

interpretation

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Volume 12 number 1

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Discussion

Justice in Translation

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According to a familiar story, a freshman in a great books course was asked what translation of the *Iliad* his class was reading. No translation, he answered, the original Old English.

The *Iliad* of Lang, Leaf, and Meyers is unusual in that it attempts to recreate the distance between the reader and the supposed context of the original. The more ordinary choice is to present a classical author in a contemporary style and tacitly assume that the author can be read as a contemporary. This assumption has a corollary, that the classical author, having addressed himself to a matter of enduring concern (as evidenced by his being translated), participates with the modern reader in a common and readily available purpose.

These are the assumptions that seem to underlie a recent translation of Plato's *Republic* by G. M. A. Grube.¹ Hackett has put it out in paperback in a generously-sized octavo format that is easy to read and comfortable to hold. Adequate margins with Stephanus page and section references make it a useful edition for the student. The volume is not encumbered by scholarly apparatus: the preface, introduction and brief bibliography take up in all a scant eight pages. The introduction aims at no more than describing the dialogue's place in a very general historical and biographical survey. There is a page-long introduction to each book, illuminating the "main thread of the discussion" (p. v), and a minimal use of notes in the body of the translation. Grube aims "to combine successfully fidelity to [his] author with natural readability" (p. iv). He eschews paraphrase altogether and mostly achieves an uninterrupted flow of educated, contemporary English. His style and vocabulary are plain in the best sense. Grube has a good ear for that level of the language which is idiomatic without blatant colloquialisms, which is free from mannerisms of diction or structure, and which will not be rapidly dated. It is an English that has many of the virtues we would look for in a translation of Plato's Greek.

But Grube's translation also has its share of flaws. Although some of these could be overlooked as occasional infelicities or minor errors, taken together these flaws raise the question whether this translation has, at its core, a different purpose from that served in the original. Grube's text often expresses individual turns of the conversation with great clarity, but it often achieves this

1. *Plato's Republic*, tr. by G. M. A. Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1974).

clarity by disregarding the larger arguments which these single episodes constitute. Not only does he lose the context for the separate discussions, he also does not convey the effects of the book's dialogic structure and hortatory design. These deficiencies appear especially when the text broaches a problem prominent either in modern thought or in the modern conception of Plato's thought. Grube's translation thus serves the same purpose as his earlier book, *Plato's Thought*: "In each of the eight chapters of this book the reader will find an account, as complete and concise as I can make it, of what Plato said on the subject discussed . . ." (three of the chapters, for example, are "The Theory of Ideas," "Art," "Statecraft").

This question of purpose can, in fact, be asked of four other translations with which I will compare Grube's. It is one aspect of the more general question, what does an English Plato mean? In the following pages I will compare the Greek text with the English versions in order to discover their individual virtues and deficiencies, assess their relative merits, and attempt to illuminate the general problem of reading Plato in modern dress.³ I will make no brief on behalf of Old English, but it seems to me that some of the assumptions of all these translations need to be called into question.

In Part I, I will consider first Grube's basic accuracy in rendering the Greek without addition or loss; second, how he has managed some particularly difficult problems of Greek idiom not amenable to "literal" translation. From there I will consider how well his rendering of particular passages fits in with their context, to what extent the translation respects the argument as Plato spins it, and how well the translation represents the special form of Plato, the dialogue. I will adduce for comparison two other readily available translations, that by Desmond Lee in the Penguin series, and the copiously annotated translation by Paul Shorey in the Loeb Library.⁴ In Part II, I will look at the assumptions and methods of the translations by Allan Bloom and A. D. Lindsay, mostly with reference to passages already discussed, and conclude with a brief assessment of the practical strengths of each of the five translations, and the uses to which they are adaptable.

I

Plato, legend has it, died while revising the order of the opening four words of the *Republic*. The story must give a translator pause. But in English, the order of the Greek, "I went down yesterday to the Piraeus" (Lee, Shorey), does

2. (London, 1935,) p. ix.

3. The problem of the historicity of understanding is not primary here, since the comparison is between a modern reading of the Greek text and a modern translation.

