

Natural Disasters Cultural Responses

Unearths the forgotten history of a catastrophic flood, examining its profound impact upon the environment and society of modern China.

Autonomous Nature investigates the history of nature as an active, often unruly force in tension with nature as a rational, logical order from ancient times to the Scientific Revolution of the seventeenth century. Along with subsequent advances in mechanics, hydrodynamics, thermodynamics, and electromagnetism, nature came to be perceived as an orderly, rational, physical world that could be engineered, controlled, and managed. Autonomous Nature focuses on the history of unpredictability, why it was a problem for the ancient world through the Scientific Revolution, and why it is a problem for today. The work is set in the context of vignettes about unpredictable events such as the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius, the Bubonic Plague, the Lisbon Earthquake, and efforts to understand and predict the weather and natural disasters. This book is an ideal text for courses on the environment, environmental history, history of science, or the philosophy of science.

It is widely assumed that humanity should be able to learn from calamities (e.g., emergencies, disasters, catastrophes) and that the affected individuals, groups,

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and enterprises, as well as the concerned (disaster-) management organizations and institutions for prevention and mitigation, will be able to be better prepared or more efficient next time. Furthermore, it is often assumed that the results of these learning processes are preserved as "knowledge" in the collective memory of a society, and that patterns of practices were adopted on this base. Within history, there is more evidence for the opposite: Analyzing past calamities reveals that there is hardly any learning and, if so, that it rarely lasts more than one or two generations. This book explores whether learning in the context of calamities happens at all, and if learning takes place, under which conditions it can be achieved and what would be required to ensure that learned cognitive and practical knowledge will endure on a societal level. The contributions of this book include various fields of scientific research: history, sociology, geography, psychoanalysis, psychiatry, development studies and political studies, as well as disaster research and disaster risk reduction research.

The March 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan plunged the country into a state of crisis. As the nation struggled to recover from a record breaking magnitude 9 earthquake and a tsunami that was as high as thirty-eight meters in some places, news trickled out that Fukushima had experienced meltdowns in three reactors. These tragic catastrophes claimed some 20,000 lives, initially

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displacing some 500,000 people and overwhelming Japan's formidable disaster preparedness. This book brings together the analysis and insights of a group of distinguished experts on Japan to examine what happened, how various institutions and actors responded and what lessons can be drawn from Japan's disaster. The contributors, many of whom experienced the disaster first hand, assess the wide-ranging repercussions of this catastrophe and how it is already reshaping Japanese culture, politics, energy policy, and urban planning. Hurricanes, floods, oil spills, disease, and disappearing wetlands are some of the many environmental disasters that impact the Gulf South. The contributors to *Environmental Disaster in the Gulf South* explore the threat, frequency, and management of this region's disasters from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. Scholars from the fields of history, sociology, and anthropology examine the underlying causes of vulnerability to natural hazards in the coastal states while also suggesting ways to increase resilience. Greg O'Brien considers the New Orleans flood of 1849; Andy Horowitz, the Galveston storm of 1900; and Christopher M. Church, the 1928 hurricane in Florida and the Caribbean. Urmi Engineer Willoughby delves into the turn-of-the-century yellow fever outbreaks in New Orleans and local attempts to eradicate them, while Abraham H. Gibson and Cindy Ermus discuss the human introduction of invasive species and their long-

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term impact on the region's ecosystem. Roberto E. Barrios looks at political-ecological susceptibility in New Orleans's Lower Ninth Ward, and Kevin Fox Gotham treats storm- and flood-defense infrastructures. In his afterword, Ted Steinberg ponders what the future holds when the capitalist state supports an unwinnable battle between land developers and nature. These case studies offer new ways of understanding humans' interactions with the unique, and at times unforgiving, environment of the Gulf South. These lessons are particularly important as we cope with the effects of climate change and seek to build resilience and reduce vulnerability through enhanced awareness, adequate preparation, and efficient planning.

