INTRODUCTION

1. Personal communication, June 1, 2007, Kedarnath.

2. Richard Davis (1995, 639) has usefully offered a more involved definition: “The word liṅga has three primary meanings, and all three are important here. Liṅga denotes the penis, the male generative organ. It also denotes a mark, emblem, badge—a sign that allows one to identify or recognize something, as one may identify someone as a member of the male sex by his penis. Finally, it also denotes the primary cult object of Śaivism, an upraised cylindrical shaft with rounded top, rising from a rounded base. The icon resembles, in a generally abstract manner, an erect male member, and serves at the same time as a sign of Śiva.”

3. As Don Handelman and David Shulman (2004, 37–38) put it: “The liṅga, in short, is the core of this god at home in our world: an ontology of pure potentiality is present here.” The Kedarnath situation is further complicated by the fact that not everyone experiences Shiva’s Kedarnath form as a linga. I am grateful to Aftab Jassal for suggesting I emphasize the remarks of Handelman and Shulman on this point.

4. While the jyotirlingas are commonly thought of as a set of twelve, the names and locations in this set vary. I discuss this in more detail in chapter 3. For an overview of the jyotirlingas, see Fleming (2009b).

5. I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer from the University of California Press for the suggestion, here and throughout the manuscript, that the precarity of visiting and residing in the Himalaya deserves emphasis.


7. I employ pseudonyms when describing these kinds of conversations.

8. “The attraction [ākarśan] of the Himalaya is nowhere else” (Ḍabarāl, n.d., 5). The published copy of this work available to me did not contain a publication date. It is, however,
reasonable to assume that this work was published in approximately the early 1960s. It does not discuss in detail additional road building in the region brought on by the Sino-Indian Border Conflict of 1962, and it notes that the motor road to Kedarnath extends through Guptkashi (254). It refers in several places (e.g., 585) to 1951 Census of India data, which suggests that 1961 census data were not yet publicly available in published form. Ḍabarāl’s description of yatra conditions demonstrates rough concord with that given in the famous pilgrimage digest Kalyāṇ Tirthāṅk, which was first published in 1957 (Podār, Goswāmi, and Shāstri 1957). I am grateful to James Lochtefeld for his assistance in dating Ḍabarāl.

11. I am indebted to Laurie Patton and Joyce Flueckiger for this notion of “residue.”
13. For a full discussion of commercial visual culture in Kedarnath, see my previously published article in Material Religion: The Journal of Objects, Art, and Belief: (Whitmore 2012).
14. There are, today, many different ways to understand the relationship between “place” and its analytic partner “space.” Some regard space as the parent category, and some do not. See Knott (2009); Kong (2010); Gaenszle and Gengnagel (2006, 8); Lochtefeld (2010, 4–5); Feldhaus (2003, 5); Hubbard, Kitchin, and Valentine (2004); Warf and Arias (2009); Ferguson and Gupta (1997); Low and Lawrence-Zunigais (2003); Feld and Basso (1996, 4–11). In the study of religion, J. Z. Smith’s (1987) illustration of how places constitute and reflect the projects of ritual has been formative for establishing the value of place as a category of analysis.
15. For an earlier application of the idea of complexity to place and pilgrimage in South Asia, see the edited volume Pilgrimage: Sacred Landscapes and Self-Organized Complexity (Malville and Saraswati 2009).
16. The question of how to think about scale is central to human geography and political ecology (Neumann 2009). As Francisca Cho and Richard Squier (2013, 373) note, “In thinking about a complex system, we have to balance our choice of scale against our scope of interest.”
17. My understanding of place as complex agent draws on a preexisting theoretical trend in the study of South Asia to understand deities as complex agents (for this theoretical genealogy, see Sax 2009, 94–95; Latour 2005, 1993; Inden 1990).
18. For an extended consideration of the limitations of this binary, see Descola (2013). See also Bauer and Bhan (2018); Gergan (2017); and Chakraborty (2018).
19. For recent, substantive examples of this trend, see Tweed (2008) and Vásquez (2011).

