



EDITORIAL

Intimidating Knowledge

Catalyst Editorial Board

In the few years since *Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience* inaugurated its first issue in 2015, the journal has published five issues. We founded *Catalyst* because we saw need for a journal that valued cutting edge scholarship in feminist technoscience. Very often, we found, in our own experiences, and in others, that disciplinary boundaries severely “disciplined” the contours of knowledge. Feminist journals often under-appreciated the role of science, and STS (technoscience) journals under-appreciated the role of social categories such as gender, race, class, sexuality, nation, and indigeneity. Deeply aware of the critical stakes of knowledge formations and social justice, we inaugurated *Catalyst*, so we might help catalyze more bold, robust, creative, and imaginative explorations in the feminist technosciences. We are deeply committed to feminist accounts that take seriously the intersectional roots and evolutions of science and feminism.

The five issues we have published have each been very well received. They have each pushed the bounds of disciplinary and interdisciplinary technosciences in interesting and important ways. But as

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sociologists of knowledge have long noted, success usually breeds attacks, and we have watched with deep concern as some authors of *Catalyst* (along with scholars across disciplines), and authors working in feminist technoscience more broadly, have been attacked. It is noteworthy that these attacks have primarily focused on junior scholars, often women of color, queer, and trans scholars; i.e., the attacks focus on precisely those who are already vulnerable in the academy. They have received hate mail, they (and their scholarship) have been publically vilified, and their superiors (Chairs of Departments and University Administrators) have been notified, cautioned and at times publically pressured to take action to disavow their work.

In many ways, debates on academic freedom are not entirely new. In particular, feminists and feminist scholarship have long been the focus of ridicule, outrage, and threats. But it is also clear that at this particular time in history, and with the growth of social media, attacks on academia and academics is particularly acute. The very ground and veracity of academic knowledge – of what counts as knowledge and what does not – is under pressure. There is a plethora of evidence that academic freedom is at present insecure, and fragile, all across the globe. Moreover, without strong commitments to equity and anti-racism, academic freedom can be twisted to protect harassment as BIPOC and LGBTQ2S scholars make inroads into disciplines. Political actions camouflaged in instrumental logics and free speech, have weaponized ideas of Academic Freedom to protect hate speech and harassers, while threatening individual faculty, programs and departments. As editors of this journal, we stand firm in resisting this backlash, and hostile political climate for feminist, anti racist, anti colonial, and queer scholarship. Our only response can be *not* to be silenced, and to draw on the many legacies of social movements that helped create the very departments and intellectual fields this journal celebrates. We join our colleagues (faculty and administrators) in other fields, and editors of other journals to work to support our authors, feminist technoscience scholars, and the integrity of the publishing process.