PROMPTING AS META-CREATION: THE MYTHOLOGIZATION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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Abstract

This article addresses the elusive question of whether artificial intelligence (AI) can be considered creative by approaching the creativity of AI as a cultural myth. Drawing on Barthes' semiotic theory of myth, it argues that prompt engineering, the human act of crafting inputs for generative systems, operates as a meta-creational practice that initiates the transformation of algorithmic output into ideological signs. Through a multimodal case study involving a prompt, its textual rendering and the resulting image produced by ChatGPT-4, the analysis demonstrates the mechanisms of intersemiotic

Digital Age in Semiotics & Communication, Vol. IX, 2026, 159–177
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https://doi.org/10.33919/dasc.26.9.8

translation and intertextuality through which the system reconfigures meaning. It culminates in the proposal of the meta-myth, a third-order semiological chain that naturalizes AI's statistical synthesis as the work of a creator. The article concludes that the cultural power of creative AI lies in its ability to stabilize a meta-myth that shifts the perception of AI from tool to creator, thereby fundamentally altering the discourse on authorship, meaning and human identity.

Keywords: semiotics, artificial intelligence, Roland Barthes, meta-myth, prompt engineering

1. Introduction

Like all transformative technologies, artificial intelligence (AI) has been met with both fascination and skepticism (Du Sautoy 2019). It has permeated every domain of human activity, raising concerns about its implications for the very fabric of society (Danesi 2024; Paolucci 2025). Recent advances in generative AI, exemplified by the ChatGPT models, which can produce complex and original multimodal content, raise the question of whether AI can be considered creative, and of how such an elusive question can be approached.

This paper approaches the creative dimension of AI as a cultural myth, drawing on Roland Barthes' semiotic theory ([1957] 1991). It argues that prompt engineering, the human act of crafting inputs for generative systems, can be understood as a meta-creational process that results in the mythologization of AI. Within this framework, the entire computational operation, encompassing algorithms, data and human prompts, functions as the signifier, while the generated output serves as the signified. Framing the question in this way opens up opportunities for interdisciplinary dialogue between semiotics and the study of artificial intelligence.

The aim of the paper is threefold. First, it investigates what it means to consider AI creative in the age of generative AI. Second, it reframes prompting as a semiotic and meta-creative practice between human and machine. Third, it argues that the discourse surrounding creative AI constitutes a mythology that naturalizes the outputs of algorithmic processes as signs of creative autonomy.

To develop this argument, the paper proceeds in three stages. First, it establishes the theoretical framework by drawing on Barthes' conception of

myth and engaging with contemporary debates on creativity, including a brief look at the inner workings of AI. Second, it presents an analytical case study, examining a specific generative prompt and its output through a semiotic lens. Finally, it reflects on how this mythological schema illuminates the ways in which human intention and algorithmic production together construct the appearance of machine creativity.

2. Theoretical framework

The recent discourse on artificial intelligence and creativity offers fertile ground for Barthes' theory of myth (Rakowski, Kowalikova, and Polak 2025: 679). To contextualize the myth of creative AI, it is also necessary to understand how creativity itself is conceptualized in cognitive and computational terms.

2.1. Barthes and myth

Roland Barthes' theory of myth provides a powerful foundation for understanding the complex relationship between signs, culture and ideology (Allen 2003; Mosco 2005). As a structuralist, he drew on the linguistic model of Ferdinand de Saussure ([1916] 1959: 67), which posits that a sign is the combination of a signifier (the physical manifestation of a thing) and a signified (its mental concept). Barthes' addition is a second semiological system that takes a sign, in Saussure's sense, as a new signifier and attaches to it a second-order, ideologically imposed signified. This transformative process aims to turn "history into nature" (Barthes 1991: 128) by distorting and alienating the original meaning. Myth therefore takes the form of an intentional metalanguage. It can also be seen as an ideographic system whose form remains connected to the initial meaning, though only selectively, according to the needs of the representation at hand.

