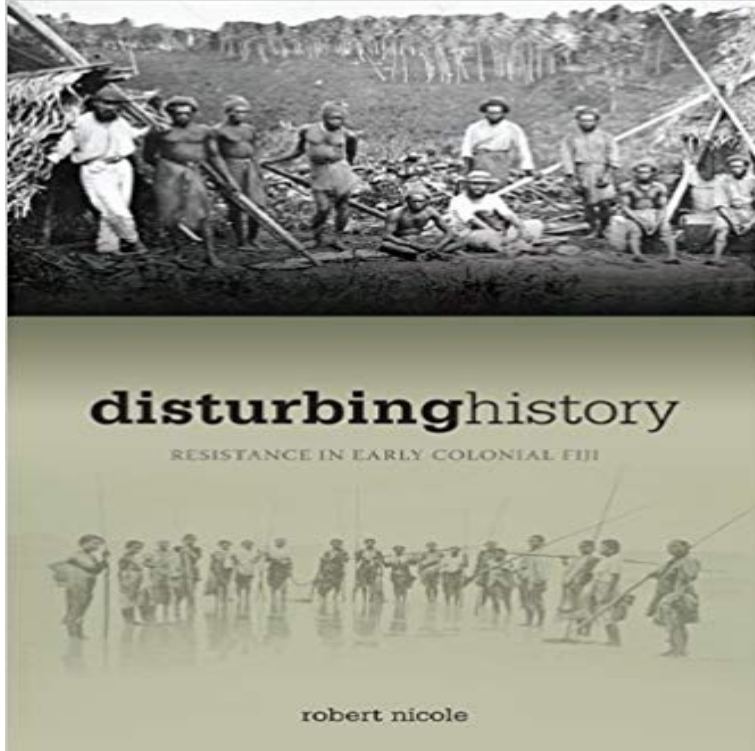


Disturbing History: Resistance in Early Colonial Fiji



Disturbing History focuses on Fijis people and their agency in responding to and engaging the multifarious forms of authority and power that were manifest in the colony from 1874 to 1914. By concentrating on the lives of ordinary Fijians, the book presents alternate ways of reconstructing the islands past. Couched in the traditions of social, subaltern, and peoples histories, the study is an excavation of a large mass of material that tells the often moving stories of lives that have largely been overlooked by historians. These challenge conventional historical accounts that tend to celebrate the nation, represent Fijis colonial experience as ordered and peaceful, or British tutelage as benevolent. In its contribution to postcolonial theory, Disturbing History reveals resistance as a constant but partial and untidy mix of other constituents such as collaboration, consent, appropriation, and opportunism, which together form the colonial landscape. In turn, colonialism in Fiji is shown as a force shaped in struggle, fractured and often fragile, with a presence and application in the daily lives of people that was often chaotic, imperfect, and susceptible to subversion. The book divides the period of study into two broad categories: organized resistance and everyday forms of resistance. The first examines the Colo War (1876), the Tuka Movement (1878-1891), the Seaqaqa War (1894), the Movement for Federation with New Zealand (1901-1903), the Viti Kabani Movement (1913-1917), and the various organized labor protests. The second half of the book addresses resistance manifested in the villages and plantations, including tax and land boycotts, violence and retributive justice, avoidance protest, petitioning, and womens resistance. In their entirety these forms reveal a complex web of relationships between powerful and subordinate groups and among subordinate groups themselves. The author concludes

that resistance cannot be framed as a totality but as a multilayered and multidimensional reality. In the wake of Fiji's present volatile climate, this book will aid readers in understanding the continuities and disjunctures in Fiji's interethnic and intraethnic relations.

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