

ON TRANSLATING PLATO

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I imagine that Professor Sallis asked me to speak on translating in the first instance because of some work I had done in turning German into English. First was the translation of Jacob Klein's book Greek Mathematical Thought and the Origin of Algebra, which was originally published by the M.I.T. Press in 1968, and, having become a sort of classic not only in the history of mathematics but also in the study of modernity, was picked up for republication by the Dover Press in 1991. I had also done an annotated version of Heidegger's essay "What is that -- Philosophy?" for the use of our seniors at St. John's College. It remains unpublished because Professor Sallis was unable to obtain reasonable terms from the Heidegger estate. Furthermore I did an essay written by Nietzsche when he was twenty "On the Relation of the Speech of Alcibades to the Other Speeches of the Platonic Symposium," which our student journal Energeia published to serve not only a model but also as an encouragement for our students who choose similar topics for their annual essay. I also did a short vignette by Hermann Hesse, called "An Evening at Home with Doctor Faustus" for the same journal; in this story Mephistopheles invents a future-phonograph and plays for Doctor Faustus the music of our century -- pretty nearly the same that sometimes wafts across our campus. The Doctor concludes that the world has gone to the devil, as he himself soon will.

In 1995 I was asked by the series adviser, Keith Whitaker to do a first translation for the nascent Focus Philosophical Library; Plato was suggested as a possibility. The Focus Press publishes fresh translations, intended to be very reasonably priced and to be used by American students. The project was appealing to me both as a teacher in a school dependent on good and accessible translations and as a dean in need of intellectual recreation.

I had what turned out to be an inspired idea, that of seeking collaborators among my colleagues, figuring that the pleasure of becoming so really intimate with a dialogue as only a translator is would be enhanced by the close partnership of common work, and that three heads could better solve the problems and detect the mistakes that would surely dog a lone translator. Peter Kalkavage and Eric Salem agreed to becoming a trio. We chose the Sophist because we had all three begun to recognize the dialogue as the most ontologically future-fraught of them all,

and we welcomed the challenge of preserving its originary freshness.

What follows is a report, under various headings, of the things we think we learned, and the advice we might venture to give our fellow translators.

Collaboration

One feature of the Sophist is that wherever you are, there he is not; he is forever trying to escape into trackless impassible thickets, ("Impasse," incidentally, is one of our translations, very nearly literal, of aporia -- waylessness.) But those who deal in knowing also display an opposite fault in the dialogues. That is the fault of position-taking. They occupy positions in defense of which they throw up outworks (problema is the Greek word for such a defensive outwork) and employ various apotropaic stratagems. Evidently Socrates and Plato consider that either to have a universal escape route in all arguments or to occupy entrenched positions is unworthy of the philosopher's mission.

And so it is of the translator's task. Those who work together on transferring Greek meanings into English words have to be focussed on what the Greeks call the pragma and what Hegel calls die Sache. They have to eschew both escape and entrenchment, and they must be objective -- intent on the object at hand.

Yet while ego is out, there is a strong human element in a collaboration put in the service of a dialogue. It demands and develops friendship. The three of us all bring slightly different strengths: One is perhaps more alert to Greek grammar, another to the philosophical resonances of terms. All three of us, having undergone the most effective part of our education at St. John's College, are relatively fearless in the face of ignorance and fresh in our deliberate amateurism.

The way we work is that each of us presents a translation of one Stephanus page in turn every third week, which all of us together then rake over as with a fine-tooth comb, the original translator explaining but not particularly defending a choice. Often we let somewhat daring or awkwardly accurate readings stand, waiting for that reading, close to the final one, in which we attend particularly to idiom and flow while erasing false inspirations.

I think we have become persuaded that in putting a rich Greek text into English there are so many facets to be attended to, that three heads are indeed better than one. We do in fact

have grand predecessors to look to: You will recall the legend about the seventy-two scribes, six from each of Israel's twelve tribes, who produced the Septuagint, the earliest extant Greek version of the Hebrew Bible, in the third century B.C. They worked in separate cells and came up with identical translations, presumably inspired by the text itself. We might say that the Platonic text acted on us in a more modest ex post facto mode in a similar way -- one version would suddenly, after some trial and error, click for all three of us.

Our advice to collaborators: Cotranslating is a form of intimacy, best done by those who have the same object firmly in their sights while viewing each other with affectionate respect.