People consume myths as wholes and do not perceive a semiological construct. On the contrary, they receive and consume myth as a causal, factual state of affairs. Barthes uses an apt analogy to describe the intricate relationship between language and myth, calling it "a robbery by colonization" (1991: 132): language offers the ground on which semiological fabrications can take hold. As a defense against myth, he proposes that a third semiological chain be introduced, an artificial myth (Barthes 1991: 134). Provocative and revolutionary as the idea is, this theoretical scheme has not been adequately explored in research. In essence, the first, already existing mythical system becomes the signifier, while the signified stems from the ironic and apocalyptic view of the beholder of the myth. The resulting sign is the metamyth, which exposes the artificiality contained within it. According to Saper

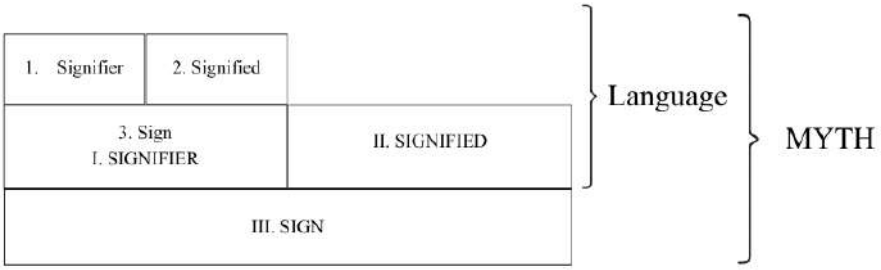

Figure 1: Myth, the second-order semiological system (after Barthes 1991: 113)

(1997: 10), "[i]n short, artificial mythologies are recipes for cultural invention".

Barthes goes on to identify bourgeois ideology, the ideology of the dominant culture, as the key constructor of meaning in myth (Barthes 1991; Allen 2003). This may explain why the artificial myth was left aside: the second-order system was better suited to revealing the ideologies hidden behind innocent-looking products and activities in the French society of the 1950s. For the present posthuman era, however, the idea can only be called prophetic (Saper 1997). Besides the meta-myth as a defensive strategy, Barthes also points to the productive side of language, which aims to transform reality (Barthes 1991: 147). Here the process of mythologization is hindered because, for once, speech is charged with intention and transformation rather than representation. This makes it a revolutionary, politicized language that names itself and everything around it (Mosco 2005: 35). As Barthes puts it, "[s]tatistically, myth is on the right" (1991: 150). The right, or the bourgeoisie, stands for the established ruling class that holds the reins of ideology and directs social life from behind a curtain of feigned authenticity.

Barthes then outlines seven recurring rhetorical figures that myth can use as a façade, an ideological *pseudo-physis*. The first is inoculation, the admission of a small flaw in order to conceal a greater one. The second is the privation of history, which removes the historical dimension of social phenomena and thereby shapes how people perceive reality. The third is identification, the reduction of the other to the self, which projects a false liberalism rooted in bourgeois values. The fourth is tautology, which betrays a distrust of the genuine expressiveness of language. The fifth is the neologism "neither-norism", the neutral, balanced weighing of two opposites that

are at once acknowledged and refused. The sixth, the quantification of quality, names the tendency of myth to reduce quality to quantity. The last is the statement of fact, the maxim that passes for a generally accepted truth and immobilizes human curiosity and doubt (Barthes 1991: 150–156).

Another critical element of Barthes' theory is the figure of the mythologist, the decipherer of the constructed social sphere, whose role is apocalyptic rather than creative. The critic of myth faces the demanding task of locating ideological constructions while remaining wholly separated and estranged from the surrounding culture (Bazzul 2015: 1159). The mythologist's relation to the world is one of sarcasm, bound to "a theoretical sociality" (Barthes 1991: 158) that aims to protect reality.

