BOOK REVIEW

Bernadette Bensaude-Vincent. *Temps-paysage. Pour une écologie des crises*. Paris: Le Pommier/Humensis, 2021. 300 pp.
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Temps-paysage. Pour une écologie des crises, the new essay by Bernadette Bensaude-Vincent, is motivated by the recurring crises of our time, understood as crises of time and weather, both encompassed by the French word “temps.” It argues that the dominant, linear, and homogeneous temporal framework is one of the sources of the problem. It then proposes to think of times in the plural: rather than trying to understand the collusion between the time of human history and a global time, it is necessary to extend the perspective to those that are usually kept separated, such as minerals, plants, and animals, as well as humans. Furthermore, the deeply ingrained chronological approach takes as a given a privileged standpoint outside of and above time itself, one that can no longer be sustained. Instead, we must learn how lifelines intersect and are entangled, so that our thinking about the biogeological, social or technical worlds can be renewed.

In what follows, translations into English from the original French text were made by the review's author. The page numbers refer to the French edition.

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The first part of the book, *Emergency Time*, analyses and deconstructs the time metaphors of the flow and the arrow of time, the latter pointing either to the progress of humankind (as in Moore's law) or to some form of collapse. Both teleological perspectives are entailed by the conception of oriented time that presents the future as the guide to the present. François Hartog's "regimes of historicity" and Reinhart Koselleck's "horizon of expectation" are concepts mobilized to construct the argument.

The second part of the essay, *Chronos' Empire*, explains how the idea of chronological time became hegemonic. It shows how a linear and universal time was constructed, and how this is thought to complement an independent, subjective time. The argument continues with the analysis of the construction of deep time, measured in millions of years, leading to a time scale at the end of which the Anthropocene has been placed. The processes of abstraction and standardization that allow such constructions were successful in hiding the fact that in nature itself lots of different times are present. All in all, these constructions share the common fiction that we possess a privileged view, an external view, situated nowhere and in no time.

The third part of the book, *The World in Polychrony*, builds a new metaphor of the time-landscape. The inspiration comes from the works of ecologist Patrick Blandin, the sinologist and philosopher François Julien, the concepts of moments of being in some of Virginia Woolf's writings, and the reading of the Latin poet and early physicist Lucretius by Michel Serres. Differently from the landscape in Western art, the landscapes in time-landscapes are to be inhabited rather than seen. The moments of being in Virginia Woolf's writings build time-landscapes, lived as "the revelation of a world, in a ceaseless process, in which the lines of becoming make knots, get entangled, disentangled, and push each other apart" (p. 151). The metaphor is enriched with examples from ethology and microbiology: ticks waiting for mammals operate according to *kairos*, symbiogenic bacteria traverse the phylogenetic, time-oriented tree. Each time-landscape engenders a local time, thus questioning the idea of a universal time.

The last part of the text, *Ages in Landscapes*, displaces the attention from objects to the itineraries of their materials, in order to use the metaphor of time-landscape heuristically. Analyzing the nuclear landscape, the author concludes that the nuclear "questions the very idea of successive ages in human techniques," for the "age of the nuclear will not end" (p. 238). Plastics constitute another time-landscape, one of a perpetual present concealing origin and destination of discharged plastic objects. Thus, the social life of objects may end, but the lives of their materials impose on us their own times, which leads the author to consider ecopolitical landscapes. In an analysis of the proposals of the circular economy and the Cradle-to-Cradle ecological design, Bensaude-Vincent concludes that they fail to incorporate a time-landscape. It is, therefore, necessary to go further and find ways of really composing "with the

diverse temporalities playing in the landscapes of techno-nature that constitute the earth we inhabit” (p. 268).

The text is rounded off by a *Coda*, addressing metaphysical issues and making explicit some influences that are instrumental to the argument. Henri Bergson’s “intuition” inspires the “attention” to things and their heterochrony, thus breaking with the classical metaphysics underlying the arrow of time and its progress-or-collapse logic. Michel Serres’ notion of an active Biogea and his view that language is shared by humans and things are combined with contributions from the so-called “thing turn,” thus avoiding binaries such as “a history of Man” versus a “history of other things” (p. 284). Time-landscapes offer a chronography rather than a chronology and narrations rather than discourses, breaking with the tradition of unveiling the essence of things. Finally, for Bensaude-Vincent one should not assume an opposition between Moderns and the Earthbound, as proposed by Bruno Latour. For her, “it is necessary to assume a plurality of visions of the earth, associated with the multiplicity of lines of time” (p. 292).

The book is of interest for a variety of readerships, including philosophers and historians of science, anthropologists, sociologists interested in the sociologies of humans and non-humans, ecologists and also the non-specialized public needing a fresh approach to issues that have been entangling us all in ceaseless polemicizing.

Temps-paysage is no doubt a highly welcome contribution to the philosophy and history of science and technology. Its diversified bibliographic references richly connect its ideas to contemporary discussions on how to talk about society, culture, science, and technology without leaving nature apart. Also, it shows, as in Bensaude-Vincent’s other publications, how these words need renewal to be used critically and productively.

If there is some aspect to critique in the book, it is the demanding task for its readers to detach themselves from the idea of linear time. Yet, this seems exactly to be the point: in order to become aware of multiple temporal landscapes, it is necessary to leave the metaphors of the flow and arrow behind and to accept time as much more complex.

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