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After Progress: A Philosophy of Technology from the Periphery
(a translation of two chapters from Tras otro progreso: Filosofía de la tecnología desde la periferia
by Héctor José Huyke-Souffront)

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Translator’s Preface
I. Introduction

Philosophy is my first love. Since I was an eleven-year-old, I knew I wanted to pursue studies in this field. Years later, I graduated with a bachelor's degree in Philosophy from the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez Campus. Dr. Héctor Huyke was one of my professors. He has a Ph.D. in Philosophy from Columbia University in the City of New York; a M.A. in Philosophy from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; and a B.A. in History and Philosophy from Carnegie Mellon University. Currently, he teaches various philosophy courses, including Ethics, Modern Philosophy, and Philosophy of Technology. He is the Coordinator of the Philosophy Section for the College of Humanities at University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez Campus. His first book, Anti-profesor: reflexiones contra el profesor y su estudiante..., was published by Editorial Universidad de Puerto Rico in 2001. Tras otro progreso: filosofía de la tecnología desde la periferia, published by Editora Educación Emergente in 2013, constitutes his second full-length book.

I remember the author was writing the manuscript when I was an undergraduate. He told me that his interests in the philosophy of technology began when he read and met Langdon Winner during a formative time of his life. While you might think the ideas expressed in this book could be outdated—after all, technology is ever changing—it is a work that is pertinent to our times. The task of a philosopher in this book, according to Huyke, is to describe and study the relationship between human beings and technology. We are still struggling to understand this relationship, even as we are continually adopting new technologies in our lives.
Tras otro progreso: filosofía desde la periferia deals with the philosophy of technology. This is an independent subdiscipline of philosophy, which seeks to question the nature of technology, to address the ethical questions regarding technology, and to understand the preconceptions about technology that predominate in the culture. In the late twentieth century, numerous critics have railed against the so-called neutrality thesis. The neutrality thesis holds that technology is a neutral instrument that can be put to good or bad use by its users. Critics have argued, as Huyke himself has, that technology is not neutral and that an ethical evaluation of culture and technology is possible. Huyke’s book explores the established concepts of “progress” and “technology,” inviting readers to question the seemingly interchangeable meaning between of the two concepts. In his words, “ciframos nuestras esperanzas en la tecnología.” But, he argues, there should be a rigorous examination of the current practices of invention and innovation that have had an impact on humanity as a whole. “[El libro] constituye, primordialmente, un cuestionamiento de dicha práctica, de lo que se ha convertido en el sentido común en torno a la tecnología.” In other words, the new practices developed through the adoption of new technology are not necessarily synonymous with progress. Curiously, these practices might hinder progress—at least, Huyke's concept of progress. Although he is not a technophobe, he believes that a gradual favoring of long-distance experiences over nearby reality is currently taking root in the so-called countries at the

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2 Huyke, Tras otro progreso, 13.
3 Ibid.
center. This is not only multiplying misery around the world, but also threatening the existence of meaningful work in the future. It is not a surprise, then, that the main discussion is interwoven with issues such as participatory democracy, sustainable development, globalization, cultural diversity, environmental protection, and higher education.

It should be made clear that the author is not arguing against technology, “lo que sería absurdo,” but against the general practice of optimization that has characterized our technological culture. According to the author, this practice of optimization is molded by two patterns: the multiplication of options and hyperselection, and the replacement of local experience with remote, long-distance experiences. The first pattern—discussed in Chapter 5—can be observed everywhere. For example, the iPhone 6 has the new Touch ID functionality that allows users to approve purchases from Apple’s App Store using a fingerprint identity sensor. The selling point, according to Apple, is that users are able to purchase content faster. One could still provide the username and password to approve purchases, but they are giving users a variety of choices when purchasing, while prompting them to consume at an accelerated rate. The second pattern—discussed in Chapter 6—is also prevalent today. For example, educational institutions offering

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4 The author defines “the center” as “countries and regions that are presumably regarded as technological advanced” and “the periphery” as “countries and regions that want to reach the level of technological advancement that presumably has been reached in other countries.” Ibid, 85.
5 Ibid, 14.
6 Ibid, 15.
7 The author defines the concept of technological culture as follows: “La práctica de optimización que predomine en un contexto histórico particular.” Huyke, *Tras otro progreso*, 19.
online degrees, children playing Minecraft with friends, online dating, online streaming of music concerts, broadcasting operas or plays in movie theaters, and the list goes on.

