



Bodies and Technology

On Corpses, Embodiment and Contemporary Technology

Towards which Modes of Subjectivity under Contemporary Technologisation?



CITA Conferences 2009



Place

Salle académique, 4th floor, Faculté d'informatique, Facultés Universitaires
Notre-Dame de la Paix, 21 Rue Grandgagnage, B-5000 Namur

Organisation

Cellule Interdisciplinaire de Technology Assessment (CITA), FUNDP

Centre de Recherche Informatique et Droit (CRID), FUNDP

**Groupe de recherche interdisciplinaire en communication & internet
(GRICI), FUNDP**

Département de communication (COMU), UCL

Access

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Conference 3: Bodies under Guard? On Biometrics and ICT-Enabled Surveillance

Tuesday 21st of April, 16h30

The issue at stake in this conference is that of the rise of usages of body-reading technologies towards economic and political decision-making processes. Indeed contemporary practices are proliferating that exploit technologies, most of them based on ICT-based modelling techniques, towards the surveillance of bodily parameters for economic usages but also the devising of security policies in airports and at borders, for instance. Biometric techniques, such as ICT-modelling of iris movements and finger printing, are most inventive as well as invasive means for interpreting bodily parameters. Throughout the use of such techniques, bodies become corpses subjected to processes of technological exploration, of which results once scientifically interpreted are looked at as bearing special scientific authenticity. The body as such corpse becomes a fleshy receptacle of scientific truths only interpretable and exploitable through technologised exploration, a corporeal physical materiality to capture through algorithms and to reduce into ICT-modelled standardised and normalised body parts and databases. There are issues with this technologisation of the body by biometrics, the first being the presupposition that individuals actively work at lying and concealing, and thus that the corporeal body is the only 'true' entry for understanding contemporary subjectivity. Another, further, one is that biometrics users tend to dismiss any role or even existence to individual subjectivity beyond that that can be corporeally documented.

Still, it is thus that biometrical tools have entered and are practised in economic milieus, especially in marketing departments, wherein they are used towards the elaboration of statistics on consumption behaviours that become modelled and normalised through ICT techniques. Thus, too, biometric techniques became routinised for the identification, in practice the social construction, of suspects of political, economic, cultural and bodily misbehaviour. The above drafted dark scenario of the technologised interpretation of bodily parameters puts us in front of the need to explore the relationships between bodies, technology and the contemporary bio-political continuums in which they are inserted. In these continuums, if, on the one hand, one remains with the possibility for self-constructing one's private intimate individuality, on the other hand, possibilities become ever more plentiful for others to infringe regulations on privacy protection through the reading and capturing of individuals' bodily information, this often without explicit consent of the latter.

et Société

The Papers

Technologised surveillance: an approach through the concept of 'security', by Ayse Ceyhan, GEEST and Science Po, Paris

Summary: The paper will focus on the concept of security as tool for the exploration of the theme of technologised bodily surveillance. It will be reflected upon how and why biometrics have come to become symbiotic with contemporary security policies. After their emergence in the US of the eighties, and their more recent popularization through the European Union and most developed countries, biometric techniques are nowadays looked as THE technology for the fully ascertained identification of individual people. This contemporary status of biometrised corporeity as core of security systems will be analyzed as suggesting a quest for certainty and anticipation of the future; this also explains the calling to predictive techniques that look at the body as locus for the prevision of likely risks. This way of considering security leads to several philosophical and ethical issues and problems in need of urgent analysis.

Technologised surveillance: an approach through Foucault's notion of governmentality, by Antoinette Rouvroy, FUNDP and FNRS

Summary: The paper will explore Foucault's notion of governmentality as tool for the critical analysis of technologised bodily surveillance. This notion will be used towards exploring the stakes at hand with the growing automation of practices of detection, classification and anticipative evaluation of people's behaviors, preferences, needs and abilities, towards security purposes, but also more generally towards marketing, entertainment, and administrative finalities. The consecration of an 'actuarial turn' in governmental rationality, multi-modal observation and prediction technologies are also an invitation to rethink the relation between the philosophical issues with truth-telling predictive discourses based on the observation of human bodies, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, issues related to the notion of power as regards to *bodies* – as privileged information receptacles and privileged targets of normalization efforts – and also as regards to the *social and political body*.