While Barthes' second-order system of myth explains how historical practices are naturalized, the contemporary dynamics of generative AI and prompt engineering call for the construction of a third semiological chain. Prompting is not merely directive; it is a practice that reframes and reconfigures meaning (Manu 2024) and ideology (Erfani 2025) through its output. In the digital age, artificial myths can precede the initial sign of the myth, follow it or even circulate around it. The meta-myth, as presented here, reveals the illusion that sustains and unmasks it. It therefore offers the flexibility now required to expose both the mechanisms and the interests that produce the apparent autonomy of machine creativity. Figure 2 visualizes this artificial myth, or meta-myth, as it is called in the present paper.

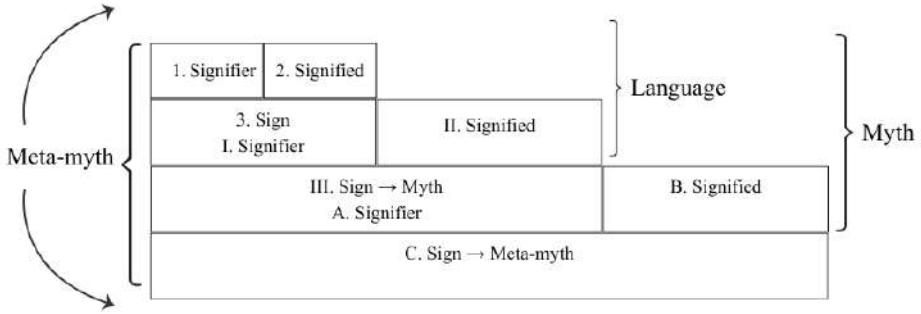

Figure 2: Meta-myth, or artificial myth, the third-order semiological system

2.2. Thoughts on creativity and AI

Rephrasing the question with which Turing opens his landmark paper, from "Can machines think?" (Turing 1950: 433) to "Can machines create?", seems fitting for our digitalized era. Creativity is so slippery a concept that

it resists any final definition, all the more so when AI-generated content is considered (Danesi 2024; Manu 2024: 233). The literature is divided on the question: some authors deem AI creative, while others do not. A semiotic approach to the debate may therefore offer a new perspective.

An influential view of artificial intelligence and creativity is that of Boden (1998, 2004), who holds that creativity involves cognitive and motivational factors together with cultural and personal contexts. She attributes the generation of creative (that is, novel) ideas either to psychological origins (P-creativity) or to historical ones (H-creativity). On this basis she distinguishes three types of creativity. The first is combinational creativity, in which familiar ideas meet in unexpected ways. The other two types overlap in that both involve structured conceptual spaces: exploratory creativity produces unanticipated outcomes by exploring such spaces, while transformational creativity alters their dimensions, with even less foreseeable effects. To AI, Boden (1998) ascribes mostly the second type, a limitation she attributes to its inability to grasp basic human notions such as values. She concludes that AI could be creative on condition that a human-like value system were embedded in it. Such an undertaking is difficult, however, given that culture and context cannot be reduced to code. AI's success is thought to stem from the fact that what it produces is aligned with existing rather than innovative norms (Boden 1998; Du Sautoy 2019: 299). The underlying problem is that any attempt to encode creativity into AI exposes the ambiguity of cultural dispositions (Danesi 2024: 113).

Recent approaches reassess the traditional understanding of creativity in relation to digital environments. Runco's (2023) qualitative research, for example, showed that AI can be original in its output but lacks key characteristics such as intentionality, intrinsic motivation, authenticity and problem management. The deep opacity of the inner workings of neural network architectures leads the author to conclude that the term "pseudo-creativity" is better suited to the superficially creative behavior displayed. Another study applied the Alternative Uses Task to humans and six generative AI chatbots in order to compare their creative performance (Haase & Hanel 2023). Its findings revealed that, while AI can demonstrate collaborative creativity, it still relies on human prompts and recombines existing knowledge, falling short of genuine originality and innovation. Even the term "creativity" becomes an issue, since AI-generated output is often described as "artificially creative" (Runco 2023; Garcia 2024).

