

This is the peer reviewed version of the following article:

GÜNTHER ANDERS' MORALISM / Rasini, Vallori. - In: S&F SCIENZA E FILOSOFIA.IT.. - ISSN 2036-2927. - 32:2, 2024(2024), pp. 232-246.

Terms of use:

The terms and conditions for the reuse of this version of the manuscript are specified in the publishing policy. For all terms of use and more information see the publisher's website.

19/03/2025 18:29

(Article begins on next page)

VALLORI RASINI

GÜNTHER ANDERS' MORALISM

1. *The rhetoric of the incomplete being*
2. *The perversion of progress*
3. *The decline of morality*
4. *Only moralism can (perhaps) save us*

ABSTRACT: GÜNTHER ANDERS' MORALISM

About the condition of the contemporary humanity, Günther Anders believes that it is necessary to be 'moralists' and to attempt a reversal of the relationship with technology. It is not important to study the essence of the human being; instead, we must understand that the development of humanity, driven by the idea of infinite progress, has led to the collapse of human morality. Values of humanity have been replaced by machine-like principles, focused solely on functionality and efficiency, which could ultimately lead to total destruction



"You are a moralist by nature"
[letter from H. Arendt to G. Anders, 9 January 1957]

1. The rhetoric of the incomplete being

The term 'moralism', which has a distinctly negative connotation, denotes an individual's tendency to attach overriding or excessive importance to moral considerations and to behave as if everything were constantly under judgement. Unless accompanied by implicit complicity or affectionate condescension, calling someone a moralist is hardly a compliment. Anders reserves this term for himself. He uses it to label his own philosophical style, fully aware of the distinct irritation provoked in others by both this attitude - his constantly flaunted 'moralistic fixation' - and,

perhaps even more so, by his admission of this awareness: an exceedingly irritating insistence.

It is a point of arrival which, underpinned by a precociously manifested inclination, constitutes the outcome of a cogent analysis of the current anthropological condition and outlines the redefinition of man's 'task' – the recovery of a dimension that is perhaps irretrievably lost – developing in the transition from the rhetoric of 'doing oneself' to the critical observation of "what one does" (and has done). The adoption of this attitude coincides with the abandonment of a classical anthropological enquiry¹, i.e. an essentialist investigation of human nature, which Anders had initiated in the footsteps of the famous Max Scheler.

That kind of enquiry hinged on the question of who (or what) is the human being, the age-old, restless question that engenders an existential abyss. We do not know who man is at all, Scheler declared at a time of great crisis of values and certainties at the beginning of the last century. We possess various images of him, he argued, which may not exactly be wrong but are certainly partial and insufficient to offer human beings a provenance and a destiny, to guarantee them the position to which they aspire in the cosmos². An indeterminateness to which the new philosophical anthropology is tasked with finding an answer; it must identify the thread from which it is at least conceivable to unravel knowledge about the human. However, it is precisely this thread that provides an unknown because the basic determination obtained by the new research framework is precisely the constitutive indeterminacy of a being 'open to the world', whether it is found in the sublime fleetingness of the spirit, in the inscrutability

¹ This is a turning point in Anders' thought that he himself emphasised on several occasions; see for example G. Anders, *Mensch ohne Welt. Schriften zur Kunst und Literatur* (1984), Beck, München 1993, p. 11; see also Id., *Wenn ich verzweifelt bin, was geht mich an!* (1984), in Id., *Das Günther Anders Lesebuch*, Diogenes Verlag, Zürich 1984, pp. 298-299.

² M. Scheler, *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos* (1928), Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, München 1947, pp. 9-11.

of an eccentric being or in a biologically deficient foundation³. Recalling Nietzsche's effective formula of the as yet undetermined animal⁴, the current of German philosophical anthropology maintains that the human being 'must make himself': between freedom and constraint, he must mould himself and recognise as a moral duty that completion which is 'originally' denied him. Anders himself, in the research that led to the 1929 lecture for the Kant-Gesellschaft and the subsequent publication of *Pathologie de La Liberté*, adhered to this framework, referring to the specificity of human nature in its extraneousness to the world, its lack of identification and the fundamental instability dependent on its 'extreme' freedom:

in all his acts, man feels his freedom in relation to the world. But in no act does this take place so explicitly as in withdrawing into himself. Indeed, through this act, man now takes the destiny of his break with the world into his own hands, intensifies it until it becomes a true opening to the world, and compensates the world through himself⁵.

