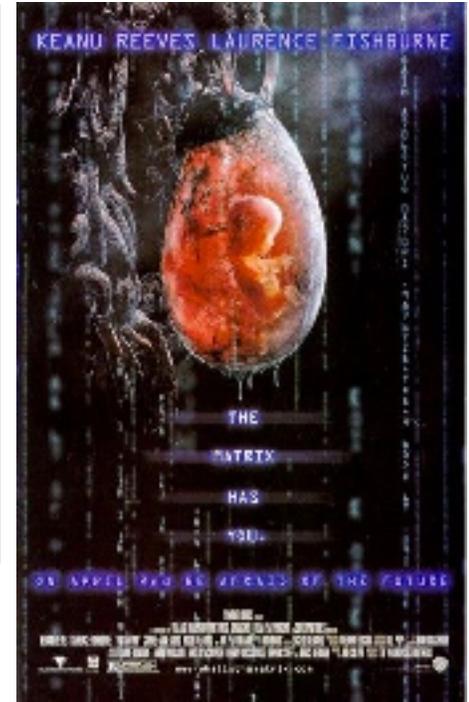


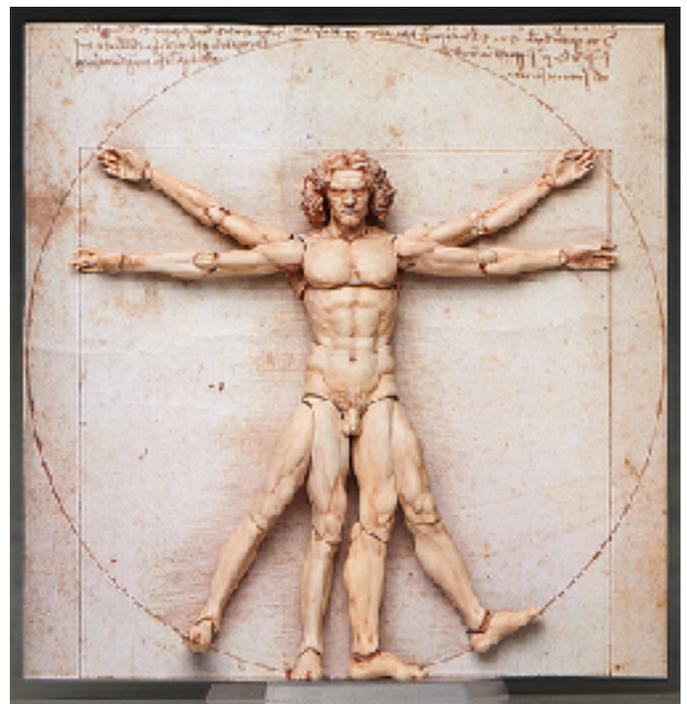
# From Human to Posthuman

Simians, cyborgs, and women are peculiar boundary creatures all of which have had a destabilizing place in Western evolutionary, technological, and biological narratives. These boundary creatures are, literally, monsters, a word that shares more than its root with the verb to demonstrate. Monsters signify. We need to interrogate the multifaceted biopolitical, biotechnological, and feminist theoretical stories of the situated knowledges by and about these promising and noninnocent monsters. The power-differentiated and highly contested modes of being of monsters may be signs of possible worlds...



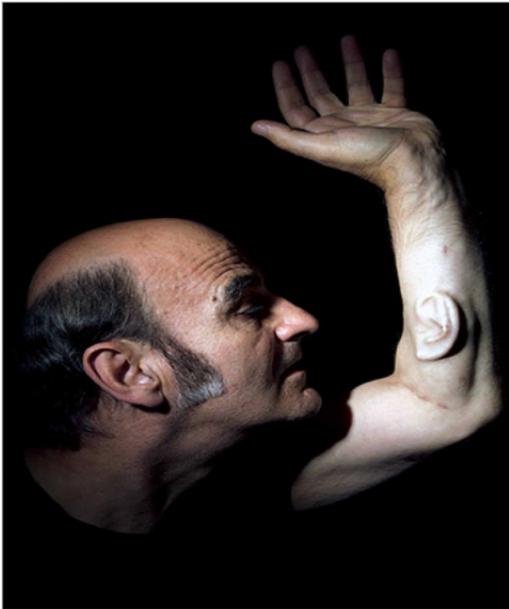
Traditionally, there has been a yawning cultural gap between the sciences and the humanities: a gulf between literary culture, the formal world of art and politics, and the culture of science, the world of engineering and industry.

