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BOOK REVIEW

Nail, T. (2020). *Lucretius II: An Ethics of Motion*. Edinburgh University Press. ISBN: 978-1- 4744-6665-3.

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According to Thomas Nail, we live in hyperkinetic modernity, and we need new ethics appropriate to the new mobility we are experiencing today. For this purpose, he wrote *Lucretius II: An Ethics of Motion* as the continuation of *Lucretius I: An Ontology of Motion* (2018) using four main methodologies: historical ontology, close reading, translation, and argumentation. His main focus is on Book III and Book IV of *De rerum natura* (1995), and he succeeds in shedding light on them from a contemporary vision. For Nail, *De rerum natura* as a philosophical poem gives new meaning and inspiration for us to comprehend motion by differentiating Lucretius's philosophy on movement from an Epicurean aspect to this term. Likewise, *De rerum natura* focuses on the ontological frameworks of ethics, knowledge, aesthetics, life, death, and ecology. Because these ontological frameworks provide a timeless aspect of philosophy, I find Thomas Nail's contemporary approach crucial. Since *Lucretius II: An Ethics of Motion* allows us to build correlations between recent sociological, ecological, and philosophical approaches, it carries important value to understand the posthumanist aspect as well. He aims to read Lucretius from a new materialist perspective, which refuses the dualities between existence and gives importance to relationality. Likewise, new materialism sees history as a processual notion, not a progressive term. Thus, Nail's approach to history, philosophy, and posthumanism directs readers to interact with these terms in a non-linear way from a new materialist way of looking. By applying ethics as the key term of the book, he questions life, death, knowledge, aesthetics, and ecology from a philosophical posthumanist standpoint.

Accordingly, he considers Lucretius as a philosopher of movement. The emphasis on the motion is pivotal in Nail's previous book, *Lucretius I: An Ontology of Motion*, as in *Lucretius II: An Ethics of Motion*. From this point of view, he successfully conceptualizes Lucretius' aspects of movement with ethics as the core concept in this book. Nail's argumentation of movement occurs in these two books frequently and helps readers comprehend the philosophical background behind Lucretius, such as Epicurean philosophy and Homeric poetry. Moreover, he stresses that Lucretius hybrids the two opposed figures and traditions of Epicurus and Homer. He continues to associate Lucretius' approach on ethics and movement with continental philosophy by mentioning the ideas of Deleuze, Marx, Nietzsche, etc. In doing so, he protects his critical stance on recent issues, especially on ecology and the existence of

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humanity, from a posthumanist viewpoint. Furthermore, Nail aims to give an integrated point of view about ethics and motion.

In a similar vein to philosophical posthumanism, Donna Haraway's (2016) conceptualization of the term will be beneficial in terms of Nail's contemporary conceptualization of the book. Haraway identifies three essential ontological breakdowns between organism-machine, human-animal, and physical-nonphysical relations. The first one refers to the hybrid human in terms of not having a pure human body because of technological developments, medicine, organ transplantations, and so forth. The second one indicates that humans are not unique or exceptional. Rather, they are part of the animal kingdom, and companion species gain importance kinship amongst creatures in the world. The third one refers to micro-level relationships such as microelectronic devices. In this way, Nail's argumentation on ethics, ecology, aesthetics, life, death, knowledge includes processualism and relationism with his historical ontology by breaking the ontological boundaries between these terms similar to Haraway. He also emphasizes the hybridity of Lucretius' philosophy and the hybrid thinking concerning current debates on ecology, politics, and life.

