

# The "Daily" Lucretian

Post by "Cassius" of October 8, 2019 at 8:49 AM

I need to finish the transcription of the 1743 Edition, so I am going to try to discipline myself to work on it daily to get through it. At present I am nearing the end of Book 2, so I think I will post the progress I make daily, and that may serve as a sort of daily "reading."

**October 8: Book 2, Approx Line 770 - Lucretius is discussing the relationship between the properties of atoms and the qualities / events of the bodies which they compose, and he is pointing out how color is such an example:**

That seeds may be void of color I have shown; I shall now prove that they actually are so. Now every color may be changed one into another; but the principles of things will by no means in admit of change, there necessarily must be something that remains immutable, lest all things should be utterly reduced to nothing; for whatsoever is changed, and breaks the bounds of its first nature, instantly dies, and is no more what first it was. Be cautious therefore, how you stain the seeds of things with color, lest all things should recur to nothing, and be utterly destroyed.

Besides, though Nature bestows no color upon seeds, yet they are endued with different figures, from which they form and vary the colors of every kind which show upon them. (For it is of great concern what seeds unite with others, and what positions they are preserved, and what motions they give and receive among themselves;) and thus you may readily account why things that just before appeared black, should suddenly look white. As the sea, when the rough winds enrage the waters, grows white with foaming waves. So you may say of what commonly appears black to us, when the seeds of which it is formed are mingled, and their order changed, when some new seeds are added, and some old ones are removed, the direct consequence is that its color is changed, and appears white. But if the water of the sea consisted essentially of blue particles, it could by no means change into a white color. Disturb the order of the seeds how you would, the principles that are blue would never pass into a white.

But if you say that the seeds which make the sea look of one uniform white are stained with different colors, as a perfect square that is one figure, is made up of several bodies that are of several figures, then it would follow that, as we perfectly see that dissimilar figures which the square contains within it, so we might discover in the water of the sea, or in any other body of one simple color, the mixed and different colors from which that simple color proceeds.

Besides, the dissimilar figures that go to make up a square do by no means hinder that the surface of the body should appear square, but a mixed variety of colors will forever prevent that the surface of any body should appear of one fixed and uniform color.

And then the very reason that would incline us sometimes to impute colors to seeds is by this means destroyed, or, in this case, white Bodies are not produced from white, or black from black, but from seeds of various colors. Now a white would much sooner proceed from seeds of no color at all, then from such as are black, or any other opposite color whatsoever.

Besides, since colors cannot appear without light, and since the seeds of things cannot appear in the light, you may thence conclude that they are covered with no colors at all. For how can any color show itself in the dark, which surround in the light itself, as it is differently struck either with a direct or oblique ray of light? After this manner, the plumes of doves, which grow about their neck, and are an ornament to it, show themselves in the sun. In one position they appear red like a fiery carbuncle, in another light, the greenness of the emerald is mixed with a sky blue. So, likewise, the tail of the peacock, all filled with light, changes its colors, as the rays strike directly or obliquely upon it. Since therefore colors are produced only by the strokes of light, we cannot suppose that they can possibly exist without it.

And since the eye receives within itself one sort of stroke with when it is said to perceive a white Color, and another contrary one, when it views an object of a black or any other color, and since it is of no moment by what color any thing you touch is distinguished, but rather of what peculiar shape and figure it is, you may conclude there is no manner of occasion that seeds should be stained with any colors, but that they should cause that variety of touch by the various figures with which they are imbued.

Besides, since there are no certain colors peculiar to certain figures, and since seeds of any figure may be of any color, whence is it that bodies that consist of such seeds are not in there several kinds imbued with all sorts of colors? It would be common to see crows, as they fly about, cast a white color from their white feathers, and black swans might be produced from black seeds, or be of any other one or more colors, as there seeds chance to be distinguished.

Further, the more any body is broken into small parts, the more you may perceive its color languishes by degrees, and dies away. This is the case of gold, when it is divided into thin shavings, its luster is extinguished, and the purple guy, by much the richest, when it is drawn out thread by thread, is quite lost. Hence you may infer that the particles of bodies discharge themselves of all color before they come to be as small as seeds.

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**Post by “Todd” of October 8, 2019 at 9:34 AM**

I really like this daily reading idea!

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**Post by “Cassius” of October 8, 2019 at 10:22 AM**

Yes Lucretius can seem like a wall of text, especially when deep in the weeds of the atoms. I think it helps a lot to keep the full context in mind as digesting small pieces.

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**Post by “Cassius” of October 9, 2019 at 8:39 AM**



## Mankind's Place In the Universe

Now, I should be glad to know - since, without the walls of this world, the visible heavens - there lies an infinite space, what is contained there. This the Mind desires eagerly to search into, and, by its own vigor, to range over freely, and without obstruction.

And first, since there is no bound space in any part of it, on no side of it, neither above or below it, as I have proved, and the thing itself proclaims it, and the very nature of space confirms it; we are not to suppose, (since this space is infinitely extended every way, and the seeds innumerable fly about this mighty void in various manners, urged on by an eternal motion) that this one globe of Earth, and the visible heavens only, were created, and that so many seeds of matter that lie beyond do nothing; especially since this world was made naturally, and without design, and the seeds of things of their own accord, jostling together by variety of motions, rashly sometimes, in vain often, and to no purpose, at length suddenly agreed and united, and became the beginning of mighty productions, of the Earth, the Sea, and the Heavens, and the whole animal creation. Wherefore, it needs must be allowed, there were in many other places agreements and unions of the seeds of the same nature with this world of ours, surrounded as it is with the fast embraces of the heavens above.