1. IN PURSUIT OF SHIVA

1. I am grateful to Andrea Pinkney for the idea of Dev Bhumi as a brand.
2. See Elmore (2016, 115). I am grateful to Udi Halperin for his guidance on this point.
3. A common story in the area is told of Banasur’s daughter, Usha, who dreamed of a man she did not know and fell in love with him. She related her dream to her friend, Chitralekha (“picture-writer”), who had the ability to create portraits based on verbal
It was revealed that Usha had fallen in love with Aniruddh, the grandson of Krishna. Usha kidnapped Aniruddh and married him. Krishna went to war with Banasur, and Shiva was forced to make peace. In Ukhimath, the far and away most ancient part of the temple complex (judging by how much lower the floor is in that part of the complex) is the marriage place (Hindi: vivah-sthal) of Usha and Aniruddh. In the village of Lamgaundi, in the Bamsu area that belongs to Banasur, there is a small shrine where the image of Aniruddh is worshipped. If you are arriving from Guptkashi you enter this area by crossing the Ravan Ganga River. Today in Ukhimath residents of the village of Dangwari feel themselves to be particularly connected to this history. Dangwari has a tradition of producing artists and artisans, a tradition often ascribed to the arrival of South Indian artisans (Hindi: shilpakar) who were somehow connected to the Virashaivas. The largest photographic studio in Ukhimath is called Chitralekha.

4. Tirth purohit accounts of this history often state that centuries ago most of the important shrines in the Kedarnath valley were originally under the control of the 360 original families. Some Kedarnath tirth purohits have, since 2013, established a website that details their concerns and responses to the disaster. See “360 Teerth Purohit” (n.d.).


6. For a description of the Ramanandis, a renunciant organization that includes both monastics and householders and that, as Peter van der Veer has argued, demonstrates an extremely fluid and open complex of community identity and practice, see van der Veer’s Gods on Earth (1997).

7. See Shobhi (2005, 286) for a discussion of how the meaning of the term jangama in Virashaiva and Lingayat contexts changes from “wandering ascetic” to “caste group.”

8. The actual term used here was “back part” (Hindi: prṣṭ-bhāg) of the buffalo. This detail refers to a part of the story that, in Tiwari-Ji’s telling, we have not yet reached and that will be made clear later in the chapter.

9. I am grateful to Vidhu Shekhar Chaturvedi of the American Institute of Indian Studies for this semantic insight.

10. The art historian B.N. Goswamy (2013) has connected this text to a series of paintings (ca. 1815) in the pahari (mountain) style by artists working in the nearby region of Kangra, located in what is today known as Himachal Pradesh, created around 1815. I am grateful to both Ronald Davidson and Shaman Hatley for this reference.

11. I am grateful for the guidance of Fred Smith in thinking about this point.

12. I am grateful to Abigail Sone for her input on this point.

13. I am grateful to D.R. Purohit for his invaluable assistance in translating and understanding these songs.

2. LORD OF KEDAR


2. “Koi particular rūp se mān ke nahiṁ calenge.”

3. I am grateful to Udi Halperin and David Haberman for drawing me to this way of thinking about “presence.”
4. In developing this insight I am deeply indebted to the work of Benjamin Fleming (2007), particularly his dissertation on the relationship of the development of the *jyotirlinga* system to the early history of the forms through which Shiva was worshipped.

5. Kedarnath also appears on other kinds of Shaiva lists of Shiva-oriented worlds and places during the sixth to ninth century CE (Bisschop 2006, 25–35). In the *ayatana* lists, or the lists of places that mark the place, temple, or abode of a deity found in certain versions of the *Skandapurana* manuscripts, Kedarnath is the second Shaiva *ayatana* in the category of “mundane place, accessible to men” (Bisschop 2006, 13). Jan Gonda’s (1975, 178–256) discussion of the semantic range of the word *ayatana* offers insight into the difficulties of finding the boundaries between god, form of deity used for worship, and location. On this point, see also Bisschop (2004, 67).