Subsequently, nature is one of the essential terms in *Lucretius II: An Ethics of Motion* in correlating ethics and movement together. The relationship between human's ever-movement and the notion of ethics affects nature inevitably. Similarly, one of Nail's focal points is human migration, which he defines as a constitutive and foundational aspect of all social reality. This status of human motion also gives the reader a new perspective on posthumanism by questioning this term concerning human constructions on nature from a social reality perspective. In this sense, his way of correlating terms from a sociological and philosophical perspective makes this book more effective in showing ecological disasters and their harmful impacts on nature and society. Since people have been forced to immigrate because of the harmful impacts of ecological calamities, this situation gives rise to new socio-political issues, including immigration policies, welfare standards, increasing poverty, and such. Nail's book provides a philosophical inspiration to create a posthumanist aspect of life, including socio-political and philosophical aspects of it. Thus, I find Nail's conceptualization quite significant as he creates new dimensions in critical theory. Similarly, Rosi Braidotti (2018), who is one of the important posthumanist scholars, emphasizes that "creativity -the imagination- constantly reconnects to the virtual totality of a block of past experiences and affects, which get recomposed as action in the present, thereby realizing their unfulfilled potential" (7). Following her approach, Nail reconnects past experiences and affects with contemporary debates on nature focusing on Lucretius' philosophy. Additionally, Braidotti's (2013) conception of *zoe* as "the vital force of life" that "refers to the dynamic, self-organizing structure of life itself" (60) is also valuable to read Nail's book from a posthumanist perspective. From her definition of *zoe*, Nail approaches the notion of life by relating it with ethics as a collective way of living and acting in the rejection of hierarchies between humans and non-human.

From the structural concept of *Lucretius II: An Ethics of Motion*, I would like to point out Nail's statement that is essential to understand the book's narration and its content. He states that "for Lucretius, there are no beings, only becomings – only flows of matter in constant composition and decomposition" (26). In terms of *becoming*, it is important to note Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari's (2005) philosophy of becoming, which is a rhizome, not a classificatory or genealogical tree (239). Following these statements, Nail's way of narrating



keeps main arguments from a strict way of defining; rather he reinforces an interpretive expression by liberating notions from their molar definitions, which indicate fixations, hierarchies, resemblances, and representations (Deleuze & Guattari, 2005). Therefore, the notion of becoming constructs this book's structure in a flow of narration and ideas that enables readers to interiorize ethics associating it with life as a process of becoming. Moreover, his conception of knowledge as a performative and transformative term strengthens the book's structure and practices the dynamic processes in the understanding of ethics.

In addition, Nail's overall argument on human, non-human relationships strengthen both the posthumanist emphasis on non-hierarchical relations and Deleuze & Guattari's ontology of becoming as a rhizome. Nail argues that "I would like to use Lucretius' naturalism and materialism to overcome the anthropocentrism and constructivist anti-realism of contemporary poststructuralism. The result, I hope, will be kinetic new materialism, distinct from current vitalist new materialisms, object-oriented ontologies, and speculative realisms" (214). So, he adds a philosophical posthumanist attitude to ancient texts with a combination of transformative and performative understanding of knowledge and opens a new path to grasp the post-anthropocentric viewpoint, which questions anthropocentric constructions and gives equalities to all non-human species concerning ancient philosophy. Similarly, he focuses on process-oriented ontology, and he claims that "there is only 'one natural process', but since process is, by definition, neither whole nor part, it can neither be one nor many. Nature is not a thing or even a big collection of things. Thus, it cannot be 'one' in the strictly numerical sense" (9). Nail, therefore, stresses the importance of process-oriented ontology concerning its relationality with ethics and nature. He supports the ideas that heterogeneities and multiplicities are pivotal components of posthuman thinking through nature. In that way, he sheds light on the zone of relationality for readers to correlate nature and ethics as many and processual notions.

Consequently, Nail's approach to Lucretius' philosophy is quite successful in defining ethics of motion and correlating ethics with life, death, knowledge, aesthetics, and ecology. The methodology, the honorifics, and the structure of *Lucretius II: An Ethics of Motion* help readers follow the narration and rediscover Lucretius as an ancient philosopher in a combination of the contemporary perspective. I offer people to read *Lucretius II: An Ethics of Motion* without a doubt if they have concerns about humanity's applications of nature and life itself from an ethical questioning. After reading this book, readers will have new ways of criticizing motion through a philosophical posthumanist philosophy.

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