Besides, since there is a large stock of matter already, and a place suitable, nor is there anything or cause to hinder and delay, things must necessarily be produced, and come into being. Now, since there is so great a plenty of seeds, that all the ages of men would not be sufficient to number them, and the same power, the same nature remains, that can dispose the seeds of things in any other place, by the same rule as that united in this world of ours, we must needs confess, that there are other worlds in other parts of the universe, possessed by other kinds of inhabitants, both of men and beasts.

Add to this, that in the universe there is no species that has but one of a sort, that is produced alone, that remain single, and grows up by itself; but whatever species things are of, there are many more individuals of the same kind. This you may observe in the animal creation, this you will find to be the state of the wild beasts, of the human race, of the silent fish, and the whole brood of birds. By the same reason you must own, that the heavens, the Earth, the Sun, the moon, the Sea, and all other beings that are, do not exist singly, but are rather innumerable in their kind; for every one of these have a proper limit fixed to their beings, and are equally bound by the general laws of nature, with all those whose species include a numerous train of individuals under them.

- Lucretius Book Two, line 1080

That graphic came at the end of my typing for today. Here's more of the context:

Again, since you allow that all bodies do not emit sound and smell, and not attribute sound and smell to every body; so, since we cannot discover every thing by our eyes, you may conclude there are some bodies as much void of color, as there are others without smell or sound; and a judicious mind can properly form a notion of such bodies void of color, as it can of others that are without smell or sound, or any other qualities whatsoever.

But lest you should conceive the first seeds are void only of color, you must know that they are without warmth, are altogether free from cold or heat, they emit no sound, are without moisture, nor do they send out any smell from their several bodies; so when you propose to compound a pleasant ointment of sweet marjoram, myrrh, and flowers of spikenard, that send out the richest odor up to the nose, the first thing you are to do is to choose, as far as it lies in your power, an oil that has no smell, that it may, as little as possible, infect and corrupt those few sweet ingredients, being mixed and digested with them, with its native rankness.

Lastly, the seeds do not bestow any smell upon the bodies they produce, nor any sound, for they can exhale nothing from themselves; and, for the same reason, they can communicate no taste, nor cold, nor any vapor hot or warm. You must separate all qualities from the seeds that render them liable to dissolution, such as viscous, brittle, hollow, which proceeded from qualities that are soft, putrid, and rare, the seeds must have nothing of these properties if you would fix them upon an eternal foundation, upon which alone depends the security of beings, lest all things should fall to nothing, and perish beyond recovery.

Now farther, those beings we see indued with sense, you must needs own are produced from insensible seeds; nor is there anything we perceive by common experience, which refutes or opposes this opinion. Everything rather leads us on, and compels us to believe that animals, I say, proceed from principles that are void of sense; for we observe living worms come into being from stinking dung, when the earth, moistened by unseasonable showers, grows putrid and rotten.

Besides, beings of all kinds undergo continual changes; the waters, the leaves, and the sweet grass turn themselves into beasts; the beasts convert their nature into human bodies; and the bodies of wild beasts and birds increase and grow strong by these bodies of ours. Nature therefore changes all sorts of food into living bodies; and hence she forms the senses of all creatures, much after the same manner as she quickens dry wood into fire, and sets everything in a blaze. You see now it is of the utmost importance in what order these first seeds are ranged, and, when mingled together, what motions they give, and receive among themselves.

But tell me, what is it that lays a force upon your mind? What moves you? What drives you into another opinion, that you should not believe a thing sensible can be formed from insensible

seeds? Perhaps you observe that stones, and wood, and earth, when mingled together, can produce no creature indued with sense; but you will do well to remember, upon this occasion, that I did not say things sensible, or sense, could instantly proceed from all seeds in general, which go to the production of beings, but that it was of great consequence of what size the seeds are that created a being of sense, with what figures, motions, order, and position they are distinguished. Nothing of which we observe in wood, or clods of Earth. Yet these, when they are made rotten by moisture, produce worms, because the particles of matter, being changed from their former course by some new cause, are so united and disposed, that living creatures are formed, and creep into being.

Besides, those who contend that a sensible being may be raised from sensible seeds, (and this you are taught by some philosophers), must needs allow those seeds to be soft; for all sense is joined to bowels, nerves, and veins, all which, we know, are soft, and consequently liable to change and dissolution.

But grant their seeds to be eternal, yet if they are sensible, each seed must be endued with sense, either as a part or a whole, and be like a complete animal of itself; but no single part can perceive or exist of itself, for each part requires a union with the other parts, to make it capable of sense, nor can the hand feel any more, or any other part retain its sense, when separated from the body. These seeds therefore must be perfect animals, and so unite together in a vital sensibility; but how then can be seeds be said to be eternal, and secure from death, when they have the nature of animals, and are one and the same with them in all respects, and therefore are mortal, and must die?

But allow these seeds to be sensible and Incorruptible too, yet, by their union and agreement, they can produce nothing but animals and things sensible; that is, mankind, and cattle, and wild beasts, can produce nothing but men, and cattle, and wild beasts. (How then could things insensible, such as trees, metals, have a being?)

If you say these seeds, in mingling together, lose their own proper sense, and assume another, what need you impute any sense at all to them, when they must lose it again? Besides, as we have proved before, since we perceive the eggs of birds are changing into living young, and that worms break out of the earth, when it is made rotten by unseasonable showers, we may conclude, that things sensible may arise from insensible seeds.

If anyone will assert here that sense indeed may proceed from insensible seeds, by sort of change made in the seeds, by virtue of the thing that generates, before the animal is formed, it will be sufficient plainly to show him, that no animal can be formed but by a union, first of the seeds, nor can anything be changed but by agreement of the seeds, so that there can be no such thing as sense in any body before the animal is completely formed. And for this reason: because the seeds lie scattered in the air, the water, the earth, the fire, nor have they yet united together, after a proper manner, into any vital motions by which the senses of any animal may be produced, in order to guide and preserve it.

