Lucy Suchman

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Lucy Suchman is Professor Emerita of Anthropology of Science and Technology in the Department of Sociology at Lancaster University, in the United Kingdom,[1] also known for her work at Xerox PARC in the 1980s and 90s.

Her current research extends her longstanding critical engagement with the field of human-computer interaction to the domain of contemporary war fighting, including problems of 'situational awareness' in military training and simulation, and in the design and deployment of automated weapon systems. At the center of this research is the question of whose bodies are incorporated into military systems, how and with what consequences for social justice and the possibility for a less violent world.[2] Suchman is a member of International Committee for Robot Arms Control[3] and the author of the blog dedicated to the problems of ethical robotics and 'technocultures of humanlike machines'[4]

Before coming to Lancaster, she worked for 22 years at Xerox's Palo Alto Research Center (PARC) in California, where she held the positions of principal scientist and manager of the *Work Practice and Technology* research group.[1][5] While at PARC, she conducted an influential ethnographic study, using video, of office workers and research scientists struggling to use a copy machine.[6][7][8]

Suchman is a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, obtaining her BA in 1972, MA in 1977, and Doctorate in Social and Cultural Anthropology in 1984.[2] While at Berkeley, she wrote her dissertation critiquing the AI planning model as a basis for

interactive interface design. She also studied procedural office work to understand how it was similar to and different from a program, and how assumptions about the work informed the design of information systems.

Research[edit]

Suchman's early research was heavily influenced by ethnomethodology. Suchman's book, *Plans and Situated Actions: The Problem of Human-machine Communication* (1987), provided intellectual foundations for the field of human-computer interaction (HCI). She challenged common assumptions behind the design of interactive systems with a cogent anthropological argument that human action is constantly constructed and reconstructed from dynamic interactions with the material and social worlds. She has made fundamental contributions to ethnographic analysis, conversational analysis and Participatory Design techniques for the development of interactive computer systems.[2][9]

An updated version of the book was published in 2007. This second edition, called *Human-Machine Reconfigurations: Plans and Situated Action*, included five new chapters exploring developments in the field of computing and social studies technology since the mid-1980s.[2] Specifically, Suchman addressed the relationship and interactions between humans and machines with a focus on the idea of human-like machines.[10] Her later research is dedicated to problems of autonomy and control in human-technology interaction with emphasis on autonomous weapon systems.[11]

Professional affiliations[edit]

In 1988, Suchman served as the program chair for the Second Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work.[2] She also served as the Program Chair for the first Conference on Participatory Design of Computer Systems.[2] Between 1982 and 1990, Suchman was on the board of directors of the Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility, a group she helped to form.[2] Suchman is currently a member of the International Committee for Robot Arms Control.[2] In addition, she serves as a Collaborating Editor for *Social Studies of Science*.[2]

Suchman is also affiliated with numerous academic institutions. She served as president of the Society for Social Studies of Science from 2016 to 2017. She has served as a visiting senior research fellow with King's College London's Work, Interaction and Technology Research Group and as an adjunct professor for the Interaction Design and Work Practice Laboratory at Sydney's University of Technology.[2] Suchman currently serves as an adjunct professor at the IT University of Copenhagen in Denmark.[2]

Awards[edit]

- 1988 Xerox Corporate Research Group's Excellence in Science and Technology Award[2]
- 2002 Benjamin Franklin Medal in Computer and Cognitive Science [1]
- 2005 Outstanding Contribution to Research Award from the Communication and Information Technologies Section of the American Sociological Association[2]
- 2010 Lifetime Research Award from the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) Special Interest Group on Computer-Human Interaction[12]
- 2011 Honorary Doctorate at Malmö University.[13]

- 2014 [John Desmond Bernal Prize](#) from the Society for Social Studies of Science.[14]
- 2018 Honorary Doctorate at [Maastricht University](#).[15]

Publications[edit]

> This section **may contain an excessive amount of intricate detail that may interest only a particular audience**. Please help by [spinning off](#) or [relocating](#) any relevant information, and removing excessive detail that may be against [Wikipedia's inclusion policy](#). *(May 2020) ([Learn how and when to remove this template message](#))*

- Suchman, L. (1987) *Plans and situated actions : The Problem of Human-Machine Communication.* Cambridge University Press, New York.
- Suchman, L. (1993) *Response to Vera and Simon's Situated Action: A Symbolic Interpretation.* Cognitive Science, 17:71—75, 1993.
- Suchman, L. (1995) Making Work Visible. Communications of the ACM, 38 (9). pp. 56–61+.
- Suchman, L. (1995) Representations of Work (Special Report). Communications of the ACM, 38 (9). pp. 33–68.
- Suchman, L. and Blomberg, J. and Orr, J. E. (1999) Reconstructing Technologies as Social Practice. The American Behavioral Scientist, 43 (3). pp. 392–408.
- Suchman, L. (2000) Embodied Practices of Engineering Work. Mind, Culture and Activity, 7 (1&2). pp. 4–18.
- Suchman, L. (2000) Making a case: knowledge and routine work in document production. In: Workplace studies : recovering work practice and informing system design. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 29–45.
- Suchman, L. (2000) Organising alignment : a case of bridge-building. Organization, 7 (2). pp. 311–327.
- Suchman, L. and Bishop, L. (2000) Problematizing 'Innovation' as a Critical Project. Technology Analysis & Strategic Management, 12 (3). pp. 327–333.
- Suchman, L. (2002) Practice-based design of information systems : notes from the hyperdeveloped world. The Information Society, 18 (2). pp. 139–144.
- Suchman, L. A. and Blomberg, J. and Trigg, R. (2002) Working Artefacts: Ethnomethods of the prototype. British Journal of Sociology, 53 (2). pp. 163–179.
- Suchman, L. (2003) Figuring service in discourses of ICT: the case of software agent. In: Global and Organizational Discourses about Information Technology. International Federation for Information Processing . Kluwer, Dordrecht, The Netherlands, pp. 15–32.
- Suchman, L. (2003) Organising alignment. In: Knowing in organisations: a practice-based approach. M. E. Sharpe, London, pp. 187–203.
- Suchman, L. (2004) Decentring the manager/designer. In: Managing as designing. Stanford Business Books, Stanford, pp. 169–73.
- Suchman, L. (2004) Methods and madness. In: First person : new media as story, performance, and game. MIT Press, London, pp. 95–98.
- Suchman, L. (2004) Talking things. In: First person : new media as story, performance, and game. MIT Press, London, pp. 262–265.
- Suchman, L. (2005) Affiliative Objects. Organization, 12 (3). pp. 379–399.

