

Hammering Away at the Human – Critical Posthumanism and Nietzsche

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Let me put my cards on the table. As a representative of a school of thought, or a theoretical orientation, namely *critical* posthumanism, I'm not here primarily as a "Nietzsche scholar", even though I think Nietzsche's "project" or "stance", if he has one, certainly has an anticipatory, critical, function – "critical" in a similar sense to what I take the qualifier of "*critical* posthumanism" to mean. This critical affinity, as one might call it, lies in the "sounding out" of the question: what does it mean to be human, today, in the past, and in the future? In other words an anthropological or, indeed, postanthropological question. However, given our present context, I'd like to slightly reformulate this question and not focus on the central figure of posthumanist discourse, the posthuman, but ask instead: what does posthumanism want? Or, in other words, what is the "desire" of the posthuman? What is it a symptom of? What is its "object"? – in the hope that this will come across not only as a "psychoanalytic" but also as a recognizably "Nietzschean" question, in the sense, that one might ask what is the specific "will to power" that informs, knowingly or unbeknownst, the desire to "overcome" this other figure and its discourse, namely the "human" and "humanism"? In doing so, I'm not interested in whether Nietzsche's "super-" or "overhuman" anticipates, informs, or critically surpasses or indeed undercuts the contemporary notion of the "posthuman" – I'll leave this question to the transhumanists and their own specific will and desires.

At face value, however, what they all have in common – posthumanism, transhumanism, and Nietzsche as well – is that they all play with the idea of overcoming the human or at least one specific form of it. What they seem to somewhat disagree on, however, is what role technology should play in that process and what role humanism had or should still have in this process of self-abandonment or self-transcendence, if indeed, it is that: humans willing themselves into something else – posthumans – by asking the question concerning technology again and more insistently, and in doing so putting their very "being" on the line, either out of self-hatred or, indeed, some perceived "necessity", maybe out of hope or simply curiosity – we should, because we can.

So, what exercises me as a *critical* posthumanist, that is as a critical commentator of posthumanism, of what it desires and what it does, is the question whether a posthumanism is thinkable *without* technology and what this would be or mean? We are all aware that our relationship to technology is, to say the least, ambiguous. It serves as a "*pharmakon*", as Bernard Stiegler would say, as both cure and poison. On the one hand, posthumanism speaks of an "originary technicity", on the other hand, with Heidegger (and therefore by implication also with Nietzsche) it grapples with the notion of modern technology as "enframing", as the manifestation of the modern

“will to power”. In other words, it is the specific form of technical nihilism at work in this ambiguous relationship of ours with technology, or technique and technics, that is at the heart of the matter for critical posthumanism and its investigation into the question of what the desire of the posthuman actually informs. The desire of the posthuman in both ways of course, as the human desire for the posthuman and also the question of what a posthuman desire, if that existed, could still mean?

Let me unpack this a little for you, first, by asking:

1. What is *critical* about posthumanism?

I do not see the situation of man in the world of global technology as a fate which cannot be escaped or unraveled.¹

In my view, posthumanism is only really “critical” when it questions the predominantly instrumental and utilitarian notion of technology as a “tool”. In doing so, it follows a long line of thinkers, from Ernst Kapp, to Marx, maybe Nietzsche, too, Heidegger, McLuhan, Leroi-Gourhan, Simondon, Derrida, Stiegler and many others who all in their own way address the fact that philosophy has neglected the importance of technology, technics and technicity in the process of hominisation. Or as Mark Hansen and Katherine Hayles would put it in a more recognizably “posthumanist” term: technogenesis.²

Tool-“use”, a practice that is by no means uniquely human, I’m sure we all agree, is never purely instrumental, neatly to be parsed into a subject and object function. A tool is never a mere extension of a natural (human) organ, or a prosthesis, a mere replacement of a lost “natural” bodily “ability”, it is also never just an “enhancement” of some previously deficient natural given, as many transhumanists might like to think. If anything it is a supplement. It therefore follows Derrida’s aporetic logic of supplementarity in that it “completes” something or someone who was never aware of what they were lacking, and in supplementing thus, the supplement undermines the notion of completeness and completability as such. The tool-supplement, like technics in general, is a *pharmakon*, both cure (the solution to a “problem”, a remedial device) and poison (the loss of the idea of autonomy, the origin of some kind of “lack” which, in turn, produces desire, violence and the will to power).

