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"Between Selves: Human and AI Subjectivity in Semiotic and Interdisciplinary Perspectives"

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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Presentations in alphabetical order of the presenters' surnames

Momchil Alexiev · *ACTIFILM Ltd.*

Workshop: Avatar Tango

This workshop explores the relationship between Lacan's mirror stage, AI-generated avatars, and identity in immersive environments, asking how digital representations shape our perception of the self. It invites participants to reflect on identity, desire, and embodiment in the emerging space between human subjectivity and intelligent machines.

Arianaz Asghari (ERUA) · *University of Macerata*

Between Selves: Subjectivity, Enunciation, and Creativity in Human–AI Interaction

Recent developments in generative artificial intelligence challenge traditional notions of subjectivity, creativity, and authorship. This paper explores how AI systems, without consciousness or intentionality, can produce outputs that simulate the presence of a speaking subject. Drawing on semiotic theory, particularly the concept of enunciation, subjectivity is understood not as a stable inner property but as an emergent effect of discursive assemblages—combinations of norms, institutional voices, stereotypes, and pre-existing statements. Generative AI appears capable of similar operations, producing coherent narratives, stylistic imitations, and dialogic interactions that evoke a human-like agency.

Rather than asking whether AI "understands" or "thinks," this study examines how subjectivity is constructed and perceived in human machine interactions. Selected case studies of AI-generated narratives, visual media, and playful or ironic discourse illustrate the mechanisms by which coherence, voice, and apparent intentionality emerge from recombination of semiotic elements. These cases highlight both the parallels and divergences between natural and artificial creativity.

The paper further considers implications for authorship, originality, and creative labor, suggesting that hybrid human–AI collaboration produces a new semiotic field in which subjectivity is continuously negotiated and redefined. Ultimately, the space "between selves" is conceptualized not as a boundary but as a dynamic arena of semiotic production, offering novel insights into the nature of creativity, agency, and the evolving interface between humans and machines.

Kristian Bankov (ERUA) · *New Bulgarian University*

Plato, Kant, Bergson, Ricoeur and AI: Who's smart subject?

Kant holds that the power of judgment — deciding that this case falls under that rule — cannot be taught but only exercised, and that no further rule can supply it without infinite regress. This article tests that claim against large language models, recontextualising the author's 1997 paper "Text and Intelligence" within the new intellectual production of AI. Before 2017, machine intelligence was superhuman inside rule-spaces drawn by others and mute about its own operation; the attention mechanism added not knowledge but relevance, recomputed for each case. Read through Plato's wax and aviary, Bergson's *bon sens* as persevering attention, and Kant's second unteachable power — *Witz*, the assimilation of heterogeneous representations lying far apart — attention appears as mechanised *ingenium comparans*, acquired from examples rather than rules, so that Kant's regress is absorbed into weights rather than broken. Yet *Anthropology* §54 requires judgment to follow wit, and the machine has no case: no ostension, no commitment. Autonomous weapons show subsumption displaced in time, to the procurement decision, rather than abolished. The 1997 formula holds: artificial intelligence is encyclopedism without a transcendental subject, lacking Ricœur's ontological vehemence. The reciprocal question follows: how much human judgment ever exceeded a well-weighted encyclopedia?

Keywords: power of judgment (Urteilskraft), subsumption, attention mechanism, wit (ingenium), ontological vehemence

Andriana Bartziou · *Aristotle University of Thessaloniki*

Encounters of the Enunciated Kind: Sci-Fi Imaginaries and the Semiotics of Hybrid Subjectivity in Human-AI Communication

Recent developments in generative AI have intensified a question that science fiction has long been rehearsing: where does human subjectivity end and artificial subjectivity begin? Drawing on Claudio Paolucci's semiotic framework, in which subjectivity emerges as an effect of enunciation, produced through assemblages of heterogeneous discursive instances, this paper proposes that cinematic science fiction constitutes a privileged semiotic laboratory for examining this question.

Through a Greimasian analysis of three films, Her (Jonze, 2013), Ex Machina (Garland, 2014), and I'm Your Man (Schrader, 2021), it is argued that each constructs a distinct model of enunciation in human-AI communication: mutual and reciprocal constitution, strategic and asymmetric manipulation, and specular recognition respectively. In each case, subjectivity, human and artificial alike, is not a precondition of the communicative act. It is its outcome.

Grounded in Lotman's theory of dialogue as the generative site of new meaning rather than mere information transfer, the analysis further proposes that the boundary between human and artificial selves functions as what Lotman calls a semiotic border: maximally productive, irreducibly unstable, and constitutive of both parties. This paper, thus, contributes to an emerging semiotics of hybrid creativity, arguing that science fiction imaginaries do not merely reflect cultural anxieties about AI but actively pre-configure the semiotic schemas through which human-AI interaction is lived and understood.

