

Ethics of Coding: A Report on the Algorithmic Condition

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EoC seminar at Utrecht University “The Social Ethics of Coding”

When? **March 30**, 2017 9:30am-5pm

Where? **Drift 13** room 0.05

PROGRAMME

coffee/tea @ 9:30am

10-10:10am Welcome, Round of introductions (host: Dr. Iris van der Tuin)

10:10-10:30am Introduction to EoC project (Prof. Felicity Colman, Kingston University)

10:30-11:30am **Opening lecture *Becoming Europeans* (Prof. Rosi Braidotti)**

This talk defends the idea of the EU as a project of transformation of Eurocentric identities into a nomadic, post-nationalist framework. I will defend this idea on two grounds: historically, by stressing the anti-fascists roots of the project of European integration after WWII; and conceptually, with reference to my project of nomadic subjectivity and to Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy of becoming.

Rosi Braidotti was the founding professor of Gender Studies in the Humanities at Utrecht (1988-2005) and the first scientific director of the Netherlands Research School of Women’s Studies. In 2005–2006, she was the Leverhulme Trust, Visiting Professorship in the Law School of Birkbeck College, University of London. In 2001–2003, she held the Jean Monnet Visiting Chair at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies of the European Institute in Florence. In 1994-1995 she was a fellow in the School of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. Her books include *Patterns of Dissonance*, Polity Press, 1991; *Nomadic Subjects*, Columbia University Press, 1994 and 2011a (second ed.); *Metamorphoses*, Polity Press, 2002; *Transpositions*, Polity Press, 2006; *La philosophie, là où on ne l’attend pas*, Larousse, 2009; *Nomadic Theory. The Portable Rosi Braidotti*, Columbia University Press, 2011b, *The Posthuman*, Polity Press, 2013. In 2016 she co-edited with Paul Gilroy: *Conflicting Humanities*, London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic. Since 2009 she has been an elected board member of CHCI (Consortium of Humanities Centres and Institutes).
www.rosibraidotti.com

11:30am-12:30pm **Investigating Datafication by Doing Entrepreneurial Research (Dr. Mirko Tobias Schäfer)**

Data play an increasingly important role in our society; people and machines generate more and more high-quality, accessible data. This range of large datasets, combined with innovative research tools, provide fascinating opportunities for researchers and students. Utrecht Data School is a research and training platform where students from different disciplines get the opportunity to take a new perspective to the opportunities and problems of data.

This talk zooms in on Utrecht Data School's particular approach in investigating datafication: *entrepreneurial research*, a method used to immerse deep into the field of investigation. Commercial activities of Utrecht Data School serve as 'anthropological vehicle' to land in, and navigate through, the territory of the research and then to expand engagement, to gain credibility and trust for, first, accessing rich data, second, generating deep insights, and, first, having impact. The talk presents the Data Ethics Decision Aid (DEDA) which was developed as commissioned research project and, in turn, became a real product that is now actively marketed. DEDA is an example how scholarly inquiry affects directly the environment of their research. DEDA is a process to detect ethical issues in municipal data projects. How does the Data Ethics Decision Aid look, what does it do, and what are the ethics involved?

Mirko Tobias Schäfer is assistant professor in the Department of Media and Culture Studies at Utrecht University. He is co-founder and the project lead of the Utrecht Data School. His research interest revolves around the socio-political impact of media technology. His publications cover user participation in cultural production, datafication, politics of software design and communication in social media. He is co-editor and co-author of the volume *Digital Material: Tracing New Media in Everyday Life and Technology* (Amsterdam University Press, 2009). His book *Bastard Culture! How User Participation Transforms Cultural Production* (Amsterdam University Press, 2011) was listed as best-seller in the section computer science by *The Library Journal*. His most recent book publication is the edited volume (together with Karin van Es) *The Datafied Society: Studying Culture through Data* (Amsterdam University Press, 2017).

lunch

1:30-2:30pm

Postcolonial Digital Humanities: Diasporas and Belonging **(Prof. Sandra Ponzanesi)**

Postcolonial digital humanities is an emergent academic field which analyzes the digital turn in the humanities from a postcolonial perspective, rethinking the ontology of digital media and its feasibility for participation, integration and emancipation. As such it takes into account the workings of digital media both as empowering and as still deeply inscribed into existing power dynamics by accounting for the debates on digital divide, race online and gender discrimination as often reminiscent of how colonial dynamics are reproduced in digital context (Amin, 2010; Stoler, 2013; Ponzanesi and Leurs, 2014).

Postcolonial Digital Humanities explores, on the one hand, how postcolonial critique interrogates the different phases of internet culture and, on the other, how subaltern, marginal or alternative groups participate and co-shape that very internet culture producing counterpublics. Therefore, the first part of this talk explores the works of critics like Lisa Nakamura, Radhika Gajjala, Roopika Risam, and Jessie Daniels among others who have observed that problematic racial and ethnic categories persist within digital cultures. Indeed, there is increasing urgency to emphasize that big data is never neutral or fully accurate, as 'gender, geography, race, income and a range of other social and economic factors all play a role in how information is produced and reproduced' (Graham 2012: np). The second part will focus on how the appropriation of digital technologies have contributed to the enhanced participation and integration of migrant communities i.e.

Europe, by forging new forms of digital diasporas and affective connectivity.

Sandra Ponzanesi is Professor of Gender and Postcolonial Studies at the Department of Media and Culture Studies/Graduate Gender Programme of Utrecht University. She is also Head of Department Humanities at University College Utrecht. Her expertise is gender and postcolonial critique from a comparative and interdisciplinary perspective. Her research areas include postcolonial studies, transnational feminist theories, comparative literature, Italian colonial history, European migration studies, visual culture, postcolonial cinema, media and conflict studies. She is currently the PI of the ERC consolidator project CONNECTINGEUROPE 'Digital Crossings in Europe. Gender, Diaspora and Belonging', and a founder of 'Postcolonial Studies Initiative' in Utrecht. Her books include: *Postcolonial Transitions in Europe: Contexts, Practices and Politics* (2016, co-edited with G. Colpani), *The Postcolonial Cultural Industry: Icons, Markets, Mythologies* (2014) and an edited volume on *Gender, Globalization and Violence* (2014).

2:30-3:30pm

HACKING HABITAT & ROBOT LOVE (Ine Gevers)

HACKING HABITAT advocated a new sense of 'a-whereeness' now that digital and analogue realities merge. The eye has become overrated and all our senses need to be switched in order to survive. A-whereeness is a prerequisite for algorithmic resistance and active digital citizenship. www.hackinghabitat.com ROBOT LOVE exceeds the question whether we will be masters or slaves of technology. We are already outsourcing decisions over life and death to algorithms and sharing emotions, love and sex with robots. Will digitization and robotics provide new spaces for love and generosity? What are the chances and threads?
www.robotlove.nl

Ine Gevers is the artistic director of the Niet Normaal Foundation (not translatable). She has realized different large scale expanded art exhibitions and publications. www.nietnormaal.nl

coffee/tea

4-5

Round table discussion, Conclusion