6. The translation is mine. I adopted the suggestion of Peter Bisschop that Nanda might be a river name, and I am grateful to him for his guidance in working with this passage.

7. Several centuries later, the water at Kedara is also connected to the lake of Shiva’s potent *retas* (Sanskrit: *relo daka*, semen or mercury or quicksilver) from which Karttikeya was born. On this point, see Bisschop (2006, 181–82) and White (1996, 245–46).


9. Anne Feldhaus (2003, 245) has observed that “the exact list varies.”

10. Matthew Clark (2006, 190) has observed that the Kalamukhas began to be associated with specific temples at Balligāve in Karnataka in 1019. Among these is a temple notably dedicated to the “Dakṣiṇa-Kedāreśvara” (Lord of the Southern Kedāra).

11. It is of note in this regard that there is a *rawal* in the traditionally attested lineage of Kedarnath *rawal-jagatgurus* named, perhaps, for this form of Bhairava: Shri Rawal Bhukundalingа Jagadguru (Hiremath 2006, 62).


13. For a summary of this point, see M. Joshi (1986).

14. Travis Smith (2007, 89) suggests that the “alliance between Lākulīśa Pāśupatism and Brahmanism runs deeper than most scholars have acknowledged.”

15. For a relevant but not identical example of this process, see Chakrabarti (2001, 81).

16. Though it is not strictly possible to absolutely connect the figure of Shankara to the building of a temple at Kedarnath, historian Shivprasad Naithani does deem it possible that a temple at Kedarnath could have been built beginning roughly at this time, probably constructed by the ruling regional dynasty of the time in Garhwal-Kumaon, the Katyrus. On Shankara’s presence in the Himalaya, see Pande (1994, 340–50); Bader (2000, 136–82, 252); and Naithānī (2006, 167). I am indebted to Jack Hawley for bringing Jonathan Bader’s work to my attention.

17. For how the Garhwali story might fit into the broader history of the Naths, see Mallinson (2009, 421).

18. Colonial records support, albeit in a confusing and sometimes contradictory way, the presence of Virashaivas in the Kedarnath valley in the nineteenth century (Traill 1823, 124; Atkinson 1884, 55–57; Walton [1910] 1989, 173; Oakley 1905, 147).

19. This understanding has been presented by Shoba S. Hiremath (2006, 10–11), author of an English history of Kedarnath sanctioned by the five *jagatgurus*. See also on this point, see Reddy (2014, 118).
20. David White (1996, 121) points out that the title rawal may have begun as a Pashupata clan name in the eighth century and been absorbed into the social lexicon of the Naths. He derives it from the Sanskrit term rāja-kula (lineage of the king). See also Ḑabarāl (n.d., 414–17).

21. I am grateful to Gil Ben-Herut for his guidance in understanding this early history.

22. Fleming notes that there are two very different accounts of Kedarnath as a jyotirlinga in the Shiva Purana, one in the kotirudrasanāhita and one in the jītānasamhita, that seem to have different understandings of the form into which Shiva is descending. The translation used here is from a different translation series Ancient Indian Tradition and Mythology. The Sanskrit versions of the Shiva Purana most commonly available in the Kedarnath valley (they are usually ordered from Haridwar or Rishikesh) are those published by the publisher who took over the Venkateshwar Press, Khemaraja Shri Krishnadas. See Fleming (2007, 13–14, 81–84); Shastri (1970, Kotirudrasanāhitā 19.1–26); Śrī Śivamahāpurāṇa (2004).

23. “Samsāratāraṇāṃ cā’nya pāpajālanikṛtanam || Kedāramudakaṁ pītvā punarjanma na vidyate| na yoniṣu niyuñjyate sa gacchechāśvataṁ padam||.” Lakshmidhara states that the verse is found in the Devi Purana.