Philippe Boisnard (ERUA) · *Université Paris 8 – CITU*

Allogenetics and Transvergence: The Emergence of Non-Anticipable Ontologies in Generative Systems

Productions generated by artificial intelligence systems arise neither from subjective intention nor from mere mechanical execution. We propose to analyze this irreducibility through the concept of allogenetics, borrowed from Marcos Novak (2002), which designates a mode of genesis whose operative principle is alien—alien in the literal sense—to lived experience and to the interiority of the subject. Allogenetics does not imply the absence of determination, but rather a genetic heteronomy: forms emerge from computational dynamics that cannot be reduced to the aesthetic categories inherited from modernity.

We argue that this heteronomous genesis becomes particularly visible in processes of transvergence—the interaction between convergent and divergent dynamics within latent spaces—where human curatorial choices (image selection, dataset construction, LoRA training) enter into composition with the statistical structures of the model, producing configurations that cannot be anticipated in advance. The installation XXX Machina by Erin Robinson and Anthony Frisby (Ars Electronica Prize, 2025) constitutes a paradigmatic case. Operating as an “autonomous machine of desire,” the system recursively reprocesses its own outputs, generating unstable visual lineages—distorted anatomies, fractured subjects—that neither the artist nor the model could have produced independently.

This regime of co-agency belongs neither to intersubjective collaboration nor to instrumental use. Instead, it opens the possibility for the emergence of new ontologies of the sensible, in which generated forms structurally exceed the anticipatory horizon of each of the agents involved. It is this regime that we designate as post-aesthetic: not a historical supersession of aesthetics, but a theoretical necessity that appears when the genesis of the work can no longer be referred back to a constituting subjectivity.

Heidi Campana Piva · *University of Turin*

Application of Large Language Models to Semiotic Analysis of Conspiracy Theories

The accelerated evolution of digital technology has undoubtedly impacted the dynamics of information. Some Telegram news aggregator channels now exist solely to spread, wide and fast, narratively distorted

pieces of events, framed in a way to serve certain political, economic, and social interests. The current technological landscape, thus, pushes the need for computation processes that can allow researchers to carry out more efficient textual analyses on larger datasets. As such, this work introduces a newly refined methodology of semiotic analysis assisted by Large Language Models. A qualitative approach supplied by semiotics and philosophy of communication is combined with a quantitative approach based on semi-automatic analysis of big social data through artificial intelligence, to study the digital propagation of conspiracy theories on Telegram. This method allows for the identification of language patterns (texts, signs, codes) that assist in the codification of cultural meanings (which have a particular significance within specific groups) and in the formation of ideological clusters on social media (fairly isolated online communities that help to shape beliefs and attitudes). The objective of the refinement and application of computational linguistics tools is not to use machine learning to fully-automatically analyze text, but rather, to serve as a tool for the human analyst (to the semiotician). Furthermore, this work approaches the use of AI solutions from a critical point of view, which is to say that computational processes are both methods and objects, being not merely applied, but analyzed in themselves.

Georgios Damaskinidis · *University of Western Macedonia*

Military Translation as Enunciative Assemblage: Semiotics, Agency, and Generative AI

AI-assisted military translation offers a site for examining how subjectivity and authority are produced in hybrid human–machine discourse. In semiotic terms, subjectivity can be understood not as an inner property of a speaker but as an effect of enunciation, generated through discursive positioning, institutional codes, and the reiteration of forms (Benveniste, 1971; Greimas & Courtés, 1982; Eco, 1976). From the standpoint of translation studies, translation is likewise not a neutral transfer of meaning but a situated practice shaped by ideology, mediation, and unequal distributions of agency (Munday et al., 2022). These issues become acute in military contexts, where translation is embedded in chains of command, operational urgency, and institutionalized authority (Baker, 2010; Inghilleri, 2010).

This paper argues that AI-assisted military translation makes visible a broader transformation of enunciation: authoritative voice is increasingly assembled across translators, prompts, datasets, models, doctrinal phraseology, and military institutions rather than originating in a single sovereign subject. Building on work on translation technology and machinic agency (O'Brien, 2012; Olohan, 2011), I propose the concept of military translation as enunciative assemblage to describe this distributed production of meaning. Methodologically, the paper combines semiotic analysis with discourse-oriented translation analysis of military and quasi-military translation scenarios. It shows how generative AI can simulate institutional voice, redistribute responsibility, and naturalize command authority while obscuring the layered agencies involved in multilingual communication. The paper contributes to semiotics and translation studies by reframing military translation as a case for studying hybrid subjectivity, artificial voice, and the reconfiguration of authorship in human–AI collaboration.

Marek Debnár and Lucia Spálova · *Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra; University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava*

Never Say (A)I: The Enunciation of Subjectivity between Humans and Artificial Intelligence in Detroit: Become Human and The Medium

This paper explores how digital games simulate the emergence of subjectivity through interactions between human players and artificial intelligence. Drawing on Émile Benveniste's concept of enunciation, according to which the subject is not a pre-existing entity but comes into being through the act of utterance by assuming the position of the "I", the paper argues that this principle is transformed in digital games: the "I" emerges not only through language but also through the interaction between the player, the game character, and the algorithmic system. It further builds on contemporary semiotic approaches to enunciation, particularly the work of Claudio Paolucci, who understands the subject as an effect produced by the organisation of multiple discursive voices. From this perspective, video games are not merely narrative worlds but media that simulate the process through which the self is constituted.

