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A Moment's Notice: Time Politics across Cultures by Carol Greenhouse [Review]

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Recommended Citation

Brydon, Anne, "*A Moment's Notice: Time Politics across Cultures* by Carol Greenhouse [Review]" (1999). *Anthropology Faculty Publications*. 1.
https://scholars.wlu.ca/anth_faculty/1

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the subject matter for scholars in several fields. More specifically, these essays echo much recent literature in stressing the homologies of words and objects, the powerful role of signifying processes such as iconicity and indexicality, and the critical importance of paying attention to alternative or transgressive practices and representations. The volume would make a perfect textbook for an advanced course in cultural theory in a variety of disciplines.

***A Moment's Notice: Time Politics across Cultures.* CAROL GREENHOUSE. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996. xv + 315 pp., notes, references, index.**

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A Moment's Notice is a timely book in every sense of the word. Its author, who has already done significant work on Americans' understandings of law and justice, turns her attention to current anthropological questions surrounding agency, diversity, and the politics of representation. Greenhouse focuses on the cultural analysis of agency and social ordering as made manifest through contesting legal, scholarly, and political representations of time at specific moments, exemplified here in three case studies. The resulting analysis is consistently lucid, nonpolemical, and satisfyingly detailed. The author approaches the study of time's public construction with both a subtle understanding of symbols and how they work and a cogent take on cultural diversity, political power, and power's institutional forms.

A Moment's Notice concerns how "time articulates people's understandings of agency" (p. 1). Greenhouse specifically speaks of "representations" rather than mentalities, avoiding the false dichotomy between rationality and relativism that troubles, for example, the Sahlins-Obeyesekere debate. (In their rival interpretations of Captain Cook's deification and death, the authors use contrasting models of, to use Sahlins's phrase, how "natives think." While Sahlins posits culturally distinct categories of thought, a Hawaiian mentality that can override sensory evidence, Obeyesekere argues for a common sense that sounds suspiciously like bourgeois rationality and empirical reason, (Sahlins, *How "Natives" Think: About Captain Cook, For Example*, 1995; Obeyesekere, *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook: European Mythmaking in the Pacific*, 1992). By focusing on the public construction of time, Greenhouse is able to argue convincingly that social or public time has no existence separate from claims to legitimacy and accountability made in its language and that time concepts do not spring from society as wholes. For Greenhouse, "social time is not about time passing but about the vulnerability of political institutions to legitimacy crises of various kinds" (p. 15). Representations of time are manipulated in moments of crisis to legitimize institutions of law, politics, and scholarship. Part 1 contains a critique of how anthropological theories of time fail to transcend as-

sumptions about the naturalness of linear time, rooted as they are in the logic of the nation-state. In part 2, Greenhouse applies her analysis to three moments of crisis: the unification of China in the third century B.C., Motecuhzoma's expansionist politics in 16th-century Mexico, and the introduction of diversity politics into the United States Supreme Court appointments during the Reagan and Bush administrations. These case studies show how social time is always plural and that its cultural representation provides flexible means for social actors to improvise propositions about agency and order.

In part 1 Greenhouse establishes her argument that agency is not a neutral concept, but rather a cultural construct drawing upon formulations of time. By means of a recovery of Durkheim's original semiotic, she rereads classical anthropological texts about time to critique the false dichotomy between linear (Western) and cyclical (non-Western) time. In so doing Greenhouse successfully integrates intellectual reflexivity into her analysis and avoids reproducing the foundationalism that constructs time as simultaneously contingent and eternal. This category mistake, she argues, is rooted in Christian notions of mortality and God as the source of the "Real," and is naturalized through the secularizing discourses of the state and law. Its assumptions form deep-lying principles of Western liberal justice that are apparent in its self-understanding as impartial.

Dread of death is not the only way in which people define the terms of their existence, yet it persists in the West and privileges the linear model as objectively real. It is not a representation originating in bodily experience of change but rather a political discourse intended to subsume different temporalities under one political regime, using bodily metaphors as justification. Linear time does the work of the state by how it gives coherence to legitimizing narratives that construct history as an inexorable development toward the present regime and project it into the future.

Part 2 begins with an examination of the Chinese state's foundation during the Ch'in Dynasty (221–207 B.C.). Greenhouse critiques the conventional practice of interpreting legalist and Confucian philosophies as rivals during that period, when in her view they were both used as symbolic repertoires. The Ch'in unified independent kingdoms by innovating new representational forms that materialized time through the person of the emperor. Legalist ideas of statecraft and Confucian ideas of the cosmos were combined to reconcile social orders, ideas that survived long after the Ch'in dynasty collapsed.

The Mesoamerican case concerns a 16th-century political regime that saw its legitimacy under challenge from new forms of cultural diversity, including that triggered by the Spanish invasion. Rather than welcoming Cortés, Motecuhzoma asserted his own right to succession, drawing upon metaphors derived from mythic representations of the struggles between Tezcatlipoca and Quetzacoatl to mirror his own situation and to try to incorporate Cortés into his own legitimizing narrative.