If new technologies are used to achieve the impossible prior to their invention, then practices and ideas around that activity will change. Will it change for the better or for the worse? Huyke wishes the readers to think hard on this. For example, he argues that if military strikes in modern warfare become more precise and “surgical,” then large troop deployments would become irrelevant. Consequently, fewer men or women would need to sign up for service and it would mean fewer people stationed on foreign soil. This would provide the military apparatus with the flexibility to stage more interventions and thereby reduce the possibility for citizens in the aggressor nation to form an opposition because the majority of the population would be spared the horrors of war. In the long run, acts of aggression between nations could last generations until the general population grows weary of war. In other words, the adopted technological practice of warfare that was intended to limit the number of casualties could prolong acts of aggression between nations and be counterproductive to the original aim.

II. The Structure of Tras otro progreso

The book, which is 248 pages in length, is composed of an introduction, three thematic sections, an epilogue, and a bibliography. The first section has five chapters. In this first section, the author explains the problems of the current technological culture. The second section has four chapters. In this second section, the author describes the contemporary practices of progress and the patterns that result from these practices. The
third section has three chapters and is devoted to evaluating the effects of these patterns. Each chapter is divided into subsections. Each subsection is hierarchically numbered with its corresponding title. For example, the first subsection of Chapter 5 is 5.1, with the remaining subsections following this pattern: 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, etc. I have eliminated the numbers in the subsections to avoid confusion, but I have kept the titles in the translation.

I have chosen to translate Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 for my thesis project. I believe that these chapters present the essential arguments of the book. Chapter 5 gives an overview of practices being habitually performed as a result of the adoption of technologies that represent “progress.” Huyke discusses examples of these practices in different contexts, such as the demand for convenience or happiness (“Contemporary Practices of Progress at the Center”), the desire for fewer war casualties (“Recent Developments in the Military”), and the decline of the individual’s freedom to choose (“Ethical Autonomy and Hyperselection”).

Chapter 6 gives an introduction to the concepts that reveal Huyke’s standpoint regarding contemporary technology and the effects of these technologies in our daily lives. In this chapter, Huyke explains the second pattern of contemporary practices of progress: the replacement of nearness with remoteness. This is the chapter where he introduces the concepts of fortifying or debilitating linkages and locally rooted or remotely rooted technologies. These concepts are the cornerstones of the nearness principle. This principle is Huyke’s attempt to provide an alternative to the prevailing
notion of “progress.” In short, this notion mistakenly conceives as progress the abandonment of thought and our immediate surroundings for speed and remoteness.

III. After Translation

After three years at the Graduate Program in Translation, I have discovered that a translator's nights are filled with endless hours of research. Countless hours are spent finding the right words or quotes. Initially, I thought there was only one voice and that my task as a translator was to find the right one. But as Suzanne Jill Levine described, “there are no originals, only translations. Memory is a text translated into another text.”8 My version of this text is only that, just a version. My translation is not a literal translation of the text, and is not only transmitting a message from one language to another, but also transmitting the source text's notion of culture through translation.

In “Las versiones homéricas,” Jorge Luis Borges challenges the notion that a translation is an inferior work to the source text. He states that it is ridiculous to assume that, for example, the ninth draft of a manuscript is necessarily inferior to the eighth draft of the translated text, “ya que no puede haber sino borradores.”9 A text should never really be considered as completed, even after it is published. Any author may confess that he or she did not feel that the work was in fact finished, but deadlines intervened, nonetheless. Not only is a translation an extension of the source text but also it is another version of the text.

8 Levine, Translation as (sub) version, 92.
9 Borges, Versiones homéricas, 1.
This new version, Marazka argues, is “responsible for the survival of the original.”\(^\text{10}\) In his article, Marazka mentions the history of the *aristoteles arabus*—the name for the Arabic translations and commentary of Aristotle’s work—as an example of how translation serves another function other than transmitting a message from one language to another. In his view, these translations changed the way Aristotle was read and gave his work a chance for survival. While it is true that the translator gives the source text the opportunity to connect with more readers and cultures, perhaps it is not readily apparent that a “translation has the capacity to set texts and experiences in motion.”\(^\text{11}\) In the case of Aristotle, the texts moved from Greek to Syriac, and then from Arabic to Latin.

With this translation, I am interested in writing a “sense-for-sense” translation. The text requires this approach, however with certain caveats. As Susan Bassnett has noted,

> The art of the translator, for Horace and Cicero, then, consisted in judicious interpretation of the SL text so as to produce a TL version based on the principle *non verbum de verbo, sed sensum exprimere de sensu* (of expressing not word for word, but sense for sense), and his responsibility was to the TL readers.\(^\text{12}\)

It still holds true because “when difficulties are encountered by the translator, the whole issue of the translatability of the text is raised.”\(^\text{13}\) I do not want the text to be questioned

\(^{10}\) Marazka, “Translation Beyond Empire,” *Journal of Literary Studies and Linguistics*, 90.

\(^{11}\) Ibid, 96.

\(^{12}\) Bassnett, Translation Studies, 52.