4. Plato, *The Republic*, tr. by Desmond Lee (second ed., revised, New York *etc.*, 1974). Plato, *The Republic*, tr. by Paul Shorey (Cambridge, Mass. and London, I, 1930 (rev. 1937), II,

nothing but introduce a slightly awkward emphasis on “yesterday”; Grube’s “I went down to the Piraeus yesterday” is normal English for the Greek and places whatever secondary emphasis there is where it should be, on the destination. In the next sentence Socrates, reporting on the new festival, says he admired “our own procession” and graciously adds that “that which the Thracians had sent was no less outstanding” (Grube). But it is not so simple. Has Socrates gone down to the Piraeus as a local or a visitor? The theories that Plato has Socrates descend—and to the most feverish district of Attica at that—to construct a model of what is above, urge a detachment of Socrates from the lower realm. The Greek (327a4) has not “our own” but “of the local inhabitants” (“local contribution to the procession,” Lee; Shorey only confuses with “of the citizens”). Further, there is a historical problem: were the Thracians resident aliens or envoys? Adam notes, *ad loc*, that the former was more likely. So Grube has introduced a sharper distinction between “us” and “them” than Socrates seems to feel or make (indeed, in 327b he makes a point of his own intention to leave). Grube appears to have been led into this by his translation of *epempon* (327a5) as “sent.” That is the common meaning, but construed with its cognate *pompên*, which must mean “procession,” the verb needs a more germane translation. Shorey, with “the show made by the marching of the Thracian contingent,” gets it precisely right. He also observes the force of the tense of *epempon*, for which Grube implies an aorist rather than imperfect. And Shorey has perhaps picked up some of the spirit of the “p” alliteration in the Greek. What is disturbing about Grube’s handling of the verb is that the errors of translation are elementary, and careless. These may seem like small matters, but along with his forthright presentation of idiomatic English, he has gratuitously given an unlikely historical interpretation, and he has obscured the dramatic situation and hence the potential significance of Socrates’s presence.

Grube translates accurately, of course, more often than not, but such errors do occur. Here is another example. At 589c7, Socrates proposes to tell the panegyrist of injustice how they would say *καὶ τὰ καλὰ καὶ τὰ αἰσχρὰ νόμιμα . . . γειγονέναι*. Grube’s translation, “beautiful and ugly traditions have originated,” looks right only at first glance. “Traditions” is hardly the subject of this discussion; “the origin . . . of the conventional notions of fair and foul” (Lee) is what they are discussing.

As these examples show, there is considerable variation in quality throughout the translation. Many difficulties are rendered simply and well. In 343c Thrasymachus restates his position. The reader must keep straight the relations

1935). I will occasionally refer also to *The Republic of Plato*, tr. by F. M. Cornford (New York, 1945), a widely used paraphrastic version. Jowett’s translation is perhaps still the one most in circulation, but it pays the penalty now for having been highly idiomatic in its own time, and I will make almost no reference to it. I have made use of the running commentary and notes of James Adams, *The Republic of Plato* (Cambridge, 2 vols., 1902). The translators will be cited by name. All references are *ad loc*. unless page number is given.

of many terms expressing three basic contrasts: justice/injustice, ruler/subject, advantage/harm. The Greek takes full advantage of its resources of parallelism and coordinating particles; the English tends to get awkward. But Grube makes it easy to follow and manages to imitate the exaggerated clarity of the original within English idiom. For example, *τοὐναντίον* (343c6), is predicative in Greek and is laboriously translated as such by Shorey and Lee (“is the contrary, and . . .”); Grube makes the point clearer with an adverbial phrase (“on the other hand”).

But often the same passage illustrates both flawed and deft translation. In 572e5–573c, Socrates describes the *eros* implanted in the youth who becomes tyrannical. Grube uses “lust” and “love” appropriately, and captures well the “sting of longing” (*pothos*). Shorey’s vocabulary here is correct but cumbersome; Lee imports more sexual reference than is called for, and obscures the presentation of Eros as a mythological figure. But Grube drops the whole phrase introducing the simile of the drone bee (573a1), rendering the reference to it in the next paragraph incomprehensible. Socrates, in 422e2–7, about to observe that the oversized, wealthy city is disunited, denies the name “city” to any other state than one such as “we are founding” (Grube). This translation of *κατασκευάζομεν* pleasingly recalls the historical precedent of colonization implied in the dialogue. But the word actually means “build” or “construct” (whether buildings or institutions), and that is the sense and context needed here (so Lee and Shorey). On the other hand, when Adeimantos asks for a different name, and Socrates says only that one must address other cities *μειζονῶς*—literally, “more greatly,” Grube’s (=Lee’s) “find a grander name for them” nicely fits the sense and the ironical spirit and vigor of the Greek. This time one can hardly read Shorey without wincing: “a greater predication must be applied.” Even though “greater” leads more exactly to the problems of size and number, its use here illustrates well the false value of literalism which Grube at his best avoids.