This volume is the second attempt by a joint international research team (consisting of Bulgarian, Chinese, Russian and American ethnologists) to contribute to the domain of ecological anthropology. The editors of and contributors to this collection share the understanding that catastrophic events challenge society to rework a specific methodology, and to activate a specific resource, to adapt to and cope with crises ecologically, socially and ideologically. The main aim of this volume is to reveal the important role of studying and taking into account the cultural stereotypes in this process. Through detailed analysis of different case studies, the contributors further generalize the definition of

disasters and critical situations as situations that arise from the violation of a balance in individual and collective life, as any deviation from “normality” in the particular context of each discreet culture. This interpretation informs a structural grouping of the materials in this collection into three main parts. The section on “Cultural Responses to Natural and Biological Disasters” (specific case studies) follows the “Conceptualization of Cultural Knowledge about Disasters”. The contributors to the collection share the conviction that the ecology of social crises (presented in the volume’s third section on “Cultural Management of Social Crises”) is a valuable and necessary addition to the field of natural and technological, bio- and man-made disasters. They believe this is proved by the texts presented in this volume. The empirical data employed in the volume and the forms of disasters researched include materials from the Tibetan Pastoral area and the Pamir Plateau in Asia, the Rhodopes and Strandja Mountains in the Balkans, Macedonia and Central and Western Bulgaria, to ethnic minority areas in Central and Western China, Ukraine and Moldova.

Earth’s fractured geology is visible in its fault lines. It is along these lines that earthquakes occur, sometimes with disastrous effects. These disturbances can significantly influence urban development, as seen in the aftermath of two earthquakes in Messina, Italy, in 1908 and in the Belice Valley, Sicily, in 1968.

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Following the history of these places before and after their destruction, this book explores plans and developments that preceded the disasters and the urbanism that emerged from the ruins. These stories explore fault lines between “rural” and “urban,” “backwardness” and “development,” and “before” and “after,” shedding light on the role of environmental forces in the history of human habitats.

Goethe’s 1832 poem Faust offers a vision of humanity realising freedom and prosperity through transcending natural adversity. Changing European Visions of Disaster and Development returns to Faust as a way of exploring the rise and fall of European humanist aspirations to build free and prosperous national political communities protected from natural disasters. Faust stories emerged in early modern Europe linked to the shaking of the traditional religious and political order, and the pursuit of new areas of human knowledge and activity which led to a shift from viewing disasters as acts of God to acts of nature. Faust’s dam building and land reclamation project in Goethe’s poem was inspired by Dutch hydro-engineering and in turn inspired others. Faustian dreams of an engineered future were pursued by the American Yugoslav inventor Nikola Tesla and the country of his birth towards establishing its national independence and escaping the fate of being a borderland. Faust remains a compelling reference point to

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explore European visions of disaster and development. If Faust captured the European spirit of earlier centuries, what is today's outlook? Ambitious Faustian development visions to eradicate natural disasters have been replaced by anti-Faustian risk cosmopolitanism sceptical towards human activity in ways counter to building collective protection from disaster. Tesla's country of birth fears returning to being an insecure borderland of Europe. This powerful and timely book calls for a rekindling of European humanism and Faust's vision of 'free people standing on free land'.

The Handbook provides a comprehensive statement and reference point for hazard and disaster research, policy making, and practice in an international and multi-disciplinary context. It offers critical reviews and appraisals of current state of the art and future development of conceptual, theoretical and practical approaches as well as empirical knowledge and available tools. Organized into five inter-related sections, this Handbook contains sixty-five contributions from leading scholars. Section one situates hazards and disasters in their broad political, cultural, economic, and environmental context. Section two contains treatments of potentially damaging natural events/phenomena organized by major earth system. Section three critically reviews progress in responding to disasters including warning, relief and recovery. Section four addresses

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mitigation of potential loss and prevention of disasters under two sub-headings: governance, advocacy and self-help, and communication and participation. Section five ends with a concluding chapter by the editors. The engaging international contributions reflect upon the politics and policy of how we think about and practice applied hazard research and disaster risk reduction. This Handbook provides a wealth of interdisciplinary information and will appeal to students and practitioners interested in Geography, Environment Studies and Development Studies.

