Erroneous Gazes: Lucretian Poetics in Catullus 64*

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ABSTRACT

This article argues for a 'reciprocal intertextuality' between Catullus 64 and Lucretius anticipating the poetic interplays of Augustan poets with the De Rerum Natura. *Catullus' wedding guests (proto-readers), Ariadne (proto-Narcissus), and Aegeus (proto-Dido) are interpreted here as* errantes *in the Lucretian sense: through their erroneous gazes presented in Poem 64, they all exemplify how* not *to gaze at the structure of the universe. In the Lucretio-Catullan intertextual space — generated, as it seems, by the Catullan text — a reciprocal way of reading emerges: while, on the one hand, 'Catullus' uses 'Lucretius' to show that the aesthetic experience he offers is dependent upon an erroneous, unLucretian gaze/reading which deprives us of the external spectator position, 'Lucretius', on the other hand, uses 'Catullan' characters as deterrent examples in order to teach us how* not *to submerge in 'Catullus' poetics of illusion'.*

Keywords: Catullus; Lucretius; intertextuality; Lucretian receptions; illusion; epic gaze; Vergil; Ovid

I INTRODUCTION

The echoes of Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* in Augustan poetry have received much critical attention;[1] however, the importance of the intertextual relationships between Catullus and Lucretius seem to be underestimated, even though they could serve as textbook examples for intertextual theories. The two poets produced their work in the same period, under the aegis of C. Memmius, and there is no external evidence that could help us decide whether Lucretius is citing Catullus, or the other way round.[2] Considering the well-known Roman

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[1] Above all, see Gale 2004; Hardie 1986; 2002; 2009; or, most recently, Schiesaro 2014. Hardie 2007 is a fruitful summary.

[2] Until recently, the question has mostly received a historicist treatment, from Frank (1933) to Giesecke (2000: 10–30). Although Giesecke provides a detailed account of the problem, as well as a useful list of allusions (on pp. 181–2), the questions of literary or philosophical interpretation are beyond the scope of her argument. Eventually, Gale (2007: 69–70) dehistoricizes the question and does offer interpretations — but since she writes a concise piece for the *Cambridge Companion*, her analyses are rather short and generalizing in character.

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practice of sharing 'unpublished' manuscripts in order to ameliorate them, the 'published' versions may even contain 'mutual borrowings' or 'reciprocal allusions'. But I do not want to historicize at all. In what follows, I shall focus on the intertextual relationships between *De Rerum Natura* and Catullus' Poem 64; and although I am inclined to agree with those who regard Catullus as responsible for the echoes between them,[3] I think that in the Lucretio-Catullan intertextual space, generated, indeed, by the Catullan text, a special kind of reciprocity emerges, where the reader finds himself in the middle of an intertextual *agōn*. This poetic interplay makes the reader — basically the reader of Catullus 64 — feel that it is impossible to decide whether 'Catullus' is using Lucretian allusions in order to show us a very unLucretian world that lacks (and maybe needs) Lucretian theory for its operation, or rather it is 'Lucretius' who is using Catullan allusions in order to show that we need Epicurean theory to fix the problems so spectacularly present in Catullus' text.

Though my interpretations, accordingly, will handle the intertexts as Lucretian allusions in Catullus 64, I would like to emphasize that a kind of reciprocity, in the figurative sense, is nevertheless in operation here. To some measure, this reciprocity is characteristic of all intertextual relations, which suppose simultaneous dialogues between texts, influencing, even retroactively, each other.[4] However, what we encounter in the case of Lucretius is much more than that. As Philip Hardie has shown, Lucretius in fact provokes his own 'agonistic' reception in Augustan poetry,[5] and this agonistic character of Lucretian intertextuality has much to do with an emphatic reciprocity: the Augustan reception of Lucretius can make one hear the voice of both poets, the alluding and the alluded one, affirming, correcting or subverting each other's message (*sensus*, to use Quintilian's word).[6] In this essay, I shall suggest that the 'agonistic' and therefore emphatically 'reciprocal' intertextual reception of Lucretius in Augustan poetry begins with Catullus' contemporaneous allusions to Lucretius in his Poem 64. In other words, Catullus seems to clear the ground for Augustan poets to have poetic interplay with Lucretius.

To put it simply, the relations of the Augustan poets with Lucretius might be described as a simultaneous dialogue. Indeed, even when we are certain that it is Ovid who is alluding to Lucretius, we still cannot decide whether the allusion is the intertextual affirmation or the intertextual subversion of Lucretian theory. If chronology is left behind, Lucretius can be read both as a 'provocation' of the ordered world of the *Aeneid* and as a 'correction' of the erroneous world of the *Metamorphoses*. Accepting the premises of intertextuality, both would absolutely make sense.[7] As was already mentioned, the case of Catullus 64 and Lucretius is very similar, radicalized by the historical situation I have characterized above. In what follows, I will analyse Catullus 64 as a poem that, as far as *intentio operis* is concerned, is intentionally alluding to Lucretius, creating an

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[3] Considering the significant difference between the length of the two poems (a short epyllion of 408 lines on the one hand and a long didactic epic of six long books on the other), the intertextual relationship will be more 'condensed' in the case of Catullus and more 'extended' in the case of Lucretius. This is why scholars generally presuppose Catullus' use of Lucretian allusions, cf. Frank 1933: 251 ('Catullus must have been the borrower'); Giesecke 2000: 10 ('Catullus must have been the imitator'). Gale (2007: 69) is more cautious: cf. 'here it must be conceded that the *DRN* should probably be regarded as the source text'. However, if we also take other Catullan poems into consideration, e.g. Catullus' love poems, which Lucretius 'answers' or 'uses' as deterrent examples in his description of love in Book 4 (cf. Gale 2007: 69), a reverse influence becomes just as plausible.
[4] Edmunds 2001: 159–63 calls this phenomenon 'retroactive intertextuality', but — considering simultaneous cases, such as the case of Catullus and Lucretius — I would prefer 'reciprocal intertextuality', which usefully suggests the 'simultaneous' dialogue of texts, independently from the time of their production. This is what Borges called 'deliberate anachronism' in his *Pierre Menard*.
[5] Above all, see Hardie 1986: 233–7, concerning Vergil's use of Lucretius.
[6] As for *sensus* in literary imitations, see Quint., *Inst.* 10.5.5, cf. Hardie 1986: 234.
[7] cf. Fowler 2000: 128; he offers the famous example of Lucretius' and Vergil's *regere imperio*, where one cannot decide 'whether we make *Aeneid* correct the Epicurean retirement of the Lucretian intertext or the Lucretian traces subvert the *Aeneid*'.

intertextual space where the *agōn* of the two poets can be performed. Instead of insisting that a reading in the reverse direction would equally be possible (i.e. to read *DRN* as alluding to Catullus 64), I will only suggest that in the Lucretio-Catullan intertextual space to be examined below, an impression of reciprocity emerges.[8] Accordingly, Catullus' intertextual *agōn* with *DRN* in his Poem 64 might serve as a late republican overture to the story of Lucretian intertextuality in Augustan poetry.

Catullus' poetic texture in the epyllion, famously based on the leitmotif of weaving and the exploitation of all of its metaphorical possibilities, is often considered to be a kind of textual labyrinth:[9] neither the characters nor the readers are able to decide who they are, where they are (in time, in space, or in the text), and with whom they are communicating. So far, the Lucretian background of this Catullan labyrinthine poetics has remained beyond the scope of critical attention. In what follows, I shall be reading the game of textual illusions as closely intertwined with the intertextual relations existing between Poem 64 and *DRN*; I shall present the Catullan epyllion as a forerunner of 'Ovid's poetics of illusion' (cf. Ariadne and the Ovidian Narcissus in Section III), or of 'Lucretian visions in Vergil' (cf. Aegeus as Epicurus and the Vergilian Dido in Section IV) as they have been analysed by Philip Hardie.[10] I think *errare* is the best metaphor available to grasp these intricate intertextual relations. The famous Lucretian scene of the 'shipwreck with spectator'[11] at the beginning of Book 2 depicts the Epicurean wise man sitting in the Temple of the Wise. From here, he can look down (*despicere*, 9) on other people, who are erring (*errare*, 10) because they lack Epicurean wisdom or are unable to gain it. In Catullus 64, *error* is one of the central metaphors of illusion, explicitly present in the depiction of the labyrinth ('errabunda uestigia', 'fallible footsteps', 113; 'inobseruabilis error', 'deceptively mazed confusion', 115). An intertextual reading would thus suggest that figures as well as readers of Catullus 64 are *errantes* — i.e. victims of desire, illusion, and failure — because they lack Lucretian wisdom. All three erroneous acts of viewing/reading I analyse below have significant Lucretian connections, and can be considered as models that describe the necessarily erroneous or labyrinthine way in which one is lead to read the poem. Those who are in error, and therefore exhibit erroneous gazes, are characterized by an insatiable desire (mortal guests as proto-readers), by separation and a subsequent sense of frustration (Ariadne as proto-Narcissus), or by a semiotic failure and a tragic sublime (Aegeus as proto-Dido). The great exception is Theseus, who is only viewed, rather than a viewer.

