girl" (in 58 BCE, Tullia was at least 20, in 45, at her death, over 30)[20] is both a token of her father and at the same time somehow irreplaceable is consistent with the actual ambivalent status of women in elite Roman society and probably had real consequences in social history (Hallett 1984a, 67, cf. 64):

> Well-born Roman women's initial valuation as their father's daughters not only helped ensure their subsequent valuation in other roles but also allowed them to transcend the most obvious limitations of this one – indeed, to display increasing independence and self-assertiveness …

Like children and thus needy, needy and thus important, important and thus empowered: the dynamic upshot of these "girls'" lifelong value and eventual empowerment as ~~women~~ emerges as a paradox that is now generally recognized as typical for binary systems of cultural representation.

Behind this presentation of cultural relations, which Roman rhetorical and aesthetic theory thoroughly formalized, is the idea, familiar from poststructuralist studies in classics, that the two halves of binary systems, such as those of masculine and feminine in systems of sex and gender, presume and depend on, even as they exclude, one another.[21] "Thus," as

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[18] See n. 41 in the Introduction.
[19] But see Corbeill 2000, 70f.
[20] Cicero's language for her is (typically: Hallett 1984a, 66f.) equally infantilizing when she dies at around 30.
[21] For the terminology, see Rubin 2011 [1975]: 39f. with Haraway 1991, 137–41 cf. Holmes 2010, 92–110. On the formalization of gender relations in rhetoric, see, e.g., Gleason 1995, 103–30, Corbeill 1996, 128–73, Richlin 1997, Gunderson 2000, 1–28, 187–222, Connolly 2007b.

the thinker most closely associated with this intellectual tendency, Judith Butler, has written (1990, 17–23 at 22):

> "I feel like a woman" is true to the extent that Aretha Franklin's invocation of the defining Other is assumed: "You make me feel like a natural woman." This achievement requires a differentiation from the opposite gender. Hence, one is one's gender to the extent that one is not the other gender, a formulation that presupposes and enforces the restriction of gender within that binary pair.

Using ancient aesthetics as an example later in the 1990s, Margret Graver exposed the ambivalence and paradox of the classical Roman conception of gender dualism: "Dandyism [*concinnitas*] is no masculine ornament," writes Seneca; but, asks Graver: "If *concinnitas* is not a 'masculine ornament,' then what is? Here, the answer seems to be 'no ornament at all … ' 'Masculinity' thus appears in *purely negative terms*."[22] In other words, says Graver, the positive value of the Roman system is masculinity, but it asserts itself through negations. The flipside of this may be that the feminine in fact retains a positive value even in its devaluation – a positive value, but necessarily complex and contradictory. Something analogous appears in action, on the analysis once again of Judith Butler, in some historical attempts to *resist* or *subvert* the sex-gender system in Western Europe and North America. In feminism's constitutive attempt to isolate and valorize "the feminine" in the middle to late twentieth century, writes Butler, the masculine maintained its value even in the advancement of radical feminism precisely because of the presuppositions of masculinism in the movement and in society at large: "If the … distinctness of 'the feminine' depends on its purification of all masculinity … then that repudiated masculinity is *presumed* by the feminized morphology, and will emerge either as an impossible ideal that shadows and thwarts the feminine or as a disparaged signifier of a patriarchal order … "[23]

Exactly analogous to the persistence of the masculine in the feminine of radical feminism is the persistence of the feminine in the masculine of Roman masculinism. Using the textbook language of aesthetic theory that Graver isolates in her treatment of Seneca's treatment of Maecenas, in the letter following his famous denunciation of Maecenas' verbal dandyism, Seneca throws the value of the negated feminine into relief when he

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[22] Graver 1998, 615f., with my emphasis, citing Sen. *Ep*. 115.1: *Non est ornamentum virile concinnitas*. See further Holmes 2010, 110–25.

[23] Butler 1995, 87, cf. Haraway 1991, 137–9.

imagines what it would be like "if we were allowed to look at the soul of a good man [*boni viri*]" (*Ep.* 115.3, 4f.):

> O quam pulchram faciem, quam sanctam, quam ex magnifico placidoque fulgentem videremus … Nemo illam amabilem qui non simul venerabilem diceret. Si quis viderit hanc faciem altiorem fulgentioremque quam cerni inter humana consuevit, nonne … evocante ipsa vultus beniginitate productus adoret ac supplicet … oculis mite quiddam sed nihilominus vivido igne flagrentibus, tunc deinde illam Vergili nostri vocem verens atque attonitus emittat?

> O quam te memorem, uirgo? namque haut tibi vultus
> mortalis nec vox hominem sonat …
> sis felix nostrumque leves quaecumque laborem.

> O what a beautiful and sacred sight [*faciem*] we would see as it shone from the grand and tranquil man … Nobody who said that it/she [*illam*] was lovely would not also say that it/she was worthy of respect. If someone saw this sight [*faciem*], higher and shining more than is ever discerned among the human, then would he not, compelled by the very bounty of its expression herself/itself, pray and abase himself? … With eyes flashing something mild but with a fire no less alive, then would he not, awestruck and stunned, raise the cry of our Vergil?

> O how shall I report you, maiden? For your looks are hardly
> mortal, your voice sounds nothing human …
> Bless you and lighten our labors, whoever you are!

Essentially a set-piece of Platonic provenance,[24] this passage begins with the description of the man who gives up on non- "masculine" cultivations (*Ep.* 115.2): "The great man speaks pretty freely and with less concern [*remissius … et securius*]." In doing so, this great man forgoes the effeminate dandyism attributed derisively to Maecenas' speech in the letter before, but then takes on a different kind of effeminacy in the image that Seneca now associates with Aeneas' mother. Lover or mother (she *is* Venus), this image confronts the founder of Rome after he washes up on the shores of Carthage in Book 2 of the *Aeneid*. As elsewhere in the face of *Philosophia domina*, through the Alexandrianism of Vergil's inheritance, Seneca becomes almost elegiac in his masculine submission: "She will approach and raise us up, if we want to worship her [*colere eam*]."[25] At this point it is not clear if Seneca means, by "her" (*eam*), the *authority* of the noble man who has dispensed with

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[24] See Chapter 6 on Cic. *Off.* 1.95.
[25] *Ep.* 115.5. Cf. *Ep.* 53.7 as discussed in Chapter 2.

the effeminate accouterments of oratorical self-satisfaction, or simply Virgil's Venus. This ambiguity becomes ambivalence when Seneca writes (*Ep.* 115.6): "We will be able to see Manly Excellence [*virtus*] even when 'she' is hidden [*obrutam*] in the body, beset with poverty, even when disgrace and a bad reputation lie in front of 'her.' We will discern, I declare, that beauty, even cast in filth [*pulchritudinem illam quamvis sordido obiectam*]."

As we'll see again with Cicero's feminine personifications in Chapter 6, the tradition will do a great deal to insulate such statements from their possible eroticism. Here, for instance, Seneca identifies a possibly erotic element only to emphatically pair it, in "Platonic" fashion, with worship and respect: "No one who said she was lovely/desirable [*amabilem*] would not also say she was worthy of respect [*venerabilem*]." But even such efforts, in the immediate context, founder in the ambivalent sound of the "Platonizing" – sanitizing – term: *venerabilis* surely means "worthy of respect," and surely not, as its sound persists in suggesting, "venereal," or associated with Venus and erotic desire for real women. Likewise, surely, Jupiter did not, in Venus' previous appearance in the *Aeneid*, have any similarly untoward response to his daughter when he "sampled a kiss" of the Goddess of Love in the memorable scene from Book 1.[26] With just the same impossible subtext, Seneca emphasizes that we will see this image of virtue, authority, and the rest – person or attribute, male or feminine – *not* with the eyes of the body in response to the Great Man but with the eyes of the mind in response to a ~~woman~~. However, the face flashing fire also flashed with "something mild" (*quiddam mite*), which, again, is emphatically distinct from the abject, feminine "something soft" (*aliquid molle*) that Cicero deplored in the *Tusculans*, and, closer to home, from the gentleness of character of Seneca's Maecenas. Because of his otherwise inappropriate association with feminine things ("he married a woman a thousand times, although he had one wife"), the Augustan dandy, not a bit like Seneca in his mastery of aesthetics and proximity to power, "appeared … to have been soft [*mollis*] instead of mild [*mite*]" (*Ep.* 114.6f.). In all these instances, as the careful double negative of Seneca's initial statement suggests ("*nobody* who said … would *not* also … "), the formulations point to

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[26] *Aen.* 1.226: *oscula libavit natae.* Servius *ad loc.* affirms the chastity of the kiss, but why does he feel it requires a gloss at all? See Putnam 1998, 7f. on *Aen.* 8.611, Clayton 1999, 77. The point, in Seneca's quotation from Vergil, is not, at any rate, eroticism *per se* but the impossibility of expunging *aesthetic* pleasure from that *ascetic* strain of European thought, which associates the aesthetic, qua aesthesis, with ethical incontinence and women: Stock 2007, 7–46, cf. Putnam 1998, 48–54.

the presence of the feminine in the masculine, and even of the female in the feminine, in the course of emphatically pointing to something else. They do so not without the provisional admission of that which they ostensibly exclude.