The analysis of Detroit: Become Human and The Medium identifies two distinct models of subjectivity. Detroit: Become Human explores the emergence of an autonomous self through decision-making and encounters with the other, whereas The Medium presents subjectivity as an identity divided between two worlds, taking shape simultaneously across multiple planes of existence. In both cases, the subject is not the source of meaning but its ongoing product, emerging through the interaction between the human player and the algorithmic system.

The paper argues that digital games extend Benveniste's concept of enunciation beyond the boundaries of verbal language. Rather than being constituted solely in discourse, the "I" emerges as a distributed semiotic effect mediated not only by the player and the game character but also by the algorithm. The title, Never Say (a)I, reflects this transformation of subjectivity in the age of artificial intelligence, where the boundary between the human subject and its technologically mediated counterpart becomes increasingly intermediate.

Key words: Human – AI interaction, Video game semiotics, Posthumanism, Player agency, Enunciation, Subjectivity

Ioannis Floros · *Aristotle University of Thessaloniki*

AI and Philology: The case of the Greek Philologist depiction

The popularity of the AI tools is a well known fact. In the field of education, an extensive debate is taking place regarding the pros and cons of their usage. Some view artificial intelligence as a useful tool for educational purposes. However, counterarguments are also part of the relevant discourse. For many, the use of such tools has a negative impact regarding the development of creativity and critical thinking.

The upcoming presentation will examine a new topic that has not been explored to date. This study will analyze the depiction of the Greek philologist in AI generated images. This way an alternative form of introspection is taking place, as these images will be evaluated in terms of accuracy.

At the same time, semiotic translation will be used to explore how written language is translated into image. The combined examination of language and image may reveal common motifs in the portrayal of the philologist and, thus, a myth concerning this specific category of Greek educators.

Ivan Ginev (ERUA) · *New Bulgarian University*

Using AI generation tools in the creative design process: field findings

[abstract to be added]

Eesha Aditi Gupta (ERUA) · *University of Oregon*

Semiotic Register Drift: How LLMs Are Changing the Way Humans Speak

Delve, boast, meticulous, and other words preferentially generated by LLMs are measurably increasing in spoken communication. Analyzing over 740,000 hours of academic discourse and spontaneous podcast conversation, Yakura et al (2024) identify a causally attributable shift in human lexical behavior following ChatGPT's release in scripted and unscripted dialogue. This paper proposes a mechanism for this drift.

Drawing on Silverstein’s (2003) theory of linguistic indexicality and Peirce’s triadic sign model, we argue that register, the personal semiotic style habitual selection patterns create, is both expressive and constitutive. It

reflects and reinforces a specific method of meaning-making indicative of underlying semantic organization. Register is indexical, pointing through causal connection at the speaker's socio-cultural position.

Yakura et al.'s work suggests underlying semiotic register drift, unconscious convergence of human registers towards the fixed semiotic defaults of LLM outputs. Semantic priming incrementally strengthens these abstract representations (Was et al., 2019), consolidated across sleep (Gaskell et al., 2019). An LLM's register is frozen into weights by predominately English training corpora and demographically narrow RLHF fine-tuning.

Detecting this drift in spontaneous speech suggests this is multimodal. We propose extending this framework to image generation and across languages, with implications for linguistic diversity, cognitive homogeneity, and epistemic autonomy.

Angel Iskrev · *Proof. (creative agency)*

Workshop "The New Creative Athlete"

[abstract to be added]

Christo Kaftandjiev · *Sofia University*

Subjectivity And Its Semiotic And Narrative Aspects In Traditional And AI-Generated Communication

Goal of the Presentation

The aim of this presentation is to explore, in an engaging and highly visual manner, the concept of subjectivity and its semiotic and narrative dimensions in both traditional and AI-generated communication.

Structure of the Presentation

This objective determines the key research tasks and, accordingly, the overall structure of the presentation:

Definition, Classifications, and Functions of Subjectivity

A conceptual overview of the term, including its principal classifications and functions.

Subjectivity Across Disciplinary Perspectives

An examination of subjectivity from the viewpoints of semiotics, narrative theory, postmodernism, feminism, psychology, sociology, and artificial intelligence.

Subjectivity in Sign Systems

The variability of interpretations of the same phenomenon across different sign systems, including colors, gestures, dance, tattoos, and others.

Subjectivity in Semantic Frameworks

The variability of interpretation through key semantic concepts such as synchrony/ diachrony, denotation/ connotation, semantic fields, continuum, zero morpheme, liminality, viscosity, and related notions.

Subjectivity in Stylistic Figures

The role of rhetorical and stylistic devices—such as metaphor, metonymy, personification, and hyperbole—in shaping subjective interpretation.

Subjectivity in Textual Cohesion and Coherence

The variability of meaning as influenced by different types of textual linkage and organization.

Subjectivity Across Audience Perspectives

The interpretation of the same phenomenon from the viewpoints of diverse user or audience groups.

Subjectivity in Narrative Structures

The variability of interpretation through narrative elements such as characters, actions, magical agents, chronotopes, and modes of dramatization.

