

# Democritus' "Nothing is truly real but atoms and void" statement

**Post by “waterholic” of October 4, 2022 at 2:07 PM**

To my untrained eye the position that only atoms and void exist must be taken in the context of the times when the prevailing understanding of the universe consisted of the four key elements: water, earth, fire and air as well as the distinct expectation of spirit living outside the material realm.

Both Lucretius and Democritus agree on the fact that only atoms and void truly exist and the spirit too consists of atoms, but in the Lucretian understanding "spiritual" atoms are only a very small proportion of human body.

Interestingly, this again reminds me the ever present issue of small vs. big, element vs composite. Just as swerve creates randomness in the micro world, yet in the macro world many things are perfectly predictable, in the same way only atoms and void in the micro world are combined to create the objective reality, which can be sensed (again due to the atoms that are "coarse" for example).

Hard to imagine how one can arrive from all of the above to nihilism. Yet, I trust this is a common problem?

A final note, Lucretius too refers to certain images or perceptions that appear not to "exist". Perhaps this is similar to what Democritus had in mind?