Combining Butler's analysis of the persistence of the masculine in strains of second wave feminism with Seneca's attribution of grammatically feminine attributes to the Great Man in Roman cultural poetics, we can explore something not usually recognized in the seminal studies of sex and gender in Greece and Rome from the 1990s. Yes, on the one hand, the male is valued in opposition to the female – that is, negatively, and only in relation. The opportunistic binary in turn necessitates the degradation of the female and the *attempt* to split the feminine from the female, so that the attribute can be used to convey the good qualities of the substantive without *her* actual substance. On the same hand, the Great Man of Senecan sociology overflows with feminine attributes, which can, in their emanated autonomy, actually begin to do things like "real" females – or feminine personifications of more than usual embodiment, such as Venus: command respect and worship, and *not not* sexual desire. But on the other hand, on the contrary, and also, reversing Butler's critique of the secret masculinism of oldguard feminism, the oldguard masculinism of Roman philosophy *also harbors a secret, spectral "feminism"* – that is, a positive value for the feminine that persists both *in spite of* and *because of* Roman philosophy's "exclusive" valorization of masculinity.[27]

The conceptual move that I am making is likely to be counterintuitive. I am, in effect, *taking for granted* the developments outlined by Graver. I take for granted that the masculine component of the ancient Roman system, whatever its positive value in cultural *practice*, is at least *in theory* predicated on the exclusion of the feminine. This exclusion undermines, not only the ability of the masculine to positively define itself (as masculine), but also to exclude, and devalue, the feminine (and real women). The flipside of this, the insight on which I insist, is that, as Butler suggests about older forms of feminism, the feminine in Rome acquires a *positive* value just and precisely to the extent that systems of representation put a patently positive value on the masculine as a form of negated feminine.

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[27] Cf. Hallett 1997.

The ambiguous philosophical value of the universal woman: Lucretius' *Natura*

Using the paradoxes of poststructuralism to discern the unlikely "feminism" of Roman philosophy, in the rest of this section I'll analyze the passages in Lucretius that have attracted the most polarized critical responses from classicists interested in gender in the 1990s. Based on the paradoxical norms of Roman social life, these programmatic passages of the *DRN* feature personifications more or less tantamount to the Venus who stands before Aeneas in Seneca's quotation of "our Vergil." They thus furnish the macrocosmic background against which we'll be able to see the Roman "feminism" that emerges, in the paradoxes of poststructuralism, at the microcosmic level of Lucretius' metaphysics of the life of the body-mind.

At the higher, macro-level, then, consistent with the paradoxes of poststructuralism and proceeding with the "both/and" logic of deconstruction, it is, in the framing narrative of the *DRN* as a whole, not *just* the case that the positive value of Epicurus as a male conqueror of the universe and ersatz epic hero (even Aenean) depends directly on the negation of nature as a woman (1.66–71):

> primum Graius homo mortalis tollere contra
> est oculos ausus primumque obsistere contra,
> quem neque fama deum nec fulmina nec minitanti
> murmure compressit caelum, sed eo magis acrem
> inritat animi virtutem, effringere ut arta
> naturae primus portarum claustra cupiret.

> A Greek human being was the first to dare to raise
> his mortal eyes and stand opposed, whom neither
> gossip of the gods nor lightning nor sky with thunder
> threatening did restrain, but only more
> excited the trenchant prowess [*virtus*] of his mind,
> so that he lusted to burst through Nature's tight-barred gates.

Later again (3.38–40):

> his ibi me rebus quaedam divina voluptas
> percipit atque horror, quod sic Natura tua vi
> tam manifesta patens ex omni parte retecta est.

> A kind of god-like pleasure and shuddering do me
> overtake completely in view of these things – that Nature by your
> violence lies so exposed and unclothed all over.

Such representations feature a negation of the feminine in the form of
a nature who is even obscenely personified. The value of the masculine,
even the man, then comes precisely, first in the case of Epicurus and then
in that of Lucretius, from *his* position of dominance over "her." But this is
not all. Rather/also: this feminine personification, certainly subjected or,
if you will, "repressed," returns when Nature herself speaks in the famous
prosopopeia that these passages paradoxically introduce: "In the end, if
nature suddenly issued a voice, and harangued one of us, in person [*ipsa*],
as follows … "[28] Nature marks the climax of this important point of the
poem by speaking for herself for pages. She is both the object of the man's
violent pleasure and herself the juridical agent (*actor*) who subjects him.[29]

The same personification took place in Seneca's personification of the
attributes of the Great Man. There, too, it became unclear who or what
was in charge, but the male and masculine Roman philosopher submit-
ted to "her" (virtue, the face/sight of it/her, beauty, "something soft/
gentle," etc.) all the same. He was in charge, then she was in charge,
and then it became unclear who or what initiated the order of domi-
nance: her or him or some other her or him (e.g., the Great Man from
whom "she" emanated). Such was the course of the **dynamic person-
ification**, to which **linear personifications** of a more conventional
kind, both discussed in Chapter 2, give rise. In passages such as these,
it becomes unclear whether dynamic personification, and the agency of
the object that it reveals, is a moment *of* linear personification or rather
a moment *before* linear personification. If dynamic personification,
revealing the agency of the object, is a moment *before* linear person-
ification, then dynamic personification is the *condition* of linear per-
sonification, and all personifications, even the obvious or conventional
instances, only betray or reveal the flux and power of the dynamic of
reality that systems of representation, such as Lucretius' *DRN*, purport
to regulate.

In the same way, as discussed with other examples in Chapter 2, part
of the power of Nature's address in Lucretius comes precisely from the
fact that she, as a "woman," is suddenly speaking in the masculine regis-
ter that the many legalisms of her speech imply. Recognizing that letting

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[28] 3.931f. Cf. Nugent 1994, Clayton 1999, and Fowler 2002b (orig. 1996); on the literary and historical
context, Keith 2000, 39–41; on the personification in Book 3: Wallach 1976, 61–6; cf. Kany-Turpin
1999, 97–9, and esp. Degl'Innocenti Pierini 2012, 224f.; more generally, Gale 1994, 39–45, Garani
2007, 29–94.

[29] 3.963: "In the right [*iure*], in my opinion, she pleads [*agat*], in the right she complains and
reproaches." Speaking, "she" stands in contrast to silent "mother" earth: Keith 2000, 36–8.

Nature speak in her own voice is still to use "her," as a Tullia-like cipher or "effigy" of a male author (such would be **linear personification**), Don Fowler argues that "the power of such figures" in the *DRN*, among whom Fowler also includes Venus Genetrix and Mother Earth, "is too great to be contained" (such would be dynamic personification).[30] The proof of the impossibility of containment that Fowler, in good deconstruction, affirms is that, even as Lucretius personifies nature in a compromised position, he noneless prepares us for Nature's empowering personification, her great speech, with lines such as these (2.1090–92):

> quae bene cognita si teneas, Natura videtur
> libera continuo, dominis privata superbis,
> ipsa sua per se sponte omnia dis agere expers.

> If you understand [Epicureanism] well, then Nature seems,
> free forever, released from her arrogant lords, to do [*agere*]
> all things, with no help from gods, herself of her own accord.

Obviously such lines, combined with those discussed before and the fact that nature, recognized as a woman, is thus granted extraordinary authority, set up a system of representation that is complex and liable to internal contradictions. Nevertheless, this complexity and possible contradiction are an asset to the Roman philosopher, and not only for his continued objectification and instrumentalization of the feminine – to which he is probably unavoidably committed – but also for his value to *us* (on the assumption that we are opposed to his misogyny, if not avowed feminists). Such contradictions in the Roman system "save" the Roman philosopher, as modern philosophers say of philosophical infelicities in the thinkers that they value, from himself.

