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## AI and the Death of the Author

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The concept of the humanities (“Geisteswissenschaft”) as a specific domain of enquiry was minted in the 19th century by scholars who wished to distance themselves from the emerging world of the natural sciences, of disruptive technologies and powerful machines. Their aim was closely connected with the concern to safeguard the humanness of human beings in the face of dehumanizing tendencies discernible in Faustian technological civilization, while at the same time emphasizing that humanities scholars have their own legitimate methods (phenomenology rather than empiricism), different than, but in no way deficient compared to the modus operandi of technoscience and laboratory research. The essence of humanness was primarily defined as our capacity to think, and to understand what thinking means, philology is at least as important as physiology. In my lecture I will focus on a specific item of concern of humanities scholarship, namely authorship. On the one hand, there is a close connection between authorship and technology (from book printing via typewriters up to laptop computers) but although such technological innovations evidently affected the manual aspects of writing, authorship as such was supposed to remain a human affair. An whereas in the natural sciences writing styles were increasingly anonymized, in the humanities scholars were still able to develop and maintain their own recognizable style. As we speak, artificial Intelligence is challenging our conception of authorship (not in the least authorship as an important dimension of humanities scholarship), or even the aura of authorship. in an unprecedented manner. Although AI builds on previous technological advances effectively increasing the pace and scale of knowledge production in the humanities as well, the death of the author seems imminent. Are we the last genuine authors? Are we still authors? Can authorship be saved and can authorship save us?

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