

# A Study of Anders' Three Crises: From Machines to Human Shame

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**To cite this article:**

Filippo Ursitti. A Study of Anders' Three Crises: From Machines to Human Shame. *International Journal of Science, Technology and Society*. Vol. 10, No. 3, 2022, pp. 115-120. doi: 10.11648/j.ijsts.20221003.14

**Received:** May 18, 2022; **Accepted:** June 6, 2022; **Published:** June 14, 2022

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**Abstract:** This article aims at showing how the philosopher G. Anders develops his ontology of technology as described in his *Outdatedness of Mankind vol. I and II*. I argue that Anders' three crises are a fundamental interpretative key for understanding his philosophy of technology as well as his negative anthropology which should be inscribed within his idiosyncratic approach of a critical theory of technology. The article is structured in the following manner: first, an introduction which presents a super-structure in which become possible to collocate Anders' discussion on crisis and shame. Second, there will be a discussion on the role played by the machine in the Andersian philosophy of technology. Third, there will be an analysis on the mechanism through which radio and television alter the traditional anthropomorphic notion of 'experience' through the creation of phantoms and matrices constituting the crisis of needs. Fourth, there will be an exemplification of the consequences of humanity's progressive detachment from the awareness of its *praxis* through the Andersian notion of 'Promethean Gap'. Fifth, the conclusion will summarise the main results of this article depicting what Anders describes as the pathological status of humanity in the age of the machines, that is, humanity's shame before its own products.

**Keywords:** Philosophy of Technology, Critical Theory of Technology, *Techne*, Promethean Gap

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## 1. Introduction

The pathological is the essential condition of humanity, it constitutes its vital impulse toward every productive activity. Pride protects humanity from invasive and pathogen behaviours. Thus, what we call 'humiliations' are nothing but the consequences of a destabilising and de-centralising agent which undermines the subjective human pride. Every crisis of the subjectivity – understood as something which is not given but rather earned – is therefore deriving from a humiliation. The history of culture and consequently of modern humanity is arranged as an inexorable crumbling of the anthropocentric pride caused by demystifying instances. G. Anders traces a pseudo-historical trajectory of crises which began with the creation of the machines and end with humanity's shame before their products.

## 2. Anders' Machine

Even though the two volumes composing the

*Outdatedness of Mankind* were published twenty-five years apart from each other – the first text appeared in 1956 while the second one in 1980 – they were framed as one single comprehensive unit, which discusses a common theme, namely, *techne* as 'Subject of History'. The motives of Anders' research are rooted in the traumatic experience of the frightening development of the capitalist society and on the mass conformism growth after the Second World War [15].

In this post-war context Anders developed his theory of the '*Promethean Gap*' (*Gefalle*) and the everyday growing distance between humanity and the world of its objects. In other words: the idea that technology has made – in the last century – such a step forward with the 'automatisation' of the productive processes to render superfluous and outdated humanity and its faculties to the point that humans almost feel inadequate for the world [15].

For Anders the upsurge of technology to totalising power is recognised as the process of overturning the relations between humans and their needs (means and aims), since in this new era the means are the only source of justification of

humans' needs and objectives. This technological upturn was accomplished through three distinct phases – three 'revolutions' – through which Anders defines as the philosophical framework of human fate:

1. The first revolution coincides with the coming into existence of the machine.
2. The second revolution begins when the needs become commodities.
3. The third revolution corresponds with the substitution of humans with machines.

This first phase started as soon as the 'principle of the machine' – i.e., the fabrication of machines or at least of pieces of machines – was introduced [6]. This appears to be a decisive moment for Anders because it symbolises the substitution of the 'tool' with the 'machine', thus leading to the process of outdating (*Antiquierheit*) the 'human' in the sense that we handle a tool while the machine controls us [2].