How he can be so saved will appear as a consequence of persisting in the "both/and" logic that I have adopted. Thus, again, it is not *just* the case, as S. Georgia Nugent put it in the article that elicited Fowler's reparative effort, that "the symbolic value of the female body is distributed over the two constitutive terms of the Epicurean universe," with the result that (1994, 205):

> She is matter, but also void; fertility, but also mortality. In this poem whose raison d'être is to provide a reasoned understanding of the composition of the cosmos and of one's place in it, the female provides a means of figuring the world but does not possess a mind capable of understanding it.

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[30] 2002b, 449, cf. Serres 2000, 39. On introduction of Venus, see Catto 1988–1989, esp. n. 3, with Clay 1983, 82–110, 226–38, and 99–102 on *Lucr.* 2.167–74.

Nugent's claim is generally true. Just as important as its truth, however, is the way that it arrives there: if it is true that the feminine plays two parts in *DRN*, as Nugent demonstrates and as Fowler accepts, then the problem is not so much that she, in the form of real women, is then excluded from the system for whom she is the most versatile and powerful grounding metaphor. Rather, the problem is that "in this poem whose raison d'être is to provide a reasoned understanding of the composition of the cosmos and of one's place in it," there are still "things" (including *ourselves*, as we'll see) that resist rationalization, that retain, in a word, their mystique.[31] These are not only women but also men – all of us, then – and even those of us whom "all of us," construed as men and women, does not include: people who don't conform to gender dimorphism, children and animals, all kinds of things – all maintain their mystique and are not rationalized or, if they are, it is only for a moment *before*, in the dynamic that personification reveals, some other aspect of the "things" to which the *DRN* is dedicated overtakes their rationalization. Lucretius' personification of Nature "herself" thus marks a limit beyond which Roman attempts at rationalization, including the rationalization of Roman masculinism, fail.

But is that all there is to say from a feminist perspective? The challenge that I think Roman philosophy meets, or at least the opportunity that it presents for a reparative reading, is to navigate between the poles of liberal feminist freedom, the objectification of women that that position critiques and condemns, and the recognition of subjection and collectivity as definitive parts of the individual person that liberal and relatedly libertarian forms of feminism exclude.[32] The failure to synthesize these positions *may* result in mystification and "irrationality" – which may in turn "justify" social disparity and its givenness to males or females (and this includes its being given exclusively in terms of male and female).[33] But this dilemma is hardly confined to antiquity and redressing it in a feminist context will not only provide a more profound appreciation of the problems that Roman philosophy presented itself; it also makes it possible to recognize the reparative possibilities available to the interpreter of ancient masculinist projects. Perhaps especially as a pre-modern formation, Roman philosophy somehow managed both to posit and evade (affirm and negate) the individual, human or otherwise, as a category of action.[34]

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[31] *Pace* Nussbaum 1994, 181–7; cf. Kany-Turpin 1999, 99 with *DRN* 2.181=5.198, 5.186, cf. 1.949f.
[32] On reparative reading, see the Introduction above and the Conclusion below.
[33] Butler 1993, 9–15, cf. Goldberg 2009, 44f.
[34] Cf. Blondell's "cake principle" above: Chapter 1, n. 59. For more on the pre-modern, esp., pre-capitalist, see the Conclusion below.

The positive possibilities of this achievement appear by comparison with a seminal source of modern feminism who recognized early something that all the thinkers considered in this study also acknowledge. Maybe unwittingly, she exposed both its possibilities and limitations (de Beauvoir 1953, 728):

> As a matter of fact, man, like woman, is flesh, therefore passive, the play-thing of his hormones and of the species, the restless prey of his desires. And she, like him, in the midst of carnal fever, is a consenting, voluntary gift, an activity; they live out in their several fashions the strange ambiguity of existence made body. In those combats where they think they confront one another, it is really against the self that each one struggles, projecting into the partner that part of the self which is repudiated; instead of living out the ambiguities of their situation, each tries to make the other bear the abjection and tries to reserve the honour for the self.

The disparate results of this contest of disavowal, the (real) division of symbolic labor, are a matter of history. If woman, to use de Beauvoir's idiom, does attain value in this system, it is in her "function as double and mediator … to man … caught between the silence of nature and the demands of other free beings" (1953, 730). She is, in other words, a mystification of and for man (1953, 718):

> Indeed, the struggle cannot clearly be drawn between them, since woman is opaque in her very being; she stands before man not as a subject but as an object paradoxically endowed with subjectivity; she takes herself simultaneously as *self* and *other*, a contradiction that entails baffling consequences.

Without completely challenging the matters of social and historical reality, I have been arguing in this study that Romans do partly recognize the universal condition of vulnerability that attends embodiment and that they compensate for it by setting up "woman" in the state in which de Beauvoir still found "her." Nevertheless, I am also attempting to show that Roman philosophy recognizes, with de Beauvoir, not only the possibility of woman as mediator but also of man as a passive body like woman, through woman, and thus himself as a mediator and possible subject, not of individual, but rather of solidaristic feeling, thought, and action.

Whether the Romans, or even we, derogate this position of embodied, passive mediation, which also, as mediation, makes relationship and solidarity possible, is not a scholarly as much as a personal decision. De Beauvoir does devalue it, and for reasons remarkably similar to those of the Romans at their least reflective (1953, 728):

"[V]irtue", as the ancients called it, is defined at the level of "that which depends on us". In both sexes is played out the same drama of the flesh and the spirit, of finitude and transcendence; both are gnawed away by time and laid in wait for by death, they have the same essential need for one another and they can gain from their liberty the same glory.

The existentialist invokes the Stoic and his idea of "manly excellence" (*virtus*); in doing so, she raises the same question to which Stoicism, and in fact traditional liberal projects, are open on a more radical feminist analysis.[35] Are liberty and glory – let's say, freedom and political participation – however modified, the only goals worth striving for? Has the "given" no value in its passive, related embodiment? In asking such a question, then or now, we confront the same canons of representation in literature, as in life, and find ourselves not as far from the Roman problematic, or the compensatory collusion that that problematic induced, as we might think.

"Literature," "philosophy," and the gender of personification (*DRN* 2)

In this section and the next, I consider instances in which nature or other abstractions appear with human attributes in *DRN*, and I make two points. First, in this section, I argue that Lucretius exploits the possibility that aspects of nature can be personified as women to prepare the way for his account of how people, as actual animate beings, come to life and become capable of agency. In other words, Lucretius practices **literary personification** throughout the *DRN* to provide a basis, at more specific points, for **philosophical personification**, or his account of the formation of the basis of personhood, including subjectivity, in the life of the body-mind. Throughout the *DRN*, Lucretius represents the dynamic of agency through forms of domination exhibited by full-blown personifications, such as Venus or Nature: he attributes to them, as terms, certain predicates usually attributed to human beings – not least, as in the prosopopeia of Nature above, the predicates of freedom, agency, and autonomy: "free [*libera*] … to do [*agere*] all things … herself of her own accord [*ipsa sua per se sponte*]."[36]

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[35] See Chapter 6.
[36] For more proper applications of *sua sponte*, see *Lucr.* 2.151–93, 5.1145–7, with Johnson 2013, 120–30; cf. Bianchi 2014, 44–6; further documentation and discussion at Gill 2006, 194–7.

Second, in the section after this, I argue that the origin of the life of the body-mind, and thus of real agency as we experience it in ourselves and encounter it in others, arises by a kind of *transfer or metaphorization* of personification *from* the literary *to* the philosophical. Combined with this, crucially, is the *erasure of the difference* between proper and figurative forms of personification. That is, in the terms I developed in Chapter 2, it becomes difficult to tell where **literary personification** stops, and where **philosophical personification** begins; as a result, it ceases to be obvious or even plausible to say, for instance, that the personification of nature discussed in the previous section is something altogether different from our own personification, or our actual acquisition of subjectivity and personhood. In the theoretical terms that I have introduced, **linear personification** of a **literary** kind gives way to **dynamic personification** of a **literary** kind, and literary, dynamic personification in turn gives way to, reveals, and in fact exemplifies this: the beginning of human life, the life of the body-mind, is itself a process of **dynamic personification**, but whether this is **philosophical** *or* **literary** cannot be determined.

Lucretius' attribution of the upper-level literary personifying dynamic to the lower level of philosophical personification is, then, problematic. In particular, it uses a phenomenon modeled on personhood, personification, to explain the phenomenon, personhood, on which personification is modeled. There is a circle here, which may or may not be vicious, but which at any rate transects the supposed distinction between reality and representation, or "natural" physics (atomic events), as the condition of social physics (life as we see it and experience it) in the form of poetic physics (or the figurative economy of words and their combinations that constitutes the poem). Finally, as a result of the salience of gender differences in power and status in social physics, or Roman life, and the circular character of the interrelation of natural and poetic physics in *DRN*, Lucretius reveals the femininity that subtends personhood in the form of subjection and subjectivity. The process of becoming and being a person, or the origin of the life of the body-mind, then appears – as, against all expectations, it actually was, and may be still – fundamentally feminine.