- Suchman, L. (2006) "Wajcman confronts cyberfeminism." Social Studies of Science.
- Suchman, L. (2007) Feminist STS and the Sciences of the Artificial. In: New Handbook of Science and Technology Studies. MIT Press.
- Suchman, L. (2007) *Human-Machine Reconfigurations.* Cambridge University Press, New York.
- Suchman, L. (2011) Practice and its overflows: Reflections on order and mess. TECNOSCIENZA: Italian Journal of Science & Technology Studies, 2(1):21–30.
- Suchman, L. (2011) Anthropological Relocations and the Limits of Design. Annual Review of Anthropology, 40: 1–18.
- Suchman, L. (2011) Subject Objects. Feminist Theory, 12 (2): 119–145.
- Suchman, L. (2013) Consuming Anthropology. A. Barry & G. Borrn (Eds.), Interdisciplinary: Reconfigurations of the Social and Natural Sciences, (pp. 141–160). London: Routledge.
- Suchman, L. (2015). Situational Awareness: Deadly bioconvergence at the boundaries of bodies and machines Media Tropes, V(1), 1-24.
- Suchman, L. (2016). Configuring the Other: Sensing War through Immersive Simulation. Catalyst: feminism, theory, technoscience, 2(1).
- Suchman, L., & Weber, J. (2016). Human-Machine Autonomies. In N. Bhuta, S. Beck, R. Geis, H.-Y. Liu, & C. Kreis (Eds.), Autonomous Weapons Systems (pp. 75–102). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

See also[edit]

- [Science studies](#)
- [Science and technology studies](#)
- [Cognition](#)
- [Philosophy of mind](#)
- [Ethnography](#)

References[edit]

1. ^ Jump up to:ᵃ ᵇ Adelson, Beth (2003). "Bringing considerations of situated action to bear on the paradigm of cognitive modeling: the 2002 Benjamin Franklin Medal in computer and cognitive science presented to Lucy Suchman". Journal of the Franklin Institute. **340** (3–4): 290. doi:10.1016/s0016-0032(03)00046-2.
2. ^ Jump up to:ᵃ ᵇ ᶜ ᵈ ᵉ ᶠ ᵍ ʰ ⁱ ʲ ᵏ ˡ ᵐ "Professor Lucy Suchman". Lancaster University. Archived from the original on 15 April 2019.
3. ^ "Lucy Suchman". ICRAC. 3 July 2013. Retrieved 22 January 2020.
4. ^ Suchman, Lucy. "Lucy Suchman". Robot Futures. Retrieved 22 January 2020.
5. ^ "Agencies at the Interface: Colloquium with Lucy Suchman". MIT Media Lab. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Retrieved 25 November 2012.
6. ^ "Mythbusting: Corporate Ethnography and the Giant Green Button". PARC. 3 December 2013. Retrieved 26 December 2021.
7. ^ Gross, Ana; Suchman, Lucy (30 September 2021). "Lucy Suchman in Conversation with Ana Gross". Sociologica. **15** (2): 179–185. doi:10.6092/issn.1971-8853/13414. ISSN 1971-8853.
8. ^ Buderi, Robert (1 May 1998). "Field Work in the Tribal Office". MIT Technology Review. Archived from the original on 19 December 2005. Retrieved 26 December 2021.
9. ^ Suchman, Lucy (1987). Plans and Situated Actions: The Problem of Human-machine Communication. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 203.
10. ^ Suchman, Lucy (2007). Human-machine reconfigurations : plans and situated actions. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 314.

11. **^** *"Situational awareness and adherence to the principle of distinction as a necessary condition for lawful autonomy - Research Portal | Lancaster University"*. *www.research.lancs.ac.uk. Retrieved 22 January 2020.*
12. **^** *"2010 SIGCHI Awards"*. *SIGCHI. Archived from* the original *on 1 July 2017. Retrieved 11 October 2011.*
13. **^** Professor Lucy Suchman to be made Honorary Doctor Malmö University
14. **^** *"Bernal Prize"*. *Society for Social Studies of Science. Retrieved 9 October 2014.*
15. **^** http://www.maastrichtsts.nl/events-surrounding-honorary-doctorate-for-lucy-suchman/ Events surrounding honorary doctorate for Lucy Suchman