I shall now turn to Catullus' Lucretian poetics, and place it in the context of these erroneous acts of viewing/reading. But let me make one preliminary remark. Obviously, Lucretius' work is far from being as 'univocal' as it perhaps seems from the above formulations. Like the Horatian teacher in the *Ars Poetica* who does not obey his own rules, the Lucretian didactic persona shows us the 'not-quite-yet-thoroughly-Lucretius in

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[8] In the conclusion to this essay, I will return to questions of reciprocity, with special emphasis on the reverse direction.
[9] cf. especially Gaisser 2007 (1995); Scheid and Svenbro 1996; Theodorakopoulos 2001; Schmale 2004; Robinson 2006. Though being relatively early in the recent tradition of interpreting Catullus 64 as a text woven of inconsistent narrative, textual and intertextual threads, Rees 1994 is extremely useful in his emphasis on sensory perception in the epyllion. As for the chronological contradictions and inconsistencies in Catullus 64, displaying the labyrinthine poetics in a narrative, see especially Weber 1983 and O'Hara 2006: 33–54.
[10] See Hardie 2002: 143–72; 2009: 153–79.
[11] For the notion of 'shipwreck with spectator' (*Schiffbruch mit Zuschauer*) and for its interpretation in a broad philosophical context, see Blumenberg 1997 (1979). Blumenberg's analysis, as we will see, is eminently useful for pointing out both the symbolic significance and the inner contradictions of the Lucretian spectator scene in the proem of Book 2. As for the ancient literary and philosophical context of the scene, see the vast material in Fowler 2002: 22–56. For an excellent analysis of Blumenberg's interpretation of Lucretius, see Möller 2015. I am grateful to Professor Melanie Möller for sharing her paper with me before publication.

Lucretius'.[12] From a Catullan perspective, we could say that the 'Catullan voices' in the *DRN* itself are impersonations of this unLucretianism in Lucretius. Reading Lucretius' work through a Catullan lens would mean remythologizing, or more precisely, refilling the empty Lucretian textual world with illusory presences.[13] The Lucretian universe contains tendencies towards fictional mythology and divine presence — i.e. things that, except when the myth and the divinity in question are the enlightened ones, change us into *errantes* — but, of course, also suppresses or domesticates them.[14] To read this universe from a Catullan perspective would thus be a work of liberation, but a very unLucretian one at that: it would imply freeing Lucretius from the wisdom that makes him and his pupils happy.[15] To read Catullus 64 from a Lucretian perspective is, in its turn, a disillusioning activity in the literal sense. For while Catullus' epyllion suggests that *illo tempore*, the presence of gods in the human world was a real possibility, Catullus' Lucretian intertexts would certainly respond by saying 'Really? This must have been an illusion'.

II GUESTS/READERS

In the textual universe of Catullus 64, no character is able to break free from the pressures caused by the fear of death, by religion, the gods, mythology and monsters, by corporeal and mental illnesses, and by the lust for power, luxury and sex, and to contemplate, as a *sapiens,* the cosmos from the Temple of the Wise. On the contrary, almost all of the characters are subject to a self-destructive gaze.[16] The first are the Nereids, whose marvel (*admirantes*, 15) at the *monstrum* of Argo results in Thetis' ill-fated marriage with Peleus. At their wedding, the mortal guests (having left behind a Lucretian-like illusory Golden Age, built to honour the union of mortals and immortals[17]) are entering the golden and highly unLucretian *sedes* (an ironic 'literalization of the metaphor of the Golden Age'[18]) that '**fulgenti splendent auro** atque **argento**' ('are shining with glittering

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[12] cf. O'Hara 2006: 55–76.

[13] For Lucretian 'emptiness' and its refilling with presences (Vergil) and tragicomic dramatization (Ovid), see Hardie 2002: 150.

[14] For mythology in Lucretius, not only as a deterrent example but also as an instructive force, including his tendencies of *Remythisierung*, see Gale 1994. For Epicurus' deification as a kind of Lucretian myth-making in the spirit of an enlightened mystery religion, see ibid.: 191–207.

[15] Needless to say, some of the intertexts have more and others have less relevance for the present study. For example, I will ignore the well-known parallel between the Lucretian Iphigenia and the Catullan Polyxena, for which see Skinner 1976. Usually, I will use echoes that have been listed by Giesecke 2000: 181–2. In other cases, I will mark them.

[16] For the gaze as central figure of Catullus 64, cf. Fitzgerald 1995: 140–68. The gaze, and the state of being gazed at, are present from the beginning to the end of the poem.

[17] Cat. 64.38–42 'rura colit <u>nemo</u>, **mollescunt** colla iuuencis, / <u>non</u> humilis **curuis** purgatur uinea rastris, / <u>non</u> **falx** attenuat frondatorum **arboris** umbram, / <u>non</u> glebam prono conuellit uomere taurus, / squalida desertis robigo infertur **aratris**' ('Fieldwork's abandoned, draught oxen's necks get flabby, no curved rake clears the weeds from the low-set ground clean, no teams now split the sod with deep-thrusting ploughshares, no pruning hook lessens the shade of leaf-thick trees, while the ploughs, deserted, are scarved with rust's scaly tetter'), cf. Lucr. 5.933–6 '<u>nec</u> robustus erat **curui** moderator **aratri** / quisquam, <u>nec</u> scibat ferro **molirier** arua / <u>nec</u> noua defodere in terram uirgulta <u>neque</u> altis / **arboribus** ueteres decidere **falcibus** ramos' ('No sturdy farmer guided the curved plow; no one knew how to work the fields with iron implements or plant young saplings in the earth or cut the old boughs from tall trees with pruning hooks'). The pseudo-Golden Age in Catullus means that, in the moment of the 'union' of mortals and immortals, the illusion of a Golden Age for a short festive moment of time emerges, though with the spectacular intrusion of *robigo*. In Lucretius, the pseudo-Golden Age — confirmed by the obligatory topos *sponte sua* (938) — signifies a demythologization of the mythological Golden Age in the framework of a rational *Kulturgeschichte* (cf. Gale 1994: 164–74). The spectacular parallel is mentioned in Schmale 2004: 82–3, while it is missing from Giesecke's list.

[18] Fitzgerald 1995: 149.

gold and silver', trans. author, 44; cf. Lucr. 2.27 '[si] nec **domus argento fulget auroque** renidet', 'even if the house lacks the lustre of silver and the glitter of gold'), where 'tota **domus** [cf. Lucr. 2.27] gaudet regali **splendida gaza**' ('the entire house glittering proudly with royal treasure', 46, cf. Lucr. 2.27 '**splendent**' and 2.37–8 'nil nostro in corpore **gazae**/proficient', 'neither riches […] have any beneficial effect upon our bodies').[19] Then, they stare avidly (i.e. insatiably) at a picture: 'cupide **spectando**' (267, cf. Lucr. 4.1101–2 'sic in amore Venus simulacris ludit amantis/nec satiare queunt **spectando** corpora coram', 'so, in love, lovers are deluded by Venus with images: no matter how intently they gaze at the beloved body, they cannot sate their eyes'). This, from the evoked Lucretian perspective, means that in spite of any alleged 'visual satisfaction'[20] (cf. 64.268 'expleta est'), the desiring gaze ultimately remains unsatisfied: the act of gazing at the picture cannot satiate the desire for real presences. In the context that has been evoked, Lucretius claims that the participants of sexual intercourse are always erroneous victims of an illusion (4.1104 '**errantes** incerti corpore toto', 'while they stray uncertain over all the body', trans. W. E. Leonard), because the real presence of total penetration is impossible (4.1111), as is so spectacularly dramatized in Ovid's narrative of Narcissus.[21] The insatiable gaze of Catullus' (internal and external) 'desiring readers' (Hardie) is similar to that of Narcissus, which is 'caught between the intellectual understanding that texts are just texts, words with no underlying reality, and the desire to believe in the reality of the textual world'.[22]

But what is the picture the guests are gazing at? It is a pictorial representation on a luxurious purple coverlet ('**purpura … uestis**', 49–50, later: '**purpurea**ue … **ueste**', 163; cf., in a very negative context, Lucr. 2.35–6 'textilibus si in picturis **ostroque** rubenti/iacteris', 'if you toss in embroidered attire of blushing crimson'; 2.52: 'clarum splendorem **uestis purpureai**', 'the brilliant lustre of purple raiment').[23] With the exception of the hint at insatiable sexual desire, the Lucretian parallels come from Book 2 of *DRN*, where the didactic teacher is instructing us how to be a *sapiens*: we should leave behind the miserable life of the unenlightened, follow in Epicurus' footsteps, and, above all, we should learn that the cosmos is made of the accidental meetings of various atoms. Thus, we will be able to admire the sublime structure of the universe.[24] The mortal viewers of the coverlet, however, are not marvelling at the cosmos. Instead, they are marvelling at a representation on a textile coverlet (*uestis*), which is, quite dazzlingly, characterized by Catullus as '**uariata figuris**' ('decorated with […] figures', 50) — a phrase which serves, in Lucretius, the characterization of the atoms with various shapes (Lucr. 2.335: 'percipe, multigenis quam sint **uariata figuris**', 'I want you

