

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

Post by "Cassius" of October 4, 2022 at 2:50 PM

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Both Lucretius and Democritus agree on the fact that only atoms and void truly exist and the spirit too consists of atoms

Given what I write below I would be very hesitant to state the proposition that way - (that they both took the same position that only atoms and void truly exist). I would say that Democritus took that position but Epicurus did not, as he was working from a different perspective of what it means to "exist."

[Quote from waterholic](#)

A final note, Lucretius too refers to certain images or perceptions that appear not to "exist".

See I see both of those comments as relating to the extremely important issue of what we should take "exist" to mean.

If you are talking about dreams, someone correct me if I am wrong but I recall Epicurus/Lucretius as specifically saying that they do "exist" in that they have real impact upon us. But again that hinges on the meaning given to "exist."

So given the statement in Diogenes of Oinoanda my view would be that Epicurus took the very strong position that we should consider the world around us actually does "exist" even though it is ultimately made up of atoms and void, which alone have eternal and unchanging properties.

I know I may sound like I am being nitpicky but I don't think this point is minor, and thus its inclusion on the inscription. The entire "Canon of Truth" seems to be devoted to allowing us to define that which we perceive as "true" and there is only a thin shade of meaning (IMHO) between "true" and "real." If we can validate it with the canon of truth, my interpretation would be that Epicurus would say that it "exists" or at the very least that it is "true" which in this context I would take to be almost exactly the same thing (and maybe exactly the same thing).