If the tool (*Gerät*), intended as expansion or as extension of a human's limb, is under the complete will of its user that uses it for pursuing its own needs; then, the machine is presented as independent from human's will. The machine is capable of producing not simply commodities, but means of production which, independent from their usage, will be 'means' for continuing the production. By being 'consumed' they produce something new: the situation in which it becomes necessary to produce further machines [6]. The human presence in this entire process is minimal, people only participate at the beginning of this chain of production (as manual labourers) or at the end (as consumers) while the process seems to be guided by an immanent necessity which defines its aim, namely, the iteration of the automatisisation. Inspired by an electrical blackout occurred in the USA in 1965, Anders formulated his preliminary reflections on the nature of *techne* in general and of the machines in particular in ten theses:

1. The machines expand both qualitatively and quantitatively; every machine aims, for maintaining its best performance, for a condition where its indispensable external processes occur with the same mechanical precision of its internal one.
2. The expansionistic impulse of the machine is insatiable; therefore, it cannot be stopped.
3. The number of existing machines diminishes.
4. The machines degrade to parts of machines, cogs of mega-machines, hence they become ontologically inferior to the whole of which they become a part.
5. The machines become one unique machine which tends towards the abolition of plurality.
6. The bigger the mega-machine is, the more threatened are the single components.
7. In this interdependency between the mega-machine and the plurality of smaller machines grows the danger of failure or even of catastrophe, therefore, it is characteristic of this technological world to grant some degree of autonomy to its single components to avoid a disaster.
8. The machine must be able to preserve itself, in case of calamity, in one or more of its pieces.

9. One of the principal duties of the machines consists in regulating the growth of the mega-machine.

10. The *techne* is not an absolute evil. There is a *techne* which is indispensable for the development of vast areas of the world. Thus, one of the duties of philosophy of technology would be discovering the dialectical point where our 'yes' to the *techne* must change into scepticism or into a severe 'no'.

The expansion of the machine is not just a technical change; indeed, it involves a drastic modification in the society as a whole. In its impulse toward expansion the machine tends to include what it is not yet under its control so that energy, things, and people are just possible goods to be confiscated [6] and consumed.

All of whom become part of the mechanical process, they become means: the triumph of the world of the apparatuses consists in the fact that it has deleted the difference between the technical and the social forms, thus making them indistinguishable [6]. The reason behind Anders' usage of the word 'apparatus' (*Apparat*) relies on the fact that it can be used to identify both a physical-technical object – e.g., a computer – and the enterprise which 'contains' in itself humans and many singular machines which together act according to principles of technical character<sup>1</sup>.

The dream of the machines is to match with each other in increasing proportions so that they can reach an 'ideal state' of existence in one perfect mega-machine which contains in and surpasses all the apparatuses. But this condition should not be confused with what we usually refer to as 'interdependency of the production' which, in other words, means that all the products have mutual relations with each other. The high degree of specialisation and differentiation of the singular technical functions, by making dependent the functioning of one product to the utilisation of another one, imposes the command that every commodity once bought, demands the purchase of other commodities; each one is thirsty for another one [5].

This first model of the expansion of the machine was later substituted by Anders with the idea of *Volks-gemeinschaft*, 'the community of the apparatuses' [6], where the components of the machine have only one objective: the conquest of the totality, leading to a situation where nothing would be outside *techne*'s power [6]. The world as a machine is the truly techno-totalitarian condition towards which we are going [6], a condition where 'technique', 'world', or 'society' are just different names for the same thing [11]<sup>2</sup>.

The revolution represented by the substitution of the tool for the machine is not a mere consequence of the history of

1 To the *techne* do not belong only the 'apparatuses' (*apparathafte Dinge*), i.e. the machines together with their products and the effects produced by them. To the *techne* belongs the enterprise, in which we are utilised, since we work there as instrumental parts (Anders, 1981, p. 180).

2 The world of the apparatuses does not only constitute itself through the model of the *Volks-gemeinschaft*, in fact, *mutatis mutandis*, the latter reproduces the former. Example par excellence is the National Socialism with its total functionalisation (*Indienstnahme*) of the individual who was technically produced: in a way in 1933 the radio won [the elections] (Anders, 2007, p. 255).

production, but something concerning the totality of the human world, which now appears as the world of the apparatuses:

Today singular machines do not exist anymore. The totality is the true machine. Every single one of them is a part, a screw, a cog of the bigger one; a piece which in part satisfies the need for other machines and at the same time imposes the need for others. It would make no sense at all, to admit that this system of apparatuses, this macro-apparatus, is a 'means' that is at our disposal for freely achieving our objectives. The system of apparatuses is our world, and 'world' means something different from 'means', it belongs to a different category [5].

In this world, from which is impossible to escape, humans lose their freedom and surrender it to their objects. What is changing us, by shaping and deforming us, is not just the objects mediated by the 'means', but the means themselves which determine the usage of machines, which consequently change us.