Growing concerns about climate change and the increasing occurrence of ever more devastating natural disasters in some parts of the world and their consequences for human life, not only in the immediately affected regions, but for all of us, have increased our desire to learn more about disaster experiences in the past. How did disaster experiences impact on the development of modern sciences in the early modern era? Why did religion continue to play such an important role in the encounter with disasters, despite the strong trend towards secularization in the modern world? What was the political role of disasters? *Historical Disasters in Context* illustrates how past societies coped with a threatening environment, how societies changed in response to disaster experiences, and how disaster experiences were processed and communicated,

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both locally and globally. Particular emphasis is put on the realms of science, religion, and politics. International case studies demonstrate that while there are huge differences across cultures in the way people and societies responded to disasters, there are also many commonalities and interactions between different cultures that have the potential to alter the ways people prepare for and react to disasters in future. To explain these relationships and highlight their significance is the purpose of this volume.

This book examines the dangers and the patterns of adaptation that emerge through exposure to risk on a daily basis. By addressing the influence of environmental factors in Indian Ocean World history, the collection reaches across the boundaries of the natural and social sciences, presenting case-studies that deal with a diverse range of natural hazards – fire in Madagascar, drought in India, cyclones and typhoons in Oman, Australia and the Philippines, climatic variability, storms and flood in Vietnam and the Philippines, and volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and tsunamis in Indonesia. These chapters, written by leading international historians, respond to a growing need to understand the ways in which natural hazards shape social, economic and political development of the Indian Ocean World, a region of the globe that is highly susceptible to the impacts of seismic activity, extreme weather, and climate change.

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New approaches to both cultural landscapes and historic urban landscapes increasingly recognize the need to guide future change, rather than simply protecting the fabric of the past. Challenging traditional notions of historic preservation, *Conserving Cultural Landscapes* takes a dynamic multifaceted approach to conservation. It builds on the premise that a successful approach to urban and cultural landscape conservation recognizes cultural as well as natural values, sustains traditional connections to place, and engages people in stewardship where they live and work. It brings together academics within the humanities and humanistic social sciences, conservation and preservation professionals, practitioners, and stakeholders to rethink the meaning and practice of cultural heritage conservation, encourage international cooperation, and stimulate collaborative research and scholarship.

Why did the people of the Zambesi Delta affected by severe flooding return early to their homes or even choose to not evacuate? How is the forced resettlement of small-scale farmers living along the foothills of an active volcano on the Philippines impacting on their day-to-day livelihood routines? Making sense of such questions and observations is only possible by understanding how the decision-making of societies at risk is embedded in culture, and how intervention measures acknowledge, or neglect, cultural settings. The social construction of

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risk is being given increasing priority in understand how people experience and prioritize hazards in their own lives and how vulnerability can be reduced, and resilience increased, at a local level. Culture and Disasters adopts an interdisciplinary approach to explore this cultural dimension of disaster, with contributions from leading international experts within the field. Section I provides discussion of theoretical considerations and practical research to better understand the important of culture in hazards and disasters. Culture can be interpreted widely with many different perspectives; this enables us to critically consider the cultural boundedness of research itself, as well as the complexities of incorporating various interpretations into DRR. If culture is omitted, related issues of adaptation, coping, intervention, knowledge and power relations cannot be fully grasped. Section II explores what aspects of culture shape resilience? How have people operationalized culture in every day life to establish DRR practice? What constitutes a resilient culture and what role does culture play in a society's decision making? It is natural for people to seek refuge in tried and trust methods of disaster mitigation, however, culture and belief systems are constantly evolving. How these coping strategies can be introduced into DRR therefore poses a challenging question. Finally, Section III examines the effectiveness of key scientific frameworks for understanding the role of culture in

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disaster risk reduction and management. DRR includes a range of norms and breaking these through an understanding of cultural will challenge established theoretical and empirical frameworks.

