

Was Shakespeare an Epicurean?

Post by “Eikadistes” of January 11, 2024 at 11:50 AM

Yes, yes, yes, yes, **yes!**

I am not sure if he would be identified as "Epicurean", but I am absolutely **convinced** that Shakespeare was very familiar with Lucretius *De Rerum Natura*, and, given the time period, he **must** have owned one of a privileged number of copies that would have been available at the time.

You nailed the quote from *King Lear* (I include it in *the Hedonicon*). He contradicts Christian creation *ex nihilo* a few times.

In *Romeo and Juliet*, there are more than a few references to "atomi".

Shakespeare explicitly steals a few lines of Lucretius in *Othello*, when describing the Pontic Sea.

Those are just a few references, off of the top of my head. I include more in *the Hedonicon* because, parallel to my interest in philosophy, I spent the better part of a decade as a theatrical performer, and part of my education is in Shakespeare, so having done a number of shows, I am particularly attuned to recognize Shakespearean references, and, as I read Lucretius, I realized that Shakespeare must have been more than a passing fan.

Awesome find, [Cyrano](#) !

(Also, in another thread, we should explore the Lucretian influences on *Cyrano de Bergerac*, whom I think qualifies as an Epicurean).