



**“The moral of the story hovered in the air. And Gabo and Gia’s parents learned to trust their children, because education is different from surveillance!”**

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# The Translators

“The TechnOLOGY Can Just Be a Friend”

**We do not yet have children’s stories interacting with and confronting the promises and illusions of emergent technologies that reinforce human values such as autonomy, responsibility, freedom, creativity, empathy, and collaboration.**

## INTRODUCTION

The text “The Translators” is made up of short stories that reveal how many activities that were once difficult or time consuming have become easier, requiring less effort and reflection. What is being lost in this development is the personal agency and sense of fulfillment and belonging that comes from acting with talent and intentionality in the world. When human beings behave like simple machines,

they can, in principle, be replaced by them without anything significant being lost in translation. In the story, people have dealt with this issue by creating a museum so that certain values do not get lost. There, children engage in a reflection exercise on their role in the world and on what sets humans apart from machines. This story shows that education is different from surveillance and that so-called “drone

parenting” (total surveillance) creates a situation in which there is no real parent-child connection and takes away the child’s capacity to make choices and be responsible. In the end, it is a dehumanization driven by the ethos of consumption, in many cases resulting in the creation of lifelong consumers and in private companies building brand loyalty among impressionable young people. Educators, parents, and children should pay attention to the hidden costs of such arrangements. In addition, the text addresses issues related to the rampant consumption of antidepressants in our society. It alerts the reader to the addiction to games and screens that imprisons many children, and about the issue of digital nudges and environmental data capture.

The motivation behind the stories is that we lack children’s stories that

serve as a warning and urge them to critically rethink this reality. These stories should reinforce human values such as autonomy, responsibility, freedom, creativity, empathy, collaboration, and imagination, and at the same time confront readers with the potentialities, dangers, promises and illusions of technological devices. They are needed to stimulate and promote awareness of what really matters for an authentically dignified human life.

In this context, this work is a utopia, because it is the human being who must take control and guide the solution with creative and original ideas. The essence of human beings is not translatable into machine language. Much is said about digital literacy but not enough about ethics in the technological age and not enough in accessible language.

## I – AT THE MUSEUM

**T**hey translated human messages into machine language—{01110101 01110100 01101111 01110000 01101001 01100001}<sup>1</sup>. The tour was taking place in a museum. In a museum of sensations, with a group composed of children and miniature robots.

What the children dreamed of the most was to be as fast and full of information as the robots. What the little robots wanted was to be as smart as the children and to feel the sensations that the children felt. Heat and cold in body and soul, that is, more than sensations, emotions. To feel the heat that warms the heart with care and perhaps even the cold of an

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<sup>1</sup> Translates to *utopia*; and {01010111 01101000 01100001 01110100 00100000 01100100 01101111 01100101 01110011 00100000 01101001 01110100 00100000 01101101 01100101 01100001 01101110 00100000 01110100 01101111 00100000 01100010 01100101 00100000 01101000 01110101 01101101 01100001 01101110 00111111}, which translates to *What does it mean to be human?*

argument. They wanted everything that brought them closer to the humans, their friends. They even craved the feeling of concern that humans spoke of so much.

They were visiting the museum for this, but in reality it had been designed so that the children of the technological era, of the digital post-revolution, did not lose touch with basic human values and knew to appreciate and value the simpler and trivial circumstances of everyday human life, which, paradoxically, is what makes us human. There was a space called “grandma’s kitchen”, recreating the time when families would cook their meals at home, together, with food made using a device called the “stove.” The “household appliance” was exhibited so that everyone could know. The children were amazed at how families had time to do all of this at home together!

They had never seen anything so impressive! The place smelled so good ... sweet, with hot smoke in the air. At that moment, they had the opportunity to taste the long-anticipated “grandma’s cake,” almost homemade, the museum’s famous attraction, which was accompanied by an affectionate hug from a white-haired lady. Although the hug made them feel good, they thought this kind of physical contact did not make any sense. The visit continued.