To begin with, the contradictions and paradoxes that center on women in Roman life all proliferate around the term *natura* in the *DRN*.[37] In literary terms, Lucretius' Nature is not only assigned the authority to speak in Book 3, but also an authority to act in ways typically contradictory. So, for

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[37] For Lucretius' Latinization of *phusis*, see Fowler 2002a, 242–4.

example, as Lucretius begins his cosmological account of the formation of the universe, he writes (5.76–81):

> praeterea solis cursus lunaeque meatus
> expediam qua vi flectat natura gubernans;
> ne forte haec inter caelum terramque reamur
> libera sponte sua cursus lustrare perennis
> morigera ad fruges augendas atque animantis,
> neve aliqua divum volvi ratione putemus.

> I will, moreover, unroll the sun's course and the way of the moon
> and with what power Nature, as governor, steers them,
> lest perhaps we think that the things between heaven and earth
> wander freely of their own accord through eternal orbits,
> acting obligingly in making produce and animals,
> or lest we think they advance by some plan of the gods.

Whether we ought to take the word *gubernans* as referring to the action of the nautical helmsman or of the political governor, its collocation with "power" (*vis*), over and above that of the celestial bodies (*ne … libera sponte sua*), emphasizes that this is an issue of freedom and autonomy and that freedom and autonomy are combined with force. That the passive partner of the relation exhibits the particularly wifely attribute of obliging obedience (*morigera*) reinforces the effect.[38] The parallel placement of "free" (*libera*) in l. 79 and "obliging" (*morigera*) in 80 makes it tempting to place commas after the lines in the Latin and read them distributively – that is, describing two distinct species of things in general: those of "heaven" (A) and "earth" (B) where things of type-A (heavenly) "wander freely of their own accord" (79) and things of type-B (earthly) "act obligingly in making produce" (80), and where A are superlunary, masculine, and free, and B sublunary, feminine, and *passive/obliging* (wifely) and *nutritive/productive* (maternal; N.B. *not* "sua sponte"). Interpreted thus, the lines, to use once more the "both/and" logic of deconstruction, represent freedom *and* subordination distributed out in specifically gendered ways (freedom is masculine/starry, subordination is feminine/earthly) *at the same time* as they distance us from such an interpretation: *ne reamur*.[39] The feminine still retains its value, then, as passive and productive, even as the poem will proceed to reject this, or seek its form and value at higher and lower levels.[40]

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[38] On the wifely connotation of *morigera*, see Brown 1987, 374f.
[39] More cake principle: Chapter 1, n. 59.
[40] On the Aristotelian background, see Bianchi 2014, 157–64.

In the meantime, such lines bereave *both* male and female things of
authority for motion, agency, and freedom, and refer such attributes to
nature. In less metaphorical stretches, however, consistent with the para-
dox of female agency in Roman reality, Lucretius sometimes bereaves even
nature of "agency" (1.1021–1025):

> nam certe neque consilio primordia rerum
> ordine se suo quaeque sagaci mente locarunt
> nec quos quaeque darent motus pepigere profecto,
> sed quia multa modis multis mutata per omne
> ex infinito vexantur percita plagis …

> For assuredly the first of things do not each one
> organize themselves, with their own intelligent mind,
> nor are the motions that they exhibit fixed definitively,
> but because many of them have been changed many ways in all
> things, thus driven, they are thrust by blows forever …

Similarly (2.1019–22):

> sic ipsis in rebus item iam materiai
> concursus motus ordo positura figurae
> cum permutantur, mutari res quoque debent.

> Just so, in the same way, in things themselves, when again their matter's
> direction, motion, arrangement, position, and shape
> are changed, the things also ought to change.

Whereas the passage from Book 5 discusses the power and movements of
the celestial bodies, the passages from Books 1 and 2 describe the power,
movements, and various other attributes of Lucretius' smaller bodies, the
"firsts of things" or atoms, and the effect that alterations on one level have
on another. Taken together, above and below the thresholds of sensibil-
ity and intelligibility, or what we see and understand in daily life, these
passages deny (1) that any capacity resembling agency exists *in* the things
in question (atoms, below) and (2) that any capacity resembling agency
exists *outside* the things in question (earth and stars, above).[41] The source
of movement and activity – which one might *mistake* for life[42] – does not
appear to be anywhere at all; it is rather, if it "is" at all, external, relational,
deferred. "Nature" is a name.

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[41] See Deleuze 1990, 274f., with Goldberg 2009, 37–9, Holmes 2012, 327–9.
[42] Cf. 1.1034: *vivant … ignes*; 5.476f.: *ut corpora viva/ versant.*

Whether or not he consistently uses this name, Lucretius marks the extremes of sensibility above and below the atomic threshold precisely as horizons of personification. At the head of the passage in which he will develop his doctrine of the life of the body-mind in Book 3, the poet uses an unusual word to recall the famous programmatic statement of poetic inability and the "honey on the cup" of his poetics from the end of Book 1.[43] First, in Book 1, he writes (1.948–50):

> Si tibi forte animum tali ratione tenere
> versibus in nostris possem, dum perspicis omnem
> naturam rerum, qua <u>constet compta</u> figura.

> If by chance I can hold your soul with such an account
> in our verses, while you examine in entirety
> the Nature of things, with what figure she stands <u>dressed up</u>.

Later, as he approaches his account of the human soul, he uses the same rare word (*compta*) to endow the world with a human form even as he emphasizes its/her constituted and inanimate character (3.258–60):

> Nunc ea quo pacto inter sese mixta quibusque
> <u>compta</u> modis vigeant rationem reddere aventem
> abstrahit invitum patrii sermonis egestas.

> Now as to how these things are mixed up among themselves and in what
> ways, <u>dressed up</u>, they come to life, I would like to give an account
> but unwilling, the poverty of our ancestral speech draws me off.

With the shared attribution of the "dressing up" (*compta*), the poet draws a parallel between a kind of divine-*seeming* agency in Book 1 ("the Nature of things … stands dressed up") and its rationalized original, which is no agency at all: "These things … mixed up among themselves … dressed up … come to life."[44] The subject of the verb shifts in the two passages from singular to plural and thus, in effect, from the nature (*natura constet*) of things to the things (*res, primordia*, etc.) themselves (*vigeant*).[45] With the change, however, the predicate of personification – of appearance in the attire of figuration: *compta figura* – persists, whether it denotes an attribute of a person or of things.[46] If, as ancient etymology suggests, Lucretius derived the word *compta* from *kosmos*, the Greek for universe (and ornamental article of clothing,

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jewelry, or dress), then the toggling between the universe and a woman is all the more marked: *natura rerum* is "wearing" either *the* "cosmos" or just some makeup and jewelry.[47]

The rest of this chapter will consider the way in which Lucretius plays these extremes of animation or ensoulment – individual or collective, above or below, real or imaginary – off one another: he explains the emergence of life out of the constitution of inanimate matter, at the same time that he deconstructs the possibility of explanation, as a form of representation, or at least agency; in the light of matter's subordination and subjection as inanimate, he may even deconstruct the possibility of life. As a result of his deconstruction, on the level that we human beings actually occupy, all personhood, to the extent that it entails a degree of agency, is personification: the *improper* attribution of agency, freedom, and life, on the basis of a figurative misprision. As a figure of subordination, appearance (objectification), and relationality, the female is but a special instance, an expression in social physics, of the general atomic process of making things *look* alive.[48]

Comparing all the above passages, the first two passages about Nature the governor (*Natura gubernans*), the middle two about relationality and diffusion, and the last two, in which nature is a woman and then, in effect, even woman is not quite woman but a conglomeration of pulsing atoms (*vigeant*), we appear to confront a typical Lucretian "inconsistency":[49] metaphor (poetry) and argument (philosophy) join, or indeed part, ways. This appears to be an instance in which we just have to recognize the limitations of language and adjust for the inaccuracy of metaphor, as when Lucretius makes atoms laugh at us for taking their personification seriously.[50] However, the force of movement that

implication of Lucretius' repetition approaches Barthes' 2005, 188 "hypothesis": "Neuter = the nonsubject, the one to which subjectivity is prohibited, which is excluded from it (*mancipium*)." Thanks to Will Shearin for drawing my attention to Barthes' seminar.