Besides, a blow falling upon any animal, heavier than its nature can endure, immediately torments it, and confounds all its senses both of body and mind; for the connection of the seeds is dissolved, and the vital motions are wholly obstructed, till the force of the blow being agitated violently through the limbs dissolves the vital ties of the soul from the body, and compels her, scattered and broken to pieces, to fly out through every pore. For what can we conceive to be the effect of such a stroke but to separate and dissolve the seeds that were united before?

And then it happens, when the blow falls with less violence, that the remains of vital motion often get the better, they recover and calm the great disorders of the blow, and recall everything again into its proper channel. They rescue the body, as it were, from the jaws of death, and give new life to the senses that were almost destroyed; else why should creatures rather return to life from the very gates of death with new spirits, than when they were just entering in, proceed on, and utterly perish?

Further, since we feel pain when the seeds are shaken from their natural state and situation within, and are disordered through all the bowels and limbs by any outward force, and when they return again into their proper place, a quiet pleasure immediately succeeds, you may conclude that simple seeds cannot be tormented with pain, nor of themselves be affected with pleasure; because they do not consist of principles or other seeds by whose violent motions they may be disturbed, or be delighted with any pleasure they can give; and therefore they cannot possibly be endued with any sense at all.

Again, if in order to produce creatures with sense, sense must be imputed to the seeds from which they are formed, of what principles, I pray, is the human race properly composed? Of such, no doubt, as laugh, and shake their little sides, such as bedew their face and cheeks with flowing tears, such as can widely talk how things are mixed, and such as search of what first principles themselves are formed; For all things that enjoy the faculties of perfect animals must consist of other seeds like them, and these must arise from others, and thus the progression would be infinite. I urge further, whatever you observe to speak, to laugh, to be wise, must proceed from other seeds that can perform the same; but if this be ridiculous and downright madness, and things that can laugh can spring from seeds that never smile, and the wise, that learnedly dispute, are produced from foolish seeds and stupid, what hinders that sensible things may not as well be formed from seeds without any matter of sense at all?

Lastly, we all spring from ethereal seed; we have all one common parent, when the kind Earth, our mother, receives the quickening drops of moisture from above, she conceives us and brings forth shining fruits, and pleasant trees, the human race, and all the race of beasts, she yields them proper food on which they feed, and lead a pleasant life, and propagate their kind, and therefore has she justly gained the name of mother. The parts that first from Earth arose return to Earth again; what descended from the sky, those parts brought back again that heavens receive; nor does death so put an end to beings as to destroy the very seeds of them, but only disunites them, then makes new combinations, and is the cause that all things vary their forms,

and change their colors, become sensible, and in a moment lose all their sense again. You may know from hence of what importance it is, with what the first seeds of things are united, and in what position they are contained, and what are the several motions they give and take among themselves. And from hence you may conclude that these first seed are not the less eternal, because you perceive them floating, as it were, upon the surface of bodies, and subject to be born, and die. It is of like concern with what the several letters are joined in these verses of mine, and in what order each of them is disposed; for the same letters make up the words to signify the heaven, the sea, the Earth, the rivers, the sun; the same express the fruits, the trees, the creatures; if they are not all, yet by much the greater part are alike, but they differ in their situation. So, likewise, in bodies, when the intervals of the seeds, their courses, connections, weights, strokes, union, motions, order, position, figure; when these things are changed, the things themselves must be changed likewise.

Now apply your mind closely to the documents of true reason, for a new scheme of philosophy presses earnestly for your attention, a new scene of things displays itself before you. Yet there is nothing so obvious but may at first view seem difficult to be believed, and there is nothing so prodigious and wonderful at first that men do not by degrees cease to admire. For see the bright and pure color of the sky, possessed on every side by wandering stars, and the Moon's splendor, and the Sun's glorious light; these, if they now first shown to mortal eyes, and suddenly presented to our view, what could more wonderful appear than these? And what before could men less presume to expect?

Nothing surely, so surprising would be the sight have been. But now, quite tired and cloyed with the prospect, none of us vouchsafes so much as to cast our eyes up towards the bright temples of the sky. Therefore do not be frightened, and conceive an aversion to an opinion because of its novelty; but search it rather with a more piercing judgment. If it appears true to you, embrace it; if false, set yourself against it.

Now, I should be glad to know, since, without the walls of this world, the visible heavens, there lies an infinite space, what is contained there. This the Mind desires eagerly to search into, and, by its own vigor, to range over freely, and without obstruction.

And first, since there is no bound to space in any part of it, on no side of it, neither above or below it, as I have proved, and the thing itself proclaims it, and the very nature of space confirms it; we are not to suppose, (since this space is infinitely extended every way, and the seeds innumerable fly about this mighty void in various manners, urged on by an eternal motion) that this one globe of Earth, and the visible heavens only, were created, and that so many seeds of matter that lie beyond do nothing; especially since this world was made naturally, and without design, and the seeds of things of their own accord, jostling together by variety of motions, rashly sometimes, in vain often, and to no purpose, at length suddenly agreed and united, and became the beginning of mighty productions, of the Earth, the Sea, and the Heavens, and the whole animal creation. Wherefore, it needs must be allowed, there were in many other places agreements and unions of the seeds of the same nature with this world of

ours, surrounded as it is with the fast embraces of the heavens above.

Besides, since there is a large stock of matter already, and a place suitable, nor is there anything or cause to hinder and delay, things must necessarily be produced, and come into being. Now, since there is so great a plenty of seeds, that all the ages of men would not be sufficient to number them, and the same power, the same nature remains, that can dispose the seeds of things in any other place, by the same rule as that united in this world of ours, we must needs confess, that there are other worlds in other parts of the universe, possessed by other kinds of inhabitants, both of men and beasts.

