

# 西方经典文论选读

*Selective Writings*  
*in Western Classical Literature* (英语CBI读本)  
(*Content-based English Reading*)



主编 张进 谭颖



WUHAN UNIVERSITY PRESS

武汉大学出版社

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# 前 言

哲学不应该是学院的奢侈品,它不是抽象、烦琐的教条,更不是漫无边际的高谈阔论。哲学是启迪人生智慧的学科。没有智慧的人是糊涂的、烦恼的、浮躁的、冲动的,而受过哲学熏陶的人是清醒的、宁静的、理性的、自足的。基于此,本书将西方文明史上最富影响力的12位思想家的哲学思考汇集成耐人寻味的哲学命题,以每一章的核心思想为主题,以哲学家的基本观点为铺垫,一步步引导学生进行相关主题的思辨和讨论。

本书力争剥去哲学深奥、艰涩的外衣,强调知识与语言的融合。阅读本书时,不仅应关注英语的综合语言技能训练,更要强调学科知识的掌握和思辨能力的培养,在两个层面上把西方哲学知识和英语学习有机结合起来。通过不同文化激发兴趣,拓展人文知识,培养综合素质和多元文化意识,在提高语言综合运用能力的同时,加强跨文化交际能力。

编 者

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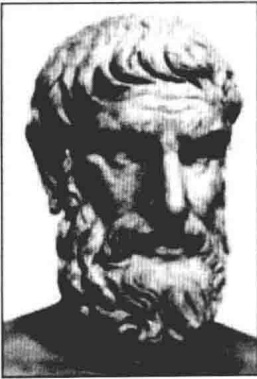
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# Chapter 1

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## Nothing Out of Nothing



Happy is he who has discovered the  
cause of things and has cast beneath his feet  
all fears, unavoidable fate, and the din of the  
devouring underworld.

—Virgil

### In this chapter

- ◆ Getting to know Titus Lucretius Carus
- ◆ Appreciating Lucretius' poem of *On the Nature of Things*
- ◆ Examining atomism

## 【Titus Lucretius Carus】

Titus Lucretius Carus (c. 99-55 B. C.)<sup>[1]</sup> was a Roman poet and philosopher. His only known work is the epic philosophical poem *De Rerum Natura* (*On the Nature of Things*<sup>[2]</sup> or *On the Nature of the Universe*) about the beliefs of Epicureanism<sup>[3]</sup>. Virtually nothing is known about the life of Lucretius. He was probably a member of the aristocratic family, and his work shows an intimate knowledge of the luxurious lifestyle in Rome. His love of the countryside invites speculation that he inhabited family-owned rural estates, as many wealthy Roman families did. And he was certainly expensively educated with mastery of Latin, Greek, literature, and philosophy.

*On the Nature of Things* has a considerable influence on the Augustan poets, particularly Virgil<sup>[4]</sup>. It also played an important role both in the development of atomism<sup>[5]</sup> and the efforts of various figures of the enlightenment era to construct a new Christian humanism.

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[1] Titus Lucretius Carus: 提图斯·卢克莱修·卡鲁斯, 罗马共和国末期的诗人和哲学家, 以哲理长诗《物性论》(*De Rerum Natura*) 著称于世。

[2] *On the Nature of Things*: 《物性论》, 是现存唯一系统阐述古希腊罗马的原子唯物论的著作。全书依据德谟克利特开创的原子唯物论, 以大量事例阐明了伊壁鸠鲁的学说, 批判了灵魂不死和灵魂轮回说及神创论。

[3] Epicureanism: 伊壁鸠鲁学派, 以伊壁鸠鲁的学说为基础, 拥护德谟克利特的理论, 认为最大的善是驱逐恐惧、追求快乐, 以达到一种宁静 (ataraxia) 且自由的状态, 并通过知识免除生理的痛苦 (aponia), 降低欲望。

[4] Virgil: 维吉尔 (公元前 70—前 19), 古罗马奥古斯都时期最重要的诗人。著有长诗《牧歌集》(*Eclogues*) 和史诗《埃涅阿斯纪》(*Aeneid*)。

