

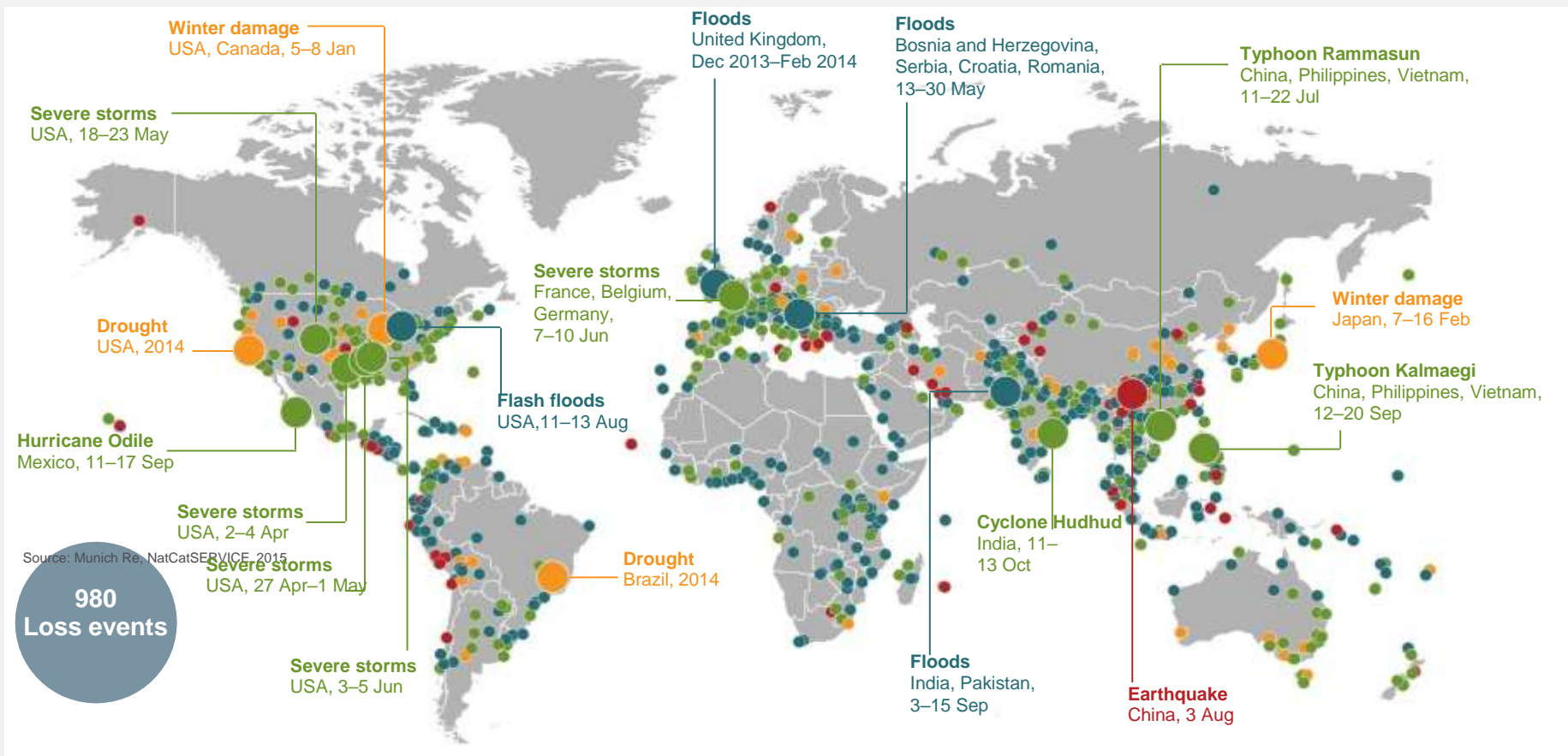
SOCIOLOGY OF DISASTER

a brief introduction

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nanyang technological universitY

Loss events worldwide 2014

Geographical overview



Source: Munich Re, NatCatSERVICE, 2015

980
Loss events

Loss events



Selection of catastrophes



Overall losses ≥ US\$ 1,500m

Geophysical events



(Earthquake, tsunami, volcanic activity)

Meteorological events



(Tropical storm, extratropical storm, convective storm, local storm)

Hydrological events



(Flood, mass movement)

Climatological events



(Extreme temperature, drought, wildfire)

What is a *disaster* ?

