his unhappy love: discontinuous, momentary shards of epigrammatic wit and perceptiveness, but within an overarching consciousness incapable of achieving any sustained or coherent (self-)perspective' (216). In his conclusion, however, S. argues that, although the corpus might end with Poem 116, the overarching 'drama of composition' ends with 'the most pitiable happy ending ever' (238): Catullus and Lesbia never marry one another, but instead 'will love each other forever, and their love will pile disaster upon disaster' (238).

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T. H. M. GELLAR-GOAD, *LAUGHING ATOMS, LAUGHING MATTER: LUCRETIUS' DE RERUM NATURA AND SATIRE*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2020. Pp. viii + 280. ISBN 9780472131808. $85.00.

If you want to read an elegant and well-researched monograph on Lucretius' use of satire, T. H. M. Gellar-Goad has written this book for you. His ambition is to convince us that without the extensive use of satiric elements, Lucretius would not be Lucretius at all. As he argues, the way Lucretius uses a personal voice, builds up and undermines his didactic persona, distances himself from the mob, mocks his adversaries (non-Epicurean philosophers, the personified *Religio* etc.), caricatures theories he wants to refute, satirises human attitudes he wishes to be avoided (fear of death, erotic love), etc., makes him *almost* a Roman satirist, and his didactic poem *almost* a 'member' (3 and *passim* — an unfortunate word) of the genre of Roman satire. Although the demonstration of satiric elements in Lucretius is not an entirely new approach (see the book's numerous references to earlier literature), this book is the first systematic treatment of the presence of the satiric mode in Lucretius, interpreting the whole didactic project in the context of the Roman satiric tradition. Accordingly, the question that emerges is not whether there are satiric elements in the *DRN* (this is self-evident), but whether the poem can be read as an *almost*-satiric project in its entirety. G.-G., being exceptionally familiar with the sources of Epicureanism and the Greco-Roman satire, does his best to argue for the latter.

Fortunately, the author has chosen a multifaceted mode of argument. The Introduction is a useful overview of his aims, even if I would be more cautious in opposing 'straightforward' and 'satiric' (16; variants on this opposition occur repeatedly: see 128; 162; etc.). Satire, as we learn from this very monograph, is one of Lucretius' 'serious' weapons: satiric passages like the caricature of Anaxagoras' views (cf. the 'laughing atoms' at *DRN* 1.915–20 — hence the title) or the satiric representation of the fear of death and the erotic infatuation (Books 3 and 4) do not change the 'straightforward' character of this didactic poem. The key difficulty, as chapter 1 itself emphasises, is that the whole endeavour undertaken here depends on our definition of (Roman) satire. Defining generic features is not easy (even if one cannot agree with G.-G. that satire is more protean than other genres, 22), and, embarrassingly, '[n]ot all satire is constantly satiric' (17). The way out of this labyrinth is provided by the subsequent, 'intertextual' chapters, including a brilliant discussion (ch. 2) of Lucretius' systematic allusions to earlier Roman satire (with significant new material on satiric echoes in Lucretius and revealing case studies, such as the discussion of the satiric background of Lucretius' *kataskopia*) and a rich treatment of *DRN*'s reception in later Roman satire (ch. 3), showing how the literary memory of Lucretius' didactic pose (containing satirising traits) merges into later satirists' didactic poses (containing philosophising traits). One of the few things I missed from this excellent chapter is a discussion of the Catullan intertextuality present in Juvenal 12, a satire which features a hero called 'Catullus' throwing his — highly Catullan — *uestis purpurea* into the sea (Juv. 12.38–9, cf. Cat. 64.49–50 with T. Geue, *Juvenal and the Poetics of Anonymity* (2017), 184–8). Adding this to the Lucretian echoes revealed by G.-G. (115), we spot a combined (Lucretio-Catullan) allusion.

Having proved that Lucretius' poem is deeply embedded into the tradition of Roman satire, the rest of the book delves into the text of *DRN* to find as many traces of the satiric mode as

possible. The core of the argument is ch. 4, which surveys the most important satiric elements, such as mocking non-Epicurean views or caricaturing 'ridiculous' human behaviour, and interprets them as parts of a coherent system held together by Lucretius' satirising language and style, the sophisticated construction of a divided audience, and various satiric allusions. I would not be satisfied, however, if the volume were not crowned with the magnificent chapter 5 which, finally, sheds light on intersections (rather than 'tensions' as its title suggests) between satiric mode and Epicurean didactic, both trying to show a way out of the 'misguided, flawed, and intellectually and morally abject' (183) world we all live in. Satire, as G.-G. rightly states, is thus part of the Lucretian 'philosophical initiation' (178). In my view, this is the culmination of G.-G.'s argument, justifying his satiric reading of the *DRN*. Less essential is chapter 6 which discusses 'civic satire' in Lucretius without finding any scene in *DRN* that contains even a minimal trace of the typically satiric representation of city life. Doubtlessly, Lucretius could have composed a funny scene mocking the hustle and bustle of Roman streets. Sadly, he did not. (Rather, he used this satirico-urban imagery — probably with an Ennian echo — to reinforce his representation of the atomic motion, cf. 56. One could add the 'atomic motion' of the busybody and the poet in Hor. *Sat.* 1.9.)

All in all, G.-G.'s *Laughing Atoms* is just the book on Lucretius and satire we needed. I have one bibliographical quibble: H. Blumenberg's *Schiffbruch mit Zuschauer* (1979) could significantly have enriched the interpretation of the 'birth scene' of the Lucretian satirico-didactic persona — *suaue mari magno* — so important for the present study.

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HUNTER H. GARDNER, *PESTILENCE AND THE BODY POLITIC IN LATIN LITERATURE*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. Pp. x + 303, illus. ISBN 9780198796428. £73.00.

Hunter Gardner's excellent monograph examines the symbolic capacities of pestilence in Latin literature between the Late Republic and Early Empire. She argues that Roman writers used plague narratives to come to terms with the civil wars of the first century B.C.E. and the new governing system that arose in their aftermath. She identifies four tropes structuring this tradition: the regression of a sick society to an apocalyptic Golden Age, the collapse of social hierarchies and the discord they foster, the liquefaction of individual bodies and the body politic and the resistance of individuals to the levelling and erasure of their identities. After using Livy to establish the interpretive framework guiding her analysis, she contrasts Lucretius', Vergil's and Ovid's approaches to pestilential disintegration and reintegration. She then traces the reception of their imagery in the imperial era and beyond. Attuned to questions of literary, political and cultural significance, she makes an important contribution to the study of classical antiquity and the growing field of medical humanities.

Underpinning G.'s analysis is the basic analogy between the body of the individual and the body of the state. Section I puts this comparison in dialogue with the knowledge of ancient medical writers, who explained diseases as the by-products of foul air, toxic locales, bad habits and bodily humours. Although they lacked an understanding of germ theory, they intuitively understood that illness could be spread through physical proximity. This idea implicated social relationships in the spread of contagions, enabling the metaphoric potential of plague to be fully realised in Latin literature. Informing G.'s approach to the representational capacities of disease are the studies of Antonin Artaud, Michel Foucault, Susan Sontag and René Girard, all of which facilitate her reading of plague narratives as experiments in civic collapse and re-foundation.

G. structures the rest of Section I around a close reading of Livy that clarifies the conceptual stakes of the chronologically ordered chapters that follow. In Livy's narration of the plagues of 463, 399 and 364 B.C.E., the transformative effects of illness on the individual body are reflected in ideological shifts in the body politic. By levelling differences between the patricians and plebeians, contagion creates a blank slate in which new laws and customs can arise. Temporarily relieving