

INTRODUCTION.

TEMPORAL CROSSROADS: EDITORIAL REFLECTIONS ON THE GRAMMAR OF TIME

Kaspars Kļaviņš, Dr. hist.

*Department of Asian Studies, Faculty of Humanities, University of Latvia, Latvia
South China Normal University, China*

Time represents one of the most universal dimensions characterising human experience. Meanwhile, it is a culturally differentiated phenomenon. Every civilization, religious tradition, philosophical system, and social order develop their own understanding of binary phenomena relating to time and interpreting it – continuity and change, memory and anticipation, cyclical return and historical progression. These differing temporal frameworks form the grounds that enable the cultures to organize their individual experiences, as well as collective life.

This special issue of *Cultural Crossroads*, *The Grammar of Time: Ontologies and Practices Across Cultures* contains articles by scholars representing diverse intellectual traditions and geographical contexts. Here, they explore the ways how time is conceptualized, experienced, represented, narrated, and regulated across cultures. These contributions approach temporality from a wide spectrum of views that encompasses philosophy, religious studies, linguistics, literary criticism, media studies, political thought, anthropology, and visual culture.

On the whole, the articles demonstrate that time cannot be viewed solely as a chronological measurement – temporality emerges as a complex cultural and intellectual structure formed by historical experience, language, ritual practice, social organization, political imagination, and aesthetic representation. Time appears as a neutral framework within which events take place; moreover, it is revealed as an active principle whereby reality itself is interpreted and organized.

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At the outset, philosophical and ontological approaches to temporality are offered, as the authors examine conceptualisation of the nature of time, change, and relationality in different intellectual traditions. The contributions range across Marxist philosophy and critical theory, Daoist and Buddhist thought, ecological perspectives, social acceleration theory, neuroscience, and reflections inspired by contemporary physics. Simultaneously, they are united in critique of linear and substantialist models of time, favouring processual, relational, and historically situated understandings.

Next, religious and sacred temporalities are addressed, where ritual, eschatology, liturgical structures, and sacred narratives are shown to yield definite modes of temporal experience diverging from secular chronology. Across Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, and Caucasian religious traditions, time is organized through repetition, moral orientation, remembrance, and transcendence, whereas linguistic analysis of sacred texts reveals encoding of culturally specific temporal logics achieved by grammatical structures themselves.

Subsequently, temporality is considered in relation to modernity and cultural transformation, where processes of modernization, globalization, technological change, migration, and political conflict are recognised as producing overlapping and frequently competing temporal systems. In these contexts, inherited cultural rhythms persist alongside accelerated forms of contemporary life, giving rise to complex negotiations encompassing identity, historical memory, and cultural continuity.

This analysis is followed by literary and media temporalities. Poetry, cinema, science fiction, webtoons, and existential literature are explored as sites wherein time is not merely represented but actively recomposed. Melancholy, historical trauma, queer temporality, emotional memory, technological futures, and alienation are shown as themes that explain the ways how narrative and artistic forms transfigure temporal perception, as well as noncognitive experience led by emotions.

Likewise, this issue explores visuality and historical representation, emphasizing and explaining participation of visual media such as photography and pictorial traditions in the construction of historical consciousness and cultural memory. Here, time reveals itself as embedded in seeing, recording, preserving, and interpreting, rather than existing as an external framework of representation.

The final themes addressed in the current issue comprise historical and institutional temporalities, highlighting collective temporal order being forged by language, legal systems, administrative structures, and political discourse. Temporal concepts are viewed as profoundly embedded in daily communication, social hierarchy, as well as governance. Here, temporality is brought to light as both a symbolic and materially institutionalized dimension of social life.

Altogether, it is suggested that the grammar of time is neither universal nor fixed. Instead, it is composed through cultural interpretation, historical conditions, and social practice – over and over again. Different societies navigate the relationship between past, present, and future in diverse and evolving ways. The study of temporality becomes crucial for understanding both cultural diversity and global interconnectedness in a world that is characterised by stimulation, acceleration, fluctuation, and rival historical narratives,

Methodologically, the issue is aimed at showing the necessity of interdisciplinary approach, since no single discipline can fully capture the complexity of temporal phenomena. Instead, the study of time requires exchange and discussion involving theoretical reflection and historically grounded cultural analysis, as well as manifold epistemological and cultural traditions.

To conclude, the current issue does not propose a unified theory of temporality. Instead, the authors venture to create a comparative space, wherein diverse approaches to time can engage in fruitful conversation. Thereby, *Culture Crossroads* sustains the commitment to cross-cultural scholarship, inviting reflection on human societies and their comprehension of change, continuity, memory, as well as historical existence, since to study time ultimately means to study the ways how humans understand themselves.