



Women and the Machine: Representations from the Spinning Wheel to the Electronic Age

Ms. Julie Wosk

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From sexist jokes about women drivers to such empowering icons as Amelia Earhart and Rosie the Riveter, representations of the relationship between women and modern technology in popular culture have been both demeaning and celebratory. Depictions of women as timid and fearful creatures baffled by machinery have alternated with images of them as being fully capable of technological mastery and control -- and of lending sex appeal to machines as products.

In *Women and the Machine*, historian Julie Wosk maps the contradictory ways in which women's interactions with -- and understanding of -- machinery has been defined in Western popular culture since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution. Drawing on both visual and literary sources, Wosk illuminates popular gender stereotypes that have burdened women throughout modern history while underscoring their advances in what was long considered the domain of men. Illustrated with more than 150 images, *Women and the Machine* reveals women rejoicing in their new liberties and technical skill even as they confront society's ambivalence about these developments, along with male fantasies and fears.

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