

Introduction: Time and educational (re-)forms — Inquiring the temporal dimensions of education

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To cite this article: Mathias Decuypere & Pieter Vanden Broeck (2020): Time and educational (re-)forms—Inquiring the temporal dimension of education, *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, DOI: 10.1080/00131857.2020.1716449

Let me say a word on the idea of progress. We conceive of time as an irreversible line, whether interrupted or continuous, of acquisitions and inventions. We go from generalizations to discoveries, leaving behind us a trail of errors finally corrected (...) I cannot help thinking that this idea is the equivalent of those ancient diagrams we laugh at today, which place the Earth at the center of everything, or our galaxy at the middle of the universe, to satisfy our narcissism. Just as in space we situate ourselves at the centre, at the navel of the things in the universe, so for time, through progress, we never cease to be at the summit, on the cutting edge, at the state-of-the-art of development. It follows that we are always right, for the simple, banal, and naive reason that we are living in the present moment. The curve traced by the idea of progress thus seems to me to sketch or project into time the vanity and fatuousness expressed spatially by that central position. (...) This diagram allows us permanently (...) to be not only right but to be righter than was ever possible before. Now I believe that one should always be wary of any person or theory that is always right: he's not plausible; it's not probable. (Serres, 1995:48-49)

Speaking here is Michel Serres, who, in dialogue with Bruno Latour, succinctly yet very poignantly summarizes the way in which modernity has generally been approaching issues of time and space. In traditional modernity, Serres argues, time is being conceived as an arrow that goes ever forward and that is continuously proceeding along the general underlying line of progress. Time, in this modern sense, is approached as always being linear, and steadily and uniformly going from an archaic and unenlightened past, into our contemporary present, and towards a bright, better and more enlightened future. This implies that in modernity, time is approached as existing outside of the humans who experience this time themselves: time unfolds, whether or not there are humans present to witness – or interfere in – this unfolding. Over the last decades, however, it has become very clear that this modern, unidimensional approach to time is increasingly difficult to maintain. Instead, different conceptions of time have emerged, as well as different understandings of the relations between the spatial and the temporal (Serres, 1995). For example, that time and space are becoming increasingly compressed, has become one of the most salient insights from recent social theory (Harvey, 1989), along with associated leitmotifs that our traditional understanding of time as ‘clock time’ and space as ‘coordinate space’ have been superseded by a form of ‘timeless time’ and what is popularly called a ‘space of flows’ (Castells, 1996). It has equally been argued that social life in general is characterized by a contraction of the present (Luhmann, 1976), resulting in an increasing amount of acceleration (Rosa, 2013), and that this increased instantaneity has led to a replacing of chronological with chronoscopic time (Virilio, 1986) – to name only a few. Next hereto, the argument is increasingly made that the abject condition of our planet and the ‘new climatic regime’ that is gradually unfolding, make it more and more difficult – or indeed fatuous – to continue to

adhere to unidimensional arguments of progress or of modernity as the steady march towards an enlightened society (e.g. Latour, 2018).

This Special Issue aims to meticulously disentangle the (relations between) different sorts of time that are fabricated in contemporary education and the various constellations intent on governing it. By doing so, we aim to further problematize the often unreflexively assumed and fairly traditional modern understandings of time in the field of educational theory. The theme of time has always been closely related to the field of education in general, and to the field of educational philosophy and theory in particular. Quite simply, there is no education whatsoever possible, or even conceivable, without incorporating and addressing the issue of time in one way or the other. Time is at the core of any form of education, be it in the fairly traditional senses of education as *Bildung*, formation, or edification, or in more recent senses of instruction, learning and investing. Indeed, education has always been a matter of time and change. Both are presupposed by the intent to teach and the willingness to learn. Within the national context for instance, the modern centrality of the curriculum stems from its capacity to structure, shape and project that time as the specific, temporal horizon of education processes and desired learning outcomes. National curricula arrange time in class hours, schooldays and yearly cohorts, but even more importantly, they establish what the past can teach to present and future generations (Forquin, 2008). However, when education shifts perspectives towards transnational, European or even global levels, it has been noted that the past, when understood as continuity and as tradition, loses relevance (McEneaney & Meyer, 2000). Increasingly, contemporary education is shaped by the future. Likewise, it has been noted that (education) governing systems are increasingly deploying and anticipating the future not as horizon to progress towards, but rather as resource that is increasingly being drawn into the present, thus doing away with the arrow of time (Appadurai, 2013; in the context of education see e.g. Lewis, 2018). Educational governing is, in that respect, perhaps one of the most salient areas in which concrete dealings with time become explicitly visible, as regional, national or international governmental actors explicitly aim for the creation of specific sorts of time (e.g. Lewis, 2018; Hayes & Findlow, 2017; Thompson & Cook, 2014; Nespore, 2004). That is to say, in educational governing, time is constantly discursively deployed and, so do all the contributions in this Special Issue extensively argue, *fabricated*, often in relation to political governance that explicitly seeks to steer or more implicitly nudge educational actors and/or systems in preferred directions.