The things produced nowadays are maxims turned into things and modes of repressive usage which tell a story of an inverted domination where humans lose their control over the world that they have created and where they are not able to regain access to the processes that they once started. This 'emancipation of the objects' is carried out in a way in which the action stolen from humanity is given to the machines, which, therefore, represent the 'incarnated making' (*inkarniertes Handeln*) becoming 'pseudo-people' (*Pseudo-Personen*) [4]. The indistinguishable role of the machine from its mode of usage is cleverly rendered by Anders with the equation '*Habere=adhibere*', i.e., 'to have' equals 'to use'.

With this progressive growth of autonomy on behalf of the *techne* corresponds the consequential reification of humankind. Humans lose their central role of producers (*homo faber*) and their activities terminate at the extremes of the mechanical production: at the beginning as inventors or manual labourers and at the end as consumers. Their natural 'deficiency' and their being anthropologically determined by their needs, on one hand, and their adaptability and plasticity, on the other hand, are both utilised by the industry for reiterating the consumption, to which humans are forced through the intrinsic power of the commodities. The consumeristic terror is the terror of the use. Our universe of apparatuses transforms us into beings that are coerced to use [6].

Therefore, it is not unsatisfied needs which push individuals towards the commodities but rather the latter that produces the former: we do not end up having what we have the need for, but we end up with feeling the need for what we have; the needs depend, for their being, on the existence of the commodities. The request becomes a product of the offer, the needs conform to the products so that at the end they are never other than the footprints and the reproductions of the needs of the commodities [5] which the apparatus uses to sustain itself.

The industry, which needs to equalise the hunger of the commodities as the hunger for the commodities, is called advertisement. Advertisement is a means of propaganda produced for the sole objective of producing the needs of

products which need us since, by liquidating these products, humans guarantee the continuation of the production of the commodities themselves [6]. On one hand, the advertisement grants the world of the technical products an ontological status: what irradiates a bigger attraction and power to exhibit itself in the *bellum omnium contra omnes* is valued and recognised as 'being' [6]. On the other hand, the advertisement is a plea for destruction. Through advertisement the consumers are incited to 'ruthlessness', to substitute their old commodities with newer and more fashionable versions of them. Each advertisement is a call for annihilation presented as a functional imperative of the technical apparatus which has repercussions on our lives.

The ideal of the industry is that to imitate the method applied to the industry of consumption, that is to render as small as possible the gap between the production and the liquidation of the commodity [6]. Anders, describes this ideal condition by using the fairy-tale image of the 'The Land of Cockaigne' [9]<sup>3</sup>, a world where the 'usage' does not exist anymore, only the consumption remains untouched; a world where the industry, in its complex, is transformed into one industry comprehending all the products of consumption [6]. The immanent element of destruction contained in the production leads Anders to label the ontology of the industrial era as a negative ontology, where the 'fluidification' of the object is as much characteristic as the reification of the non-objective [6]. Anders here recalls the well-known idea of the 'planned obsolescence', the principle according to which goods are produced with an artificially limited useful life after which they become obsolete. In this sense, both objects and humans are a-historic, in the sense that they neither come from the past nor are built-in for the future, but they only live for the present [6]. The idea of property is liquidated with the objects whose stability is substituted by the alternation of having and not-having [6].

In 'the Land of Cockaigne' the immediacy once lost after Adam and Eve were expelled by the Eden is restored [6], this is the dream of the *techne*. Even though its mediation character is incontestable, the apparatus exists to fulfil a desire, that is, its reducing to a minimum time and space. The time and the space between the desire and its realisation are eliminated by the immediate realisation of the desire. Time and space appear as obstacles if they are measured by the Cockaigne's standard; the battle against them is the secret motto of this epoch: the abolition of time is the dream of our time. The society without time and space (rather than without classes) is tomorrow's hope [6].

In the world dominated by the *techne* humanity loses the sense of time and the possibility of making experience. The lack of the temporality consists in the 'deficiency' of our being humans: the time exists only because we are biological beings; because we never have what we should actually have; because we constantly need to obtain what is necessary.

3 "An imaginary place of extreme luxury and ease where physical comforts and pleasures are always immediately at hand and where the harshness of [...] life does not exist" Chisholm, H., Cockaigne, Land of. Encyclopaedia Britannica. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1911) p. 622.

Being-in-time means existing in the mode of not-having or the mode of achieving the *desiderata* [6].