Of all the huge natural disasters that claimed the lives of thousands in Asia, the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004 was the largest, estimated to have killed more than 230,000 people. The scope of damage brought about by this natural disaster urges focus on recovery and post-disaster reconstruction from several perspectives. Here we find an in-depth ethnography of Thailand and the role of culture and religion as an underpinning issue in post-disaster recovery. Following the post-tsunami recovery over five years, the book provides knowledge on socio-cultural responses from affected local communities after natural hazards, and is based on original material collected in Thailand after the 2004 tsunami. With a focus on how culture and religion interplay in the processes of building resilience and decreasing vulnerability, it gives a deeper understanding of how disasters are experienced and dealt with on a local level. It examines survivors' experiences of rituals and ceremonies that became a part of the survivors' lives in new ways after the tsunami, offering psychological reassurance and religious efficaciousness as well as communication links between themselves and the deceased. Using observations, narratives and material from in-depth interviews

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with survivors, relatives, relief workers, officials and Buddhist monks and nuns, this book contributes to the research on anthropology of disaster and to the development of research on cultural resilience and religion in post-disaster recovery. It will be of interest to scholars of Disaster Studies, Buddhist Studies and Asian Studies.

Disasters are the result of complex interactions between social and natural forces, acting at multiple scales from the individual and community to the organisational, national and international level. Effective disaster planning, response and recovery require an understanding of these interacting forces, and the role of power, knowledge and organizations. This book sheds new light on these dynamics, and gives disaster scholars and practitioners new and valuable lessons for management and planning in practice. The authors draw on methods across the social sciences to examine disaster response and recovery as viewed by those in positions of authority and the 'recipients' of operations. These first two sections examine cases from Hurricane Katrina, while the third part compares this to other international disasters to draw out general lessons and practical applications for disaster planning in any context. The authors also offer guidance for shaping institutional structures to better meet the needs of communities and residents.

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As the global climate shifts, communities are faced with a myriad of mitigation and adaptation challenges. These highlight the political, cultural, economic, social, and physical vulnerability of social groups, communities, families, and individuals. They also foster resilience and creative responses. Research in hazard management, humanitarian response, food security programming, and other areas seeks to identify and understand factors that create vulnerability and strategies that enhance resilience at all levels of social organization. This book uses case studies from around the globe to demonstrate ways that communities have fostered resilience to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

This collection examines a broad spectrum of natural and human-made disasters that have occurred in Japan and New Zealand, including WWII and the atomic bombing of Japan and two recent major earthquake events, the Great East Japan Earthquake and the Christchurch Earthquake, which occurred in 2011. Through these studies, the book provides important insights into the events themselves and their tragic effects, but most significantly a multidisciplinary take on the different cultural responses to disaster, changing memories of disasters over time, the impacts of disaster on different societies, and the challenges post-disaster in reviving communities and traditional cultural practices. Bringing in humanities and social science perspectives to disaster studies, this collection

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offers a significant contribution to disaster studies.

Initial priorities for U.S. participation in the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, declared by the United Nations, are contained in this volume. It focuses on seven issues: hazard and risk assessment; awareness and education; mitigation; preparedness for emergency response; recovery and reconstruction; prediction and warning; learning from disasters; and U.S. participation internationally. The committee presents its philosophy of calls for broad public and private participation to reduce the toll of disasters.

The 2011 Tohoku earthquake, tsunami and Fukushima nuclear disaster (collectively referred to as '3.11', the date of the earthquake), had a lasting impact on Japan's identity and global image. In its immediate aftermath, mainstream media presented the country as a disciplined, resilient and composed nation, united in the face of a natural disaster. However, 3.11 also drew worldwide attention to the negative aspects of Japanese government and society, thought to have caused the unresolved situation at Fukushima. Spurred by heightened emotions following the triple disaster, the Japanese became increasingly polarised between these two views of how to represent themselves. How did literature and popular culture respond to this dilemma? Re-imagining Japan after Fukushima attempts to answer that question by analysing how Japan

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was portrayed in post-3.11 fiction. Texts are selected from the Japanese, English and French languages, and the portrayals are also compared with those from non-fiction discourse. This book argues that cultural responses to 3.11 had a significant role to play in re-imagining Japan after Fukushima.

