

Venus and Mars - "Good" vs. "Evil"?

Post by "Joshua" of June 22, 2025 at 9:30 PM

Summary of the above:

- Lucretius poetically adopted for his own poem the Empedoclean struggle between the moral forces of [Love and Strife](#) [wikipedia]
 - However, in an atomistic understanding of Nature these forces are *not* moral. Through an endless process of combination and dissolution, the atoms form and reform all compound bodies.
 - Venus and Mars are complex figures in the poem.
 - Venus represents:
 - the formation of complex systems like our world.
 - the promise that pleasure is attainable even in a cosmos where 'destruction' nips at the heels of 'creation' - though of course matter is never actually created or destroyed
 - the mythical mother of the line of Aeneas, and therefore of the Roman people
 - the poet's Muse - a patron goddess appropriate for an Epicurean writing a philosophical poem
 - I'm thinking out loud here, so take this with a grain of salt: In Greek mythology, Aphrodite is a much more primordial being than the nine Muses - more ancient even than Zeus himself. She was born of the union between sea-foam and the discarded genitals of Ouranos - a daughter of the first order of divine beings. The Muses are the daughters of the second order (the Titans) on their mother's [Mnemosyne] side, and the third order (the Olympians) on their father's [Zeus himself]. She quite literally fell from heaven; 'Ouranos' is still the Greek word for 'sky' to this day.
 - Mars, less complex, represents:
 - Whole world systems hurtling into ruin
 - Death, pain, strife, war, disease (like the plague with which Lucretius ends his poem), and so on

I ought to have included John Tyndall's [Belfast Address](#) in the quoted passages above. Here it is;

Quote

Is there not a temptation to close to some extent with Lucretius, when he affirms that 'nature is seen to do all things spontaneously of herself without the meddling of the

gods?' or with Bruno, when he declares that Matter is not 'that mere empty capacity which philosophers have pictured her to be, but the universal mother who wrings forth all things as the fruit of her own womb?' Believing as I do in the continuity of Nature, I cannot stop abruptly where our microscopes cease to be of use. Here the vision of the mind authoritatively supplements the vision of the eye. By an intellectual necessity I cross the boundary of the experimental evidence, and discern in that Matter which we, in our ignorance of its latent powers, and notwithstanding our professed reverence for its Creator, have hitherto covered with opprobrium, the promise and potency of all terrestrial Life.