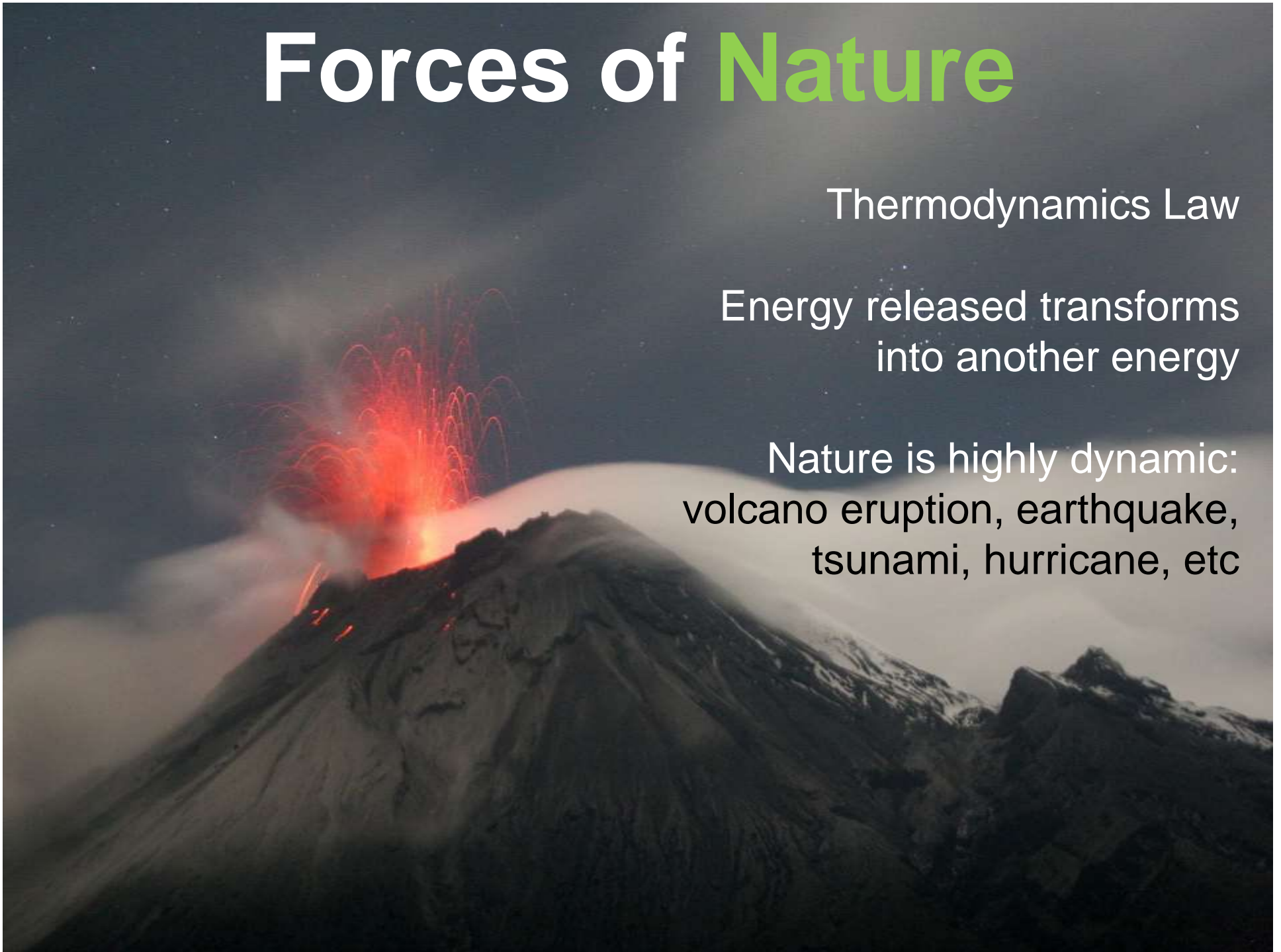
Is a **disaster** a **natural**
or **social** phenomenon?