[47] *TLL*, s.v. *como*, 1992.49–58. Isidore writes (*De differentiis verborum*, 1.112=*TLL* 1992.54–6): "between the words *comptum* and *compositum* the difference is that *comptum* [denotes arrangement] by design [*cura*] and *compositum* by nature." In all the entries in *TLL*, which are divided between persons (*ornare*) and things (*rem*) for *como* (1991f.), and concrete (*ornatus*) and abstract (*de rebus incorporeis*) for *comptus* (1992f.), Lucretius' uses find no place. On the feminine connotation of *cosmos* in Aristotle, see Bianchi 2014, 19f.

[48] Cf. Johnson 2008, 141–52.

[49] Cf. O'Hara 2007, 62–9.

[50] For the laughing atoms, see 1. 915–20 and 2.976–9; see Kennedy 2002, 77–9. The most famous instance of this Lucretian exegesis and warning against interpreting personification literally is his discussion of Cybele, the Great Mother at 2.598–660, on which see Chapter 2. Comparable are his other comments on catachresis and the pathetic fallacy at 2.646–60, 865–90, 5.821–5. Cf. Garani 2007, 30–2, 45–7, 81.

nature exhibits and that also appears in the form and movement of
bodies is elsewhere associated with actually animate bodies – namely
our own (5.559–63):

> denique iam saltu pernici tollere corpus
> quid potis est nisi vis animae quae membra gubernat?
> iamne vides quantum tenuis natura valere
> possit, ubi est coniuncta gravi cum corpore, ut aer
> coniunctus terris et nobis est animi vis?

> Finally then, what is able to lift a body with a quick
> leap, except the power of the soul that governs the limbs?
> Do you then see what a tenuous nature is able to do,
> when it's conjoined with a heavy body, just as air is joined
> to earth and the power of our mind is joined to us?

It is, again in the same terms, from atoms to planets with people in the
middle, the same movement and "force" that "governs" things. Sometimes
this "governance" attends inert material, as in the passages from Books 1
and 2. Sometimes it characterizes the animate person with *a* nature, or
soul, who shakes his body in this passage from Book 5. Sometimes, as
in the previous passage about the planets, Nature is "governing" (*gubernans*)
over things that respond but neither freely (*libera*) nor in the wifely
effort to oblige (*morigera*). The force at work is, then, named *Natura* and
endowed with a personal predicate (e.g., *gubernans, morigera, libera, sua
sponte*).[51] In each case, the bodies are enlivened with a play of metaphor
as much as with a play of actual forces, and it is hard to tell, in the move-
ment from concrete and inert matter to concrete but sentient and agential
life, where metaphor stops and life begins.

Lucretius displays the generative interplay of metaphorical and actual
force when he begins to tackle the question of the emergence of life in
Book 2 (865–70):

> Nunc ea quae sentire videmus cumque, necessest
> ex insensilibus tamen omnia confiteare
> principiis constare. neque id manifesta refutant
> nec contra pugnant, in promptu cognita quae sunt,
> sed magis ipsa manu ducunt et credere cognut
> ex insensilibus, quod dico, animalia gigni.

> Now these things, whatever they are, that we see feeling, you must
> admit that, all the same, of unfeeling principles first

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[51] Garani 2007, 71–81.

they must consist. Nor does the visible refute
this or argue against it in the form of those things that are known up front,
but rather all the more *do they themselves take us by the hand* and force
belief that things ensouled, as I say, emerge from the senseless.

Lucretius presents the emergence of life in terms that themselves reflect
the emergence of life: plain description, marked as such with the language
of plain reality ("nor does the visible refute this"), takes on the aspect of
metaphor and makes the things in question "take us by the hand them-
selves." But *is* this just a metaphor? This is what things "do" after all, not
only when we consider "nature" on our own, but also when things seen,
in the form of an actual human person (poet or philosopher: both are
actually only atoms) tell us what to believe with a philosophical poem. At
what point does Lucretius' representation, in the form of the poet himself
writing the poem for us to read, become no longer a representation of
reality but rather an actual *presentation* of reality – not a figuration, then,
but an exemplification, not art but simply life? Or was it in fact presenta-
tion and exemplification as opposed to representation, and life as opposed
to art, from the beginning?

The example that the poet next provides to enframe philosophical per-
sonification associates the flickering, perspectival effect of emergent life
with nature its/herself. It dramatizes the emergence of the sensible from
the senseless as a matter of nature's personification (*DRN* 2.874–80):

> praeterea cunctas itidem res vertere sese.
> vertunt se fluvii frondes et pabula laeta
> in pecudes, vertunt pecudes in corpora nostra
> <u>naturam</u>, et nostro de corpore saepe ferarum
> augescunt viris et corpora pennipotentum.
> ergo omnis <u>natura</u> cibos in corpora viva
> vertit et hinc sensus animantum procreat omnis.

> Moreover all things change themselves again and again.
> Rivers change themselves, leaves, happy fields
> change into cattle, cattle change <u>their nature</u> to our
> bodies, and from our bodies often grows the strength
> of wild beasts and the bodies of birds.
> Therefore <u>Nature</u> turns all food into living bodies, and
> from here produces all the senses of things ensouled.

Following the previous passage and the flicker of life expressed in col-
lective personification, this passage explicitly connects the processes of
life to the personification of nature, or at least to the acquisition of agency
by nature, as it/she is, first, the emphatic *object* of transformation in the

enjambment between lines 876 and 877 (*vertunt pecudes … | in … naturam*), and then the emphatic *subject* of that transformation in 875f. (*ergo omnis Natura cibos … vertit*). This "hypostasis" from reification to personification (objectification to "subjectification") constitutes, in the astute formulation of one scholar, "a dynamic tension between *natura genita*, the engendered nature of things, *natura duplex*," in the form of atoms and void, "and *natura naturans*."[52]

Between the passive (*genita*) and active (*naturans*) "natures" that result from such an analysis, *natura duplex* is both active and passive, and both subjective and objective, or personal and "re-al" (from *res*, "thing"). This active and passive, personal and real thing Lucretius introduces as both the *natura* born of beef and the *Natura* who effectuates the birth. In the passage above, Lucretius emphasizes that the situated and relational character of this process is a product of *this relation here*. Nature can act in these complex, paradoxical ways in part as a result of the perspective that the poet invites us to share with himself, or *the relationship between the reader and (On) the Nature of Things itself*. The term *omnis* ("all"), which immediately precedes the term *natura* in the penultimate line, *probably* modifies the term for food (*omnis … cibos*), with the result that nature stands in singular agency over "all the food" on which she works.[53] The same term could, however, actually modify *natura* (*omnis natura*) in some collective sense of the natures of all the creatures in question. Whether "nature" is some kind of collective, passive object of processes of which *it* just happens, in this line, to be the grammatical subject or whether *she* is the subject in the fullest sense thus depends on *us* as readers. Far from being simply clever, Lucretius' ambivalent positioning of the otherwise colorless modifier "all" reveals the paradoxical unity of subjectivity and subjection that the "nature" of his poem shares with actual women in Roman life. Maybe, like [n]ature, they too really can be the subjects of their experience, and it just depends on how "we" look at it.

The point in the present discussion is that, with the advent of Lucretius' *Natura* – whether she is fully or partly personified, merely in proximity to personification, or even problematizing the very possibility of personification – the Stoic-Platonic hierarchies of subject and object, agent and field, form and content, representation and reality are subverted.[54] Now, in view

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[52] Kany-Turpin 1999, 94f.
[53] So Bailey 1947, Vol. II, 941, specifying.
[54] Reflected in rhetorical theory at Cic. *Inv. rhet.* 1.7; in metaphysics, at Sen. *Ep.* 65.2f. Cf. Derrida 1974, 13 on "the Stoic and later medieval opposition between *signans* and *signatum*" and "all its metaphysico-theological roots"; Deleuze 1990, 257–60.

of the long tradition before and after the Lucretian intervention, challenging the hierarchy of form over content poses a challenge to (masculine) reason and god in their supremacy (activity) over (feminine, passive) nature. It is the nature of animals as embodied and the embodiment of Nature as a kind of animate being that marks this subversive development in Lucretius' account of the emergence of life. Nature's operation in this way coincides with the paradoxical value of women and girls in the system of representation built out of sex and gender in Roman life, the social physics of the.