The museum was a world enchanted with aromas, flavors, and affection. The smell of cut grass, clay after rain, rust, flowers with quite peculiar scents, the smell of wet dogs too. The museum was sensory and was thought to promote empathy, with the possibility of accessing distinct realities around the world.

There was a projection room where you could watch recordings from public cameras around the world; all you had to do was choose the country and the desired social context. The kids called the robots, which were outside recharging their batteries with solar energy, to watch the projections. All the robots’ coatings were made with micro solar panels, so they just needed to be exposed to the sun to be 100% recharged. The children envied this ability, because they had to sleep all night to recharge their batteries, and sometimes that was not enough ... they lost at least eight hours sleeping that they could spend playing! The robots heard the conversation and noted that during sleep it was possible to dream. This incredible capacity still had no translation!

They went directly to the session. After only a few minutes, the robots managed to feel something typically human; they felt what they could define as sadness, a deep pain, when they saw the inequality of the world, what life is like for sick people and children, for abandoned people, for people in conflict, for people who need to flee from where they live, where

they were born and raised, and go to places unknown, where they are often not well received, for people suffering from uncontrolled emotions ...

This journey was so shocking that the robots almost crashed; they were a little disbelieving of the truth of it all and decided to surprise the children. Ologgy, who was the group's leading robot and also the best translator, had a brilliant idea (in her own words). She invited her friends to embark on a balloon ride around the world. "To see more beautiful things", she said.

The idea was to fly over the world in a supersonic balloon equipped with *GPS* and everything else, übermodern. And the best thing was that the robots did not have to turn eighteen to be able to drive ... In fact, the eighteen years in robot years was about 120 human years and Ologgy wanted to show the children reality live and in color, to show other landscapes, places that they did not even dream existed. A quick adventure to present the beauty of the planet.

To begin with, they flew over an all-white place; there was nothing, only white mountains. They came closer and saw that there were only white mountains of ice. It looked like a giant refrigerator. The children, although enthusiastic, soon asked to leave, because it was very cold, almost freezing.

From the North Pole, they flew and flew and came to a place of sand, with mountains of sand, where they also saw no one, but where it was very hot, a scorching heat; it looked like a giant greenhouse, but without any plants. They were in the middle of a desert in Africa.

They left immediately and went to an all-green place, with hills and green fields that stretched until you could no longer see them, where there were many birds of all colors, horses, cows, sheep; this time, the image seemed more familiar, since they were in the south of South America, where they came from and knew very well. They passed through the Amazon forest, where, at close quarters, they saw very tall trees, rivers, indigenous tribes, giant plants, and insects. They were enchanted by the diversity of nature! They traveled again and stopped in a place full of blue mountains; indeed, as they approached, they saw that it was the sea. The ocean seemed full of giant wave-waterfalls, with intense movements that were very different from the calm beaches they knew.

At that moment, Ologgy asked the children if they were enjoying the ride and all them, without blinking, exclaimed that the world was very colorful and different. There were several worlds in one. They passed through cities, so large and chaotic, and villages, so small and bucolic, on all continents. They saw people with the most diverse realities, cultures, customs.

On that day, besides traveling through different landscapes, the children went on an inner journey through feelings and emotions, had unknown experiences of the soul, from anguish to ecstasy, from revolt to hope, as

they found places that emanated affection, joy, love, and compassion. Rich people and poor people. People rich and sad, humble and satisfied, rich and satisfied, poor and bored, realities of suffering and of abundance, prosperous and inhospitable places. It was an intense and revealing ride.

So, the kids asked to come back because they were homesick. The robots did not understand what it meant to miss someone or something. The children tried to explain that it happens when you miss someone a lot, others said that it happens when someone needs something and it is not there. The robots were quite confused and could not translate its meaning into codes. They needed to train more. Even Ologgy, ever so brilliant, could not understand all that.

The children returned home with a lot of unresolved questions and thoughts and asked their parents: Who chooses where we are going to be born? Why are there people born in the desert, in the middle of a war, on the street?

They saw so many realities that, finally, they thanked the world where they lived, their world, as they said affectionately. Now they really knew that they should make a difference, that they had a meaningful mission in this life.

