

Nigel Clark



# Inhuman Nature

Sociable Life on a Dynamic Planet



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'Drawing on an impressive array of philosophical, social, and natural science sources Nigel Clark's magnificent *Inhuman Nature* provides a compelling account of the respects in which modern ways of living are perpetually exposed to unpredictable natural processes and transformations and the manner in which communities have responded with care and hospitality to the desperate plight of others.'

**Barry Smart, Professor of Sociology, Portsmouth University, UK**

'*Inhuman Nature: Sociable Life on a Dynamic Planet* is a watershed for social theory. Nigel Clark's engaging book brings together earth systems science, philosophy, and history to challenge the longstanding impasse created through the philosophical separation of humans from the world. This book does not simply 'take nature into account': fires, floods, volcanoes, climate change, and hurricanes take centre-stage in this thorough re-writing of the organic and inorganic. *Inhuman Nature* asks the most important questions of our time, and is a must-read for anyone who takes nature and our future on this planet seriously.'

**Myra Hird, Professor of Sociology, Queen's University, Canada**

'This is possibly one of the most important books you are ever likely to read, particularly if you have been duped into thinking 'nature' and 'planet earth' are merely benevolent forces at the mercy of an insane, disordered humanity. According to Clark this just-so story illustrates our twin bad habits of focussing almost exclusively on human powers (exaggerating them wildly) and developing a blindness to the agency and powers of non-humans. This book reveals what the world is like when we come to our senses, literally. You wont look back (the view is better).'

**Adrian Franklin, Professor of Sociology, University of Tasmania, Australia**

This book is dedicated – with much love and across too many miles –  
to my parents, Elaine and Derek Clark.

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# Contents

Acknowledgements	viii
Introduction	x
1 The Earth in Physical and Social Thought	1
2 Ways to Make a World: From Relational Materiality to Radical Asymmetry	27
3 After the Tsunami: Vulnerability on a Volatile Planet	55
4 Quaking: The 1755 Lisbon Disaster and the Modern Subject	81
5 Justice and Abrupt Climate Change	107
6 Hurricane Katrina and the Origins of Community	137
7 'Burning for the Other': Colonial Encounters on a Planet of Fire	163
8 Extending Hospitality: Global Mobility and Journeys in Deep Time	193
References	220
Index	239

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## Acknowledgements

This book began in a different disciplinary home, in another hemisphere, in what is now officially a bygone geological epoch. It started out as a plea for the social sciences to take environmental issues to heart. Only gradually, haltingly, did it become a call for social thought to engage more deeply with the dynamics of the earth itself – an appeal not to allow the problem of our own impact on nature to overshadow the question of what nature can do of its own accord. A number of worldly events contributed, often brutally, to this change of direction. As did a great many conversations, more gently and generously – too many, I'm afraid, to get the gratitude they deserve. My thanks to those whose insights, promptings and invitations nudged me along the way, in no particular order: Myra Hird, Steve Hinchliffe, Doreen Massey, Mustafa Dikeç, Kathryn Yusoff, Nick Bingham, Joe Smith, Clive Barnett, Rosalyn Diprose, Nick Stevenson, Arun Saldanha, Sarah Whatmore, Bruce Braun, Tariq Jazeel, Beth Greenhough, Bron Szerszynski, John Urry, Mike Featherstone, Phil Macnaghten, Divya Tolia-Kelly, Dave Humphreys, Steve Pile, George Revill, Paul Harrison, Angela Last, Uli Beisel, Caitlin DeSilvey, Jenny Robinson, Michael Pryke, Lynn Margulis, Dorion Sagan, Graham Harman, Mark Brandon, Susanne Sargeant, Mike Petterson, Adrian Franklin, Barry Smart, Vicki Kirby, Wallace Heim, Olafur Eliasson, Simon Rees, Anthony Krivan, Vicki Kerr, Heather Worth, Claudia Bell, and John Lyall. And for many things, thought provoking and enlivening, Yasmin Gunaratnam and Zac Gunaratnam-Bailey. Thanks to Katherine Haw and Jai Seaman at Sage for guiding me and my somewhat dishevelled manuscript through the various phases of the editorial process, and to Chris Rojek for his encouragement over more years and iterations than he probably cares to recall.

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