[5] atomism: 源自古希腊语 “atomos”, 意为 “不可分割”。原子论者将自然世界理论化为由两个基本部分所组成, 即不可分割的原子和空无的虚空 (void)。

## 【Distinctive ideas】<sup>〔1〕</sup>

To the contemporary reader, the most astonishing thing about Lucretius' philosophy is that it is based on an atomic theory of physics. Certainly it's a marvel that a Roman poet writing around 50 B. C. who should understand the natural physical world as being the result of atomic interactions, but Lucretius was a follower of the Greek philosopher Epicurus, himself an inheritor of the atomic theories of Leucippus<sup>〔2〕</sup> and Democritus<sup>〔3〕</sup>, all of them believed that the basic unit of the material world was the atom—meaning “un-cuttable” in Greek.

Whereas our contemporary atomic theory is based on experimental evidence, the Greek and Roman philosophers arrived at their theories entirely through reason and speculation. Seeing the world as composed of complex structures built up by aggregates of simpler elements, those thinkers worked down to a theoretical solitary building block and down below that to nothingness. That's where Lucretius begins; there's the void and atoms falling endlessly through it, occasionally swerving to hit other atoms, and over time those atoms hook together to build up the material world we live in. Furthermore, the void is so large and atoms so numerous that other worlds have also arisen, many other worlds, in addition to our own.

And that is all there is to life, to this world, to the cosmos, to anything. Lucretius' materialistic vision was intended, he wrote, to rescue people from belief in the intervention of gods and the fear of death. Gods exist in *De Rerum Natura*, but they exist off at some distance, rather diaphanous beings<sup>〔4〕</sup>, with no interest in the world they didn't create and the humans who inhabit it. As for death, don't fear an after life, said Lucre-

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〔1〕 关注物质自身的运动,并认为宇宙是无限的,宇宙中有无数的世界在形成、发展与消灭。把古希腊伊壁鸠鲁的原子论系统化,认为物质的存在是永恒的,提出了“无物能由无中生,无物能归于无”的唯物主义观点。反对神创论,认为宇宙是无限的,有其自然发展的过程,人们只要懂得了自然现象发生的真正原因,宗教偏见便可消失。承认世界的可知性,认为感觉是事物流射出来的影像作用于人的感官的结果,是一切认识的基础和来源,驳斥了怀疑论。认为幸福在于摆脱对神和死亡的恐惧,得到精神的安宁和心情的恬静。

〔2〕 Leucippus:留基伯(约公元前500—约前440),古希腊唯物主义哲学家,率先提出万物由原子构成,是原子论的奠基人之一。

〔3〕 Democritus:德谟克利特(约公元前460—约前356),古希腊唯物主义哲学家,原子唯物论学说的创始人之一。

〔4〕 diaphanous beings:透明的存在物。



tius, you are only your constituent atoms and death merely frees those atoms to regroup, perhaps, in some other form.

## 【Introductory remarks】

*On the Nature of Things* consists of six books. Book 1, from which our excerpt is taken, demonstrates that nothing exists but infinity of atoms moving in infinity of void. Opening with a poem on the love of *Venus and Mars* (an allegory of the Roman peace), it ends up with an image of Epicurus as conqueror, throwing the javelin of war outside the finite universe of the geocentric astronomers; Book 2 proves the morality of all finite worlds; Book 3, after proving the morality of the human soul, ends up with a hymn on the theme that there is nothing to feel or fear in death. This discussion of sensation and thought in Book 4 leads to a diatribe<sup>[1]</sup> against the torments of sexual desire. The shape and contents of the visible world are discussed in Book 5, which ends up with an account of the origins of civilization. Book 6 is about the forces that govern meteorological, seismic, and related phenomena, ends up with a frightening picture of the plague of 429 B. C. at Athens<sup>[2]</sup>.

