

THE PROSTHETIC IMAGINATION

In *The Prosthetic Imagination*, leading critic Peter Boxall argues that we are now entering an artificial age, in which our given bodies enter into new conjunctions with our prosthetic extensions. This new age requires us to reimagine our relation to our bodies, and to our environments, and Boxall suggests that the novel as a form can guide us in this imaginative task. Across a dazzling range of prose fictions, from Thomas More's *Utopia* to Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*, Boxall shows how the novel has played a central role in forging the bodies in which we extend ourselves into the world. But if the novel has helped to give our world a human shape, it also contains forms of life that elude our existing human architectures: new amalgams of the living and the non-living that are the hidden province of the novel imagination. These latent conjunctions, Boxall argues, are preserved in the novel form, and offer us images of embodied being that can help us orient ourselves to our new prosthetic condition.

PETER BOXALL is Professor of English at the University of Sussex. His books include *Don DeLillo: The Possibility of Fiction* (2006), *Since Beckett: Contemporary Writing in the Wake of Modernism* (2009), *Twenty-First-Century Fiction: A Critical Introduction* (2013) and *The Value of the Novel* (2015). He has edited a number of collections, including *Thinking Poetry* and *Beckett/Aesthetics/Politics*, and an edition of Beckett's novel *Malone Dies*. He is co-editor, with Bryan Cheyette, of volume 7 of the *Oxford History of the Novel in English*, and editor of *The Cambridge Companion to British Fiction, 1980-the Present*, and of the bestselling *1001 Books*. He is also the editor of *Textual Practice*, and the series editor of *Cambridge Studies in Twenty-First-Century Literature and Culture*.

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IMAGINATION

A History of the Novel as Artificial Life

PETER BOXALL

University of Sussex



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For Hannah

Living I die, and as my breath
Dies, death recalls me into life again.

Cervantes, *Don Quixote*

My entire self trembles on the edge of being and not-being.

Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*

There is no creature whose inward being is so strong that it is not
greatly determined by what lies outside it.

George Eliot, *Middlemarch*

The only tool I possess is my forehead.

Franz Kafka, 'The Burrow'

If I had the use of my body I would throw it out of the window.

Samuel Beckett, *Malone Dies*

My foot is an object. Outside myself. It exists.

Christine Brooke-Rose, 'The Foot'

His shoulders lurked beneath that jacket, his voice, his hands – all
real. They existed, really existed, somewhere.

Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*

I'm someone who is supposed to be me.

Don DeLillo, *Zero K*

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