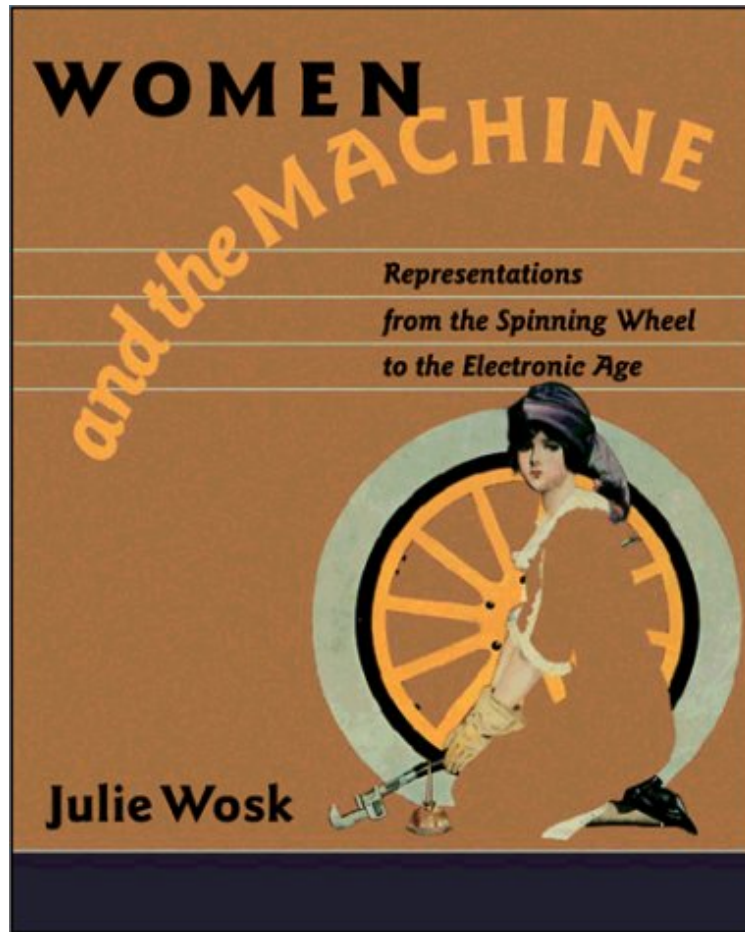


# Women and the Machine: Representations from the Spinning Wheel to the Electronic Age

*Ms. Julie Wosk*

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**Ms. Julie Wosk : Women and the Machine: Representations from the Spinning Wheel to the Electronic Age**  
before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Women and the Machine: Representations from the Spinning Wheel to the Electronic Age:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I'm very happy to have it in my collectionBy TibAlthough an overall informative and interesting book, the author attributes intention and interprets images in a way that is often very subjective. I'm very happy to have it in my collection.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Many good photos tooBy HolofernesFantastically interesting. Many good photos too.2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Marvellously Entertaining, Filled with Knowledge!By Matthew McGinley (real name)"Women and the Machine" by Julie Wosk is a bright new breakthrough text and picture book, thoroughly and adeptly written in a classical narrative-chronological style. I was intimidated at first because of the knowledgeable depth she so aptly

displayed, but gradually I began to appreciate Wosk's underlying message that women will no longer stand to be ignored in the roles of human history. Free of resentments and bitter feelings, Wosk discusses the treatment and attitudes of women since times of "the spinning wheel to the electronic age." "Women..." makes an excellent sourcebook for book reports, covering "Women and the Bicycle" (Chapter 4), "Women and the Automobile" at Chapter 5. From there she moves into "Women and Aviation" and "Women in Wartime" at Chapters 6 and 7, respectively. This book is beautifully arranged with full color photographs, old advertisements, curios, mosaics and even art. As a grown man myself, I feel men could develop a deeper respect of women's roles in modern history, as well as a well-deserved slice of humble pie. We can say, "No, women are not mechanically incompetent, nor are they completely helpless without men in their lives." This book has proven that women are quite capable and adept, having had an important role in shaping the 20th century and beyond. Remember Rosie the Riveter? There's a picture of her in here. That women played a vital role in our World War 2 victory is self-evident, having left the role of housewife and instead have helped to build our fighter planes, gun turrets and tanks--which the fighting men used on the battlefields. Men, take note. Women, take hope. We are, after all, together part of making the world a better place. It's not always men first. Women sometimes have the last word, and we have to accept that. "Women and the Machine" is nothing short of brilliant and provocative, completely unequalled to date.