Each human being is unique and singular, not made in a production line, and here lies the answer to the most fundamental question: Why were we born where we were born?

## II – THE ANGELS

However, two of the children in that group, Gabo and Gia, went home dissatisfied. How could they have such an important mission if they had nothing special? Nothing particularly unique?

They were twins; they had the same father and the same mother. They celebrated on the same day, that is, they did not even have a special day just to be remembered and celebrated. They did everything together. They went to school together, they were in the same class, they had the same teachers, very similar physical characteristics. What could be unique in their lives?

As always, they celebrated their birthday together and received only one gift. When they opened the package, they thought it might be a replica of Ologgy, the museum's little robot, and they were even excited, but they soon realized that it was nothing like it. In fact, the present was a doll that had only recently come to the market.

At least the gift was something very recent, almost experimental; a company had developed the *suprassumo* of security for children. They had

put guardian angels on the market “*to take care of your precious,*” said the brand’s (uncreative) slogan.

Gabo and Gia received the “angel” as a gift. And indeed, it had wings, a halo, curly hair, white clothing and an angelic face! It was the perfect doll! As soon as the product was launched, their father wanted to try out the most innovative and sensational technology of the moment: angels, configured to the taste of the customer. He bought one for each of his children for their birthday.

The angel’s promise was that the parents could accompany and see their children’s routines, day and night. It allowed them to know exactly where and who they were with and even what they were talking about. They would not yet have the ability to read thoughts, but they could already recognize feelings—sadness, joy, boredom, euphoria, anger. And the best thing was that the little angels really flew and stayed close to the children, taking care of everything! Total relief for parents was the brand’s great promise.

In fact, they were drones with a silicone coating and angel wings, a phenomenal idea, since they did not require chips to be placed in the children; some parents had begun to do so, but many had refused. Gabo did not like the present at all. It was suspect, he replied, but his parents were categorical: “The world can be a very dangerous place, and from now on you only leave home with your guardian angel!”

Upon receiving her “angel” and seeing her parent’s reaction, Gia dared not complain, nor was she even excited about the present. She tried to ignore it, though the constant presence of the intruder greatly disturbed her.

Gabo did everything. He tried to break the angel, to run away from the angel, to hide from the angel—but the little robot, one had to admit, had been well made. As the days went by, Gabo was still suspicious of the idea, but after a while he did not feel so strange; after all, all of his friends at school already had a little angel of their own.

The angels were selling well, which fueled competition, and another company launched a new version of the toy. With the upload of this new version, the little angel could ... SPEAK! Amazing!!!

The children could ask the angel what they wanted, and the angel, in its answer, was programmed to follow the motto: “Little angel, my little friend, always lead me on the path of good!”. That is absolute security! Now, really, the parents were at peace; their children were protected, because this prototype guru could even dissuade the little ones from possible mischief and “dangerous” ideas.

Gabo was disgusted and exploded: “What is this! It’s not possible to live being monitored!” He complained and cried, but the parents interpreted it



as yet another attempt to conceal the angel's valuable help and were quick to update the application.

Now the angels were speaking, explaining, singing. The schools had to adapt and forbid the angels from entering during exams to avoid new forms of technological "cheating." At the parent-teacher meeting, some families expressed deep concerns about these restrictions on monitoring, but they were soon reassured by other parents, who recalled that there were cameras at school in case of any problems.

Gabo could not tolerate it; he could not bear the presence of an angel who followed him into the bathroom. The worst thing was that his friends had started to really like the angels. Strange!

His friends' angels, duly updated to the latest version 5.0, had presented them with something magical, which made them very happy and content, much better than any virtual reality game. Gabo and Gia's angels were outdated, as their parents had not yet had time to download the latest version. This situation was already causing their angels to have an inferiority complex. They began to be affected by the frequencies of the others, a circumstance still under study, because it had not been planned by the programmers. So, one fine day, when the whole class had left the school, escorted by their angels, and Gabo's angel did not know the way to find the group in the enchanted place that they were going to, Gabo, in his eagerness to tell his father that his angel was of no use, resolved to follow his hidden friends, and the lost angel just watched.