Over the last decades, much of the thinking in educational theory has unidimensionally privileged space. Instead, this Special Issue seeks to think time and space together and, thus, explicitly gives the floor to the perspective of temporality. Rather than appealing to commonly held feelings that late modernity operates in liquid forms, the aim is to understand the generative mechanisms by means of which different forms of time and learning are enacted in contemporary educational configurations (Archer, 2014). The purpose of this Special Issue, then, is more specifically to bring together distinct analytical perspectives regarding processes of educational time-making; perspectives that deliberately seek to disturb the status-quo. Accordingly, the Special Issue aligns with other recent explorations in the field that all tentatively suggest that we are beginning to experience new forms of educational temporalities that are no longer analysable – and, in a strong sense, even no longer *conceivable* – in modernist terms (some examples: Amsler & Facer, 2017; Chen & Bu, 2019; Decuypere et al., 2019; Lingard & Thompson, 2017; Hassan, 2017; Papastephanou, 2014). In line with these and many other studies, the Special Issue examines how time is crucial in the constitution of contemporary education and most notably in the constitution of educational governing – presently often conceptualized and given form as *governance* (cf. Ball & Junemann, 2012;

Nóvoa & Yariv-Mashal, 2003; Simons & Masschelein, 2008). Furthermore, the Special Issue explores the distinct implications of these newly fabricated times and is foremost interested in the *effects* of such variegated time-making. Some of the major questions that are addressed in this Special Issue are: How are contemporary education and education policy creating and/or reacting to particular forms of presents, pasts and futures? How do specific forms of education (e.g. lifelong learning) relate to specific forms of time (e.g. as resource) and policy instrumentations (e.g. monitoring)? How are progress, acceleration and time related in educational reform processes?

Even though this Special Issue approaches these questions in a theoretical manner, our central thesis is that in order to make sense of the specificities of time in contemporary education in general, and in educational governing in particular, we must necessarily start from, and explicitly take into account the various empirical dynamics of time construction. Indeed, it is our contention that in order to be able to grasp the specificities of educational times in their varying national, regional or global contexts, we need to be attentive to educational time-making (cf. Bennett & Burke, 2018). What emerges very clearly from the studies gathered in this Special Issue is that the temporal dimensions of present-day education and its policy need to be unpacked by being attentive to specificities and particularities, and cannot be properly accounted for by theoretical argumentations alone. This implies, first of all, that many of the articles in this special issue argue that ‘the’ temporal can no longer be approached as the objective *and* objectifying backdrop against which different educational activities and actors operate and are being made operational. Instead, how different educational times are being made and how these various sorts of time relate with each other, is a shared concern of many articles. Secondly, and as argued, what equally emerges very clearly is that many contributors put forward the argument that we are starting to experience a new – digital – sort of temporality, which is *inter alia* characterizable by its accelerating nature. A third key theme is that many contributions in equally advocate for the importance of analysing educational (re-)forms that come about in and through the fabrication of distinct educational times. As such, the articles in this Special Issue call for intricate morphologies of the educational in general, and how educational forms come about in particular.

In sum, this Special Issue aims to develop new perspectives on educational time-making, and on the various (e.g. digital, organizational, evaluative) operations that are associated with the fabrication of distinct educational temporalities. Even though offering final and definitive answers would exceed the scope of one singular thematic issue, the Special Issue nevertheless aims to contribute to laying the groundwork for the ongoing development and further refinement of a conceptual *vocabulary*, a *grammar* or an *architecture* that will allow to account for the various complexities and intricacies of the temporal features of educational practices (Alhadeff-Jones, 2017:45). It is our hope that this will assist researchers to organize and conceive relationships amongst the various temporalities that are presently being constituted in various educational practices. In the next sections, we outline the three key themes (i.e. the relation between time and space; acceleration; morphology) that run like a common thread throughout this Special Issue more extensively, by briefly introducing each theme and framing it in the broader literature. Thereafter, we introduce each of the contributions to this Special Issue.