But if the experience is the way in which humanity can *a posteriori* compensate for its alienation from the world, then, it is the mediation form that humanity uses to experience the objective form of the world which the *techne* impedes and precludes. This is particularly clear in the entertainment industry where the world is 'served' to us in its *liquid state*. At times it is not even served, but rather provided in a totally direct mode to be immediately *used* and *consumed*; by being liquid, the *commodity* is, in the act of its consumption, *liquidated* [6]<sup>4</sup>. In both radio and television, the objective of our modern efforts seems completed, because in each of them the reception of what is transmitted happens in the same moment in which the broadcast begins [6]. Thus, space and time are replaced by the simultaneity of the events. There is not a 'there' anymore; everything is here. Yet, if everything is here, there is no space [3].

### 3. The Crisis of Needs

In relation to the second revolution, thus the creation of needs, Anders wrote an article titled *Spuk im Radio* published in 1930 in the magazine *Anbruch* edited by T. W. Adorno. In this article Anders maintained that the radio, by allowing reproductions of the same musical peace to multiply simultaneously in different places, destroyed the unity and the essence of the artwork. Anders revealed in this short analysis his opinion regarding the technical means: it is extremely strange and in need of an interpretation for the fact that the *techne* can create phantoms (*akzidentiell Spuk*) [7]. An example of phantom, given by Anders in his article *Spuk im Radio*, was that of radio-reproduced music. Anders notes the ubiquity of such music that could uninterruptedly continue even when he turned the radio off, because it was still broadcast from the radios of his neighbours.

Anders notes that no means is only a means [5]. This led to the conclusion that the effective critiques of the social existent status could be seriously addressed only when messages, mediums, contents, and forms are questioned. This is particularly true for the mass media of radio and television. They represent a new stage in the mass consumption compared to the previous 'media' (cinema and theatre) where the entertainment is 'consumed' collectively or at least together by a crowd truly accumulated. For radio and television, the mass product is not only fabricated for the mass, but in mass [6]. The mass of individuals is here substituted by the massification of the individuals; the true revolutionary event of our time is the fact that the mass still represents only a quality of the singular and therefore it must not be considered an active subject of history [6].

The principal consequence of radio and television is the transformation of the public in mass. If the former, because

of its characteristics (the physical distance, the separation, and the attentive listening), presents itself as better equipped against the dangers of conformism and manipulation; then the latter, by definition, has always had negative meanings (in it the individual loses its characteristics: reason, control over its passions, and independence of judgment). In attributing to the public the characteristics of the mass, Anders wants to highlight an intrinsic effect of the mass media themselves. Since radio and television are characterised by the 'privacy of the reception' they seem to realise the idea of a direct exposition of the individual to the action of the media. It is as if the means of mass communication can arrive directly to the singular individuals composing the (mass) public and turn them into slaves. The TV devices, according to Anders, deprive their consumers of the word. They rob them of their faculty to express themselves, of the occasion and of the will to speak [5], making them *infantile* in its etymological meaning: minors who do not speak [5].

With the loss of the language humans lose their capacity to make experience. This is the incredible power brought by the radio and the television: that events themselves, not only the news about them, can be contemporaneously transmitted in every corner of the world in the form of broadcast. The world 'comes to us' and we do not have the need to explore it, thus making unnecessary what, until yesterday, we called *experience* [5].

Another consequence of this analysis is the 'familiarisation of the world', meaning that people, things, happenings, and alien situations are presented to us as familiar facts, in a familiarised condition [5]. While alienation means that what is close appears to be distant, in familiarisation everything becomes uniform and close to us. We are transformed, as spectators, in gaffers of the globe and of the universe [5]. The motive of this phenomenon is individuated in the 'character of commodity of all phenomena', because: 1) everything which turns into commodity becomes alienated and 2) every commodity must change into something familiar [5]<sup>5</sup>. The principal objective of the familiarisation consists in the alienation itself, in hiding the causes and the symptoms of the alienation. *Techne* takes from humanity its capacity to realise that it has been estranged from the world. Both familiarisation and alienation are two sides of the same coin: they both lead to the neutralisation of every event [1] which is presented on the screen<sup>6</sup>.

The Television broadcast defines in a new manner the relationship between humanity and reality by creating a 'new medial situation' (*neue mediale Situation*), in which the singularity consists in its *ontological ambiguity*. The broadcast events are at the same time present and absent, real and apparent, they both are and are not: they are phantoms [5]. The basic principle of the transmission is to deliver what is simply simultaneous and to make it appear as a genuine

<sup>4</sup> It is for this reason that nowadays we find ourselves in a historic phase where the mode of sensorial reception is neither, as in the Greek tradition the seeing; nor, as in the Jewish-Christian one, the hearing, but rather the eating. See, Anders, G., *L'Uomo e Antiquato vol. II*, (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2007), pp. 235, 246.