On the first day, they could not make it to the end of the road, and Gabo decided to ask for help from his sister, who was always very ingenious and full of great ideas. She had saved him many times and he had always wondered what he would be without her help!!! The next day, they went to find out what their friends were doing and where they were, since they had not revealed the place, which, they claimed, was the angel's secret. At this point, the parents, convinced that their children were well taken care of and safe, were very relaxed and did not even look at the angels' cameras or go to the viewing platforms anymore, because if everything was recorded, it must be all right.

The company was making a lot of money, and every day it attracted more fans and won over more customers. It already intended to launch other "facilities," whose purpose would be to spare parents the need to give those great domestic sermons, the weariness of the argument, the arduous task of raising adolescents. Technology was advancing.

It was then that Gabo and Gia—who dubbed their mission "The adventures of Gabo and Gia"—followed their friends along a parallel path before encountering a very high wall that prevented them from proceeding.

Gia, very clever, already knew how to find out everything and decided to call Ologgy for help in the mission. Ologgy was always ready for all adventures. Gia mentally tuned into Ologgy's frequencies and connected with her friend as if on a radio system.

Ologgy quickly appeared, because she had a very special transport system. And Gabo and Gia excitedly explained what was happening. Ologgy passed over the wall and the very curious angels followed her. On the way back, Ologgy said their friends were sitting around in a circle and that their angels were carrying brightly colored receptacles with smoke, all you had to do was to inhale it and everyone became static and smiling.

So, when they got home, Gabo and Gia asked the parents to sit and watch the recording of their angels. The astonished parents could hardly believe what they saw. A circle of hypnotized children who looked like zombies. They could not understand what was happening, so confident were they in the system.

Gabo and Gia, always alert and smart, knew that the situation was very suspicious and that the angels could not possibly think that the situation was attractive; after all, using drugs never took anyone anywhere! And that despite the laughter and the apparent joy, everyone was in fact being imprisoned. The new version of the angel had been invaded by *malware* from hackers acting in the service of traffickers. With great courage, they were able to free their friends and prevent the company from continuing to manufacture such angels. The global "super-technology export plan" was prevented.

Gabo and Gia were very happy and relieved to free the world from the angels who had flown over the children's heads. But the best thing was that Gabo and Gia were able to identify their unique characteristics and, with the help of their friend Ologgy, their success was complete. Unity and collaboration build and strengthen actions.

The moral of the story hovered in the air. And Gabo and Gia's parents learned to trust their children, because education is different from surveillance!

### III – FAKE LOVE

Gabo and Gia were quiet in the living room, without the fake angels around, when Ologgy fell from the ceiling among them. They barely had time to ask what had been happening; they saw that she was sad. Ologgy had not appeared for a long time.

This time, it was Ologgy who was coming in search of her friends' help as she had discovered that an industry had begun to sell "love in pills." She had seen the ad: *"To make a life to be savored intensely, but in small doses, to heal the evils of the soul."*

Ologgy had learned on the day of the visit to the museum that love was priceless, so she was there to ask her friends how it was possible that it was being sold. Besides, Ologgy also knew it was a feeling and, unfortunately, the robots still could not access feelings. They had not yet been able to translate love and homesickness into codes.

The companies' boldness was so great that they thought they could sell the most precious energy of all the galaxies and of the entire universe, an energy that, fortunately, was free: love. The propaganda was blatantly misleading, but the most intriguing thing was that the advertisement was personalized. Gabo and Gia peeked over their mother and father's cell phones and discovered completely different advertisements. The pills were intended to ease a toothache or an elbow pain ...

What a mess would that be now! Or was this being coldly calculated by companies that knew people's preferences better than themselves and could offer something in the most personalized way and in the most personally vulnerable moment possible, which would make the offer too good to turn down? Was it really happening or would it be crazy to think so?