Forces of Nature

Thermodynamics Law

Energy released transforms
into another energy

Nature is highly dynamic:
volcano eruption, earthquake,
tsunami, hurricane, etc

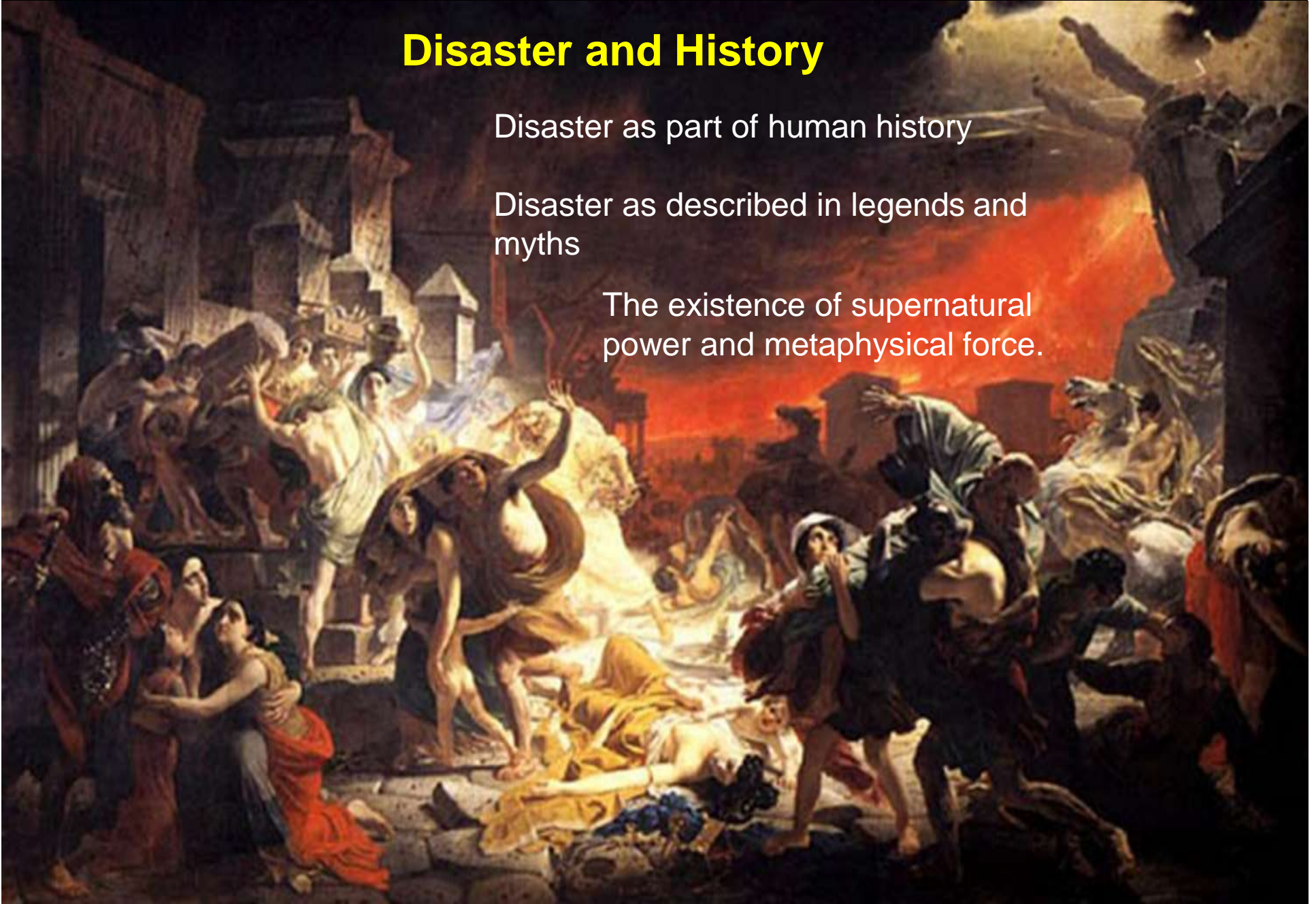


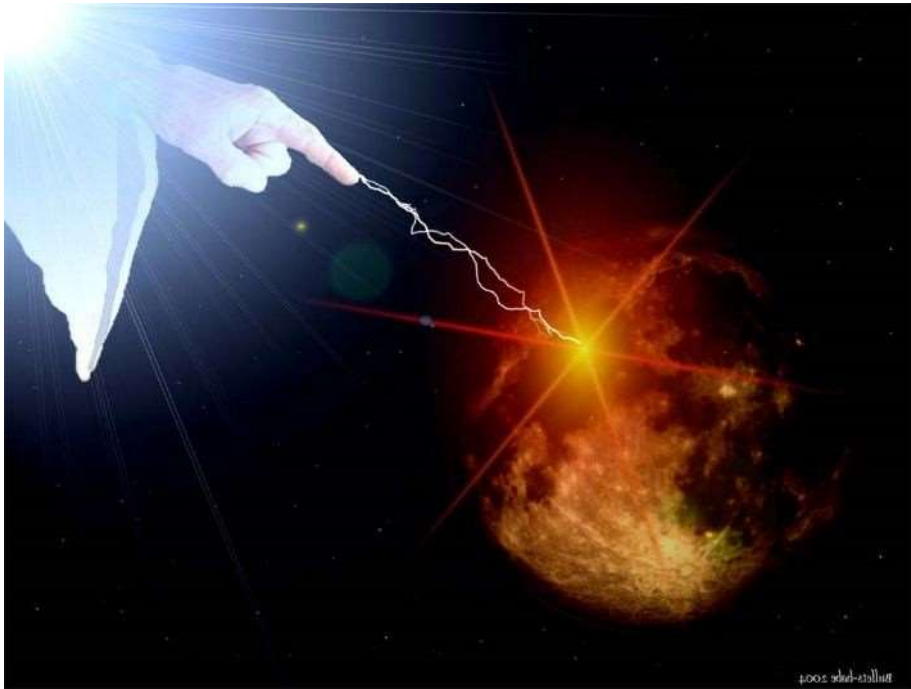
Disaster and History

Disaster as part of human history

Disaster as described in legends and myths

The existence of supernatural power and metaphysical force.





Divine Interpretation of Disaster

Fatalistic attitude prevailed in early societies

Attributing negative occurrences to the acts of the divine

Prayers, offerings, and rituals as means to influence the supernatural

disaster

Origin



late 16th century: from Italian *disastro* 'ill-starred event', from *dis-* (expressing negation) + *astro* 'star' (from Latin *astrum*).