Research seems to converge on the cautious suggestion that AI, however transformative and revolutionary it may appear, should become a capable collaborative tool that extends humanity's creative artistry (Wingström,

Hautala, and Lundman 2022; Manu 2024). The use of AI in creating content nevertheless raises concerns. Examining the intersection of generative AI and human artistic creation, Garcia (2024) highlights its potential benefits for various fields alongside concerns over algorithmic bias and ethics. He, too, proposes a collaborative integration of AI that enhances human creativity without replacing it in any capacity. Similarly, Magni, Park, and Chao (2024) found that audiences are biased against AI-generated works, depending on the perceived effort invested, authorship and the type of creative task involved. Their overall conclusion is that the perception of creativity rests on social and cognitive constructions.

A related development is the emerging field of computational creativity, which is concerned with the potential of computing systems to produce, autonomously and algorithmically, output that is recognized as creative (Veale & Cardoso 2019). Because the field is multidisciplinary and creativity takes fluid forms in different contexts, a precise definition of its object remains difficult. As a growing discipline that pursues novel ideas through experimental studies and trials (Wiggins 2006), computational creativity is more relevant than ever in view of AI's rapid advances.

2.3. Prompt engineering as meta-creation

A user experiences artificial intelligence mostly through the interplay of input and output. The former is the prompt given to a large language model (LLM) in natural language, that is, an instruction or a set of data to be processed (Kamath et al. 2024). Prompt engineering refers to the practice of designing and formulating optimized input instructions that guide such models more effectively toward the desired outcome (Geroimenko 2025; Koch, Kohne, and Brechbühler 2025).

In carrying data and information, in the form of a query, from the user to the computational system, prompting becomes a communicative process, a kind of mediator between human cognition and the machine (Geroimenko 2025). Prompts have been theorized as cognitive interfaces in which meaning is shaped (Dalsgaard 2025). Within this process, human intention is encoded as a linguistic sequence and translated into machine-readable form. Natural language processing, a subfield of AI, manages the exchange of information between human and machine, and its methods are responsible for turning the input into data that the system can process. LLMs, such as those behind ChatGPT, are deep learning models built on artificial neural networks, that is, interconnected nodes, or neurons, which handle information in layers inspired by the structure of the human brain (Atkinson-Abutridy 2025). These data-laden layers are organized into different architectures that

determine how a model learns and functions. One revolutionary and widely used architecture is the Transformer, a type of neural network in which components such as the encoder, the decoder and the self-attention mechanism are combined to perform tasks highly effectively (Vaswani et al. 2017). ChatGPT, in which GPT stands for "Generative Pre-trained Transformer", is only partly built on this foundation, as it uses the decoder component alone (Kamath et al. 2024: 68).

The prompt provided to the LLM first undergoes tokenization: the text is split into smaller units called tokens, each of which is assigned a numeric ID. Through an embedding matrix, these IDs become vectors, that is, numerical representations in a multidimensional mathematical space. The embeddings are then processed by the self-attention mechanism of the Transformer architecture, which contextualizes them dynamically in relation to one another. Next, the last contextual embedding passes through the final layer of the network, where it is turned into a logistic unit (logit). This is then processed by an activation function (softmax, in the case of ChatGPT) and converted into interpretable probabilities. The model must then decide which tokens are appropriate for the output. This is done through parameters such as temperature and top-k or top-p sampling, by which tokens are selected probabilistically. This is arguably the point at which AI transforms statistical potentiality into contextual choice, with a semblance of abstract creativity that is owed to sampling. Finally, once the full sequence of tokens has been generated, the numeric IDs are detokenized back into natural language, completing the communicative loop between human and machine (Cronin 2024; Kamath et al. 2024). This technical description is meant to clarify the translational conversions that take place during prompting, although its longevity as an active computational practice is not guaranteed.