The Contributors

Dr Ayse Ceyhan is a Political Scientist and graduate of the UFR de Sciences Politiques of the University of Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne. Specialist in security, identity and technology issues, she teaches at Sciences Po and is leader of the GEEST, the '*Groupe d'Etudes et d'Expertise Sécurité et Technologies*', a research group at the *Maison des Sciences de l'Homme* (MSH) specialized on security technologies (web: www.geest.msh-paris.fr). She has recently – in January 2008 – organized the '*Colloque biométrie*', a cross-disciplinary conference on biometrics bringing together academics, sec&tech companies, security agencies and representatives from data protection offices (web: <http://geest.msh-paris.fr/spip.php?rubrique28>).

Selected publications

- Ceyhan, A. (2009, forthcoming), Lutte contre le terrorisme : la technologie n'est pas neutre, *Revue Internationale et Stratégique*, 74, Juin 2009.
- Ceyhan, A. (2009, forthcoming), *Privacy in France in the Age of Security and Information Technologies* (chapter in Lyon, D., E. Zureik (eds.)(2009, forthcoming), *Global Privacy*)
- Ceyhan, A. (2008), Technologization of Security: Management of Uncertainty and Risk in the Age of Biometrics, *Surveillance & Society*, 5(2), 2008
- Ceyhan, A. (2006), Technologie et sécurité : une gouvernance libérale dans un contexte d'incertitudes, *Cultures et Conflits*, 64, 2006
- Ceyhan, A. (2006), Identification et surveillance à l'heure de la biométrie, *Cultures et Conflits*, 64, 2006
- Ceyhan, A. (2005), Policing by Dossiers: Identification and Surveillance in an Era of Uncertainty and Fear, in Bigo, D., E. Guild (eds.)(2005), *Controlling Borders* (London: Ashgate)
- Ceyhan, A. (2005), La Biométrie une technologie pour gérer les incertitudes de la modernité contemporaine, *Cahiers de l'INHES*, Spring 2005, 56.
- Ceyhan, A. (2004), Sécurité et frontières aux Etats-Unis après le 11 Septembre, *Cultures & Conflits*, 2004.
- Ceyhan, A. (2002), Terrorisme, immigration et patriotisme. Les identités sous surveillance, *Cultures & Conflits*, 44, 2002.
- Ceyhan, A. (1998), Analyser la sécurité: Dillon, Waeber, Williams et les autres, *Cultures & Conflits*, 31/32, 1998.

Dr Antoinette Rouvroy holds a PhD in law from the Florence European University Institute (2000-2006). She currently is a Research Associate at the FNRS, as well as Senior researcher at the Information Technology & Law Research Center (CRID) at the University of Namur. Previously, she has been pursuing academic research at the *Centre de Philosophie du Droit* at the *Université Catholique de Louvain* (UCL) (1999-2000), and worked as a researcher and assistant at the *Département de droit pénal* at the UCL, while also parliamentary collaborator for the Belgian Senate (1996-1998). Her research has also benefited from research stays at the *Institut suisse de Droit comparé* in Lausanne (Schindler foundation bursary, 1998), at the Science and Technology Studies Unit of the York University Department of Sociology (Marie Curie bursary, 2004), and at the Centre for Intellectual Property Policies at McGill University, Montréal (UNESCO bursary, 2005-2006). For further information about her research and publications, see her web page: http://www.fundp.ac.be/universite/personnes/page_view/01006658/.

