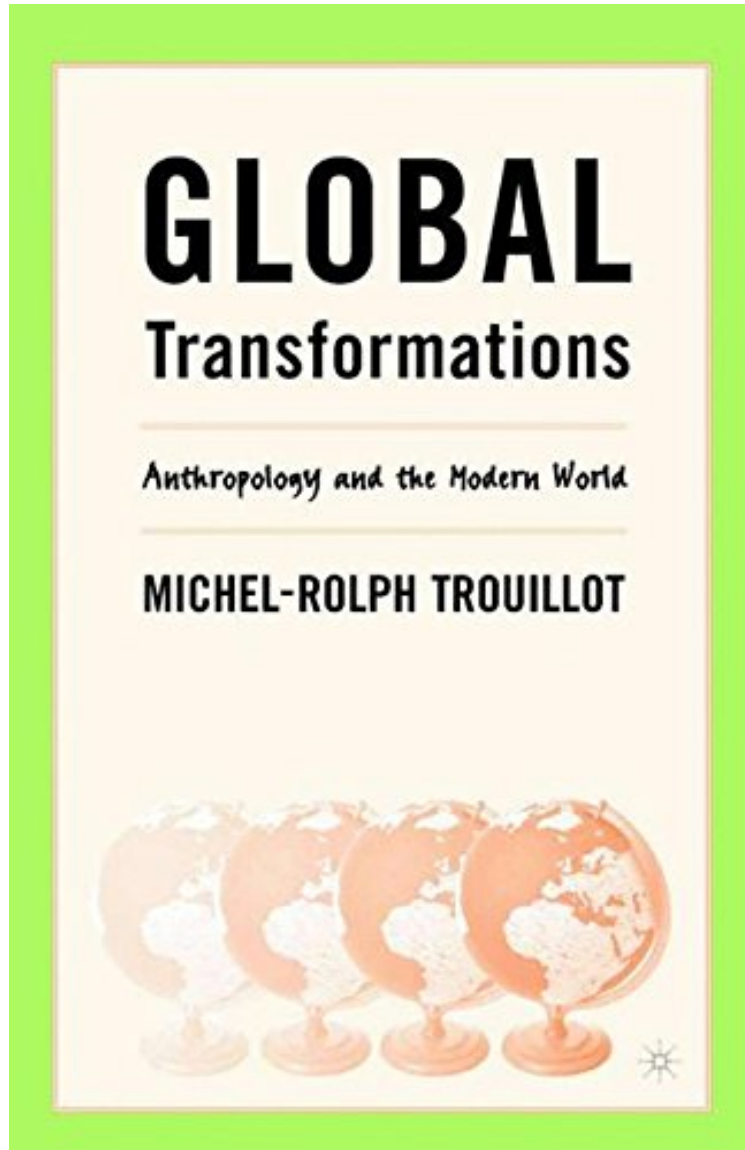


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Global Transformations: Anthropology and the Modern World

M. Trouillot

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M. Trouillot : Global Transformations: Anthropology and the Modern World before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Global Transformations: Anthropology and the Modern World:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great price. By martinez1420 Shipping was delivered sooner than expected! Great price. 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Incredible book by a brilliant anthropologist. By Jason Antrosio With the sad passing of Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1949-2012), this incredible book is a

final statement, assessment, and call-to-action for anthropology, from one of the most brilliant anthropologists of our time. It is certainly written for the anthropological guild, and can be very challenging, but it repays careful reading. Most chapters are updated and re-worked from some of the best material Trouillot published in edited volumes and journal articles. For example, "Anthropology and the Savage Slot," originally published in *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present* (Advanced Seminar) is a touchstone argument about anthropology's role in a "larger discursive field" that "is an inherent part of the West's geography of imagination" (8). All the chapters are transformed here into a must-read for anthropology and allied disciplines. Trouillot's insights about anthropology and the modern world remain incisive and present a program for research and action. 13 of 14 people found the following review helpful.