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[19] *gaza* is a lexical treasure — a Catullan/Lucretian textual sign of luxury — in itself, 'first here and in Lucr. ii 37, a Persian word borrowed from Greek', as Fordyce, a great denier of Lucretian echoes in Catullus, laconically comments (1961: 284 ad loc.). The play of 'luxurious allusions' is continued in the *Aeneid*, where Vergil presents the banquet of Dido with the help of Catullan/Lucretian allusions: 1.637–8 'at **domus** interior regali **splendida luxu** / instruitur' ('But the palace within is laid out with the splendour of princely pomp'); 639–41 'arte laboratae **uestes ostroque** superbo, / ingens **argentum** mensis, caelataque in **auro** / fortia facta partum' ('Coverlets there are, skilfully embroidered and of royal purple; on the tables is massive silver plate, and in gold are graven the doughty deeds of her sires'). Luxurious palace; purple coverlet; silver and gold, nothing is missing from the Vergilian description, which, through its combined allusions, foretells both the dangers threatening Dido's mental health (cf. Lucretius' warning), and her unhappy 'marriage' with Aeneas (cf. Catullus' Thetis). Nappa (2007: 382) notices only the Catullan background of the Vergilian lines. (My thanks go to Péter Somfai who has reminded me of the relevance of the *Aeneid* in this context.)
[20] Fitzgerald 1995: 153.
[21] Hardie 2002: 158–61.
[22] Hardie 2002: 147.
[23] The intertexts concerning the Lucretian connections of the Catullan purple coverlet are missing from Giesecke's list.
[24] I will return to the interconnection between the distant view implied by the 'shipwreck with spectator' scene and the gaze at the atomic motion in Section IV.

to grasp […] the great diversity of their forms, and the variety of their manifold shapes'), that, according to Lucretius, are not endowed with the same *filum* ('thread, yarn', here rather 'shape', 2.340–1). If we take this literally, Lucretius is visualizing the cosmos as a fine texture interwoven from different threads: a positive *uarietas* based on the spectacle of atoms which perhaps compensates for the loss of negative '"varieties" of food and living' (Gr. *poikilmata*, translated as *deliciae* in Lucr. 2.22).[25] Luxurious variety is thus being substituted, in Lucretius, by the philosophical spectacle of atomic variety; indeed, he speaks of this 'variety' (*deliciae*, Gr. *poikilmata*) as if it could be 'laid out' (*substernere*) as a coverlet on a bed.[26] On the other hand, Catullus, reunites the two, and, building upon the tradition of poetic and ecphrastic *poikilia*, he offers us the luxurious variety of aesthetic pleasure in the form of a purple coverlet variegated with pictures.

   If we take this parallel seriously, and apply the Lucretian perspective, the ecphrastic coverlet can be read as a possible poetic model of the Lucretian cosmos. While the Lucretian universe consists of accidental meetings of atoms of various shapes, regularly compared to letters (*elementa*) from which various configurations emerge,[27] the Catullan coverlet reveals itself as a textual universe woven of various textual atoms.[28] But neither the mortal guests, as internal readers gazing at the coverlet, nor the external readers of the ecphrasis modelled by them, are in the position of the Lucretian *spectator* who can read the cosmos itself: instead, they perceive the variety of pictorial/rhetorical figures (*figura* refers to both of them)[29] only to become subject — 'cupide spectando', i.e. as 'desiring readers' — to the poetics of illusion as it is manifested in Catullus' metamorphic artistry.[30]

III ARIADNE/NARCISSUS

'In the figure of Ariadne, the desiring gaze itself becomes an object of visual satisfaction, displayed on the female body that exposes itself in its preoccupation with gazing.'[31] In the following, I shall interpret her 'frustrated gaze' (gazed at by us) relying on her monologue, which repeatedly reveals her unconscious awareness of being imperceptible. This paradoxical situation of being both gazed at and imperceptible yields desperate frustration, which is, as it seems, formulated in Lucretian terms. Ariadne is a pictorial figure on the coverlet, whose famous monologue (or *fluctus curarum*, as in 64.62

[25] Bailey 1947 II: 800 *ad* 2.22. Cf. Fowler 2002: 82–8 explaining the Epicurean theory of *poikilmata* in its entirety. From that perspective, Catullus' aesthetic variety is — in spite of its spectacular unLucretianism — an almost logical continuation of the Lucretian argumentation in Book 2.

[26] cf. Fowler 2002: 90 ad loc.

[27] As for the Lucretian letter similes (1.820–9, 1.907–14, 2.688–99, 2.1013–22), primarily in the context of textual/material configurations of cosmos as 'order', see most recently Noller 2015. For the connection between the letter similes and the atomistic poetics of Epicureans, see Armstrong 1995.

[28] The metamorphic possibilities inherent in the configuration of letters are most spectacularly exploited in the polyptoton THETIDIS/THETIS/THETIDI (64.19–21), a mythological implementation of the Lucretian letter simile, performing the metamorphosis of Thetis — suppressed by the Catullan narrative — as a morphological shape-shifting on the textual surface (see Tamás 2014.) At the same time, this is a less radical form of linguistic change than Lucretius' anagrammatic 'atomology'.

[29] As far as both the pictorial and rhetorical decoration (cf. 64.265 'decorata figuris') of the ecphrastic coverlet — both expressed by *uariata figuris* — is concerned, see Laird 1993: 24–5.

[30] For the metamorphic possibilities inherent in the phrase *uariata figuris* — in an Ovidian context — cf. Myers 2012: 252. The echo in the description of Thetis' metamorphosis (*Met.* 11.241 'uariatis … figuris') cleverly hints at the Catullan suppression of Thetis' metamorphosis even through a Catullan allusion which, additionally, unfolds the metamorphic possibilities encoded in the ecphrastic coverlet of Catullus 64. From this Ovidian perspective, the suppressed metamorphosis of the Catullan Thetis returns in the form of a metamorphic ecphrasis.

[31] Fitzgerald 1995: 149.

'prospicit et magnis **curarum fluctuat** undis', 'watches, in breaking waves of grief unbounded', cf. Lucr. 6.34 'uoluere **curarum** tristis in pectore **fluctus**', 'to arouse within their breasts the rolling billows of bitter care'),[32] according to many interpreters, draws attention to its own fictional and illusory nature in many ways. For example, how could we hear the voice coming from a pictorial representation, especially when the one represented asserts that no one can hear her desperate speech?[33] At one point, Ariadne mentions that, as a worst case scenario, she could have gone with Theseus to Athens as a servant (158–63):

> si tibi non cordi fuerant conubia nostra,
> saeua quod horrebas prisci praecepta parentis,
> attamen in uestras potuisti ducere sedes,
> quae tibi iucundo famularer serua labore,
> candida permulcens liquidis uestigia lymphis,
> **purpurea**ue tuum permulcens **ueste** cubile.

> If you failed to find marriage with me to your proper liking through dread of an old-style father's merciless precepts, you still could have brought me to your ancestral home, to be your slave, to serve you with adoration, washing your white-soled feet in crystal water, or spreading and dressing your bed with a purple coverlet.

Ariadne's words — belatedly 'offering' Theseus that she could have caressed his white feet with fresh water and covered his bed with a purple coverlet — suggest that we are reading the ecphrasis of the 'purple coverlet': the phrase '**uestis purpurea**' (cf. Lucr. 2.52 '**uestis** splendorem **purpureai**') is particularly evocative, and the two colours, white and purple,[34] that are so important at the beginning of the ecphrasis, also leave their mark on the whole sentence. At the same time, Ariadne's words not only signal the ecphrastic context, but also testify to Ariadne's awareness of her own represented/fictional state. Ariadne, who is nothing other than a figure on the purple coverlet, is here offering nothing other than to cover Theseus' bed with a purple coverlet.[35] This statement might be regarded as the expression of a metaleptic desire to transgress narrative borders: as if Ariadne wished to step out from the story represented on the coverlet and join its viewers, who are the participants in the royal wedding! The situation as a whole is, however, even more complicated: at this moment, Ariadne is the fictional speaker of a monologue attributed, by the epic narrator, to a figure in an ecphrasis on a fictional coverlet. Indeed, the growing frustration of Ariadne, during her monologue, could be explained by her multifaceted fictionality and ontological instability. From this perspective, the island of Dia encompassed by the sea would have to be identified with the fateful solitude and imprisonment of the fictional hero of any literary or artistic representation.[36] Her

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[32] 'In the case of *fluctus/fluctuo … curarum*, the strongest argument in favour of imitation lies in the few but significant parallels existing between the contexts in which the metaphor appears, Ariadne's lament and *De Rerum Natura* 6.9–34, respectively. In her misery, Ariadne utters a lengthy condemnation of Theseus with *extremis querellis* (Catullus 64.130), and Epicurus, in the words of Lucretius, comes to the aid of men whose lives were so tormented with anxiety that they raged with *infestis querellis* (DRN 6.16). This he did by dispelling the tides of cares which seethed within their breasts *volvere curarum tristis in pectore fluctus* (DRN 6.34), one of the primary causes of which was and still is the vice of cupidity (*DRN* 6.25); it was this particular failing, *cupido*, which Ariadne too condemned in Theseus (Catullus 64.145–7)' (Giesecke 2000: 25–6).
[33] cf., e.g., Laird 1993: 29 ('Ariadne may be dwelling on the fact that she cannot be heard or addressed because she is in a picture').
[34] On the world of colours in Catullus 64, especially the various forms of white and red as the primary colours in the poem, see O'Connell 1977.
[35] cf. Schmale 2004: 180.
[36] As far as Ariadne's enclosed or framed character is concerned, also in the context of the labyrinth — which is a kind of prison — see Theodorakopoulos 2001: 120–1, 125.

perceptibility — i.e. how much can be seen of or heard from her — is totally dependent on the creator of the work of art.