\(^{13}\) Bassnett, Translation Studies, 39.
or to be riddled with awkward or literally employed word choices or phrasing (or “translatese”) for the sake of mere fidelity. With his text, the author wishes to make his contribution to the field of philosophy. Therefore, I understand that my role as a translator is to serve as mediator and to secure a safe passage for the text across the cultural divide between the two languages.

IV. Remarks on Translation and Philosophy

The cultural divide mentioned above may be even deeper in the translation of philosophy. According to Jonathan Rée, “philosophical translation is never bilateral” because the tradition of philosophical writing in Europe has historically been multilingual.14 On the foundations of Ancient Greek and Latin, European philosophy has developed its own vocabulary. Many philosophers read and wrote in multiple languages. For example, Descartes' famous philosophical proposition cogito ergo sum was first expressed as je pense, donc je suis in Discours de la Méthode—“surely one of the most famous products ever of the translator's hidden hand.”15

But despite the long shared history of philosophy and translation, why is there such a scarcity of literature on the philosophical aspects of translation or research in translation studies addressing the problems of translating philosophy? It could be that problems in both fields overlap, or that translation as a field of study is still young. There are also questions as to whether translation is a field of study unto itself. According to

15 Ibid., 249.
Asimakoulas\textsuperscript{16} and Jenny Williams, “Simeoni doubted whether translation could be defined as a field since it is by definition always involved in other fields such as medicine, law, technology, or literature…”\textsuperscript{17} In his often cited essay, Simeoni writes that it is difficult to imagine a field of translation because the “actual products of translation” are “[…] governed by the rules pertaining to the field in which the translation takes place.”\textsuperscript{18} But how do we, as translators, find these rules? What are the governing forces in our practice? What are the rules and governing forces in philosophy?

To find an answer to these questions, I looked to translator’s notes or translator’s remarks in various translated works of philosophy. Most of them mention biographical information about the philosopher, very specific translation problems (often justifying the use of one word over another), or how the bibliographical information is organized in the book. They are often very brief, so it is hard to find a translator’s note in philosophy describing the process of translation. Walter Kaufmann’s translations of Nietzsche were the exception. In Kaufmann’s translation of \textit{The Gay Science}, he states that, “[his] aim is, in one word, faithfulness—to Nietzsche’s meaning, tone, nuances, style, and manner.”\textsuperscript{19} But Kaufmann’s faithfulness allowed him to restructure the text for clarity. He states in another book that “I have again broken up long paragraphs to

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{17} Jenny Williams, \textit{Theories of Translation}, 104.
\bibitem{18} Daniel Simeoni, “The Pivotal Status of the Translator’s Habitus,” 19 (italics in the original).
\bibitem{19} Friedrich Nietzsche, \textit{The Gay Science}, 25.
\end{thebibliography}
make the structure of Nietzsche’s arguments clearer.” It seems that for Kaufmann the preservation of the original German—in terms of syntax and structure—is less important than providing the reader with a new, more coherent version (at least as Kaufmann may imagine that coherency, and even if he states otherwise in other translations). He writes in Portable Nietzsche, “Rather than flatten out Nietzsche’s highly unusual German into stereotype idioms, an effort has been made to preserve as much as possible of his cadences, even where they are awkwardly groping or overstrained.” In other words, he attempted to present Nietzsche as clearly and authentically as possible, which is what I am attempting to do with Huyke.

For this attempt, the terminology employed in previous works of philosophy of technology has helped me to be precise with technical terms. When seeking inspiration before and during the translation process, I would read works by, for example, Carl Mitcham and Albert Borgmann. Even though the translation of philosophy can be difficult because “philosophical writing, though it may always have clarity as its ideal, is famous for its incomprehensibility,” the source text is written in a clear style, avoiding flowery or overcomplicated sentence structures. Huyke’s writing style is plainspoken, but he enjoys the use of irony and rhetorical questions from time to time. Sparingly, I broke up paragraphs and rearranged sentences when I thought it would improve the readability of the text.

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20 Ibid, 25.
22 Ibid., 227.
V. Challenges

Among the challenges I encountered when translating this text were the references cited in the work. For example, to my knowledge Gilles Lipovetsky’s *Le crépuscule du devoir* has no English translation. I verified this using WorldCat and other online resources. But because the author quotes a Spanish translation of the book, I had to create my own English translation of the quote. I was unable to obtain the original French text to guide me. Instead, I read works from Lipovetsky in English that hinted at, for example, the translation of “normas de satisfacción del deseo y de realización íntima.”