Selected publications

- Rouvroy, A. (2008), *Human Genes and Neoliberal Governance: A Foucauldian Critique* (London: Routledge-Cavendish)
- Rouvroy, A. (2009, forthcoming), Technology, Virtuality and Utopia: Governmentality in an Age of Autonomic Computing, in Hildebrandt, M., A. Rouvroy (ed.) (2009, forthcoming), *Autonomic Computing and Transformations of Human Agency*.
- Rouvroy, A., Y. Pouillet (2009, forthcoming), The right to informational self-determination and the value of self-development. Reassessing the importance of privacy for democracy, *Reinventing Data Protection* (2009, forthcoming, February 2009).
- Le Métayer, D., A. Rouvroy (2008), Technologies de l'information et droit : Défis, conflits, complémentarités, *Interstices* (Ed. INRIA), November 2008.
- Rouvroy, A. (2008), Réinventer l'art d'oublier et de se faire oublier dans la société de l'information?, in Lacour, S. (ed.) (2008), *La sécurité de l'individu numérisé. Réflexions prospectives et internationales* (Paris: L'Harmattan), 249-278.
- Rouvroy, A. (2008), Généticisation et responsabilité: les habits neufs de la gouvernance néolibérale, in Grimaud, M.-A., C. Hervé, M.S. Jean, E. Laforêt, P.A. Molinari (ed.)(2008), *Généticisation et responsabilités* (Daloz, coll. 'Thèmes & commentaires'), 109-118.
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- Rouvroy, A. (2008), Privacy, Data Protection, and the Unprecedented Challenges of Ambient Intelligence, *Studies in Ethics, Law, and Technology*, 2, 1-51.

- Rouvroy, A. (2008), Which Rights for Which Subjects? Genetic Confidentiality and Privacy in the Post-Genomic Era, in Luppigini, R., R. Adell (ed.)(2008), *Handbook of Research on Technoethics* (Idea Group Publishing), vol. II, 454-473
- Poulet, Y., A. Rouvroy, D. Darquennes (2008), The law encounters communication and information technologies: the case of RFID, *International Journal of Intellectual Property Management*, 2008, 372-395.



On corporeity, embodiment and technologies:

A seminar series to help us reflect on our usages of technology ...

This seminar series is aimed at the exploration and debating of the contemporary, growing, technologisation of bodily experience. Our concerns lay with that technologisation has significant reconfiguring impact upon human bodily experience, among others that of inducing processes of reconfiguration of subjective individuality. These processes are at the core of our questioning process here. Contemporary bodies, while using technologies such as electronic bodily prostheses, iPod, and mobile phones, are technologically-marked: they are routinely trailed into technologised symbioses all more pervasive and intimate. This transformation fascinates as well as repulses, for it renders bodies monstrous and extra-ordinary in the same time. Quite crucially, this latter process seems to have reached a turning point following the rapid spread in recent years of privacy-intrusive information and communication technologies ('ICT'). As such, this seminar series is aimed at exploring the very roles and impacts of technologisation upon bodily experience through talks originating from various fields, among others sociology, philosophy, history, semiotics, and technology assessment.

Through the conferences, our aim is to assist going beyond habitual analytical theorising about technologised bodily experiences. In particular, we hope to assess the traditional body-vs.-soul and nature-vs.-culture analytical visions for, in our opinion, narratives on bodily technologisation ought to reflect stronger concerns for contemporary issues in, and difficulties with the modes of representation and construction of subjectivity. There are two main grounds for this opinion. First, following here from Le Breton, bodily technologisation induces processes of bodily empowerment. It allows for renewed modes of representation of the self that gets to participate to contemporary de-incarnated modes of individualism. Technologised bodies are at the core of this process for, quoting here Le Breton, they become capable to act as if an augmented, empowered, "prosthesis of our selves ever looking out for provisional incarnation ensuring our leaving traces of our passage" (1). Briefly, bodily technologisation is at the core of contemporary processed of re- and de-construction of individual subjectivity. Our second main rationale is that there is a need for in-depth reflections upon the issues, problems and risks raised by bodily technologisation. Technologisation has had its downside, that of the emergence of societal systems subjecting bodily experiences to intimately pervasive controlling. Issues we have in mind are those of the design, spread and economic and political exploitation of biometrical technologies, technologies that allow the scientific reading of bodily parameters. In our view, ICT-based biometrical techniques, e.g. finger-printing, face-recognition, eye movement-interpretation and body-tracking techniques and tools, reflect attitudes towards bodies as if subjectivity-deprived corpses only awaiting scientific objectifying reading and exploiting.

