

PREFACE

KATHRIN THIELE

Sf is this potent material semiotic sign for the riches of speculative fabulation, speculative feminism, science fiction, science fact, science fantasy.

—Donna Haraway, *Speculative Fabulation and String Figures*

This section presents contemporary feminist research on technology/-ies and mediation. While sometimes still seen as a 'new' field within feminist research, the engagement with (new) technologies can build on a rich canon of feminist technoscience studies and feminist media and visual culture studies that has become established since the 1960s. This multifaceted body of knowledge has seen the early critical debates in respect to the general question of technology, with its focus on either the emancipatory or the subjugating effects of an increasing technologization in the 20th century (think of Shulamit Firestone's 1970 radical embrace of technology *versus* the ecofeminist rejections). It witnessed the exponential growth of feminist technoscientific engagements after Donna Haraway's *A Cyborg Manifesto* in the later 1980s that got even further broadened by the simultaneous emergence of interdisciplinary media and cultural studies within the curricula of the humanities in the 1990s. And it today recognizes the most recent developments of transdisciplinary posthuman(ist) studies in-between the arts, the natural and the human sciences, which since the early 2000s populate feminist research and drive the field in yet new futural dimensions.

The chapters to be found in this section articulate themselves at the interface of this rich body of knowledge in feminist media and technoscience studies, and its up to date use and appliance in the ever-shifting body of material that we cannot but continue to call 'new technologies.' And it is in this sense that recurrent references to 'the new' when it comes to engagements with technology and media, remain also justified. A major characteristics of engagements with technology and medialization is that they bring to our attention (and today more than ever) how dynamic and shifting living experiences are, how technology and/or machines move ever closer in-to our (human) lives, and how these

continuous processes affect and transform our most intimate experiences with-in life.

A great focus within technology studies today is the critical awareness of the move from 'analog' to 'digital' or 'the digital revolution'. All contributions in this section reflect on specific dimensions of this transformation for our lives: in filmic representations (Olivieri), online intra-actions (Klumbyte), digital women's writing (Lamerichs), and images of thought (van Hulst). Each chapter works through specific transformations that take place within this complicated process of virtual and real re-locations. The most significant research impetus in these feminist engagements is that the matters at stake are explored *critically*, i.e. in a manner of investigation that expresses concern with and care for the subject matters at stake. It is from such engagements that the productive work on the multifaceted body of knowledge continues. A canon in the SF-mode: 'so far.'

References

- Firestone, Shulamit. 1970. *The Dialectic of Sex. The Case for Feminist Revolution*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.
- Haraway, Donna. 1985. "Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s." *Socialist Review* 80:65-108.