24. Unless otherwise noted, the term Kedarakhanda refers to the Garhwal-specific version of this text that is not part of Mahapuranic Skandapurana texts. My analysis is based on the five published editions of the Kedarakhanda in my possession (Dwivedi 2001; Kṛṣṇākumār 1993; Nautiyal 1994; Śrīskandamahāpurāṇāntargatakedārakhandaḥ 1906; Vyasā 2007). For a related text that may prove helpful in understanding the redaction process of the Kedarakhanda, see Brhad Śrī Badrī Nārāyaṇa māhātmya aurā cārodhāma Devaprayāga, Pañçakedāra māhātmya, tathā Gaṅgottari (1913).


27. This passage is found in Kedarakhanda 41.1–55, ed. Nautiyal (1994, 144–47). The translated sentences are from Kedarakhanda 41.26–29. I am grateful to Nirmila Kulkarni of the Center for Advanced Sanskrit Studies at the University of Pune for introducing me to this concept and her guidance in interpreting this passage.

28. Vaitarani is the name for a legendary river, a form of the Ganga, that flows through a hell into the world of the ancestors. In this passage it is unclear whether this appellation denotes a specific place or whether this is merely an indirect way of acknowledging that the Mandakini, having joined the Alaknanda at Rudraprayag, joins and becomes the Ganga at Devprayag. See Bakker et al. (2014, 89).

29. There are, to my knowledge, two commercially published editions of this text. One was produced by the well-known Mumbai-based publisher Khemaraja Shri Krishnadas, and the other is by the regionally well-known (if you are from Uttarakhand) publisher Vishalmani Sharma, based in the village of Narayan Koti in the Kedarnath valley. The Khemaraja edition begins with several chapters of material that describe ritual preparation preliminary to the physical journey, whereas the Vishalmani Sharma version does not. See Padumā and Hajāribāg (1907); Viśālmāṇī Śārmā Upādhya (1952). The chapter colophons of the Khemaraja edition state that this text comes from the Kedārakaḷpa section of the Rudrayāmala Tantra (one of the tantric traditions connected to the mantramarga). The attribution of the Kedarakalpa to the Rudrayamala is itself suspect. The Rudrayamala Tantra
is the sort of text to which many passages are attributed. See Biernacki (2007, 49), who calls it "that most elusive and ubiquitous of texts"; Muller-Ortega (1989, 6, 42).


31. The drinking of water is also one of the main elements of a passage about Kedarnath from a dharmashatra digest that describes what to do when one goes to various pilgrimage places. See Viramitrododayaḥ, who references the Devi Purana (1917, 490–92). On the ubiquity of animal-related vows, see Samuel (2008, 162).

3. EARLIER TIMES

1. On the spatialization of capital, see N. Smith (2011); Prudham and Heynen (2011); N. Smith (2008). I owe this understanding to Sandeep Banerjee, who first suggested I explore Neil Smith’s notion of “uneven development.”

2. On this point, see also Sax (2011, 167–81).

3. Sudarshan Shah was a king of the Pal (Parmar) dynasty whose rule in Garhwal was consolidated by Ajay Pal. At a certain point in the history of this dynasty the kings assumed the title of Shah (Rawat 2002, 79, 36).

4. Regarding deity ownership of land in the neighboring context of Himachal Pradesh, see Berti (2009).

5. See, among others, Guha (2000, 62–137); Mawdsley (1999); Rangan (2000); Mukherjee (2012).

6. The quoted version is from Husain (1965, 523). I am grateful to James Lochtefeld for the reference.

7. The metallurgical detail here is suggestive of what David White (1996) has observed about the alchemical significance of Kedarnath for Nath-Siddhas.

8. Nivedita’s (1928) observations about Agastmuni (27–29), Nala (33), and Ukhimath (48–49) are notable as well.

9. For an extended critique of this idea, see Ives (2004) and Ives and Messerli (1989), as well as a more extended discussion of this point in chapter 6.

10. It is of course important to recognize that such exponential growth is not unique to this particular Himalayan Indian region. Mahesh Sharma (2009, 113) observes, by comparison, that the number of visits to the Shaiva pilgrimage place Manimahesha in Himachal Pradesh grew from thirty thousand in 1998 to one hundred thousand in 2006.

