9

Earthquake Citizens: Disaster and Aftermath Politics in India and Nepal

Edward Simpson and Michele Serafini

While some earthquakes pass almost unnoticed, others become dramatic markers of history and time, signalling the rise or fall of civilizations. Part of this power lies in the violent ability of earthquakes to shake individual and collective certainties – and for someone or something to capitalize or prosper on that uncertainty. The Lisbon earthquake of 1755 caused Voltaire, Rousseau and others to herald the death of God (Voltaire 1988, 2005; Kendrick 1956). The same events directed Kant's (1764) then revolutionary thought on the nature of rationality and the sublime. Mill (1848) provocatively saw earthquakes as periods of 'accelerated consumption', a form of 'quantitative easing' – to use a contemporary term – given by nineteenth-century nature. Lenin (1970) saw parallels between the political potential of disaster and revolutionary crisis.

Recent literature turns back to the eventful nature of earthquakes (and disasters more generally). Naomi Klein (2007), for example, describes 'the shock doctrine' of opportunistic capital at work; Solnit (2010) sees the positive revolutionary potential of disasters as people are brought together in common humanity. In these formulations, the earthquake is always a moment of total rupture into which history and politics collapse as something new – good or bad – is produced in the aftermath.

In this chapter, we use contemporary earthquake ethnography and accounts of other disasters from the secondary literature to look at the kinds of actions that accompany earthquakes. In particular, we look at the changing relations between citizens and their states in the wake of tectonic shifts. One of these earthquakes took place in Gujarat, western India, in 2001; the other in Nepal in 2015. We look for patterns in action and commonality at macro-, intermediate and individual levels.

The material presented is based on ethnographic research conducted over a decade in Gujarat by Simpson and between 2015 and 2017 in Nepal by Serafini. We write in the first person when referring to research undertaken on specific earthquakes and together in the rest of the chapter. Along the way, we pause to examine the rupturing of other catastrophic events such as the philosophical aftermath of the earthquake in Lisbon and falling bombs and rocks. In all cases, we describe how initial moments of cooperation gave way, in the longer term, to conflict, contested identity politics and radical conservatism, and to a general sea change in the big politics of our regions. We do this with the aim of tracing some of the mechanics of rupture in the wake of an earthquake to observe the intimate as well as the political bearings of the philosophers' moral disquisitions. Rupture is here taken as a sudden and widespread crisis of judgement (Roitman 2013). Akin to the situation described by Greenhouse (this volume), we see how different scales of doubt and relativity are brought together in friction by the little events that permeate the lives of those who survive. If an earthquake becomes a moment of total change, that happens because the same words, funds and policies are given to the puzzled eyes of those who have just endured loss and suffering.

There is a large literature on disasters and survival that we will not pretend to review here.[1] Two studies stand out to us from the rest as seminal and eloquent: Robert Jay Lifton's (1967) account of surviving the Hiroshima bomb and Barbara Bode's (1989) descriptions of living through an earthquake in Highland Peru in 1970. Both writers (psychologist and anthropologist respectively) attempted to place the intimate and personal aspects of survival within a broad landscape of policy and social change. They had a deep understanding of the worlds they were writing about and could consequently see the multiple connections between things and meaning that were confused by disaster. They describe situations where categories and boundaries are blurred, where rival ideas and persons interact and produce unintended outcomes. Themes common to survivor literature such as anger, rehabilitation policy, budgets and shame all live together, sometimes in the same breath.

Bode recounts changes in individual mentality and structure. The disaster occurred two years after a coup in which General Velasco Alvarado took over the revolutionary leadership of the country. His 'Inca socialism' or 'Peruanismo' strove for freedom from the shackles of America and the doctrines of socialism and capitalism. Alvarado saw it possible to make a new human morality, resurrecting the Indian past and elevating suitable national heroes. Part of his vision was to integrate the marginal

sierra culture of Indian peasants (of which the earthquake-affected region was part) into the coast-dominated national sphere. Bode suggests the General seized upon the disaster as a springboard to implement his imagined future. The Catholic Church too had expanded its presence in the valley in the years before the earthquake. Marxist inspired, the political hermeneutics of the gospel also came down squarely on improving the lot of the oppressed. Revolutionary and religious forces interpenetrated and stood united in an attempt to overturn the old hierarchical structures and to build a new egalitarian state.

Bode sees deliberate political will and the spread of neoliberal bureaucracy as keys to the transformation of the valley. The disaster became a providential mandate for redesigning all that had been. The state formed new branches to oversee reconstruction and the formation of a new social order. At the same time, changes were afoot at a more intimate level. The Catholic Church took 'progress' to mean that false and sinful religious practices, such as the worship of local deities, were to be extinguished. In response, the survivors repeatedly protested, fearing the foreign aesthetic and design being given to their town.

Lifton's post-bomb psychology suggests that links between survivors and those who spectate is not metaphorical; rather, we are linked by psychological components in which the growing spectacle of holocausts of the twentieth century has imposed on us all a series of immersions in death which mark our existence. Lifton's 'death imprint' or 'death spell' relates to imagery and the conditions of death: the jarring awareness of the fact of death, in his case the grotesque and sudden burning and then slow disintegration of A-bomb bodies.

Similarly, the televised tsunami of 2004 encouraged us to imagine what it is to drown, with waves bubbling and chattering into concrete hotels, but then continuing to rise and swell and rise; laughter and surprised cries eventually cease, the brown wave swelling into Bandar Aceh carrying away the town. In our minds alone we could never quite reach the end of the fantasy. Unlike waves, the death imprint of those in earthquakes, as we shall see, is characterized by crushing, falling, the fear of falling again and the kind of gasping anxiety produced as certainties move under our feet: madness, submission and images of collapsed things that should be standing (Simpson 2013).

Lifton describes the impossibility for the survivor of catastrophe to complete what Freud (1917) called the 'work of mourning' because there is no time to prepare for the theft of life. Survivors of Hiroshima mourn for their dead as well as the dead of others, objects and lost symbols, but also for beliefs that have been shattered, for a way of life that has

vanished. Yet they mourn in vain; the survivor mourns for his former self, for what he was before the intrusion of death and the emergence of a life impaired by mourning and the guilt of survival. The consequence of the survivor's defence against death anxiety and the guilt of survival is the cessation of feeling. We may characterize this lack of feeling as an affective anaesthesia and as a key element in a broader disaster syndrome.[2]

Lifton describes the toxic combination of neediness and mistrust among bomb survivors: those surrounding them appear as disingenuous (what he calls 'counterfeit nurturance'). In addition, they suffered 'contagion anxiety': if I come too close to you, I will experience your experience of annihilation and later your death, and I do not want that. I do not want to suffer more. We take from Lifton the idea that individual survival carries with it the structural conditions that lead to a more general social fragmentation.