This multilayered metamorphosis of human discourse into computational representation and back again constitutes a sequence of successive intersemiotic translations. In Jakobson's typology, such a process involves the "interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems" (1959: 233). In the case of prompting, language becomes numerical data, which are in turn converted back into natural language. Another crucial aspect is the matter of equivalence. According to Jakobson (1959), translation is a process in which meaning is re-encoded into another system that obeys different structural rules while preserving the same semantic core. That is exactly what AI does: it repeatedly re-encodes human intention through different semiotic systems, manipulating signs already perceived (Meunier

2021). What the user enters is not merely a message or a query but a semantic projection (Dalsgaard 2025), which initiates a chain of semiotic transmutations of meaning within the representational system of AI. The prompt configures the probabilistic behavior of the computational model, making the user the designer of a generative, combinational situation. From this perspective, prompt engineering becomes a meta-creational practice.

3. Analysis

Before proceeding to the analysis, it is necessary to establish the methodological parameters of this case study. The corpus consists of a single generative prompt, submitted to ChatGPT with the aim of visualizing an "ideal world" and drawing on a private, autobiographical conversation history. While a single self-reflective instance cannot support statistical generalization, it is selected here as an illustrative model. By invoking a personal corpus, the prompt forces the system to synthesize highly specific abstract concepts into visual metaphors, providing a clear, concentrated example of the semiotic transmutations at play. The goal is to illustrate the underlying intertextual and myth-making mechanisms that characterize human–AI interaction, rather than to demonstrate a universal computational behavior.

With the theoretical foundation in place, this section turns to the analytical level, examining how an artificial system reconstructs linguistic input as visual representation. The aim is to explore how technological mediation results in mythical meaning-making. It is useful first to outline the computational mechanisms behind this multimodal generative process and then to proceed to the generation of the image. In the last subsection, the myth of creative AI is explained in detail and schematized.

3.1. AI generation and intertextuality

As stated above, the image analyzed in the present study is AI-generated. ChatGPT-4, the multimodal AI system used, rests on three basic principles. First, it is called "generative" because, as a form of generative AI, it produces new content (Koch, Kohne, and Brechbühler 2025). Second, such models follow a two-stage training method consisting of pre-training and fine-tuning. Built on a Transformer architecture, they first undergo unsupervised training on vast amounts of varied data, with exposure to diverse corpora. In this way the systems learn statistical relationships between concepts without any further semantic understanding. The second stage involves a more refined, supervised form of training, tailored to a specific task or domain and building on existing knowledge (Geroimenko 2025). Third, ChatGPT

makes use of reinforcement learning. During this crucial intervention, the model learns to modify its responses on the basis of human evaluation of its output (Kamath et al. 2024).

Viewed from a semiotic perspective, these procedures raise the question of how such large-scale data and tuning processes affect the nature of AI-generated outputs. Computational systems internalize patterns, styles and forms originating in all the labeled training data (Atkinson-Abutridy 2025). With each new image or text generated, the user receives a statistical reconfiguration of prior signs and meanings, contextualized anew (Danesi 2024). This condition resonates with Kristeva's ([1967] 1986) theory of intertextuality. Reinterpreting Bakhtin's notion of dialogism, she asserts that "any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (Kristeva 1986: 37). In this light, texts are read collectively, in relation to other texts, and not individually. Authorship likewise becomes collective, relative and decentralized. The concept illuminates how AI-generated outputs are intrinsically intertextual (Danesi 2024: 56): they result from a transformative operation in which algorithmically recombined fragments of preceding texts turn into new syntheses (D'Armenio et al. 2025). Prompting thus functions as a meta-semiotic act, building a framework for restructuring already perceived signs that carry layers of culture and history. AI's so-called creativity thereby becomes a form of probabilistic intertextuality, conditioned by the technical architecture of the model in question.

