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The Intercepted Self: Generative AI and the Disrupted Future of Selfhood

Dr Filippos Stamatiou

(Stellenbosch University & University of Copenhagen)

DATE: Monday, 26 January 2026 | 16h00–17h00 SAST

VENUES:

- **Stellenbosch University:** NITheCS Seminar Room, Merensky Building
- **University of the Witwatersrand:** Room P215, 2nd Floor, Physics Building
- **North-West University:** Seminar Room K310, Physics Building G5
- **Online**

--- A recording of the talk will be published on the NITheCS YouTube channel afterwards ---

ABSTRACT

Generative AI is transforming how we engage with technology, others, and our own sense of self. Emerging systems like Microsoft Copilot, Gemini, and forthcoming AI assistants promise not only to assist but increasingly to predict and act on our behalf. Imagine AI choosing what you might prefer at a restaurant, selecting your outfit, or even helping find a romantic partner, all based on anticipatory models. Far from science fiction, this signals a profound shift in human-technology relations and invites us to reconsider how these systems reshape our relationship to ourselves. Building on a relational conception of the self as a dynamic process shaped through interaction with our social and technological environment, I explore how generative AI intercepts and transforms the self across three interrelated spheres: the sphere of externalised output (our creative and productive acts), the contextual sphere (our lived relationships and circumstances), and the sphere of self-relating (how we form desires and identities). Through analysis of generative AI tools, AI assistants, and companionship chatbots, I consider the philosophical and existential implications of AI on selfhood, including challenges to agency, responsibility, and the fluidity of personal identity. This work aims to deepen interdisciplinary understanding of the evolving dynamics between humans and generative AI today and in the future.

BIOGRAPHY

Dr Filippos Stamatiou is a philosopher of mind and cognitive science, currently a postdoctoral fellow at the Unit for the Ethics of Technology, Stellenbosch University and a research fellow at the Center for Philosophy of Artificial Intelligence (CPAI), University of Copenhagen. He has a PhD in philosophy and a background in economics and cognitive science. His research explores issues in AI ethics, including mechanistic interpretability, explainability, AI agency and the ethics of AI companions.



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