

Tuesday, October 4, 2005

Lucy Suchman

Lucy Suchman

Professor, Anthropology of Science and Technology
Department of Sociology
Lancaster University, UK

Abstract: This paper explores the question of how capacities for action are figured in technoscientific projects dedicated to the design of human-like machines. More specifically, I consider three elements taken to be necessary for effective agency in these projects; embodiment, emotion and sociality. With some exemplary cases in view, I offer a critical consideration of the way in which these aspects of agency are conceptualized in the computing and cognitive sciences, and are realized in associated technological projects. This includes initiatives in robotics and artificial intelligence aimed at the replication of capabilities of mobility or navigation, of so called 'affective computing', and of social interaction. Drawing on recent discussions within science and technology studies and feminist theory, I highlight the fetishized figuring of agencies in these projects, and offer some reflections on the implications for both scientific and popular imaginaries. With that critique in mind, I turn to the question of how we might differently conceptualize relations between humans and machines, as irreducibly contingent encounters of specifically situated persons with equally particular, dynamic, and culturally inflected things.

Wednesday, October 26, 2005

Murder or Murdered

A Documentary by Mahvash Sheikholeslami

Special guest, Mahvash Sheikholeslami will be screening her short documentary *MURDER OR MURDERED*. A graduate of the London Film School, Sheikholeslami is an award-winning filmmaker whose work advocates for the rights of women.

In the daring documentary *MURDER OR MURDERED*, award-winning director Sheikholeslami enters an Iranian prison to create a portrait of six women on death row for the crime of killing their husbands. In low-key but profoundly revealing interviews, bitter stories of socially sanctioned enslavement and abuse reveal the women as sad victims of harsh tradition. In Persian with English subtitles. DV-CAM video.

Director Mahvash Sheikholeslami will be present for audience discussion following the screening.

Monday, October 31, 2005

In honor of Beatrice M. Bain 1915-1986

Group luncheon on the occasion of her birthday

Tuesday, November 8, 2005

Laura M. Kerr: When Trauma Came Home

Mental Illness and Emotional Distress in Late Modern America

This lecture will explore how the effects of violence and the social conditions that support violence are effectively silenced by biomedical representations and treatments of mental illnesses. Persons diagnosed with mental illnesses are nine times more likely to have survived violent crimes than persons without

histories of mental illness. Many are girls and women who have experienced rape/sexual assault, domestic violence, and/or child abuse.

After a discussion of how violence and its effects are silenced by the biomedical model of mental illness, the lecture will outline contributions of feminist theory to the development of a 'trauma model' of mental illness that includes the centrality of power, language, and knowledge for 1) the construction of medical models, 2) the possibility of recovery, and 3) the capacity to speak about the impact of violence.

Laura K. Kerr is a BBRG Affiliated Scholar at UC Berkeley 2005-2006.

Tuesday, November 15, 2005

Elina Oinas: Girls, Bodies, Politics

Feminisms in South African and Scandinavian HIV/Health Movements

Dr. Oinas' work discusses feminist perspectives on the body and health through two case studies: South African and Scandinavian young women's health activism. The HIV movement Treatment Action Campaign goes beyond the focus on access to anti-retroviral treatment and asks questions about global biopolitics. The Scandinavian girls' projects address surprisingly similar theoretical questions despite their different context. The study detects understandings of power, subjectivity and agency these movements operate with.

Elina Oinas is a BBRG Affiliated Scholar at UC Berkeley 2005-2006. Her permanent affiliation is with the Institute of Women's Studies, Abo Akademi University in Finland.

Tuesday, December 6, 2005

Luncheon at the Women's Faculty Club