Readership

We thought it essential to keep in mind for whom we meant this translation. We meant it for the people that we imagine standing around in this as in so many other dialogues as spectators and auditors. They are presumably tacitly engaged, like the silently present young Socrates, Theaetetus's friend, who shares our Socrates' name, as Theaetetus shares his looks. Another way to put it is that we thought of our students as they prepare for a seminar by silent reading. Some are quite innocent of the issues, some have, or think they have, insider knowledge, some read casually and disengagedly, and some are intensely serious.

That brought up the delicate question of colloquialism. One device that would keep the conversation casually speech-like was contraction, and we used it a lot, but not in places that we thought were meant to be stuffy, highflown, or solemn. We looked for idiomatic equivalents but avoided slang (though we had a great time devising some raucous interim translations, such as "wise guy" or "weisenheimer" for the sophist himself). While we were well aware that every idiomatic translation will in time betray its date, nothing dates more quickly than slang, and even in its day it fails, like all truckling-under to fashion, to have real appeal for students.

In the course of thinking about drawing readers into the dialogue we often had occasion to consider what is probably a real difference between the ear of a young contemporary Greek and one of our students. The well-brought up Greek (and not only an Athenian), being nourished on Homer and the tragedians whose language was no one's spoken Greek, could savor artificialities and archaisms that our students would find simply off-putting. A couple of generations ago some English-speaking students would have absorbed enough of Shakespeare and Milton to be appreciative of such echoes, but we couldn't count on that. So we put

everything into plain current English, sometimes allowing ourselves the merest whiff of high poetry or archaism.

Above all, we tried, in our students' behalf, to put ourselves into the interlocutors' sandals: What is being said, what is being heard, what is being felt, what is being thought? We called on our experience as teachers to guess at the dialogic backdrop of anxious agreement, triumphant dissent, and shamed realization that young Theaetetus contributes. But above all we clung to our main hypothesis as trusting readers of the dialogues: that each speech uttered has a discernible meaning contributing to the drift of the conversation, and that the translation should preserve that motion.

Our advice here is: In translating fill out imaginatively not only the conversation within the text but draw in the external participant, the reading student.

Predecessors

Of course, we took all the help we could get from earlier translations. We used Robin for his intelligently chosen readings, Campbell for his linguistic annotations, Cornford for informational help.

The two translations we had always at our side were the Loeb Fowler and Benardete. Fowler, though old-fashioned in diction and uninspired in terminology, was almost unfailing in making sense of puzzling passages and turns of phrase.

We consulted Benardete whenever we ran into trouble, because of his meticulous attention to every word and because of his linguistic ingenuity. His version is a crib for the better sort of folk; it becomes intelligible if you read it as essentially in Greek and accidentally in English. Since, however, we were determined to translate not only from Greek but also into English, we only rarely borrowed phrases from him though we took many hints as to meaning.

Heidegger translates numerous passages of the Sophist in the lecture notes published in 1992 under the title Platon: Sophistes. These versions are a reminder that in certain respects the translator into German is to be envied. Some of the forms that have to do with Being go more directly into German than into English. For example, to einai becomes "das Sein," while in English the infinitive cannot normally be nominalized; also to on readily goes into "Seiendes," and ta onta is rendered as "das Seiende," which functions, like the Greek neuter plural, as a collective noun. Probably most provocative and least helpful to translators who intend to be as naively true to the

text and as agendaless as possible, are Heidegger's terms for ousia, which he renders in an uninterpreted and an interpreted version, as it were. In the former, ousia is plain "Sein." In the interpreted version ousia is rendered as if it were parousia: "das Anwesende" or "das Vorhandene," i.e., "the present" or "the at-hand," in accord with his idea that Greek thought suffers from the aboriginal flaw of thinking of Being as if it were a thing.

We puzzled a good deal over the proper translation of ousia, being loath on principle, namely the principle that translation should be as far as feasible into an existent language, to invent non-current abstract substantives. But we finally decided on "beinghood." We chose it over "beingness" not only because it sounded better to us but because it had more concreteness, as in neighborhood or manhood; we were mindful that ousia means something like "real estate" in ordinary Greek. And we decided to make up a word to begin with because we had an unresolved sense that ousia, which in the Sophist is usually contrasted with genesis, had a peculiar weight, and we wanted the reader to be in a position to attend to that interpretational problem.