If we marry the ideas of Bode and Lifton, we can see three distinct but related forms of post-disaster dynamic. There is opportunity in the rupture for the structural reform of countries and regions: the reconstruction loan with certain conditions attached from an international bank, but also the expansion of state bureaucracy. On the same scale, there is chance for nation-building and large-scale ethnic politics, the march of the generals or the reform of the religious. Secondly, on the ground, there is the interface between local institutions, whether public or private, and those affected by the disaster. Here, there might be a tug of ideas, a competition of rival agendas or an impulse to reform and development (however understood); or there might be resistance to change via the solace of identity politics, whether in the form of nostalgia for a golden age or in the invigoration of ethnic, religious or linguistic boundaries. The means and methods are manifold. Finally, there is the individual struggle for survival. Nuclear bombs might carry with them their own particular psychology; nevertheless, as we shall see, other disastrous situations bring guilt and energy to those who survive. There are many other levels between the three, but in a broad sense they give some indication of the varying harmonies of violence that a disastrous moment of rupture can produce.

In our material, earthquakes emerge as peculiar moments in which these different levels come to reverberate, thus producing the possibility for change or for a renewed attention towards past things. The loose discourses of power of the everyday come to have a tighter grip on the intimate life of a survivor. Habitual behaviours may also be forgotten in the name of reconstruction. Latent conflicts may find the symbolic resources for building new and radicalized forms of ideology. Crisis, in the way Roitman (2013) has conceptualized it, may justify policies that would

not be allowed to fly in normal times. In this sense, the tectonic rupture of an earthquake leaves space for the production and reproduction of rupturing narratives of human manufacture.

Gujarat

The earthquake in Gujarat took place in January 2001, a time when many things in India were changing fast. I (Simpson) had conducted research in Gujarat before the disaster. Partially because of this, my attention was drawn to my friends who had survived. When I first visited after the earthquake in the second half of 2001, it was obvious that the overwhelming concern of those I knew was the endemic sense of uncertainty about the future. They were also struggling to interact with the many who had come from elsewhere to use the moment of shock to profit and to change the order of things.

Looking back, many people I know well had their lives fundamentally changed by the earthquake; or at least the earthquake now plays a prominent role in the way people make sense of their lives. Friends or family died, they consequently grieved and remembered. There are plentiful rags to riches stories and conspicuously fewer tales of those being deprived of their riches for lives of impoverishment. Over the years, the earthquake gradually became a marker of time: a point at which things changed direction, not radically and without reference to the past but rather as a form of filter through which some things did not pass while others grew in amplified form. The earthquake has become an origin myth, albeit told with knowledge of the previous state of things.

At a broad level, and deeply significantly, the earthquake in Gujarat brought a new chief minister to power. Narendra Modi, who is now the Prime Minister of India, was able to dislodge his predecessor in 2001 in the name of the earthquake. Keshubhai Patel, Modi claimed, was unable to manage post-earthquake reconstruction in the region. Modi took charge of Gujarat – never having faced an election – on 7 October 2001, some nine months after the disaster. As reconstruction got under way, he took a keen interest, visited many times, and gave some of his most well-known speeches at inauguration and anniversary ceremonies. Through reconstruction, his administration worked hard, as we will see, to build support for their Hindu nationalist project, developing particular partnerships, holding strategic renaming ceremonies, and promoting new heroes and history for the region.

In the intervening 17 years, change has been profound. The different scales and types of policies co-opted to restructure the region have allowed for the formation of new kinds of citizens and consumers as well as religious and cultural subjects. Post-earthquake reconstruction permitted the ideas and values of Hindu nationalism to be built prominently into the landscape. Public–private partnerships were introduced for village reconstruction as a condition of loans from development banks. Hundreds of partnerships across the region provided opportunity for cultural and religious organizations to build villages as they saw fit. New temples and forms of organized religion were thus presented to the villagers, often appearing to have state sanction because the responsibility for clearing up after the calamity was generally regarded to be the responsibility of government. The combination of loss and trauma caused by the earthquake, the promise of wealth and abundance brought by the 'sponsoring' organization and the general uncertainties of the times meant that new ideas found a welcome home in some villages. Generally speaking, organizations with an elective affinity with the nationalist interests of the ruling government received contracts for the most prestigious and influential reconstruction projects. The earthquake thus became a mechanism for entrenching religious and political values into the fabric of provincial society through reconstruction.

Elsewhere, land and water were made readily available for the new industries that targeted the affected area to avail of tax concessions. Against this backdrop, the transformation of the once commonplace, the mundane and everyday, in the aftermath was, in many ways, as dramatic as the rapid loss of the conspicuous and noteworthy in the moment of ruin brought about by the earthquake. The shock of the disaster established the condition for the creation of new possibilities, namely an industrial society underpinned by the cultural politics of Hindu nationalism.

The longer I watched and listened, the more it was obvious that it was not the disaster itself but the doctrines of the interveners that were truly shocking: shock-doctrine-SHOCK. I say this because in urgent and confused circumstances, the gaze of those on the ground is distracted from normal things by spectacle. Rules may be suspended (caste, religious distinction), and new ones (building, planning and tax) introduced. In Gujarat, 'aftermath time' was marked most strongly by the struggle of the affected with those who intervened, the doctrine-SHOCK era. In this sense, aftermath time had both psychological and moral connotations, as new arrangements and ideas were battling to find a new peace with pre-existing ones. Those bewildered by the earthquake often called the aftermath 'the second earthquake', suggesting it too was terrible.[3]

At the institutional level, as I have already mentioned, the conditions placed on loans by the development banks (Asian and World) created the most generalized framework for reconstruction. These conditions demanded the reorganization of local government and the privatization or semi-privatization of many local services, including planning. Reconstruction also necessitated private insurance and bank accounts for the beneficiaries of housing assistance. At other times, such radical measures would have been debated and contested; however, in the heat and confusion of the moment these measures came into force almost unnoticed.

The industrialization of the region is the most visible consequence of the state's home-grown reconstruction policies (tax breaks and permitted land grabs). In the shadows of these interventions there were other technocratic, linguistic and bureaucratic aspects to the post-earthquake interventions. The awe of technology contributed to the pacification of the affected, as the new district hospital was mounted on springs. The swift instrument of town planning cut through old societies, encouraged people to learn how to read maps, and to adopt nationalist and suburban mentalities. Signs of reconstruction appeared in Hindi, the national but previously invisible language in the region. Others brought religious and cultural ideas in their relief trucks.

When viewed as a whole, there were a number of serious contradictory pulls in the competing policy frameworks. For example, professionals in post-disaster reconstruction are often frustrated by the inability of their industry to learn from past calamities. As we will see in the Nepal material, such amnesia has been routinized by the 'disaster paradigm', or, the set of pre-existing knowledge and expectation that disasters engage. Emphasis is placed on the uniqueness of the circumstances of each disaster. Concern lies with the cultural conditions of the affected region or, similarly, the specificity of patterns of risk or vulnerability. In essence, risk/vulnerability is 'memory bumped forward' (Jasanoff 2010) or 'the taming of chance' (Hacking 1990), which, given that local conditions are always unique, necessarily means each disaster must be different. Therefore, we might reason, all societies are affected by disaster, but this or that society has not been affected by this or that disaster before. The disaster industry thus operates under the tense conditions of its own making: on one hand all disasters are unique, while on the other the standard codes and forms have been produced in an attempt to give those working in the industry a memory and a frame in which to work.