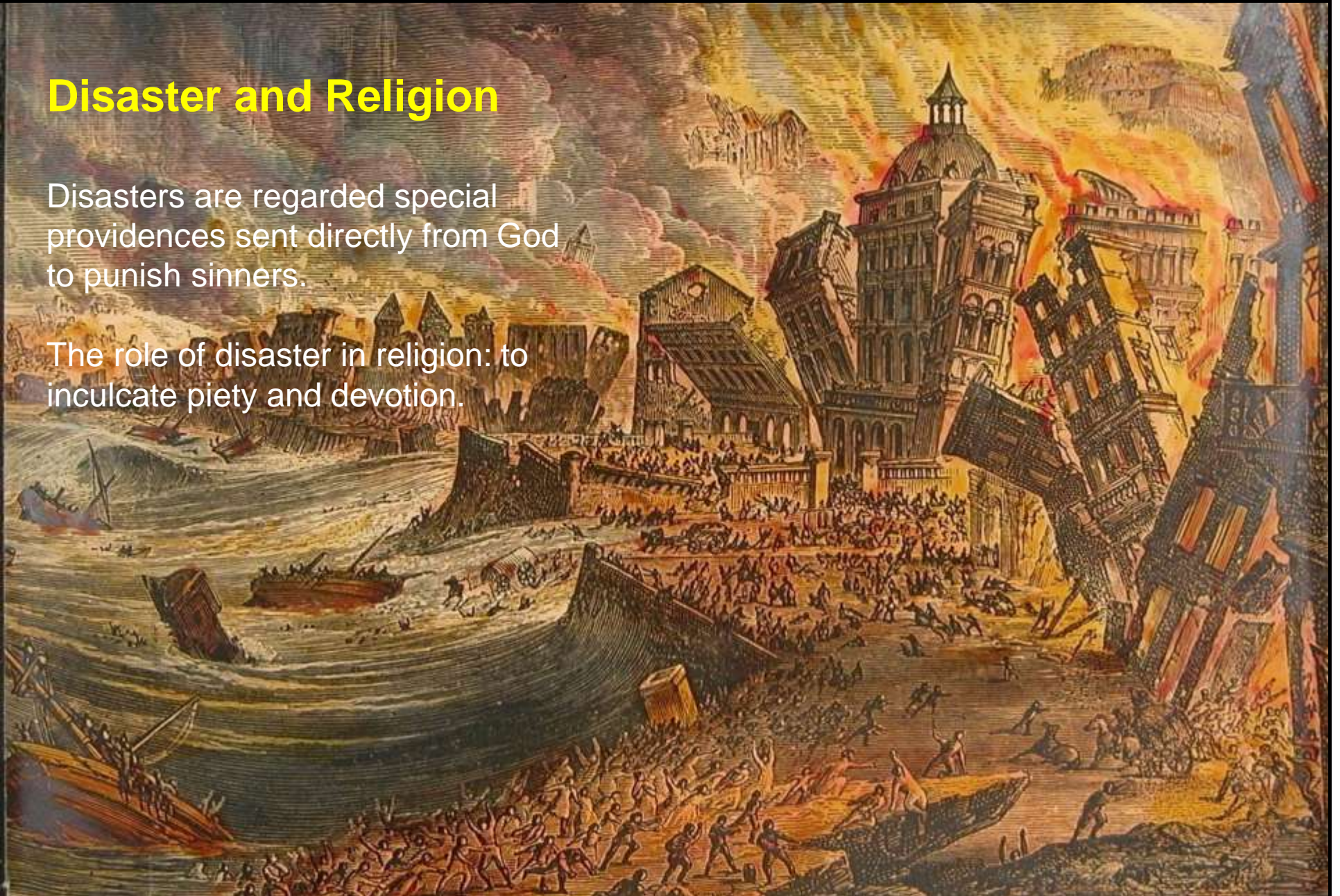


Halley's Comet apparition as portent of Harold II's death at the Battle of Hasting, 1066

Disaster and Religion

Disasters are regarded special providences sent directly from God to punish sinners.

The role of disaster in religion: to inculcate piety and devotion.



Lisbon earthquake and tsunami, November 1, 1775 (All Saints Day)

A portrait of Isaac Newton, showing him with long, wavy, light-colored hair, wearing a dark, patterned coat over a white shirt. He is looking slightly to the right of the viewer. The background is dark and indistinct. At the bottom of the portrait, the name 'ISAACVS NEWTONVS.' is visible in a small, light-colored font.

The Modern Science Era

Use of reason to explain the occurrence of disaster

Secularization of disaster

Scientific epistemology aimed to uncover forces behind disaster events

Dude, disasters are accidental or natural events.

Society

MH370, MH17 Tragedies Were Caused Due to Un-Islamic Behaviours like 'Serving Alcohol and Exposing Flesh': Malaysian Official

By [Gopi Chandra Kharel](#) November 3, 2014 16:01 IST



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A senior lecturer of the National Defence University recognised as Ridhuan Tee, has offered a theological contention as the main reasons behind the tragedies of MH370 and MH17, implying that if the Malaysian airlines had adhered to Islamic behaviours or customs, the accidents would never have happened.



Pat Robertson says Haiti paying for 'pact to the devil'

January 13, 2010 6:58 p.m. EST



