

Thomas Nail - Returning to Lucretius

Post by “DaveT” of January 29, 2026 at 1:48 PM

I've read all the posts above. And I have a question that I'd like clarification from any/all among us.

First my question, and then my reasons for asking it.

Question: Why should anyone dwell on whether Lucretius accurately interpreted Epicurus' book Nature?

Reasons for the question: Neither Epicurus nor Lucretius had data understandable to the senses about the components of atoms and their sub-atomic particles. Neither understood that photons (light) are both particles with mass (matter), and waves (energy) with no mass. I don't see why one must believe Epicurus was right about atoms and their movement to be adherents to his ethics, canonics, etc.

Einstein's theory has demonstrated that matter and energy are interchangeable, rendering Epicurus' belief in eternally unchanging elemental particles unnecessary. Indeed, what we ought to depend upon is his mode of discovering nature by our senses and power of deduction. I think he, as well as every formal scientist today, shares a willingness to be proven wrong in the advancement of additional evidence of how the world works.

So, back to the thrust of my question above: Why should anyone dwell on whether Lucretius interpreted Epicurus wrongly or indeed intentionally declined to include Epicurus' atomism?