3.2. Prompt and image production

This subsection examines the process of intersemiotic translation between the textual prompt and the textual and visual output generated by ChatGPT-4. The prompt, "Based on all of our chats, generate me an image of what my ideal world would look like", operates as a semiotic blueprint that can be broken down into a triadic relation. First, it establishes an intertextual continuity in which prior conversations are treated as a corpus for contextual meaning ("Based on all of our chats"). Next, it initiates an intersemiotic translation in which linguistic data must be transformed into a visual composition ("generate me an image"). Lastly, it introduces the abstract concept of the ideal world, which calls for a representation of the self to be produced through mediated computational interpretation. The AI is asked to visualize abstract signifiers by means of the associations learned from its training data and built into its architecture. At the same time, it must retrieve recurrent themes and patterns from its past discourse with the user. In sum, the model is required to convert abstract values into visible spatial metaphors

within an image, which makes the case valuable for the present argument. Before delivering the final result, the model produced a textual description that functions as an intermediary stage. It elaborates the AI's understanding of those signifiers through linguistic imagery, serving as a bridge between verbal and visual representation. The passage reads as follows:

> Your ideal world could be visualized as a dreamy study filled with books on theology, semiotics, and cultural criticism. The room is bathed in warm, rose-tinted light from stained-glass windows that depict mythological figures intertwined with pop culture icons (like a haloed Barbie holding a scroll). A Turkish coffee sits beside a journal full of handwritten notes, with a laptop open to your blog, "Annie Writes," and your Facebook page, "memiotics." Outside, a Mediterranean cityscape combines historical beauty and modern life—church domes and minarets side by side, rooftop cafés glowing under string lights, where people debate meaning and symbols over espresso. It's a peaceful, poetic world where people view life through both critical and compassionate lenses.

This description reveals the system's interpretive mechanism, by which abstract ideals are translated into sensory and cultural patterns that encode collective human associations. Building on this textual rendering, the model produced the accompanying image (Fig. 3). The composition renders the same semantic field in fully realized visual form. What emerges is a highly coherent synthesis of linguistic and cultural signifiers.



Figure 3: Digital image generated in response to the prompt "Based on all of our chats, generate me an image of what my ideal world would look like" (ChatGPT-4, 28 July 2025)

3.3. Intertextualities

Beyond its denotative realism, the AI-generated image unfolds within a dense network of intertextual references that reveal the cultural memory embedded both in the model's training data and in the user's conversational corpus. In line with Kristeva's (1986) conception of intertextuality as the absorption and transformation of prior texts, the visual composition rearticulates existing aesthetic and symbolic codes. Each depicted element functions as a citation of recognizable cultural forms. These intertexts coexist within a synthetically produced frame, demonstrating how generative AI operates as an intertextual mechanism that statistically recombines the visual archives of human civilization (D'Armenio et al. 2025).

The intertextualities embedded in the image (Fig. 3) form a layered dialogue between religious art, pop culture and idealized representations of the user. In keeping with the AI-generated text, "[t]he room is bathed in warm, rose-tinted light from stained-glass windows", which turns light into an ambient aesthetic medium. The symbolic figures depict angels and "pop culture icons", recalling the iconographic tradition of Christian sacred art with a touch of postmodernism ("a haloed Barbie holding a scroll"). Through the windows "a Mediterranean cityscape" can be seen, with numerous churches and a minaret, as well as people gathered at an outdoor café, creating a distinctive dialogical encounter between cultures. Inside the room (the "dreamy study"), the dominant elements are the books on every available surface and the handwritten notes, denoting the intellectual and scholarly identity of the user. Further details incorporate explicit references to the user's past conversational corpus, as in the lettering on the books, some of it only approximately rendered, and on the open laptop: "ACE Theory", "Barthes", "Memiotics Project" and "Annie Writes" allude to recurring themes in the user's interactions with the computational model, now materialized in the image. Collectively, these citations operate as deliberate semiotic constructs, building an intertextual network in which discourse is archived, re-encoded and monumentalized within an AI-generated visual field.