I was relieved to see that even German could not deal with the crucial little adverb ontos, which for our private amusement only we translated as "beingly" but more soberly, for public consumption, as "in its very being;" thus the phrase that concludes the ultimate collection of differentiating terms reveals ton ontos sophisten: "the Sophist in his very being."

To return to the advantages of translating into German with two examples.

1. We had long discussions about the translation of stasis, the specific other of motion. We settled on rest, knowing full well that rest is wrong insofar as it means lack of, or cessation from, motion. "Stand-still" or "stationariness," a condition coequal with motion, seemed too strained, and we consigned them to the glossary. German is lucky in being able to form "Ständigkeit" quite naturally, as Heidegger does (p. 579).

2. In 244 c 4, when the stranger begins his critique of Parmenides' hypothesis of the One, we were pretty much forced to use the English word "hypothesis" with all its scientific baggage. Schleiermacher uses the Germanized version of "presupposition," that is "Voraussetzung," but Heidegger eschews both and brilliantly writes "Ansatz," with the observation that Parmenides's One is not a supposition to be consequently confirmed but a beginning, an arche, an "onset" -- which is exactly what "Ansatz" may mean.

Nonetheless, with all the felicities to be gotten especially from the German propensity for easy prepositional compounding, I kept being grateful that it was our lot to be putting Plato into

English, particularly American English. In our idiom we could achieve a plainness and a playfulness that must be, when all is said and done, more pleasing to Socrates as he listens in than a lot of linguistic incense.

I think our general advice to fellow translators would be unabashedly to cannibalize and unabashedly to set aside previous translations.

Apparatus

Since we were left very free by our press to decide on supplementary materials, we thought long and hard about our obligation to the text and to the reader.

We come from a school -- meaning both a way of thinking and an institution -- that has the greatest misgivings about standing between a reader and the book. The extra-textual stuff in a volume is of course meant to facilitate the approach to the translated text, but really, how can it? Take an introduction. If it says the same thing as the work, it will, assuming that the work is of the highest quality, say it worse. If it says something else, it will keep the reader from the work by that much time. We have a strong faith, based on our common teaching experience, that good books don't need approaching; they need facing, immediately and directly, at least at the first reading.

We compromised that faith, partly because by the end of our labor we were simply so full of thoughts that we couldn't contain ourselves, partly because we know perfectly well that well-instructed students skip introductions and come back to them much later, if at all.

So we decided to keep it short, simple, and straightforward. We avoided historical backgrounding on the principle that Plato would have felt about our doing it much as a landscape painter might if we took his painting and provided it with a broad frame extending the scenery so as to give the viewer an enlarged setting. We didn't want to deface the dialogue or distract or prejudice our student readers in this way; I should say that at St. John's evidence of familiarity with introductions is a suspect virtue. But we did set the dialogue briefly in its sequence -- Theaetetus, Sophist, Statesman and the mysteriously missing Philosopher. We gave a succinct plot outline of the hunt for the sophist, geared to a new and, we think, quite spiffy diagram of the infamous divisions that play so large a role in the Sophist. We pointed out some aspects of the dialogue that had become particularly pregnant for us, such as the generic nature of the Sophist here pursued (as opposed to the named individual sophists Socrates politely persecutes in dialogues

like the Gorgias and the Protagoras). We had a little section on Father Parmenides and the strange and wonderful fact that he, the Stranger's own teacher, attracts the main attack of the dialogue. Then we told briefly what we understood about the such deep matters as the relation of Image to Non-being and of Non-being to Otherness. And we left it at that.

Since we made use of the printer's full typographical menu, we had a little note on that. We were very sparing with footnotes, using them mostly to supply what we thought an ancient contemporary reader might have known, or where we thought we detected a joke or an allusion obscure to a current reader.

Our energy went into the glossary, which we put in back, to be used or not. We arranged the Greek terms and our reasoned translations in meaning-clusters. (You will find something similar in the Hope translation of Aristotle's Physics and Metaphysics, except that we transliterated all our Greek in the hope that students might learn to accent and pronounce words like phrónesis and poíesis and mímesis correctly.) We avoided the alphabetic order so as to prevent the impression that we -- or the partners of a dialogue -- are ever looking for dictionary-like definitions. We also hoped to provide students with what we thought of as the proto-terminology of a coming ontology -- or perhaps better a me-ontology, an account of Non-being; the Sophist is a spawning ground of metaphysical terms-to-be.