On time and space

The title of this Special Issue deliberately stresses the crucial role of time in/for the educational field. We hope that this title works as a provocation, since the majority of research in the field of educational theory continues to explicitly prioritize space over time. Some examples from this Journal that attest for this explicit spatial focus can be found in, *inter alia*, Acton (2017); Charteris, Smardon & Nelson (2017); Hung & Stables (2011); and Usher (2002). Far from being isolated cases, these studies attest for a broader evolution in educational scholarship that has a keen interest in the spatial. Indeed, just like in the social sciences in general (Soja, 1989), the *spatial turn* in education has been very influential (Paechter, 2004; Larsen & Beech, 2014). However, what we would like to suggest, is that it is growing more and more difficult to defend this ‘primacy’ of the spatial. As Lingard and Thompson (2017:2) have it, ‘[t]ime and the temporal (...) have been ignored, forgotten or subsumed’ within these spatialization projects. Especially when perusing the literature on the Europeanisation and/or globalization of education, it is hard to overlook how that what claims itself as a question of space or places, in effect mostly deals with very inventive attempts to make spatial barriers *irrelevant* – say international comparisons or global standards – and often mistakes matters of space for what is as much, if not more, a *matter of time*. Some go even as far to argue that our present-day constellation is *prima facie* a temporal one, imbued with endemic uncertainty and fragmentation (e.g. Luhmann, 2012 or Bauman, 2007).

Importantly, however, it is *not* our aim to denounce existing spatial analyses in favour of an allegedly ‘more correct’ argument that would entail the overtly or even quasi-exclusively stressing of the temporal dimensions of education. Instead, and as argued above, we advocate for an approach that does not give primacy to either space or time, but that seeks to think both productively together (see esp. May & Thrift, 2003). It is important to remark that this Special Issue, thus, does not aim to revert the direction of the spatial turn and ‘turn’ this spatial turn into a temporal one. Rather than subverting spatial arguments, and reminiscent of the quote of Serres with which we started this introduction, the contributions in this Issue aim to bring both dimensions together, and not to make one element subordinate to the other (Decuyper & Simons, 2016). The title of this Special Issue should thus not be interpreted as an attempt to downsize space, but rather as an attempt to stress the active and comparatively under-researched role that time plays in contemporary educational research. Important in this respect, and as the articles gathered here all make clear – in educational governing contexts as in any other educational practice – time- and space-making does not happen *ex nihilo*, but is always produced with, as well as productive of, specific instruments and within a specific policy instrumentation (cf. Lascoumes & Le Galès, 2007): How are times and spaces produced? How are educational times and spaces brought about? How do they relate? How do they synchronize? Is there something specific about educational time and space? And what does that imply for the present-day learner?

On acceleration

Approached chronologically, time is a spatializing endeavour: it is made divisible in distinct spatial chunks (seconds, minutes, hours, etc.) that can be approached unidimensionally and therefor measured easily (Bergson, 1999; Lingard & Thompson, 2017). For instance, educational studies of time largely rely on an assumed idea of temporal segmentation (Alhadeff-Jones, 2017; Slattery, 1995). Yet, both in social theory in general and in educational theory in particular, the argument is more and more made that this traditional clock time no longer speaks to our everyday experience. Instead, it seems as if our present-day social life is pre-eminently characterized by processes and/or experiences of acceleration, velocity and speed (e.g.

Floridi, 2014; Serres, 2015; Stiegler, 2013). Moreover, there is an increasing sense that this accelerating pace of life is tightly associated with technological advancements, and more notably with processes of digitization: processes of acceleration are closely associated with the invocation of digital temporalities (Wajcman & Dodd, 2017). This is a crucial point on which many contributions to this Special Issue coincide, viz. the insight that technology is not on the outside of social relations: it actively shapes educational spaces and times and, consequently, the learning process itself – ever faster, ever more personalized, and ever more efficient (Decuypere, 2019; Masschelein & Simons, 2015). In educational contexts, for instance, we can concretely think of the increasingly personalizing and flexibilizing ‘anytime, anywhere’ logic that is being imposed on the learning process, and that seeks to make education independent from its traditional times and spaces (e.g. Sheail, 2018). More generally, the governing of education is more and more enacted as a form of *digital* education governance, where fast and ‘real-time’ governing instruments are actively shaping new forms of up-close, future-tense educational governance (Williamson, 2015 – see equally Peck & Theodore, 2015). This Special Issue further explores these insights: many contributors argue that such governing is in the process of replacing more traditional forms of governing that were primordially directed at educational institutions (in chronological time).

