

# The meaning of the word "Nature"

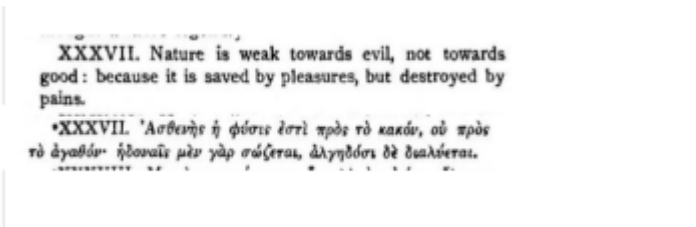
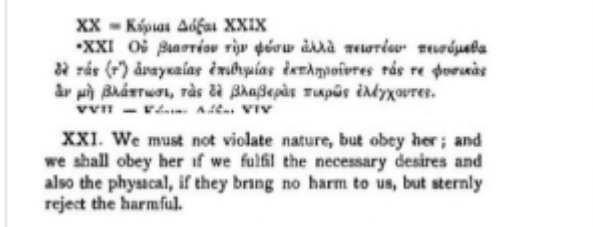
Post by "Cassius" of June 1, 2018 at 9:22 AM

[Poster:](#)

These are the English renderings of 2 VSs; I'm asking for the Greek word for the word nature in each context. DeWitt says "human nature" for nature, but I'm unsure and looking for clarity. I'd mainly like to know if the word for "nature" in Ancient Greek is different for each VS, for there's certainly a HUGE difference between "human nature" and "Nature."

21. We must not violate nature, but obey her; and we shall obey her if we fulfil those desires that are necessary, and also those that are natural but bring no harm to us, but we must sternly reject those that are harmful.

37. Nature is weak toward evil, not toward good: because it is saved by pleasures, but destroyed by pains.



Cassius:

the side-by-side Bailey translation is always available here:

<https://archive.org/stream/Epicuru...e/n107/mode/2up>

I'm not competent to comment on the Greek but you raise a question that I've had myself. I have been presuming this is an area where DeWitt is extrapolating that it **\*\*must\*\*** be "human nature" as it would be difficult or impossible to see it as "nature at large**\*\***" To the extent VS37 embraces animals, it would have to be the nature of life or something like that.

Also, I suppose it is possible (though maybe unlikely) that Epicurus could have used the word Nature to refer to "the living part of the universe" rather than to the universe as a whole, the majority of which is non-living. I've never heard anyone suggest that so I presume that would not be accurate, but it might be interesting to explore the references to see if there would be any basis for that. That might relate to the distinction I just raised in the thread by David Hazell on Lucretius that Venus is goddess of living things but not the creator of the universe as a

whole.

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**Post by “Hiram” of June 1, 2018 at 4:10 PM**

fysin is the word used in the first image, fysis in the second. So what is being translated as nature shares semantic roots with the word "physics", with the physical. Maybe "the body" or even "the flesh" could sometimes replace this translation? Another translation might be "matter".

As to your Venus reference, notice that "mater" (mother) shares semantic roots with matter. In Spanish, matter is "materia". I think in Lucretius' Latin tongue this shared semantic history would have been much more evident.