<sup>5</sup> See Schraube, E. *Auf der Spuren der Dinge. Psychologie in einer Welt der Technik*, (Hamburg Argument, 1998), p. 127.

<sup>6</sup> Adorno wrote in *Minima Moralia*, "estrangement shows itself precisely in the elimination of distance between people" (Adorno, 1978, p. 41).

presence [5]. The showed images are phantoms [13] because neither are they images in the traditional sense, nor do they possess any materiality inasmuch as they are forms presented as objects [5]<sup>7</sup>. This causes, on one hand, the attenuation of the perception of the difference between reality and fiction in the spectator; on the other hand, the elusive character of the transmissions produces the transformation of our way of making experience. The broadcasts put the receiver *a priori* in a condition in which the difference between direct experience and indirect information is obliterated [5]. The broadcast object appears on the television screen in its reality but not in the form of relation such as that of a news about itself. And yet, this reality has the same ontological status of a news – i.e., an interpreted reality and not reality itself. This happens because the ‘news’ is a judgment or a proposition with a double structure (Subject S and Predicate P), which affirms something about an absent object – e.g., the wallet is full. But this ‘news’ does not provide the spectator with either the object itself or its image (the full wallet), but with ‘something about it’. Of this ‘something’ the important and truly meaningful aspect for the S is P because the predicate allows the subject to decide how to behave. Inasmuch as the predicate makes possible to dispose of something which is absent, of including it in the practical dispositions of the subject, the news is a form of freedom. But since it communicates only a part of the absent object underlining only one aspect of it the news is a form of unfreedom because it is a partial supply, it is a prejudice already [5], and as such it limits the addressee, dispossessing the subject of its autonomy.

In the case of the radio the distinction between the mediated learning (through news) and the immediate learning (through the senses) is clear, but in the television's case such distinction is completely obliterated because it becomes difficult to say whether we are in front of a thing or of a fact [5]. The ontological ‘doubleness’ of the television relies on 1) its elusiveness which causes the images of the television to eliminate the difference between things and news and on 2) its presenting itself as immediate, because it deceives us pretending to be a fact while it is a preselected aspect of a possible fact and a news to persuade the consumer that it has no intention to persuade him. The usage of the recording camera, the choice of the images, their editing, and in general every passage of a broadcast event constitutes already a choice presented only from one side and never in its totality. Hence, the television exonerates the spectator from giving her own judgment, and as soon as it frees her from the necessity of gaining a direct experience, it forces her to accept as reality the pre-formed judgment. The TV deprives the spectator of her independence and autonomy of thought.

The broadcasts not only condition the way in which the subject makes experience, but they reverberate on reality itself, on which they exercise a truly performative effect. The relation between reality and its transmitted form is

characterised by the fact that the happening acquires more social importance in its reproduced form than in its original [5], forcing the original to conform itself to its reproduction overturning the difference between reality and fiction. It is not the reality to determine the simulation of the TV transmission, but the technical possibilities to determine the reality [10].

For understanding this process Anders goes back to the specific relation between model and reproduced commodity: on one hand, ‘being’ means plurality. On the other hand, the real must be adequate to its eventual reproductions, it must be transformed according to the copy of its reproductions. Given these circumstances, it is difficult to judge where the reality ends and the game starts [5], as often happens in the case of sports events<sup>8</sup>.

Since there is no image which does not act as a model, our world is grounded on the images of itself. The world becomes its own inverted imitation. The role played by the matrix is twofold: 1) it shapes the actual events and 2) it outlines the ‘soul’ of the consumers. From this coincidence between the structure of reality and subject – both preventively shaped – derives dire consequences which determine the character of our epoch. A vicious circle is created in which the resistance between humans and world is vehemently eliminated.

In this way the resistance that the humanity-world relation was grounded on vanishes, thus causing the world to lose its objective character. In its disappearing the world becomes an ‘edible commodity’, a ‘Land of Cockaigne’. The mutual relationship humanity-world, and *vice versa* world-humanity, is a matter involving two pre-formed entities. This is a back-and-forth process between a reality shaped by a matrix and a consumer structured by a matrix; it is a spectral affair [5].