In short, the bewildered lived among varying superimposed spheres, as different ideological forms were traced one over the other. Some new formulations of meaning took root and displaced others; some

failed (but not many). And so, in the aftermath, those who intervened with new ideas and technologies created deep anxiety, or perhaps ambivalence, among the local population over whether change and modernization had been a cause of the disaster or were in fact predestined to be the primary consequences of reconstruction.

Until recently, the decayed frames of colonial famine and flood relief measures influenced contemporary post-disaster interventions in India.[4] Private trusts and charities had also developed parallel structures to channel compassion and cash to the affected. From a laissez-faire approach to disaster relief in the late nineteenth century, the twentieth century has seen the emergence of increasing state intervention and control in the aftermath of natural disaster.[5] The earthquake in Gujarat was but one of the shocks that found the existing state of affairs wanting, and prompted the state to reform the old policies and design national codes for future bad happenings.[6] Consequently, doctrine came in many layers, from diverse sources and often with contradictory aims and tensions. Banks, national and state governments, local administrative units, private sector and humanitarian organizations all contributed their own favourite ingredients to the mix.

At the third or most intimate level there were other dynamics at play. For some, there was grief and mourning for people with names and personalities. For others, the moment of the earthquake left scars of incomprehension, which later became madness or recurrent foreboding. But the most general sense was that history had imploded into a rumbling moment and meaning had collapsed. At first, a sense of intensified community or humanity seemed to be blooming, as people helped and talked to those they usually ignored. This sensation was on the whole short-lived, and in the months and years to come other dynamics took hold. Following the aforementioned earthquake in Peru, the spirit of 'brotherhood' lasted two or three days.[7] Similar reports were provided by those we met in Gujarat and Nepal. At first, people helped one another. After a few days, some said as many as 15, older patterns were restored. Secrecy ran through the town as compensation schemes and rumours of new property made people greedy and jealous. After a few years, a smug euphoria emerged as people were wealthy and had goods and cash aplenty. There was a short phase in which regional identity was promoted as a way to counter those who had come from the outside with foreign ideas. On the whole, however, survival tended to push people apart rather than bringing them together, a trend that was mirrored in the concrete plans to reduce the population density of the town through mass-suburbanization.

As months passed and new loyalties and configurations appeared, initial moments of cooperation gave way to other kinds of rupture

running through the aftermath. The population of Gujarat is far from homogeneous, and the different cultures of eastern and western parts of the state came firmly into contact through reconstruction. Most doctrine was brought from the east, where the big cities and centres of government are to be found. The 'truths' and 'realities' with which doctrines and policies were supposed to engage were generally not the 'truths' or 'realities' of local people themselves. At various times, the state and other doctrinaires began to see the people as ungrateful when they protested about what they were being offered. Often it was said that the people of Kutch in the west, where the earthquake had had most effect, did not have enough culture or education to see the benefits in the new reconstructed scheme of things. Those who came from the east to reconstruct the west brought with them the authority of state power and a greater sense of a 'Gujarati culture'. They also came with the knowledge that those in the west were victims, and this contributed to their sense of self-confidence.

Over those years of research, it was possible to see how those who intervened in the aftermath brought with them various understandings of tragedy and right and wrong, in addition to some well-formed ideas (however misplaced) about the kind of people they had come to help. Conversely, those affected by the disaster struggled to differentiate between those who had come to intervene. Were all interventionists the same? Were there good and best organizations? It took a long time for the contours of that particular landscape to become visible.

In Gujarat, we see policy and organizations that understood the importance of rupture and unsettlement for making things anew. Many of the interventions saw the earthquake as an opportunity for putting forward new ideas and ways of doing things. Some of these interventions were calculated and experienced, perhaps based on a knowledge of previous disasters; other interventions were tentative and formed more by the conditions of the moment than by a long-term plan. The earthquake shook things up, rendered visible the commonplace of what had been there. In the confusion, fear and avarice on the ground combined with state uncertainty and ready-made plans of development banks to distil the values of political nationalism through reconstruction.

Nepal earthquake: the grammar of bureaucracy

Between April and May 2015, two devastating earthquakes struck Nepal, causing almost 9,000 deaths and leaving a path of destruction. What followed was a period of significant change. For those who survived, there

was pain in mourning, anger for delays and inequalities, and hope for better times to come. With time, the sorrow for what had been lost turned into new forms of expectation. Indeed, similarly to what happened in Gujarat, the earthquake proved functional in problematizing relations between citizens and the state, already fractious in normal times. As I (Serafini) happened to be in the country shortly after the earthquake, I observed these events at first hand and in raw form. Cognizant of what had happened in Gujarat some years earlier, I could focus on the everyday ruptures of life to see if the same history was going to be made again. In this section, I will not speak with the certainty that comes when the dust is settled and new scaffoldings are unveiled. Rather, I will look ethnographically at the points of juncture between the aforementioned scales of uncertainty and intervention to see how different ruptures were produced and tentatively bridged in the early aftermath of a tectonic shift.

As we have seen in the Gujarat case, an earthquake does not happen in a vacuum. Although devastation and death may suspend the normal rhythm of life, history does not collapse like a poorly built column in a low-rise housing block. Soon after the disaster, many villagers started reassembling things with the means they had at their disposal. There were those who rebuilt houses themselves and without fuss; those who found temporary refuge with relatives; and those who capitalized on private connections to reboot life without waiting for the government to act. In the decade prior to the earthquake, a growing and largely unregulated remittance economy had allowed households throughout the country to accumulate relative wealth under the puzzled eyes of a powerless state. Where neither investment in land, urban houses and commodities nor the repayment of loans had sucked dry the migratory economy, people often did not wait for either state or private aid to start rebuilding things. Bricks and corrugated tin sheets, after all, could just be retrieved from rubble. Where not available, they could be purchased. A World Bank report (Ratha et al. 2016, 16–17) clearly showed how remittances (and only those sent through formal channels) surged 20.9 per cent to $6.6 billion in 2015, and particularly so in the months following the earthquake in April – a steady growth from the 3.2 per cent rate of the previous year and way more than the $4 billion pledged by international donors for the reconstruction. For many of those who had relatives abroad at the time of tremors, remittances constituted a better short-term recovery scheme than any superimposed rehabilitation policy.

In the aftermath of the earthquake, the state entered into a crisis. It was not only that governmental buildings and the personnel of public offices had not been spared by tremors from ruination, but also that the

quake revealed the fragility of governance in the country. In the wake of the disaster, in fact, foreign governments, volunteers and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) had sprung into action with an alacrity that could not be matched by the government. In less than two days, professional aid groups had come from everywhere, their uniforms and logos constituting a new landscape to be learned. Quickly and with minimal governmental intercession, emergency camps had been set up in playgrounds and open fields. Two weeks after the first tremors, Nepal seemed like a land of conquest. Chinese flags could be seen waving amidst the rubble of famous heritage sites; foreign armies and international NGOs (INGOs) were distributing tents, blankets and food under the uncertain guidance of improvised translators; Japanese teams of engineers were giving instructions on how to assess damage; and helicopters painted with the colours of the Indian flag were delivering aid from the sky, producing a mixture of awe and resentment amidst people on the ground.

