

# Call for Papers

## BETWEEN SELVES

Human and AI Subjectivity in Semiotic & Interdisciplinary Perspectives

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### XXX EFSS

SEPTEMBER 4 - 7, 2026

Sozopol, Bulgaria

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

XXX EFSS, 4-7 September 2026, Sozopol, Bulgaria

Recent developments in generative artificial intelligence have reopened a fundamental question for semiotics and the humanities: **what does it mean to be a subject in a world where machines produce discourse, images, and narratives?**

In his recent work *Nati cyborg (2025)*, **Claudio Paolucci** argues that generative AI does not simply challenge human intelligence but rather reveals something essential about it. From a semiotic perspective, subjectivity emerges not as a stable inner property but as an **effect of enunciation**, produced through the assemblage of heterogeneous discursive instances—norms, stereotypes, institutional voices, and previously articulated statements. Generative AI systems appear capable of performing similar operations, assembling fragments of discourse in ways that produce the **effect of a speaking subject**, even in the absence of intentional consciousness.

Taking these insights as a starting point, this conference seeks to move the discussion beyond the now familiar debates about whether AI “understands” or “thinks.” Instead, we invite scholars to explore the **liminal zones of interaction between human and artificial subjectivities**, particularly those emerging in **creative, playful, and unexpected generative performances**.

Indeed, contemporary generative systems increasingly produce outputs that appear to transcend purely instrumental communication: visual artworks, fictional narratives, stylistic imitations, humorous exchanges, ironic commentary, speculative personas, or even simulated psychotherapeutic dialogues. These phenomena raise new semiotic questions about **creativity, authorship, voice, and subjectivity in hybrid human–machine environments**.

The organizers propose that such **boundary cases of generative creativity** may provide unprecedented opportunities for understanding both **natural and artificial creativity**. By examining how AI participates in processes traditionally associated with human subjectivity—imagination, narrative construction, aesthetic experimentation, irony, or introspective simulation, we may gain deeper insights into the semiotic mechanisms that underpin creativity itself.

Current list of invited speakers: **Claudio Paolucci (Bologna)**  
**Massimo Leone (Torino)**  
**Maarja Ojamaa (Tartu)**  
**Everardo Reyes (Paris)**  
**Simona Stano (Torino)**

This conference therefore invites contributions from **semiotics, media studies, anthropology, cognitive science, law, psychology, digital humanities, AI studies, art theory, economics and creative business professionals, etc.**

**Possible topics include (but are not limited to):**

- Semiotic theories of human and artificial subjectivity
- Enunciation and agency in generative AI systems
- AI and the semiotics of creativity
- Visual generativity and machine-produced imagery
- Narrative generation and artificial storytelling
- Stylistic imitation and “writing as someone else”
- AI humor, irony, and self-reflexive discourse
- Simulated personalities and psychotherapeutic dialogue with AI
- AI and the semiotics of imagination and fiction
- Hybrid creativity in human–AI collaboration
- Synthetic media and cultural production
- Business and copyright implications of artificial creativity

By focusing on **creative, playful, and experimental uses of generative AI**, the conference aims to illuminate a crucial question:

If subjectivity is a semiotic effect emerging from complex assemblages of voices, practices, and technologies, what new forms of subjectivity might emerge in the expanding space **between human and artificial selves**?

We welcome theoretical, methodological, and empirical contributions that explore these questions and help advance a **new semiotics of hybrid creativity**.

Selected papers will be published in the 10th issue of the journal **Digital Age in Semiotics and Communication** (ISSN, DOI, CEEOL)

**REGISTRATION FORM**

Registration fee: **40 Euro** (50€ for non IASS members, **Free** for participants from ERUA partner universities). All payments are made before the School or at the registration desk in cash. The fee includes:

- ✓ access to all lectures, workshops, seminars and round tables,
- ✓ badge and materials,
- ✓ 5-6 coffee breaks,
- ✓ A welcoming reception on 5 September

**EFSS 2026** is organized by the **Southeast European Center for Semiotic Studies** and the team of WP3 of **European Reform University Alliance (ERUA2)**,

with the support of the **STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT FUND** of New Bulgarian University

The **XXX EFSS** is an event under the auspices of the **International Association for Semiotic Studies (IASS)**