Maria Ilia Katsaridou · *Aristotle University of Thessaloniki*

An evaluative voice without a subject: generative systems reading and writing the value of cause-driven interactive media

[abstract to be added]

Massimo Leone · *Università degli Studi di Torino*

Humannerisms

Since the public diffusion of large language models, writing has become a site of reciprocal adaptation between statistical machines and their human users. Much discussion has focused on whether machine-generated language can successfully imitate human language. This lecture reverses the question: what happens when human language begins to imitate, absorb, conceal, or react against the recurrent stylistic patterns of machines?

I propose the term “humannerisms” for the semiotic effects produced by this feedback loop. Contemporary LLMs generate recognizable lexical, syntactic, and rhetorical regularities. Some acquire the status of mannerisms: conspicuous patterns associated with an idealized version of fluent, persuasive, or academic writing. Once socially recognized, however, these patterns enter a second cycle. Human writers adopt them, ridicule them, deliberately avoid them, or prompt machines to erase them. The supposed boundary between human and artificial style consequently becomes unstable.

The lecture develops “mannerism” as an analytical category rather than a loose metaphor. It relates the aesthetic history of mannerism to statistical norm, Peircean habit, linguistic variation, and theories of enunciation and authorship. Recent corpus-linguistic research on post-2022 lexical change provides an empirical basis for distinguishing measurable shifts from merely anecdotal “AI tells”; emerging evidence of differences among individual language models further complicates the idea of a single artificial style.

These transformations also have a social dimension. LLM-assisted writing redistributes linguistic competence, especially across languages and educational backgrounds, while altering the prestige traditionally attached to eloquence, authorship, and individual mastery. At the same time, practices of disclosure, detection, and stylistic “humanization” generate a new politics of textual suspicion.

The broader hypothesis is that AI-assisted writing may gradually cease to be perceived as assistance at all. If hybrid production becomes ordinary writing, subjectivity will increasingly have to be studied within the circulation of habits between human writers, computational models, institutions, and evolving linguistic norms.

Peter Andrew Mantello · *Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University*

Artificial Symbionts of the Afterlife: Negotiating Presence of Absence in the Posthuman Umwelt

With rapid advances in generative AI, LLMs, voice cloning, deep fakes and affect recognition, artificial agents no longer simply recognize human emotion and cognition; they can now simulate them. Yet what happens when artificial agents are not simply synthetic stand-ins for the living but also deceased? This paper examines digital survival after biological death. It proposes a thanasemiotics where semiosis continues without life, where the digital remains of the deceased sustain meaning-making beyond metabolic closure. A growing industry dedicated to grief tech - AI-powered memorials, platforms, holograms, augmented reality, and chatbots is expanding our understanding and horizon of mortality beyond the grave.

Digital estate planners such as Deathswitch, Lifefile, and MyWishes sell products and services so people can safeguard their post-mortal legacy by ensuring heirs have access and control over their digital information. Start-ups such as Storyline, and Hereafter.ai create pre-mortem replicas for customers in preparation for the afterlife. Platforms such as Séance AI, You, Only Virtual, and Eternos create digital twins of deceased loved ones, trained posthumously digital remains such as social media data, posting patterns, SMS, emails, voice and video recordings. Tech giants are also sowing plans to monetize the digital afterlife, securing patents for AI agent designed to keep social media user accounts active long after they transpire. The ultimate purpose of these digital ghosts is to drive platform revenue by autonomously extending user engagement and in turn, creating a never-ending stream of lucrative data through behavioural tracking, ad placements, and sponsored ads.

Drawing on biosemiotics and computational media studies, notably, the shared notion of absence found in the writings of Charles Peirce, Terrence Deacon and Katherine N. Hayles, this paper examines how meaning, agency, and affect persist when the biological organism no longer does. I argue that grief technology inaugurates a new symbiotic ecology of signs, an afterlife of semiosis where mourning, code and machine learning co-constitute now porous boundaries between the living and the dead. Although these artificial symbionts are clearly not living conversational partners, the everyday interactions, experiences and emotions associated with these systems are in fact meaningful for living users. Hence, they point to a deeper entanglement of material and semiotic causality, where the material properties of digital culture and meaning making processes it brings to human agents cannot be separated.

Gabriele Marino and Andrea Peressini · *Università degli Studi di Torino*

Maupassant 4.0 – Or, The Death of the Semiotician (at the Hand of Generative AI)