Add to this, that in the universe there is no species that has but one of a sort, that is produced alone, that remain single, and grows up by itself; but whatever species things are of, there are many more individuals of the same kind. This you may observe in the animal creation, this you will find to be the state of the wild beasts, of the human race, of the silent fish, and the whole brood of birds. By the same reason you must own, that the heavens, the Earth, the Sun, the moon, the Sea, and all other beings that are, do not exist singly, but are rather innumerable in their kind; for every one of these have a proper limit fixed to their beings, and are equally bound by the general laws of nature, with all those whose species include a numerous train of individuals under them.

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## **Post by “Cassius” of October 10, 2019 at 7:09 AM**

Thursday October 10, 2019:

These things, if you rightly apprehend, Nature will appear free in her operations, wholly from under the power of domineering deities, and to act all things voluntarily, and of herself, without the assistance of gods. For Oh - the undisturbed bosoms of the powers above, blessed with sacred peace! How they live in everlasting ease, a life void of care! Who can rule this infinite Universe? Who has the power to hold the mighty reigns of government in his hands over this whole mass? Who likewise can turn about all these heavens? And cherish all these fruitful globes of Earth with celestial heat? Who can be present at all times, and in all places? To darken the world with clouds, to shake the vast expansion of the serene heavens with noise; to dart the thunder, and often overturn his own temples, to fly into the wilderness, and furiously brandish that fiery bolt, which often passes by the guilty, and strikes dead the innocent and undeserving?

Besides, after this world was formed, and the birthday of the Sea, the Earth, and the Sun was over, there were many particles of matter added to them from without, many seeds were received every way, which the infinite mass of universe constantly discharged; from whence

the Sea and the Earth grew more strong and vigorous; from when the mansions of the heavens were enlarged, and raised their lofty arches higher from the Earth, and new air was produced. For from all the parts of the universe the proper seeds are distributed, and retire severally in all places to their proper kinds; the watery to the water, the Earth increases by earthy particles, the fiery produce fire, the airy air, til Nature, the parent and perfectress of all things, improves all beings to the utmost extent of growth they are capable of. This comes to pass, when no more is received into the vital passages, than what is perspired, and flies off; then it is that the growth of the creature is at a full stand, and nature restrains it from further increase.

For whatever creature you observe to thrive and grow lively and large, and by degrees climb up to a mature age, receives more particles into itself than it emits, because all the nourishment is easily distributed into the veins, and there confined, and the particles are not so widely scattered as in any proportion to fly off, and so receive a loss faster than they are supplied. For we must allow that many particles certainly fly off from bodies, but many others ought to be coming on, til the thing arrives to its utmost pitch of bulk. Then, by degrees, its strength and maturity of vigor decays, its age melts away and dissolves; for the larger any body is, the greater it is in size, when its growth is over, it wastes the more every way, and sends out more particles from itself; nor is the nourishment easily distributed into the veins, or nature sufficient to renew and supply those effluvia it throws off in such abundance, in proportion as the defect and the loss require. The animal therefore must necessarily perish when it is made thin by continual perspiration, and all things must at length fall by constant strokes from without; for the supplies from food must fail in old age, nor do bodies from without ever cease to batter and break to pieces all things with strokes not to be resisted.

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## **Post by “Cassius” of October 11, 2019 at 8:21 AM**

Friday, October 11, 2019:

By the same rule, the visible heavens, the surrounding walls of this great world, must tumble down by continual attacks, and fall to ruin. It is the nourishment that preserves things in being by constant supplies, but 'tis all to no purpose: For neither are the veins capable to receive what is sufficient, nor can nature afford a proper and needful recruit. Even now, the age of the world is broken, and the Earth so feeble and worn out, that it scarce produces a puny kind of creatures, when it bore formerly a lusty race, and brought forth such prodigious bodies of wild beasts. Or I cannot think all species of creatures descended from the sky by a Golden Chain upon the Earth, nor were they by the Sea created, nor by the waves that beat the Rocks, but the same Earth which now supports them, at first gave them being. At first she kindly, of her own accord, raised the rich fruits and delightful vines for the benefit of men. She freely of herself offered her sweet produce, the corn and tender grass, which now scarce rise to

perfection with all our labor.

We wear out our oxen, and the strength of our husbandmen; we can scarce find plowshares sufficient to till the fields, things are so averse to grow, and our labors are forever increasing. And now the lusty plowman shakes his head, and laments the pains he took was oft in vain; and when he compares the present times with the glorious days that are past, he blesses the good fortune of those that were before him; he talks loudly how the old race of men, filled with piety, no doubt spent their happy days within the narrow bounds of their own field, (for then every man's share of ground was much less than it is now) but has no notion, fond fool! that things by degrees decay, and, worn out by old age, hasten to ruin to the utmost period of their duration.

End of Book Two

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## **Post by “Cassius” of October 12, 2019 at 11:59 AM**

DAILY LUCRETIAN SATURDAY OCTOBER 12 2019

For as boys tremble, and fear every thing in the dark night, so we, in open day, fear things as vain and little to be feared, as those that children quake at in the dark, and fancy advancing towards them. This terror of the mind, this darkness then, not the sun's beams, nor the bright rays of day can scatter, but the light of Nature and the rules of reason.