The classical example of this is the hammer. Even before Heidegger’s differentiation between *Vor-* and *Zuhandenheit*³— namely that only the “forgetting” of the hammer only makes it usable as an extension of the hand, if the handle is broken, on the other

¹ Martin Heidegger, “‘Only a God Can Save Us’: *Der Spiegel*’s Interview with Martin Heidegger”, in: Richard Wolin, ed., *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader* (Minneapolis: MIT Press, 1993), pp. 91-116 [111].

² Cf. Mark Hansen, *Embodying Technesis: Technology beyond Writing* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000).

³ Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Part one, Division three, “The Worldhood of the World”, 15 “The Being of the Entities Encountered in the Environment”, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001 [1962]), pp. 95-101.

hand, it becomes a “thing as such” – the “discovery” of “hammering” as an *action*, as a means of *transformation*, as a source of *power* must have occurred at the “dawn of man”, in other words, in a scene that I assume everyone here will somehow have interiorized in the form of that iconic scene with that title, “Dawn of Man”, in Stanley Kubrick’s *2001 A Space Odyssey* (1968).⁴ A (somewhat lunatic) primate, referred to, in the screenplay and Arthur C. Clarke’s novelisation, as “Moon-Watcher” – our “prehuman” ancestor, presumably – picks up a bone and starts thrashing. And as *he* – the leader of the pack is inevitably male and predisposed to violence – as he becomes more adept and the bone-hammer becomes *zuhanden*, ready to hand, it turns into an organ extension and becomes a weapon to kill nonhuman “prey” and then other humans. It becomes an instrument of power, over life and death: this is the mythical beginning of technology, of metaphysics, but also biopolitics. It is also the birth of a certain humanism, of course. It’s the most common, rational, logic explanation of hominisation, except for the fact that there always remains this mystery of the actual motivation: why “us”? Why become human in *this* way? Just like we all, the prehuman in *2001* has no other explanation for the “miracle” of hominisation than some form of *deus ex machina* – a shiny black monolith dropped from the sky, a god, an alien “instructor”. Here just to remind you briefly of this, our *primal* “technoscene”:

[*2001 – A Space Odyssey*, “Dawn of Man”:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ypEaGQb6dJK>]

This is not just the imaginary primal scene of becoming-human, however, it is also, inevitably, the *ur*-anthropo-technical scene of humanism: picking up the tool-hammer, the beginning of consciousness, of meat-eating, of weaponising... But why? Does the pre-human really need a black monolith fallen from the sky to become human?⁵ Does “he” need a kind of AI to tell “him” what “he” is through a kind of reverse-teleology, in the sense of: “we” were always destined to become who “we” are. Any actual origin (and originarity), however, would almost certainly have to be thought “*en partage*” as Frédéric Neyrat puts it, or as “entanglement” – with environments, other animals, plants, objects, micro-organisms, etc.:

⁴ Stanley Kubrick and Arthur C. Clarke, *2001 – A Space Odyssey* (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1968).

⁵ Refer to Arthur C. Clarke is much more concrete in his novelisation of the Clarke and Kubrick film script (cf. Clarke, *2001 – A Space Odyssey* (New York: ACE, 1999; first published shortly after the film in 1968), and also in his reminiscence of his collaboration with Kubrick, in *The Lost Worlds of 2001* (New York: Signet, 1972).

Au lieu d'une scène primitive, il faut penser la dissémination originaire... Jamais ça ne s'hominise tout seul au milieu d'un monde fixe...⁶

The mystery of the “origin” remains everywhere because it always has to be imagined as a co-constitutional moment, or a hen and egg situation, one might say: did we only become human because of the tools that allowed us to become human “in the first place”? This is, after all, what also lies behind the conundrum of “originary technicity”. Or did actually some God, or demiurge like Prometheus, originally “gift” us, and can we rely on his return to save us once again from modern technology’s “enframing”, as Heidegger suggests. Extrapolated to our present moment, as Michael E. Zimmerman puts it starkly in discussing “Heidegger on Techno-Posthumanism”: “Super AI would be, in effect, the ultimate ontical embodiment of what Heidegger – drawing on Nietzsche – calls the Will to Will”,⁷ or, in other words, the desire of the posthuman, of self-transcendence. Since technology, as Heidegger states, “is in its essence something which man cannot master by himself”,⁸ and modern technology “tears men loose from the earth and uproots them”,⁹ now, “technological relationships” are the only kind of relationships – to others, the world, to oneself – that are left.¹⁰

What’s it all to do with Nietzsche, you might ask. Let me therefore remind you of...