If we accept the conventional distinction among the levels of scientific research practice (epistemological, theoretical, methodological, and technical), we can – and perhaps must, if we so wish – envisage the possibility that semiotics in 2026 might seek to broaden its toolkit at the latter level. This contribution intends to focus on this specific dimension, while suggesting that the outcome of a successful implementation, such as the one proposed, could act as a positive sanction capable of retroacting even up to the methodological plane (in the wake of a truly pioneering experiment, the collective volume Le sirene [The sirens], edited by the late Sandra Cavicchioli and published in 1989 by Bologna-based imprint CLUEB). Over time, various proposals have been advanced for an alternatively quantitative, computational, algorithmic, or AI-centered semiotics (from Rastier to Dondero, to the FACETS group); this paper puts forward a further proposition in this direction, simultaneously suggesting, in a provocative yet sincere manner, not merely that a semiotics produced by machines is possible, but rather that only the semiotics that can be produced by machines is possible (i.e. the one benefiting from a method so robust as to be maximally automatized). Let us consider the same problem from an even more oblique perspective. If we were to “teach” a generative AI (such as OpenAI's ChatGPT or Google's Gemini) the principles of Greimassian semiotic analysis, the program should return something comparable to Greimas' masterpiece published in 1976, if asked to analyze Maupassant's classic Deux amis. If the semiotic method, and particularly the Greimassian one, is a scientific

method, it should be controllable, falsifiable, and ultimately, replicable in an automated fashion. Can we happily move from the Barthesian death of the author to that of the semiotician? If only the text remains of the former, then only the method remains of the latter.

KEYWORDS: generative artificial intelligence; Greimas; Maupassant; methodology; semiotics.

Eduard Marinov (ERUA) · *New Bulgarian University; Economic Research Institute at BAS; University of Insurance and Finance*

Artificial Intelligence and International Economic Communication: New Sources of Competitive Advantage in International Trade

The rapid advancement of generative artificial intelligence is transforming international trade beyond its traditional role as a productivity-enhancing technology. While existing research has primarily examined AI through the lenses of automation, innovation and operational efficiency, its impact on international economic communication has received comparatively limited attention. This paper argues that AI is fundamentally reshaping the way firms create, adapt and manage cross-border economic communication, thereby influencing the sources of competitive advantage in international trade.

Building upon theories of comparative and competitive advantage, the paper proposes Communicative Competitive Advantage (CCA) as a new conceptual framework for understanding how communication capabilities contribute to international competitiveness. CCA is defined as a firm's ability to generate, adapt and strategically manage international economic communication more effectively than competitors through the integration of human expertise and AI-enabled systems. The paper discusses how generative AI transforms multilingual communication, international marketing, negotiation support, customer engagement and market intelligence, while also considering challenges related to trust, authenticity and cultural adaptation. It concludes that, in the era of generative AI, firms increasingly compete not only through superior products, technologies or innovation, but also through their capacity to create and manage economic meaning across international markets. This highlights communicative capability as an emerging strategic dimension of competitive advantage in international trade.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; International Trade; International Economic Communication; Competitive Advantage; Communicative Competitive Advantage; Globalization.

Afaf Mega · *University of Eloued, Algeria*

A Self Under Construction: From Subjectivity to Selfhood in AI Narratives: A Stylistic Study

Enunciation theory shows that language is not just a tool for communication but the very space where the subject is formed, positioned and expressed. Related to this, the present research paper endeavours to explore not only the liminal zones of interaction between human and artificial subjectivities in both human and artificial narratives but also seeks to probe into the nature of this subjectivity and its implications. By adopting a comparative stylistic framework, the study conducts a linguistic comparison between Toni Morrison's novel A Mercy and three generated AI performances prompted to simulate Morrison's unique idiolect. By examining specific stylometric markers, in the two types of text, including deictic shifting, temporal modality, syntactic density, prenominal agency and intertextual collocations, we notice that the AI narratives fail to replicate Morrison's syntactic complexity and depth. Following Paolucci's Nati cyborg (2025), the research demonstrates that the human self in A Mercy is diachronic, built through a history of bodily suffering and cultural rememory. In the other side, we assume that artificial subjectivity is not an inherent trait of the machine, but a semiotic effect produced through hybrid human-AI interaction. In other words, the AI self is synchronic, built through the statistical probability of the digital corpus, a kind of algorithmic creativity. Hence, acting as a collaborator with human creativity, AI is bringing a new form of creativity. The results of the research may have further implications on the nature of literary theory and criticism in the age of AI. In the light of this, we may reconsider the role of the critic, the nature of AI narratives as well as the nature of the author among other topics.

Key words: enunciation, stylistics, subjectivity, narratives, Toni Morrison, AI, synthetic self.

Metodi Metodiev (ERUA) · *New Bulgarian University*

The two selves of History: Subjectivity and Objectivity in the study of history in the age of AI

[abstract to be added]

Maliheh Mozayan (ERUA) · *European University Viadrina*

Who Speaks When AI Gives Legal Advice? Authorship, Creativity, and the Hybrid Self

I train an AI to give legal advice on child rights. It pulls from old court cases, Iranian justice rules, and EU privacy laws, spitting out responses that feel warm and wise like a real mediator chatting with a scared parent. No soul inside, yet it sounds alive. That's generative AI shaking up how we think about creativity and who gets to "speak" like a person. In my job at Taav System, I built one such AI "character." It mixed strict laws into gentle stories, helping lawyers like me push back against rigid rules. Suddenly, authorship blurs who wrote that empathetic twist? Me, or the machine mimicking my style? This paper explores that fuzzy line between human spark and AI imitation, using simple storytelling tools (inspired by old semiotics tricks) to unpack it. Key wonders: Does this redefine creative work in law? What if AI's ironic quips steal copyrights or play therapist? From my podcast gigs on digital rights, I've seen it firsthand — AI edits add humor I didn't plan, birthing hybrid ideas neither of us "meant." It reveals how "self" emerges from mashed-up voices, not magic brains. My takeaways? Tools to spot AI's hidden creativity in everyday jobs; tips for fair rules on machine-made art; real stories from Iran to Europe proving we're all becoming cyborg creators. Right in line with EFSS's "between selves" vibe and ERUA's future-of-work talks. AI isn't just copying us—it's showing what makes us creative. Time to embrace the dance.