How do and how did people perceive, manage and respond to natural disasters? How are the causes of natural disasters explained in history, how are they explained today? This volume investigates relationships between forces of nature and human culture in a multidisciplinary context bridging science and the humanities. Forces of nature and cultural responses is divided into four sections: (1) ball lightnings, (2) earthquakes and tsunamis, (3) volcanic eruptions and plagues, and (4) hurricanes and floodings. Specifically, Section 1 investigates theories and case studies of ball lightning phenomena. Section 2 includes a psychological study on the impact of earthquakes on academic performance, a study on tsunami vulnerability and recovery strategies in Thailand and a study on the social and economic aftermaths of a tsunami and a hurricane in Hawaii. Section 3 consists of a chapter on volcanic eruptions and plagues as well as cultural responses in Ancient Times and a study on contemporary vulnerability and resilience under chronic volcanic eruptions. Section 4 investigates the impact of hurricane Katrina on the current jazz scene in New Orleans and cultural

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responses to floodings in The Netherlands in Early Modern Times.

Offers the first comprehensive overview of research into hazards and disasters from a historical perspective. This title is also available as Open Access on Cambridge Core.

This highly interdisciplinary book studies historical famines as an interface of nature and culture. It will bring together researchers from the natural and social sciences as well as the humanities. With reference to recent interdisciplinary concepts (disaster studies, vulnerability studies, environmental history) it will examine, how the dominant opposition of natural and cultural factors can be overcome. Such an integrated approach includes the "archives of nature" as well as "archives of man". It challenges deterministic models of human-environment interaction and replaces them with a dynamic, historicising approach. As a result it provides a fresh perspective on the entanglement of climate and culture in past societies.

Historical disaster research is still a young field. This book discusses the experiences of natural disasters in different cultures, from Europe across the Near East to Asia. It focuses on the pre-industrial era and on the question of similarities, differences and transcultural dynamics in the cultural handling of natural disasters. Which long-lasting cultural patterns of perception, interpretation

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and handling of disasters can be determined? Have specific types of disasters changed the affected societies? What have people learned from disasters and what not? What adaptation and coping strategies existed? Which natural, societal and economic parameters play a part? The book not only reveals the historical depth of present practices, but also reveals possible comparisons that show globalization processes, entanglements and exchanges of ideas and practices in pre-modern times.

In the two decades bracketing the turn of the millennium, large-scale weather disasters have been inevitably constructed as media events. As such, they challenge the meaning of concepts such as identity and citizenship for both locally affected populations and widespread spectator communities. This timely collection pinpoints the features of an often overlooked yet rapidly expanding category of global media and analyzes both its forms and functions. Specifically, contributors argue that the intense promotion and consumption of 'extreme weather' events takes up the slack for the public conversations society is not having about the environment, and the feeling of powerlessness that accompanies the realization that anthropogenic climate change has now reached a point of no return. Incorporating a range of case studies of extreme weather mediation in India, the UK, Germany, Sweden, the US, and Japan, and exploring

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recent and ongoing disasters such as Superstorm Sandy, the Fukushima nuclear crisis, flooding in Germany, and heat waves in the UK, Extreme Weather and Global Media generates valuable inquiry into the representational and social characteristics of the new culture of extreme weather.

This multidisciplinary book examines the diverse ways in which environmental disasters with compounding impacts are being governed as they traverse sovereign territories across rapidly urbanising societies in Asia and the Pacific. Combining theoretical advances with contextually rich studies, the book examines efforts to tackle the complexities of cross-border environmental governance. In an urban age in which disasters are not easily contained within neatly delineated jurisdictions, both in terms of their interconnected causalities and their cascading effects, governance structures and mechanisms are faced with major challenges related to cooperation, collaboration and information sharing. This book helps bridge the gap between theory and practice by offering fresh insights and contrasting explanations for variations in transboundary disaster governance regimes among urbanising populations in the Asia-Pacific.