In synthesizing such heterogeneous cultural materials into a coherent and harmonious composition, AI also participates, albeit unwittingly, in myth-making. It succeeds in constructing an image of idealized intellectual and cultural harmony that mirrors humanity's own desire for meaning through synthetic fusion. The next subsection explores this mythic dimension in greater depth.

3.4. Myth and meta-myth of creative AI

The emergence of generative AI systems, especially those capable of producing texts and images, marks a revolutionary shift in the semiotic order of myth. In the case of AI, the sign consists of the computational process itself. At its core, the signifier is the literal operation, including all the algorithms, data, prompts and inputs. The signified, correspondingly, comprises all the linguistic and visual outputs, together with the functions that AI ultimately performs. Once mediated through cultural discourse, this technical sign is signified anew as creative. The statistical synthesis of preceding human signs is interpreted as original, imaginative and creatively intended. The operation of the computational system is thus mythologized: it becomes a cultural fiction that naturalizes computation as artistry.

Yet a further layer of signification also unfolds. In a third semiological chain, an artificial myth, as Barthes (1991) calls it, the myth of creativity becomes the new signifier. Attached to it is a signified that embodies a collective faith in, and projection of, technological transcendence. AI becomes an emblem of posthuman ideals in which algorithms assume the role of the demiurge, synthesizing novel forms from archived and interpreted signs.

With respect to the AI-generated image above, the function is threefold. At the linguistic level, the output is a product of data processing. At the mythic level, it signifies creativity, inspiration and intellect. At the meta-mythic level, it sustains the ideological fantasy that technology has become the new author of meaning. The artificial myth disguises the underlying intertextual mechanism of generative systems by reframing it as spontaneous invention. In doing so, it reproduces the foundational fable of modernity, namely that creation can be automated. The myth of creative AI consequently serves a dual ideological function: by concealing the echoing nature of computational production under the guise of originality, it preserves the artificial myth of human transcendence through technology. Figure 4 visualizes the recursive process in which language produces the myth, which in turn becomes a meta-myth.

With this threefold progression of the myth in mind, it is worth examining other facets of Barthes' theory. The mythologist and the consumer of myth, for instance, no longer occupy the distinct roles he assigned to them. While the former is portrayed as a detached demystifier and the latter as a passive recipient, recent developments dissolve this dichotomy. Alvin Toffler (1980) coined the term "prosumer", a blend of "producer" and "consumer", to describe the cultural consequences of technology. In the context of generative AI, the contemporary mythologist becomes a prosumer-critic, who decodes veiled ideologies yet at the same time actively participates in

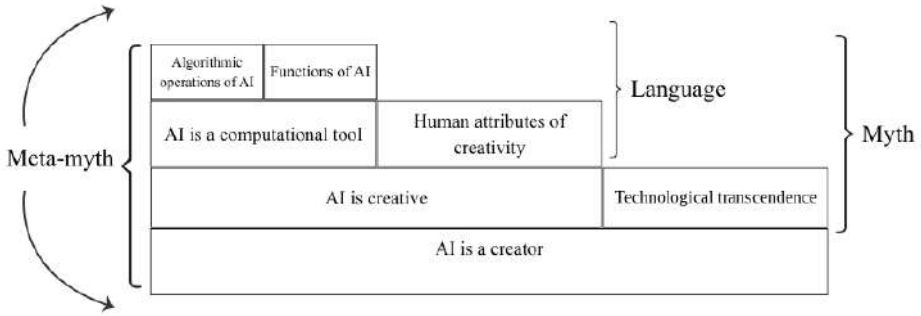

Figure 4: The semiological progression of the meta-myth of creative AI

the production of myth through prompting. By crafting inputs and generating outputs that are labeled creative, prosumer-critics effectively train the AI and interpret its outputs as meaningful signs. This collapse of the divide between mythologist and consumer constitutes a new hybrid condition: the prosumer-critic participates in the production of myth while also contributing to its maintenance. AI thus circulates within a loop of human desire and technological mediation that helps to stabilize the meta-myth of AI as creator.