2. Nietzsche’s Hammer – Turned on the Human

Ihr seht nur meine Funken: aber ihr seht den Ambos nicht, der ich bin, ihr errathtet nicht die Grausamkeit meines Hammers.¹¹

The hammer might be considered the great grandfather of every tool ever made. As technics goes, hammering is probably as “originary” as they come. This must be when the revealing and enframing business that makes us technically human must have started. Is Nietzsche’s hammer and his hammering technique any different? At face value, of course not. However, Nietzsche is the philosopher who claims to do his philosophising hammer-in-hand, and in doing so would confound the ancient distinction between *tekhnē* and *epistemē*. (New) knowledge thus flies off in the process of hammering like splinters fly off stones. No wonder Nietzsche’s hammer

⁶ Frédéric Neyrat, *Homo labyrinthus: humanisme, antihumanisme, posthumanisme* (Paris : Éditions Dehors, 2015), p. 75 [Instead of a primal scene one must think of originary dissemination... humanising never happens on its own in the middle of a fixed world... (my translation)].

⁷ Michael E. Zimmerman, “Heidegger on Techno-Posthumanism: Revolt against Finitude, or Doing What Comes ‘Naturally’”, in: J. B. Hurlbut and H. Tirosh-Samuels, eds., *Perfecting Human Futures* (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2016), pp. 97-117 [101].

⁸ Heidegger, “Only a God can save us”, p. 105.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

¹¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Nachgelassene Fragmente 1882-1884, 13=Z14 Sommer 1883, Digitale Kritische Gesamtausgabe Werke und Briefe* [eKGWB], eds. Giorgio Colli andazzino Montinari (www.nietzschesource.org, 2009-), p. 5593; available online at: <http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB> (accessed: 6 October 2025).

has inspired and exercised so many. Walter Kaufmann, for example, places Nietzsche's *Götzendämmerung oder Wie man mit dem Hammer philosophiert* in the context of his project of the revaluation (of all values), by saying: "It is usually assumed that the hammer with which Nietzsche philosophized was a sledge hammer".¹² However, the preface to *Twilight of the Idols*, originally entitled "Müßiggang eines Psychologen", seems to suggest otherwise: it is about "sounding out idols":

Es giebt mehr Götzen als Realitäten in der Welt: das ist mein „böser Blick“ für diese Welt, das ist auch mein „böses Ohr“... Hier einmal mit dem Hammer Fragen stellen und, vielleicht, als Antwort jenen berühmten hohlen Ton hören, der von geblähten Eingeweiden redet — welches Entzücken für Einen, der Ohren noch hinter den Ohren hat, — für mich alten Psychologen und Rattenfänger, vor dem gerade Das, was still bleiben möchte, laut werden muss... Diese kleine Schrift ist eine grosse Kriegserklärung; und was das Aushorchen von Götzen anbetrifft, so sind es dies Mal keine Zeitgötzen, sondern ewige Götzen, an die hier mit dem Hammer wie mit einer Stimmgabel gerührt wird...¹³

David Thatcher provided a useful analysis of Nietzsche's "hammer metaphor" in suggesting that "Nietzsche's hammer is neither a club nor a sledge-hammer ... it has more in common with the railwayman's hammer, used to check for cracks in the wheels of trains, than it has with any weapon of force or destruction".¹⁴ As Thatcher detected, hammer images are mainly occurring during the period Nietzsche was writing *Also sprach Zarathustra* and the other works of the 1880s and he classified these usages into three main groups: "the sculptor's hammer, the blacksmith's hammer and the law-giver's hammer".¹⁵ However, he added at least one more hammer to Nietzsche's toolbox in connection with the "sounding out of idols" in *Twilight*: "...mit dem Hammer Fragen stellen... This is the hammer of the physician, the 'Perkussionshammer', an instrument employed in 'Auskultation'".¹⁶ This shift from a purely destructive to a more analytical, or one might say critical, use of hammering at hollow objects would be a trajectory that is the reverse of Moon-Watcher's becoming human through discovering the use of bones in *2001 A Space Odyssey*, one might say, which goes from accidental sounding out to destructive

¹² Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 112.