Increasing acceleration is not only brought forward through technological advancements. Next to technologies, capitalism equally seems to be impinging upon acceleration. In that respect, the term *accelerationism* is often invoked in order to engage with how *both* technology and capitalism influence everyday life: the term is used in order to stress that ‘capitalism has created, is creating, and will increasingly create time-based, cybernetic feedback loops, in which time spirals in on itself as capital is continually reinvested in technological development’ (Sellar & Cole, 2017:39). It seems crucial to us, however, not to hold acceleration and/or accelerationism as some sort of default model of how contemporary education and education governance would operate. Acceleration(ism) suggests quantity, an increase in size and/or frequency, and as such points to the quantitative character of time: time as *chronos*. Yet, it is equally important to always take into account the qualitative character of time. Time as *kairos* (or the ‘right time’) involves special temporal positions: something happening at a delineated point in time, irrespective of whether it is more or less than something that came before (Smith, 1969). Driven by algorithms, many contemporary governing instruments in effect algorithmically seek to find the *right* or the *opportune* time to intervene rather than only increase the perpetually accelerating rhythm of control (Bucher, 2018). Acceleration, thus, could beget slowness in other spaces (or of other times), slowing down or even leading to a temporary stand-still of other actors. Staying true to the taking into account of the empirical dynamics of time and space construction mentioned above, acceleration thus necessitates empirical scrutiny and inquiry (Wajcman & Dodd, 2017:3): How is speed produced? How is acceleration made? Through which instruments? Which (fast and slow) fabrications are needed in order to bring about such acceleration? Who owns speed? How is it paid for, and in what ways? Where is control and evaluation to be situated?

On the form of education

In addition to time, our special issue draws particular attention to the form of education and its possible reforms. Such an interest in a formal concept of education links up with various currents of literature. Indeed, the question whether education can be said to feature an intrinsic form or shape has been raised in multiple ways. Observing how only very “few reforms aimed at the classroom make it past the door

permanently” (Cuban, 1990: 11), one strand of scholarly literature, mostly dealing with the history of American school reforms, has explained the resistance to reform attempts by the existence of a certain *grammar of schooling* (Tobin & Tyack, 1994). The expression has since become a popular shorthand for how the institutionalised character of school instruction exerts a tenacious hold on what education can be or can become (cf. Tyack & Cuban, 1995). The observation of frequently frustrated reform ambitions is then typically linked with those particular regularities that, while often silently taken for granted, lend school education its recognisable and apparently immutable shape: the grouping of students according to their age, the organisation of knowledge into distinct teaching subjects, or the classroom as an isolated, self-contained space headed by a professional teacher. The classroom and its closed door are not merely sign and symptom of school’s self-preserving tendency, but taken to symbolize a set of features that over time have slowly crystallized into essential elements –a *Gestalt*, as it were– considered a necessary condition in order to develop and maintain education’s own logic, suspended and independent from political, economic or other interference (cf. Masschelein & Simons, 2013). In the francophone context, Guy Vincent (1982), similarly concluded his historical survey of the emergent primary school in France with the hypothesis of a so-called *forme scolaire* (or ‘school form’). What constitutes the unity or essence of the modern effort to educate, even beyond the already mentioned recurring elements, is here summarised as a peculiar appreciation of impersonal rules: “For the pupil, to behave according to the rules, for the teacher, to teach by principles” (Vincent, 1982: 529). The relationship between teacher and students is not a personal one, in other words, but governed by rules *sui generis* to which both are equally submitted and precisely this given lends school its familiar face, or indeed, form. Even if the ensuing debate has led to considerable differences with the Anglo-Saxon grammar of schooling, both stances coincide in the observation of school instruction’s remarkable stability. Such stable appearance is moreover by both considered first and foremost “a product of history” (Tyack & Cuban, 1995: 86) – or as the francophone literature underlines: of *national* histories (cf. Maulini & Montandon, 2005).