First then, I say, the mind of man (which we commonly call the soul) in which is placed the conduct and government of life, is part of man no less than the hand, the foot, the eyes, are parts of the whole animal; though many of the philosophic herd have fancied that the sense of the mind is not fixed to any particular part, but is a sort of vital habit of the whole body, which the Greeks call Harmony; and thence flows all our sense, and the Mind has no particular place for its abode. As when we say health belongs to the body, yet it is no part of the body that is in health, so no particular part, they tell us, is the residence of the mind. But in this they seem to be egregiously wrong, for often when some visible part of the body suffers pain, we feel pleasure in some other part to us unseen; and the contrary often happens in its turn, that a man disturbed in mind is perfectly well all over his body, in the same manner as when a man has the gout in his foot, his head at the same time is free from pain.

Besides, when our limbs are given up to soft sleep, and the wearied body lies stretched at length without sense, there is something within that in the very time is variously affected, and receives into itself all the impressions of joy and empty cares that torment the heart.

But to convince you that the soul is a part like other limbs, and not as a harmony, takes up the whole body, observe first that many members of the body may be cut off, yet often life remains in the rest; and again, the same life, when a few certain particles of vital heat fly off, and our

last breath is blown through the mouth, immediately leaves possession of our veins and bones. And this will give you to understand that all the particles of matter are not of equal consequence to the body, nor do they equally secure our lives; but the particles of our breath, and the warm vapor, are of principal concern to preserve life to us in all our limbs. This warmth, this vapor, therefore resides in the body, and leaves our limbs as death makes approaches towards us.

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## **Post by “Cassius” of October 14, 2019 at 8:38 AM**

DAILY LUCRETIAN MONDAY OCTOBER 14, 2019

But since the nature of the mind and soul is discovered to be a part of the man, give these fiddler's their favorite word, Harmony, again, take from the music of the harp, or whencesoever they borrow the name, and applied it to the soul, which then - forsooth! - had no proper name of its own; however it be, let them take it again, and do you attend what follows.

I say then that the mind and soul are united together, and so joined make up one single nature; but what we call the mind is, as it were, the head, and conducts and governs the whole body, and keeps its fixed residence in the middle region of the heart. Here our passions live, our dread and fear beat here, here are joys make everything serene; here therefore must be the seat of the Mind. The other part, the soul, spread through the whole body, obeys this mind, and is moved by the nod and impulse of it.

This mind can think of itself alone, and of itself rejoice, when the soul and body are no ways affected; as when the head or the eye is hurt by sensible pain, we are not tormented over all the body, so the mind is sometimes grieved or cheered with joy, when the other part, the soul, diffused through the limbs, is agitated with no new motion at all. But when the mind is shaking with violent fear, we see the soul through all the limbs partakes of the same disorder. Cold sweats and paleness spread all of the body over, the tongue falters, the speech fails, the eyes grow dim, the ears tingle, and the limbs quake. In short, we often see men fall down from a terror of the mind, from whence we may easily conclude that the soul is united with the mind, and when she is pressed forcibly with its impulse, then she drives on the body, and puts it in motion.

By this rule therefore we find that the nature of the mind and soul is corporeal semicolon for we see it shakes the limbs, rouses the body from sleep, changes the countenance, and directs and governs the whole man. (Nothing of which can be done without touch, and there can be no Touch without body.) Should we not then allow that the mind and soul are corporeal in their nature?

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## Post by “Cassius” of October 15, 2019 at 8:43 AM

DAILY LUCRETIAN TUESDAY OCTOBER 15, 2019

Besides, you see the Mind suffers with the body, and bears a share with it and all it endures; if the violent force of a dart pierces the body, and shatters the bones and nerves, though death does not instantly follow, yet a faintness succeeds, and a sort of pleasing desire of sinking into the ground, a passionate resolution to die, and then again the will fluctuates and wishes to live: the Mind therefore must needs be of a corporeal nature, because It suffers pain by the stroke of darts, which we know are bodies.

I shall now go on to explain clearly of what sort of body this mind consists, and of what principles it is formed. And first I say that the mind is composed of very subtle and minute seeds; that it is so, attend closely, and you will find that nothing is accomplished with so much speed as what the mind attempts, and proposes to execute. The Mind therefore is swifter in its motion than anything in nature we can see or conceive. But that which is so exceedingly quick to move must consist of the roundest and most minute seeds, that may be set a-going by the lightest impulse. So water is moved and disposed to flow by ever so little force, because it is composed of small and slippery seeds; but the nature of Honey is more tenacious, its moisture is more unactive, and its motion slower; its principles stick closer among themselves; and for this reason, because it consists of seeds not so smooth, so subtle, and so round. And thus a large heap of poppy seeds is blown away by the gentlest breath of wind, and scattered abroad; but no blast can shake a heap of stones or darts. Therefore the smoother and smaller the principles of bodies are, the more easily they are disposed to motion, and the heavier and rougher the seeds are, the more fixed and stable they remain.

Since therefore the nature of the mind is so exceedingly apt to move, it must needs consist of small, smooth, and round seeds; and your knowing this, my sweet youth, will be found of great use, and very seasonable for your future inquiries. This will discover clearly to you its nature, of what tenuous parts it is formed, and how small a space it might be contained, if it could be squeezed together. For when the calm of death has possession of a man, and the mind and soul are retired, you will find nothing taken away from the body as to its bulk; nothing as to its weight. Death leaves everything complete, except the vital sense and the warm breath; the whole soul therefore must needs be formed a very small seed, as it lies diffused through the veins, the bowels, and the nerves; because when it has wholly left every part of the body, the outward shape of the limbs remains entire, and they want not a hair of their weight. And this is the nature of wine, when the flavor of it is gone, and of ointments, when their sweet odors are evaporated into air. And thus it is, when any moisture perspires through the pores of the body, the bulk does not appear less to the eye, upon that account, nor is there anything taken off from the weight; for many and small are the seeds that compose the moisture and the smell in the contexture of all bodies. And therefore we may well assured that the nature of the mind and

soul is formed of exceeding little principles, because when it leaves the body, it detracts nothing from the weight.

