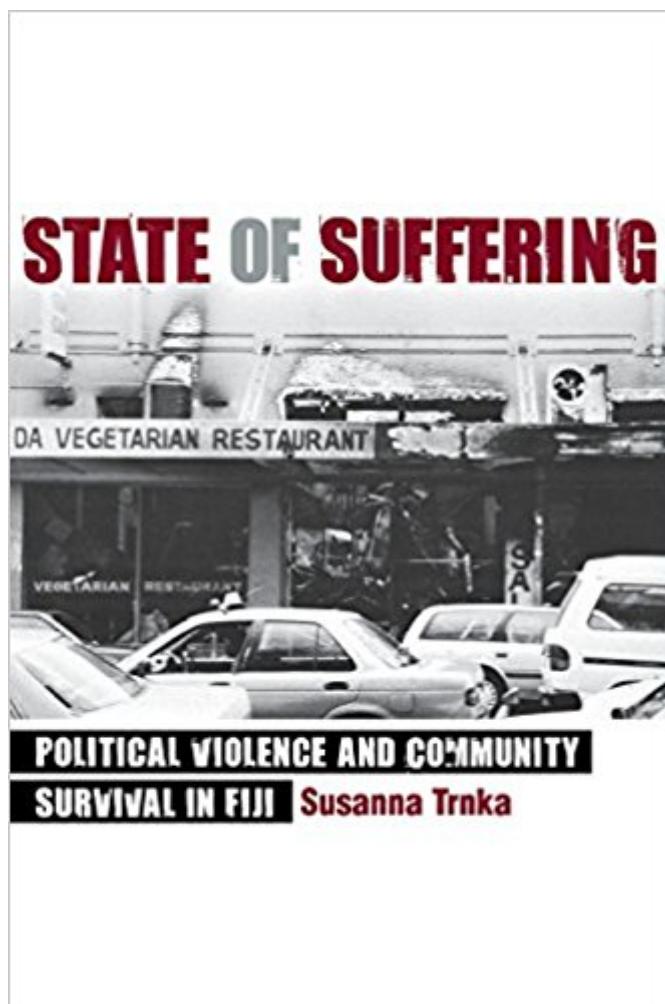


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State Of Suffering: Political Violence And Community Survival In Fiji



Synopsis

How do ordinary people respond when their lives are irrevocably altered by terror and violence? Susanna Trnka was residing in an Indo-Fijian village in the year 2000 during the Fijian nationalist coup. The overthrow of the elected multiethnic party led to six months of nationalist aggression, much of which was directed toward Indo-Fijians. In *State of Suffering*, Trnka shows how Indo-Fijians' lives were overturned as waves of turmoil and destruction swept across Fiji. Describing the myriad social processes through which violence is articulated and ascribed meaning—including expressions of incredulity, circulation of rumors, narratives, and exchanges of laughter and jokes—Trnka reveals the ways in which the community engages in these practices as individuals experience, and try to understand, the consequences of the coup. She then considers different kinds of pain caused by political chaos and social turbulence, including pain resulting from bodily harm, shared terror, and the distress precipitated by economic crisis and social dislocation. Throughout this book, Trnka focuses on the collective social process through which violence is embodied, articulated, and silenced by those it targets. Her sensitive ethnography is a valuable addition to the global conversation about the impact of political violence on community life.

Book Information

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: Cornell University Press; 1 edition (October 23, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0801474981

ISBN-13: 978-0801474989

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.2 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: Be the first to review this item

Best Sellers Rank: #575,335 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #2 in Books > History > Australia & Oceania > Fiji #162 in Books > History > Australia & Oceania > Oceania #1135 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Violence in Society

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"This powerful book is original in its conception, rich in ethnographic detail, and very clearly written. Susanna Trnka has made a strong contribution to the larger issues pertaining to the analysis of violence, state of emergency, and reconstitution of everyday life. Trnka's book signals a new generation of scholarship in the study of violence—it is, indeed, a splendid achievement. I

am sure it will become standard reading in courses on violence, diaspora, island societies, and social suffering."Veena Das, Krieger-Eisenhower Professor of Anthropology, The Johns Hopkins University"An unflinching portrayal of politically engendered suffering, this vital book should open eyes across the Pacific and around the world to the real consequences of Fiji's ethnic division and the Fiji coups. This is an insightful and courageous ethnography, brushing history against the grain, essential reading for anyone who ever imagined Fiji as a paradise."John Kelly, University of Chicago"Subtle, deeply attuned alike to everyday talk and extraordinary circumstances, and beautifully written, *State of Suffering* is an exceptional contribution. Susanna Trnka draws broad themes of violence, pain, identity, and ongoing struggles to sustain life and community together with an exceptionally rich, compelling, and brilliantly particular understanding of Fiji and Fiji Indian lives."Don Brenneis, University of California, Santa Cruz

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