¹³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Götzen-Dämmerung*, „Vorrede“, eKGBW, pp. 2326-2327 [cf. Nietzsche, *The Portable Nietzsche*, trans. and ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Penguin, 1976), pp. 465-466] There are more idols than realities in the world: that is my "evil eye" for this world; that is also my "evil ear". For once to pose questions here with a *hammer* and perhaps to hear as a reply that famous hollow sound... what a delight for one who has ears even behind his ears, for me, an old psychologist and pied piper before whom just that which would remain silent must become outspoken. (...) This little essay is a great declaration of war; and regarding the sounding out of the idols of the age, this time they are not just idols of the age, but eternal idols which are here touched with the hammer as with a tuning fork.]

¹⁴ David S. Thatcher, "A Diagnosis of Idols: Percussions and Repercussions of a Distant Hammer", *Nietzsche Studien* 14.1 (1985): 250-268 [257].

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 258.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 264.

frenzy. This was also commented on by Herman Werner Siemens and used to argue for understanding Nietzsche's critique as "art of limited warfare", as opposed to interpretations of Nietzsche as a pure "destroyer" and thus the "total or unlimited violence [usually] associated with Nietzsche's hammer".¹⁷ Thomas Brobjer equally emphasised the "diagnostic" use of the hammer and established a connection with the idea of eternal recurrence, citing from Nietzsche's *Nachlass* (KGW VII 27 [80]/KSA 11, 395), written during the Summer and Autumn of 1884:

Die Lehre der ewigen Wiederkunft als *Hammer* in der Hand der mächtigsten Menschen...,

which Brobjer saw as "destructive, diagnostic and constructive" at once – or, indeed, as one might call it "deconstructive".¹⁸ This discussion led in *Nietzsche Studien*, continued with a contribution by Peter Georgsson, "Nietzsche's Hammer Again", in 2004, who added another medical instrument or tool-use to the analytical "sounding out", or "*abklopfen*", of Nietzsche's metaphorical hammering as critique: the "stethoscope".¹⁹ Georgsson also, usefully, returned to what one might call a more "anthropological" dimension in this auscultation process, namely to see it as a process necessary for (human) self-realisation. This is the critical and final moment, when the hammer actually "speaks itself", about (human) perfection and decadence. Nietzsche's programme it seems, is therefore what one might call, an "anthropogenic" and "anthropotechnic" one. Or, as Jonas Čeika summarised in his "Marxist-Socialist" appropriation of Nietzsche, in *How to Philosophize with a Hammer and a Sickle*:

the hammer sounds out the status quo to determine the value and its 'expiration date', and once that value has expired, begins to hammer it through active critique and critical activity, building up the creator's vision using the materials provided by the ruins of the very idols one is destroying.²⁰

So far, however, there is no non-instrumental use of the hammer, whether it be for destroying, auscultating or sculpting. However, Nietzsche's use of the hammer metaphor doesn't stop here. Not only does Nietzsche philosophise and hence *write* with a hammer – the hammer as writing instrument, akin to his famous typewriter – he anthropomorphises the hammer and identifies with it. Zarathustra *is* the hammer:

¹⁷ Herman Werner Siemens, "Nietzsche's Hammer: Philosophy, Destruction, or the Art of Limited Warfare", *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie* 28.1 (1999): 321-347 [324].

¹⁸ Thomas H. Brobjer, "To Philosophize with a Hammer: An Interpretation", *Nietzsche Studien* 28.1 (1999): 38-41 [40-41].

¹⁹ Peter Georgsson, "Nietzsche's Hammer Again", *Nietzsche Studien* 33.1 (2004): 342-350 [342].

²⁰ Jonas Čeika, *How to Philosophize with a Hammer and Sickle: Nietzsche and Marx for the Twenty-First Century* (London: Repeater, 2021), p. 33.