Resentment took the form of what Bin Xu (2014), in relation to the Sichuan earthquake, has termed a 'consensus crisis'. The earthquake acted as an event that erased and restarted long processes of negotiation, interrupting silences and pushing people to speak out loudly about what had previously remained in the realm of unspoken dissatisfaction. Citizens everywhere could be heard asking 'hāmro sarkār kahā chha?' – 'where is our government?' In fact, discontent towards the government was not particularly novel. Twenty years of political instability, ongoing constitutional uncertainty and civil war had already made people wary of the state and its representatives. In some locations, the complete absence of elected administrative bodies for over two decades had exacerbated a feeling of distance and reciprocal unreliability. The earthquake, with its attendant delays and malpractices, further contributed to a general sense of inefficiency, unveiling a naked king. As one seasoned commentator of Nepali politics put it bluntly, the government was 'caught with its pants down' (D. Thapa 2015).

The perception of loyalties being stressed and torn apart was further strengthened by the sudden rupture of traditional tools of governance. At the time of damage assessment, what could have been potentially precious information templates – from cadastral maps of properties and registered households to disaggregated data concerning land ownership (*lalpurja*) and population – were largely ignored in favour of newer, internationally defined formats. As Yogesh Raj and Bhaskar Gautam have rightly noticed: 'just when … state agencies needed to recover … details and act swiftly to relieve people of their misery, they were struck by a severe bout of amnesia' (2015, 27). Instead of giving continuity to

previous data, the machinery of assessment thus relied on standard formats developed within common international frameworks for disaster management. Pre-compiled documents written in English were used to ascertain the identities of victims; 'rapid visual assessment' practices were established with no cognition of the extreme variety of architectural styles and masonry in the country; clustering of life and people was done in a whimsical manner. What followed was confusion, drama and calculation; but also renewal in the form of an increasingly bureaucratized everyday life.

The menace to sovereignty produced by an impressive post-earthquake mobilization of people, foreign institutions and private charities was not unnoticed by the state. With the aim to regain control of the situation, a number of actions were taken by the government. Already during the emergency phase, the government attempted to centralize relief through the creation of a Prime Minister Relief Fund (a tradition across South Asia), through which all donations were to be channelled. At the same time, special provisions were issued to limit earthquake-related interventions only to NGOs and INGOs that had been present in the country prior to the disaster. In some instances, the state's suspicious attempts to control processes of aid distribution caused indignation and further troubles. A diplomatic crisis almost burst out upon accusations that the government was blocking vital supplies owing to peacetime customs rules. For some, the state's reactions to a crisis of legitimacy had the contrary effect of intensifying discontent amongst citizens and media alike. In such a situation of emergency, many people complained, the brokerage of relief by the state was taken as a harmful caprice. As the editor-in-chief of a popular English-language daily put it in a challenging tone, 'and now, eat nationalism!'

Yet, while an elite section of Kathmandu's civil society and almost the whole of the international press endlessly reproduced standard narratives of government failing and corruption, affected people began turning to the state for long-term compensation, rehabilitation and succour. For most, complaining about the state was just part of the story, good for gossip with friends at a tea stall or for searching a common ground of understanding with hungry journalists, but not the central component of what was going on.

As weeks passed by, a vast array of policies was formulated with the aim of bridging ruptures that had turned political. In the process, new ideas and frameworks came to parse everyday life and mould novel citizens and political subjects. Through these frameworks, the state was given the chance to re-enter into people's lives in a new attire and, for

many, in an unprecedented way. Citizens were steadily transformed into earthquake victims (*bhukampa pidhit*). A resurgent culture of expectation was rearticulated in a new grammar, made of victims' identity documents, compensation schemes and expanding bureaucracy. While public outbursts of anger towards the government kept spilling out of the well-remunerated pens of both national and international journalists, many people on the ground began learning the new dialect of post-disaster recovery. A dialect, not a language, because it still seemed to draw on a well-rooted rhetoric of development (*bikas*) in the country:[8] *bhukampa pidhit* became the new *garib* (poor), while new terms such as 'resilience', 'transparency' and 'accountability' made their way into the mouths of many.

Despite being applied to a completely different setting, the same vocabulary of vulnerability, risk reduction and resilience that we had heard in Gujarat came to parse and intersect the myriad ways in which people talked about the seismic event. The institutional setting within which this new language had been first created and from which it was now being shouted out, indeed, conferred to certain words the power to stand for the overarching discourse on the earthquake.

The management of rupture has a comparative history of its own. Discussions abounded on how things could be 'built back better' (echoing the slogan first heard in the region after the 2004 tsunami). Specific issues that had been singled out as problems within a logic of vulnerability were given a general bearing, thus moving from being peculiar only to earthquake-affected regions to being applicable to the country as a whole. If recovery had to be followed by prosperity, and if short-cycled practices of resilience were to be strengthened by longer-term politics of security and risk reduction, new measures, plans and technologies had to be implemented nationwide. Envisioned changes had to encompass a multiplicity of scales, from more circumscribed fields such as those of house engineering or private banking to the broader ones of energy production and infrastructural expansion.

'Resilience' became an essential concept in the language of the aftermath, one that well signalled the complex tension between the state and its citizens in the wake of the disaster. Soon after the earthquake, both national and international media praised Nepalis for their 'resilience'. Like many other technical terms, it mainly appeared in English-language newspapers that winked to those who could use the word in their daily relations with donors and INGOs. Unsurprisingly, the term was also meant to praise those civil associations and common folk who had shown courage despite a weak and corrupt state.

The word comes from Latin *resilire*, which means 'to bounce back', 'to return to an original shape after a trauma'. Although historically used to designate elastic materials, it has recently been applied to human beings, signifying their capacity to return after depression, physical and moral traumas. Without the innate resilience of its citizens, it was said, Nepal would have had a much worst aftermath. Nepalese were resilient because they knew how to handle difficulties at a time of crisis, they were elastic enough to endure often blurry processes of distribution, they were liveable enough to face depression and face an absent government. It comes as no surprise that resilience soon became the adjectival hub of a nationalistic pride, especially for those who understood the meaning of the English term.

Yet, in order to justify intervention, the resilience concept was slowly reformulated in a twist which is shared with other post-disaster contexts (Benadusi 2013). Resilience became the conceptual aim of post-earthquake reconstruction, in line with an international rhetoric that had already been circulated for some years by institutions such as the United Nations, the World Bank, the United States Agency for International Aid (USAID) and the UK Department for International Development. 'Transparency' and 'accountability' (*pādarshitā* and *javaphdehitā* in Nepali-language newspapers) were included as essential tools for achieving the grand vision and pointed to what both the government and citizens alike had to develop. In the translation, some meanings were lost and others emerged. *Javaphdehitā* thus became the quality connoting the responsible person, in quite a practical sense of the one who responds to questions of any sort, or with a negative inflection of someone who has to take responsibility for a misdeed. In a context where the contact list on one's mobile phone is revealing of a person's social connectivity, *javaphdehitā* left the world of bureaucratic accountability and entered the pragmatic one of personal relations. Likewise, resilience became *suraksha* (security) as the ideal allowing the proliferation of different policies of control.