Yet we are not to suppose this nature of the mind to be simple and unmixed; for a thin breath mingled with a warm vapor, forsakes the bodies of dying men; and this vapor draws the air along with it, for there can be no heat without air intermixed, and heat being in its nature rare, must needs have some seeds of air united with it. We find then the mind consists of three principles: of vapor, air, and heat; yet all these are not sufficient to produce sense: For we cannot conceive that either of these, or all of them united, can be the cause of sensible motions that may produce reason and thought.

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## **Post by “Cassius” of October 16, 2019 at 8:22 AM**

DAILY LUCRETIAN WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 16, 2019

And therefore a fourth nature must needs be added to these (and this indeed has no name at all) but nothing can be more apt to move, nothing more subtle than this, nor consist more of small smooth seeds; and this is what first raises a sensible motion through the body: this, as it is formed of the minutest particles, is first put into motion, then the heat, and the unseen vapor receive a motion from it, and then we are and so all the limbs are set a-going; then is the blood agitated, and all the bowels become sensible, and last of all, pleasure or pain is communicated to the bones and marrow. But no pain or any violent evil can pierce so far without disordering and setting the whole into confusion, so that there is no more place for life, and the parts of the soul fly away through the pores of the body. But this motion often stops upon the surface of the body, and then the soul remains whole, and the life is preserved.

Now, how these four principles are mixed, and in what matter they subsist, I am very desirous to explain, but the poorness of the Latin tongue prevents me, against my will; yet, as far as that permits, I will endeavor briefly to touch upon this subject.

The seeds then of these principles move so confusedly among themselves, that no one of them can be separated from another, nor is there any place severally allotted to each, where anyone can act by itself; but they are, as it were, many powers of the same body. As in a piece of any animal there is smell, and heat, and taste, and out of all these one perfect body is composed; so heat, air, and the invisible vapor, and that fourth active quality, (which is the principle of motion to the other three), and from which all sensible motion rises through the limbs) compose by their mixture one subtle substance, or one Nature.

This fourth something is deeply fixed in the inmost recesses of the body, nor is there anything in the whole body more secretly and inwardly placed; it is, as it were, the very soul of the soul

itself: For as in the limbs, and through all the body, the united force and power of the mind and soul are hid and unseen, because they are formed of small and few seeds, so this something without a name, being composed of minute principals, lies deep and concealed; it is the very soul of the whole soul itself, and governs the whole body. By the same rule, it is necessary that the vapor, the air, and the heat be so properly mingled through the limbs, and be disposed either higher or lower than one another, that one certain nature may be formed from all; lest the power of the heat, the vapor, and the air, being divided and separately placed, might destroy the sense, and prevent its operation.

Heat prevails in the mind when the creature is enraged, grows hot, and fire sparkles from its glowing eyes. Much vapor is cold, and the companion of fear, it excites horror in the body, and shakes the limbs; but air is of a calm and mild quality, it resides in a quiet breast, and a serene countenance. But those have most heat whose hearts are fierce, and whose angry mind are soon inflamed into passion. of this sort, in the first place, is the distracted Fury of lions, who, roaring, often burst their very breast, and are unable to contain the torrent of Rage that swells within. The cold temperature of the deer has more of vapor, and sooner incites a chillness in the limbs, which causes a trembling motion through the whole body. But the nature of the ox consists more of soft air, nor does the smoky firebrand of anger (that spreads a shade of black darkness over the mind) too much inflame him, nor is he stupefied by the darts of chilling fear, but his nature is placed between both, between the fierce lion and the deer.

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**Post by “Cassius” of October 17, 2019 at 9:22 AM**

DAILY LUCRETIAN WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 17, 2019

## ...Nothing hinders us from leading a life worthy of the Gods.



The mind of man is formed of the same principles; though the discipline of philosophy may polish and correct some, yet it leaves behind the marks of the original nature of the mind, nor are we to think that the seeds of vice can be wholly rooted out. One man, we see, runs more rashly into passion, another is more disposed to fear, and a third is apt to be more merciful than just; It is impossible but the various tempers of mankind, and actions that follow them, must differ in many other instances, the reasons of which are at present out of my power to explain; nor can I find words to express that variety of figures by which the seeds are distinguished, and from which this variety of disposition is produced. This, however, may justly be asserted on this occasion: that the traces of original nature which cannot be corrected by the rules of reason are so very small that nothing hinders us from leading a life worthy of the Gods. - Lucretius Book Three, line 315

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### Post by “Cassius” of October 18, 2019 at 8:53 AM

DAILY LUCRETIAN FRIDAY OCTOBER 18, 2019

This nature therefore of the soul is contained by the whole body; it is the keeper of the body, and the cause of its safety: for they are both united closely together by mutual bonds, nor can they be torn asunder but by the destruction of both. As it is impossible to separate the odor from a lump of Frankincense, but the nature of both must perish, so it is equally difficult to part the mind and soul from the whole body, but they must all be dissolved. Of such interwoven principles are they formed, from their very beginning, that they enjoy a common life, nor have either of them, either the mind or the body in a separate state, the power of sense without the assistance of each other, but sense is incited in us by the nerves, from the common motions of both, and by their joint operations.

Besides, the body is never born alone, nor does it grow or continue after the soul is fled, for the water throws off of vapor when it is made hot, yet it is not by that means destroyed, but remains entire. The limbs I say, cannot with the same safety bear the separation of the soul when it retires from them, but thus divided, they must all perish and rot together. For the mutual conjunction of the soul and body from the very beginning, even as they lie in the womb

of the mother, does so jointly promote the vital motions, that no separation can be made without death and dissolution; from hence you learn that, since their preservation so much depends upon each other, their Natures also are inseparably joined and united together.