## 【Text】

### PROEM<sup>[3]</sup> (excerpt)

Mother of Rome, delight of Gods and men,  
Dear Venus<sup>[4]</sup> that beneath the gliding stars  
Makest to teem the many-voyaged main  
And fruitful lands—for all of living things  
Through thee alone are evermore conceived,

[1] diatribe: 长篇抨击; 长时间谩骂。

[2] 公元前 430 年, 雅典城内人口密集, 发生严重瘟疫, 大批居民死亡。

[3] 《物性论》的序诗。本文选自《物性论》第一部。

[4] Venus: 维纳斯, 古罗马神话故事中的园地与春之女神、爱神、美神, 同时又是掌管生育与航海的女神, 相当于希腊神话中的爱与美之女神阿芙洛狄特 (Aphrodite)。

Through thee are risen to visit the great sun—  
 Before thee, Goddess, and thy coming on,  
 Flee stormy wind and massy cloud away,  
 For thee the daedal Earth bears scented flowers<sup>[1]</sup>,  
 For thee waters of the unvexed deep  
 Smile, and the hollows of the serene sky  
 Glow with diffused radiance for thee!  
 For soon as comes the springtime face of day,  
 And procreant gales blow from the West unbarred<sup>[2]</sup>,  
 First fowls of air, smit to the heart by thee,  
 Foretoken thy approach, O thou Divine,  
 And leap the wild herds round the happy fields  
 Or swim the bounding torrents. Thus amain,  
 Seized with the spell<sup>[3]</sup>, all creatures follow thee  
 Whithersoever thou walkest forth to lead,  
 And thence through seas and mountains and swift streams,  
 Through leafy homes of birds and greening plains,  
 Kindling the lure of love in every breast,  
 Thou bringest the eternal generations forth,  
 Kind after kind. And since 'tis thou alone  
 Guidest the Cosmos, and without thee naught  
 Is risen to reach the shining shores of light,  
 Nor aught of joyful or of lovely born,  
 Thee do I crave co-partner in that verse<sup>[4]</sup>  
 Which I presume on Nature to compose  
 For Memmius<sup>[5]</sup> mine, whom thou hast willed to be  
 Peerless in every grace at every hour—  
 Wherefore indeed, Divine one, give my words  
 Immortal charm. Lull to a timely rest

[1] For thee the daedal Earth bears scented flower: 为了你, 巧妙的大地长出香花。

[2] And procreant gales blow from the West unbarred: 而养育万物的风也从西方无阻地吹来。

[3] Seized with the spell: 骤然为魅力所驱。

[4] Thee do I crave co-partner in that verse: 我渴求你和我合作这篇。

[5] Memmius: 明米佑 (Gaius Memmius, 约活动于公元前 1 世纪), 古罗马政治演说家, 文学与艺术的保护者, 卢克莱修将此长诗献给他。

O'er sea and land the savage works of war,  
 For thou alone hast power with public peace  
 To aid mortality; since he who rules  
 The savage works of battle, puissant Mars,  
 How often to thy bosom flings his strength  
 O'er-mastered by the eternal wound of love—  
 And there, with eyes and full throat backward thrown,  
 Gazing, my Goddess, open-mouthed at thee,  
 Pastures on love his greedy sight, his breath  
 Hanging upon thy lips. Him thus reclined  
 Fill with thy holy body, round, above!  
 Pour from those lips soft syllables to win  
 Peace for the Romans, glorious Lady, peace!  
 For in a season troublous to the state<sup>[1]</sup>  
 Neither may I attend this task of mine  
 With thought untroubled, nor mid such events  
 The illustrious scion of the Memmian house<sup>[2]</sup>  
 Neglect the civic cause.  
 Whilst human kind  
 Throughout the lands lay miserably crushed  
 Before all eyes beneath Religion—who  
 Would show her head along the region skies,  
 Glowering on mortals with her hideous face—  
 A Greek<sup>[3]</sup> it was who first opposing dared  
 Raise mortal eyes<sup>[4]</sup> that terror to withstand,  
 Whom nor the fame of Gods nor lightning's stroke  
 Nor threatening thunder of the ominous sky  
 Abashed; but rather chafed to angry zest  
 His dauntless heart to be the first to rend