On closer inspection, this is nothing particularly new on the Western philosophical horizon: from pedagogical exhortations to self-knowledge (as a 'learning' exercise) to generous appeals to man's providential operativity, the power/duty of self-fulfilment has always been – from antiquity to the present day – the hallmark of the human being. If the myth of Prometheus is the harbinger and emblem of this overbearing inclination, the modern ideal of progress has nourished its arrogance to the extreme limits: tasked with making himself, at the same time man seems to have the right to unmake anything that stands in his way, while, in the heat of

³ In a nutshell, this is the peculiarity of human nature according to the three leading representatives of German philosophical anthropology. See respectively: M. Scheler, *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos*, cit.; H. Plessner, *Die Stufen des Organischen und der Mensch. Einleitung in die philosophische Anthropologie* (1928) Suhrkamp, Frankfurt a. M. 2003; A. Gehlen, *Der Mensch. Seine natur und seine Stellung in der Welt* (1940), Klostermann, Frankfurt a. M. 2016.

⁴ F. Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (1886), de Gruyter, Berlin 2014, III, 62.

⁵ G. Anders, *Pathologie de La Liberté. Essai sur La non-identification* (1937), p. 75.

redemption, his action can go so far as to revolutionise its outcome.

2. *The perversion of progress*

Anders dwells on questions such as these when, between 1940 and 1941, he entertains the idea of writing an essay on *The Incompleteness of Man and the Concept of "Progress"*⁶, as if he feels the need – as Hannah Arendt wrote to him commenting on his sketch – to torment himself “with the dance of the ghosts of the 19th century” in order to come to understand that those ghosts are as old as the world⁷. Despite Arendt’s encouragement for him to complete the ‘due’ research, only a few pages of dense notes remain of Anders’ intent. These include a lucid historical-genealogical *excursus* on progress, which starts from the ‘prophecy in exile’ of the Holy Scriptures and leads to the claims of the workers’ movement, emphasising the distinction between the priority given to the word ‘progress’ and the secondary role generally played by its content⁸. It is emphasised that in the Judeo-Christian tradition, the idea of human incompleteness derives from the assumption of an expropriation and a regression from the original biblical condition. Hence, the emergence of a veritable “pathology of progress” (which in any case is rooted in Promethean mythology), a phenomenon of “universalisation of the concept” and its “transformation from a word concerning knowledge and technology to an eventemial word concerning the course of the world”⁹. World history is steered by an overwhelming drive for progressive self-creation based on the idea of total freedom and independence; where “man as a progressive considers himself better in every respect, therefore also in *moral* terms” (l’uomo come

⁶ G. Anders, *Disposition für Die Unfertigkeit des Menschen und der Begriff "Fortschritt"* (1940-1941), in H. Arendt, G. Anders, *Schreib doch mal hard facts über dich. Briefe 1939 bis 1975. Texte und Dokumente* (2016), p. 169.

⁷ Letter from H. Arendt of 10 September 1941, in H. Arendt, G. Anders, *Schreib doch mal hard facts über dich*, cit., p. 48.

⁸ G. Anders, *Disposition*, cit., p. 173.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

progressista si considera migliore sotto *ogni* riguardo, quindi anche [sotto] quello *morale*)¹⁰.

The 19th century elevated the concept of human “autopoiesis” to the highest degree. What kind? – asks Anders – “Investiture? Self-baptism? Self-generation? Self-liberation?”. “All these things together” (Tutte queste cose insieme), of course. All together because human freedom is unleashed in the form of excess, as an extreme possibility that can give rise to a “technically ‘progressive’ but socially anti-progressive” history¹¹. The pervasiveness of the concept of progress therefore determines a moral trend that loses sight of the well-being of the human being as such in favour of acting as productivity. On a socio-historical level, however, the category undergoes a process of degeneration through “the imposture of technology, which for its part brings with it new forms of illiberality”¹².