But further, if anyone denies that the body has sense, and believes that the soul diffused through the whole body is only capable of that motion we call sense, he opposes the plainest evidence, and the truth of all experience; for who would ever pretend to say that the body has sense if the thing itself did not fully prove, and convince us of it? But it is plain, you'll say, that the body is void of all sense when the soul is gone: True, for this faculty is not peculiar to the body alone, but to the soul and body united; and we know the sense becomes weaker, and decays, as the body and soul grow old together.

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## **Post by “Cassius” of October 25, 2019 at 8:14 AM**

DAILY LUCRETIAN FRIDAY OCTOBER 25, 2019 (Continuation of Book Three)

To say likewise, that the eyes can see nothing of themselves, but the mind looks through them as through doors laid open, this is ridiculous, when sense itself tells them the contrary, and sets it full in their view; especially when we are unable to look upon objects that dazzle the eyes, because our site is confounded by too great a lustre. This could not be, if they were mere doors, nor are open doors that we look through capable of pain. Besides, if our eyes were no more than doors, the mind would see clearer when the eyes were pulled out, and the whole frame taken away.

In this case it is vain to take shelter under the sacred opinion of Democritus, who says that as many parts as there are of the body, so many parts too of the soul are answerable, and are contained in them; for since the principles of the soul are not only much smaller than those of which the body and its parts consist, but are fewer in number, and are spread thinly in distant Spaces all over the limbs, you may affirm so far, that the principles of the Soul take up only so many different spaces and intervals, as may be sufficient for those little seeds that are in us to incite those motions that produce Sensation.

That this sense does not affect every minute part of the body is plain; for we seldom feel the dust that sticks upon us, nor the particles of chalk that drop upon our limbs; nor do we perceive the dew by night, or the fine threads of the spider meeting us, when we are entangled by the subtle net as we pass along; nor the decaying web lighting upon our heads, nor are we sensible of the soft feathers of birds, nor of the flying down of thistles, which from their natural levity are scarce able to descend upon us; nor do we feel the motion of every creeping insect, nor the little traces of the feet which gnats and such animals make upon us. So that the many seeds

which are diffused over all the limbs, must be first put into motion before the principles of the soul are agitated and made capable to feel, and before its seeds, by striking upon each other through so many distance spaces, can meet, unite, and part again, and be so variously moved as to produce sense and perception in us.

But the mind it is that keeps up the defences of life, and has a more sovereign power to preserve our beings, than all the faculties of the soul; for, without the mind, the least part of the soul cannot secure its residence in the body for a moment, but follows it readily as a close companion, and vanishes into air along with it, and leaves the cold limbs in the frozen arms of death. But the man whose mind is whole and entire, remains alive, though he be mangled and all his limbs lopped-off; yet his trunk, though his soul be so far gone, and his members separated from him, still lives and breathes the vital air; the trunk, if not spoiled of the whole, yet of a great part of the soul, still continues alive and holds fast its being. So, if you tear the eye all round, if the pupil remains safe, the power of sight continues entire, so long as you do no injury to the Apple, but cut the white all around, and leave that hole, this may be done without any danger or lost to the sight; but if ever so little of the middle of the eye be pricked through, though the ball otherwise looks bright and sound, the light instantly dies away, and darkness follows. This is the case of the mind and soul, and by such bonds are they always held together.

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## **Post by “Cassius” of October 29, 2019 at 8:33 AM**

DAILY LUCRETIAN TUESDAY OCTOBER 29, 2019 (Continuation of Book Three, Daniel Brown 1743 Edition)

And now, for your sake, my Memmius, and to let you know that the mind and soul are born in us and die with us, I will go on to write lines worthy of thy genius, and which I have been long preparing, and have at last by sweet labor happily perfected. Observe only that you apply both names indifferently, or, more plainly, when I offered to say the soul is mortal, you are to understand I mean the mind likewise, since they are both so united together, that in this respect, they make but one and the same thing.

First then, since I have proved that the soul consists of very minute seeds, and is formed of principles much less than clear water, or mist, or smoke, because it is more apt to move, and is set a-going by a much lighter stroke (for it is moved by the very images of mist and smoke) as when, by sleep overcome, in dreams we see the lofty altars exhale a vapor, and send up smoke into the air, the images of these things no doubt produce these phantasms in us. And since you see, when the vessel is broken to pieces, the water breaks loose and flows away in a stream; and since mist and smoke vanish into air, conclude the soul likewise to be poured out, and that

its principles much sooner perish, and its seeds are more easily dissolved, when it is separated and retires from all the limbs; for since the body, which is, as it were, a vessel to it, when it is bruised to pieces by any outward force, or rarefied by the blood being drawn out of the veins, cannot keep it in, how can you suppose it can be contained by subtle air? How can that which is more rare than this body of ours preserve it entire?

Besides, we perceive the soul is born with the body, grows up with it, and both wax old together. For as children are of a weak and tender body, their mind likewise is of the same frail complexion. As their age improves, and their strength is more confirmed, their judgment ripens more, and the powers of their mind are more enlarged. But when the body is shaking by the irresistible stroke of time, and the limbs fail without strength, the understanding grows lame, the tongue and the mind lose their vigor, all the faculties fail, and go away together. The whole nature of the Soul therefore must needs be dissolved, and scattered like smoke into the air, since we see it is born with the body, increases together with it, and with it, as I said before, becomes feeble by age, and decays.