Since culture, the media and the arts deal with the perception and the processing of catastrophe, what kind of social knowledge does this process produce and how does it contribute to the sustainable development of societies? The book seeks to understand how societies and cultures deal with disaster and the rhetorical means they resort to in order to represent it. It is situated on the cusp between the response to natural

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catastrophe, the renewed awareness of human vulnerability in the face of environmental hazard and irresponsible policies and the social role of traditional knowledge and humanistic ideas for the preservation of human communities. It aims to be diverse, in disciplinary allegiance and cultural situation, and relevant, by bringing together articles by well-known scholars and policy makers to jointly discuss the possibilities of reframing hazard for the future, so that one may learn from restored behavior instead of repeating the mistakes of the past.

Destroying human habitat and taking human lives, disasters, be they natural, man-made, or a combination, threaten large populations, even entire nations and societies. They also disrupt the existing order and cause discontinuity in our sense of self and our perceptions of the world. To restore order, not only must human beings be rescued and affected areas rebuilt, but the reality of the catastrophe must also be transformed into narrative. The essays in this collection examine representations of disaster in literature, film, and mass media in German and international contexts, exploring the nexus between disruption and recovery through narrative from the eighteenth century to the present. Topics include the Lisbon earthquake, the Paris Commune, the Hamburg and Dresden fire-bombings in the Second World War, nuclear disasters in Alexander Kluge's films, the filmic aesthetics of catastrophe, Yoko Tawada's lectures on the Fukushima disaster and Christa Wolf's novel *Störfall* in light of that same disaster, Joseph Haslinger and the tsunami of 2004, traditions regarding avalanche disaster in

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the Tyrol, and the problems and implications of defining disaster. Contributors: Carol Anne Costabile-Heming, Yasemin Dayioglu-Yücel, Janine Hartman, Jan Hinrichsen, Claudia Jerzak, Lars Koch, Franz Mauelshagen, Tanja Nusser, Torsten Pflugmacher, Christoph Weber. Katharina Gerstenberger is Professor and Chair of the Department of Languages and Literature at the University of Utah. Tanja Nusser is DAAD Visiting Associate Professor of German at the University of Cincinnati.

The pressure of climate change, environmental degradation, and urbanisation, as well as the widening of socio-economic disparities have rendered the global population increasingly vulnerable to the impact of natural disasters. With a primary focus on medical and public health humanitarian response to disasters, *Public Health Humanitarian Responses to Natural Disasters* provides a timely critical analysis of public health responses to natural disasters. Using a number of case studies and examples of innovative disaster response measures developed by international agencies and stakeholders, this book illustrates how theoretical understanding of public health issues can be practically applied in the context of humanitarian relief response. Starting with an introduction to public health principles within the context of medical and public health disaster and humanitarian response, the book goes on to explore key trends, threats and challenges in contemporary disaster medical response. This book provides a comprehensive overview of an emergent discipline and offers a unique multidisciplinary perspective across a range of relevant topics including the concepts of

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disaster preparedness and resilience, and key challenges in human health needs for the twenty-first century. This book will be of interest to students of public health, disaster and emergency medicine and development studies, as well as to development and medical practitioners working within NGOs, development agencies, health authorities and public administration.

