

Topical Outline of Lucretius

Post by “Cassius” of August 28, 2023 at 5:03 PM

I frequently find it frustrating how hard I find it to locate material in Lucretius, and after many years of reading I still don't have a good fix in my mind as to what might be the "theme" of each of the six books.

This past weekend I went through Lucretius again and put together a "topical outline" to try to make it easier to locate sections. That's now here:

[Lucretius - Editions And Topical Outline](#)

And I will see if I can't figure out additional formats to make this easier to reference. As it is, I have keyed this outline to the line numbers of the text in the most recent Loeb edition of Lucretius. That means that these line numbers won't match exactly with all of the texts, but they ought to be usable as a "finding aid" to at least get you in the ballpark of where the material occurs.

I've inserted headings that seem appropriate to make the text easier to find, and also drawn up a synopsis of each section as another level of outline. I am sure I will revise this many times but this is how it stands as of now. I see Lucretius as being over the last 2000 years the writer with the most intelligence, talent, creativity, available time, and available resources (both texts and teachers) to devote to the task of explaining Epicurean philosophy. I think his choice of topics and organization, which is presumably based on that of Epicurus himself, deserves a lot of deference in the way we present things here at EpicureanFriends.

Clicking on this outline below will take you over to the relevant section of the Lexicon page. Keep in mind that clicking the link then takes you to my larger synopsis / paraphrased version. From there you can find the approximate line number and then trace that back to the original in one of the Lucretius versions that we also have here, such as [Bailey](#) or [Munro](#).

- [2. Lucretius Topical Outline](#)
 - [2.1. Book I - Basics of Atomic Theory - All Things In the Universe Are Natural And Composed of Atoms And Void](#)
 - [2.1.1. Venus / Nature / Pleasure As Motivator of All Life](#)
 - [2.1.2. Epicurus Was a Liberating Conqueror Over False Religion](#)
 - [2.1.3. Nothing Comes From Nothing](#)
 - [2.1.4. Nothing Goes To Nothing](#)
 - [2.1.5. The Atoms Are Invisible](#)
 - [2.1.6. In Addition to Atoms There is Also The Void](#)
 - [2.1.7. Nothing Exists At The Elemental Level Other than Atoms And Void](#)

- [2.1.8. The Properties of the Atoms And the Qualities of Bodies](#)
 - [2.1.9. There is a Limit to Divisibility](#)
 - [2.1.10. The Eternal Atoms Produce the Continuity of Nature](#)
 - [2.1.11. The Error Of Thinking All Things Are Made of Fire, Earth, Air, or Water](#)
 - [2.1.12. The Universe is Infinite In Extent](#)
 - [2.1.13. The Universe Has No Center](#)
- [2.2. Book II - All Things Born of Atoms Will Grow And Die According to Nature](#)
 - [2.2.1. It Is Pleasurable to Understand the Nature of the Universe And Not To Suffer Fears and Anxieties Caused By Errors](#)
 - [2.2.2. The Motion of the Atoms](#)
 - [2.2.3. The Swerve of the Atom Breaks The Grip of Fate](#)
 - [2.2.4. The Shapes of the Atoms](#)
 - [2.2.5. The Limited Number of Shapes](#)
 - [2.2.6. All Things Contain Diverse Shapes of Atoms](#)
 - [2.2.7. There Are Limits To The Ways Atoms Can Be Combined](#)
 - [2.2.8. The Atoms Have No Color](#)
 - [2.2.9. The Atoms Do Not Possess Sense Or Life](#)
 - [2.2.10. There Are Many Worlds In The Universe With Life In Them Like Ours](#)
 - [2.2.11. Nature Has No Supernatural Gods Over Her](#)
- [2.3. Book III - The Human Mind And Soul Die With the Body](#)
 - [2.3.1. Epicurus As Pioneer Whom We Emulate](#)
 - [2.3.2. Rejection of the "Harmony" Theory](#)
 - [2.3.3. The Material Nature of Mind And Soul](#)
 - [2.3.4. The Mind and Soul and Body Are Born and Grow and Die Together](#)
 - [2.3.5. Death is Nothing To Us](#)
 - [2.3.6. What Nature Would Say To Us About Loss of Life](#)
- [2.4. Book IV - The Flow of Atoms And The Senses Are the Basis of Human Knowledge, And Reason Can Overcome Dangers Such As The Intoxication Of Romance](#)
 - [2.4.1. This Philosophy Frees The Mind from The Bondage of Religion And Brings Health](#)
 - [2.4.2. The Nature of Images](#)
 - [2.4.3. The Nature of Illusions](#)
 - [2.4.4. The Mind, Not the Senses, Bring About False Judgments](#)
 - [2.4.5. It Is Nonsense To Say That Nothing Is Knowable](#)
 - [2.4.6. The Role of the Senses In Truth](#)
 - [2.4.7. Reasoning Depends on The Senses](#)
 - [2.4.8. The Nature of Sound](#)
 - [2.4.9. The Nature of Taste](#)
 - [2.4.10. The Nature of The Images That Directly Strike the Mind](#)
 - [2.4.11. The Faculties Of The Body Were Not Created For Our Use But Were Born First Before Their Use Was Known](#)
 - [2.4.12. The Mind's Direction of The Body](#)

- [2.4.13. The Nature of Sleep And Dreams](#)
 - [2.4.14. The Nature of Sexual Attraction And its Dangers](#)
- [2.5. Book V - The World The Earth, Sky, Sun, Stars Are Not Divine But Mortal, and All Will One Day Pass Away](#)
 - [2.5.1. Epicurus Was Godlike](#)
 - [2.5.2. The World Is Mortal and Will One Day Pass Away](#)
 - [2.5.3. The World Was Not Made For Men By The Gods](#)
 - [2.5.4. The World Is Young And Not Immortal](#)
 - [2.5.5. The Formation of the World](#)
 - [2.5.6. The Sun And Moon And Stars Are the Sizes They Appear To Be](#)
 - [2.5.7. The Movement of The Sun and Moon](#)
 - [2.5.8. The Earth As Mother](#)
 - [2.5.9. The Limitations On What Can Be Born](#)
 - [2.5.10. Life Of Early Humans](#)
 - [2.5.11. Language Was Developed Naturally](#)
 - [2.5.12. Development of Human Society](#)
 - [2.5.13. The Causes of The Rise of Religion](#)
 - [2.5.14. Development of Technology And Human Progress](#)
- [2.6. Book VI - Storms And Other Mysterious Or Harmful Events Are Caused Not By Gods But Atoms](#)
 - [2.6.1. Epicurus' Achievement in Diagnosing The Disease And Identifying The Cure](#)
 - [2.6.2. The True Nature of Storms](#)
 - [2.6.3. Foolishness of Believing That The Gods Hurl Thunderbolts](#)
 - [2.6.4. Tempests](#)
 - [2.6.5. Earthquakes](#)
 - [2.6.6. Floods and The Water Cycle](#)
 - [2.6.7. Volcanoes](#)
 - [2.6.8. The Reversing Flow of the Nile](#)
 - [2.6.9. Deadly Fumes](#)
 - [2.6.10. Mysterious Fountains](#)
 - [2.6.11. The Nature of Magnets](#)
 - [2.6.12. The Natural Basis of Plagues](#)