Add to this, that has the body is subject to violent diseases and tormenting pains, so the mind is affected by sharp cares, by griefs and fear, and therefore must equally partake of death and dissolution with it. And then, in great disorders of the body, the Mind frequently grows mad, raves, and talks wildly; sometimes it is sunk into such a profound and never-ending sleep by a heavy lethargy, the eyes shut, and the head nodding, so that neither hears the words, nor is able to distinguish the face of those who stand about bedewing their cheeks with tears, and striving to recall the departing breath. Wherefore you must needs allow that the mind may be dissolved, since the infection of the disease pierces through it; for grief and diseases are both the causes of death, as we are taught by experience in a thousand instances.

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## **Post by “Cassius” of November 18, 2019 at 9:02 AM**

Daily Lucretian - Monday November 18, 2019 (Continuation of Book Three, Daniel Brown 1743 Edition)

And again, why is it, when the quick force of wine strikes through a man, and the insinuating heat works in all his veins, why follows a heaviness of the limbs? The legs no longer support the reeling body, the tongue falters, the mind is drowned, the eyes swim; noise, hiccups, brawlings deafen your ears, and many other evils, the consequence of such debauches; how could this be, did not the impetuous force of the wine distract the soul as it lies diffused through the body? Now whatever can be thus disturbed, and hindered in its operations, would (were the force to grow more violent) be destroyed and utterly deprived of future being.

Besides, a person surprised with a sudden fit of a disease drops down before our eyes as if he were thunderstruck. He foams, he groans and trembles all over, he is distracted, stretches his nerves, is distorted; he pants, he tosses and tires his limbs with strange and unnatural postures. The reason is because the force of the disease, driven violently through the limbs, agitates and disturbs the mind, as the foaming waves of the sea are enraged by the strong blast of winds. And then groans are forced from the wretch, because the limbs are tormented with pain, and the seeds of the voice are thrown out from the bottom of the breast, and hurried in confusion, without any distinct accent through the mouth.

The man raves, because the powers of the mind and soul are distracted, and their principles, as I said, broken, disjoined, and divided by the violence of the distemper. But when the cause of the disease gives way, and the black humor of the corrupt body retires into some convenient vessel, then the patient begins to rise, feeble and staggering; and by degrees returns to all his senses, and recovers life. Since therefore this soul is so tossed about with such strange disorders, and labors with such agonies in so miserable a manner, as it is enclosed in the body, how do you think it can subsist without the body in the open air, and exposed forever to the raging fury of all the winds?

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### **Post by “Cassius” of November 19, 2019 at 9:44 AM**

Daily Lucretian - Tuesday November 19, 2019 (Continuation of Book Three, Daniel Brown 1743 Edition)

And since we see the mind can be made sound, and be affected by the powers of medicine, as well as a disordered body, this is a strong evidence that the mind is mortal; for whoever attempts to make any alteration in the mind, or offers to change the nature of any other thing, must either add some new parts to it, or take off some of the old, or else transpose the former order and situation; but what is immortal can have nothing added to it, or taken from it, nor will admit of any change in the order of its parts: for whatever is so altered as to leave the limits of its first nature, is no more what it was, but instantly dies. The mind, therefore, whether it be distempered, or relieved by medicine, shows (as I observed) strong symptoms of its mortality. So evidently does the true matter of fact overthrow all false reasoning, that there is no possibility to escape its force; and the contrary opinion is either way fully refuted.

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### **Post by “Cassius” of November 25, 2019 at 3:02 PM**

Besides, we often seen men perish by degrees, and lose their vital sense limb by limb; first, the nails and toes grow black, then the feet and legs rot; at length the traces of cold death proceed on, step by step, over the other parts of the body. Since therefore the soul is divided, and does not at such a time continue whole and entire, you must pronounce it mortal.

But if you think the soul retires out of the dying members into the more inward parts of the body, and contracts its seeds into one place, and so withdraws the sense from the rest of the limbs, yet that place to which the soul retreats, and where so much of it is crowded together, ought to enjoy a more lively and brisker sense; but, since there is no such place, it is plain, as we said before, it is scattered piecemeal through the air, and therefore perishes. But suppose we grant which is false in itself, and allow that the soul may be huddled up together in the bodies of those who die one limb after another, yet then the soul must be confessed to be by Nature mortal. For it signifies not whether the soul dies scattered through the air, or perishes with its parts contracted into one place, while the senses steal away from the whole body more and more, and the powers of life by degrees appear less and less.

And since the mind is a part of man fixed in one certain place, as the ears, eyes, and other senses that preside over life, and as the hands, and eyes, and nose, when separated from the body, are incapable of sense, or even to be, but must in a very short time corrupt and putrefy; for the Mind cannot subsist of itself without the body, (or even be in the man) which is as it were a vessel to the soul, or anything else you can conceive more closely united to it; for it sticks inseparably to the body, and cannot be divided from it.

Further, the vital powers of the body and mind exert themselves together, and live united by the strongest bonds; neither can the nature of the Mind alone dispense the vital motions of itself without the body, nor can the body, void of soul, continue or use the faculties of sense. For as the eye, torn out by the roots and separated from the body, can see nothing, so the soul and mind cannot act of themselves, because they are spread over all the body by the veins, the bowels, the nerves, and bones. Nor could the seeds of the soul exercise those vibrations that produce sense, were they disposed at wide intervals, and enclosed by no solid body. They show those sensible motions because they are shut up close, which they cannot exert when they are forced out of the body into the wide air after death, because they are not under the same restraint as they are within the enclosure of the body; for the air would be an animal, if the soul could be confined within it, and maintain those motions of sense which before it exercised in the nerves and through the limbs. You must confess therefore, over and over, that the mind and soul (for they both make up but one substance) must needs be dissolved, as soon as they are stripped of the covering of the body, and their vital powers thrown out into the thin air.