Later, Ariadne realizes that she cannot be heard; in other words, she becomes aware of her acoustic imperceptibility: 'sed quid ego ignaris conquerar auris,/externata[37] malo, quae nullis **sensibus auctae**/nec missas audire queunt nec **reddere uoces**?' ('Oh, why do I uselessly plead to the indifferent breezes, grief-stricken though I am? Being unendowed with senses they can neither hear nor answer the words I utter', 64.164–6). This is a kind of anagnorisis, similar to the well-known 'iste ego sum! sensi, nec me mea fallit imago' of the Ovidian Narcissus ('that boy is me! I see it, and am not deceived by my image', *Met.* 3.463). In fact, the moment Narcissus realizes that the beloved boy cannot hear him, he also becomes aware that he is facing his own reflection, and 'turns into a sophisticated reader'.[38] However, Narcissus' Catullan forerunner, the disillusioned Ariadne comes to the realization that her medium lacks both receptivity *and* reflectivity: there is not even a miserable Echo present! However, her allusion to the Lucretian description of echo (166 '**reddere uoces**', cf. Lucr. 4.577 '**reddere uoces**') suggests that at this moment of utter solitude, even the reverberation of her own voice — which might 'lead to the illusion of non-existent presences'[39] — could offer some consolation. Further, while she desires to be perceived by the wind, the wind is the guarantee of oblivion in the poetics of Catullus 64: what (or who) is committed to the wind, will be forgotten (or forgetting), and forgetting obviously implies imperceptibility.[40] At the same time, the phrase '**sensibus auctae**' also has its significant Lucretian parallel (3.624–33):[41]

> Praeterea si inmortalis natura animaist
> et sentire potest **secreta a corpore nostro**,[42]
> quinque, ut opinor, eam faciundum est **sensibus auctam**.
> nec ratione alia nosmet proponere nobis
> possumus infernas animas Acherunte uagare.
> pictores itaque et scriptorum saecla priora
> sic animas intro duxerunt **sensibus auctas**.
> at neque sorsum oculi neque nares nec manus ipsa
> esse potest animae neque sorsum lingua neque aures;
> haud igitur per se possunt sentire neque esse.

Moreover, if the substance of the spirit is immortal and retains sentient power when separated from our body, presumably we must assume that it is provided with the five senses. In no other way can we visualize spirits roaming in the infernal realms of Acheron. That is why painters and writers of generations past have represented spirits as endowed with senses. But, divorced from the body, the soul cannot have either eyes or nose or hands or tongue or ears and therefore cannot possess either sentience or life.

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[37] *externata* (165) — immediately after *consternens* (163) — may confirm my above interpretation of the 'purple coverlet'. Ariadne, having offered the laying out of a purple coverlet to Theseus, admits her status as *externata*, i.e., literally, *laid out* like a coverlet (as *ex-sternata*). I build my view on the basic meaning of *sterno* as 'to lay out on the ground' (*OLD* s.v. *sterno* 1). Cf. Fowler's commentary to *substernere* in Lucr. 2.22.

[38] Hardie 2002: 147.

[39] Hardie 2002: 153.

[40] 64.59 'irrita uentosae linquens promissa procellae' ('scattering broken promises galewards'); 142 'cuncta aerii discerpunt irrita uenti' ('all of which the intangible winds are shredding'); 213 'gnatum uentis concrederet Aegeus' ('Aegeus […] they say, was entrusting to the winds his son'); 238–40 'mandata … / Thesea ceu pulsae uentorum flamine nubes / … liquere' ('these precepts […] like clouds whipped away from some snowy mountain top by the gale's blast, abandoned Theseus').

[41] Fordyce 1961: 299 ad loc. notices the parallel (quoting Lucr. 3.630); Bailey 1947 II, in turn, remains silent.

[42] This phrase also has a significant Catullan and also an Ovidian parallel, see below.

Read together with this Lucretian passage, Ariadne's words, quoted above, have an ironic effect. Lucretius argues that if we believe the absurdity that the spirit is 'immortal and retains sentient power when separated from our body, presumably we must assume that it is provided with the five senses', the way 'painters and writers of generations past have represented spirits as endowed with senses'. Considering this *ad absurdum* argument[43] of the Epicurean poet, Ariadne, who is simultaneously painted and written (i.e. ecphrastic), becomes similar, by way of allusion, to a soul in Hades, endowed with the five senses. Indeed, she effectively turns into a sort of *simulacrum*, which term refers to all sorts of misleading visual images from 'ghost' to 'vision' in Lucretius' Book 4: it 'may for various reasons correspond to no substantially existing objects, but nevertheless leads us to believe in the existence of such objects.'[44] Ironically, even though Ariadne realizes that the winds are not perceptible ('nullis **sensibus auctae**', 'unendowed with senses'), she fails to notice that this, unfortunately, also holds true for herself: namely, that she, as the fictional heroine of a literary representation of an artistic representation — in short, a wind-like textual phantom[45] — is in fact not endowed with senses at all. In the Lucretian context just evoked, to be a soul in Hades is, in fact, to be fictional. Consequently, as we will see, Ariadne's fear of death means not only that she is a victim of illusions but also that she is a product of them: she is a *simulacrum* in the Lucretian sense of the word.

Although Ariadne is not going to arrive at the true anagnorisis of her own fictionality — in contrast to the similarly ghost-like Narcissus[46] who realizes the fictionality of his mirror image — her own Dionysiac ending[47] is not missing at all (251 'at parte ex alia florens uolitabat Iacchus …', 'But in another quarter young Iacchus went winging by …', cf. Ov., *Met*. 3.528 'Liber adest'); moreover, this is a variation of the Lucretian scene of Magna Mater (261 'plangebant … proceris tympana palmis', 'with flattened palms were beating on drumheads', cf. Lucr. 2.618; 263 'raucisonos … bombos', 'a raucous booming clamour', cf. Lucr. 2.619).[48] Ariadne's lack of Epicurean wisdom is thus 'punished' — cf. all the threatening and frightening formulations in Lucretius (2.619 'minantur'; 621 'uiolenti signa furoris'; 623 'conterrere metu'; 632 'terrificas … cristas') entirely missing in Catullus — with an illusion of a real encounter with an acoustically/ musically present god who transcends both the borders of her separateness, and, through his synesthetic presence,[49] of the ecphrastic coverlet itself. From a Lucretian perspective, this illusory presence is nothing other than the fictional projection of her vain fear of death and religiousness so dramatically expressed at the end of her monologue. As if the sonic Bacchus could hear and answer Ariadne's unhearable words about 'omnia muta/omnia sunt deserta, ostentant omnia letum' ('everywhere, silence: everywhere's emptiness, everything signals death', 186–7): compare this to the Lucretian *loca deserta* (4.591), those empty places filled with elusive echoes that people attribute to Dionysiac figures such as Satyrs, Fauns and Pan (2.580).[50] In Catullus 64, they *are* coming (252 'cum thiaso Satyrorum et Nysigenis Silenis', 'with his band of Satyrs and Nysa-bred Sileni'). Or is this an illusion?

[43] cf. Bailey 1947 II: 618 ad 2.624.
[44] Hardie 2002: 151.
[45] cf. Lucr. 3.46 on the popular (not Lucretian) characterization of the nature of the soul as 'wind'.
[46] For the symbolic 'Underworld' in the Ovidian story of Narcissus against its Lucretian background, with Narcissus as 'Tantalus', see Hardie 2002: 156–8.
[47] As for Narcissus' Dionysiac context in Book 3 of the *Metamorphoses*, cf. Hardie 2012: 165–72.
[48] For a formal literary analysis of the 'imitation' revealing Ennian echoes in both texts, see Giesecke 2000: 17–20.
[49] 'Synaesthesia is, essentially, a paradox, and in poem 64 Catullus revels in it' (Rees 1994: 87).
[50] cf. Hardie 2002: 153 on the Ovidian filling of the deserted Lucretian countryside.

But even before her Dionysiac ending, Ariadne's desperation culminates in the realization of her total solitude and hopelessness and the curse she eventually puts on Theseus (184–201):

> praeterea nullo colitur sola insula tecto,
> nec patet egressus pelagi cingentibus undis.
> nulla fugae ratio, nulla spes: omnia muta,
> omnia sunt deserta, ostentant omnia letum.
> non tamen ante mihi languescent lumina morte,
> nec prius **a fesso secedent corpore sensus**,
> quam iustam a diuis exposcam prodita multam
> caelestumque fidem postrema comprecer hora.
> quare facta virum multantes uindice poena
> Eumenides, quibus anguino redimita capillo
> frons exspirantis praeportat pectoris iras,
> huc huc aduentate, meas audite querellas,
> quas ego, uae misera, extremis proferre medullis
> cogor inops, ardens, amenti caeca furore.
> **quae quoniam uerae nascuntur pectore ab imo**,
> uos nolite pati nostrum uanescere luctum,
> sed quali solam Theseus me mente reliquit,
> tali mente, deae, funestet seque suosque.

