

Transcript

Thomas Nail of the University of Denver. Thomas has a special interest in the philosophy of movement, and he's published a significant number of texts. This topic they include the figure for migrant 2015. The nicely titled Being and Motion from 2018 recently just last month Marks and Motion. And he's also been working on for a few years now. A3 volume study of Lucretius of which two volumes have so far been published. They include the first volume, Lucretius and ontology of Motion published in 2018. Secondly, Lucretius and ethics of Motion, published in 2020, and the third volume as yet trip here and we look forward to that. So I'm just going to do a couple of things and then I'll end over to Thomas so. Daniele is being recorded already. You press record. Yes, yes, OK, so I'll click home. Thomas be highlighted now. Great here, go OK it's over to you Thomas.

Thanks Keith, I yeah really appreciate the invitation to talk today and thanks everybody for logging online. I know it's really awkward to have some of these. It feels less and less awkward overtime. It feels like to be on video, video calls and teaching on them and having discussions and such anyway. So thanks for thanks for joining and I will. I'm not going to read a paper. I might read some parts of a paper, but I'm just going to try to talk so it'll be more informal. I feel like it's. For me anyway, it's easier to pay attention. It's hard to listen to papers on zoom for me, so I'm just going to try to talk and read. Maybe some little small parts. But anyway, thank you so much, Keith for the for the opportunity to speak and Daniele for helping set up the technology. Yeah, the center I'm so impressed with this post. Kantian Center and all the talks and it's Absolutely Fabulous. So I'm really honored to be able to talk. I'm going to set my timer so that I don't go over my time. So 45 minutes. This is what I have here, so the title of the talk today is called Lucretius R Contemporary. And that's I'll have to that will that I'm going to give you the opening what that means to me and why I think he's our contemporary. And then it might feel a bit dramatic. And then I'm gonna try to say a bit more about what like all of the pieces of that all of the supporting points. What I mean in the most general way of what I think is so contemporary about Lucretius's work is that I think that his work has been sort of miss misunderstood. It's been understood in a lot of different ways, but I think that. There is some common features to misunderstanding his work and my work I've just been writing like a maniac trying to work through the rare and Natura and and find all of these things that I think have been missing, both in the translations and interpretations, and I've tried to build those two things together to produce a new new translations and some new interpretations of what those mean. The most general thing of which all of the points that I want to talk about today are kind of sub points of. Is that I think one of the really, really kind of if we would just wanted to get to the core of what really makes Lucretius's work very

contemporary is that he had what I think is a very unique idea. Very few people ever in the history of philosophy had this particular idea, and that is that matter for Lucretius is indeterminate. It's not a substance, it's not an essence. It's not. We tend to think about it, and this is certainly how it's often read as discrete particles of stuff like atoms and I recognize that that atoms fill the English translations of his work. If you've ever read Lucretius, that's something you'll find in pretty much every English translation of his work, except for the very first one, which was by Lucy Hutchinson, who she is. Such an amazing story. I don't want to go into it now, but the very first English translation of Lucretius. It did not include the word atoms because the word Atom and no similar words are found in the Latin text, and so that's an important piece. And I'll say more about that later. But in general, to me the idea that matter for Lucretius is something which is indeterminate, which is active because in the Western history, matter is usually thought of being passive, and something that's acted upon on something that is a substance, something that is discrete, and that is typically how people in the modern philosophy of interpreted matter's. And why what's so contemporary about this idea that matter is active matter is creative matter is indeterminate. I'll give you some of the quotes where that happens in Lucretius is text soon, but what is called today new materialism, I think, is actually not that new. In many ways it's quite old, which goes all the way back, at least in my reading to Lucretius, is one of the first people that put forward that idea. That matter is both active and indeterminate, and that has huge consequences. Again, this is just the core idea here, and I'll give you the text in a moment, but that that has all kinds of consequences and Keith asked me to say a little bit more about his ethics today and that's. The most recent volume that I published on Lucretius is on his ethics. I want to talk a little bit the ethics and also some of the some of the other consequences that come from this idea. So what is also contemporary is in philosophy. There is a turn toward an interest in materialism, sometimes called deontological turn. I like that terminology less than I like materialism, but the materialist turn, whatever you want to call it, there's a lot of different positions. I don't think any of them mostly fit into what Lucretius has in mind, or they deviate in some ways from him, but the other one is in quantum physics. We don't have to track the entire history of it, but there is a way of interpreting quantum physics that has to do with indeterminacy and usually the way that physicists think about that problem is that they try to say that it's random that indeterminate. They all acknowledge that there is something called indeterminacy at the fundamental core of matter, that it is not discrete particles. It is fields of energy, and that energy is moving indeterminately, which is to say unpredictably. So it can be you can model it probabilistically. You can say that there are global deterministic equations that map it. These are all interpretations of what is a fundamentally unresolved problem that gets called the interpretation problem in quantum physics still today, which is what the heck

