Introductory Notes for Cultural Studies of Science Colloquium,
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We decided as a panel to present our very different trajectories through the field of the cultural studies of science. This, in part, is due to the difficulty of defining the extremely heterogeneous nature of the field (combining approaches from sociology, cultural studies, literary studies, media studies, and anthropology, amongst others) but also from a desire but to share different research and career strategies amongst us all. I also wanted to keep my preamble as short as possible in order to open up the discussion to as many in the audience as possible.

My main interest is in how the ways that a culture processes information informs the way it conceive of relationships between living beings. In my work I define "information" in as broad as possible terms, including the phenomenological engagements with instruments, the means of the sharing of knowledge, the material domain of laboratory or field practice, and the narrative and metaphorical dimensions of ordering complex insights about the world. This approach is informed by the work of historians such as Nicholas Rasmussen, Timothy Lenoir, Freiderich Kitller, and C. A. Bayly; media and technology theorists such as Mark Hansen, Bernard Steigler, and Adrian MacKenzie; and Philosophers of technology and embodiment such as Brian Massumi, Gilles Deleuze, Don Ihde, and Mario Perniola. My monograph on the role of note taking, files folders, and the collection of evidence in the ability to think of organisms as composed of genes is due out in January.

I want to make a two brief points about this approach:

First of all this approach, looking at ways cultures process information, allows for me to move between the work of scientists and the ways that they are situated in the culture at large. Most of the instruments I see used for the triage of information in classical genetics, such as file folders and standardized forms are also part of a larger cultural emphasis on the importance of information triage as demanded by modern industry. My especially broad concept of information allows me to see how scientists share certain tools and projects but still maintain very different objectives and social dynamics.

Second of all, I see it as engaging work that could be labeled as "a perceptual turn" in science studies that mixes new media theory, phenomenology, recent work on the role of emotion and affect, and literary theory. Much of this comes from a desire to locate and describe the importance of non-textual experience in culture at large and science in particular.

It is probably because of this orientation that I think some of the most interesting work is by those who are encouraging us to think differently about mediation and

technology. I will include here some recent work in the digital humanities, some of the work done on the understanding and use of databases and dynamic modeling, and some of the work of artists who explore technology as a medium of engagement.