Urban history is a well-established and flourishing field of historical research. Written by a leading scholar, this short introduction demonstrates how urban history draws upon a wide variety of methodologies and sources, and has been integral to the rise of interdisciplinary and comparative approaches to history since the second half of the twentieth century. Shane Ewen offers an accessible and clearly written guide to the study of urban history for the student, teacher, researcher or general reader who is new to the field and interested in learning about past approaches as well as key themes, concepts and trajectories for future research. He takes a global and comparative viewpoint, combining a discussion of classic texts with the latest literature to illustrate the current debates and controversies across the urban world. The historiography of the field is mapped out by theme, including new topics of interest, with a particular focus on space and social identity, power and governance, the built environment, culture and modernity, and the growth and spread of transnational networking. By discussing a number of historic and fast-growing cities across the world, *What is Urban History?* demonstrates the importance of the history of urban life to our understanding of the

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world, both in the present and the future. As a result, urban history remains pivotal for explaining the continued growth of towns and cities in a global context, and is particularly useful for identifying the various problems and solutions faced by fast-growing megacities in the developing world.

This companion provides an indispensable overview of contemporary and classical issues in social and cultural anthropology. Although anthropology has expanded greatly over time in terms of the diversity of topics in which its practitioners engage, many of the broad themes and topics at the heart of anthropological thought remain perennially vital, such as understanding order and change, diversity and continuity, and conflict and co-operation in the reproduction of social life. Bringing together leading scholars in the field, the contributors to this volume provide us with thoughtful and fruitful ways of thinking about a number of contemporary and long-standing arenas of work where both established and more recent researchers are engaged. The companion begins by exploring classic topics such as Religion; Rituals; Language and Culture; Violence; and Gender. This is followed by a focus on current developments within the discipline including Human Rights; Globalization; and Diasporas and Cosmopolitanism. It provides an interesting and challenging look at the state of current thinking in anthropology, serving as a rich resource for scholars and students alike.

Catastrophes are on the rise due to climate change, as is their toll in terms of lives and livelihoods as world populations rise and people settle into hazardous places. While

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disaster response and management are traditionally seen as the domain of the natural and technical sciences, awareness of the importance and role of cultural adaptation is essential. This book catalogues a wide and diverse range of case studies of such disasters and human responses. This serves as inspiration for building culturally sensitive adaptations to present and future calamities, to mitigate their impact, and facilitate recoveries.

As Enlightenment notions of predictability, progress and the sense that humans could control and shape their environments informed European thought, catastrophes shook many towns to the core, challenging the new world view with dramatic impact. This book concentrates on a period marked by passage from a society of scarcity to one of expenditure and accumulation, from ranks and orders to greater social mobility, from traditional village life to new bourgeois and even individualistic urbanism. The volume employs a broad definition of catastrophe, as it examines how urban communities conceived, adapted to, and were transformed by catastrophes, both natural and human-made. Competing views of gender figure in the telling and retelling of these analyses: women as scapegoats, as vulnerable, as victims, even as cannibals or conversely as defenders, organizers of assistance, inspirers of men; and men in varied guises as protectors, governors and police, heroes, leaders, negotiators and honorable men. Gender is also deployed linguistically to feminize activities or even countries. Inevitably, however, these tragedies are mediated by myth and memory. They are not neutral

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events whose retelling is a simple narrative. Through a varied array of urban catastrophes, this book is a nuanced account that physically and metaphorically maps men and women into the urban landscape and the worlds of catastrophe.

No person or place is immune from disasters or disaster-related losses. Infectious disease outbreaks, acts of terrorism, social unrest, or financial disasters in addition to natural hazards can all lead to large-scale consequences for the nation and its communities. Communities and the nation thus face difficult fiscal, social, cultural, and environmental choices about the best ways to ensure basic security and quality of life against hazards, deliberate attacks, and disasters. Beyond the unquantifiable costs of injury and loss of life from disasters, statistics for 2011 alone indicate economic damages from natural disasters in the United States exceeded \$55 billion, with 14 events costing more than a billion dollars in damages each. One way to reduce the impacts of disasters on the nation and its communities is to invest in enhancing resilience--the ability to prepare and plan for, absorb, recover from and more successfully adapt to adverse events. *Disaster Resilience: A National Imperative* addresses the broad issue of increasing the nation's resilience to disasters. This book defines "national resilience", describes the state of knowledge about resilience to hazards and disasters, and frames the main issues related to increasing resilience in the United States. It also provide goals, baseline conditions, or performance metrics for national resilience and outlines additional information, data, gaps, and/or obstacles that