The increased dynamism and paradox of Lucretius' materialist account of life thus challenges not only the dialectial relationship of representation and reality, but also of activity and passivity as a function of representation and reality. This appears on proceeding up from visible human experience to the macrocosmic level of agential personifications, or processes and things named as actual actors endowed with human shape.[55] These figures too are in an equally dialectical relationship with humanity, both in terms of representation and in terms of actual agency or power. As we saw before in Chapter 1, in the famous passage of social ownness from *DRN* 5, once humans get involved it is not "Nature" who makes society happen, but Venus ("Venus?"), the (other?) (titular?) deity of the poem: "And Venus diminished their strength, and children broke their parents' … arrogant character … and neighbors … entrusted [*commendarunt*] their children and the lives of women."[56] As discussed in terms of Lucretius' treatment of the "Great Mother" (*Magna Mater*) in Chapter 2, Lucretius countenances such personifications as "Venus" in Book 5 if they are used without forgetting that the personifier is "in fact, onself [*ipse*]," and not the thing that one personifies. The result of such conditions is that the supposedly sovereign deity, "Venus," "whom" Lucretius introduces to name the formation of human society in Book 5, experiences action (e.g., representation) at the hands of those whose society "she herself" controls. "Her" appearance is that of an aesthetic artifact, just as, when the first participants in human society experienced "her" in Book 5, they did so in the vicarious, aesthetic recognition of themselves in their children and each other (so *cognita* at 5.1013). With the recognition of the products of their flesh, parents experienced the association of aesthesis and aesthetics, and "Venus" who made it happen emerges *then*.

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[55] Cf. Garani 2007, 33.
[56] *DRN* 5.1017–21.

In a similar way, not only do animate creatures, inanimate matter, cosmos, and deity all interact in these simultaneously complementary and controlling, figured and figuring, liberating and limiting ways, but so do deity and deity. This will constitute yet another, ostensibly higher level at which the dualities of activity and passivity, subjectivity and subjection, and *natura duplex* are suspended through the traditionally double figure of the female. As we learn in the famous prologue of the poem, it is Venus, "who … alone govern(s) [*gubernas*] the nature of things."[57] Given the equally memorable presence of Mars ("Mavors") in the prologue, limp and "conquered by the wound of love" (35: *devictus vulnere amore*), here "in the beginning," an emphatically female deity, Venus, presides over things (*res*) and nature (if it/she is a deity), in an already subverted binary of subject and object, person and thing, ruler and ruled, figuring (Venus) and figured (Nature). Excluding the masculine Mavors (or including him in the parentheses of impotence), these two feminine figures form a double or super-feminine relation of mutual subjection and subjectivity that, somewhere along the line, produces life and people.[58] It is, in short, **dynamic personification** *all the way up*: personifications from the food that "nature" makes into bodies, from the bodies that come together in societies in the name of "Venus," and from "Venus" who fuels "Nature" even as "Nature" produces Venus, who produces the society that produces her.[59]

The poet's protestation notwithstanding, the play of epithets and predicates at the macro-level of the poem, in and between the personifications of Venus, Mars, and Nature, exhibits a shifting and paradoxical dynamic: differences such as male/female, male/masculine, female/feminine, active/passive interact and break apart. As the process is repeated, the feminine increasingly figures subjection and subjectivity, and life and agency coincide in paradoxically self-cancelling, self-affirming feminine personifications.

Deconstruction: the soul of the soul in the life of the body-mind (*DRN* 3)

The feminine-feminine complex of Venus and Nature is a product of the combination of social physics and poetic physics – that is, of the

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[57] *DRN* 1.21: *quae … rerum naturam sola gubernas*. My discussion of the passages here is indebted to Gigandet 1996, esp. 220–4, cf. Kany-Turpin 1999, 96.

[58] Cf. superseded Mavors at *DRN* 1.29–37, with Clay 1983, 226–34, 1998, 142–60; cf. Gale 1994, 41f., Garani 2007, 37–43, 49.

[59] On the spiral as the onto-epistemological model of Lucretius, see Serres 2000, 139–46, with Goldberg 2009, 46f.

paradoxical position of women as agents in Roman social history and the economy of words and their combinations in the *DRN*. The same dynamic combination will emerge below the threshold of sensibility at the atomic level of the body-mind in Book 3. Here what matters is both the obvious gendering of the *animus/anima* distinction *and* the complex way in which, consistent with the paradox of female agency in Rome, life emerges in actual physics. It emerges as a dynamic interplay of forces which are increasingly, exclusively feminine, deferred, and neither completely proper (actually physical) or metaphorical (purely figurative), as what appears physical (literal, real) affects the figurative, and *vice versa*. Lucretius' begins the presentation of natural physics in the marked terms of social physics, thus (*DRN* 3.136–9):

> Nunc animum atque animam dico coniuncta teneri
> inter se atque unam naturam conficere ex se,
> sed caput esse quasi et <u>dominari</u> in corpore toto
> consilium quod nos animum mentemque vocamus.

> Now I declare that the mind and the soul are held conjoined
> among themselves and complete a single nature from themselves,
> but that the head, so to speak, and <u>master of the house</u> in the whole body
> is the capacity for planning that we call soul and mind [*animum mentemque*].

What is interesting about this passage in the present context is not only the obviously gendered hierarchy that Lucretius' use of *animus* and *anima* suggests, and not only the language of domestic arrangements that sustains the gendering of the metaphor: *dominari*, "to be the master" or "to own the house" (*domus*). More relevant is the gendered metaphor that suggests that the Epicurean theory of life is parallel to, if not another expression of, the same conception of embodied life that the Stoics expressed with the very term *oikeiôsis* – that is, even the life of the not so social Epicurean can be expressed in social and specifically domestic terms (3.323f., 329–32):

> Haec igitur natura tenetur corpora ab omni
> ipsaque corporis est custos et causa salutis …
> sic animi atque animae naturam corpore toto
> extrahere haud facile est quin omnia dissoluantur.
> implexis ita principiis ab origine prima
> inter se fiunt consorti praedita vita …

> This nature, then, is held by the entire body and is itself
> the guardian of the body and the cause of its health …
> Just so, the nature of the mind and soul is not easy to extract

from the whole body without all things falling apart.
With their first principles so tightly wound together from their beginning,
they come *to be dowered conjointly with a partner-life.*

As Leonard's translation of the last line suggests, the social relation of marriage describes the constitution of the individual in the specific terms of property and ownership that organize Roman family arrangements in general.[60] Where it is common to consider the social on the model of the individual (think "body politic"), here we see that the individual can be considered on the model of the social.

The importance of the social in this conception of the self is not necessarily or primarily that it implies the agency of others in the formation of the self (as discussed in the previous chapter). Although this cannot be ruled out, the domestic arrangements of the body rather represent the social life of the body.[61] In the body, in the form of the relationship between the inert and animate, self exists even within self as a household of discrete components that only achieve autonomy as a collective (3.769–75):

quove modo poterit pariter cum corpore quoque
confirmata cupitum aetatis tangere florem
vis animi, nisi erit consors in origine prima?
 … an metuit conclusa manere in corpore putri
et domus aetatis spatio ne fessa vetusto
obruat?

In what way, grown equally strong with the body, would
the force of the mind be able to touch the longed-for flower of life,
if it is not a partner in the very beginning?
 … or did it fear to stay locked in the crumbling body
in case the house, exhausted in the aging span of time,
was falling down?

The fact that it is a kind of commonplace to conceive of the body as itself a household has not been noticed in studies of ownness, which is

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[60] On the last line, see Bailey 1947, Vol. II, 1048: "'a life in partnership,' a commercial metaphor," with a cross-reference to a text ([Verg.] *Cirus* 15) discussed by Lyne 1978, 105f. as marital; cf. Ernout 1925, Vol. II with Paul. Fest. 281.8, cf. Quint. *Decl. min.* 376.2.4f. (*vitae consors*), Dig. 23.2.1. pr. 2 (*consortium omnis uitae*). For such "root metaphors," see Shrijvers 1998, 185, cf. Cabisius 1984. Thanks to Amanda Gregory for drawing my attention to the conjugal language in these lines in the first place.

[61] Cf. 3.396–416, where Lucretius maintains the gendered and domestic dimensions of the discussion (*dominantior, comes, privatus, foedere*) through the typical ownness-situation and oikeiotic language of parts and wholes (*partem pars, membris truncus, lacer undique membris, lacerate oculo, tantula pars*).

called, again, at least in its Stoic form, in Greek *oikeiôsis*, derived from *oikos*, "home." It is, notionally, more at home in Cicero and Seneca, the Stoic proponents of ownness as we'll see in the next two chapters, but the consequences of this "domestic" or "social" conception of the body is certainly not limited to Stoics, as Lucretius' emphatic and persistent imagery indicates, nor is it "just" metaphorical, as its occurrence in Plautus, for example, would suggest.[62] It appears to be an integral part of the system of Roman thought.