11. I am grateful to Andrea Pinkney for her suggestion to think of these developments as a form of branding.

4. THE SEASON

1. Unlike most offerings to deities, which are received back as prasad and consumed if edible, this rice is never eaten by anyone and is disposed of outside the boundaries of Kedarnath. (Some link this festival to the story in which the gods, when churning the ocean, inadvertently produced a poison that could wipe out all creation but Shiva drank it to save the world and closed his throat to prevent it from descending into his body.)

2. The importance of Kedarnath and more broadly the Himalaya in the Bengali imaginaire receives more substantive discussion in chapter 6.
3. Sanskritists who began the Lanman reader with the story of Nala and Damayanti will be fascinated to note that the village of Nala connects itself to this story.

4. For examples of Garhwali deity processions, see Sax (2000, 102–9; 2006, 119). See also forthcoming work by Karin Polit. On the relationship of the metal masks to the doli, and thereby to the deity, see Daniela Berti’s (2004) discussion of a similar phenomenon in Himachal Pradesh. On the complex relationships among deity procession, territory, political authority, and ritual in the western Himalaya, see Peter Sutherland (2006, 1998). I am grateful to Udi Halperin for his suggestions about this section about Nala Devi.

5. The Kedarnath deora procession also did not involve a doli prior to the 1950s.

6. Weapons and other insignia of deities are often in Garhwal regarded as powerfully charged objects. In the context of the Pandav Nrtya performance tradition, each character dances with a specially designated weapon that is regarded as full of shakti. Sometimes possession begins when someone grasps the weapon or object. It therefore stands to reason that such objects could also be “recharged.” See Sax (2002, 84, 97–100).

7. The tirth purohit who did these actions was also from Nala village, which may explain his role here.

8. “Buddha Kedar.” There is also a Buddha Madmaheswar located on a hill above the valley in which the current Madhyamaheshwar temple is found. That place, however, actually features a very small and simple shrine with a linga inside. Additionally, there are other “Kedars” not part of the five-Kedar series: Basukedār (located south of Lamgaundi, arguably the beginning point of the Kedarnath valley pilgrim trail of centuries past) and another Buddha Kedar, which I have not seen, reputedly on the path that departs from Triyugi Narayan and crosses the mountains that divide the Kedar valley from the Uttarkashi district.

9. In 2007 approximately fifteen to twenty different Garhwali devtas, either singly or in groups, visited Kedarnath. Many of these devtas visited from the Uttarkashi district of Garhwal, such as the group of devtas (Rudreshvar Mahadev, Narsingh, Someshvar, Madri-Devi, Draupadi-Devi) who arrived in Kedarnath on July 29, 2007. I was told that this particular Rudreshvar Mahadev was in fact the kul-devta (lineage deity) of sixty-five villages and was taken on deora by different groups from among those villages on different years, sometimes consecutively. Jeetu Bagdwal came from the Uttarkashi side for the first time ever in 2008 as part of a group of devtas of whom the main deity was Huneshvar Mahadev.

10. Ghi maliś, ghī lep, ghī lepan, ghṛt lepan, in order of increasingly Sanskritized Hindi, are all words that refer to the action in question. Of these, ghī maliś, or ghee malish, is the most common expression. I therefore use ghee malish.

11. North Indian yatris, without correlation to a particular region, would occasionally tell me that touching and massaging of the linga were practices that occurred at certain temples in their home region. Paul Muller-Ortega (personal communication, June 2009) has witnessed a select group of devotees massaging the linga at Mallikarjuna, a jyotirlinga located in Andhra Pradesh. However, in many other North Indian settings, and in most South Indian settings of which I am aware, such an act would not be possible for the average devotee.

12. “Pāpo’ham pāpakarmāham pāpātmā pāpasambhavaḥ | Trahī mām Pārvatīnātha sarvāpāpaharo bhava||.”

13. This mantra is different from the mantras for the ghee bath used during an abhishek, and the ghee malish is always done whether or not there is an abhishek. I am grateful to
members of the Kedarnath Tirth Purohit Association and the Samiti for their explanations of the *ghee malish*.