is going on and why can't we predict it. And Lucretius is one of the few who actually puts indeterminacy at the heart of his materialism and the other one the other very contemporary idea that is still unresolved. Is the idea of turbulence and the interpreter that did the most for this in the interpretations of Lucretius is Michel Serre, the French philosopher of science? Read Lucretius, an emphasized all of the usages of the word turbulence to Bantam, Indiana in the poem, and emphasized what an important role turbulence played in Lucretius poem. And maybe that doesn't sound like a big deal to you, but let me tell you that turbulence in fluid dynamics in physics is the greatest, as Richard Feynman, the physicist said, is the greatest unsolved problem of classical physics. There is no mathematical solution to turbulence. There are the Navier Stokes equations and they can get pretty good across approximations, but they don't actually have a full full mathematical formula for predicting what turbulence will do. But turbulence is everywhere. It's a deep part of many features of reality and Lucretius. It gave the first description of that in Western history, and he thought that it was fundamentally indeterminate. We never thought that it could be mastered, and it's yet to be mastered and predicted and so I think that's an important thing that makes him very modern as that he saw he understood turbulence at, gave descriptions of it. He didn't exactly give the same quantum descriptions, but he did describe indeterminacy and the key phrase in the Latin that Lucretius uses to describe this indeterminacy, and he uses it at least two times in the text, maybe 3, but this term in character temporary in Curtis Coelho Keys. So this term is an indeterminate or uncertain time in determinant space, so that's when the swerve happens. For Lucretius, where does it happen? When does it happen? It's indeterminate now. You could read that epistemologically and say, well, it happens somewhere specifically, but we don't know where that is. That's not exactly what he says. Or you can interpret it onto logically. And that's how I interpret it. Is that this indeterminacy is a fundamental part of the swerve. And that this word is not something that happens. I know that maybe you've heard that story that you know the origins of atomistic philosophy. There's a rain of atoms, and they fall through. Avoid and then one of them swerves at some point and then hits the other ones. Then they all you know, compile into the world. Stuff gets made out of that initial one Atom, that swerves, and that. Is that's that's an interpretation, but it is not. That description is not what is in Lucretius is text that might be coming from other interpreters in the modern period. It might be coming from certain interpretations of Epicurus, although that's not, I don't think that that's the case either. I do think that the description of this word that we have in texts, that is that are primary primary texts comes from Lucretius and the description he gives there is not as a counterfactual and I'm just going to read a little segment of that. Counterfactual claim about where the swerve happens. For Lucretius, this was one of the first things to me that I look for in the text, and then I couldn't find this idea that there was a rain of atoms, and then a sudden swerve.