[1] For in a season troublous to the state; 因为, 在国家多难的时日。这首诗创作期间, 恺撒正在高卢征战, 所谓“多难”, 是指他预想到的即将到来的内战风暴。

[2] The illustrious scion of the Memmian house; 光辉的明米佑家族后裔。illustrious; 出色的。scion; 后裔(尤指贵族的后裔)。

[3] Greek; 希腊人, 指伊壁鸠鲁。

[4] Raise mortal eyes; 抬起凡人的眼睛。

The crossbars at the gates of Nature old<sup>[1]</sup>.  
 And thus his will and hardy wisdom won;  
 And forward thus he fared afar, beyond  
 The flaming ramparts of the world<sup>[2]</sup>, until  
 He wandered the unmeasurable All.  
 Whence he to us, a conqueror, reports  
 What things can rise to being, what cannot,  
 And by what law to each its scope prescribed,  
 Its boundary stone<sup>[3]</sup> that clings so deep in Time.  
 Wherefore Religion now is under foot,  
 And us his victory now exalts to heaven.  
 I know how hard it is in Latian verse  
 To tell the dark discoveries of the Greeks,  
 Chiefly because our pauper-speech<sup>[4]</sup> must find  
 Strange terms to fit the strangeness of the thing;  
 Yet worth of thine and the expected joy  
 Of thy sweet friendship do persuade me on  
 To bear all toil and wake the clear nights through,  
 Seeking with what of words and what of song  
 I may at last most gloriously uncloud  
 For thee the light beyond, wherewith to view  
 The core of being at the centre hid.  
 And for the rest, summon to judgments true,  
 Unbusied ears and singleness of mind  
 Withdrawn from cares; lest these my gifts, arranged  
 For thee with eager service, thou disdain  
 Before thou comprehendest: since for thee

[1] The crossbars at the gates of Nature old: 那古老的自然之门的横木。crossbar: 门闩或门上的横木(此处比喻冲进自然里去发现它的秘密)。

[2] ramparts of the world: 世界的墙垒(卢克莱修把世界设想为一个圆球,它的外层是火热的以太的旋流。“这个世界”指我们这个世界,即宇宙中无数世界之一)。

[3] boundary stone: 永久不易的界碑,意即“深深埋入地里面去的界碑”。

[4] pauper-speech: 贫乏的文字。

I prove the supreme law of Gods and sky<sup>[1]</sup>,  
 And the primordial germs of things<sup>[2]</sup> unfold,  
 Whence Nature all creates, and multiplies  
 And fosters all, and whither she resolves  
 Each in the end when each is overthrown.  
 This ultimate stock we have devised to name  
 Procreant atoms, matter, seeds of things<sup>[3]</sup>,  
 Or primal bodies, as primal to the world.  
 I fear perhaps thou deemest that we fare  
 An impious road to realms of thought profane;  
 But 'tis that same religion oftener far  
 Hath bred the foul impieties of men:  
 As once at Aulis, the elected chiefs,  
 Foremost of heroes, Danaan counsellors<sup>[4]</sup>,  
 Defiled Diana's<sup>[5]</sup> altar, virgin queen,  
 With Agamemnon's daughter, foully slain.  
 She felt the chaplet round her maiden locks<sup>[6]</sup>  
 And fillets, fluttering down on either cheek,  
 And at the altar marked her grieving sire,  
 The priests beside him who concealed the knife,  
 And all the folk in tears at sight of her.  
 With a dumb terror and a sinking knee  
 She dropped; nor might avail her now that first  
 'T was she who gave the king a father's name.  
 They raised her up, they bore the trembling girl  
 On to the altar—hither led not now

[1] the supreme law of Gods and sky: 神和天的最高定律。所谓关于神的定律指证明神不干预人事的定律, 不是指神用来统治人的定律。