In order to have a strong and secure national recovery, the government attached side measures to rehabilitation policies. In the name of transparency and economic integration, remittances had to be controlled and regulated. At the presentation of the budget for Fiscal Year 2017/2018, Minister for Finance Krishna Bahadur Mahara clearly stated: 'Arrangements will be made toward making it mandatory for aspiring migrant workers to open a bank account before going for foreign employment' (Ghimire 2017). Following the earthquake, the state sought to regain legitimacy by creating conditions for domestic employment and

by regulating that remittance economy whose informality had so successfully helped people to thrive at a time of crisis.

Similarly, support for rebuilding houses was mainly given through the Rural Housing Reconstruction Project, jointly developed by the Government of Nepal and major donors (World Bank 2015). In order to be eligible beneficiaries of this programme, applicants were requested to sign a legally binding participation agreement with their respective village district committee or municipality. The participation agreement, as it was referred to in official documents, outlined 'the entitlements and obligations of both parties regarding key details of the program such as payment, housing construction standards, and grievance redress mechanisms' (World Bank 2015, 5). It was upon signing the agreement that people started receiving technical and social support to rebuild their houses, in line with a newly formed National Building Code that fostered resilient buildings. A subsidy of NPR 200,000 (later adjusted to NPR 300,000 to cover inflation in building costs),[9] disbursed in three tranches, was granted to those who could provide full documentation of ownership and citizenship. Money was to be transferred through formal banking. A special provision, moreover, was detailed for those who had started rebuilding things on their own. Again, subsidy was made dependent on compliance with standards of construction, on the provision of full documentation of ownership and of access to official channels of economic integration. The ideals of donors could thus be engraved in governmental compensation schemes from the outset.

Such an approach, which had been envisioned and justified in the terms of an accountable and transparent procedure to compensate 'the right amount to the right people', was not devoid of troubles and inequalities. On the ground, earthquake victims who were living in remote rural areas had to travel long distances and spend thousands of rupees to reach bank branches usually situated in the regional headquarters; once there, long queues and delays in the transferring of money forced many to stay and wait in the headquarters for days, if not weeks. Moreover, an owner-driven reconstruction left out all renters and those incapable of providing satisfactory documents. It also opened up spaces of interference for middle men and brokers of all sorts to step in: local cadres of political parties interested in intersecting funds or unblocking situations in exchange for future votes; professional writers and *lekhapān* (notaries), mostly high-caste Bahun, acting as consultants and playing on their expertise of the law and on personal connections in bureaucratic offices; Catholic professionals sent to give consultancies in exchange for the recognition of theological efficiency.

In the new setting, ruptures that had only been latent before the earthquake were now accelerated owing to the conditions created by the seismic event. Bureaucracy entered into people's lives and intersected decisional processes imbued by doubt and uncertainty. As Haxby (2017) shows in his ethnography of households' strategies of recovery, joint estates were legally separated between competing brothers; previous cycles of reproduction of amity and moral values amongst householders were interrupted; and long-term, informal temporalities of affect were ruptured into a drier and better punctuated discourse on ownership, documentation and bureaucracy. With money pouring in for reconstruction – and often even for reconstructing what used to be of no concern whatsoever for the legal owner – fluid processes of occupation, informal renting, land usage and so forth were reduced and framed in the uncontradictory and exclusivist logics relating to ownership and documentation: this is mine, this is not. Infrastructural expansion, the decentralization of administrative structures and the fiscalization of the territory thus became 'instrumental effects' of a reconstruction project that never aimed only at rebuilding earthquake-affected areas – a hyperbolic process of bureaucratic intensification reminiscent of the expanding states described by Ferguson (1990) and Scott (1998).

The earthquake also gave momentum to political processes that had been stalled for years. In less than five months after the first earthquake, then prime minister Sushil Koirala announced that an agreement had been reached amongst the four major parties for drafting a much-awaited new Constitution. With the so-called 'emergency phase' still ongoing, Nepal obtained what could not be obtained in the past decade. On 20 September 2015, the Constitution was promulgated, after the deal had eluded citizens well after the failure of the first Constituent Assembly in 2012. Seasoned commentators on Nepali politics began wondering why things had taken such a sudden turn. Some believed the government had found in constitution-drafting a desperate way for regaining state legitimacy in troublesome times; others glimpsed in it a practical response to the ever-increasing pressures of international donors and development banks, whose pleas for stability and for a structural readjustment of fiscal policies and administration could not be left unanswered; the most critical ones accused party leaders of chipping in on a popular piece of paper for drawing unwanted gazes away from all the troubles that had been festering in the rubble, while advancing personal agendas and exclusionary politics that would be more difficult to handle in normal times (Jha 2015; M. Thapa 2015). Whatever the reason may be, Nepal was given a new foundation when all others seemed to be failing.

The foundation came in the shape of a federal state. For the first time in the history of the country, Nepal was officially declared a federal democratic republic. Its territory was to be divided into seven provinces, whose boundaries were ideally drawn on the basis of a mixture of identity and capability criteria. Geographical continuity, language, culture and ethnicity were to be considered alongside administrative governability, potential for infrastructure development, availability of natural resources and economic interrelationships in the making of new borders. Thus formed, provinces could work in a more autonomous manner, while provincial elections would decide the 165 members of Parliament. This exercise in collaging and decentralization had been at the basis of previous failures in drafting the Constitution. Now, the earthquake seemed to have provided the right condition for expediting the process without much second thought.

The new Constitution was saluted with joy and hope by a substantial chunk of the population. Candlelit ceremonies were held in many seriously affected districts, soon becoming signals of an upcoming period of renovation; welcoming banners for a new Nepal were hung at the entrance gate of villages and neighbourhoods; and a touching ceremony was organized at Kasthamandap, one of the historic hubs of Kathmandu, with leaf plates burning around the image of a bygone Dharahara tower: this was circulated on all media. A sudden gust of national belonging rushed through the rubble, with top-tier politicians blowing in the wind their speeches of unity and renovation.

Yet, while pleasing donors and everyone who hoped for a refreshing wave of stability, critical stances towards such a 'fast-tracked' document were not absent. In fact, the Constitution was promulgated in a climate of resurgent ethnic politics. For weeks prior to the official announcement, people in the Southern plains of Nepal (Tarai) had been protesting against a state that, they felt, was profiting from a situation of emergency to erase years of struggle for recognition. Since Nepal had emerged as a unified nation at the end of the eighteenth century, the political economy of the country had been flourishing around a fundamental postulate: people from the hills are different from the people of the plains (Madeshi). For most of the past two centuries, the Gangetic soils of the Tarai had been more the agricultural goldmine for a hillcentric politics of extraction than an integrated part of Nepal's self-crafted national identity. The new Constitution was now further strengthening a hillcentric state ideology. Seen from the perspective of Madeshi leaders and critical analysts (Lal 2016), the introduction of unfavourable rules of citizenship, the demarcation of federal state borders so as to reinforce old patterns of

dominance and the dissolution of equitable provisions contained in the former Interim Constitution of Nepal were all clear instances of the durability of exclusionary politics. The post-earthquake wind of unity thus turned incendiary.