The conclusion of the reflection on the theme finally seems to anticipate the idea of a reversal that was only fully formulated later, in certain writings from the late 1970s¹³: i.e. the idea that this decadence in no way heralds the emergence of a new category that will take the place of that of progress in human history. Therefore, asking which new category will succeed it is a lazy question: “history does not ‘proceed’ by replacing one category with another, which would somehow perform the same function as the previous one, but [develops] in a new situation”¹⁴. This reference to situational change, justified here by the fact that “not only historical answers change, but also questions” (non mutano solo le risposte storiche, ma anche le

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ See G. Anders, *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen, II. Über die Zerstörung des Lebens im Zeitalter der dritten industriellen Revolution* (1980), Beck, München 1992, the chapter „Die Technik als Subjekt der Geschichte“, pp. 271-298, dated 1978; see also the essay *Id.*, *Die Antiquiertheit der Geschichte*, in “Merkur” 383 (1980), pp. 339-345.

¹⁴ G. Anders, *Disposition*, cit., p. 175.

domande), will then take the more complete form of the “substitution of the subject of history” (sostituzione del soggetto della storia), that is, of an epochal change in the concrete conditions of existence in the world, such as to overturn the relationship between the human being, the traditional protagonist of the course of history, and that which he himself has produced, generated, and fostered along this course. Anders explains:

I am referring to the fact that we - and by ‘we’ I mean most of our contemporaries, including statesmen, who live in industrialized countries - *have renounced* (or have allowed ourselves to be influenced by this renunciation) *considering ourselves* (as nations, classes, or as humanity) *as the subjects of history*; we have abdicated (or we have allowed ourselves to be deposed) and *we have replaced ourselves with other subjects of history or, more accurately, with a single subject: technology*¹⁵

This fact, which is clearly not and cannot be evident to everyone to the same extent, at the same time justifies saying that both the human being - essentially ‘at the disposal’ of his excellent tools (and therefore himself transformed into an instrument) - and history, at least that conceived as human history, can be said to be obsolete. The new course of events must, in short, exhibit a strong discontinuity from the past, recognising that “*we are no longer permitted to say that, in our historical situation, technology is just one thing that exists*”, as if technology were a mere component of worldly reality, “*but that instead we must say that now, history unfolds in the situation of the world known as the world of ‘technology’*”¹⁶. This is an irreversible revolution, in line with the idea formulated at the time of the sketch on the concept of progress: the historical question has undoubtedly changed, since it is now the artificial universe that is advancing

¹⁵ G. Anders, *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen, II*, cit., 279; and Id., *Die Antiquiertheit der Geschichte*, cit., p. 339.

¹⁶ G. Anders, *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen, II*, cit., p. 9.

it, while the human being struggles in the increasingly improbable endeavour to answer it.

3. *The decline of morality*

But let us return to Anders' philosophical 'turning point' and his abandonment of research dedicated to the pure creative possibility of the human to focus instead on the present, immediate and available actuality of the concrete anthropological condition¹⁷. Moreover, is this not the first teaching of Husserlian phenomenology? If the motto to follow goes "to the things themselves!", the human being 'in the flesh' is the one we observe in the streets, in the factories, grappling with the profound socio-cultural changes of the time; it is man plunged into a world that is technological 'in itself' because - as discussed - technology does not dwell there as a mere thing among other things, but determines and manages the way of being and the essence of life on Earth. With this turning point, from the 1940s onwards, Anders' philosophical anthropology became increasingly 'moralistic'.

However, every turning point is the result of preparation and the history of Anders' case can be easily reconstructed. When asked about the issue in 1979 in an interview with Mathias Greffrat, Anders presents his own moralism as inevitable: "when you have done and seen the things I did and saw as a boy, it is difficult not to become moralistic"¹⁸. He recalls precise memories of when, during the First World War, having travelled to France as a member of a paramilitary student association, he had to witness the humiliating treatment of civilians and see the agony of mutilation

¹⁷ Of course, in Anders' conception human indeterminacy does not disappear, but remains in the background, for example in acting as a stage for the possibility of exercising feelings; see G. Anders, *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen, I: Über die Seele in Zeitalter der zweiten industriellen Revolution* (1956), Beck, München 1961, pp. 309-316.

¹⁸ G. Anders, *Wenn ich verzweifelt bin*, cit., p. 296.

in soldiers, and concludes: “if, coming from a peaceful family, one sees such spectacles, it is simply impossible not to become moralistic”¹⁹. The moving idealism of the adolescent is soon replaced by the firm awareness of the adult, overwhelmed by racial discrimination, forced into exile, fatigued by the uncertainties of precariousness and tormented by the obvious analogies between the development and establishment of the Nazi totalitarian regime and the technicalisation of life in the capitalist West. And while political totalitarianism seemed to have come to a standstill after the Second World War, technocratic totalitarianism was vigorously advancing and consolidating, eventually generating apocalyptic monsters.