[2] primordial germs of things: 事物的始基, 指事物的最初起点, 即原子。事物的种子或原初物体。

[3] Procreant atoms, matter, seeds of things: 质料、事物的种子或原初物体。procreant: 有繁殖力的。

[4] As once at Aulis... Danaan counsellors: 一次在奥里斯, 那些公推的首领, 英雄中的英雄, 达拿亚的头目。此处故事出自尤里披底的悲剧。希腊神阿伽门农的女儿伊菲贞尼亚被带到奥里斯, 哄骗说让她和阿基里斯结婚, 其实是把她作为牺牲品来祭神。

[5] Diana: 戴安娜, 古罗马的狩猎和处女之神。

[6] She felt the chaplet round her maiden locks: 她察觉到她头发上的圈带(圈带是牺牲的象征)。

With solemn rites and hymeneal choir<sup>[1]</sup> ,  
 But sinless woman, sinfully foredone,  
 A parent felled her on her bridal day,  
 Making his child a sacrificial beast  
 To give the ships auspicious winds for Troy<sup>[2]</sup> ;  
 Such are the crimes to which Religion leads.  
 And there shall come the time when even thou,  
 Forced by the soothsayer's terror-tales<sup>[3]</sup> , shalt seek  
 To break from us. Ah, many a dream even now  
 Can they concoct to rout thy plans of life<sup>[4]</sup> ,  
 And trouble all thy fortunes with base fears.  
 I own with reason; for, if men but knew  
 Some fixed end to ills, they would be strong  
 By some device unconquered to withstand  
 Religions and the menacings of seers.  
 But now nor skill nor instrument is theirs,  
 Since men must dread eternal pains in death.  
 For what the soul may be they do not know,  
 Whether 'tis born, or enter in at birth,  
 And whether, snatched by death, it die with us,  
 Or visit the shadows and the vasty caves  
 Of Orcus<sup>[5]</sup> , or by some divine decree  
 Enter the brute herds, as our Ennius<sup>[6]</sup> sang,  
 Who first from lovely Helicon<sup>[7]</sup> brought down  
 A laurel wreath of bright perennial leaves,  
 Renowned forever among the Italian clans.

[1] With solemn rites and hymeneal choir: 庄严的仪式和婚礼的咏唱。

[2] To give the ships auspicious winds for Troy: 为远征特洛伊的舰队祈求顺风。auspicious: 吉利的, 幸运的。

[3] Forced by the soothsayer's terror-tales: 你会为巫卜的吓人鬼话所迫。

[4] Can they concoct to rout thy plans of life: 能让它们来破坏你的生活计划。concoct: 图谋; 捏造。rout: 击溃; 打垮。

[5] Orcus: 奥迦斯, 罗马的地狱(冥界)之神, 死神, 亦作冥府本身。

[6] Ennius: 恩尼乌斯(Quintus Ennius, 公元前239—前169), 罗马共和国时期的诗人、剧作家, 被认为是罗马早期拉丁语诗人和罗马文学奠基人。

[7] Helicon: 赫利孔山, 希腊南部高山, 希腊神话中司文艺的女神缪斯居住之地, 被视为诗的灵感源泉。

Yet Ennius too in everlasting verse  
 Proclaims those vaults of Acheron<sup>[1]</sup> to be,  
 Though thence, he said, nor souls nor bodies fare,  
 But only phantom figures, strangely wan,  
 And tells how once from out those regions rose  
 Old Homer's ghost<sup>[2]</sup> to him and shed salt tears  
 And with his words unfolded Nature's source.  
 Then be it ours with steady mind to clasp  
 The purport of the skies—the law behind  
 The wandering courses of the sun and moon;  
 To scan the powers that speed all life below;  
 But most to see with reasonable eyes  
 Of what the mind, of what the soul is made,  
 And what it is so terrible that breaks  
 On us asleep, or waking in disease,  
 Until we seem to mark and hear at hand  
 Dead men whose bones earth bosomed long ago.