On top of which there's not one single house on this lonely island, it's ringed by breakers, offers no loophole. There's no way of escape, no hope, and, everywhere, silence: everywhere's emptiness, everything signals death. Yet my eyes shall not fade and grow still in dissolution, nor the senses secede from my exhausted body, till I've petitioned the gods for a befitting forfeit for this betrayal, in my last hours have prayed that heaven will keep faith. So, you whose vengeful exactions answer men's crimes, you Furies whose snake-wreathed brows announce the wrath gusting up from your secret hearts, I summon you here to me now: give ear to the complaints which I in misery am forced to dredge up from the inmost core of my being — helpless, burning, blinded by mindless frenzy. But since they're the true products of my private heart, don't let my grief all go for nothing: rather in just such a mood as Theseus abandoned me to my lonely fate, let him, goddesses, now doom both himself and his!

Interestingly, Ariadne formulates her own future death as a separation of her senses from her body, which not only echoes the Lucretian words quoted above (Cat. 64.189 'nec prius **a** fesso **secedent corpore sensus**', cf. Lucr. 3.625 '**sentire potest secreta a corpore** nostro'),[51] but also anticipates Narcissus' 'o utinam **a nostro secedere corpore possem**' ('Would that I could be separated from my body!', Ov., *Met.* 3.466–7). This Ovidian sentence seems to be an intertextual mixture of the Catullan and Lucretian quotations (*secedere* from Catullus, *possem* from Lucretius). However, as far as Narcissus is concerned, the desired separation from his body would be, paradoxically, a real solution to his problem, i.e. the removal of the barrier which separates him from himself as an extreme case of the *exclusus amator* situation, which, in Lucretius, is the fate of all lovers.[52] The separation of Ariadne's senses from her body would, in turn, amount to her unconscious recognition of her fictional character.[53] And this latter is precisely the object of Narcissus' unconscious desire: if only he could change into a work of art! Meanwhile, Ariadne's ultimate

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[51] The parallel is missing from Giesecke's list and also from the commentaries.
[52] See Hardie 2002: 145 and 161.
[53] Because the evoked Lucretian context, quoted and commented on above, speaks of fictional (painted and written) souls endowed with senses.

desperation, as quoted above, has also another Lucretian parallel. Lucretius, earlier in Book 3, when teaching about the senselessness of the fear of death, warns us that we should not believe those who boast of not being afraid of death, and, consequently, of having no need of philosophical teaching ('nostrae rationis', 44): while they pretend to 'know very well' that the nature of the spirit is similar to that of fire or wind (*uenti* [!], 46; cf. Ariadne's characterization of the winds as 'nullis sensibus auctae'), they are actually afraid of death. Lucretius recommends that we should listen to the words of these people when they are in trouble (3.48–58), since this voice is more sincere:

> extorres idem patria longeque fugati
> conspectu ex hominum, foedati crimine turpi,
> omnibus aerumnis adfecti denique uiuunt,
> et quocumque tamen miseri uenere parentant
> et nigras mactant pecudes et manibu' diuis
> inferias mittunt multoque in rebus acerbis
> acrius aduertunt animos ad religionem.
> quo magis in dubiis hominem spectare periclis
> conuenit aduersisque in rebus noscere qui sit;
> **nam uerae uoces tum demum pectore ab imo**
> eliciuntur <et> eripitur persona, manet res.

It is not just the bolded lines about sincerity (64.198 '**quae quoniam uerae nascuntur pectore ab imo**', cf. Lucr. 3.57 '**nam uerae uoces tum demum pectore ab imo**')[54] that show significant parallels with the text of Catullus 64, but the Lucretian passage as a whole seems to be a confusingly exact description of the Catullan Ariadne in her ultimate despair:

> For the same people, though banished from their homeland, driven far from the sight of other human beings, branded with the stigma of some foul crime,[55] and afflicted, in a word, with every kind of tribulation, continue to live. Wherever they bring their troubles, they offer sacrifices to their ancestors, immolate black victims, dispatch oblations to the infernal deities, and in their bitter plight turn their minds much more zealously to superstition. The lesson is this: it is advisable to appraise (*spectare*) people in doubt and danger and to discover (*noscere*) how they behave in adversity; for then and only then is the truth elicited from the bottom of their hearts: the mask is ripped off; the reality remains.

We may hear the voice of the Catullan Ariadne here, who, complaining about her banishment, imperceptibility, and stigmatization by a shameful crime, is turning to the gods, and especially to 'infernal deities' (in Lucretius: *manes*, in Catullus: *Eumenides*).[56]

 Again, the intertextual encounter between these texts has an ironic effect. The ideal pupil of *DRN* contemplates (*spectare*) and gets to know (*noscere*) 'Ariadne' from an external position; in her desperate situation (exactly the way Lucretius supposes), from the bottom of her heart, she sincerely reveals to the Epicurean spectator that she is dedicated to *religio turpis*. Ironically, Ariadne alludes to this Lucretian sincerity even when she addresses the Eumenides, who, at least as the Catullan narrator informs us, are fulfilling her curse! This can be understood either as a denial of the Lucretian

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[54] Fordyce 1961: 302 ad 198, however reluctantly, notices ('Lucretius has the same verse ending in iii. 57'), as Bailey 1947 II: 999 ad 3.57 does ('Munro has an interesting note …').
[55] In the Lucretian context, the formulation 'foedati crimine turpi' must refer to the ignominious crime of the banished (cf. Bailey 1947 II: 997 ad 3.42). When related to Ariadne, this can be interpreted as the crime of Theseus which has maculated Ariadne.
[56] In Lucretius, both *nigras pecudes* and *inferias* imply *di inferi*, i.e. 'lower world deities' (Bailey 1947 II: 999 ad loc.). Catullus' Eumenides, usually imagined as belonging to the sphere of Underworld, are thus totally compatible, see *DKP* II s.v. 'Erinys'.

wisdom (in this Catullan scenario, infernal deities seem to exist), or as an implicit affirmation of Ariadne — who, after having characterized herself as invisible and inaudible, turned to the Eumenides to make her curse heard and fulfilled — being a fictional product of illusions. But if Ariadne herself is an illusion, how about the Catullan narrator, who introduces her monologue — echoing the same Lucretian line — as follows: 124–5 'saepe illam perhibent ardenti corde furentem/clarisonas **imo** fudisse **e pectore** uoces' ('Often (they tell us) heart burning, wild with passion, she'd pour forth shrill cries fetched up from her innermost breast')? The narrative authority is immediately undermined by the 'Alexandrian footnote' of *perhibent*, this dubious reference to the always *multiplex sermo* of Fama.[57] Furthermore, who could hear Ariadne's 'clear sounding voice' ('clarisonas … uoces') coming from the bottom of her heart, if even Ariadne knows that she is imperceptible, and if we know that her speech is part of an ecphrasis describing a theoretically mute artistic representation? Is not the Catullan narrator both victim and discoverer of his own poetics of illusion? In this sense, he is just like the Ovidian narrator who addresses Narcissus as a Lucretian teacher asking him why he falls victim to the *error*[58] of sensory illusions (*Met.* 3.432 'credule, quid frustra simulacra fugacia captas?', 'gullible boy, why do you catch at fleeting phantoms in vain?'), not recognizing that he himself is *credulus* when he considers Narcissus a living person with whom he can communicate.[59] This intertextual connection between Lucretius and Catullus is of a proto-Ovidian tone, not only because of its narcissistic *Nachleben* in the *Metamorphoses*, but also because it evokes the imagery of banishment as a concretization of the literary fiction itself. When I am banished (*extorris patria*), we (you and me) cannot see or hear each other (Lucr. 48–9 'fugati/conspectu ex hominum', 'driven far from the sight of other human beings'): at that moment, I am a kind of fictional hero who can communicate only in an illusory and fictional — in Lucretian terms erroneous — way. My presence is both the object and the product of a desiring gaze.