Small problems of idiom often call out the best in Grube’s translation. For example, in 332c6 the double question, idiomatic in Greek but foreign to English, is nicely rendered with a paratactic addition: *τίσιν τί*, etcetera, becomes “what does the craft . . . give . . . , and to whom?” (cf. Shorey!). The beliefs of the guardians are set fast, 430a–b, not to be washed out by emotions which are stronger than any “powder or soda or soap” (Shorey: “detergent . . . abstergent . . . lye”). When Cephalus sums up the usefulness of money (331b5–6), Grube cuts through the awkwardness and indefiniteness of, for example, “setting one thing against another” (Lee) with “benefit for benefit.”

Perhaps no small difference in the idioms of the two languages is so taxing as that of pronouns. Because Greek has a multiplicity of demonstrative and third person pronouns, the advantages of case and gender, and a stock of correlative particles, a Greek paragraph can go quite a distance without repeating

an antecedent. Moreover, Greek style tolerates a much greater degree of indeterminacy than does English. Grube does not respond to this difficulty consistently. Sometimes he will substitute an antecedent for a pronoun (for example, 430d8–9), at other times leave a hanging “this” (for example, 328e4).

A mishandling of the pronoun idioms can seriously disturb the sense. The double question mentioned above occurs in the discussion of justice as a *technê* analogous to medicine and cooking (332c6–d2). The question is asked three times, once for each craft, and the interrogative *τίσιν* turns out to be masculine twice, neuter once. Grube keeps “to whom?” all three times, and so even gives us: “What does . . . cooking give . . . , and to whom?—It adds flavor to food.” He has chosen to preserve a verbal pattern that has no logical value, and to make Socrates sound awkward. Since the whole discussion here is intended to clarify by the use of familiar examples—that is, the passage has a conversational rather than expository tone—Grube actually works against the intended effect. Here the problem can be met by “what” (Shorey) and does not call for abandonment of the parallel construction.

In this last case the difficulty concerned one word. But in the fullest uses of the pronominal idioms, Plato balances several pronouns against each other. In such passages the differences between Greek and English are so marked that the failure of the translator to represent the Greek closely must be evaluated in a larger context. Consider 438, in Grube’s translation. Socrates expounds the proposition that “in the case of all things that are related to another, when the first is qualified by a predicate, the second is too, but each in itself is unqualified and directed to an unqualified object” (438a7–b2). When Glaucon fails to comprehend, Socrates offers examples taken from the relation of opposed comparatives—something greater against something smaller—and from the field of knowledge—knowledge becomes specifically architecture when it is knowledge of house-building. Then he repeats the general proposition with minor changes of wording (438d11–13; Grube uses a somewhat condensed but very clear version of his rendering of the first statement).

Plato uses no words here for the ideas of “related, qualified, predicate,” *et sim.* Instead of saying “related” he uses correlative pronouns; for “qualified” he uses, in effect, a “such . . . as” construction. “Than” and “of,” as in “greater than the smaller” and “knowledge of building a house,” are both expressed by the genitive case or by the preposition *πρός*. Plato takes them as similar relations of subject and object. Shorey, in a note, calls this passage “a palmary example of the concrete simplicity of Greek idiom in the expression of abstract ideas.” He offers a literal version of the second statement of the proposition: “. . . of all things that are such as to be of something, those that are just themselves only are of things just themselves only, but things of a certain kind are of things of a kind.” No wonder Glaucon was confused.

But Plato explains Plato. When Cornford, defending his method of para-

phrase, condemns Shorey's version as of little use to "one more concerned to follow Plato's argument than to relish . . . Greek idiom"⁵ he not only disregards some of Plato's intention, he ignores the student who is trying to understand the problem of Plato's place in the history of the Western mind. Plato does not write with a post-Aristotelian vocabulary. Nonetheless, English cannot bear Greek's idiom without becoming impossibly burdensome to read. The dilemma may well be insoluble. Grube's version reads well, but perhaps he does not offer enough to the modern student who is as persevering as Glaucon.