These and aforementioned issues of the contemporary new modes of subjectivation under bodily technologisation have already been pointed at, in the past, and very interestingly, by Haraway, an American feminist author, in her 1985 "Cyborg Manifesto" (2). So as to survive under contemporary technologisation, Haraway erects the concept of cyborg, of "cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism," as a device towards "build[ing] an ironic political myth faithful to feminism, socialism and materialism." This myth suggests leaving out usual concepts and boundaries, among others those related to gender, natural purity or dichotomies such as culture-vs.-nature, while commenting about technologised bodily experiences. "By the late twentieth century, our time, a mythic time," Haraway writes, "we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs. The cyborg is our ontology; it gives us our politics" (3). These are all propositions by Haraway that the technologisation of bodily, corporeal, experience be the focus in explorations of contemporary modes of subjectivity.

Alongside Haraway, we would especially argue leaving aside temporarily considerations about usual dichotomies, such as culture-vs.-nature or natural purity while commenting about technologised bodily experiences. How natural and pure is a body enhanced with an inserted electronic prosthesis such as an artificial limb or a pace-maker? Is it natural, pure? Or is it rather better, and more usefully, considered as a 'technology-+-nature' hybrid? As a cyborg, as Haraway would argue? Let us go further. What about external, more mundane, prostheses such as headphones, PDA's and mobile phones? What are the impacts upon bodily experience of such technologies? Are we becoming 'technology-+-nature' hybrids? Are we becoming penetrated by ICT? Are our bodies and subjectivity becoming cyborgs?

- (1) Le Breton, D. (2002), Imaginaires de la fin du corps, *Passant*, 42, en ligne : <http://www.passant-ordinaire.com/revue/print.asp?id=458>
- (2) Haraway, D.J. (1985), A cyborg manifesto: science, technology, and socialist-feminism in the late twentieth century, *Socialist Review*, 15, 2, pp. 424-457, reprinted as chapter in Haraway, D.J. (1991), *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge), 149-181.
- (3) Haraway, D.J. (1985), A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century, in Haraway, D.J. (1991), *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge), on p.149-150.

Programme

Conferences take place on **Tuesdays 16h30 à 18h30**, in the **salle académique** of the **Faculté d'informatique**, Facultés Universitaires Notre-Dame de la Paix, 4th floor, 21 Rue Grandgagnage, Namur, Belgium.

Information and registration (free): citaconferences@gmail.com

Tuesday 17th of February 2009

Opening Conference – Technologised Bodies, Damaged or Enhanced?

Bernard Andrieu, Université de Nancy
Christophe Lazaro, European University Institute, Florence

Tuesday 3rd of March 2009

Conference 2 – Mediatised Bodies, Re-Imagined Bodies?

Jan Baetens, KUL
Sarah Sepulchre, FUNDP and UCL

Tuesday 21st of April 2009

Conference 3 – Bodies under Guard? On Biometrics and ICT-Enabled Surveillance

Antoinette Rouvroy, FUNDP
Ayse Ceyhan, Sciences Po and GEEST, Paris

Tuesday 5th of May 2009

Conference 4 – Contemporary Issues in Technologised Corporeity

David Le Breton, Université de Strasbourg, France

Tuesday 9th of June 2009

Closing Conference – Embodiment as Device for Reflecting on the Contemporary World? Towards Technologically-Weaved Bodies?

Lieve Gies, Keele University, UK
Amparo Lásen, Universidad Complutense, Madrid, Spain
Leopoldina Fortunati, Università di Udine, Italy

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