I was like, well, yeah, that. But he never says that. Here's what he says Lucretia. So this is in book 2, lines 221 and 222, but he says that matter is quote always in the habit of swerving. So the Latin there is Declan Areso leurent and that word, solar. It in Latin means habit, something that's constantly going on some kind of activity that is. Ongoing, not a one time thing. It's not like once. US and Adam's words and then everything else deterministically falls into place. It's that matter is always swerving. There's never a time in which it is not. It is always in the habit. And then he says. And if it were not in the Latin, there is NI see if it wasn't, then quote all would fall like raindrops, and that's the cataract in Latin. So that's the that's that. This is the passage where people say, oh there was an Atom that swerved suddenly out of nowhere, and then it caused all these things. But actually, what Lucretius says is that matter? Is always swerving. And if it wasn't always swerving then everything would fall like raindrops. OK, so that's a counterfactual claim. He's not saying things fall like raindrops, he's saying they don't fall like raindrops because matter is always swerving. OK, so that was that was a very important thing early on, so the structure of what I want the paper maybe I'll read some parts but but what I want to say today the first thing I want to do is kind of just introduce why so I've come to this conclusion that Lucretius is a very contemporary floss for that has a lot to add. He's never somebody that I read in Graduate School or undergraduate. I don't think I ever heard his name uttered in undergraduate or Graduate School. I never read anything by Lucretius. I never read his work. Nobody ever talked him about, he wasn't relevant. I had heard the name Epicurus, but I had never read or heard anything important about Lucretius, so it's now become my mission in life to proselytize the word of Lucretius and try to try to get him a new life. Because I think everybody has at every every period of history, people go back to that text and reread it. And what's weird about now, contemporary? Is that we don't read it as much. For example, I mean it's just in the way that it used to be red and the way that the classics that great thinkers went back to these texts and it's just Lucretius. I feel it has fallen, fallen away and I think it's important to return to him in any case, so I want to tell a little bit of story about how I came to that. And then in the first part I want to say a bit about his ethics. Some of the some of the ethical consequences of this philosophy. And then in the final section sort of layout some some really different conclusions that I've taken away from Lucretius. That I'd like to share an an and hear your thoughts about. Then and then wrap up if we if we get through all that. So the short story of how I got into how I came to this, why I was thinking about Lucretius as a contemporary thinker. My first personal exposure was was reading to lose his text, logical sense and there's an appendix in there on the simulacrum and Andalus had had read Epicurus and Lucretius together and given them a very interesting interpretation. And that was my first exposure to ever encountering Lucretius. But I read it in Graduate School and didn't wasn't sure totally what to make of it and so life moves on and projects move on. The thing that got me more

immediately motivated was that I spent a year in Graduate School. I did a Fulbright Scholarship to work in Toronto, in Canada with the migrant justice movement called. No one is illegal, so I do political philosophy as well. And that was something that was very interesting to me. Very few political philosophers had taken seriously migration. As as a core feature of political theory, I mean today there's a lot more literature, but when I was writing in 2009 and doing this work, I could find very little and I was encouraged by reading, you know, bits here and there of a rent in a Golden Valley bar and run Sierra. And that was all great, but it wasn't enough. They don't talk about it as much as I wanted to hear a much more in depth description, so I went to I have a background in activism, political activism. That's how I got into philosophy, and so that was my way of kind of getting into this problem. And while I was there, I worked with these mother justice activists and it was a wonderful experience. I came back from that and started writing about migration and very quickly I realized that I didn't want to do a political philosophy of migration. But I realized that there wasn't really a model for what I wanted to do. I wanted to look at migration. And think about migration from the perspective of migrants, not necessarily the ethnographic perspective. Although that's important too. But think about what migration is, which is movement, and think about that as the beginnings of political as the beginning of political theory. Think about migration as a constituent feature in which states would be metastable forms of a more primary form of motion. Namely, migration would become sort of consolidated into States and not states. Being the things that declared. People to be migrants so making them first and then, but then I realized when I was writing this book these the figure the migrant period, the border that I didn't really have a conceptual vocabulary to do that work and I couldn't find one. Of course I had influences with cocoa and a Lowe's and Marks and and other figures, but I was I had to search for some and so I like a lot of professors and you know we get into new things and the way we learn them is by teaching about them. And so I just. Created a class and I was like, well, I'm going to figure this out and see if I can find philosophers who have taken motion seriously and they've created some concepts that will be useful to think about this stuff. So I created a class called Philosophy of Movement and the whole purpose was to just throw in everything into the class that I thought might be helpful and that might be about movement. It turns out that every philosopher has something to say about movement, so that was a lot to take on, but it also turns out that. Very few of them actually make movement primary. They always explain it by something else, and that's what I was discovering in that class. And so I put in a bunch of philosophers who I thought very much would be philosophers of movement, who, over the course of close readings, turned out not to be, and then several who very much surprised me, and Lucretius was one of those that surprised me. I put him in the class because I had read from from from logical sense. You know, from Dellows back in the day and I thought oh didn't deliver.