But as school education expands on a *global* scale (Meyer et al., 1992), the form or grammar of school simultaneously loses much of its self-evident character (cf. Vanden Broeck, 2019). Fuelled by international comparisons, which construct education as a worldwide affair (Schriewer, 2000), globalisation throws into stark relief the contingency of education. What seemed necessary, all of a sudden becomes visible as a mere possibility, which has turned out differently elsewhere (in different places) and expectedly will turn out different again in the future (in different times). Reform becomes endemic and in and through this, the future is increasingly expected as change, as discontinuity. But the future is not only novel and unknown: as many contributions to this Special Issue underline, precisely in this modality of an expected discontinuity, the future also becomes an exploitable trope for giving (pedagogical, political, etc.) decisions a new and broader scope for action. The future provides potential “histories-to-come” (Shackle, 1990) that widen the scope of the possible, at once imparting to the resulting choices an impression of necessity. The future acts both as a motivator and a *justificans* for decisions that claim to anticipate unexpected, yes even unforeseeable states of affairs. In this precise sense, many contributions in this Special Issue argue that the present is increasingly shaped by the future and school, much like any other organization (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001), is expected to perform reliably under such conditions of future uncertainty today (cf. Mangez et al., 2017). The question, then, is if education will nevertheless maintain its grammar of school. Or does this intensified orientation to the future (also) make room for new and different forms? How do the questions of time, form and reform come together in the contemporary practice of global education?

Outline of the special issue

With this Special Issue, it is our aim that the collection of articles that we have brought together, offers fresh theoretical insights that might set the agenda for further theoretical and empirical inquiry in the construction and ongoing fabrication of educational temporalities. More especially, we have sought to bring a variety of theoretical strands such as Science and Technology Studies, systems theory, and governance studies, together.

Starting this Special Issue is *Christina Segerholm*, who explores the temporal dimension of evaluation systems in the educational field. Importantly, and in line with many contemporary sociological theory, Segerholm contends that evaluation has constitutive effects, that is, that evaluation changes higher education as it is being measured. Drawing on the example of Swedish evaluation systems of higher education, Segerholm argues that evaluation systems are first and foremost machineries that are imbued with temporal power. The article analyses how Swedish evaluation systems promote and accelerate change. More especially, the article draws on Hartmut Rosa's three aspects of social acceleration (technical acceleration, acceleration of social change and acceleration of the pace of life). Importantly, the article's empirical analysis suggests that evaluation systems seem to breed evaluation systems, and thus, that feedback loops of evaluation directly contribute to social acceleration as a whole: evaluation systems sustain and promote social acceleration.

The contribution of *Joakim Landahl* focuses on the temporal characteristics of one specific evaluation system, namely the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)'s Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). Landahl's argument is that assessment programs like PISA order and structure time in highly specific ways, namely through *swiftness*, *regularity* and *synchronization*. Crucially, the article shows that the temporal rhythms invoked by PISA create a new temporal regime that is heavily informed by PISA's calendar (based on three-year cycles of national educational evaluation). Landahl's argument, thus, is that PISA endows the OECD with a substantial amount of power (and not the other way around, that is, that PISA would be a powerful tool because it stems from the OECD). Loosely drawing on the national example of Sweden as a case in point, the article shows how this temporal calendar engenders temporal effects on the country level as well: national education policies are heavily accelerated by the rhythm and tempo of PISA, whereas they at the same time stimulate a retrotopian or nostalgic attitude of looking back at the past.

Clearly, and as the contributions above already make clear, educational governing is not only a matter of national policies and interventions. In their contribution, *Mathias Decuyper* and *Maarten Simons* focus on two recent European policy documents that are focusing on digital education (i.e. Opening up education and the Digital Education Action Plan), and approach these documents as key articulations of Europe's contemporary governing apparatus. Drawing on the work of Bruno Latour, they argue that both documents seek to call into existence a very specific contemporary learner, and that this is effectuated through the creation of highly specific sorts of space and time. Analysing time and space conjointly, Decuyper and Simons qualify the temporalities that are enacted in these documents as *potential* temporalities, and the sorts of space as *ecological* and *networked* spatialities. Crucially, the article elucidates that educational time- and space-making is dependent on an array of newly emerging instruments, such as

platforms, portals, credits and certificates. In conclusion, the article argues that the mode of existence of the contemporary learner is first and foremost an *opportunistic* mode of existence.

Focusing on the temporal side of the standardization of European higher education, *Rosaria Lumino* and *Paolo Landri* critically analyse the temporal politics of the standardization of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The fabrication of the EHEA, so they argue, can only be considered by analysing how time and space are inevitably interlinked. Thus, the fabrication of the EHEA needs to be considered as the installation of a new time-space, where higher education is increasingly operating in *network time*. In order to investigate this time-space, Lumino and Landri analyze the dashboards of scorecards indicators which are deployed in order to monitor the steps taken in the Bologna process. Approaching these indicators and scorecards as standards, the article argues that these standards operate as powerful governing technologies in order to align higher education systems with each other, as well as to install competition between those systems as well as between member states. Furthermore, the article elaborates the notion of *arrythmia*: appearing as a calculated version of reality, the future installed by these temporal standards leads to educational fields which are in a state of permanent tension.