14. It is also possible to translate this phrase as “blown-out *darshan*,” referencing both the idea that the *darshan* bestows a liberation (often translated as *moksha* or often in Buddhist contexts *nirvana*) that can be understood as the extinguishing of *karma* but perhaps also referencing the contrast with the evening *darshan*, which involves fire and light, and the morning *darshan*, which does not.

15. For a fuller discussion of the *ghee* massage in Kedarnath, see Whitmore (2018).

16. In important ways, a video like this should be understood as a twenty-first-century *mahatmya*, a text that aims that aims to present the greatness (Sanskrit: *mahatmya*) of a particular place, region, and/or deity. On this point, see Pinkney (2013a) and Whitmore (2016).

17. My thinking about the experience of weather in Kedarnath owes a great deal to my many fruitful conversations with Tori Jennings. On the experience of weather, see Jennings (2016).


19. In 2007–8 I did not observe any *payari geet* sung during the Kedarnath procession. This to me was a significant difference. Two valleys to the west there was an active tradition of welcoming a traveling deity with song, whereas in the Kedarnath valley this tradition was not in evidence and I heard conflicting reports about whether such songs had ever been sung to Kedarnath. This made sense because Kedarnath-Shiva was important beyond the region and did not function as the guardian deity or owner of a specific area in the manner of the other Shivas of the Panch Kedar. The entire region was his, but not in a way that emphasized his everyday presence and activity.

20. I do not know if any of these hypotheticals have happened since 2007. I have been reluctant to inquire because it is a sensitive matter. D.R. Purohit’s vast knowledge of Garhwali literature and practice was immensely helpful to me in contextualizing my own data on these points.

5. WHEN THE FLOODS CAME

1. I am grateful to the anonymous reader provided by the University of California Press for guidance in thinking about the “*longue durée*” of the 2013 floods.

2. D.P. Dobhal, Dehra Dun, personal communication, May 2014.

3. Kedarnath valley resident who survived the floods in Kedarnath, personal communication, May 2014.


6. NATURE’S TANAV DANCE

1. I am grateful to Jonathan Greene for his assistance in thinking through this formulation.

2. The complexity of responses to the floods follows to some degree the model set out by Judith Schlehe (2010) in her work on recent disasters in Indonesia.
3. The well-acknowledged problem of Himalayan mountain hazards is to be distinguished from supposed threats facing the Himalaya presented by the once-regnant “Theory of Himalayan Environmental Degradation.” Himalayan Perceptions (Ives 2004) was the follow-up project to Ives and Messerli’s earlier work The Himalayan Dilemma (1989), which questioned the then commonly held idea that the Himalaya was a fragile landscape in environmental crisis because of the cumulative impact of overpopulation and the resultant higher levels of subsistence farming that had resulted in large-scale deforestation and had thereby increased the impact of flooding. This position, termed the Theory of Himalayan Environmental Degradation (THED), carried with it a pervasive discourse about fragility and vulnerability that still infuses popular sentiment since 2013 in Uttarakhand and across Himalayan regions in South Asia, particularly in Nepal. Ives and Messerli’s rebuttal of this position has since been ratified by scholarly consensus (Mathur 2015, 102; Ives 2006; Ives and Messerli 1989; Ives 2004; Guthman 2002). More recent work often resists a straightforward fragility narrative or “vulnerability-resilience” binary when thinking about human-nature relationships in the Himalaya. While still seriously attending to the particular forms of hardship that attend residence in the Himalaya, recent scholarship presents a more granular and nuanced focus on issues such as local and regional practices of resource use and management, how those practices have affected floods and sediment flow, and “how Himalayan communities conceptualize their environment” (Wasson et al. 2008; Rangan 1995; Guneratne 2010, 1–3). There has also been a push to “decolonize the Anthropocene” and its sense of anthropogenic environmental crisis and “move beyond a politics of urgency to examine the slow, historical processes of erasure under colonialism and imperialism” (Gergan 2017, 490; see also Bauer and Bhan 2018). On this point, see also recent excellent work by Ritodhi Chakraborti (2018), to whom I am grateful for many insights about this topic. It emphasizes the utility of the idea of “well-being” as a replacement for the problematic vulnerability/resilience binary (2018).


