

Toward a New Interlinear Gloss of De Rerum Natura

Post by “Joshua” of June 13, 2023 at 10:25 PM

This project has been dormant for two years, but I have recently picked it up from scratch and am making (glacial) progress. I'm grappling with the Latin word **animans**, which most dictionaries are careful to point out is used for lower order animals but not for humans. I am on the point of insisting that in Lucretius there is no great difference. I am supporting this claim by citing the Letter to Menoeceus, but would appreciate any thoughts as I plow ahead...particularly from [Don](#) .

My essential point is that Epicurus in that letter uses the Greek word ζῷον where βίος would be considered more "appropriate". Cyril Bailey translates; "And when this is once secured for us, all the tempest of the soul is dispersed, since the living creature has not to wander as though in search of something that is missing, and to look for some other thing by which he can fulfill the good of the soul and the good of the body. For it is then that we have need of pleasure, when we feel pain owing to the absence of pleasure; (but when we do not feel pain), we no longer need pleasure."

It's clear that Epicurus makes no distinction between lower animals and humans in this paragraph--both are equally motivated to pursue pleasure and avoid pain. In fact, the reference to fear in the preceding sentence really seems to drive home the point; it is humans and gods *even more* than animals that are under discussion.