As protests took place and people kept dying – more than 60 casualties would be counted at the end of the conflict – a blockade of the Nepal–India border (*nākābandi*) was enforced. In a characteristic convergence of institutional and street stereotyping in the country, Madeshi's quests for recognition were turned into a matter of international geopolitics. People started blaming Madeshi and Indian leaders indiscriminately, their responsibility for stalling essential goods in a post-earthquake emergency phase taken as a particularly serious issue.

With petrol and gas blocked at the Indian border, life in earthquake-hit areas became tangibly more difficult – if that was possible. In Kathmandu, one had to spend hours lining up in queues just to obtain a few gallons of petrol; kitchen stoves ran low on gas, and many restaurants had to shut down or adopt 'Modi-fied' menus (a play on words inspired by a widespread feeling of resentment towards the Indian prime minister); and hospitals and pharmacies ran short of medicine, as the blockade was now affecting the delivery of all kinds of goods. The *nākābandi* was also extensively used to explain why some things were stopping and why others had not started yet. Both the government and I/NGOs started complaining about the shortage of petrol and gas for justifying their inability to carry on with the recovery. Street beggars and unemployed youths soon took the chance to earn some money by queuing on demand. In the countryside and up the mountains, the situation was either slightly better or terribly worse. Old practices were recovered at the time of need. Homemade *chulo*s – wood-burning stoves – reappeared in their dozens, at least where people could retrieve the precious red earth (*rāto māto*) of which they are made. Trees were cut and the price of wood went through a period of hyperbolic inflation. Some villagers profited from the situation to pump up their incomes.

At the same time, while temporary shelters had yet to be delivered and the reconstruction proper was still at a vestigial stage, fantasized images of future developments started appearing in the press. Pictures of engineeringly sound buildings, often legitimated with the stamp of the Nepal Engineering Association, were widely circulated on newspapers and social media; working plans of railways, highways and smart cities caught the imagination of many; projects for the reconstruction of 'model' villages mushroomed. Even the project of making Nepal a self-sufficient hydro-nation gained momentum along the lines of a post-earthquake

ideology of risk reduction, economic growth and security – one that was backed up by the interests of development banks and donors (Lord 2016). If such images, inflected in the popular, future-looking grammar of *bikas* (development), had been part of life before the earthquake as well, now they were reformulated in the catchy terms of an ameliorative project of recovery and security. In the process, what had been daily practices of survival at the time of the crisis, especially in the countryside, were rearticulated in the grammar of commendable and yet short-term instances of resilience, to be enhanced and made more effective within a modernist logic of risk reduction suitable to the needs of a growing urban nation.

Conclusion

Aftermath refers to the second growth or crop in the same season, the new flush of grass after mowing, which is often quite different in its qualities to the first crop; but it is still grass. The second crop may grow unevenly as it races for the light. It may pale before establishing itself. Aftermath is a measure of a quality of time and growth. It is also popular to think about disasters leading to a *tabula rasa*, or blank slate. The term refers to society akin to the unformed and featureless mind found in the philosophy of John Locke.[10] Destruction wipes things clean so that they can be remade anew. Naomi Klein in her appropriately titled *Shock Doctrine* finds obvious fault with this idea, adopting a metaphor of her own. She describes the experiments of psychologists who thought that if the personality of a patient could be erased, then it could be built back again without fault or disorder.[11] To this end, patients were deprived of all routine and structure, and were subjected to irregular and disorienting sensory stimulation. Despite initial successes, the psychologists were often frustrated by the return of elements of the patient's original personality. So too, in Gujarat and Nepal, those who came to intervene did not find the featureless mind they might have hoped for. However, in both locations we can see nation-building, expanding states and intimate transformations that can be empirically tied to the earthquake. Remarkably, we can also see regime change in Gujarat and radical constitutional reform in Nepal, both of which have strong and clearly identifiable origins in the moment of the earthquake.

Aftermaths often appear to have similar structures characterized by the interaction of shock and stun with new intentions and plans. They cannot, however, be seen as a generic sociological condition, for the shocks and doctrines vary. An aftermath is a product of the longer history of the locality. The world does not implode into the moment of disaster

to emerge afresh or ready to be remade in any old way. Older ideas will not disappear: old Bhuj was thrown into disarray by the earthquake, yet the national flag was still raised to mark Republic Day before the dust had settled. Likewise, post-earthquake grievances of blame and poverty in Nepal drew on well-established grammars of complaint and hierarchy in the country. In both moments, people found their way home despite the absence of streets and buildings; networks of amity and economic support did not vanish in the rubble; Bhuj was reconstructed from archival sources and the Madeshi were kept at the usual distance in the new federal setting. In sum, there was no clean slate in rupture.

Yet the sudden suspension of certainty that comes with an earthquake makes people dubious about the proper course of action. How to tame the sense of things being torn apart? In history, the sublime reach of catastrophe has led to speculation on the possible purpose of mass death and destruction in the grander scheme of things. In particular, the catastrophe of an earthquake has provided opportunity to reconsider how men should properly relate to their gods, and has prompted additional speculation on God's supposed intentions. We have described the promotion of neo-liberal Hindu nationalism in Gujarat and the formation of bureaucratic subjects in Nepal. In both locations, codes, regulations and new ways of ordering chaos and thought became the order of the day. The momentum to reform and restructure the state and relations between people and the state was central to disaster politics in Gujarat and Nepal. In Gujarat, the east moved on the west; in Nepal, highland moved on lowland, as spatial and identity politics entered the debate about rights and privileges of development. In both locations too we saw regime change and an intensification and occasional renewal of pre-disaster politics. These events were accompanied by the personal stories of grief, guilt and gain, and the difficulties of surviving. If one looks deep enough, there is a possibility for comparison in aftermaths.

The 1755 Lisbon earthquake is much written about by those seeking to understand the debate enlivened by the disaster about whether optimism or pessimism was the underlying philosophical condition of eighteenth-century Europe. Looking at the earthquake with hindsight, historians have wondered whether the shock of the disaster pushed the Enlightenment in certain godless directions. Some say it did; others believe the paradigm shift from God to rational science was already under way.[12] But what of the moral and philosophical content of the debates provoked by the earthquake? Do these have relevance for thinking about the earthquakes we have discussed? Can we think comparatively about the thoughts people have in the aftermath of a disaster? Or

do the thoughts earthquakes provoke only belong to a particular place and time, in this case Lisbon and Europe of the mid-eighteenth century?

At the time of the tremors, Lisbon was a prosperous mercantile centre. The destruction of its inhabitants and wealth by an earthquake and the ensuing floods and fires reverberated across Europe. Lisbon was also known for its inquisitors and idolatry, which added a sharp edge to events in the aftermath. The Protestant clergy in northern Europe asserted that the earthquake happened because the people of Lisbon were Roman Catholics. The clergy of Lisbon, on the other hand, felt that the shock was the result of divine anger at the presence of certain Protestants in the town. The heretics were forcibly baptized and a splendid auto-da-fé was held, with a view to preventing further disaster.