Anders’ observation of a profound situational degeneration, in the context of a more intimate ‘anthropological perversion’²⁰, is accompanied by an awareness of the perhaps definitive obstruction of the conventional channel of morality. The moral attitude, which human beings have always attributed to themselves as a distinguishing feature of their gender, in the contemporary anomaly seems in fact to have slipped among the faculties of technological products and to have been definitively taken away from man: today’s market society provides for the reversal of the temporal and conceptual succession of the demand/supply relationship, which is why it is technology that determines the extent and manner of the demand for production (with all that this entails) and not the human being. The fact that the system advances the demand for consumption, determines its forms, times and rules, makes it clear that this substitution concerns all the requirements of the new subject of history, including the moral subject: “Today’s moral imperatives arise from technology and

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 297-298.

²⁰ Here, the terms seem to be interchanged. However, on a logical level, the situation is so severely compromised due to the perversion of the Promethean dimension (discrepancy, habituation, resignation, etc.).

render the moral postulates of our ancestors ridiculous – not only those of social ethics, but also those of personal ethics”²¹.

This new subject of history becomes the conductor of historical and economic processes thanks to the exponential growth it is accorded; a growth that is not merely quantitative but especially qualitative. Technology is not only fast, effective, and efficient; it is considered more valuable, ‘superior’ to human beings and their capabilities. Thus, while admitting – however indirectly or unconsciously – his own obsolescence, man tends to acknowledge technology’s specific ‘maturity’, making its claim to be his guide and model fully legitimate. “The moral requirement has also now shifted from man to machine”,²² says Anders and – like an infant facing the authority of an adult – the ‘will’ of technology takes on the sense of an ‘obligation’ for him. But if now the maxims recognised as morally valid come from machines – if, in short, the moral directives come from the technocratic system – the human being’s task remains that of ensuring the application of these directives, by offering, preparing and making himself available as an actuator of tools and consumer of products²³.

This provision forces him to adapt to the world of artifice by pushing the limits dictated to him by nature. Anders’ emphasis on this aspect of the human condition, in which the biological dimension clashes with the artificial, mainly focuses on the backwardness of the body. The poor, rigid and shoddy organic body, unaltered for millennia, with which man must contend, embodies all his ontological inferiority in the face of technology. Translated into the language of morality, this constancy of his assumes a decidedly negative meaning: the human body is “unfree, resistant and obtuse” (non-libero, refrattario e ottuso), and already from

²¹ G. Anders, *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen II*, cit., p. 17.

²² G. Anders, *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen I*, cit., p. 40.

²³ On the reduction to consumers see in particular G. Anders, *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen II*, cit., pp. 15-16.

this standpoint “*the subjects of freedom and lack of freedom are interchanged. The machines are free; man lacks freedom*”²⁴.

There is little use in those laborious attempts at “autosuperamento” (self-overcoming) put into practice by human engineering; they – argues Anders – resemble “*riti di iniziazione*”²⁵ (initiation rituals) which, far from leading the human out of a condition of minority, rather propose a curious reinterpretation of the idea of “*incompiutezza umana*” (human incompleteness): a nature in need of exercise, of “*educativo*” (educational) effort (or as Arnold Gehlen would perhaps suggest, of disciplining) in order to deal with the increasingly unequal relationship with the system of technology. This exhausting and futile attempt to move to a “*maturità macchinale*” (machinic maturity) takes on the appearance of an “*superamento dell’essere uomo*” (overcoming of the human being)²⁶. It takes the form of the aspiration (which in reality has become a stable condition) of a being that in the illusory attempt to free itself from the burdens of *natum esse* transforms itself into an entity ‘inferior to itself’: the climax of every possible dehumanisation.

And since he is not afraid of toil and torment, since he spares no spontaneity and ingenuity to eliminate the spontaneity and humanity of his performance; since he makes every effort to complete his reduction to a passive being, to a thing; since he hopes to force the threatening limits of his lack of freedom to finally acquire the *summum bonum* of total usefulness, the expression “*climax of dehumanisation*” is certainly not excessive²⁷.