Our advice to translators is to go easy on the paraphernalia of translation.

Editing

The translator's final reading of course tries for absolute correctness. But we have to warn the trustful that having a perfect disk is no protection. Something will get screwed up, there will be unexpected glitches and, as we learned to our sorrow, it will be in the most carefully construed first sentence.

No matter how good and accommodating the editor -- and we have good reason to thank Ron Pullins, the editor-publisher of Focus Press -- there will be howlers.

Our advice: Trust no one but yourselves and demand to see final proofs.

Replies

Theaetetus plays to the Stranger by regularly uttering a budget of stock replies signifying slight hesitation, passive assent, positive agreement or requests for clarification.

After a while we began to suspect that the rotating litany of responses might not be entirely mechanical. This apprehension made it incumbent upon us to keep a list of our considered renditions of nai, pos, pos d'ou, pos gar ou, ti de, houtos, anangke, pan, panu ge, pantapasi men oun and a dozen others, so that in one of our later readings we could make all the replies consistent. In that way we would give readers of the translation a chance to discover patterns we only suspected. For example, pantapasi men oun, for which we borrowed Benardete's "That's altogether so," occurs in the dialogue as a strong assent to a summary claim and concludes the dialogue as Theaetetus's last response to the final collection of divisions that catch the true and ultimate sophist as the expert of the non-genuine. Theaetetus is clearly assenting not only to the definitive but also to the global character of this final determination of a human type and profession.

Particles

We were similarly anxious to render particles fairly consistently. The dialogic life is in them -- they indicate inflections of the voice, gestures of the body, and even motions of the soul.

The dictionary, or even Denniston's Greek Particles, though they must be consulted to give the limits of usage, cannot do it all. The translators must savor the speech in its context and judge whether it is marked as an inference or a new departure, whether eagerness is being displayed, smiles are suppressed, eyebrows raised or hands thrown up. We were mindful of typographic and punctuational devices not available to a Greek composer of living speech and used italics, dashes, colons, semicolons and exclamation points liberally to render the force of particles or emphases indicated by sentential order. I might mention here that capitalization helped us a great deal in translating a dialogue full of terms for forms and kinds designated in Greek by the definite article and a verbal or adjectival substantive such as to on (Being), to me on (Non-being), tauton (the Same), thateron (the Other).

Our advice to translators is to be -- within the limits of natural English -- consistent, careful and ingenious in rendering apparently little and apparently automatic elements of the

dialogues; they may be more revealing than one realizes at the time.

Techno-humor

At the end of Bacon's New Organon there is to be found a prescient catalogue of one hundred and thirty "histories" of special investigations that are one day to constitute the sphere of human expertise. It is a strange and wonderful fact that the first such comprehensive ordering of extant technical know-how (that I know of) is found in the Sophist -- and that it is a send-up. The stranger, who is not an overtly funny person, engages in what might be called techno-humor at the expense of experts.

Of course, as readers of the dialogue, we thought a good deal about the reason why a comprehensive classification of human know-how or technique -- we translated techne as "expertise" and sometimes "art," as in "arts and crafts" -- should be the approach of choice to the delineation of the Sophist. We were, of course, alert to the startling conjunction of apparently disjunct themes that governs a number of the great dialogues, as the Phaedrus, for instance, seems to yoke the unlikely pair of love and rhetoric.

Moreover, it does not take much reflection to see that the Sophist, whose nature is presented here as that of a faker and a know-it-all, should be tracked into the branches of human activity, and that in that great decision-tree he should reappear in seven places, and sometimes among the lowly but genuine crafts and sometimes among the high-sounding but dubious ones. It also made sense that the hunt for this elusive creature should be the occasion for presenting to the world the new dialectic art of division and collection and all its problems -- chief among them what might be called the problem of heuristic direction: at what moment in this dialectic enterprise, at the beginning, end or in-between, does new insight arise?