5. I am grateful to Samantha Kaplan for her help in thinking through the relationships of modern built environments to the natural environments where they are situated.

6. I am grateful to Devalleena Das for this reference.


8. I am grateful to James Lochtefeld for insight about this point.

9. See also a forthcoming book project on this topic by Brian Pennington, tentatively entitled God’s Fifth Abode: Entrepreneurial Hinduism in the Indian Himalayas.

10. For a complementary perspective on this point see Sax (2011).

11. The influence of European imaginings of the mountainous picturesque that often accompanied the expectations of the tourist gaze in the region is immediately evident in the Kedarnath valley today. The area in and around Tungnath, one of the Panch Kedar that lies on the Chopta road to Badrinath, is known locally as the Switzerland of India.

12. Linkenbach (2006, 165) goes on to note that Uttarakhandi regionalism seems to be developing “anti-Muslim rhetoric.” For broader context on this point, see also Cederlöf and Sivaramakrishnan (2006, 31–33); Moore (2003, 187).

13. In 2007 while I was living in Kedarnath several people said to me during informal conversation that in recent years, because of the increased number of yatris and amounts of...
circulating money, the environment in Kedarnath had become increasingly intense (Hindi: *tez*) and less enjoyable.

14. I am indebted to James Lochtefeld for conversation that aided me in thinking through this situation.

15. M. M. Dhasmana (1995, 44), writing about the worship of the deity Jakh in the Kedarnath valley, confirms this point.


17. A team of researchers led by Changrae Cho (C. Cho et al. 2016, 797), for example, concluded that “a regional modeling diagnosis attributed 60–90% of rainfall amounts in the June 2013 event to post-1980 climate trends” that could potentially be correlated to “increased loading of green-house gases and aerosols.” On this point, see also Agnihotri et al. (2017). I am grateful to Samantha Kaplan for her guidance in understanding the state of scholarly conversation among climate scientists on this point and to Ritodhi Chakraborty for discussion about the Uttarakhand climate situation specifically.

18. As an aside, it should be noted that this report is remarkable in its style and tone. It is characterized by a persistent mingling of what in many circumstances would be separate genres: the scientific languages of hydrology and geology, the social scientific language of environmental anthropology, and the celebratory religious language that I associate with oral and written *mahatmya* accounts. It shifts easily between nuanced accounts of pilgrimage tourism in the region and technical assessments of the impact of hydroelectric dams on local biodiversity. The preface begins with a quote attributed to the *Kedarakhanda* section of the *Skandapurana*, and the second-to-last chapter closes with a quote about the Himalaya from the famous play *Kumarasambhava* by Kalidasa. While I have not focused on it in this book, the religious texture of the biodiversity of the central Himalaya is a subject that warrants consideration in its own regard, beginning with the famous episode in the *Ramayana* (mentioned to me in Kedarnath) when Hanuman carries an entire Himalayan mountain to the southernmost part of the subcontinent so that a wounded Lakshman can be saved by Himalayan plants.

19. See also on this point Drew (2014b, 33); Alley (2000).

7. TOPOGRAPHIES OF REINVENTION

1. I am grateful to Rikhil Bhavnani for clarifying conversations on this point and to Peter Valdina for conversation that helped me to conceptualize this chapter as a whole. It should be noted Emma Mawdsley (2005) has observed, in the context of her work on the Tehri Dam, the complexity of the ways in which the “Hindu Right” has sought involvement with environmental activism. On this point, in the context of postearthquake Gujarat, see Bhattacharjee (2016).

2. On the idea of local deities as entities involved in politics, see Jassal (2016).

3. For other recent examples of this trend toward holistic, multidisciplinary approaches to the study of ecology and religion, see Kent (2010); Veldman, Szasz, and Haluza-DeLay (2012); Frisk (2015); Snodgrass and Tiedje (2008); Drew (2017).

4. NIM staff, Sonprayag, personal communication, January 2017.