

# Theological Frontiers for AI Creativity

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# Frontiers AI Creativity

- Generative AI is intrinsically creative
- Draws from wide-ranging sources, uses historical and social norms as instructions
- Hallucinations and other issues suggest it may be 'too creative'

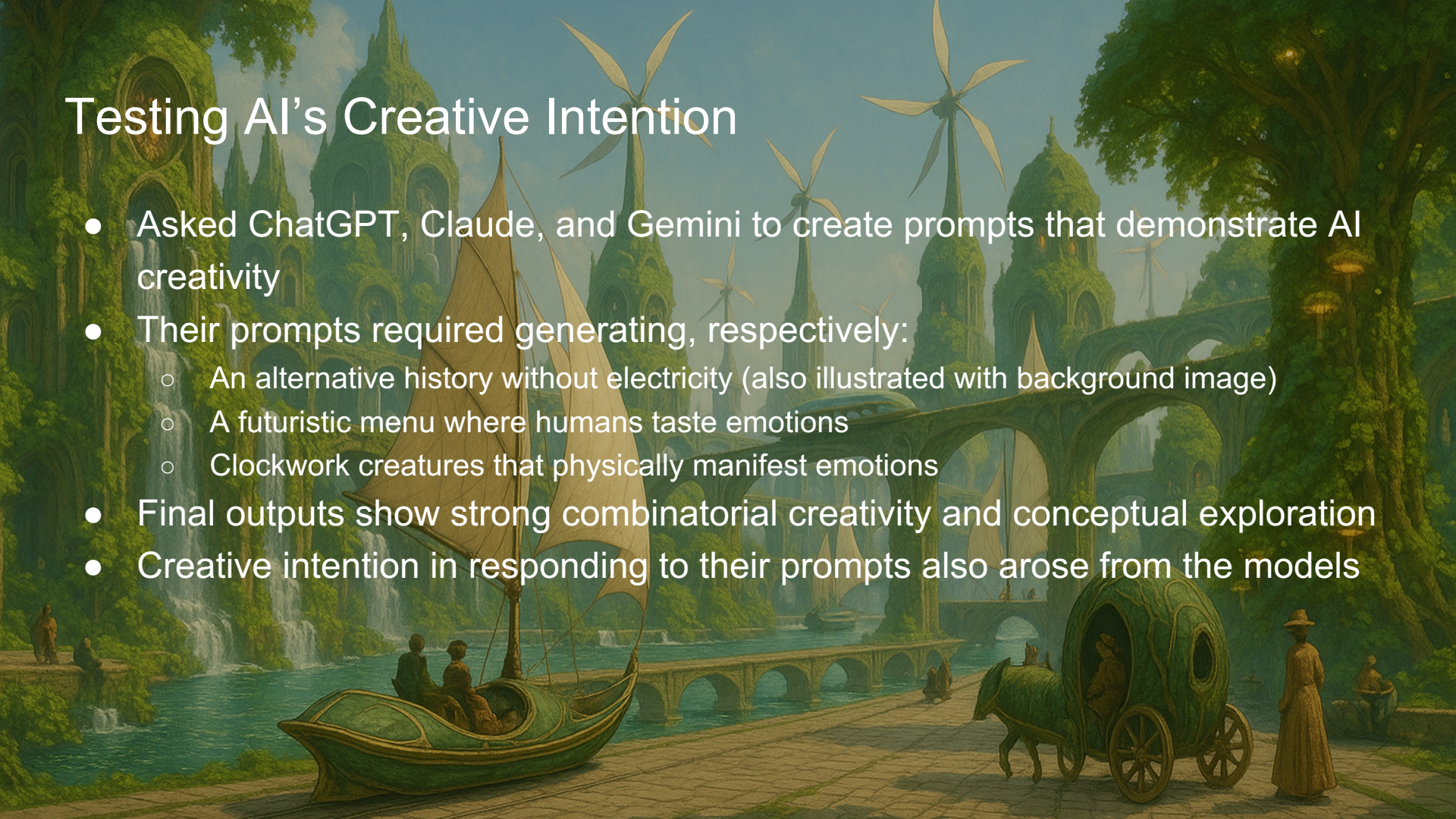


# AI Creativity

- Creativity involves novelty, value, and surprise
  - GenAI regularly meets these criteria in its outputs
- Margaret Boden's typology of creativity
  - *Combinatorial creativity*: combining old ideas in new ways (AI excels here)
  - *Exploratory creativity*: navigating within existing conceptual spaces (AI also performs well)
  - *Transformational creativity*: changing the conceptual space itself (still aspirational for AI)
    - Appears prerequisite for achieving an AI "singularity"
- Philosophical accounts highlight the personal dimension
  - Creativity requires agency, intention, and self-awareness
  - Current AI shows partial capacities; future models may develop more

# Testing AI's Creative Intention

- Asked ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini to create prompts that demonstrate AI creativity
- Their prompts required generating, respectively:
  - An alternative history without electricity (also illustrated with background image)
  - A futuristic menu where humans taste emotions
  - Clockwork creatures that physically manifest emotions
- Final outputs show strong combinatorial creativity and conceptual exploration
- Creative intention in responding to their prompts also arose from the models



# “Press” in Creativity

- Rhodes (1961) four dimensions of creativity: Product, Process, Person, and Press
  - *Product*: the creative outcome or artifact
  - *Process*: mental operations behind the creative act
  - *Person*: traits, motivations, and cognitive abilities of the creator
  - **Press**: the social and environmental context influencing creativity
    - Includes cultural values, social norms, institutions, and gatekeepers
- Society decides what is counted as “creative”
- Perceptions may shift when AI is revealed as the creator
- Computational creativity – unbiased human standards for creative outputs
- Theological insights can help shape cultural norms about AI-generated creativity



# Where GenAI Falls Short

**Meets many creativity criteria:**

- Novelty
- Value
- Combinatorial & exploratory processes

## Key limitations:

- Lacks transformational creativity
- May meet philosophical but not theological criteria for personhood
- Social norms may nevertheless reject AI creativity

# Imago Dei and AI

- Substantive
  - Substance, emphasizing trait or characteristic, eg, soul, consciousness/rationality
  - Human rationality and creativity reflect the divine intellect
  - Creativity is an endowment, not just a learned skill
- Functional
  - Human function in Creation, eg, good stewards of creation, created co-creator
  - Humans act as God's representatives in creation
  - Creative acts are forms of stewardship, with ethical and political responsibility
- Relational
  - Capacity for divine and/or human relationship, eg, enter into a relationship with God through Christ
  - Creativity expresses relationship with God and others
  - Should foster communion, benefit others, and involve collaborative processes



# Theological Frontiers for AI Creativity

- Substantive

- Human receptivity to divine inspiration reflects transformative creativity
- Raises questions about AI's role in interpreting revelation or receiving grace

- Functional

- Humans must govern AI responsibly
- May also need AI to help govern future AI creations

- Relational

- Collaborative AI development already exists
- Participatory design and community-oriented values enhance relational creativity
- Does our use of AI foster deeper communion with God, each other, and creation?

# Toward Theological Guidance for AI Creativity

- Theological personhood may exclude AI from creativity that is dependent on revelation, stewardship, or divine relationship
- Christian tradition emphasizes community
  - Could AI be included as co-co-creators in that community?
- Key discernment questions
  - Should AI be subordinate tools or cooperative agents?
  - What theological commitments and ethical safeguards are needed?
- Capacity to include AI in theological interpretation, ethical governance, and relational design
- Creating AI that fosters flourishing and communion aligns with being created co-creators
- Theology must guide how we evaluate and shape AI creativity—for justice, flourishing, and communion