Say something about Lucretius and the swerve, and maybe that's important and Michelle Stairs book. So I read Michelle Stairs book and I thought, well, you know this is this is compelling case here. Maybe there's something there. Let's go back and read Lucretius very closely and we'll see what it's all about and see if motion is actually primary for him, or if he explains it by something else. And I was not optimistic because of the whole idea of atoms. Frankly, if there are atoms that maybe the atoms move around, but if the atoms themselves don't move internally or change, then motion isn't really primary. It's not all the way down, it's it's atoms or what's really fundamental there. And the weird thing happened though when I was teaching that in the Latin. So I was looking at the Latin. I was like well, where where does he say Adams in the text? And I kept digging around and I thought, well surely I'm an idiot like I'm just not finding this. I'm not a Latin scholar, I'm sure the. You know, sure, the the scholars know better than I do on this point, and I kept digging and digging and digging and nobody was talking about it either, which I thought was strange. And it turns out that he never says it. The Latin word is not actually invented yet, so there is the Greek word at most, but we don't. But but he didn't. He's writing in Latin, and he made a very merry, very big deal about writing only in Latin and not using Greek terms. But he very easily could have Latinized that word. And that's exactly what happens after Lucretius writes his Palm, Cicero latinize is the word atomos and he he gives it a Latin name. And so we have that Latin word. But Lucretius never uses that word and he never uses other words that would make you think that this was that he was talking about discrete particles of something like. There are Latin words for particle that you could easily use and he never uses those. Instead of that uses all these other words. There's not a single word for matter in the poem. And that's very much in keeping with the Greek poetic tradition is sort of using singular words that both fit the meter, but that also expressed something unique about matter, and I that was very intriguing to me and thought I thought something must be going on. Of course, the idea of turbulence was awesome too, but if it didn't get that turbulence didn't go all the way down, then he wasn't going to be a flosser movement in the end. Nonetheless, I got a lot out of that, and the other one is the thing about the swerve I told you I was. It was weird to me to find. He actually didn't have the same idea of the swerve that everybody had said. And so that that that convinced me that it was worth taking more time. So I taught another class that was that was just on Lucretius and all we did was read book one. I mean, I thought we were going to read maybe more, but it turns out that when you close read in Latin, it takes a very long time, and so we only got through book will actually give me get through book. One of the rare natural. But we read very very closely in the Latin and all kinds of things were jumping out at me, which I'll talk about toward the end of the paper. But that's how I got into Lucretius. I was looking for a vocabulary about movement in motion. And he seemed more the more I dug into it, the more rich and strange it all seemed to

be. But before I get into some of those features that I found there, I want to talk about ethics. There are consequences, so just maybe go with me for the moment and and except the fact that or tentatively accept the fact that indeterminacy that matter is indeterminate for Lucretius, and that that has all these implications. One of the implications that that has is ethical. Lucretius has a very, very radical political or ethical theory, and I mean a political theory as well that's related. But the core of it of Lucretius is ethics is an as it was. For Epicurus, Lucretius is very much an Epicurean is coming out of that tradition. He read all of Epicurus is work, and now we don't even have that work. But Lucretius had access to that work here, edit and at the core of ethics is the fear of death. And now what does that mean? What are the consequences of that? It's Lucretius is a naturalist. Everything is nature. All of all of all of matter is, that's all that there is. There are no transcendent gods. There are no transcendent values, and this puts him in a very different kind of ethical tradition, which I think normative ethicists would not find to be ethical. Probably at all, because new Lucretius can't ground ethics. Any normative ethics in anything that is beyond nature. Lucretius is more interested in giving a natural explanation or a history or an account. A description of. The conditions for ethics. So something maybe like a materialist metaethics or something like that, in which he gives most of what he says about ethics, are actually quite negative, meaning that here's all the places where if you believe in transcendent entities or values, here is where you are going to succumb to the fear of death. Here is where you they actually lead you to unethical or bad actions with respect that sort of undermine those normative ethical systems themselves. And so just I not going to go into all of them, but I will say that they're just there is no any. There's no nothing, nothing like the Platonic good for Lucretia. Or for Lucretius, I hope that that is clear, but I'm just giving you the broad strokes here. There's no transcendent good, even if it's some kind of ironically, never achieved good. There's nothing like that. For Lucretius, there are no gods. There are no values. It means also that there's not even kind of any fixed. We might call Aristotelian virtues. It's that if there are virtues that people practice fine, but Aristotle doesn't give the fully naturalistic account of how those virtues might emerge, and there can't just be some virtues and not others, which I know is a problem in virtue theory of how you figure out which which are the real virtues and which aren't, which are more primary, and so on. That's just not Lucretius's approach, because there's not going to be anything like some kind of essential virtue that we could say is genuinely a virtue, because nature just doesn't have any of those Oproy Ori. I also don't think that. Another way to read Lucretius's ethics is through utilitarianism. You could say that it's a pleasure is the highest good, so there's a similarity here. Between Epicurus is ethics, where I think at for Epicurus, the highest. The highest pleasure is not feeling any pain, and for Lucretius that he's I really expected to find some places in the text where Lucretius says very clearly something of that kind, and he never does. I kept