But the gap is crumbling in unexpected fashion. Technical culture has gotten out of hand. The advances of the sciences are so deeply radical, so disturbing, upsetting, and revolutionary, that they can no longer be contained. They are surging into culture at large; they are invasive; they are everywhere. (Bruce Sterling, *Mirrorshades*)



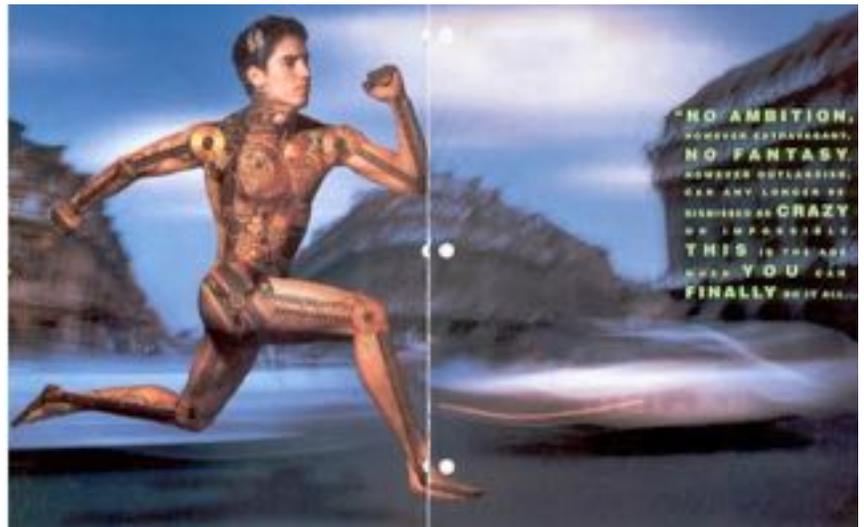
Ihab Hassan, "Prometheus as Performer: Toward a Posthumanist Culture?": "We need first to understand that the human form—including human desire and all its external representations—may be changing radically, and thus must be re-visioned. We need to understand that five hundred years of humanism may be coming to an end, as humanism transforms itself into something that we must helplessly call posthumanism" (205)

"The computer raises questions about where we stand in nature and where we stand in the world of artifact. We search for a link between who we are and what we have made, between who we are and what we might create, between who we are and what, through our intimacy with our own creations, we might become" (Sherry Turkle, *The Second Self*, 12).



**Stelarc:** It's time to question whether a bipedal, breathing body with binocular vision and a 1,400 cc brain is an adequate biological form. It cannot cope with the quantity, complexity, and quality of information it has accumulated; it is intimidated by the precision, speed, and power of technology and it is biologically ill-equipped to cope with its new extraterrestrial environment.

No ambition, however extravagant, no fantasy, however outlandish, can any longer be dismissed as crazy or impossible. This is the age when you can finally do it all. Suddenly technology has given us powers with which we can manipulate not only external reality—the physical world—but also, and much more portentously, ourselves. You can become whatever you want to be.  
**Ed Regis:** "Meet the Extropians"



**"I was born human. But this was an accident of fate—a condition merely of time and place. I believe it's something we have the power to change. I will tell you why" Kevin Warwick Cyborg 1.0, *Wired* (145).**

## The Reincarnation of Saint Orlan

Are we still convinced that we must bend ourselves to the decisions of Nature, this lottery of genes distributed by chance? My work is a struggle against the innate, the inexorable, the programmed, Nature, DNA (which is our direct rival as far as artists of representation are concerned), and God!



Traditional expressions of ethnicity are incapable of coming to terms with emergent technosymbolic systems of essential similarity and difference that conjoin individuals into groups in cyborg-dominated cultures. Cyborg transformations in traditional categories of kinship and ethnicity result in different systems of identity composition. I suggest that these transformations be described by the term “technicity”: an appropriate tool to describe ethnic-type relations among cyborgs, especially since traditional blood ties are increasingly replaced by technologically defined social bonds. There can be little doubt that systems analogous to ethnicity can be seen to act as a social cohesive in cyborg cultures. New body parts, cryogenic processes, enhanced digitalized senses, and collective cyberspaces redefine what it means to be human—to have a human body and to associate with others of one’s own kind. (David Tomas, “The Technophilic Body”)

For transhumans and extropians, science and technology are opening up a glorious techno-Nietzschean millennium of longevity, neural self-programming, cyborg symbiosis, nanotechnology, and rapacious libertarian economies....*For me, the posthuman condition is a far more critical, ambiguous zone, one in which technoscience deepens rather than resolves the contradiction that characterize the fragile ground we walk upon....One boundary of this zone is our deepening symbiosis with machines....With Kismet, humanness is neither eradicated nor finally fulfilled, but swallowed up inside a technological design. In other words, humanness becomes a feature.*” (Erik Davis, “Ecce Robo”)



**Leon Kass, “Preventing a Brave New World,”: “Human nature itself lies on the operating table, ready for alteration, for eugenic and psychic “enhancement,” for wholesale re-design. In leading laboratories, academic and industrial, new creators are confidently amassing their powers and quietly honing their skills, while on the street their evangelists are zealously prophesying a post-human future.”**

**...[T]he most significant threat posed by contemporary biotechnology is the possibility that it will alter human nature and thereby move us into a posthuman stage of history....human nature exists, is a meaningful concept, and has provided a stable continuity to our experience as a species. It is what defines our most basic values. Human nature shapes and constrains the possible kinds of political regimes, so a technology powerful enough to reshape what we are will have possibly malign consequences for liberal democracy and the nature of politics itself. Frances**



Your future is our world Morpheus. You future is our time... Humans multiply and spread, taking over. They are like a disease, a cancer of this planet, a plague and we are the cure. I hate this place, this...zoo, this prison, this reality whatever you want to call it. It's the smell if there is such a thing. I feel saturated by it. I can taste your stink and every time I do I fear that I have somehow been infected by it. It's repulsive. I must get out of here. I must be free.