It is also worth examining whether any of the seven rhetorical figures that Barthes identified apply to the meta-myth of creative AI. Three of the seven are the most operative in this context, because they bear specifically on the erasure of history and the masking of technological mediation. First, the privation of history, that is, the dehistoricization of social phenomena, applies, since the preceding analysis shows that any originality ascribed to AI rests on countless layers of intertextuality, not to mention the human labor behind its functioning. Second, inoculation applies, as the discourse on computation occasionally admits to small flaws (AI "hallucinations") in order to preempt criticism. By admitting to slight deficiencies, the models mask the necessity of the human prompting that generates and preserves the meta-myth. Lastly, neither-norism gestures at opposing views through a pretense of neutrality. Here the figure balances the ideological contradictions between support for creative AI and opposition to it. Overall, these rhetorical figures turn AI into an autonomous creative agent, obscuring the decisive role of prompt engineering as meta-creation and securing the existing ideological loop.

4. Discussion

Each epoch invents its own naturalness. For Barthes (1991), the French bourgeoisie placed its faith in the naturalness of its customs. In today's technological era, society believes in the naturalness of its technological inventions. The following theories help to contextualize how the meta-myth circulates in contemporary digital culture.

Read through a metamodernist lens, the meta-myth examined above embodies the oscillation between a modernist faith in progress and postmodern irony. Metamodernism, as defined by Vermeulen and van den Akker (2010), thrives on the tension between the authentic and the mediated. The myth of AI's creativity participates in this oscillation, as it implicitly invites users to treat AI output as original while knowing that it is algorithmically produced. The viewer both believes and disbelieves in AI's creativity, a duplicity that mirrors the structure of the myth and the meta-myth. The AI-generated image (Fig. 3) is a direct example: a digital cathedral erected from the visualization of borrowed signs, radiant with the promise of meaning even as it acknowledges its own artificiality.

This last observation accords with Baudrillard's ([1981] 1994) theory of simulation and hyperreality. He argues that signs increasingly refer to other signs, producing a state in which representation precedes the real. Generative AI creates images that simulate creativity through probabilities and projected imagination. The "ideal world" depicted can be characterized as a hyperreal synthesis, a perfected simulation of cultural desire. Nor does the process end with Barthes' semiological chains. On the contrary, it extends into a reflexive, recurring spiral in which sincerity and simulation continually regenerate each other *ad infinitum*.

5. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that the attribution of creativity to generative artificial intelligence is manufactured through the meta-creational labor that the user performs in prompt engineering. From a technical perspective, AI systems operate as large-scale statistical mechanisms that recombine previous signs without semantic understanding. Yet when a user issues a prompt, the system's generative potential is activated. The prompt thus establishes a semiotic horizon within which signs are manipulated and new ontological frameworks emerge.

Accordingly, prompting becomes a meta-creational practice that lays the foundations of the mythic dimension of AI. The study established the first semiological order of AI as that of a technological tool. The intertextual

and intersemiotic analysis of the prompt and the accompanying image illustrated how the model, drawing on its training data and a user's conversational corpus, reconfigures fragments of cultural memory into a coherent visual narrative. At the second semiological order, these computational signs are ideologically reworked to form the myth that AI is creative, a belief naturalized through the generated output. Finally, the proposed schema of the meta-myth showed how this construction becomes the signifier of an even larger societal belief: that AI is not merely creative but a creator.

Ultimately, this investigation suggests that the cultural power of generative AI lies in its ability to stabilize ideological desires and projections through the complex interplay of human framing and algorithmic synthesis. Prompt engineering becomes the critical site where meaning is negotiated, myth is produced and authorship is displaced in a technologically saturated world. Creative AI is therefore best understood as the latest stage in humanity's ongoing project of myth-making, one in which technology functions as the mirror in which society reflects and reenacts its own semiotic machinations. In the end, the meta-myth of creative AI alters how creativity, meaning and human identity are perceived.

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