In his vivid insistence on the joint formation of embodied life, or its internally social character, Lucretius is probably aiming at something like the unity of consciousness:[63] he introduces discrete units to account for discrete operations but posits their interrelation to maintain psychological unity in a kind of functionalism. His attempts to do so nevertheless lead to some curious developments in this "household" of embodied self (3.269–75, 279–81)

> sic calor atque aer et venti caeca potestas
> mixta creant unam naturam et mobilis illa
> vis, initum motus ab se quae dividit ollis,
> sensifer unde oritur primum per viscera motus.
> nam penitus prorsum latet haec natura subestque
> nec magis hac infra quicquam est in corpore nostro
> atque <u>anima est animae</u> proporro totius ipsa …
> sic tibi nominis haec expers vis facta minutis
> corporibus latet atque animae quasi totius ipsa
> proporrost anima et <u>dominatur</u> corpore toto.

> So also heat and air and the invisible power of wind
> mix together to make a single nature and that force, quick,
> distributes to them from itself the beginning of movement,
> where first, bearing feeling, movement arises in flesh.
> For deep inside, this nature hides and lies below,
> and there is nothing in our body than this any lower,
> and it is itself altogether the whole soul's soul …
> So also, you see, this force, made of slight bodies, with no name
> lies hidden and is as it were itself the soul's soul for sure,
> and in the whole house of the body <u>its lord and master</u>.

Lucretius is at pains in much of this section to distinguish between mind (*animus*) and soul (*anima*), stressing – *after* he takes the liberty of doing

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[62] See n. 89 in Chapter 6.
[63] Gill 2006, 4–6, 10f., 56–66, 114–18, cf. Epicurus, *Ep. Hdt.* 63–7=LS14A with Everson 1999, 543–6; see, on the unity *animi atque animae* above, Mehl 1999, 283–5.

so (3.143, 150, 275, 280f.) – that he may use "soul" (*anima*) erroneously to refer to the compound of the mind (*animus*) *and* soul (*DRN* 3.421–4).[64] In his effort to outline the constituents of the (feminine) soul in consistently physical terms, he finally, emphatically, resorts to "the soul of the soul" – a hidden, nameless substance, finer than the others.

   While the "unnamed" referent of Lucretius' soul of the soul is attested in connection with Epicurus, Lucretius uses Latin to present it in the gendered *animus/anima* system, particularly in terms of a feminine-feminine substance, *anima animae*.[65] In the first place, introducing this feminine-feminine at the moment of the origin and unity of consciousness that vexes modern philosophers and scientists no less than Lucretius and his contemporaries is familiar: it is consistent with the introduction of the feminine at aporetic points that we have seen playing a constitutive role in Lucretius' philosophical poetics in the discussion of this chapter. In the second place, the <u>feminine gendering</u> of this important substance does not appear in Epicurus:[66] this may or may not be important in its own right – it may or may not be the case that Epicurus genders it and explains his gendering in a text that does not survive or that it is one of those assets of Latin that Lucretius is game to exploit – but even if Epicurus had developed this idea, Lucretius introduces the *feminine*, in the soul as in the poem, at a point of possible paradox to figure, in effect, the unfigurable.[67] There is something in addition to paradox or problematic that Lucretius effects with the introduction of the feminine in the doctrine of the soul, as opposed to the introduction of the feminine in the form of personified Nature or Venus. As said, in the doctrine of the soul we find not only a possible problem, even a paradox, but also a problem that needs to be solved by something dynamic and relational: either the fourth element is understood as itself possessing the qualities of consciousness and movement or is somehow, like the atoms acting *sua sponte*, even more relationally, a constitutive force whose constituents, precisely in their being thus constituted, effect consciousness and movement in diffusion.[68] Thus, as we saw in the previous two sections, the feminine element (here, soul of the soul) is introduced where systems require external support. Now we

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[64] Brown 1997, 10f., Mehl 1999: 276–9.

[65] Attested at Plut. *Adv. Col.* 1118de, Aetius 4: 3.1.388=315 Usener=LS14C with Annas 1991, 93f., cf. Mehl 1999, 274f. On the uniquely Latin prominence of the gender of the elements among which the *anima animae* finds itself in Lucretius, see Corbeill 2015, 4–7.

[66] On a similar absence, see Everson 1999, 545, n. 6, cf. Kerferd 1971, 82, Mehl 1999; more generally, Sedley 1998, 46.

[67] *Pace* Annas 1991, 94, see Hasker 2001, 108, also Brown 1997, 121.

[68] Cf. "Aristotle" at Cic. *Acad.* 1.26, *Tusc.* 1.22, with Kerferd 1971, 85–7.

see, in view of the previous chapter, that this is typical, a kind of third (wo)man tactic of ancient philosophical impasses.

Referring back to this passage from the perspective of the next book and assuming that the reader has accepted the account of the origin of the life of the body-mind that I'll discuss momentarily, Lucretius explains that, with his doctrine of the soul, he has taught "out of what things, dressed up with its body it comes to life [*quibus e rebus cum corpore compta vigeret*]."[69] There, note again that *it* comes alive in the singular in Latin: *vigeret*. When, however, Lucretius introduced the *anima animae*, after he reminded the reader of his programmatic sense of poetic inadequacy (with the so-called poverty topos discussed above), it was, again, not *it* but *they* that came alive: "in what ways, dressed up, *they* come to life [*compta … vigeant*]." The exceptional nature of this super-element exceeds, not only expression, but also specificity and precision, to say nothing of individuality.[70] This supports the interpretation, suggested by Lucretius' use of domestic language as an expression of the same insight that the Stoics expressed with their coinage of the term *oikeiôsis*, that even individual life is plural, collective, and social. Consistent with its social multiplicity, it proliferates *just when* the philosopher-poet tries to pin it down.

A confirmation of this proliferation – or really, as we'll see in a moment, this *supplementation* – is an aspect of Lucretius' account that is usually dismissed: the super-feminine soul of the soul is introduced as the *fourth* element that inaugurates the life of the body-mind.[71] The other elements are, somewhat confusingly: heat, wind, and fire. In the familiar Empedoclean schematization that is elsewhere important to Lucretius, the four elements are of course earth, air, fire, and water.[72] Not only, then, does Lucretius "confuse" the count of the elements, supplementing fire with heat, but he also implicitly introduces the feminine-feminine soul of the soul now as an unnamed fourth *and/or* fifth element: earth, air, wind, and fire – *and* the soul of the soul. Here too again, the very "name" of this unnamed "fourth" element, soul of the soul, sustains the dynamic of supplementation: *anima – animae*. Once again, not just proliferation, but: proliferation and proliferation and …

As with the role of the feminine as personified in personification – that is, the becoming conscious and active on the part of human

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[69] Cf. *DRN* 4.27. On the "coif," see n. 43 above.
[70] On the (Stoic) singular and (Epicurean) plural, see Gordon 2012, 124–8; cf. Lévy 1992a, 400.
[71] Brown 1997, 122.
[72] Garani 2007, 13–15.

persons – at first, it is hard to tell whether this introduction of the soul of the soul is a rhetorical ploy, simply working to cover over poor argument on, e.g., the part of Lucretius or of his system (hence on the part of Epicurus), or whether it is in fact a constitutive "philosophical" part of the system, in the sense that, metaphor or not, it is helping Lucretius think through something that he might not otherwise be able to think through. The difficulty of deciding between these two descriptions of the feminine at this point in *DRN* – feminine as ornamental and rhetorical or constitutive and "philosophical" – is an instance of the problematic captured by the idea of the "supplement" in deconstruction: the social organization of the household "supplements" the physical explanation of the process of formation of the person because the household promises to explain and describe the person but, in explaining and describing the person, the household actually "supplants" it, offering itself in place of the person that it would explain and describe (Derrida 1974, 144f.):

> For the concept of the supplement … harbors within itself two significa-tions whose cohabitation is as strange as necessary. The supplement adds itself … It is thus that art, *technè*, image, representation, convention, etc., come as supplements to nature and are rich with this entire cumulating function …
>
> But the supplement supplements. It adds only to replace … If it rep-resents and makes an image, it is by the anterior default of a presence. Compensatory [*suppléant*] and vicarious, the supplement is an adjunct, a subaltern instance which *takes-(the)-place* [*tient-lieu*].