Referring to the unreality of the world which now becomes reality, Anders affirms that the totality is less true than the entirety of its partial truths, in other words: the falsity is the whole, and only the whole [5]. With this statement Anders aims at criticising the television in its entirety, because it constitutes a new relation of humanity with the world [12]. Even if each broadcast would be transmitted according to the truth, the fact that many real things cannot be shown might allow the broadcast to turn them in the totality of an ‘already-made’ world and the consumer of such totality in an ‘already-made’ man [5].

Thus, the totality of the broadcasts produces a distorted picture of the world, a ‘pseudo-model’ of the world [16], which becomes the sole condition of the experience. If the world is presented to the mass-man as a totality of fixed schemes, of stereotyped forms of perception and behaviour, the world risks to become its own representation. The epochal character of this transformation relies on its precise negation of the human specificity. The matrix is, therefore, the fundamental character of the modern man. The ‘end of

<sup>7</sup> Anders has anticipated that form of ambiguous perception of the reality, which is now called ‘virtuality’ (Liessmann, 2002, pp. 84-85).

<sup>8</sup> Anders expresses that phenomenon, according to which, the happening obtains the attention and therefore the reality only through the mass medias, and to these has to preventively conform.

the ideologies' consists today in the fact that instead of lies about the world we have a falsified world.

## 4. The Promethean Gap

This progressive detachment of humanity from the awareness of its praxis is the core of what Anders calls 'Promethean Gap'. With this notion Anders believes of having characterised the *conditio humana* of our time and of all the ulterior epochs [8]. With the Promethean Gap Anders refers to, first, the discrepancy between the productive ability (*Herstellen*) of humanity and its capacity of imagining (*Vorstellen*) the consequences of its own producing. Second, the everyday growing a-synchronisation between humanity and the world of its products and the incapacity of our soul of remaining up to date with our production which makes humanity outdated, a prehistoric species<sup>9</sup>. It is an overturning of Platonism and the result of a dialectical process in which the imagining loses its anticipating character and trudges behind the produced objects while the producing is emancipating itself from the guiding image of the representation positing it in front of the *fait accompli*.

The term '*Vorstellen*' loses, in this particular case, its own reason because its prefix '*vor*' which means a planning anticipation proceeding the realisation of a product is now liquidated. We face an inverted-platonic situation in which the realised objects come before their *eidōs*, they appear before they are imagined in their own magnitude and in their consequences. Hence, the person who used to 'imagine' becomes now the person who 'registers' because she cannot cognitively 'keep up' with what she has done and with the incalculable power that she has gained through her *praxis*. Thus, the fundamental dilemma of our epoch: we are inferior to ourselves and we are incapable of making an image of what we have done. In this sense we are 'inverted utopians', while the utopians could not produce what they imagine, we cannot imagine what we produce [4]. Anders calls this gap 'Promethean' because we are not good enough for the Prometheus within ourselves [5]. In this way Anders overturns the revolutionary emancipatory connotation of the mythical Titan. Prometheus, lauded by Goethe in a hymn and considered "the noblest of the saints in the calendar of philosophy" [14] by Marx, has truly freed humanity with his gift (the fire, prefiguration of the *techne*) but he chained it to a new servitude, that one of the products.

In the preindustrial era the gap between producing and imagining was imperceptible, worthless and harmless, today that is not the case anymore. We cannot connect today's *Vorstellen* to yesterday's emotional level to obtain bigger and more complex sets of emotions as today's scientists base their discoveries on yesterday's *Herstellen*. Through the technological revolution, the distance between humanity's imaginative faculty and its objects' performances has dramatically increased. What should be set in motion today is

not a campaign claiming humanity's omnipotence and omniscience, but, on the contrary, a movement that realises that *Vorstellen*-wise we are inferior to ourselves.

## 5. Conclusion

Anders' three crises are a means to describe the modern human condition epitomized by the discrepancy between the productive ability of humanity and its capacity of imagining the consequences of its own producing. In this sense, what Anders describes as the pathological status of humanity in the age of the machines is the fact that humanity is affected by a Promethean shame which causes it to give to its products its former status of subject of history. The three crises aim at portraying humanity as something merely co-historical.

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<sup>9</sup> As a matter of fact, the invention of the atomic bomb preceded the creation of the anti-nuclear movement as a war precedes its war crime tribunal.