The Bork and Thomas confirmation hearings marked a shift in the nature and limits of the boundary between politics and law. The blurred line between

what humans make and what God made is the discursive space for disputes over the judiciary. The myth of law as justice external to the workings of human agency needs to resolve, however contingently, the individual predilections of the individual holding the office of Supreme Court judge. The terms of these contested appointments indicate a shift from transcendent neutrality to political representation, which is visible in how the narration of personhood through the conventions of a linear autobiography interpolate personal and collective histories.

A Moment's Notice is an intellectually satisfying and informative analysis. It provides an insightful and challenging examination of the knowledge practices underlying the present moment, a legitimation crisis that is not rooted in "time-space compression," as some would have it, but in legal and political discourses intended to reconcile different ways of representing (and thus experiencing) knowledge about the world—discourses from which public confidence slowly drains.

***The Citizen Factory: Schooling and Cultural Production in Bolivia.* AUROLYN LUYKX. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999. xliii + 399 pp., appendix, notes, bibliography, index.**

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In *The Citizen Factory: Schooling and Cultural Production in Bolivia*, Aurolyn Luykx takes up two themes that have long occupied the hearts and minds of South American educators and social critics but have been sorely neglected by ethnographers of education working in South America: the role of education in the construction of ethnic and national identities and the role of teacher training in the ideological circuit linking schooling to nation formation through the production of educated citizens. Luykx explores these themes through the ways indigenous students at a rural teacher's college in highland Bolivia respond to and contest the social meanings and subjectivities produced by the school in their efforts to legitimize and incorporate their indigenous identities into their emerging civic and social roles as primary school teachers. Drawing on practice theories, post-structuralist notions of identity formation, and other actor-centered frameworks, the author presents a critical ethnography that mediates the conceptual poles of processual but ahistorical classroom microethnography and historicist but agentless macro theories of education as social reproduction. The narrative structure of the book modulates between these poles—from the macrostructures of the Bolivian state and its educational apparatus to the alienating micropractices of the normal school as a Goffmanesque "total institution" (p. 79) and the linguistic and expressive forms of students' resistance to that alienation. Luykx then moves back to larger national considerations in the final chapter, where she draws on ethnography to consider possibilities for a liberatory and "transformative Bolivian pedagogy" (p. 293).

The book is based on ethnographic research Luykx conducted in the early 1990s, a time of comprehensive nationwide educational reform that proposed to transform the Bolivian educational system's historical "civilizational project" of constructing a dominant, urban *criollo* national identity through "the destruction of indigenous identity" (p. 41). In its place, reformers sought to implement a progressive educational agenda claiming to embrace and promote the country's linguistic and cultural diversity. As Luykx shows in the book's second chapter, educational reform has been partial and uneven at best, particularly in its ambivalent incorporation into rural schooling. In subsequent chapters she lays out the contradictions in the ideological terrain students encounter at the normal school. These students are caught between a persistently traditional pedagogy and a progressive reformist curriculum meant to validate indigenous languages, cultures, and histories of struggle. One of Luykx's central concerns is how the school draws upon ethnic, class, and gender identities to construct normative "subject positions" (pp. 124–125) through the structure and content of school discourse. She intersperses description and analysis of classroom and extracurricular activities with excerpts from lengthy interviews she conducted with a group of students, thus illustrating the critical work students engage in as they negotiate the school's contradictory messages about what it means to be a rural Aymara, to be a *campesino*, to be a teacher, and to be Bolivian.

To explain the alienating and commodifying effects of *highland Bolivian* schooling as well as students' resistance to those effects, Luykx relies heavily on conceptual frameworks developed to account for the ideological work of institutions, schools, and capital in *Euro-American* contexts. This is both suggestive and problematic. For instance, her application of Marx's theory of capitalist worker alienation to the position of students in the educational system provides an interesting framework for thinking about the relationship between linguistic production and economic production as modes of exploitation. Her rather mechanical application of Marx's model, however, ends up reducing the historical and cultural specificity of the students' school experiences to an example of a more general form, potentially limiting the usefulness of her findings in constructing the kind of liberatory pedagogy she eventually proposes in the final chapter.

The strength of Luykx's ethnography lies in how she effectively interweaves daily life at the normal school into the national processes by which subject positions are constructed and deployed. As a result, the students' emerging social identities are seen as occurring at the interstices of urban and rural, national and local cultural processes. In this sense, she has realized her intention of "striking a blow against Andeanism" (p. xxxix) by removing highland Aymara communities from a precious insularity and relocating them within the national fray. In her effort to expand the geographic and cultural contexts of meaning construction in which students participate, the author, however, has perhaps hypercorrected. She renders the ethnography in such broad strokes that one finds little to distinguish these high-