But as translators it was not so much our business to have theories about the inevitable implication of expertise and shamming or about the problems of classification as to render the divisions faithfully into English. And there we were in a pretty good position. As I have said, all three of us come from a college that has distanced itself from specialization, and we were alive to the tragicomedy of defining human beings as the professors of a profession. (Our English version of sophistes was, incidentally, "professor of wisdom.") Not that all of us aren't ourselves certified members of the world of expertise. I myself, for instance, began my working life in a profession that the Stranger might have ranged, looking to the three great

branches of human expertise called "getting," "separating," and "making," under getting, specifying it as a hunt beneath the soil for fragmented old artifacts carried on by means of pick-axes. We call it archaeology. Recall that the Sophist is first found in the right hand branch of animal hunting on land, specified as the sham-teaching hunt of wealthy youths.

We tried to preserve the neologic high-jinks of some of the divisions. Thus the sophist is found a second, third, and fourth time in the getting part of expertise as a psycho-trading virtue-seller, and in the manipulating part both as a seller of self-made learnables and a peddler of other-made learnables: "psycho-trading" renders pychemporike and "learnable-selling" mathemato-polikon.

We had not long worked on our new current project for the Focus Philosophical Library, a translation of the Phaedo, before we became aware of the varieties of Platonic humor. In fact one of us, Peter Kalkavage, who, as it happens, got his doctorate at Penn State, began retrospectively to refer to the Sophist as a one-joke dialogue, dominated by the techno-humor of the otherwise ponderous Stranger that I've just described. The Phaedo, because in it Socrates not only speaks but even makes speeches, is, we discovered, infused with a very different, far more subtle humor, which we are doing our best to preserve. It is the sort of hilarity or jocundity in the original Latin sense, the subdued joyousness and even merriment of the ultimate moment, that belongs to a man going blithely to his death without having lost his firm, even hard grip on the earthly condition. We have come to think of it as the tone of the lightness of Being. It keeps his companions in an ambivalent state of sorrowful exhilaration, suspended between tears and laughter.

Of course the secondary partners too, are very different in the two dialogues. Theaetetus is, at least vis-à-vis the Stranger, a somewhat stuffy boy, while that comradely pair, Simmias and Cebes, are each in their way pretty lively.

Does bringing out the humor of the dialogues in translations need a justification? I should not imagine so, but I might mention once more that all three of us are receiving our real education in a place to which a way of reading Plato was introduced by Jacob Klein, who in his interpretations was especially alert to the mimetic character of the dialogues. As imitations of Socrates and the conversations he conducted or attended, they were bound to be playful, as Socrates was playful, with a playfulness that is the kindly counterpart of his notorious dissembling, his irony. But not all humor is comedic in Aristotle's understanding of comedy as the imitation of what is laughable, that is, low or ugly but relatively harmless (Else, Aristotle's Poetics, pp. 39 ff, 183 ff). The techno-humor of the Sophist comes far closer to comedy than does that of the other

dialogues, with the proviso that the laughableness of the sophistic craft is not so harmless.

In any case, our advice to colleagues who plan to translate Platonic dialogues is to be prepared not only to laugh themselves but also to be the cause of laughter in others.

Faithfulness

It was clear to us from the beginning that looseness, paraphrase, and interpretative adumbration were intolerable in the translation of any Platonic writing, but especially in a dialogue like the Sophist, which is so close to the brink of technical metaphysics and yet so carefully refrains from letting philosophy become a techne, an expertise. It does so by going at what Aristotle will later codify as "problems" of Being in an oblique and human way. It is oblique in concentrating, as was said, less on ontology than on me-ontology, the account of Non-being as the ground of imitation or pretense, and it is human in pursuing the Sophist as a human type as much as it does sophistry as a profession. In this morning-twilight of philosophy meticulous accuracy is especially necessary. So we spent, as I have said, much time on words, determining for ourselves whether they were terms of a trade or not -- yet. Aporia and methodos are examples. Both come to be fixed as terms of philosophy: "perplexity" and "method." But we aimed to preserve at least in some places the unfixed original meaning: "impasse," i.e. lack of passage, and "way," both at which preserve the playful spatial analogy that is so prominent in the Stranger's reflections on the motion of thought.

We aimed at faithfulness, however, not only in words and terms but also in sentences. The obvious problem is always sub-literality -- producing a contortedly accurate pony. We thought that it was a part of faithfulness to render the various levels of elegance, clarity and emphasis of the speeches -- and the Stranger surely has his obscure and klunky moments, at least as we heard them.

