Panel Proposal CAAS 2017: New Aspects of Rhetorical Strategy in Lucretius

The importance of rhetorical strategies to *De Rerum Natura* (*DRN*) has not yet been fully investigated. Classen (1968) explored for the first time the importance of poetical strategies and rhetorical techniques in *DRN* (cf. Asmis 1983; Schiesaro 1990); since then, Lucretian rhetoric has not been an area of focus. Markovic's (2008) monograph explores the rhetorical use of argumentation in *DRN*, but attributes this to Epicurus. Particular sections of *DRN* have received extensive treatment as to their rhetorical strategy and effect (Wallach 1976; Reinhardt 2002), yet in general Lucretius' rhetoric is seldom appreciated as a *pervasive* feature of the poem. Lucretius' extensive use of rhetorical strategy compared to the relative absence of these features in other Latin poetry has not been emphasized.

This panel seeks to establish that many techniques, traditionally understood as 'didactic' or 'poetic', are based on the rhetorical tradition, and that rhetorical strategy extends throughout *DRN*. We also explore the closeness of the boundaries between rhetoric and didactic. We explore Lucretian rhetoric through close readings of passages which have not yet been studied in an explicitly rhetorical context.

Individual Abstracts:

The Multiple Interlocutors of the *De Rerum Natura*

The reader of *DRN* does not only receive Epicurean doctrine, but also *reacts* to it. Twice in Book 1 the voice of the addressee is heard in the form *inquis* ('you say', v.803, 897), suggestive of 'mutual intellectual respect and progressive learning' (Volk). The paper explores this tightening of the bond between teacher and reader.

One also sees a shift between Lucretius' addresses to a specific reader and his use of a generalising second person singular verb. The paper analyses examples of this phenomenon from Book 2's proem and Book 3's speech of Nature. The rhetorical weight of these passages has attracted a great deal of attention in the scholarship, yet they are underappreciated as didactic devices. These case studies illustrate the weakness of the boundaries between rhetorical and didactic strategy.

Rhetorical Repetition in Lucretius

It has long been noted that verbal repetitions pervade Lucretius' didactic-epic, *DRN*. Yet a consensus has not been reached as to their purpose and function, or even if they rightly belong in the text. Multi-linear repetitions are viewed as temporary stop-gaps which would have been removed had Lucretius lived long enough, or as later interpolations; shorter repetitions are deleted or ignored altogether.

The paper uses comparative analysis of the theoretical instruction of the rhetorical handbooks and Lucretian repetition to argue that this aspect of *DRN* finds its roots in the rhetorical-didactic tradition, and, far from a result of later insertions or the incomplete state of the poem, is part of a meaningful rhetorical strategy.

Where matter (really) matters. Lucretius and Metonymy

Imagery plays a decisive role in Lucretian didactics: through the visible the invisible can become visible and intelligible. Hereby, the importance of rhetorical devices like metaphors is often stressed. A trope which has not received much attention is metonymy. I shall ask therefore which role it plays for Lucretian imagery, firstly by giving a brief outline of how metonymy works and how its epistemological *nucleus* – the contiguity of its two referents – are linked to the premises of Epicurean atomism. Secondly, I aim to show that metonymy not only serves as a powerful rhetorical device but also possesses specific epistemological value for the *DRN*.

Analogy in Thucydides and Lucretius or: How to explain the causes of phenomena and historical events

Analogy is a commonplace in Greek philosophy. In the 'Archaeology' (1.1-23), Thucydides examines a vanished past, through signs (*semeia*) and analogical technique. He compares Greek historical events to the Peloponnesian War to understand its origin.

On the other hand, Lucretius often uses analogy as a rhetorical method of explanation: he accumulates examples, similes and metaphors to reveal causal links between different sorts of natural phenomena. However, this paper shows that, despite generic and stylistic differences, the analogical method reinforces the relationship between Thucydides and Lucretius, especially in a part of *DRN*'s early history of mankind (5.925-1457). The paper suggests that these lines can be read as a Lucretian 'Archaeology', written to discover the true reasons of the debasement and corruption of the contemporary age.

700 words

Select Bibliography:

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