Pieter Vanden Broeck's contribution analyses the tendency of the European Union to shape education as a project-based activity, as evidenced by the contemporary implementation of its well-known Erasmus funding programme. With the help of Niklas Luhmann's systems theory, his article examines how such educational projects differ from school education and how they extend, reduce and therefore redefine the scope of what is possible as education – and for whom. Compared to the time planning of the school curriculum, Vanden Broeck argues, projects do not keep the “wilderness of the present” at bay. Instead, they establish constellations between problems and their solution that have a different, much more variable relationship to their environment. The project-ification put into practice by the EU is therefor said to illustrate how education further de-institutionalises in favour of organisational forms, capable of doing without the assumption of stability that shapes education's conception as school. Such volatile forms call for a new educational ecology: one that does not halt at the observation that the differences between system and environment – between education and society – erode or liquify, but that takes up the task of studying how new borders are constructed, maintained or lost, when earlier institutional boundaries are crossed.

Building further on the lens of systems theory, *Eric Mangez* and *Pieter Vanden Broeck* explore how the emergence of a new educational vocabulary, made up of words such as 'learning', 'competences' or indeed 'projects', relates to the question of time. Starting from the observation that education shifted perspectives from origin to future, breaking away from the past and its static hierarchies, they inquire how contemporary semantics of time, centred around future uncertainty, risk and crisis, enables a process of differentiation that defines anew the form of education and politics. Reconstructing education's history of the future, they argue that the recent stress on the lexis of learning should *not* be considered as a foreign intruder that colonises education. Instead, Mangez and Vanden Broeck indicate the new learning-lingo as the semantical disguise of emergent new forms of education and governance. The insistence on 'learning' hides the profound ambiguity of the new forms that characterise contemporary education and educational governance, they claim, which relies on paradox in order to expand what can meaningfully count as education or politics. They present the semantics of learning as a potentialization technique and thus raise the question what constitutes its other side: where does learning stop?

Closing this Special Issue is *Giancarlo Corsi*, who instead of playing out form against matter, as the notion's philosophical history would suggest, chooses to explore what Luhmann's alternative distinction between form and *medium* might offer. From the latter perspective, forms are not merely the incidental expression of a matter or essence that actually constitutes the substantial. Instead, and against such essentialism, the notion becomes part and parcel of how Luhmannian systems theory envisages that the contingency of the social world – the scope of the possible – is always operationalized and administered via dissolution- and recombination-practices. The conundrum of education's ceaseless reforms, Corsi argues, should be reconsidered from this angle: not as a question of a(n essentialised) form that opposes change, but as the outcome of the interminable play between the limitless aspirations of education's medium and the very finite nature of its organisational forms.

Conclusion: Towards an inquiry of educational times

In sum, the articles gathered in this Special Issue clearly show that educational (re-)forms are endowed with significant temporal dimensions and, more importantly, attest for the crucial import of *scrutinizing* these temporal dimensions. In line with other related contemporary social theory on temporality, the articles collected here clearly show the invocation of a multitude of temporalities and spatialities. We end this introduction with a very simple implication hereof, an implication which nevertheless has significant consequences: if contemporary education and education governing is characterized by a multitude of temporalities and spatialities, it follows – going back to the quotation of Serres at the beginning of this introduction – *that we are never automatically right*. Indeed, the modern central position as described by Serres seems to be fading in contemporary educational governing: rather than having one strictly delineated centre, present-day educational governance seems rather characterizable by *ordinalization*, where both time and space are in a constant process of being relatively (re-)ordered (cf. Fourcade, 2016). From a scholarly perspective, then, it can be argued that the different sorts of 'timespaces' (Lingard & Thompson, 2017) that are presently generated, demand severe scrutiny and academic attention. If we are never automatically right, this means that the fabrication of timespaces is always a contingent manner that *might be otherwise*. From a critical time perspective, time is always multiple, relational, deeply uneven, and thus, different times might and should be valued differently (Sharma, 2013). Through showing the contingency of such time-making, the articles in this Special Issue all open avenues to *think* educational times anew.

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