Painting Yourself into a Corner
By Bob Newman
Without any doubt Trouillot's book has been reviewed in scholarly journals by his colleagues around the world. They have mounted either learned attacks or heaped learned praise on his work. I never read any such reviews. Though I can call myself "anthropologist" with some justification, I cannot say that I have ever moved in the rarefied atmosphere of ratiocination that surrounds GLOBAL TRANSFORMATIONS. I have not engaged in such debates, perhaps from lack of ability, perhaps also from lack of desire to do so. This book is aimed at the highest level of scholars; it is extremely difficult, but if you discipline yourself to hack through the dense jungle of ideas and verbiage, you will glean a rich harvest of thoughts to consider on a wide variety of topics. GLOBAL TRANSFORMATIONS discusses the previous and future directions of the field of Anthropology in the light of globalization. It is a strong critique of almost everything that has been done up to the present. Anthropology, says the author, has ignored history to its own peril. Anthropologists have fetishized field work--making it into a ritual beloved for its own sake---and continually tried to describe discreet cultures, rather than link their chosen area or people up to wider processes and trends. Anthropology has been too fascinated with "the Other" a.k.a. the Savage. Trouillot makes a big point of arguing that globalization is hardly new, that it is not just a phenomenon of the 1990s and after, but that in their search for the pure, untrammelled "savage", anthropologists did not acknowledge this. There are so many ideas in this book that it reminds me of a smoker who lights one cigarette with another, a continuous cycle of smoke, a filmy tower of ideas that reach up to the stars. Are they all firmly anchored to the earth? Maybe, maybe not. While there are occasional concrete examples given in the text, and they are excellent, many times I felt as if I had to take it all on faith, not a style that I relish in anthropology books. Trouillot's criticisms are trenchant and well-argued, they are legion. He manages to disparage nearly everyone and all work done so far. As for work that he approves, only a few minor works seem to get the nod. His arguments cover the relationship between academe and politics too. He delineates two models, a nineteenth century one and one that arose in the 1960s. Saying that both are flawed, he hopes that anthropologists could work out a new "model of engagement" that would better reflect the relationship between political power and academic work. Certainly the relationship between power and anthropologists has been problematic over the whole time the field has existed. Arriving at the end of this short work of 139 pages (plus notes)-which took me nearly a month to read---my feeling was that I had been painted into a corner. Which way to turn? Every action seemed politically nave or incorrect, if I wanted to describe life in some corner of Indonesia or Uruguay, I would have to relate my writing to the legion of negative forces abroad in this world, to weave my way through a vast minefield of caveats and no-nos. The brilliant mass of ideas in the book produced a great gloom in me; I felt that it would be better to stay home and grow strawberries. But, if anthropology is your field, you can't avoid reading this book. If you are young, perhaps you will have the enthusiasm to work out a way in which Trouillot's critique could be coupled with a plan of action. I should say that though GLOBAL TRANSFORMATIONS had a rather depressing effect on me, it is the most interesting or challenging book that I've read for several years. It made me think---perhaps that's why it depressed me.

Through an examination of such disciplinary keywords, and their silences, as the West, modernity, globalization, the state, culture, and the field, this book aims to explore the future of anthropology in the Twenty-first-century, by examining its past, its origins, and its conditions of possibility alongside the history of the North Atlantic world and the production of the West. In this significant book, Trouillot challenges contemporary anthropologists to question dominant narratives of globalization and to radically rethink the utility of the concept of culture, the emphasis upon fieldwork as the central methodology of the discipline, and the relationship between anthropologists and the people whom they study.

'Michel-Rolph Trouillot gives us a splendid statement of new possibilities for anthropology. He leads anthropologists away from the 'savage slot' with which the discipline perforce began and toward a rejuvenated moral optimism that will critically engage with the West and the emerging global order. Trouillot's brilliance takes us beyond both a superficial denunciation of Western domination and a knee-jerk political correctness.' - Richard G. Fox, Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research 'As in much of his previous writing, Trouillot enlightens us here by broadening the context for understanding large-scale processes, such as globalization and the functioning of the world system. By insisting that we test each word in our code - including such terms as 'the West' - against those realities which it may obscure or conceal, he helps to bring the darkened half of the world into brighter light. In this broadening

of the field of play, the author makes an eloquent plea for more history - one might even say for more serious history. But his book is also a plea for more serious fieldwork, based on a methodology that is distinctively (though not uniquely) anthropological. In its own way, then, this book is a gauntlet thrown down to challenge familiar ways of knowing. Its innovativeness rests partly upon urging us to do what we had been doing before - but to do it more thoroughly, more honestly. Trouillot's gift for sketching an emergent synthesis, which draws repeatedly on the asking of harder questions, comes through. Above all, he makes us think.' - Sidney W. Mintz

From the Inside Flap"Michel-Rolph Trouillot gives us a splendid statement of new possibilities for anthropology. He leads anthropologists away from the 'savage slot' with which the discipline perforce began and toward a rejuvenated moral optimism that will critically engage with the West and the emerging global order. Trouillot's brilliance takes us beyond both a superficial denunciation of Western domination and a knee-jerk political correctness."--Richard G. Fox, Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research "As in much of his previous writing, Trouillot enlightens us here by broadening the context for understanding large-scale processes, such as globalization and the functioning of the world system. By insisting that we test each word in our code--including such terms as 'the West'--against those realities which it may obscure or conceal, he helps to bring the darkened half of the world into brighter light. In this broadening of the field of play, the author makes an eloquent plea for more history--one might even say for more serious history. But his book is also a plea for "more serious" fieldwork, based on a methodology that is distinctively (though not uniquely) anthropological. In its own way, then, this book is a gauntlet thrown down to challenge familiar ways of knowing. Its innovativeness rests partly upon urging us to do what we had been doing before--but to do it more thoroughly, more honestly. Trouillot's gift for sketching an emergent synthesis, which draws repeatedly on the asking of harder questions, comes through. Above all, he makes us "think."'"--Sidney W. Mintz

About the AuthorMICHEL-ROLPH TROUILLOT is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Chicago. He is the author of numerous books, including *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Beacon 1997), *Haiti, State Against Nation: The Origins and Legacy of Duvalierism*, and *Peasants and Capital : Dominion in the World Economy* (Johns Hopkins Studies in Atlantic History and Culture).