Wer soll der Herr sein? So begann er wieder. Nun! *Diese* da wahrlich nicht – lieber noch zerschläge ich *Diese* da mit meinem Hammer. Ich selber aber bin der Hammer.²¹

He/Zarathustra is the idol-smashing hammer, only that the idol-hammering in this instance, the *Götzenhämmerung* as one might say, is the destruction of the (lower) “human”. Zarathustra, the personified hammer, also stands for the work, the task, the will or the desire, as that power which wishes to overcome the human:

Der Mensch ist das, was überwunden werden muß. *Hier halte ich den Hammer, der ihn überwindet!*²²

The human, as the ultimate idol, one might say, needs to be thoroughly sounded out, tested and if need be, smashed:

Letzte Rede: Hier der Hammer, der die Menschen überwindet – ist der Mensch mißrathen? wohlan, erproben wirs, ob er diesen Hammer aushält!²³

It is a strategy that drives the philosophical hammer and his tool to overcome “degenerate” [*entartete*] and dying races and make way for a new order of life by supplying the degenerate themselves with a desire for the end – an “ecstatic” nihilism that under certain circumstances would appear indispensable for a philosopher like Nietzsche:

Eine pessimistische Denkweise und Lehre ein ekstatischer Nihilismus kann unter Umständen gerade dem Philosophen unentbehrlich sein: als ein mächtiger Druck und Hammer, mit dem er entartete und absterbende Rassen zerbricht und aus dem Wege schaffe, [um] für eine neue Ordnung des Lebens Bahn zu machen oder um dem, was entartet und absterben will, das Verlangen zum Ende einzugeben.²⁴

Difficult not to feel a certain chill in the prophetic power of such a seemingly “inevitable” drive towards “self-cleansing” of the “degenerate”. In any case, the role of the hammer in this is crucial:

Der Hammer: als die Lehre, welche die *Entscheidung* herbeiführt.²⁵

It is the hammer to overcome the human that brings about the highest individual, only to facilitate self-annihilation:

²¹ Nietzsche, *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 1884-1885, eKGWB [32=Z II 9, Winter 1884-1885], p. 6264.

²² Nietzsche, *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 1882-1884, eKGWB [21=Mp XV 3b, Herbst 1883], p. 5763.

²³ Nietzsche, *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 1884-1885, eKGWB [25=W I 1, Frühjahr], p. 5899.

²⁴ Nietzsche, *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 1884-1885, eKGWB [35=W I 3a, Mai-Juli 1885], p. 6401.

²⁵ Nietzsche, *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 1885-1887, eKGWB [2=W I 8, Herbst 1885-Herbst 1886], p. 6675.

Der Hammer zur Überwältigung des Menschen: höchste Entfaltung des Individuums, *so daß es an sich zu Grunde gehen muß* (und nicht, wie bisher, an Diätfehlern!) (wie der Tod in die Welt kam!)²⁶

To summarise: the desire to overcome the human, the desire for the overhuman, or the posthuman (at least for transhumanists it seems) translates into the death wish of the higher human, the true individual, and the role of the hammer is to chip away at the degenerate, the *Herdentier*, the herd and slave mentality of the weak. It is the will or desire of the hammer itself that drives it towards the stone to sculpt the (new) human, as Zarathustra says – a central passage repeated in *Ecce Homo*:

Hinweg von Gott und Göttern locket mich dieser Wille; was wäre denn zu schaffen, wenn Götter – da wären! Aber zum Menschen treibt es mich stets von Neuem, mein inbrünstiger Schaffenswille; so treibt's den Hammer zum Steine. Ach, ihr Menschen, im Stein schläft mir ein Bild, das Bild meiner Bilder! Ach, dass es im härtesten, hässlichsten Steine schlafen muss! Nun wüthet mein Hammer grausam gegen sein Gefängniss. Vom Steine stäuben Stücke: was schiert mich das?²⁷

Difficult not to see two images merge here: Zarathustra frantically chipping away at the (pre)human, and Moon-Watcher orgiastically clobbering the bones of the (herd) animal in *2001*, all to the bombastic drumming of Richard Strauss's *Also sprach Zarathustra* – the Will to hammer, now speaking itself or for itself [*der Hammer redet*]:

Ganz hart allein ist das Edelste. Diese neue Tafel, oh meine Brüder, stelle ich über euch: werdet hart!²⁸

A question, from a critical posthumanist point of view maybe *the* question, nevertheless arises: can one envisage an overcoming of the human by any other than “technical” or “hammering” means? Our “originary” co-implication with technics and technology keeps bringing out both the best and the worst in “us” – a distinct echo of (liberal) humanism, calling for a moral, or ethical choice of a “free” (or in Nietzsche's terms “strong”) individual, a call, as transhumanists certainly hear it, that would make it even our “duty” to enhance ourselves: technical enhancement *is* moral enhancement, and vice versa.