This last example raises the possibility that by translating Plato too clearly one may overlook what is actually happening. Two more small examples will illustrate this problem. In 329c Grube renders idiomatically and directly Cephalos's recollection of the time he asked Sophocles about his sex life. Cephalos then generalizes to *epithumiai* ("appetites," Grube: "desires") as a class, and in his repetition of Sophocles's opinion the plural genitive *τουτων* (d2) must refer not to the collective *aphrodisia* but to the appetites. Grube takes it, however, as "sex." This is an error, but note that in making it he gains forcefulness in the moment and loses a foreshadowing of the discussion of how the just man happily regulates himself. In 342c8 Socrates points out that the *technai* "govern and have power over their object" (Grube). For *archein* "govern" is the best choice I found to mediate the meanings of "be the first part of" and "rule." For *kratein* "have power" is also easy and exact; but then one must translate the familiar "advantage of the stronger" (*kreittonos*, c11 and elsewhere) as "of the more powerful" or the clarity and construction of the argument will get lost. Grube does not follow through; indeed, in c11 he has "its own advantage."

The combination of consistency and precision in translation matters most when the words assume, even for a moment, the force of technical terms. In 454a–b Socrates, preparing to meet the objection that women differ in nature from men, remarks on the difference between eristic, which the *antilogikê technê* introduces, and dialectic. The implied and self-illuminating contrast between *antilegein* and *dialegein* is perhaps beyond translation. More importantly, the translator confronts the two-fold problem of maintaining both the technical distinction between the two types of verbal investigation and the appropriateness of both words to the informal, conversational context in which they are used. For he must remember that the casual reference to "dialectic" here is preparatory to the reintroduction of it as a major and strictly defined topic in Book VII; and he must not forget that in English "dialectic" and "eristic" belong to a technical vocabulary used only in philosophic studies. Shorey uses the technical terms once, the informal "wrangling" and "arguing" once; at best, this points out the problem. Lee chooses a distinction of purpose: "score points

5. P. vi. Cornford ignores Shorey's first version of the proposition, which uses modern, technical language much like Grube's. Shorey frequently uses alternative styles of translation for two statements of the same idea.

in a debate” and “argue seriously.” He loses the reference to technique and to the basic meanings of the words which Grube attains by contrasting “disputing” and “conversing.” Indeed, Grube’s is probably the simplest and clearest version in the immediate context, but by their very familiarity his English terms fail to prepare the reader for “dialectic” in its technical and philosophic sense.

In 382 Socrates rejects the stories of deception by the gods in popular mythology by distinguishing between the *ὡς ἀληθῶς ψεύδος* and verbal falsehood. The former is a misunderstanding in the soul about reality. *Pseudos* is a word of much greater range in Greek than “lie” is in English. It frequently means “deliberate misrepresentation,” but it can refer to any representation and often means “misrepresentation from whatever cause.”⁶ The distinction which Socrates makes here is not easy; Adeimantos needs two tries to get it. But Grube does not make it any easier. In the mysterious phrase *τῷ κυριώτατῳ . . . ψεύδεσθαι καὶ περὶ τὰ κυριώτατα* (382a7–8; Shorey overclarifies it: “falsehood in the most vital part . . . about their most vital concerns”) Grube translates *pseudesthai* by an explicit verb of speaking: “to speak untruth with most important part of himself about the most important subjects.” But it turns out that *pseudesthai* here refers to what is *not* the verbal falsehood. For this phrase is explained by a parallel expression a few lines later (b1–2): *τῇ ψυχῇ περὶ τὰ ὄντα ψεύδεσθαί τε καὶ ἐψεῦσθαι καὶ ἀμαθῆ εἶναι*. . . . Grube’s translation of this, “to lie and to be in a state of untruth about reality in one’s soul, to be ignorant . . .”, removes the emphasis from the opening words and generally obscures the parallelism (note the change from “with” to “in” for the dative; compare Shorey: “that deception in the soul about realities, to have been deceived and to be blindly ignorant . . .”). Thus Grube provides a passage in clear, smooth English which actually obscures the very point under discussion. But this is a vital moment. Plato introduces here the distinction between a world of unchanging perfection and the human world. He makes the distinction in reference to the gods of popular belief, not to philosophic “ideas”; and in this way he grounds the introduction of the absolute world of thought in common religious feeling. The hortatory intent of the book, as well as the philosophic, requires us to respect his method.

This last series of examples, drawn mostly from the first half of the *Republic*, points up how the basic ideas treated in the *Republic* are bound into the development of the dialogue as a conversation, rather than as an exposition. The translator, by focusing rather narrowly on the most prominent needs of the passage, has mistranslated a broader reference. In the end, the accuracy of the rendering of individual statements cannot be considered apart from the translator’s appreciation of the dialogic form.