IV AEGEUS/DIDO/EPICURUS

As opposed to both the mortal guests (who are physically present at the wedding) and Ariadne (who is present on the ecphrastic coverlet as a representation), the Aegeus figure is located in a twilit area: in Catullus 64, he is part of the ecphrasis, but not of the coverlet. The digression interwoven in the ecphrasis only reveals Aegeus' absence. This location could, in principle, guarantee an external spectator position for the Athenian king, who is explicitly (but unsuccessfully) aspiring to this very position. Thematically, he is in an external position too: he sends Theseus to Crete, and waits for him in Athens. Aegeus (as I intend to explain elsewhere) is an unsuccessful writer figure of Catullus 64, a 'father of letters' (πατὴρ ὢν γραμμάτων) in the sense of the Platonic *Schriftkritik*, whose 'invention will produce forgetfulness (λήθην) in the minds of those who learn to use it' (*Phaedr.* 275a, trans. H. N. Fowler). In 64.222 ff., he tries to inscribe Theseus' mind mnemotechnically, and teach him a kind of proto-writing system (a binary code: white sails signify fortune, painted sails signify misfortune). However,

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[57] 'Hearsay introduces the lament and thus distances it from the visual representation of Ariadne on the coverlet' (Rees 1994: 84).
[58] Ov., *Met.* 3.431 'oculos idem, qui decipit, incitat error' ('and the same delusion mocks and allures his eyes'), cf. also 447 'tantus tenet error amantem' ('so great a delusion holds my love', trans. F. J. Miller).
[59] 'But *credule* is also a trap for the author and the reader: as *we* utter this apostrophe to the foolish boy, we are for a moment beguiled into behaving as if the fictional character could hear and respond to our words, as we clasp at textual phantoms' (Hardie 2002: 147). For a detailed interpretation, see Krupp 2009: 113.

since the curse of Ariadne was fulfilled by the gods, Theseus forgets to use this system, which eventually results in the death of his father.[60]

Consequently, the 'father of letters' changes from a writer figure into an erroneous spectator/reader figure. The moment he caught sight of the painted sails and misinterpreted them as signs of Theseus' death (or, more precisely, mistook them for *signs* when they were not signs at all), Aegeus committed suicide. From what seems to be an external spectator position (i.e. the Acropolis of Athens), he threw himself into the sea (241–5):

> at pater, ut **summa prospectum ex arce** petebat,
> anxia in assiduos absumens lumina fletus,
> cum primum infecti conspexit lintea ueli,
> praecipitem sese scopulorum e uertice iecit,
> amissum credens immiti Thesea fato.

> But his father, scanning the horizon from the acropolis' summit, anxious eyes worn out with constant weeping, no sooner had glimpsed the canvas of the bellying sail than he flung himself headlong from the height of the rock face, believing Theseus destroyed by an unrelenting fate.

What we witness here is the inverse of the Lucretian *Schiffbruch mit Zuschauer*: it is the spectator of the sea who falls victim to a figurative shipwreck. Aegeus is thus the paradigmatic example of a 'spectator-wreck with ship'. The Lucretian wise man gazes at the shipwreck from a safe distance — from the shore (*e terra*, 2) or, in the second version, from the Temple of the Wise (*sapientum templa*, 7); this latter, according to Fowler, is an *acropolis* or *arx*[61] — which is 'sweet' for him, 'not that anyone's distress is a cause of agreeable pleasure; but it is comforting to see from what troubles you

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[60] The act of forgetting — which is strongly interconnected with the poetics of illusion — is also performed in Lucretian terms in Catullus 64. Ariadne first criticizes Theseus because he is ethically *immemor* (i.e. *perfidus*), then curses him. Due to the curse, he turns his 'ethical' forgetfulness into a 'mnemotechnical' one and brings tragedy upon himself and his family (200–1). It is Jupiter who fulfils Ariadne's curse: thanks to a cosmic earthquake caused by his *nutus* (203), the winds (238), those representatives of forgetfulness in Catullan poetics, make Theseus forget his father's instructions: 207–9 'ipse autem **caeca** mentem **caligine** Theseus / consitus oblito dimisit pectore cuncta, quae **mandata** prius **constanti mente tenebat**' ('but Theseus himself, his mind a seedbed of blind darkness, with forgetful heart let slip all the various commandments that up to that moment he'd constantly kept in mind', see also 231 '**memori** … corde' and 248 'mente **immemori**'). Compare Lucr. 4.456–7 'in noctis **caligine caeca** / cernere censemus solem lumenque diurnum' ('though enveloped by the blind blackness of night, we have the illusion of seeing the sun and daylight') — where the context is illusions in dreams — suggesting that the act of forgetting is similar to that of being eluded by misperception. As if Ariadne, herself being a victim of elusive dreams (56 'fallaci excita somno', 'roused […] from treacherous slumber', 122 '**deuinctam** lumina **somno**', 'eyes slumber-weighted'; cf. Lucr. 4.453–4 '**deuinxit** membra … / **somnus**', 'our limbs are prisoners of […] slumber') as well as figuratively blind (197 'amenti **caeca** furore', 'blinded by mindless frenzy'), would wish to punish Theseus not only with forgetfulness but also with her own 'Lucretian' blindness/invisibility, i.e. *caeca caligo*, 'blind blackness'. (For *caecus* as both 'blind' and 'invisible', see *OLD* s.v. *caecus* 1 and 7.) The fulfilment of the curse can be read as a confirmation of this wish of Ariadne since Theseus' forgetfulness, i.e. that he forgets to change the painted sails to white ones, makes his sails in fact 'invisible', or at least 'unreadable' as a sign. (See below, with further thoughts.) As far as 64.209 is concerned, cf. also Lucr. 2.582 'conuenit et **memori mandatum mente tenere**' ('it is advisable to […] retain it in the depository of your memory'), a mnemonic overture to a teaching that everything is built of atoms of various shapes — for us, suggesting a didactic, literally Epicurean aspect present in the relationship of Aegeus and Theseus. (As for that, see also below.) For forgetfulness as a leitmotif of Catullus 64 — also on the metafictional level, cf. 64.116–17 'sed quid ego … com**memor**em' — see in general Heil 2007.

[61] 'The modern tourist thinks of Athens; the ancient Roman would think rather of the Capitol' (Fowler 2002: 48). I disagree. In a didactic poem which is explicitly importing the particularly *Athenian* enlightenment to the unenlightened in Rome (for Epicurus as Athens' gift to the human race, see the proem to Book 6), both associations (together with many others, also listed by Fowler) should be relevant at the same time. It is not only a modern tourist who would think of Athens.

yourself are exempt' (Lucr. 2.3–4). However, Aegeus does not, in fact, have this outside position: he is deeply involved in the scene he gazes at. But this is, as Blumenberg explains, a paradox in the Lucretian framework itself: 'The contradiction consists in this: what the spectator enjoys is not the sublimity of the objects his theory opens up for him but his own self-consciousness, over against the whirl of atoms out of which everything that he observes is constituted, including himself.'[62] Aegeus' suicide — as we will see in the light of its Vergilian successor — can be interpreted in similar terms. As the aetiological explanation (Aegeus > Aegean Sea) anticipates, Aegeus' atoms are identified with the atoms of the sea, which, from Homer onwards, was conventionally called purple, or with the purple coverlet on which the *ferruginea*, i.e. dark purple (with Servius' words, *purpura subnigra*), sails are 'represented'.[63] Sorry for asking, but could you identify a purple sail represented on a purple coverlet?

Before we develop the argument further, let us turn to Dido for a while. To my mind, in Book 4 of the *Aeneid*, there is the Vergilian succession to the Aegeus scene, where Dido catches sight of the bustling Trojans on the Carthaginian shore (*Aen.* 4.397–412):

> tum uero Teucri incumbunt et litore celsas
> deducunt toto nauis. natat uncta carina,
> frondentisque ferunt remos et robora siluis
> infabricata fugae studio.
> migrantis cernas totaque ex urbe ruentis:
> ac uelut ingentem formicae farris aceruum
> cum populant hiemis memores tectoque reponunt,
> it nigrum campis agmen praedamque per herbas
> conuectant calle angusto; pars grandia trudunt
> obnixae frumenta umeris, pars agmina cogunt
> castigantque moras, opere omnis semita **feruet**.

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[62] Blumenberg 1997 (1979): 26–7. The problem is also registered by De Lacy 1964.
[63] While the tradition, as well as most Catullan scholarship, speaks of Theseus' sails as white (positive) / black (negative), in Catullus 64 we find something dazzling. As for the positive sails, Catullus follows the 'white' tradition, but as far as the 'negative' sails are concerned, Catullus seems to return to the tradition preserved in Simonides, who, according to Plutarch's biography of Theseus, reported red sails, but — confusingly enough — as the 'positive' ones (see Plut., *Thes.* 17). Catullus, in turn, introduces red sails as the 'negative' ones. But are they really red? Aegeus speaks as follows: 'inde infecta uago suspendam lintea malo, / nostros ut luctus nostraeque incendia mentis / carbasus obscurata dicet **ferrugine Hibera**' ('and then hang your wanderer's mast with black-dyed sailcloth [it is far from being 'black', however it is typical of translations and interpretations! – Á.T.], so that our grief and burning resentment of mind may be declared by canvas darkened with Spanish rust [correct, but why 'black' then? – Á.T.]', 64.225–7). Taking into account what Servius reports about the colour of *ferrugo* ('ferrugo coloris genus est, qui uicinus est purpurae subnigrae', Serv. ad *Aen.* 9.582 '**ferrugine … Hibera**', an obviously Catullan phrase in Vergil), we can surmise that the 'negative' sails of Theseus were textiles of purple colour such as the *uestis purpurea* on which they have been 'represented' (in the former scene where Theseus' ship has served as the object of Ariadne's gaze). Additionally, purple is the paradigmatic example of the ancient conceptualization of colours: we cannot identify what 'purple' looks like, because it is so much dependent on social, cultural, and physiological conditions of perception (see Bradley 2009: 189–211). According to Pliny the Elder, 'laus ei summa in sanguinis concreti, nigricans aspectu idemque suspectu refulgens' ('its highest glory consists in the colour of congealed blood, blackish at first glance but gleaming when held up to the light', trans. by H. Rackham, *NH* 9.62.135); here, the importance of light in the perception of purple colour is emphasized, while Lucretius — whose theory of colour perception (for which see Bradley 2009: 74–86), according to my hypothesis, deeply influences the colour philosophy of Catullus 64 — points out that the colour of purple textiles perishes when the material is unravelled: 'purpura poeniceusque color clarissimu' multo, / filatim cum distractum est, disperditur omnis' ('This is what happens when purple stuff is picked into tiny pieces: when it is shredded thread by thread, all the purple or scarlet colour, in spite of its unsurpassed brilliance, is shed', 2.830–1). In the poetic tradition, furthermore, purple is often named as the colour of the sea. The purple sails, therefore, cannot function as signs on the purple background (sea or coverlet) before Aegeus' fatigued, anxious eyes (cf. 242 'anxia in assiduos absumens lumina fletus', 'anxious eyes worn out with constant weeping').