The hammer is thus the first and last tool of a human self-understanding based on anthropotechnics, one might argue. Self-sculpting, turning the hammer against

²⁶ Nietzsche, *Nachgelassene Fragmente* 1882-1884, eKGWB [20=Z II 2, Herbst 1883], p. 5762.

²⁷ Nietzsche, *Also sprach Zarathustra*, Teil 2, „Auf den glücklichen Inseln“, eKGWB, p. 1703; cf. also *Ecce Homo*, „Also sprach Zarathustra“, eKGWB, p. 2596.

²⁸ Nietzsche, *Götzen-Dämmerung* [*Also sprach Zarathustra*, 3.90], eKGWB, p. 2415. There is also a disturbingly “masculinist” undertone here of course.

oneself (and others) is the only hope for a being whose origin is shrouded in mystery, based on absence and under-determination – this is what Stiegler refers to as the “de-fault of origin [*défaut d’origine*]”.²⁹ It informs the negative anthropology of the human as the “noch nicht festgestellte Thier”,³⁰ or the idea of man the tightrope walker: “Der Mensch ist ein Seil, geknüpft zwischen Thier und Übermensch, — ein Seil über einem Abgrunde”.³¹

How to break out of this technological circle of which the notion of originary technicity is only the most insistent symptom: humans make technology – technology makes us (post)human, therefore the human was always already technical, all technology is (post)anthropotechnics and so on. The notion of originary technology or technicity resolves nothing, since its “essence” is still nothing technical, not even anthropotechnical. The subversive pleasure, or the power that lies in the desire of and for the posthuman figure has by now disappeared, in my view. Under contemporary techno-scientific capitalist conditions the desire of the posthuman cannot function as a critical “instrument” to debunk a humanism which has long since reinvented itself as technohumanism or transhumanism. The posthuman now plays for the other side, one might say, just as Nietzsche threatens to do as well, once again. So, maybe it is time to take sides on the “originary” front, or the front of “originarity”: our originary technicity weighed up against our originary animality, facing our “successor”.

I think we have to take Nietzsche at his word, regarding the hammer and its ambivalent role: “Der Hammer – eine Gefahr, an der der Mensch zerbrechen kann”.³² “Can”, yes, but not “must”. Technics is mundane in the sense that it relates us to the world and to each other. Once it stops doing and being that, it oversteps its mark. As “autonomous” technology destroys being and beings, be they human or nonhuman, and must therefore be reined in. After all, what would be the use of a pure technosphere? Would the AI governing it dream of hammering away at the human, would it be “Nietzschean”? In fact, it doesn’t really matter if the origin of technology, or its technicity, remains a mystery, as long as we’re aware of and able to trace its effects. Every genealogical approach eventually reaches its limits, its exhaustion, loses track or trace. And traces are never for eternity, they change, they’re altered, they disappear – the disappearance of an absence of a presence... like a human footprint or face in the sand washed away by the sea, as Foucault put it so starkly.³³ The human has left its technical traces on the planet and as it disappears, these

²⁹ Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time, 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*, trans. Richard Beardsworth and George Collins (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 16.

³⁰ Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, eKGWB, p. 2017.

³¹ Nietzsche, *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, Vorrede, Teil 4, eKGWB, p. 1638. One might say that in the context of post- and transhumanism, it is Nietzsche who is now walking a rope between the animal and the machine-superhuman-intelligence-successor species, high above the abyss of looming extinction.

³² Nietzsche, *Nachgelassene Fragmente 1884-1885*, 34=N VII 1 April-Juni 1885, eKGWB, p. 6297.

³³ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* [1966] (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 422.

traces will survive it, at least for a while – this is what some call the “Anthropocene”. It started maybe with hammering and ended in murder and maybe didn’t progress much from there. But is this reason enough to welcome our technological successor – the AI – who might be as effective a killing machine as it already is as a creator of new superhuman idols and images, as it looks back at Nietzsche (and Heidegger and Stiegler and everybody else) who are their progenitors. Not even a god or an AI, it seems, can save us.