The organization of social life in the form of the household in Lucretius' explanation thus "supplements" the organization of matter that consti-tutes social life: whatever was "really" happening in reality in such a way as to make matter combine and produce animate life, and then make that combined matter of animate life combine and produce social life, is both demonstrated and occluded by its presentation as *illustrandum illus-trans*.[73] One need not follow the argument to this point of paradox, but even if one does not go all the way, one still needs to decide whether the feminine-feminine soul of the soul and its literary (social, aesthetic) and philosophical (physical, metaphysical) associations are extraneous or inte-gral to Lucretius' argument. Does life *take place* with the soul of the soul, or does the soul of the soul take *the* place of life?

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[73] An instance of "that which must be illustrated doing the illustrating": see Silk 1974, 11f. (*explanan-dum explanans*), with Derrida 1974, 13.

Whether or not one follows the deconstruction to the point of paradox, then, the fact that one *can* do so at all suggests that, in their relationship, image and argument, literature and philosophy are functioning in some strong concert, and therefore are in fact integral – meaningfully non-extraneous – at this point in *DRN*.[74] Interpreting the introduction of the feminine as meaningful and integral to Lucretius' description and explanation of the body-mind has two further implications, which also suggest that the associations of the feminine soul of the soul are integral to Lucretius' poem as a whole. On the one hand, the Roman system of sex and gender in social experience may leave, as it were, a residue in Roman systems of representation, which a good philosopher-poet such as Lucretius can use in new ways to come up with new philosophical positions. This is still "woman" or the feminine being used, and even objectified, in the philosophical system as a mere means of representation of philosophical thinking (**linear, literary personification**). There is, on the other hand, a more complicated possibility that saves the Roman philosopher from the charge of "just using" the feminine as a representative of his thought, consciously or not – and this possibility is more complicated precisely because it questions, in a radically deconstructive way, the possibility of distinguishing representation and reality that was assumed, in a kind of weak deconstructionist fashion, by the interpretation of the feminine as an instance of "constitutive" metaphor.[75] Assume that Lucretius' philosophical poem is, at the point at which he introduces the feminine-feminine "soul of the soul," attempting to represent the constitution of the person and is doing so in a mode of discourse (the poem) that is itself constituted by the feminine in the form of "the soul of the soul" of Lucretius' poem: if that is so, it may just be the case that, in Roman reality *and* representation (which are not after all necessarily different: representation *is* a part of reality; social, natural, and poetic physics

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[74] Derrida 1974, 13: "it is not a question of 'rejecting' these notions; they are necessary and, at least at present, nothing is conceivable for us without them." To ground the discussion somewhat, one can consider as supplements to Lucretius' Epicureanism, not only metaphor, personification, and so on (including poetry itself on some readings: hence, perhaps, all "form" as opposed to philosophical content), but also "extraneous" philosophical associations, such as Lucretius' Empedocleanism which may be mere "ornament" to his Epicurean fundamentalism (Sedley's 1998, 1–34 thesis) or may compromise it (Garani 2007, 43, 55, 57, 84f., 94) in the dynamic of Roman "eclecticism," discussed in Chapter 1 above.

[75] Lakoff and Johnson 1980, xii relate their work to the "Continental tradition" with reference to Ricoeur 1977, 284–9 who rejected deconstruction: see, e.g., Derrida 1971, 1974, 104f., 158f.; cf. Kennedy 2002, 19–22, 34–6, 51–3; with Barthesian (43–7), even Heideggerian affiliation (54–60), rather than, e.g., "Marxist": cf. Kennedy 2002, 53 on Jameson 1992, 158–67, Goldberg 2009, 42–4, 48.

are one), the feminine *just is* the constituent of constitution, and that constitution *just is* feminine. We cannot definitely separate the Roman representation from our reality or **literary, linear personification** from **dynamic, philsophical personification**.

   The move that I have just made should be sustained a little longer, as moves like it tend to be missing from studies that concern themselves either totally with the mode of representation (traditional literary/formalist or philosophical studies) or that broadly attempt to account for both reality and representation short of transcending that binary (sociological, historicist).[76] The claim that I am making at the end of the previous paragraph is based on three assumptions. The first assumption that I am making is that there are specific social historical conditions of Roman "reality" and specific "ideological" (cultural, aesthetic) conditions of representation at Rome (uncontroversial, the basic premise of all historicism).[77] The second assumption that I am making is that our own attempts to understand Roman conditions of reality and representation involve integrating Roman self-understanding with our understanding of the Romans; here, by integrating Roman self-understanding with our understanding of the Romans (call it "fusion of horizons" *vel sim.*),[78] I am simply describing whatever, pragmatically, happens when we understand the Romans in our own social and historical conditions, including the various competencies, social situations (institutional affiliations and the varying degrees of training, time for research, etc.), freedoms, and so on, required for legitimacy in our "interpretive community" (this assumption ought to be only slightly less controversial than the previous).[79] My third (and most controversial) assumption is itself threefold: (A) the Roman conditions of self-understanding and the conditions of our understanding the Romans are not identical, but they may be, for historical reasons, either unevenly continuous or at least relevantly parallel; (B) such conditions of understanding, theirs and ours, are the *only* conditions of understanding to which we have access in our attempt to understand the Romans; this is particularly the case in view of the problematic reality of the past – the fact that it is indeed, as even the Stoics saw, no longer actually the case and hence itself contingent on the conditions of our

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[76] For the full hermeneutic scheme implied here, see above, Introduction.
[77] E.g., Gadamer 1975, 181f.
[78] Gadamer 1975, 304.
[79] See Fish 1980, 356–71, cf. 310–13, 317–20, 328–33, 342–55, improved by Bourdieu 1988, 95–112, 312–18; 1993, 72–7; 1996, 339–48; cf. Derrida 1974, 14. For feminist discussion, see Dressler 2011, 64f.

understanding the past, which is to say, the past is actually contingent on the present;[80] thus, (C) we cannot disregard the conditions of our understanding the Romans but must accept that at least some aspects of the conditions for our understanding the Romans are of a piece with the Romans' conditions for understanding themselves, with the result that intelligible, legitimate aspects of our interpretation *constitute and prove* "facts" about the past.[81] Thus, what I described above – that is, the representation of the emergence of life and of coming to consciousness as a process of constitution that is somehow feminine – *and* our ability to understand the Roman understanding of it that way, – may just be proof that that process of being constituted a person really was (and really is) meaningfully feminine.

Conclusion: preservation and reproduction

Scholars of ancient philosophy who tend to bracket the social and historical conditions in which categories such as the feminine acquire their meaning and to whom the idea of supplementation seems frivolous will not accept the metaphysical relevance of something as seemingly adventitious as gender, and scholars of literature or culture who tend to view historical conditions as uniquely determinative and radically particular, such that the past is just different, will not accept the possibility that any category, metaphysical or otherwise, could be the same from one historical instantiation to another (some of them might not even accept the reality or relevance of a metaphysical category).[82] These two interpretive positions, philosophical and social-historicist, are, however, just that – interpretive positions – and they need not exhaust the range of positions available to the interpreter (which a discussion such as this attempts to demonstrate), and they *should* not disavow the full implications of their ostensibly modest prerogative: "the historical process of *preservation* (Bewahrung) that, through constantly trying to prove itself (Bewährung), allows something true (ein Wahres) to come into being."[83] In terms of the

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[80] *SVF* 2.509.26f., with Goldschmidt 1953, 37–45 (suggestive comparandum at Lucr. 1.471–82); cf. LS27.

[81] Gadamer 1975, 284f., cf. 296f., e.g., improved by Hindness and Hirst 1977, 309, 322, in Jameson 1988, 170; cf. Derrida 1974, 10: "History and knowledge … have always been determined … as detours *for the purpose of* the reappropriation of the present." On the role of materialism in deconstruction, see Derrida 1981b, 60–7.

[82] I refer here to "the demon of historicism," on which see Gadamer 1975, 268–77, improved again, by Bourdieu 1996, 158. See Rabinowitz 1993, 3–11, cf. Richlin 1991, 180.

[83] Gadamer 1975, 287, my italics; cf. 296f.

present discussion, we ought to question, if not the motivation, then at least the historical determinations of any position that *cannot accommodate a positive and real role for the feminine in something as important as the constitution of the self*. This means questioning, not only any ancient's cultural or philosophical position, but also our own cultural and philosophical positions to the extent that those positions preclude our recognizing the socially constructed feminine gender of the process of our own personhood. At any rate, this is at least partly the case if struggle and contestation still condition the gender-segregated production and reproduction of human life.