Ortega y Gasset’s quotes were especially difficult to find. In *Tras otro progreso*, the author is citing two works from the Spanish philosopher, *Meditación de la técnica* and “El mito del hombre allende la técnica.” The former was translated as “Man the Technician” by Helene Weyl. She was responsible for Ortega y Gasset’s German translations, and later she introduced Ortega y Gasset to American readers with her English translations. I quote her English translation on page 18 of this thesis project, but on page 63 I had to insert my own translation because she omitted the line that is quoted by Huyke. I can only speculate why she omitted it from her translation, but I felt it was necessary to refer to the original work when I added my own translation. I also translated the quote from “El mito del hombre Allende la técnica” on page 18 because I found no English version of the text. Curiously,

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23 I found inspiration for the translation in Lipovetsky’s “The Contribution of Mass Media.”
the Spanish text is a translation from German. It was taken from a conference that Ortega y Gasset gave at Darmstadt in 1951.24

As for the quotes taken from Spanish translations, I looked for the original whenever possible. This took a little effort on my part because I would compare the two versions to find the correct page number for my translation. When the author was paraphrasing the content and listed a specific page number, it was difficult to find the page number. For example, the author refers to page 48 from Tecnologías del yo on page 90 of the source text. It took me a long time to locate the passage that the author was paraphrasing on page 19 from Technologies of the Self.

I also added quotes to the translation after reviewing the material that was being paraphrased in the source text. I found—although infrequently—that the author would paraphrase the source text too closely. I included the appropriate page number and took the quote from the source text. For example, I included a direct quote from Verbeek in the subsection “Ethical Autonomy and Hyperselection,” which is found in Chapter 5. Also, I corrected any inaccuracies discovered in the text. For example, Truman did not give that speech at the Potsdam Conference. He gave those remarks, addressing General Eisenhower, at the raising of the flag over a new headquarters of the U.S. military command in Berlin.25

I either purchased books or searched in Google Books for the quotes. Surprisingly, I found many articles and books using search engines. I found a few books in online repositories. I

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25 William Lee Miller, Two Americans: Truman, Eisenhower, and a Dangerous World, 149.
also used the University of Puerto Rico Library’s online databases. As a last resort, I would use Amazon’s “Search Inside the Book” feature. Overall, it was a challenge to find the correct quotes.

I have decided to use Chicago Manual of Style’s Author-Date system for the translation. In the source text, the references needed to be tidied up. Also, the source text has footnotes and I did not want to add more footnotes to the translation. For the Translator’s Preface, I decided to use Chicago’s Notes-Bibliography system because it allowed me to share more information.

**Cercanía and lejanía**

It was difficult to find a suitable translation for cercanía and lejanía. For the former, “proximity” and “local” were considered—even going to the obnoxiously wordy “local experiences” or “nearby experiences.” Ultimately, I discarded “proximity” and “local” because it lacked a depth of meaning that was needed in the text. I asked the author and he pointed to Heidegger’s *Das Ding* for a possible solution. Although he was not thinking of Heidegger at the time when he wrote the book, he realized that his reading of Heidegger as an undergraduate was key to formulating the concept of cercanía. In a Spanish translation of *Das Ding*, Nähe is translated as cercanía. In English, Nähe is translated as “nearness.” After consulting and reading these texts, I decided to use “nearness” and “remoteness” for my translation.

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26 Heidegger, “La cosa,” Conferencias y artículos, 143.
Ensamblajes fortalecedores and ensamblajes debilitadores

It took me a long time to decide how to translate ensamblaje fortalecedores (fortifying linkages) and ensamblajes debilitadores (debilitating linkages). Why, for example, did I use the word “linkage” instead of “link”? From my reading of the text, calling it a link would not convey the right idea. Huyke is referring to a series of connections between the individual and a collection of technologies. It is not simply a connecting structure between them, but a relationship that is connecting multiple individuals and technologies at the same time.

Agilidad de selección

As for agilidad de selección, I was at a loss for lexical equivalents until I came up with “hyperselection.” The inspiration for the term came from an excerpt from Mark C. Taylor’s Speed Limits: Where the Time Went and Why We Have So Little Left, published in Salon as “Fast, cheap and out of control: How hyper-consumerism drives us mad,” which Dr. Auerbach sent me last year. I attempted to locate the term through search engines, and it is being used in disparate ways. I wanted a term that would exude the impression of speed, agility, flexibility, and immediacy. The term is also reminiscent of Baudrillard’s and

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Borgmann’s concept of “hyperreality.” I think the term is appropriate and intelligible for the translation.

VI. The Translator at the Periphery

It is my hope that this translation—this version—allows the author and his text to move forward. It will provide a new opportunity to discuss the role of technology in our lives: What we leave behind in exchange for convenience and speed; how we replace habits and adopt new technologies at an accelerated pace; why we could benefit from integrating a healthy dose of skepticism into our lives. The ideas expressed in Tras otro progreso are worth discussing because the text provides, hopefully, the standpoint of the periphery, which is needed to enrich the debate in philosophy of technology.

29 Borgmann’s concept of “hyperreality” is explained in the Crossing the Postmodern Divide. Borgman, 82-97.
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