Maarja Ojamaa

Lotman's 'Thinking Device' and Hybrid Forms of Subjectivity

Some decades before the emergence of contemporary large language models, Juri Lotman outlined the structural requirements for a 'thinking device' or a 'meaning-generating mechanism'. He argued that the capacity to generate genuinely new information relies on structural asymmetry and the collision of mutually untranslatable codes rather than on stable inner consciousness. This dialogic friction transforms sufficiently complex texts into (semiotic) interlocutors. The idea also underpinned Lotman's proposition that an operational model for designing artificial intelligence can be found in the artistic text.

The talk applies Lotman's framework to interrogate the contemporary generative AI landscape. We'll ask whether hybrid human-machine interactions function as joint meaning-generating mechanisms that produce new forms of collaborative subjectivity and creative agency.

Hristo Panchugov (ERUA) · *New Bulgarian University*

TBD

[abstract to be added]

Claudio Paolucci · *Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna*

Language Endowed Machines

[abstract to be added]

Pietro Perconti · *University of Messina*

The Self Is Between Selves: Enunciative Effects and First-Person Commitment

In semiotic approaches to generative artificial intelligence, subjectivity is often described as an effect of enunciation. The apparent unity of a voice emerges from an assemblage of utterances, norms, and heterogeneous discursive instances. Yet the first-person position is also stabilized through social practices of interpretation, correction, and the attribution of responsibility. In this sense, other minds come first. Semiotic practices do not merely express a pre-existing self; they participate in the process through which an agent becomes someone.

Generative AI provides a particularly revealing test case for this thesis. In both humans and artificial systems, language does not merely represent an already constituted subjectivity; it contributes to establishing its position in a public space. This does not erase the difference between the two cases: current systems can produce the linguistic signs of subjectivity, but whether they can preserve commitments and remain answerable for their utterances over time is still an open question. Artificial subjectivity remains a possibility; but if it does emerge, it will not be found exclusively inside the machine. Like human subjectivity, it will have to be constituted between selves.

Nadezhda Pletneva · *Independent researcher*

Frictionless Gloss and the Act Without an Act: Symbolic Suicide, Cognitive Friction, and Resistance to the Simulacrum

Interaction with generative AI installs the trap of frictionless gloss: Large Language Models produce syntactically impeccable, authoritative text with no productive effort from the user, generating the phenomenon of the "act without an act" — the formal product is complete, while the internal reflexive act is absent. Read through Baudrillard's theory of the code and the simulacrum, this externalization amounts — reversing the Baudrillardian valence — to the symbolic suicide of the subject: not a challenge to the code, but consenting dissolution into the autonomous system of signs. The oxymoron is deliberate: suicide is the act par excellence, and precisely the act is missing — even disappearance occurs without an act.

The paper proposes critical thinking as resistance grounded in cognitive friction — adversarial prompting. Unlike the model's internalized self-critique — a simulacrum of friction — the user's pressure is structurally external: only the subject stakes finite resources — time, effort, risk of failure. The decisive bifurcation is the instance of evaluation: the critic measures output against their own ground; the apathetic user cedes it to the machine. The predictable objection — that the code recaptures resistance as training data — misses: recapture seizes the trace of the act, not the act itself, which exists only in its performance.

A Pilot Micro-corpus Analysis of Russian-language generations tests whether external friction is distinguishable from its simulacrum across three conditions: default generation, the model's iterative self-

critique, adversarial prompting. A bilateral corpus correlates output metrics (MATTR, rhetorical-cliché density, syntactic-calque reduction) with the density of the subject's logical — not emotional — adversarial moves.

Flavia Politi · *Université de Liège / Università di Bologna*

Making Judgements about Creativity: On Eco, Kant, and the New Platypuses

In this contribution we intend to reflect on whether the production of semiotically understood texts by machines-endowed with language (7) leads to a result that human judgment may deem creative (1,3,4,6). To answer this question, we will review a number of "achievements" reached by generative AI systems in different domains, from mathematics and science (AlphaGo, FunSearch, AlphaFold) to visual arts (8,9,10), and which have in some form been socially sanctioned as creative or innovative. We will look comparatively at the functioning of the neural networks (CNN, Transformer, Evoformer, GAN, Diffusion Models) that make possible the production of new synthetic texts, bringing about a metamorphosis of the creative gesture (2). In conclusion, we will ask whether the judgments expressed by a human judge on machinic artifacts are or may be considered to be reflective or determining in their nature (5).