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need to be addressed to increase the nation's resilience to disasters. Additionally, the book's authoring committee makes recommendations about the necessary approaches to elevate national resilience to disasters in the United States. Enhanced resilience allows better anticipation of disasters and better planning to reduce disaster losses—rather than waiting for an event to occur and paying for it afterward. Disaster Resilience confronts the topic of how to increase the nation's resilience to disasters through a vision of the characteristics of a resilient nation in the year 2030. Increasing disaster resilience is an imperative that requires the collective will of the nation and its communities. Although disasters will continue to occur, actions that move the nation from reactive approaches to disasters to a proactive stance where communities actively engage in enhancing resilience will reduce many of the broad societal and economic burdens that disasters can cause.

Human cultures have been interacting with natural hazards since the dawn of time. This book explores these interactions in detail and revisits some famous catastrophes including the eruptions of Thera and Vesuvius. These studies demonstrate that diverse human cultures had well-developed strategies which facilitated their response to extreme natural events.

Catastrophes, it seems, are becoming more frequent in the twenty-first century. According to UN statistics, every year approximately two hundred million people are directly affected by natural disasters—seven times the number of people who are

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affected by war. Discussions about global warming and fatal disasters such as Katrina and the Tsunami of 2004 have heightened our awareness of natural disasters and of their impact on both local and global communities. Hollywood has also produced numerous disaster movies in recent years, some of which have become blockbusters. This volume demonstrates that natural catastrophes—earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, etc.—have exercised a vast impact on humans throughout history and in almost every part of the world. It argues that human attitudes toward catastrophes have changed over time. Surprisingly, this has not necessarily led to a reduction of exposure or risk. The organization of the book resembles a journey around the globe—from Europe to North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, and from the Pacific through South America and Mexico to the United States. While natural disasters appear everywhere on the globe, different cultures, societies, and nations have adopted specific styles for coping with disaster. Indeed, how humans deal with catastrophes depends largely on social and cultural patterns, values, religious belief systems, political institutions, and economic structures. The roles that catastrophes play in society and the meanings they are given vary from one region to the next; they differ—and this is one of the principal arguments of this book—from one cultural, political, and geographic space to the next. The essays collected here help us to understand not only how people in different times throughout history have learned to cope with disaster but also how humans in different parts of the world have developed specific cultural, social, and technological strategies

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for doing so.

This book is the product of the 2nd World Conference on Environmental History, held in Guimarães, Portugal, in 2014. It gathers works by authors from the five continents, addressing concerns raised by past events so as to provide information to help manage the present and the future. It reveals how our cultural background and examples of past territorial intervention can help to combat political and cultural limitations through the common language of environmental benefits without disguising harmful past human interventions. Considering that political ideologies such as socialism and capitalism, as well as religion, fail to offer global paradigms for common ground, an environmentally positive discourse instead of an ecological determinism might serve as an umbrella common language to overcome blocking factors, real or invented, and avoid repeating ecological loss. Therefore, agency, environmental speech and historical research are urgently needed in order to sustain environmental paradigms and overcome political, cultural and economic interests in the public arena. This book intertwines reflections on our bonds with landscapes, processes of natural and scientific transfer across the globe, the changing of ecosystems, the way in which scientific knowledge has historically both accelerated destruction and allowed a better distribution of vital resources or as it, in today's world, can offer alternatives that avoid harming those same vital natural resources: water, soil and air. In addition, it shows the relevance of cultural factors both in the taming of nature in favor of human comfort and in the role of

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the environment matters in the forging of cultural identities, which cannot be detached from technical intervention in the world. In short, the book firstly studies the past, approaching it as a data set of how the environment has shaped culture, secondly seeks to understand the present, and thirdly assesses future perspectives: what to keep, what to change, and what to dream anew, considering that conventional solutions have not sufficed to protect life on our planet.

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