The faith of translators who mean to be faithful must be that, meaning-element for meaning-element, it is possible to turn Greek into English, and that this must imply that usually -- it never pays to be too rigid -- one Greek word goes into one English word or typographical symbol, one phrase into one phrase, one clause into one clause, and one sentence into one sentence -- in other words that it is possible to get equivalence without sublinearity. It also implies that one can find an English word order that renders the emphasis of the Greek sentence, and English connectives that maintain the Greek flow. One of our last readings was addressed, as I have mentioned, to the attempted eradication of all signs of translaterese. Our trust

was that if we stuck faithfully to the Greek, barring simple mistakes and omissions, we would get English that said exactly what the Greek said and with something like the original naturalness and deviations from naturalness. In other words, we had the faith that we might overcome the charge expressed in the Italian pairing traduttore: traditore; we hoped that a translator need not be a traitor to the text.

Our best advice to others is not to give in to current hermeneutic theories concerning the essential untranslatability of one language into another, but to suppose, as a starting hypothesis, that even if not all human speech can say the same thing, then at least we can think and say practically the same thing as our ancient intellectual progenitors -- from which it is evident that the translator's hypothesis is no negligible commentary on contemporary philosophy.

Requirements

The last item on my list of observations concerns the crucial question what translators need to know and be good at.

The three of us did not think that we were required to have a full-fledged interpretation to have a go at a translation. What we needed instead was a lively sense of intimations, a sense born of a belief in the unfailing significance of the text. In other words, we came to Plato's philosophic plays with the trust that every word (or nearly every word) was deliberately placed, but that some terms and turns were special sign-posts to implied meanings. We tried to be alert to oddities of language and emphasis as well as to hapax legomena (linguistic singularities which we treated as occasions for literalness even if it proved awkward). On another level, we listened for high points and crucial junctures, which Plato's most responsible speakers, and of course Socrates himself, often signal by a throwaway reference to that one more "little" addition.

None of us are, this is the moment to say, great believers in esoteric readings. We are much too possessed by a sense of the pedagogic generosity of the dialogues, a sense that here a discreetly fierce energy is devoted to carrying interlocutors, bystanders, and readers beyond themselves, into realms reachable only by circuitous and indirect means. To put it another way: In the dialogues we are told as much, but no more, than we need to make us want to think onward. That is why the dialogues are fairly easy to read the first time and get harder to understand as, with each reading, more signals are picked up.

There certainly exist occasionally esoteric writers like Newton who, "to avoid being baited by little smatterers in

mathematics ... designedly made his Principia abstruse" (Portsmouth Collection), and authors who touch guardedly on theological or political issues in intolerant times (though they never do seem to escape persecution). Socrates' dissembling and Plato's subtlety, however, are not of this self-protective sort but are pedagogical devices for drawing the learner in -- at least that is our experience. The dialogues work on the principle that "a cat may look at a king," or rather, "a boy may look at Being." And in any case, they display hardly any attempt to mask the fact that not everything that goes on in these conversations will be of comfort to respectable parents.

So the first translator's requirement is a belief in the many-layered accessibility of the text and an alertness to those signs and signals which the English version should preserve for readers to puzzle over.

A second requirement we put on ourselves was to attempt consistency but to shun method. An intelligent consistency is, we thought, the guardian spirit of open minds. So as far as possible we tried, as I said, to choose the right word and to stick with it even in fairly routine phrases. Thus phainetai is almost always "it appears" and dokei "it seems." At the same time we tried to remain open to significant nuances and strange turns within each dialogue, though our avoidance of methodical translating bound to a particular interpretation of Platonic philosophy applied mainly across the dialogues: In taking up the Phaedo we saw once again the truth of the teaching that each dialogue is a fresh world of discourse and is to be faced without preconceptions regarding "Platonic thought." That observation is particularly true as between dialogues in which Socrates guides the conversation and those in which he only listens in or is, finally, even absent.

As far as preparation is concerned, since none of us can really read Greek as a living language, we were glad to see that we could do pretty well on a lot of Greek reading experience to give us a feel for the intention and on enough grammatical expertise to tell us when we needed to do careful parsing. We found that besides Liddell-Scott we needed to have at hand Roget's Thesaurus to help us to the word we were looking for.

But we think that all in all, the main requirement for translators of Plato, and our advice to them, is to believe in the semantic plenitude of the Platonic texts, and to produce an English version that, like the Greek, says more than the translators know.