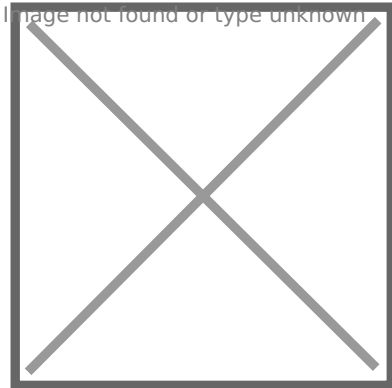


# "Pleasure" and the opening line of Lucretius

Post by "Cassius" of January 11, 2023 at 10:54 AM

As far as I can tell the Latin is: Aeneadum genetrix, hominum divomque voluptas, alma Venus, caeli subter labentia signa....

Now every translation I can find uses another word, but the word is in fact VOLUPTAS which we translate as PLEASURE ..... Correct? I know that poetic translators, and even the narrative versions, like to substitute another word, but given the philosophical significance of the issue, it seems to me that we ought to make note that the word involved is "Pleasure" which presumably is the closest Latin translation of Hedone -- rather than some euphemism. The latin dictionaries use "delight" as a second meaning, but would Lucretius have used any other word for the Greek concept we translate into English as "pleasure" if he were trying to be precise?

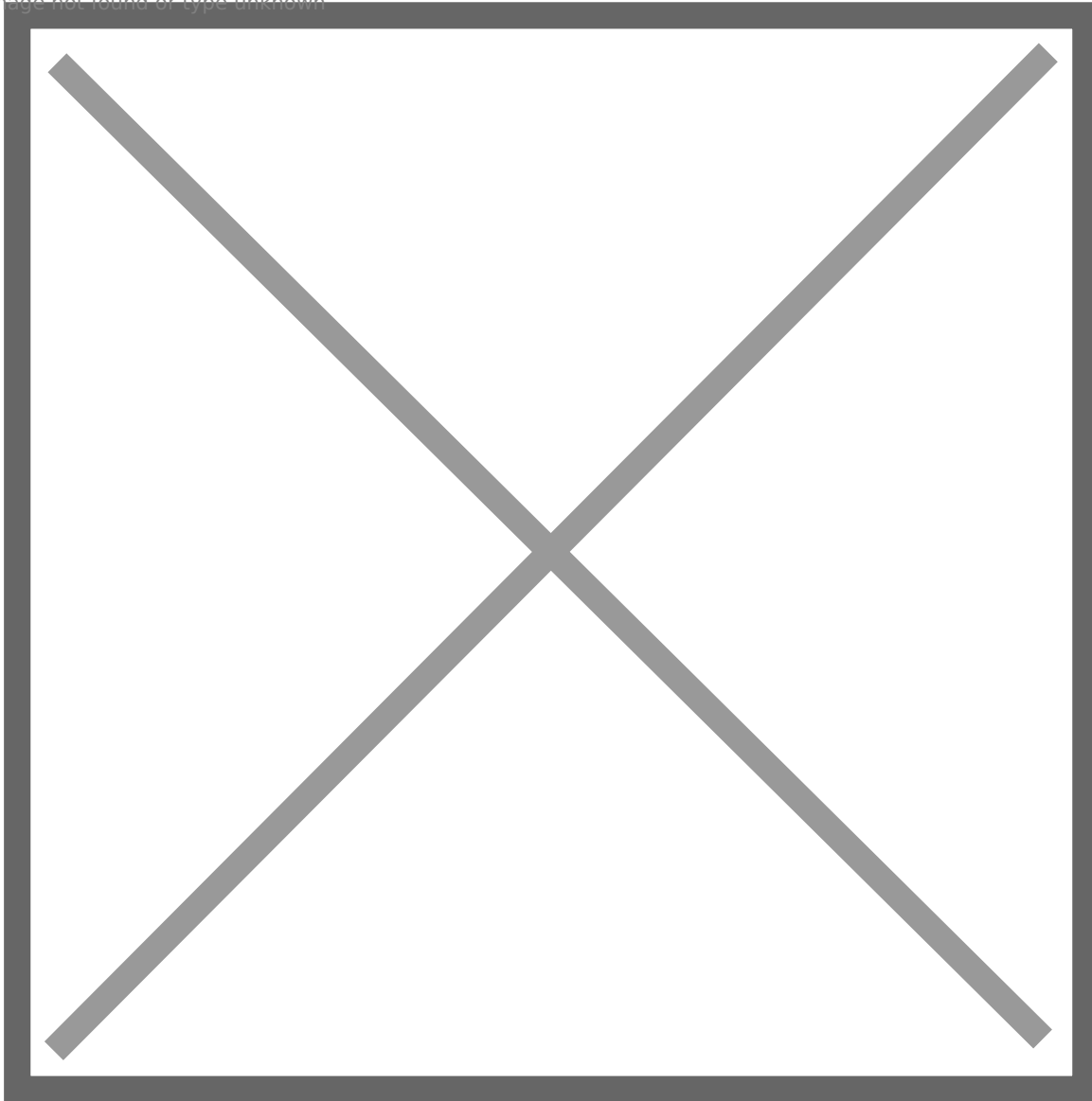


[How to say pleasure in Latin](#)

Latin words for pleasure include voluptas, delectatio, luxuriosi,, luxuriosi and delectationis. Find more Latin words at [wordhippo.com](http://wordhippo.com)!

