

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN NON-BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

Technologies of Perception: Searches for Life and Intelligence Elsewhere

You have been asked to participate in a research study conducted by Claire Webb from History, Anthropology, and Science, Technology and Society at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.). The purpose of the study is ethnographic fieldwork to analyze how scientists searching for life and intelligence beyond earth design experimental systems. The results of this study will be included in Claire Webb's Dissertation. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a scholar who on topics related to finding life and intelligence beyond earth. You should read the information below, and ask questions about anything you do not understand, before deciding whether or not to participate.

- **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are free to choose whether to be in it or not. If you choose to be in this study, you may subsequently withdraw from it at any time without penalty or consequences of any kind. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

- **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The question “Are we alone?” has shifted in the past few decades to “Where else is life?” Answers to both questions—an intelligent alien and lively signs of earthlike biology—have yet to surface. This dissertation seeks to illuminate how two communities of scientists construct experimental systems around these missing objects, operating at the edges of knowledge, through familiar metaphors of “seeing” and “listening.” The Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence (SETI) Institute and U.C. Berkeley astronomers use radio telescopes to try to perceive artifacts from an intelligent alien whose technology is considered commensurable with humans'. A Massachusetts Institute of Technology astronomy team uses optical methods to look for “bio-signatures” that would indicate “Earth’s twin.” This project asks how both groups search for the otherworldly objects while mining the anthropos as point of departure. How do astronomers mobilize technologies of perception to build experimental systems toward a future-oriented object? How do such processes codify “scientific selves” and scientific subjectivity alongside the elusive objects of study? This multi-sited ethnographic account will trace in detail how technical practices work within and across SETI and exoplanetary praxes, contributing to the anthropology of science and outer space. I invoke feminist theory to plumb constructions of anthropocentrism and the scientific gaze, reworking the notion of a neutral observer to diversify scientific accounts of the Other.

- **PROCEDURES**

The primary methodologies for this research include participant-observation and interviewing. For the participant-observation component, the researcher will observe and, in a manner you deem appropriate, assist in conducting day-to-day research activities.

The researcher will be gathering data in the following forms:

- (1) **Field notes**, or written descriptions of everyday research activities (data analysis, lab meetings, etc.);
- (2) **Audio recordings** of everyday research activities.
- (3) For the interview component (which should take about 1-2 hours), the research will conduct **audio-recorded** one-on-one interviews at a previously agreed upon time and location.
- (4) **Conference and Workshops**: Join in a conference as part of the researcher's work.

- **POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

You may have differing opinions or beliefs from colleagues in your field.

- **POTENTIAL BENEFITS**

You may engage anthropological and social ideas about science. Your research may appear in researcher's dissertation work. You may make cross-disciplinary connections with other scholars.

- **PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

You will not be compensated for participation in this study.

- **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. In addition, your information may be reviewed by authorized MIT representatives to ensure compliance with MIT policies and procedures.

If activities are to be audio- or videotaped, the researcher will obtain explicit consent verbally, through email, or through a Google form.

You may negotiate the terms of your participation. If requested, personal identifiers (name, IP address) will be eliminated for public documents (such as a published dissertation), and coded by the researchers in a secure (password protected) workspace.

- **IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Claire Webb at ciwebb@mit.edu, 414334074; or, her supervisor, David Kaiser, at dikaiser@mit.edu.

- **EMERGENCY CARE AND COMPENSATION FOR INJURY**

If you feel you have suffered an injury, which may include emotional trauma, as a result of participating in this study, please contact the person in charge of the study as soon as possible.

In the event you suffer such an injury, M.I.T. may provide itself, or arrange for the provision of, emergency transport or medical treatment, including emergency treatment and follow-up care, as needed, or reimbursement for such medical services. M.I.T. does not provide any other form of compensation for injury. In any case, neither the offer to provide medical assistance, nor the actual provision of medical services shall be considered an admission of fault or acceptance of liability. Questions regarding this policy may be directed to MIT's Insurance Office, (617) 253-2823. Your insurance carrier may be billed for the cost of emergency transport or medical treatment, if such services are determined not to be directly related to your participation in this study.

- **RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you feel you have been treated unfairly, or you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Chairman of the Committee on the Use of Humans as Experimental Subjects, M.I.T., Room E25-143B, 77 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge, MA 02139, phone 1-617-253 6787.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

I give permission to participate in an interview with the researcher

I give permission for the audio of my interview to be recorded

I agree to be included in audio video and photographic recordings, with permission revocable on a case-by-case basis.

I give permission for the following information to be included in publications resulting from this study:

my name my title my scholarly affiliation direct quotations

Name of Subject

Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)

Signature of Subject or Legal Representative

Date

SIGNATURE OF PERSON OBTAINING INFORMED CONSENT

In my judgment the subject is voluntarily and knowingly giving informed consent and possesses the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research study.

Claire Isabel Webb

Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

Date

May 21, 2018