

Episode Thirty-Two: The Atoms Are Colorless, But the Implications Are Not

Post by "Don" of August 22, 2020 at 9:34 PM

From my perspective, you're reading too much into Lucretius's "there necessarily must be something that remains immutable." I think he's simply talking about the "seeds" or Epicurean "atoms/un-cuttables" of which there are supposed to be types.

For Lucretius, the "immutable" somethings are "seeds" like smooth atoms and hooked atoms. These remain **unchanged** whether the smooth atoms are in water or wine; whether the hooked atoms are in iron or stone. These "seeds" remain unchanged. In a modern sense, a carbon atom is the same whether it is in my body or coal; a hydrogen atom is the same whether it is in water or in a star. The atom remains unchanged.

For Lucretius and Epicurus, the fundamental "particles" **were** the "un-cuttables" which remain unchanged when combined in different bodies. We can't hold Lucretius and Epicurus to our quantum field theory ideas of what fundamental particles are.