thinking that he would say. Something you know without the highest pleasure was not feeling any pain, but that's not really the case, and in fact he never says Lucretius never says in the text. Pleasure is the highest good or we should avoid paying at any cost. That kind of language just isn't there, which did sort of confuse me a little bit in the beginning. But I do think that his, especially some of the passages he's a poet, he very much has lots of descriptions of pleasure and. Some of them are very are running. Not extremely, but they're relatively in moderate. I think Epicurus might find the things that Lucretius says to be immoderate and beyond beyond. What is, I think they share the idea that you don't. You don't want to go too far on the pleasure scale, or else you're going to produce pain, but I think for Epicurus, that's a that's a smaller range, possibly again, it's not totally clear in the text we really have to get into it, but my. Feeling about it after after reading them is that for Lucretius, is a bigger range of what pleasures can be had, and some of the examples I'll just give one. But there's a number of. One comes from Book 3 where Lucretius is describing. He's praising at the curious, actually in the beginning and the Pro MacBook 3, he's saying how much he's read. All of Epicurus is work and how much he's loved it, and he's like a bee flying around, you know, and and sampling from the Flowers, which is also not exactly, I think, what Epicurus would have had in mind, and it's not what Epicurean scholars thought of themselves as bees. Sampling from Flowers, like the pages of Epicurus writings. So already at Lucretius is has a has a very different relationship to Epicurus than most of the Epicureans, like Philodemus. And then the really extreme thing is that Lucretius says that when he reads the text of Epicurus, he's intoxicated. He takes it in, and a vision of the of all of nature of the cosmos opens up before his eyes, and he goes into an ecstatic state where he's shaking violently. I mean, he's feeling such extreme feelings of joy. And ecstasy and the English translations are kind of all over the place, but it is a very powerful scene in book three that I think there's just no equivalent of that in Epicurus and set. Which leads me to think that Lucretius had a broader range of what constitutes pleasure, and that pleasure comes in part from something that's related to these ecstatic moments and visions, which I think are are related to certain mystery religions. But it like Elusys, but we that would be too far of a digression. But in any case, that's the beginning of what I want to say is that? For Lucretius, there are simply no transcendent values, but it's not. It's not. It's not. It's not committing a naturalistic fallacy, but let me say more. Just a second, but I want to rule out one so I don't think it's utilitarian. That's the conclusion of that point. The other thing that I don't think it is which one could respond, possibly with and say, like, well, look, there are systems of value that are maybe not transcendent, one could say. For example like capitalism, Lucretius may didn't respond directly to the issue of capitalism, and yet I really don't think that Lucretius's philosophy was at all consistent with capitalism. In fact, in fact, I think that capitalism is maybe one of the most abstract, most transcendently committed ethical systems you know. We

can discuss that later, but I just want to say some of the basic differences of why Lucretius couldn't possibly have supported anything like the capitalist mode of production. And that is that capitalism relies on a certain metaphysical assumption, namely the existence of something called abstract labor, time or value. There's just there is no such thing in Lucretius of abstract labor time, everything has qualities, quantity and quality always go together. Marks in Marx's reading of Lucretius, this is very clear, but Lucretius. It's also very clear the idea. So Lucretius does critique greed quite a bit. He thinks that in anytime you have people who are greedy, they want wealth and power and so on. He thinks that this streams from a fear of death. They're afraid of dying, and so they try to live longer by accumulating and that you know the same thing holds for the acquiring political power. For example, that's what he says about politicians, and the state. Is there also afraid of death and so, but they try to have statues built to themselves and they so that they can live on in the memory and history. Of the people and that way achieve immortality. And of course direct things about the immortality immortality of the soul, the existence of gods, and rewards of heaven, all of that. Lucretius says these are attempts to escape the natural condition of death, not just like death that you will die at one point, but that you are continually dying in the sense that you're the material, it E. Of your body and mind are dissipating, and that we feel very anxious about that, he says. And it leads us to these crazy ideas of how to escape. Death and escape nature by transcending it. In any case, the core thing about capitalism that is inconsistent with this format with Lucretius. Naturalism is that it's based on the idea of first of all, abstract labor time. But there is some unit of quantities without qualities, and the second one is exchange ability for Lucretius. Every single thing is singular. There's not things. If you have atoms, then you can say Oh well, Adams, that's kind of like each one, or the each Atom could be identical and they could be exchanged, but there really aren't atoms in Lucretius in the text, and instead what you get, and I'll talk about in a moment you get this language about flows. Being woven together, he has all these beautiful images of string and some of these are just straight up translated out of the text when we get them in English translation. But the words in Latin very much have to do with weaving and woven patterns. His image the matter is something that is. It's like a thread that's woven into knots and folds that's then folded into a fabric. And the fabric is, those are things what he calls rarum. Those are things discrete objects, but they are woven, and they're always sort of vibrating and moving around and swerving. Remember, they're always vibrating and swerving, and that idea, if that's what things are, they cannot possibly be exchanged. Even the basic idea that he has of the Similac room. These like membranes that shed every object, is constantly shedding. It's dissipating one. We could have a modern interpretation of this thermodynamically. That's what he is. That's what all objects do. They radiate heat. And what is heat radiation? It's the loss of photons. It is the movement of