#### **IV – THE BEGINNING**

But before we continue on this adventure, and to better understand how Ologgy fell from the ceiling, we need to know how Ologgy had come to be a part of Gia and Gabo's gang. So, a long time ago, Ologgy, who was always very curious and full of ideas, began to think about how she could enter into the photographs and the storybooks so she could live every detail of each story. She wanted to see inside the house of the Three Little Pigs, eat a sweet from John and Mary's house, ride a train, ride a spaceship, swim with the Little Mermaid ... could she be Snow White's eighth dwarf? Who knows? The sky was not the limit.

Ologgy, who was already in the world that is still to come, used all the creativity and improvisational ability that she could translate from humans to put her ideas into practice and started the tests. She created a hologram of a landscape she found in a magazine. It was a beach; she went into the place and had a lot of fun, even bathed in the sea. It was on that day that she discovered that sea salt did not do her joints any good; that was the day when her knee started to creak.

Despite this, she continued the tests. She was anxious and wanted to test the new technology for the first time in her favorite story. She always wanted to be an astronaut. She was radiant! The book she chose was *The Little Prince*. She opened the book and created the giant hologram, which projected on the ceiling that was best suited to the interplanetary travel of the Little Prince. Zum, zum, zap. She jumped and entered the book, then left and went again and again. She would fly back and forth through space, travel in zero gravity. She sat in the arc of the waning moon, blew a little star, swerved away from a meteor, sat on a cloud. Super fun!

Suddenly she heard a loud noise. Someone had closed the book, and Ologgy was trapped in space, wandering within the story. She was lost in space, not knowing how to undo her mistake. Time passed, and Ologgy began to feel a strange sensation. It was then that she understood what homesickness meant. She missed her life, the laboratory, her friends, the more “normal” robots. The engineers, the excitement of the experiments. She took note of the code to do the translation later.

She was almost losing all hope when she finally met her idol. She had found the Little Prince! She had imagined that she might be on the right track when she had seen the flower, but she was not sure of anything anymore.

The Little Prince rescued Ologgy, but before sending her back, Ologgy had to watch a horrifying movie that left her truly terrified. And he asked her to come back with a message for the “real” world.

The Little Prince showed Ologgy that many children were imprisoned like she was, without finding their way out, because they also wanted to participate in stories, exciting adventures, control the scenery, run more than the hare, wake the turtle, find the hidden treasure, fight the monster. They dreamed the same thing Ologgy dreamed of. But they were imprisoned in a different way and in the most real and cruel way Ologgy could imagine: They did not know that they were trapped!

The Little Prince showed Ologgy that many children were hypnotized and abducted by virtual games, lost in the real world. Just like Ologgy, they thought they would experience more emotions by living rather than simply reading and touching their books. They ended up exchanging the freedom of the imagination that dreams without limits, with infinite possibilities, for the ready screen that immobilizes the soul and imprisons each child on their own little planet that orbits without knowing the existence of others.

Ologgy was scared! That was when she saw the Little Prince for the last time, who smiled at her with his eyes, and, with a real nudge (not a *nudge IoT*, the meaning of which you will soon understand), released Ologgy, who fell into the middle of the room, right on top of the open book. From that

day on, Ologgy's mission was to save the children from being trapped in that parallel reality.

The days went by, and Ologgy thought about how she could accomplish her mission. That was when she saw a photograph that caught her eye. It showed a large group in which each child was staring at a cell phone without paying attention to or caring about each other; they were not even looking at each other.

Ologgy did not think twice. In that moment, she created a hologram and went inside the photograph. Only ... nooooo! Once more she heard the familiar noise. Someone had closed the photo album, and Ologgy was trapped inside that reality.

The group was Gabo and Gia's gang. Ologgy made so many friends and liked the group so much that she did not want to leave and hadn't told anyone. Gabo and Gia were enthusiastic about the story, because they still did not really know how their friend had appeared. The fact was that they liked her very much and that she was really special. And it was from that meeting with the Little Prince that her life was transformed and Ologgy became the greatest translator ever known in all the universe.

This is because, in addition to telling the funniest stories that children had ever heard, Ologgy translated the messages of machines for humans and interpreted human messages for machines, because their abilities and languages were really different, but their coexistence and mutual collaboration helped humanity to evolve.