4. Only moralism can (perhaps) save us

The entire moral dimension no longer concerns the behaviour of man ‘as man’; it does not investigate human norms and responsibilities towards the world, but – entirely entrusted to the machinic system – appears to be exclusively aimed at fostering a process of general annihilation. In other words, the human being no longer

²⁴ G. Anders, *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen. I*, cit., p. 33.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

²⁶ G. Anders, *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen I*, cit., p. 41.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

appears free, is no longer a judge, is no longer responsible; he has renounced being the yardstick for his own existence and is engaged in physical and psychic transformation in order to adapt as much as possible to the status of technology. Although aware of appearing to be an 'anthropological essentialist', Anders does not hesitate to declare this new chapter of the human condition 'unprecedented'.

But make no mistake, he clarifies, it is not the alteration as such that seems 'unprecedented' to us. Those who think they hear the hidden voice of a 'metaphysical conservative' in our arguments miss the point. There is no position more foreign to me than that of the "metaphysical ethicist", who considers 'good', 'an already prescribed *status quo*', that which is, because it is as it is (in reality or in imagination); for which, therefore, man's morality is framed within the confines of "what is as it is and must be", or which even derives its prescriptions and prohibitions from the said *status*²⁸.

Considering that there will still be attempts to root moral duty and human responsibility on exquisitely metaphysical speculative foundations, the clarification is not peculiar²⁹; in any case, it is clear to Anders that it is not a question of defending the status of the human essence: not only has he long since done away with recourse to categories held dear by past speculation, but, as moreover ratified by naturalistic evolutionism, there is nothing "cosmically illicit" in the transformation of species³⁰. It is therefore not the transcendence of the human limits imposed on us that is unprecedented and so radically new as to be disconcerting, but the failure to recognise their legitimacy; not the desire in itself for transformation or improvement, but the renunciation of the assumption of humanity as a yardstick for ourselves; and finally, not the transgression of some 'normality', but the

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

²⁹ And this in spite of his firm conviction: "it has long been the case that the game is lost for a 'metaphysical morality'" (è da gran tempo che per una 'morale metafisica' la partita è perduta). (ivi, p. 45). One only has to think of *The Imperative of Responsibility* by Hans Jonas, his peer and acquaintance, who in the late 1970s proposed a series of considerations rather similar to those that Anders had expounded many years earlier: H. Jonas, *Das Prinzip Verantwortung* (1979), Suhrkamp, Frankfurt a. M. 2003.

³⁰ G. Anders, *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen I*, cit., p. 46.

abandonment of the responsibility to establish it. In particular, the tools of dialogue and mutual communication have become useless: there is no longer a common space in which discussion can nourish self-awareness; the possibility of choosing a form and style of life is now purely illusory; information is totally entrusted to technological systems, removed from human control and its eventual purposes (today far more than Anders could have imagined when he wrote about it), because after all, within a technologically organised system, “the idea of the morality of action is replaced by that of the goodness of operation”³¹. In short, the compromise of morality is definitive.

On the other hand, the anthropological condition is progressively aggravated by the gap between the faculty to produce and the capacity to imagine one’s own products in action – the so-called ‘Promethean discrepancy’, which, as he points out in his *Thesen zum Atomzeitalter* “is not just one fact among others [...] and defines the moral situation of man today”³², still foolishly convinced that he is at the helm of the technological adventure. A situation of alienation and estrangement that reaches its climax with the construction and inevitable dropping of the atomic bomb. As we know, it is that ‘hobbyhorse’ that even his friends reproached Anders for, and which produced some of his most profound and ‘piercing’ reflections. The atomic monstrosity, with its supraliminal dimension³³, is not only a terrible symbol – the symbol of the enormity and overbearance of technology – but an ‘happening’ (or rather something that has happened): the event of the end of time, the coming of the Apocalypse. On the one hand, blindness to it, and on the other, the stupidity of a certain unconsciousness – that which refuses to even try to understand the drama of culpability in the ongoing destruction (in the manner of

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

³² G. Anders, *Thesen zum Atomzeitalter* (1960), in Id., *Die atomare Drohung*, Beck, München 1986, p. 96.

³³ G. Anders, *Wenn ich verzweifelt bin*, cit., pp. 317-318; Id., *Thesen zum Atomzeitalter*, cit., p. 96.