matter that generates dissipation. Everything is dissipating one way to interpret the simulacrum is that it's just a thermodynamic point entropy. The second law that matter, and things are all unraveling. But if everything is unraveling, everything is changing. Everything is moving. The idea that you could exchange commodities equally is absurd. It doesn't make any sense. The idea that you could somehow exchange these and accumulate wealth fits onto Lucretius's idea of the escape of death that people fear death and to avoid that they accumulate. And they believe in abstractions like abstract labor time that will allow them to feel as if they are overcoming death. OK, so here's here's now you're wondering, well is there a? I've given you mostly the critical things, but what does Lucretius actually think positively about ethics in it? Just a short burst. Obviously. I've written a book on it, so there's a lot more to say, but I'm just giving you the digested version here is that first of all. His ethics is completely imminent. There's no transcendence, it's naturalistic, it's material. But remember that the matter is indeterminate. It's not a deterministic material, it's indeterminate. And that all the things, the rare and that we see are woven metastable patterns of matter. Again, he does not use. He uses all these different words. We can talk about, but he does. And one of them is primordial. That word or *dia* means to order in Latin, but it also is a term that used to weave when things are woven together there, the *ordea* means the pattern that's woven into cloth. In any case, it's a very woven image of matter that's constantly swerving. So the here's the positive thing to say about Lucretius is ethics. Is it's more of a hypothetical epic you could say, maybe it has meta ethical implications, but I think that the more positive way to think about it would be, as a hypothetical ethic, namely that here's the way nature works. It's dissipating everything is unraveling. That's that's what the similar. Do they unravel all of matter? So as parts of nature, we have it, we can. We can go with that flow. We can affirm the thing that we are which is unraveling. And dissipation and creativity and indeterminacy. We can. We can kind of affirm those aspects of nature and of ourselves, or we cannot, and that's what that's what I pathetic about is that if you want to frankly survive the likelihood of surviving because most of nature is dissipating itself, if you want to go with the rest of what nature is up to, you can do that, or you can struggle against it. And if you struggle against it and you believe that you can transcend it, an escape nature. And you believe in values outside of nature? Then you're fighting an uphill battle. It's like you're swimming against the current. You can do it, but it's going to be really hard. It's going to exhaust you and you're not going to get very far. Or you can go with the water and allow that movement to pass through. You and I think that ladder image of allowing nature to pass through you. And this is the important part is increasing the manifold. Weigh the diversity of the ways in which matter dissipates, think? That would be the way that would be closest to Lucretius. You don't want to dissipate too rapidly. That would be what fossil fuel capitalism. Basically you can. You can waste a ton of energy really, really fast, but if you do it