Pat Robertson has previously linked natural disasters and terrorist attacks to legalized abortion in the United States.

(CNN) -- Pat Robertson, the evangelical Christian who once suggested God was punishing Americans with Hurricane Katrina, says a "pact to the devil" brought on the devastating earthquake in Haiti.

Officials fear more than 100,000 people have died as a result of Tuesday's 7.0-magnitude earthquake in Haiti.

Robertson, the host of the "700 Club," blamed the tragedy on something that "happened a long time ago in Haiti, and

people might not want to talk about it."

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Robertson says native Haitians made deal with the devil for freedom from France
- Robertson is evangelical Christian who has made similar comparisons
- He once suggested God was punishing Americans with

The Haitians "were under the heel of the French. You know, Napoleon III and whatever," Robertson said on his broadcast Wednesday. "And they got together and swore a pact to the devil. They said, 'We will serve you if you will get us free from the French.' True story. And so, the devil said, 'OK, it's a deal.' "

Disaster is marked by disruption on social order and relations caused by external shocks.

Disaster is a social event that causes damages and loss on human beings.

Disaster as
social and cultural
phenomenon



Will of God or human intervention?

Impact is natural
Cause is man-made

How to study **disaster**
sociologically?

RISK



The probable
Calculation
Perception
Prediction
Hazard

DISASTER



The actual
Result
Realization
Outcome
Damage