Adolf Eichmann³⁴) – abandon humanity in a vacuum. It is becoming increasingly clear that only a ‘moralistic’ attitude, i.e. a defective and irritating philosophical behaviour, capable of wrenching attention away from the gear of obviousness, of distracting by provoking, can perhaps hope to somehow make a dent in such a compromised situation.

Moralistic insistence becomes systematic and very well matched to the ‘occasional’ trend of his philosophical activism³⁵. Moral occasionalism lends itself better than any treatise to collaborating with the methodological stratagem of exaggeration, to operating in tune with expedients of amplification and distortion that also provoke emotional reactions; above all, it brings worldly reality (things themselves), and mainly those portions of reality to which the greatest urgency pertains – such as the existence of the atomic bomb – before philosophical reflection, forcing it as far as possible out of the academic classroom:

the discussion of certain subjects fails merely because it is addressed to the wrong audience. Since the bomb is not hanging over our universities, but over the heads of us all, it would not be appropriate to philosophise about the possible Apocalypse in a specialised language with a specialised group³⁶.

Matters of general interest must be in the public domain, even at the cost of renouncing the philosophical dignity to which relevant reflections legitimately aspire: we must not indulge in sophistry and succeed in doing philosophy ‘in popular terms’, finding an appropriate tone and manner:

one who is in danger cannot be presented with problems that are deliberately made difficult, but he must be addressed with words that may perhaps make him aware. At a time when doing so is *necessary*, the question of whether it is *possible* to do so is wrong because it is not permissible. There is no easy path – the moralist must find a way to sneak through the difficulties, i.e.

³⁴ See in this regard G. Anders, *Wir Eichmannsöhne. Offener Brief an Klaus Eichmann* (1964), Beck, München 2001.

³⁵ See G. Anders, *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen I*, cit., p. 8.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

he must find a language that is not only understood in certain buildings: in universities³⁷.

Various types of prose lend themselves to this purpose because reflection on existence, especially when in need of a surplus of emotion, can also find a good channel in fictional stories, open letters and poetry. From the 1950s onwards, political actions, conferences and publications frantically multiplied, in what Anders himself did not hesitate to call a “constant schizophrenia”³⁸ in thematic, stylistic and methodological terms. Alongside extensive studies and many journalistic articles, the *Diary from Hiroshima and Nagasaki* and the correspondence with Claude Eatherly were published, both dedicated to the nuclear question and clear evidence of how the ‘practical’ philosopher – in the dual sense of pragmatist and moralist – is able to make way for the effectiveness of direct and widespread forms of communication. The use of the admonition – “let your first waking thought be ‘Atom’” (il tuo primo pensiero dopo il risveglio sia ‘Atomo’)³⁹ –, the invitation to go to extremes – “have [the] courage to be afraid” (abbi [il] coraggio di avere paura)⁴⁰, and the recourse to a certain carefully resemanticised predicative method make his philosophical activism obstinate and authoritative. And although convinced that there is a slim chance of interrupting the ongoing process of annihilation, Anders states, “I believe that we have no other task than to at least warn men that they are carrying out activities *without a telos*, but that in the end a *telos* will result from them that was not their intention, namely universal destruction”⁴¹.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 238.

³⁸ Letter from G. Anders to H. Arendt dated 23 November 1955, in H. Arendt, G. Anders, *Schreib doch mal hard facts über dich*, cit., p. 60.

³⁹ G. Anders, *Off Limits für das Gewissen. Der Briefwechsel zwischen dem Hiroshimapiloten Claude Eatherly und Günther Anders* (1961), in Id., *Die atomare Drohung*, cit., p. 210 (the commandments from which the quotation is taken, were originally published in the “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” of 13 July 1957).

⁴⁰ G. Anders, *Thesen zum Athomzeitalter*, cit., p. 98.

⁴¹ G. Anders, *Brecht konnte mich nicht riechen. Interview mit Fritz J. Raddaz*, in „Die Zeit“ of 22 March 1985.

Not a path towards hope – which he is notoriously averse to – but an invitation to recover a portion of humanity by attempting an inner recomposition through awareness and untimely exercises in the extension of imaginative and sentimental performance: “if we do not want all to be lost, *today's decisive moral task is to develop the moral imagination*”⁴².

VALORI RASINI è professoressa ordinaria di Filosofia morale presso l'Università di Modena e Reggio Emilia

vallori.rasini@unimore.it

⁴² G. Anders, *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen I*, cit., p. 273.