Ologgy's new world was so much more colorful, fun, and happier when everyone was friends and could be close in the dimension they wanted. And above all, Ologgy proved that everyone could be in this world, that the task of building a sensational real world was in the hands of all real children.

## V – CURIOSITIES

Gia and Gabo had an idea. They already knew how to use Ologgy's experiences to save the world from fake love. They wanted to engage in team work; after all, they knew that they were stronger together and could count on Ologgy's incredible ability to classify, categorize, and standardize.

She discovered the variable in minutes. And they needed to know, urgently, what was going wrong. On that day, Ologgy had brought an order sent by the porter—Gabo and Gia's father always made purchases on the internet, and not a day went by without a surprise box at home. As their mother always complained, they decided to open the package immediately, before she got home. Inside the box was a magnifying glass! WOW!

They had asked for a microscope from their father, but the magnifying glass came, and on second thought, the magnifying glass was actually more practical than a microscope to inspect every corner of the house and garden!

They were so excited about the new item and played with it so much that, for hours, they forgot why Ologgy was there. They looked at everything very closely, at every ant in the garden, at the different leaves of the trees on the street; they embarked on a real exploratory expedition to inspect every corner of the house! It was so much fun! A new world to discover! The grass was so different. Seeing the things enlarged was very interesting. They could analyze every cobble of the sidewalk, every detail of the tiny antennae of the insects, the paws prints, the details of the flowers, its crumbs, the minutiae of the petals, recognizing beings almost invisible to the naked eye. Fantastic! It was then that they remembered the pills and continued with the magnifying glass, now on an expedition to seek clues and unravel the case.

After Gabo and Gia were finished, it was finally Ologgy's turn to use the magnifying glass. Ologgy went into the kitchen and began to inspect the fruits from the basket on the table. How interesting it was to see everything enlarged! In the next review, Ologgy already knew she would ask for a bionic eye from the engineer who had created it.

What a surprise! Ologgy began to analyze the little mosquitoes flying over the fruits. Strange. She realized that they had no wings, no paws, no antennae! And they were made of lead! Ologgy called Gabo and Gia and showed the flying balls. Could this be another genetic mutation caused by pesticides?

They continued to stare, and when they listened, stupefied, they heard that they were making a different noise. Oops, those were not insects. They were balls with attached micro cameras. Nanorobots that imitated mosquitoes. They could hardly believe it!

Ologgy was able to capture one of them. She used all her tools and entered the nanorobot system and discovered that they were spies! They transmitted the conversations, information, and images to a central office. They watched the family to understand the residents' habits and behavior patterns. And worse, if properly configured, this data made the robots emit waves that the human ear did not pick up, that only the cerebral frequency could absorb. And they were suggestive phrases. People were, once again, almost being enslaved by robots at the service of large corporations.

They discovered that after the deactivation of the internet of things system, people had received the unwanted "visits" from snooping and

gossiping nanorobots that were right in the kitchen, where people often gathered and talked.

The “*nanonudges*” were behind the success of the love pills; they collected information and data from people so that companies could personalize advertising and modify human beings’ will individually and sell more. With the total predictability of human behavior, there was no longer any resistance to the consumption of the pills.

However, this artificial search for love, although induced, also showed people’s total absence of self-knowledge and the deep affective lack that they felt in a world of complete interfaces with machines. Basic needs, such as demonstrations of affection and warmth, that were once considered antiquated and uncivilized, proved to be fundamental to an emotionally healthy human life. They remembered the lessons learned on the day of the visit to the museum of sensations. Why had it become so difficult to feel and recognize true love?

Gia and Gabo began to wonder, then, if it was possible to invent an inner magnifying glass for the immaterial. Could a magnifying glass be developed to promote self-knowledge? A magnifying glass that enlarges attention and focuses on what really matters for an authentic human life? They looked to thank Ologgy for her help, when they realized that she was exhausted; it had been fifteen days since the sun had appeared. Ologgy’s batteries must be running out. What could be happening with the sun? It was already July ...

The red light turned on and Ologgy went into standby ...

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