### SUBSTANCE IS ETERNAL

This terror, then, this darkness of the mind,  
 Not sunrise with its flaring spokes of light,  
 Nor glittering arrows of morning can disperse,  
 But only Nature's aspect and her law,  
 Which, teaching us, hath this exordium<sup>[3]</sup>:  
 Nothing from nothing ever yet was born<sup>[4]</sup>.  
 Fear holds dominion over mortality  
 Only because, seeing in land and sky  
 So much the cause whereof no wise they know,  
 Men think Divinities are working there.  
 Meantime, when once we know from nothing still

[1] Acheron; 阿克戎河, 所谓的黄泉, 即地狱河。传说阿克戎河里面没水, 只有幽魂。

[2] Old Homer's ghost; 老荷马的鬼魂。荷马, 约公元前9世纪的希腊盲诗人。

[3] exordium; 事物的开端; 肇始。

[4] Nothing from nothing ever yet was born; 无物能由无中生。

Nothing can be create, we shall divine  
 More clearly what we seek: those elements  
 From which alone all things created are,  
 And how accomplished by no tool of Gods.  
 Suppose all sprang from all things: any kind  
 Might take its origin from any thing<sup>[1]</sup>,  
 No fixed seed required. Men from the sea  
 Might rise, and from the land the scaly breed,  
 And, fowl full fledged come bursting from the sky;  
 The horned cattle, the herds and all the wild  
 Would haunt with varying offspring tilth and waste<sup>[2]</sup>;  
 Nor would the same fruits keep their olden trees,  
 But each might grow from any stock or limb  
 By chance and change. Indeed, and were there not  
 For each its procreant atoms, could things have  
 Each its unalterable mother old?<sup>[3]</sup>  
 But, since produced from fixed seeds are all,  
 Each birth goes forth upon the shores of light<sup>[4]</sup>  
 From its own stuff, from its own primal bodies.  
 And all from all cannot become, because  
 In each resides a secret power its own.  
 Again, why see we lavished o'er the lands  
 At spring the rose, at summer heat the corn,  
 The vines that mellow when the autumn lures,  
 If not because the fixed seeds of things  
 At their own season must together stream,  
 And new creations only be revealed  
 When the due times arrive and pregnant earth  
 Safely may give unto the shores of light

[1] Suppose all sprang... its origin from any thing: 假如一切都可以从无中生有, 那任何东西就能从任何东西中产生。

[2] Would haunt with varying offspring tilth and waste: (牛、羊等牲畜以及一切猛兽) 就会漫山遍野到处乱跑。

[3] Each its unalterable mother old? 怎能每样东西都有它不变的老母亲?

[4] the shores of light: 光之岸, 即这个灿烂的世界。



Her tender progenies<sup>[1]</sup>? But if from naught  
Were their becoming, they would spring abroad  
Suddenly, unforeseen, in alien months,  
With no primordial germs, to be preserved  
From procreant unions at an adverse hour.  
Nor on the mingling of the living seeds  
Would space be needed for the growth of things  
Were life an increment of nothing; then  
The tiny babe forthwith would walk a man,  
And from the turf would leap a branching tree—  
Wonders unheard of; for, by Nature, each  
Slowly increases from its lawful seed,  
And through that increase shall conserve its kind<sup>[2]</sup>.  
Whence take the proof that things enlarge and feed  
From out their proper matter. Thus it comes  
That earth, without her seasons of fixed rains,  
Could bear no produce such as makes us glad,  
And whatsoever lives, if shut from food,  
Prolongs its kind and guards its life no more.  
Thus easier 'tis to hold that many things  
Have primal bodies in common (as we see  
The single letters common to many words)  
Than aught exists without its origins.  
Moreover, why should Nature not prepare  
Men of a bulk to ford the seas afoot,  
Or rend the mighty mountains with their hands,  
Or conquer Time with length of days<sup>[3]</sup>, if not  
Because for all begotten things abides  
The changeless stuff, and what from that may spring  
Is fixed forevermore? Lastly we see

[1] progenies: 子孙; 后裔; (动植物) 后代。

[2] And through that increase shall conserve its kind: 借长大而延续自己的种类。

[3] why should Nature not prepare... conquer Time with length of days: 为什么自然不能制备躯体巨大而能涉渡大海, 或以双手便能撕开山岭, 或活万岁而征服自然的人物呢?