# Monads

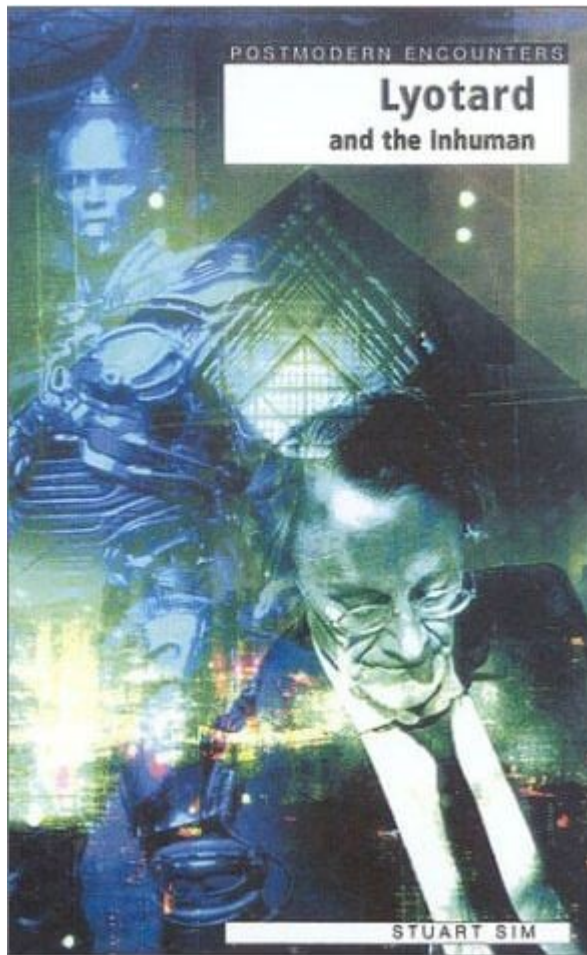**by [Kirby Olson](#)**



**In a short book** called *Lyotard and the Inhuman,* I found an unsettling description of monads.

A monad thus is "a self-contained entity oblivious to everything except its own interests" (Sims 12).

Every monad begins as a liberation story (i.e., feminism, ethnic studies, the KKK, the internet) but ends with a ferocious and belligerent attempt to destroy those aspects of the human race that don't accord with its interests, and to extend those interests becomes the only goal of any such entity. We see in the Terminator series how the internet

(Skynet) could wish to segue off and destroy the hands that built them.

Lyotard wants to point out irremediable differends, to advance the spirit of antitheticality and, in some funny way, his revolution seems to go with the idea of checks and balances invented by James Madison in Federalist Letter #10—that the monadic nature of different institutions should be arranged so as to guarantee a maximum of endless strife in the name of a limited peace.