> quis tibi tum, Dido, cernenti talia sensus,
> quosque dabas gemitus, cum litora **feruere** late
> **prospiceres arce ex summa**, totumque uideres
> **misceri ante oculos** tantis clamoribus **aequor!**
> improbe Amor, quid non mortalia pectora cogis!

Then, indeed, the Teucrians fall to and all along the shore launch their tall ships. The keels, well-pitched, are set afloat; the sailors, eager for flight, bring from the woods leafy boughs for oars and logs unhewn … One could see them moving away and streaming forth from all the city. Even as when ants, mindful of winter, plunder a huge heap of corn and store it in their home; over the plain moves a black column, and through the grass they carry the spoil on a narrow track; some strain with their shoulders and heave on the huge grains, some close up the ranks and rebuke delay; all the path is aglow with work. What feelings then were yours, Dido, at such a sight! Or what sighs did you utter, viewing from the top of the fortress the beach aglow far and near, and seeing before your eyes the whole sea astir with loud cries! O relentless Love, to what do you not drive the hearts of men.

The scene is a perfect example of the Vergilian sublime epic gaze, as well as of deviant focalization: as many interpreters have pointed out, the simile — which compares the bustling Trojans to ants — seems at first to be focalized by the Vergilian reader who gazes at the scene from a safe distance (*cernas*). However, it gains its full significance when the epic narrator asks Dido about her feelings when seeing (*cernenti*) the Trojans bustling on her shore. As the narrator informs us, Dido gazes at the scene from the top of her Carthaginian citadel. On the one hand, the view from citadel renders the ant simile realistic and marks Dido as the focalizer: i.e. when seen from the top of the citadel, the Trojans could literally appear as bustling ants. Meanwhile, from the safe distance of reading, they also appear as ants, only figuratively.[64] On the other hand, the citadel as a location combines Dido's tragic gaze with that of the Catullan Aegeus in intertextual terms (*Aen.* 4.410 '**prospiceres arce ex summa**', 'viewing from the top of the fortress', cf. Cat. 64.241 '**summa prospectum ex arce**', 'scanning the horizon from the acropolis' summit').[65] It is well known that Vergil's Dido is a successor of the Catullan Ariadne. But Dido's tragic gaze (repeated in 4.586–91) which leads to her suicide also makes her — as is confirmed by the spectacular intertextual connections — a kind of Vergilian successor of the Catullan Aegeus.[66] The scene is, like its Catullan predecessor, obviously a 'spectator-wreck with ship'. Dido the 'would-be Epicurean',[67] in spite of her false Lucretian wisdom and false external spectator position, finds no safe point from which she can gaze at the world.[68] When she sees the shore 'glowing' (409–10 'cum litora **feruere** late/prospiceres') — cf. Lucretius' legions on the Campus Martius imitating war (Lucr. 2.41 '**feruere** cum uideas', 'when you watch […] swarming') — and the sea

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[64] For interpretations of this kind, see Smith 2005: 112–13 (emphasis on visual perception); Reed 2007: 99–100 (emphasis on historical perspectives); Hardie 2009: 163 (emphasis on sublime visions); Lovatt 2013: 227–9 (emphasis on Dido's both disempowered and vengeful gaze).

[65] To name the third intertextual brother, I have to mention Laocoon and his penetrative gaze as analysed by Hardie 2009: 166–7. Laocoon comes from the top of the citadel (2.41 '**summa** decurrit **ab arce**', 'runs down from the citadel's height'), finds the *error* latent in the wooden horse (2.48 'aut aliquis latet error', 'or some trickery lurks inside'), addresses his fellow-citizens in a 'Lucretian didactic voice' (Hardie), but, in the end, falls victim to fate.

[66] Commentators usually do not notice the parallel between Aegeus and Dido. Lovatt 2013: 229 is perhaps an exception, but she arrives from Dido to Aegeus indirectly, i.e. via Valerius Flaccus.

[67] Hardie 2009: 163.

[68] 'Lucretius' removed viewer, one recalls, looks down from the *templa serena* (*DRN* 2.8), at a safe distance from danger. Now, upon Aeneas' departure, Dido similarly views Aeneas' men at a great distance, for they appear as ants. Yet Dido cannot achieve, through her vision, the state of *ataraxia* that Lucretius advocates. Instead, the distant view prepares Dido for suicide […]' (Smith 2005: 113).

'mingling' before her eyes because of the loud cries (411 '**misceri ante oculos** tantis clamoribus aequor') — cf. Lucretius' particles of dust illustrating the motion of atoms (Lucr. 2.113 '**ante oculos**', 2.117 '**misceri**')[69] — the synesthetic formulations[70] describing her gaze suggest that, in this tragic moment, she experiences the sublime: the different senses get intermingled, and Dido can grasp something from the perpetual 'whirl of atoms out of which everything that she observes is constituted, including herself'. In fact, Dido's self-destructive gaze — from a philosophical or aesthetic point of view — has much to do with sublime experience: she approaches the infinite, in both the outside and the inside world. As if Vergil, as an ancient forerunner of Hans Blumenberg or Phillip De Lacy, reminded us of the connection between the macroscopic and microscopic forms of 'distant view' in Lucretius' Book 2,[71] and combined them in the sublime vision of Dido.[72]

If the sublime gaze of the Carthaginian queen can be retrojected upon the Athenian king, then we may come to the following conclusions. From a Lucretian point of view, the Catullan Aegeus is an 'unsuccessful Epicurus' figure. He could benefit from all the conditions that make an Epicurus but he does not use his chance. Firstly, his city is the noble Athens. As for the strong relation between Athens and Epicurus, see Lucr. 6.2 and 5–6: 'Athenae […] genuere uirum tali cum corde repertum,/omnia **ueridico** qui quondam ex ore **profudit**' ('Athens […] gave birth to a man endowed with such great genius, whose lips once gave utterance to true pronouncements on every subject'; surprisingly, this is echoed in the Catullan depiction of the authentic Parcae: 64.306 '**ueridicos** … cantus', 321 '**fuderunt**'). Secondly, he is a father figure with rational instructions attempting to make a semiotic order in the world: think of both the mnemotechnical inscription of Theseus' mind with a Lucretian background[73] and the Lucretian-sounding formulation in Cat. 64.159 'prisci **praecepta parentis**' ('old-style father's merciless precepts', cf. Lucr. 3.9–10 'tu **pater** es, rerum inventor, tu **patria** nobis/ suppeditas **praecepta**', 'You are our father and the discoverer of truth: you supply us with fatherly precepts'). Thirdly, he had the chance to have an external spectator position, on the very Acropolis of Athens, from where — as from the Temple of the Wise — he could both gaze at the miserable *errantes* and enjoy a sublime spectacle of the universe. In Lucretian praises of Epicurus, the Athenian father of rational wisdom is described as a culture hero who, having transgressed the boundaries of the world (Lucr. 1.70–1), gifted us with the sublime vision of the mechanism of the universe, i.e. the motion of the atoms, including a vision of the gods: 3.17–18 'totum uideo per inane

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[69] Dido's vision is associated with the Lucretian spectacle of atoms by Hardie 2009: 163, though only in general terms and without hinting at intertextual signs through which Vergil unites Lucretius' macroscopic and microscopic visions in one spectator scene. Cf. Schroeder 2004: 153.

[70] *feruere*: sensing heat, *prospiceres* and *ante oculos*: visual perception, *clamoribus*: acoustic perception. Cf. Catrein 2003: 59–60. For ancient poetic synaesthesia in general, see also Butler and Purves 2013.

[71] cf. De Lacy 1964: 50. As he explains, the common feature of the two is the motif of military spectacle, cf., e.g., 'belli certamina magna' ('mighty clashes of warriors', Lucr. 2.5) and 'aeterno certamine' ('in ceaseless combat', 2.118, the latter describing the atomic motion). Ironically, macro- and micro-levels are already intertextually contaminated in the phrase 'it nigrum campis agmen' ('over the plain moves a black column', 4.404) which, according to Servius ad loc., is originally an Ennian phrase describing Carthaginian elephants attacking Roman territory. The opposition of future Carthaginian elephants vs. present Trojan (i.e. proto-Roman) ants, as Reed 2007: 99 points out, is here counterbalanced with the threatening parallel between Dido's death and Hannibal's attack. The sublime play with micro and macro, present and future, Trojan and Carthaginian suggests comedy and tragedy at the same time. As for the 'Lucretian' distance of the Vergilian narrator/reader from the events described in Book 4 of the *Aeneid*, see Schroeder 2004: 151 and Ferenczi 2010: 157.

