

# I'm not going to translate this

**Post by “michelepinto” of May 11, 2019 at 3:42 PM**

I'm not going to translate this in English: <http://epicuro.org/roberto-herlit...ante-alighieri/>

I think it is too much "Italian".

An Italian famous actor Roberto Herlitzka translated Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura* in the same metric and style Dante used for the *Divina Commedia*.

Today the book was presented officially in Turin and a great friend of mine, Sandro Borzoni, an Epicurean, was there and wrote this presentation.

---

**Post by “Cassius” of May 11, 2019 at 4:40 PM**


Interesting post even if you don't translate it! 😊 How do you mean "it is too much Italian?" Too long to translate, or too something else?

Google translate version:

## **Roberto Herlitzka renews the "honey" of Lucretius with the complicity of Dante Alighieri**

By [Michele Pinto](#) | May 11, 2019 [0 Comment](#)

At the Turin Book Fair, Roberto Herlitzka, on his debut as a translator, presented his version of Tito Lucretio Caro, *La Natura* (Books I-IV), published by La Nave di Teseo.



Alongside the famous actor, a brilliant Massimo Manca, who knows Lucretius well because he has been teaching Latin language and literature at the University of Turin for a long time. His conversation with Herlitzka is easy and lacking in useless pleasantries, at the Salone del Libro the times are short, but everyone knows it, and they go straight to the point, in *medias res*. Everything revolves around a central question: how did the idea of translating Lucretius come

about? And above all because to translate it into Dante triplets. Currently the translations we are used to are exegetical or even popular, while the poetic language chosen by Herlitzka is not easy, it is certainly not an Italian for everyone. But the world from which the author of this verse translation comes is theater, and theater is the place where poetry and verse can be spent in public, even today. In a sense, then, even Lucretius loved archaic Latin, and therefore why not use a fourteenth-century Italian, with some license to even more recent poetic language?

Herlitzka studied al d'Azeglio in Turin - he is keen to remember this detail, given that Turin is the city that hosts the Book Fair - and the classical high school was the place where his love for Dante was born, but also for the other classics, like Petrarca, Leopardi, Montale. The idea of translating some verses of Lucretius into hendecasyllables was at the beginning a pastime, the distraction of a student who experiences hendecasyllables as a pure exercise in style, or perhaps as a game. At first for love of Dante, then for love of him, of Lucretius, and some kinship between the two there, and was recognized by some well before this work of translation began. Then as we know the actor moved to Rome to study acting, and among his teachers was Orazio Costa, who opened his mind when he read Dante.

The love for Dante, however, could not make up for a knowledge of Latin that was not that of the professional philologist, and therefore Herlitzka confesses confidently to Professor Massimo Manca that he did not start from scratch, but that he used a very translation literal of *De Rerum Natura*, the school edition of the Avia Pervia series. Unfortunately, however, especially in the fourth book, certain passages that have to do with eros and sexuality have been omitted (Autocensura? Don't the students have to read certain things?), Therefore, especially in this book, the reference was the Italian translation by Armando Fellin. With a winking look, and here the actor's soul shines through, Herlitzka tells us that he now hopes to end the verse rendition and thus complete this translation that he conducted, little by little, over a lifetime.

Then the actor stands up, and begins to read the triplets of his translation, a sense of rhythm, a force, even Manca, who is used to the metric of Latin verses, and follows the original text he brought with him, looks up surprised. There are five passages chosen by Herlitzka for the public of the Salone del Libro:

the one in which it is said that the gods, blessed, do not care about human affairs;

the useless sacrifice of Iphigenia to allow the easy departure of Greek ships;

the sacrifice of the calf to the gods, sacrificed on the altars of the divine sanctuaries;

atmospheric dust, which moves in all directions illuminated by the light of the sun, to which atoms are compared, which flow incessantly into infinite space;

and finally, the fifth piece, which certainly many of you will remember having translated in the long hours of Latin spent in high school. The one in which the sick child is described, to which

the doctor delivers a bitter medicine ( *absinthia* ). The rim of the glass is sweetened with honey. Lucrezio, with his verses, wants to tell the message of his master, Epicurus, in a sweet way, and even we adults, who for years have not faced the reading of those verses in Latin, we cannot however not remember that image: *dulci counting melle* .

**Sandro Borzoni**

---

### **Post by “michelepinto” of May 11, 2019 at 5:38 PM**

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Interesting post even if you don't translate it! 😊 How do you mean "it is too much Italian?" Too long to translate, or too something else?

Basically is a new translation of De Rerum Natura in Italian, in the style of a great italian poet. It is hard to reed for me, that I'm italian. And has no sense translate a translation... So I imagine that book has not to much interest for who not speaks Italian.

---

### **Post by “Cassius” of May 11, 2019 at 5:41 PM**

I see! Do you gather that it adds a new "take" on the poem, or largely just another effort over the same ground? I gather that some people (especially those who like poetry) like the idea of tackling it to try to capture the poetic feel. Is that his approach, or is he targeting accuracy of meaning?

---

### **Post by “michelepinto” of May 11, 2019 at 5:41 PM**



---

## Post by “michelepinto” of May 11, 2019 at 5:46 PM

### [Quote from Cassius](#)

I see! Do you gather that it adds a new "take" on the poem, or largely just another effort over the same ground? I gather that some people (especially those who like poetry) like the idea of tackling it to try to capture the poetic feel. Is that his approach, or is he targeting accuracy of meaning?

I think boot. The focus is the strong of the Words and the feeling he feels and trys to give back. But if the Lucretius words ghive feelings, they must be about Epicurus theachings.