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Behnam Ramezanpour (ERUA) · *University of Macerata*

Simulated Selves and Distributed Subjectivity: A Semiotic Analysis of Human–AI Enunciation in Creative Systems

Recent developments in generative artificial intelligence are challenging how we understand subjectivity, creativity, and authorship. Instead of focusing on whether AI can truly think or understand, this paper takes a different approach: it asks how the feeling of subjectivity is created in interactions between humans and AI.

Building on semiotic theory especially the work of Barthes, Kristeva, and Peirce the paper argues that subjectivity is not something fixed or internal, but something that emerges through communication and discourse. Although AI systems do not have consciousness or intention, they are able to combine different styles, narratives, and cultural elements in ways that give the impression of a speaking voice. In this sense, AI does not have subjectivity, but it can produce a convincing effect of it.

The paper introduces the idea of distributed subjectivity to explain what happens when humans interact with AI systems. In contexts such as chatbots, AI storytelling, or even simulated therapeutic conversations, users often respond to AI as if it were a subject. As a result, meaning is not produced by either the human or the machine alone, but through their interaction. Subjectivity becomes something shared, constructed within a dynamic relationship.

This shift has important consequences, not only for semiotic theory but also for creative industries. While AI depends on human-generated cultural material, it also changes how authorship, creativity, and value are understood. In particular, we are beginning to see not only the commodification of creativity, but also of subjectivity itself.

By moving beyond the simple question of whether AI can be considered a subject, this paper suggests that a more important issue is emerging: how our understanding of subjectivity is being transformed in the space between human and artificial agents.

Filip Samuilov (ERUA) · *New Bulgarian University*

The Illusion of the AI Subject: Legal Liability and Human Oversight

Artificial intelligence increasingly performs functions that resemble autonomous decision-making, prompting philosophical, semiotic, and interdisciplinary accounts of AI as a subject-like entity. In legal analysis, however, the central issue is not whether AI can meaningfully be described as a subject, but how responsibility should be allocated when AI systems cause harm, violate legal norms, or produce unlawful outcomes. This paper argues that attributing legal subjectivity or personhood to AI does not solve the problem of accountability but instead obscures the identification of a responsible actor. Through a comparative examination of emerging regulatory approaches to AI governance, with particular attention to doctrines of human oversight, accountability, and liability, the paper shows that legal systems continue to depend on identifiable human or corporate actors as the ultimate bearers of responsibility. It therefore treats the AI "subject" as a functional illusion in legal doctrine: a concept that may hold interpretive value in philosophical debate, yet remains inadequate as a basis for assigning legal liability. By contrasting theoretical claims of AI selfhood with the practical requirements of legal attribution, the paper demonstrates that the stability of legal order depends on preserving a traceable link between technological action and human agency. It concludes that effective AI regulation must strengthen mechanisms for identifying developers, deployers, operators, and corporate entities as accountable actors, ensuring that increasing technological autonomy does not outpace the demands of legal certainty, institutional coherence, and the rule of law.

Ivaylo Saraliyski (ERUA) · *New Bulgarian University*

Synthetic Subjectivity and Visual Generativity. AI Images, Symbolic Systems and the Semiotics of Hybrid Creativity

Recent developments in generative AI have unsettled traditional distinctions between tool, medium, author and subject. This paper examines AI-generated visual culture not as the product of an autonomous machine intelligence, but as a semiotic interface in which human intention, algorithmic recombination, cultural memory and stylistic convention temporarily converge. The central question is not whether AI possesses subjectivity, but how AI systems produce the effect of a speaking, imagining or interpreting subject through images, narratives and aesthetic choices.

The paper focuses on visual generativity as a space of hybrid enunciation. In AI-assisted creative processes, the prompt does not function simply as an instruction; it becomes a site where authorship is negotiated between the human user, the model's training data, inherited visual codes and the unpredictable logic of generation. This creates a form of synthetic subjectivity: not a conscious self, but a semiotic position from which meaning appears to be articulated.

Through selected examples of AI-generated imagery, including symbolic and archetypal visual systems such as Tarot, the paper will discuss how artificial creativity reorganizes familiar cultural signs into new configurations that appear interpretative, personal or even introspective. The aim is to show that generative AI should be understood less as a replacement for human creativity and more as a revealing mechanism: one that exposes how creativity itself often emerges from assemblages of voices, conventions, images and technological mediation.

Tigran Simyan · *Yerevan State University*

Creative subject vs AI, or the problem of modes of subjectivity (using the examples of the Armenian epic David of Sassoun and the Armenian artist Martiros Saryan)

The report examines how generative artificial intelligence creates new interpretive versions of portraits and self-portraits, using the work of the brilliant Armenian artist Martiros Saryan (1880–1972) as an example. The empirical material for the analysis will be his depictions of faces and self-portraits, such as “Self-Portrait” (1909), “Portrait of the Poet E. Charents” (1923), “My Family” (1929), “Self-Portrait with a Mask” (1933), “Portrait of Academician A. Tamanyan” (1933), “Self-Portrait. Three Ages” (1943), “Self-Portrait” (1942). The selected paintings will be processed through AI (Midjourney) according to different modes; in other words, the generation of selected images is carried out using prompts that set different modes of subjectivity. The analysis is followed by a semiotic analysis of the face's nonverbal components and the culturally marked elements of the visual environment.