[72] On the sublimity of Lucretian visions in Vergil see Hardie 2009: 154–6. On Lucretian sublime in general, see Porter 2007.

[73] See Lucr. 2.582 'conuenit et memori mandatum mente tenere' ('it is advisable to […] retain it in the depository of your memory') and its Catullan ramifications as mentioned in n. 60 above.

geri res./apparet diuum numen sedesque quietae' ('I see what happens throughout the whole void. Plainly visible are the gods in their majesty, and their calm realms').

Aegeus, like Dido, misses the opportunity to become a good Epicurean or 'Epicurus' himself. He does not exploit the possibilities implied in his external spectator position: his erroneous gaze, misreading the sea/coverlet as signifying a shipwreck, results in his own figurative shipwreck. But this is not only a failure, at least not from an aesthetic point of view. Aegeus' tragic gaze is both erroneous and sublime at the same time: from the Acropolis, he cannot see the *errantes* because he himself is *errans*, but he is simultaneously being gifted with a sublime vision which, however, overwhelms him and causes his death. Observing the scene of Aegeus' suicide before the background of the purple coverlet, the 'father of letters' is melting into the purple sea/writing/image which is in fact his own creation. In the framework of the Catullan spectator-wreck with ship, he gives himself over (244 'praecipitem sese')[74] to the whirl of atoms. This is what the palindrome 'uer**tice iecit**' (244) illustrates on the textual surface: viewer and viewed are uniting, the atoms of Aegeus are dissolving in the atomic texture — 'ocean of matter' ('pelagus materiae', Lucr. 2.550) — of the cosmos of Catullus 64. In that sense, we really experience a Lucretian/Blumenbergian shipwreck: 'When Lucretius resorts once again to the metaphor of distress at sea and of shipwreck, he accordingly speaks of his universe of randomly moving atoms as an ocean of matter (*pelagus materiae*), from which the forms of nature are thrown onto the beach of visible appearance, like the debris from a massive shipwreck (*quasi naufragiis magnis multisque coortis* [Lucr. 2.552]), as a warning to mortals of the perils of the sea. It is only because the supply of atoms is inexhaustible that the catastrophes of physical reality continue to be fruitful in forms and to allow the man standing on the shore of appearance to observe a certain regularity.'[75] Instead of the distinction (*cernens*, 236) and the recognition (*agnoscam*, 237) he rationally proposed (which are impossible if there is no *difference* which could constitute a sign), Aegeus, in his sublime annihilation, or, rather, identification with the object gazed at, becomes part of the Catullan texture constituted as a literal implementation of the Lucretian letter simile. The coverlet woven of letters, manifesting the experience of the cosmos woven of atoms, involves its *figura/spectator* in the texture of his or her own sensory illusions, where he or she, just like in a labyrinth, is doomed to suffer a sublime shipwreck on, and melt into, the textual ocean of matter.

V CONCLUSION

Thanks to the polemical tradition Lucretius is participating in, Lucretian allusions in Augustan poetic texts are almost necessarily embedded in polemical contexts, which implies the presence of reciprocal intertextuality. While Lucretian allusions 'subvert' a supposed ideological construction (e.g. in Vergil's case) or clear the ground for an aesthetically 'subversive' narrative (e.g. in Ovid's case), they, or their new context, also necessarily form an opinion (either 'correctively' or 'affirmatively') about the supposed message of the alluded passage. Furthermore, Augustan poets might have used Lucretian allusions in order to embody the 'anti-Lucretius' whose presence may have been felt in *DRN*.[76] The agonistic dialogue between Lucretius and later poets which emerges from this situation could be described in terms of reciprocal intertextuality, since we have the opportunity to reverse the direction in a Borgesian way, and imagine what happens when Lucretius is the 'alluding poet'. What happens if we read the phrase *regere*

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[74] On *praeceps* and the sublime, see Hardie 2009: 215–16.
[75] Blumenberg 1997 (1979): 27–8.
[76] cf. Hardie 1986: 233.

imperio in Lucretius,[77] forgetting that he is the previous author, and interpret it as a polemical allusion to Vergil?

The anachronistic question of reverse direction becomes a serious question in the case of Lucretius and Catullus. As I have emphasized in the introduction, I do agree with those who regard Catullus as responsible for the intertextual relationship between *De Rerum Natura* and Catullus 64. Since Catullus' allusions to Lucretius have been interpreted in this essay as predecessors of both Vergil's and Ovid's various Lucretian allusions, the term 'poetic interplay' becomes a figurative description of Catullus' use of Lucretian intertexts. It is as reciprocal as the Lucretian allusions of Vergil and Ovid are reciprocal in the sense I have characterized above. At the same time, the biographical fact that Catullus and Lucretius had the chance to know each other's work and reflect on it while they were composing, adds a kind of *effet de réel* to Catullus' Lucretian allusions which is obviously missing in the later cases. In this essay, in a way entirely independent from the historical question 'who is responsible for which echo', I have shown a possible way in which we can establish a proto-Augustan reciprocal reading of *DRN* and Catullus 64 in an intertextual space basically generated through the latter. Above, I have used Catullus 64 as a starting point and interpreted the intertextual relations from the Catullan perspective, but now I wish to show the reverse direction. In a nutshell, of course.

In Section II, we have seen how Catullus presents the scene in which the guests are entering the luxurious palace of Peleus in Lucretian terms. Handling *DRN* as the alluding text, we could argue that in his Book 2, Lucretius uses this scene of Catullus 64 as a deterrent example from which you can learn how dangerous it is to give yourself up to the pleasures of power and luxury, with special emphasis on gold, silver and purple coverlets. These things are sources of *error*, in its various senses, from which the future *sapiens* has to abstain. The Lucretian teacher would like to convince us that, instead of the texture of a purple coverlet, i.e. the source of sexual and aesthetic *errores* in Catullus, you should wonder at something else: the atomic texture of the universe, which is *uariata figuris* in a positive, unCatullan sense. This is the way in which the erroneous forms of aesthetic pleasure should be substituted by true philosophy: the latter endows the *sapiens* with a sublime gaze at the beauty of the structure of the universe, i.e. with a positive aesthetic experience as opposed to the negative one offered by Catullus.

In Section III, we have seen Ariadne as a kind of proto-Narcissus in the sense of 'Ovid's poetics of illusion'. We could argue that Lucretius, in his Book 3, uses the Catullan Ariadne as a deterrent example against the dreadful things, such as the fear of death and the grief of love, that demolish human life. The Ariadne figure is the perfect tool for Lucretius to visualize the banished person who, in her ultimate despair, gives up her surface rationality, and turns to infernal deities whose existence, in normal circumstances, she would deny. Ariadne, as both victim and product of illusion, functions here as a textbook example for how *not* to live your life: her erroneous gaze — which cannot be separated from the person gazed at since they are parts of the same 'purple coverlet' — is a counterpart of the way the Lucretian *sapiens* gazes at the universe.

In Section IV, we have seen Catullan and Vergilian scenes of 'spectator-wreck with ship'. From a Lucretian perspective, Aegeus as a kind of proto-Dido is a perfect example of how *not* to implement the famous opening scene of Book 2, where the *sapiens* (spectator) is looking at other people's misery (shipwreck) from an external spectator position and, accordingly, is being prepared both to reach the condition of tranquillity and marvel at the structure of the universe. Aegeus and Dido, in spite of all their surface similarity to Epicurus, use their seemingly external spectator positions — on the Acropolis and on the Carthaginian citadel, respectively — for a kind of self-destructive

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[77] cf. n. 7, above.

gaze. Instead of remaining indifferent about what they are gazing at, they are simply killing themselves. Their erroneous gazes are reversed variants of the — both macroscopic and microscopic — sublime gaze *à la* Lucretius.

I would like to emphasize again that the previous reasoning is a *Gedankenexperiment*. Although I do not want to exclude the historical possibility of Lucretius alluding to Catullus 64, it is the Catullan text which is responsible for the meanings that emerge from the above interpretations. At the same time, this does not demolish the reciprocal character of the intertextual relationship, since Lucretius is an 'active' participant of the poetic interplay, but only in the form constructed by Catullus. Moreover, this Catullus is a kind of Catullus who is partly constructed by his epic successors, not quite independently from the ways they construct their various Lucretiuses. This is also how, as I have shown, 'Lucretius' uses the erroneous gazes of 'Catullan' characters such as the guests/readers, Ariadne/Narcissus, and Aegeus/Dido as deterrent examples in order to teach us how *not* to submerge in the 'Catullan' poetics of illusion. Simultaneously, this is also the way in which 'Catullus' is using 'Lucretius' to show that the aesthetic experience he offers is dependent upon an erroneous, unLucretian gaze/reading which necessarily deprives us of the external spectator position. We have to turn into Lucretian *errantes* if we want to be good Catullan readers.

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