Grube presents the dialogue in paragraph form, but wherever Socrates is developing an idea through a series of questions and assents—which is to say,

6. Grube’s note to 377e7 explains that *pseudos* can mean “untruth,” but it does not really explain Socrates’s point. That note actually applies to this passage, which adds to the confusion.

most of the time—Grube omits the introductory “he said” and attaches the assents (which, he asserts, “do not contribute to the argument,” p. vi) to the paragraphs of Socrates’s statements by means of a dash. The style excludes quotation marks. However common the form of dialogue was in the early Fourth Century, the Athenian reader could hardly have been less distracted by the mechanics of its presentation than is the modern reader, who has had experience with the novel before he comes to Plato. Plato chose to maintain that form over continuous, or at least less frequently interrupted, expositions. While Grube’s convenient format does not suppress any substance, it encourages the reader not to regard the form a matter of importance.

As a type of dramatization the dialogue derives its life from the adaptation of style to the content and to the intended emotional force of any given moment of conversation. Grube relies basically on a flexible English period of moderate length. It easily accommodates extended phrases, subordinate clauses and paratactic additions but shies away from oratorical rotundity. It is an expository style, capable of setting out an idea fully. At its best Grube can make it both dignified and moving:

Perhaps, I said, it is a model laid up in heaven, for him who wishes to look upon, and as he looks, set up the government of his soul. It makes no difference whether it exists anywhere or will exist. He would take part in the public affairs of that city only, not of any other. (592b2–5—the close of Book IX)

The concluding myth of Er, which is one of the longest continuous expositions in the *Republic*, is also effectively rendered, but with one exception. The proclamation of the heavenly messenger, 617d6–e5, is couched in a heraldically compact, nominal style (which Denniston derives from the style of the pre-Socratics). It is a forceful and dramatic bit of mimesis in the original, but unnoticeable in the translation.

The problem with Grube’s style, indeed, is that he cannot shake off the expository tone. Consider Socrates’s description of the “democratic” man’s dissipation: *τοτὲ μὲν μεθύων καὶ καταυλούμενος. αὐτίς δὲ ὑδροποτῶν καὶ κατισχαινόμενος* (561c7–8). There is a rhetorical flourish in this which is hardly captured by: “At one time he drinks heavily to the accompaniment of the flute, at another he drinks only water and is wasting away.” Compare Lee: “One day it’s wine, women and song, the next water to drink and a strict diet.”⁷

Such inflexibility can obscure the intent of an important passage. At the end of Book III (416d2–417b8) Socrates prescribes the ascetic and communal life of the guardians. The specifics are set out in an extended series of infinitive clauses (sometimes elliptical) dependent on *dei* (“it is necessary”). The last clause introduces further infinitives in indirect discourse, then the original con-

7. Shorey’s version is more pejoratively loaded. Cf., on the rest of this passage, *infra* p. 92. For other examples of Grube’s failure to match style, see 377a7 and 401c with Adam’s notes.

struction is resumed with a heightened impersonal expression, “it is not lawful” (*ou themis*). These infinitive instructions are capped by an emphatic potential optative phrase whose verb is repeated in active and passive: literally, “thus they would be saved and would save the city.” And this in turn gives way to a monitory future indicative condition. The vigor of the Greek is achieved by the change to increasingly forceful types of construction after the accumulation of infinitives, something not easily imitated in English. But Grube flattens the climax by dropping the repetition of the optative verb (“they may preserve themselves and their city”), and by substituting the translation of the more common subjunctive future condition (as English present) for the more emotional future indicative. The emphasis is thereby shifted to the regulations themselves and away from the importance which Socrates attaches to having these men lead a reformed life.

Above all, the dialogue, as a conversation, establishes a context within which ideas are developed. The context is for the most part defining and limiting. The dialogue prevents an idea from being applied outside the sphere in which it was raised, and limits its application to the matter at hand. Indeed, dialogue permits the introduction of topics for essentially negative purposes, as when Socrates deliberately confuses Polemarchos by proving that the just man is a thief (333e–334a, cf. Adam’s note *ad loc.*); or when he simultaneously demonstrates and dismisses the technical aspect of music, which makes its reform possible, by intentionally confused references to Damon’s rhythmic theory (400b). Grube renders these passages without gain or loss.