The methodological premise of the study is Northrop Frye's theory, as described in his work “Anatomy of Criticism” (1957).

In his study, Frye identifies five modes:

A. mythic mode, B. romantic mode, C. high mimetic mode (tragedy, epic), D. low mimetic mode (the hero on the level of an ordinary person), E. ironic mode (a helpless hero).

Frye demonstrated a system of the development of literature from myth to the heroic and from the realistic to the ironic. However, the modes do not end there. In addition to Frye’s structural modes, modes of artistic tonality will also be introduced.

Saryan’s self-portraits will also be examined through other literary modes: the tragic, the comic, the dramatic, the elegiac, the idyllic, and the satirical.

This study will serve as a reflection on the following question: how AI generates faces according to modes within the context of Armenian visual codes and nonverbal semiotics (facial expressions, oculesics, background transformation, amplification or reduction of “Armenianness”). An additional question concerns how AI modifies interiors and the Armenian landscape in accordance with the above-described modes.

The conducted analysis will have a didactic aspect for the interdisciplinary training of students, with an emphasis on teaching methods not only in literary studies but also in psychotherapy and nonverbal semiotics.

Mansi Singh (ERUA) · *AICIED cluster*

AI and String Theory

String compactifications generate large spaces of mathematically consistent candidates, making exhaustive manual analysis difficult. This work presents a reproducible artificial-intelligence pipeline for a focused classification problem arising in Calabi–Yau compactification: predicting whether a five-dimensional integer weight system belongs to the reflexive or non-reflexive class. Reflexive lattice polytopes are physically relevant because they are closely connected with toric constructions of Calabi–Yau manifolds. A balanced streamed sample is drawn from the public calabi-yau-data/ws-5d dataset. The six integer weights are used as inputs, while geometry-derived quantities are excluded to reduce target leakage. Three supervised models are compared: logistic regression, random forest, and a feed-forward neural network. Performance is evaluated using accuracy, precision, recall, F1 score, average precision, and the area under the receiver-operating-characteristic curve (ROC–AUC). The accompanying script automatically inserts the numerical results after execution, ensuring that no metric is reported before it is measured. The study illustrates how AI can empower string-theory research by prioritizing candidates for further geometric analysis, while emphasizing that machine-learning predictions do not replace mathematical verification or physical interpretation.

Simona Stano · *Università degli Studi di Torino*

One Body, No Body, One Hundred Thousand Bodies: Corporeality, Identity and Subjectivity in AI Systems

[abstract to be added]

Paola Tabanelli · *University of Bologna*

The Institutional Voice of AI: Enunciation and Subjectivity in Public Administration–Citizen Communication

This paper examines how generative AI reshapes communication between public administration and citizens. Focusing on chatbots, automated replies, and AI-supported digital interfaces, it investigates how artificial systems participate in the production of an institutional voice. The central question is: who speaks when AI communicates on behalf of a public institution?

Drawing on semiotic theories of enunciation, the paper argues that the AI-mediated administrative voice should not be understood as either fully human or fully artificial. It emerges from a hybrid assemblage of legal norms, bureaucratic genres, datasets, interface design, institutional procedures, and citizens' expectations. This assemblage produces the effect of a speaking subject: official, neutral, responsive, and authoritative, yet distributed across multiple human and non-human actors.

The case of public administration is particularly relevant because AI communication affects access to rights, services, obligations, and institutional trust. By analysing public-sector AI as a space between human and artificial subjectivities, the paper contributes to debates on agency, accountability, and the semiotics of institutional communication.

Keywords: public administration; generative AI; enunciation; institutional communication; subjectivity; semiotics; accountability.

Violeta Vekova (ERUA) · *New Bulgarian University*

Between Signs and Worlds

[abstract to be added]

Victoria Villalobos · *University of Tartu*

The uncanny's playground: mind, machine and magic at the new frontiers of semiotic inquiry

Accentuated in times of rapid technological innovation, the uncanny as both topic and effect in new art and media can provide a lens through which to understand the juncture between personhood, technological

mechanisms, and the unending sense of mystery discursively attributed to current generative AI systems. In this context, a glimpse into aesthetic trends that dive into the uncanny and the liminal will be used to exemplify the prevalent discomforts and intrigues that surround machine and human imagination at the points in which they seem to mesh. If human dreams and creations mirror the semiotic tendencies of our cultural assemblages, GenAI's incursions in artistic dreamscapes may serve as a mirror of these processes.

Set within the general realm of weird fiction, the world-building organized around the dream-like, liminal, and unsettling spaces through collaborative GenAI enables a reflection on how certain images may become uncanny in the first place, as machine outputs confront the boundaries of what is familiar, what is strange, what is reiteration, and what is a bewildering mixture of cultural and aesthetic categories. Specific genres will be explored as notorious online aesthetic genres with active community world-building and interrogated for how elements of iteration, recombination, estrangement and 'dream logic' appear in the collision between the human and the nonhuman. The uncanny thus provides a fertile signifier through which fiction may map the cultural and affective consequences of AI in relation to these systems' visual outputs, processual opaqueness and hallucinatory mechanisms.