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.

From Publishers Weekly The image of the flustered woman unable to change a tire or recognize a Phillips screwdriver is so common it's practically archetypal but then again, so is her counterpart, Rosie the Riveter. Wosk (a professor of English and art at the State University of New York, Maritime College) takes these images their place in history, literature, art and advertising and deconstructs them in this engaging and entertaining but nonpreachy feminist history. She posits that women and technology always seemed like strange bedfellows to men, and to many women, too. The world of machines, after all, historically belonged to men; women's involvement in technology signaled both an intrusion into male turf and an abandonment of the female landscape of hearth and home. Using illustrations, cartoons and photographs from the past three centuries, Wosk delineates shifts in social acceptance of women's relationship to technology. Typewriters, spinning wheels, sewing machines and household appliances are all given their due, as are bicycles, cars and airplanes. But there are intriguing asides, too, like the technology of women's corsets, bustles and hoops. How women were inveigled into factories during World War II and then lured back into the home all via the mechanics of machines and appliances is fascinating. Wosk also delves deep into the use of women to sell machines, from factory equipment to automobiles. With the sleek detail of a gift book, Wosk's history may look deceptively slight, but her work is complex, comprehensive and highly readable. Illus. and photos. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Art historian Wosk analyzes the overt and covert messages in depictions of women and machines in an array of fiction and, more impressively, in some 150 visual images. Historically, the spinning wheel gives way to the typewriter and pounding rivets with Rosie the Riveter to pounding computer keyboards. Wartime glorification of female capability usually showed women being instructed by men, reminding everyone that the necessity of women's labor was temporary, and subordinating laboring women to men. Examining a wide range of advertisements, fashion stories, cover illustrations, and photographs, Wosk contrasts images of women as fearful of machinery and scientific technology in general with others showing mastery and control, thereby illustrating gender stereotyping and the hesitant advances women have made in a supposedly male domain. Although primarily pitched to scholarly readers, Wosk's study will also inform nonacademic readers. Whitney Scott Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "Engaging and entertaining... Using illustrations, cartoons and photographs from the past three centuries, Wosk delineates shifts in social acceptance of women's relationship to technology. Typewriters, spinning wheels, sewing machines and household appliances are all given their due, as are bicycles, cars and airplanes. But there are intriguing asides, too, like the technology of women's corsets, bustles and hoops... With the sleek detail of a gift book, Wosk's history may look deceptively slight, but her work is complex, comprehensive and highly readable." -- Publishers Weekly "Women and the Machine presents a wealth of information on the intersections of women with technology and machinery. Covering a wide period of time, her work presents a

fascinating array of information... Wosk's assessment of the challenges faced by women in the supposedly masculine world of machines is a highly readable and excellent source book on the issues, bringing together a great deal of research that plays among the disciplines of art history, visual culture, gender studies, and sociology... A satisfying and fascinating read." -- Kirsty Robertson, H-Women, H-Net s"Art historian Wosk analyzes the overt and covert messages in depictions of women and machines in an array of fiction and, more impressively, in some 150 visual images... Examining a wide range of advertisements, fashion stories, cover illustrations, and photographs, Wosk contrasts images of women as fearful of machinery and scientific technology in general with others showing mastery and control, thereby illustrating gender stereotyping and the hesitant advances women have made in a supposedly male domain." -- Booklist"A fascinating and informative blending of social history and art." -- Library Book Watch"A delightful book framed by captivating illustrations that support and enrich the text... Wosk demonstrates that cultural attitudes about women and their mechanical abilities are complex, contradictory, and conflicted in the past and present." -- Choice"Reveals deep cultural tensions over the role of women in a technologically complex society... Wosk's elegant visual history reads as a prelude to the computer age." -- Technology and Learning"This is a serious book written by a serious art historian, with 150 images from high and low European and American art, from advertising, photography and satirical reviews." -- Julie Wosk, Woman's Art Journal"Julie Wosk's fine detective work, uncovering powerful images of historical representations of technology, makes a significant contribution to the literature on technology and society." -- Madelyn Holmes, IEEE Technology and Society Magazine"Two things about this book stand out. The first is that when you can personalize an academic volume, it's a good book. The second is that Women and the Machine offers a profoundly feminist point of view that isn't buried in academic jargon... Full on target." -- Larry Zimmerman, Key Reporter"The book... make[s] a strong case for women's fascinating and changing relationship with the machine, from the spinning wheel to the sewing machine to the microwave oven." -- Home News and Times (Yonkers, NY)