Lisbon, too, like Gujarat and Nepal, boomed after the math of its destruction, and the new glory sat uneasily with the images of loss, wrath and human sacrifice that accompanied the initial news of the earthquake. The tugs and contradictions of the destruction and the prosperous aftermath detained some of the foremost thinkers of the age: Rousseau, Voltaire and Kant. They discussed the death of God, whether God's design for the world was the best of all possible designs and, if so, what place there was for the terror and destruction of an earthquake. Is chance or fate the general principle of universal operation? Is death a greater evil when it strikes at many people simultaneously, rather than removing them at intervals?

Their thought shows that earthquakes shake certainties as well as foundations, and, therefore, they necessarily became part of the discussions of theologians and philosophers. For the Christian theologians, earthquakes were instruments of fear, operating either as a routine and indiscriminate part of the divine order of things, or as divine instruments of punishment, which could be distributed when appropriate. Consequently, not only in Europe, but in India and Nepal, aftermaths have often spawned the rise of new religious forms, as the beleaguered have become zealots, transforming their fear, guilt, trauma, ecstasy or rapture into improved forms of devotion or into ritualized apologies for their wrongdoings. In Bode's Peru of the 1970s, the religious resurgence took the form of a battle between different currents of Christianity. The discussions that followed the Lisbon earthquake, although not restricted to that disaster by any means, marked another kind of critical shift and added momentum to thinking in the Enlightenment mode.

The Lisbon earthquake of 1755 broke Voltaire's faith in the doctrine of 'whatever is, is right'. In his first poem on the earthquake, he (1756) attacked the optimism represented by characters such as Pope: 'come,

ye philosophers, who cry, "All's well", And contemplate this ruin of a world'.[13] Voltaire mocked: whatever happened must have happened for the best of all possible reasons! In Lisbon, the heirs of the dead will benefit financially; the building trade will enjoy a boom; animals will grow fat on meals provided by corpses trapped in the debris; an earthquake is a necessary effect of a necessary cause; private misfortune must not be overrated; an individual who is unlucky is contributing to the general good. Is this the best of all possible worlds? Is there not as much evil in these sentiments – Voltaire asked – as in the earthquake itself? For Voltaire, man could not hope for a safe life with benevolent protection of Providence rewarding virtuous behaviour. The saddening truth is that we know nothing of our origin, purpose or destiny. Nature has no message for us. God does not speak. The bodies of men are made for decay and our minds for grief.

Rousseau was unhappy with Voltaire's views on our fate. He said that at a personal level the optimism Voltaire attacked had helped him to endure the very things supposed to be unendurable. For Rousseau, man must recognize evil as the consequence of his own nature as well as that of the universe. A benevolent God desired to preserve man from evil, and of all the possible systems whereby God's creation might be ordered, God had chosen the one that contained the least evil and the most good. Put bluntly, said Rousseau, the reason why God had not done better for mankind was that God could not do better. Rousseau maintained that moral evil originated in man himself, not God, and that, even though physical evil is a necessary part of the creation, the majority of physical evils are man's own fault. According to him, it was not nature or God that had congregated 20,000 houses of six or seven storeys in Lisbon. If the inhabitants of the city had not lived in crowded and dangerous buildings, the damage would have been less. Had they left the city after the first shock, then they could have been saved. Instead, they stayed obstinately on the spot, worrying about their money and their possessions. For Rousseau, there was sociology in the disaster as well as theology and philosophy.

These lyrical discussions serve to show how earthquakes impose on the imagination in practical, sociological and philosophical registers. The philosopher sublimates the variegated doubts that an earthquake produces into a moment of epistemological, even theological, rupture. Is God dead, or is He simply incapable of catering for His worshippers? Is Evil a part of God or the unwanted offspring of humanity? In the same vein, we like to think, as the planner or the political leader embroiders narratives of blame and rehabilitation, and reassures the citizens who have been left to wonder about their future amidst rubble. In this sense,

the doubt and hope of the Enlightenment philosophers no longer seem so profound. Their thoughts are the stuff of teashop chat on the streets of South Asia. The earthquake, wherever it takes place, is an opportunity to take ownership of the story and to turn abstract thoughts into concrete realities. These doubts and hopes are those that allow for the implementation of new building codes, bureaucratic citizenship and the renaming of prominent public spaces after once-obscure figures in nationalist history. The oscillation between life and death also allows the governments of India and China to develop their influence within Nepal through the creation of infrastructure and supply chains.

Our discussions of events in South Asia have also shown how earthquakes break, disorient and bereave. They have also allowed for the formation of new policy landscapes, new forms of citizens and governments. Earthquakes are opportunities for those with the composure and gall to see them as such. The long drag and conclusion of processes in Gujarat contrasts with the contingency and immediacy that still animates Nepal. In Nepal, we have seen the opportunism of fleet-footed international organizations seeking to make the world new.

Regime change and constitutional reform are not perhaps linked to earthquakes with any organic or scientific certainty. However, the failure of God, buildings and society to protect leads to the distinct sense of betrayal that comes with inevitable delays to post-earthquake reconstruction. In both Nepal and Gujarat, dramatic changes to government occurred at about the same time as people had come to terms with what had happened to them and were beginning to understand what needed to be done in order to make things better. The urge to rebuild individual lives and houses thus clashed with the ideas and plans of those who could ease recovery. Out of the crisis of judgement, new forms of narrative followed. Earthquakes allow for storytelling, and effective storytellers may find particularly receptive audiences given the conditions of particular uncertainty that earthquakes bring with them.

Notes

1. The edited works of Anthony Oliver-Smith and Susanna Hoffman (1999) and in reverse name order (2002) have been influential.
2. On syndromes and New Orleans see Adams et al. (2009).
3. This ascription of disaster-like qualities to the aftermath is commonly reported. The wave of aid in Sri Lanka was called the 'second tsunami', for example.
4. See, for example, Klein (1984) on famine relief and D'Souza (2006) on flood control in India.
5. Tirthankar Roy (2008) suggests that patterns of response during the period see the destruction of state capacity, which activates anarchic unregulated markets and private institutions,

until the state bounces back to take control. We see some resemblance of this pattern in Guja-rat, with the additional influence of the international community and the partnership of state and private interests in reconstruction.

6. The Gujarat State Disaster Management Bill was passed as Act 20 of 2003. A national disaster management bill was passed in 2005.
7. Anthony Oliver-Smith (1986, 76) writing about the Peruvian earthquake and landslide of 1970. Rebecca Solnit (2010) sees the moment of post-disaster disorientation as a possible source of new politics. While sympathetic with the sentiment, the nationalist and cultural chauvinism evident in Gujarat were probably not the forms of utopia Solnit had in mind.
8. For critical approaches to the ideology of *bikas* in Nepal, see Pigg (1992, 1996); Fujikura (2013); Heaton-Shrestha (2004).
9. World Bank (2018).
10. John Locke (1632–1704), the Scottish Enlightenment philosopher, thought humans were born without innate ideas, and that knowledge is instead determined only by experiences derived from sensual perception (see Baird and Kaufmann 2008).
11. Naomi Klein (2007, 25–48) outlines this theory in a chapter provocatively entitled 'The Tor-ture Lab: Ewen Cameron, the CIA and the Maniacal Quest to Erase and Remake the Human Mind'.
12. Recent historians such as Goldberg (1989), Larsen (2006), Paice (2008), Shrady (2008) and Wootton (2000) contribute to placing the earthquake and its debates in proper context. Ken-drick (1955) remains the classic account of the English sources.
13. From Voltaire's poem on the Lisbon disaster; or an examination of the axiom 'All is well' (see 1988).