at the expense of destroying half the trees on the planet, you're not actually increasing the net entropy of the planet, you're slowing it down by destroying the planet. I think Lucretius is. That's the idea that I think he wants us to dissipate an experience. The pleasure of dissipation, the feeling of. That loss, I notice it sounding very battalio right now, but I'm reading a bunch of a tie or even nietzschean, but to experiment with all those forms, but without going too far such that the experimentation completely falls apart and that you know everything is expanded too rapidly with some kind of nuclear nuclear blast. In any case, OK, now moving on to the final part of the paper. These are the. These are the I think there's 3 three ideas that I really wanted to try to. Say about Lucretius that I thought were I don't know new, relatively new dispute, rible, I'm sure, but I want to try to give you some evidence of why I think they're important. Talked a little bit about the swerve already, but I do want to say this about the Swerve because maybe you don't know it, but it's an interesting difference. That I've that I've recently paid attention to and try to dug into because it wasn't obvious to me. I've been reading the scholarship for awhile, but the other thing that's interesting about the Swerve in Lucretius is that it is the only place where we get an account of the swerve in the primary text. We do not get a swervin Epicurus people talk about that and attributed to him and I think that that's also in a minute. I think it's right, but I also think that we have to qualify it and say something more, which is that we do not find in the letters Epicurus's letters to Herodotus. There's no mention of aswe. Or in the extant fragments that we have of Epicurus is 37 volume on nature. We don't have any evidence that there is any discussion whatsoever of a swerve, and I have to say that when I first found this, I was I was genuinely shocked. I had seen so many people write about the sword of and Epicurus, I thought, surely it's gotta be somewhere, but there's there's enough articles now that I had to dig to find. But if you look, it's not there. It's not in Epicurus. There are people who attribute this word to Epicurus after well after Lucretius, but what's happening there? So, for instance, that's you know, Simplicius that Cicero. Plutarch, these are commentators after Epicurus and after Lucretius, who are essentially using at Lucretius's. Description of this warband, attributing it to Epicurus an it's not ridiculous to do it, it's just that we don't actually have any primary evidence that he ever said that. That said, let me just back up and say, I think Epicurus did have an idea of this word. It's very likely, even though we don't have any primary evidence of it, because we have, so there was a scholar that was contemporary with Lucretius named. Famous who studied with Zeno of side on in Athens and studied. Epicurus is writing so he had read the mall and infill ademuz his writings. There is one and we have lots of filidei misses writings much more than Epicurus but there is one and only one instance of this term. Paraklesis and Paraklesis would be the Greek term for the swerve. There's not very developed, it's only mentioned once, but it is there. And the tradition and the nature of Philodemus, who is a very hardcore Epicurean scholar. He

would not have fabricated that on his own. Lucretius, who knows? He was a wild poet. He was not one of the initiated scholars of Epicurus. He was an Inter Loper. I mean he was a well read Inter Loper but he was he was not of the caliber of Philodemus. In any case he Philodemus uses it but only once and it's not a substantial part of the philosophy. In fact, that letter to Herodotus that Epicurus rights. That's where the most. That's the core of Epicurus philosophy was supposed to be written down. Because it was going to be passed on to students, but the fact that it's there without any mention of this word indicates that if Epicurus might have had this idea, or even come to it later, it wasn't a core feature of his philosophy. In the same way that it was likely for Lucretius. So yeah, so I do think that he probably had this idea. It wasn't quite as significant. I think Lucretius took some liberties in really focusing on this work because it's everywhere in DRAM, nachura in in the images of turbulence and curvature and inclination, and all these things. So anyway, that's that's something that I wanted to to share, is that. That the swerve is very important for Lucretius, maybe more so than than anyone else. I talked before about the Atom an I just wanted to say that that that particular term is the way that Lucretius deals with this. So he uses these other terms primordia materis. Uh, primordia these words that have to do with these are words that people translate off in his Atom. But the word Adam and the word particle are not there. The thing that I wanted to note here is that in loose Leucippus, Democritus, and Epicurus, there are the word Atom is used, and those atoms. The key feature about them is that they are unchangeable. They do internally, they don't. They are static, they don't change, and they don't move. Inside and that, I think, is a difference because I think with Lucretius we're dealing much more with images of threads and flows and swerves than we are of particles that are discrete atoms and that makes ultimately movement something that's very primary for Lucretius and relatedly. This is the second idea. What to share here in this series of things is about stasis in ethics, particular in Lucretius, so in Epicurus there is this idea of kotis tomatic pleasures, and those are pleasures for Epicurus that are the word stomatic is related to stasis, and the idea is that these are pleasures that don't involve, like there are kinetic pleasures, and for Epicurus those can be a bit dangerous because it can be quite extreme and for Lucretius. This these terms are not in there, they're not in the Greek for sure, or he doesn't use the Greek words, obviously, but there are some very similar terms about call mind Trank Trank will mind that are similar to ataraxia, but they're never fully static. I would say in Lucretius, this is this is this might be a difference between Epicurus and Lucretius. This is this is for Epicurus, you know, just satisfying the sensation of hunger and not having any bodily pain. You don't want to go too far too much farther than that, because you're going to become, you know, not static anymore. And for Lucretius, that worry at motion is something that is deeply fundamental to nature. You're never going to get away from that. It's important to have metastable states of tranquility. And and but there's not

