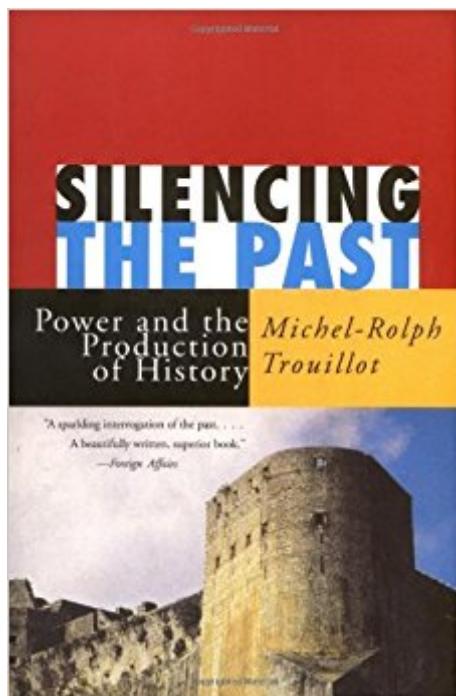


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Silencing The Past: Power And The Production Of History



Synopsis

Placing the West's failure to acknowledge the most successful slave revolt in history alongside denials of the Holocaust and the debate over the Alamo, Michel-Rolph Trouillot offers a stunning meditation on how power operates in the making and recording of history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Trouillot, a widely respected scholar of Haitian history, has experienced firsthand how the recounting of historical "truth" can be manipulated to serve the interests of a particular group in power. Nevertheless, he rejects the facile proposition that history is no more than self-justifying propaganda written by the "winners" of conflict. Rather, he suggests that we can gain a broader and more accurate view of past events by striving to listen to a broader spectrum of voices. While recognizing that competing groups and individuals may lack equal access to modes of communication, he maintains that the variety of voices is there; we simply have to work harder to hear them. To illustrate this point, Trouillot examines the untold aspects of the Haitian independence struggle as well as the ongoing conflict over the "true" legacy of Columbus. Trouillot is a first-rate scholar with provocative ideas; general readers may find themselves somewhat lost in his discourses, but serious students of history should find his work a feast for the mind. Jay Freeman
--This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Now that so many grand projects of the past are up for reappraisal, Michel-Rolph Trouillot interrogates history, to ask how histories are in fact produced. . . . A beautifully written book, exciting

in its challenges. --Eric R. Wolf "An accessible book filled with wisdom and humanity." --Bernard Mergen, *American Studies International* "Aphoristic and witty, [Silencing the Past] shows that the two senses in which history is made, by doers and by tellers, meet in moments of evidentiary silence. [A] hard-nosed look at the soft edges of public discourse about the past." --Arjun Appadurai "Trouillot is a first-rate scholar with provocative ideas. . . . His work [is] a feast for the mind." --Jay Freeman, *Booklist* "Trouillot makes the postmodernist debate come alive." --Choice "A sparkling interrogation of the past. . . . A beautifully written, superior book." --Foreign Affairs "Elegantly written and richly allusive. . . . Silencing the Past is an important contribution to the anthropology of history. Its most lasting impression is made perhaps by Trouillot's own voice--endlessly agile, sometimes cuttingly funny, but always evocative in a direct and powerful, almost poetic way." --Donald L. Donham, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* "Written with clarity, wit, and style throughout, this book is for everyone interested in historical culture." --Civilization

This is an excellent book, for many reasons. First, it's a book about the history of the Western Hemisphere (mostly), centering on Haiti and San Souci, and then upon Columbus. Second, it's a book about how history is determined. It's not just a compendium of facts. History is developed and managed based upon certain facts and upon the suppression of other certain facts. Third, it's a book about what history means, how facts are presented or suppressed, what the history of that history is. Fourth, it is simply an excellently written book. The language is crisp and accurate, the thought advances at a smooth but swift state, and the author is present in every paragraph and word. There is no hesitancy or evasiveness. I enjoyed this book. It's a history book, but I enjoyed it.

A great work for those interested in the construction and perpetuation of historical narratives, and ways to expand our understanding of history. The introduction and beginning is pretty theory-heavy, but then the book offers examples for understanding which are accessible, helpful, and engaging. Highly recommended - definitely has influenced my research and writing.

I highly recommend this text for all students of historiography. Trouillot raises the important questions about "silences" and the politics of historiography in interesting ways, using case studies, especially from the almost unknown history of Haiti. I used the text for my own preparation in teaching a PhD level historiography course. I will use it as a textbook for the students in the future.

An absolutely necessary reflection on how history is produced, privileged, and forgotten. Not only a

work for historians, but anyone dealing with questions of power and privilege.

Fantastic book not only for history courses but for anthropology as well!

Excellent.

A profound study of how history has been manipulated. A warning to current and future historians of the need to be involved in present day debates.

great

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