References

Adams, Vincanne, Taslim Van Hattum and Diane English. 2009. 'Chronic Disaster Syndrome: Dis-placement, Disaster Capitalism, and the Eviction of the Poor from New Orleans'. *American Ethnologist* 36 (4): 615–36.

Baird, Forrest E., and Walter A. Kaufmann. 2008. *Philosophical Classics: From Plato to Derrida*. Up-per Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Benadusi, Mara. 2013. 'The Two-Faced Janus of Disaster Management: Still Vulnerable, Yet Already Resilient'. *South East Asia Research* 21 (3): 419–38.

Bode, Barbara. 1989. *No Bells to Toll: Destruction and Creation in the Andes*. New York: Charles Scrib-ner's Sons.

D'Souza, Rohan. 2006. *Drowned and Dammed: Colonial Capitalism and Flood Control in Eastern India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Ferguson, James. 1990. *The Anti-Politics Machine: 'Development', Depoliticization and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Freud, Sigmund. 1917. *Mourning and Melancholia*, The Standard Edition of the Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. 14. London: The Hogarth Press.

Fujikura, Tatsuro. 2013. *Discourses of Awareness: Development, Social Movements and the Practices of Freedom in Nepal*. Kathmandu: Martin Chautari.

Ghimire, Sagar. 2017. 'Bank Accounts Must in Nepal for People Heading Abroad to Work'. *MyRepublica*. Accessed 30 May. https://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/bank-accounts-must-in-nepal-for-people-heading-abroad-to-work/.

Hacking, Ian. 1990. *The Taming of Chance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Haxby, Andrew W. 2017. 'The Maintenance of Virtue over Time: Notes on Changing Household Lives in Post-Disaster Nepal'. *HIMALAYA, the Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himala-yan Studies* 37 (2): 65–74.

Heaton-Shrestha, Celayne. 2004. 'The Ambiguities of Practising Jat in 1990s Nepal: Elites, Caste and Everyday Life in Development NGOs'. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 27 (1): 39–63.

Hoffman, Susannna M., and Anthony Oliver-Smith. 2002. *Catastrophe and Culture: The Anthropology of Disaster*. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.

Jasanoff, Sheyla 2010. 'Beyond Calculation: A Democratic Response to Risk'. In *Disaster and the Politics of Intervention*, edited by A. Lakoff, 14–40. New York: University of Columbia Press.

Jha, Hari Bansh. 2015. 'Nepal's New Constitution: An Analysis from the Madeshi Perspective'. *Kantipur*. Accessed 24 September. https://idsa.in/idsacomments/NepalsNewConstitution_hbjha_240915.

Kant, I. 1764. *Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen*. Königsberg: Johann Jacob Kanter.

Kendrick, T.D. 1956. *The Lisbon Earthquake*. New York: J.B. Lippincot Company.

Klein, Ira. 1984. 'When the Rains Failed: Famine, Relief, and Mortality in British India'. *Indian Economic & Social History Review* 21 (2): 185–214.

Klein, Naomi. 2007. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. London: Macmillan.

Lal, C.K. 2016. 'The Brute Majority'. *MyRepublica*. Accessed 20 September. http://admin.myrepublica.com/opinion/story/28487/the-brute-majority.html.

Larsen, Svend Erik. 2006. 'The Lisbon Earthquake and the Scientific Turn in Kant's Philosophy'. *European Review* 14 (3): 359–67.

Lenin, Vladimir. 1970. *Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder*. Peking: Foreign Languages Press.

Lifton, Robert Jay. 1967. *Death in Life: Survivors of Hiroshima*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

Lord, Austin. 2016. 'Citizens of a Hydropower Nation: Territory and Agency at the Frontiers of Hydropower Development in Nepal'. *Economic Anthropology* 3 (1): 145–60.

Mill, John Stuart. 1848. *Principles of Political Economy, With Some of Their Applications to Social Philosophy*. London: John W. Parker.

Oliver-Smith, Anthony. 1986. *The Martyred City: Death and Rebirth in the Andes*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Oliver-Smith, Anthony. 1996. 'Anthropological Research on Hazards and Disasters'. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 25 (1): 303–28.

Oliver-Smith, A., and S.M. Hoffman, eds. 1999. *The Angry Earth: Disaster in Anthropological Perspective*. New York: Routledge.

Paice, Edward. 2008. *Wrath of God: The Great Lisbon Earthquake of 1755*. London: Quercus.

Pigg, Symaco Lorraine. 1992. 'Investing Social Categories through Place: Social Representations and Development in Nepal'. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 34 (3): 491–513.

Pigg, Symaco Lorraine. 1996. 'The Credible and the Credulous: The Question of Villagers' Beliefs in Nepal'. *Cultural Anthropology* 11 (2): 160–201.

Raj, Yogesh, and Bhaskar Gautam. 2015. *Courage in Chaos: Early Rescue and Relief after the April Earthquake*. Kathmandu: Martin Chautari.

Ratha, Dilip. et al. 2016. 'Migration and Remittances: Recent Developments and Outlook'. In *Migration and Development Brief* 26. Washington: The World Bank.

Roitman, Janet. 2013. *Anti-Crisis*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Roy, Tirthankar. 2008. 'State, Society and Market in the Aftermath of Natural Disasters in Colonial India: A Preliminary Exploration'. *Indian Economic & Social History Review* 45 (2): 261–94.

Scott, James. 1998. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have Failed*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Shrady, Nicholas. 2008. *The Last Day: Wrath, Ruin and Reason in the Great Lisbon Earthquake of 1755*. London: Penguin Books.

Simpson, Edward. 2013. *The Political Biography of an Earthquake: Aftermath and Amnesia in Gujarat, India*. London: Hurst.

Solnit, Rebecca. 2010. *A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities that Arise in Disaster*. London: Penguin.

Thapa, D. 2015. 'The Honeymoon is Over'. *The Kathmandu Post*, 18 June.

Thapa, M. 2015. 'Nepal's Slippery Fast-Track'. *The Wire*, 13 June.

Voltaire. 2005. *Candide, or Optimism*. Translated by Tobias Smollett. London: Penguin.

Voltaire. 1988. 'Poème sur le désastre de Lisbonne'. in *The Riches of Rhyme: Studies in French Verses*, edited by C. Scott, 208–36. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wootton, David. 2000. 'Introduction'. In *Candide and Related Texts*, Voltaire, viii–xxxiii. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing.

World Bank, The. 2015. *Nepal Rural Housing Reconstruction Program: Program Overview and Operations Manual Summary*. Washington: The World Bank.

World Bank, The. 2018. 'Nepal: The World Bank Sign Three Agreements Totalling $440 Million'. Accessed 21 January. http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2018/01/21/nepal-world-bank-sign-three-agreements-totaling-440-million.

Xu, Bin. 2014. 'Consensus Crisis and Civil Society: The Sichuan Earthquake Response and State–Society Relations'. *The China Journal* 71: 91–108.