[www.wordhippo.com](http://www.wordhippo.com)

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[pleasure | Etymology, origin and meaning of pleasure by etymonline](#)

PLEASURE Meaning: "source of enjoyment, pleasing quality or thing, that which pleases or gratifies the senses or the... See origin and meaning of pleasure.

[www.etymonline.com](http://www.etymonline.com)

[ONLINE LATIN DICTIONARY - Latin - English](#)

Brown: MOTHER of Rome, Delight of Men and Gods, Sweet Venus; who with vital power

Munro: MOTHER of the Aeneadae, darling of men and gods, increase-giving Venus,

Bailey: MOTHER of Aeneas's sons, joy of men and gods, Venus the life-giver,

Humphries: Creatress, mother of the Roman line, Dear Venus, joy of earth and joy of heaven,

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2828-pleasure-and-the-opening-line-of-lucretius/>

Leonard: Mother of Rome, delight of Gods and men, Dear Venus that beneath the gliding stars

MF Smith: Mother of Aeneas' people, delight of human beings and the gods,

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### **Post by “Joshua” of January 11, 2023 at 11:37 AM**

Voluptas was also a goddess, signifying sensual pleasure, granddaughter of Venus--alternatively, an aspect of Venus herself--and her Greek equivalent was Hedone.

*Delight* makes for a good English translation in part because it is 'higher in tone'--more suited to an archaic form like Latin epic verse. It has the same Latin root as 'delectable', and there are also metrical considerations. "de-LIGHT of GODS and MEN" is iambic, the standard English poetic foot. *Delight of gods and men...the darling buds of May.*

*Pleasure* breaks up the flow. This is true even in prose, though it wouldn't be as strongly felt.

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### **Post by “Joshua” of January 11, 2023 at 11:43 AM**

"DELIGHT of Humane kind, and Gods above,

Parent of Rome; Propitious Queen of Love,

Whose vital pow'r, Air, Earth, and Sea supplies,

And breeds what e'r is born beneath the rowling Skies:

For every kind, by thy prolificque might,

Springs, and beholds the Regions of the light."

John Dryden translation in heroic couplets; rhyming couplets in iambic pentameter. Dryden is already taking liberties with the meter in the second line, but he nails the first line and that sets the tone.

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### **Post by “Don” of January 11, 2023 at 11:52 AM**

**Post by “Kalosyni” of January 11, 2023 at 3:41 PM**

[Don](#) looking at the above Latin Dictionary entry for "voluptas" -- it occurs to me that delight sounds like a mental pleasure, and where as plain old "pleasure" is in the body.

(Just my take on it).

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**Post by “Don” of January 11, 2023 at 3:54 PM**

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

[Don](#) looking at the above Latin Dictionary entry for "voluptas" -- it occurs to me that delight sounds like a mental pleasure, and where as plain old "pleasure" is in the body.

I guess you could say it's all bodily in some ways since the mind resides in the body?

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**Post by “Joshua” of January 11, 2023 at 3:55 PM**

We also have to consider the motives of the early translators. Most of them in their frontmatter went to great lengths to disavow the main tenets of the poem. One published anonymously, another vowed that she would feed it to the fire if she still had it in her hands. Delight is a gray area. Pleasure is subversive.

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**Post by “Cassius” of January 11, 2023 at 3:57 PM**

[Quote from Joshua](#)

Delight is a gray area. Pleasure is subversive.

Yep "delightful" sounds like a tea party description of ice cream. "Pleasure" sounds like you are going to a movie rated PG - or worse!

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**Post by "Don" of January 11, 2023 at 4:04 PM**

[Quote from Joshua](#)

Pleasure is subversive.

Gimme that old time subversion! It's good enough for me!

Everybody sing along!!

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**Post by "Onenski" of January 12, 2023 at 11:52 AM**

I don't know if this helps, but I'm checking some translations into Spanish.

Abbe Marchena (1791): *Engendradora del romano pueblo / placer de hombres y dioses, alma Venus* (Marchena's translation is the most popular.)

Francisco Socas (2003): *Engendradora de los Enéadas, placer de hombres y dioses, nutricia Venus*

Victoria Pégolo et. al. (2020): *Engendradora de los Enéadas, impulso vital de los hombres y de los dioses, nutricia Venus*

In Spanish is a little more frequent the use of the word "pleasure /placer", although it's interesting that an abbe in a catholic country like Spain in XVIII century used that word.

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**Post by "Little Rocker" of January 13, 2023 at 7:29 PM**

Quote from Don

Gimme that old time subversion! It's good enough for me!

Everybody sing along!!

[OMG!](#) As the kids say, 'I feel seen.' Howling with laughter.