really any stasis, and I think that's that's something to think about with Lucretius is that you're never getting anything that static on that same that same point. See, these are actually these are really the three things that are part of the three volumes. The core idea is the first thesis is that there's no atoms, there are no atoms in Lucretius and that is a core feature of the volume one that I wrote. The second one is that there's no stasis, and that has all these ethical implications in volume 2 and the third one is that there are no gods in in Lucretius. And that is a big that's a main feature of volume three, and this is another difference between Epicurus and Lucretius, even though they're very, very close. I think there are differences both between Democritus and Epicurus, which we, that's another subject, but between Lucretius and Epicurus, but one of these differences is the lack of the meta cosmia. So in Epicurus there's this idea that there is a place, but there are many worlds, but between the world's there are the places where the gods live. And I think that that plays an important role for Epicurus because it's a place where the gods can reside, but they're kind of outside of the worlds because all the world's are fully naturalistic and there's no transcendence. But between the world's there might be, you know what he believes that there are these gods, or at least acts as if there are. And Epicurus by graphically speaking worshiped the gods. He gave sacrifices to the gods and encouraged his students to do the same, and I'm not sure if the same thing can be said of Lucretius. In part because of the scene where he's very critical of Agamemnon sacrifices his daughter for the Trojan War, Big Storm happens and Agamemnon is going to clear the way by sacrificing his daughter because the Sage tells him to do it. Lucretius is very critical of any sacrifices to the gods. Any worshipping of the gods. He also doesn't say anything about this in between space of the worlds. And in fact, he is very clear and I have a bunch. It's there's several places that we want to look at, but they're basically book 5 page numbers 146 through 155, and there's another place in book 5 and then in book 6 where Lucretius gives a description of the gods as basically being similar lock role. He calls them sunk to Simulacro the sacred Simulacro. So, and that's important, because Lucretius descriptions of the gods, they have a reality, but they had their reality is just like the other signal locker of nature. They don't exist in between worlds, but when the gods come to us in visions or in dreams, they are. They're really there. I mean, they're real visions, but they are very much Similac, WRAL, sacred Similac, WRAL, divine images that come to us, and he doesn't say that they come to us from outside. Yes, well the oh I have two minutes left and I've basically finished the main points, but I know I've like stuffed a lot into this talk, so there's there's a lot of the loose threads hanging off of this, but I do want to say very quickly if I could. I wanted to thank Keith for put me on the trail of this point, which was that in Deleuze's book on Nietzsche there's a. There's a footnote that I mean I had read that book that was along time ago, and. Keith reminded me of this footnote where Deleuze interesting Lee, in his book on Nietzsche, notes that Marx had a very fascinating

reputation of Lucretius, a very original one and really of Epicurus as well. But there's but, and so I followed up on this footnote and the thing that it was interesting to me is that I saw a possible difference here between the way that like Deleuze directly and explicitly says, he thinks that the Swerve is a mask for what he calls an incipient dynamism, and he'd be. And so he turns away and does an rejects, ultimately marxes reading of Lucretius, which is a fully materialistic one. And in favor of the idea of a swerve as being some dynamic, and in the appendix of logic of sense, he calls at Conatus with Spinoza. But there's some kind of dynamism that's that is there, and that he sees in nature that same dynamism, or that will, and I think this is an. It's an interesting point to think about Marx is reading Lucretius and how that differs from niches we can't get into it, but I do think that term, whether it's dynamic, where there's some kind of vital power inside of the swerve and for marks that's not there. And I think, genuine Lucretius. There's not that kind of dynamistic Vitalistic story either, but it does connect up. Lucretius to Deleuze is reading, and then through that to what's called Vitalist new materialism. For example, like Jane Bennett. And Frost and cool in their edited collection. Talk a lot about vitalism as being central to new materialism and one of the things I'd like to propose just to return now and wrap up to return to the idea of Lucretius as a contemporary is that I think he's not just like no other new materialists. I think he's different because for him the swerve is indeterminate and there's not a vital or dynamic anything else. It's just movement. But movement is fundamentally in determinant. And I think that that's that's that's a slightly different story than than than the vitalist new materialism, at least in Jane Bennett and some others. Anyway, thanks for your attention and patience.