But the translator’s care is most needed whenever the positive development of a topic suggests to modern thought more than Plato allows it. In such cases Grube does not always preserve Plato’s limitations by observing his construction of the argument. In 400d11–401d2, Socrates argues that the city’s artisans must imitate only the best. The basis of the argument is that rhythm, harmony, and form (the danced ode is the governing example) must conform to the *logos*, and the *logos* conforms to the character (*êthos*) of the soul. If the *êthos* is good, the other qualities will also be present: εὐλογία ἄρα καὶ εὐαρμοσσία καὶ εὐσχημοσύνη καὶ εὐρυθμία εὐηθεία ἀκολουθεῖ . . . (400d11–e1) “So fine speech, fine music, gracefulness, and fine rhythm are all adapted to a simplicity of character . . .” (Grube). Even allowing in Grube’s translation for the break in the pattern for “gracefulness,” “simplicity” translates only that meaning of *euêtheia* which Socrates rejects in the next two lines, and carries neither the meaning nor verbal pattern (corresponding to the repeated εὐ-) needed here. And “fine” is hardly the necessary moral term. But Grube has in fact already risked the vital connection by translating *logos* as “word” in d4, “content” in d9, and “speech” here. And he does not recapture the intent by translating the opposites, *kakologia* and *kakoêtheia* (401a6), as “poor language” and “poor character.”

From this basic proposition Socrates goes on (401b4) to the enthusiastic in-

junction against artisans who present less than the best always. The argument leads us to look at the work of the craftsman with our eye on the moral quality of the soul reflected in the surface features of the work. “Beauty” as a purely aesthetic quality should have no place. Plato makes this clear by starting negatively and using clearly moral language. The positive notion enters only after the simile of the harmful pasturage, and still with a rural metaphor: the craftsman of good natural ability (εὐφυῶς δυνάμενος) tracks down the nature of the *kalon* (“beautiful,” first occurrence in this passage) and *euschêmon* (“graceful”—but see below). Those who enjoy his works are like those living in a healthy place, and from their perception of the *kala erga* comes assimilation to the *kalos logos*. This last is obviously the *eulogia* that expressed good character; *kalos* in this passage may be “beautiful” rather than “good” but it has been strictly defined, both by context and by pairing with a *eu*-compound from the preceding part of the argument. Grube, however, obfuscated the context by his translation of the preparatory argument, and now translates *euschêmon* without reference to its key element. And though the use of *logos* here is transitional to the acquisition of reason in the next paragraph, the translation “beauty of reason” for *kalos logos* completely obscures the connection of this climax to what had led up to it. Finally, Grube takes the three nouns for the assimilation, *ὁμοιοτήτα τε καὶ φιλίαν καὶ συμφωνίαν* and renders *philia* first, to get “love of, resemblance to, and harmony with . . .” But *philia* is determined by its position here. It must mean the affinity of those belonging to the same group (see LSJ), not a quasi-erotic passion which deserves primary emphasis. Shorey, for this same passage, has notes on the similarity of Plato to Wordsworth, and though he preserves most of the restraints of Plato’s language, his modern bias leads him to call the *eikones* produced by the artisans “symbols” (“images,” Grube). The translators would prefer a Grecian Plato to a Greek; but the Athenian would have us embrace beauty only as a useful manifestation of good character.

I have already had occasion to cite one of the best-known sections of the *Republic*, in which Socrates derides the democratic man who treats all his desires equally (561). The description of his behavior is loaded with words that have political meanings, in particular *timê* and its compounds (*atimazein* (b5)—“disdain” (Grube), but also “disenfranchise”—is the most obvious). These keep alive the political meaning of *isos*, “equal.” Grube ignores this level of meaning until he reaches the *isonomikos* man of Glaucon’s assent to Socrates’s climactic disparaging description (561e1); he renders this as “a man who believes in legal equality.” Though “legal” covers *-nomos*, the effect here is further to obscure the consistency with which Socrates is following out the book’s dominating metaphor by portraying the condition of the man’s soul as the constitution of a city. (I have already quoted Grube’s rendering of the culminating expression of that metaphor at the end of Book IX; there he translates the difficult *heauton katoikizein* by “set up the government of his soul,”

which captures it perfectly.) For *isonomia* is a constitutional term in Greek, and though *nomos* is a new word in this context, its appearance here in a term for a type of character has been well prepared in the Greek by the metaphor. Since Grube's "legal" is unprepared in the translation, it appears as a new idea. As a result, Grube's Socrates suddenly seems to be taking pot shots at a type of political theorist. (Lee was careful to maintain the constitutional metaphor and his translation of *isonomikos*—"one who believes in liberty and equality"—is consistent with the rest of the passage. Shorey, slightly less careful than Lee, seems all too happy to present a Socrates merely satirizing the "devotee of democracy.") Grube, apparently caught by a momentary interest in exhibiting Socrates's infamous attack on the spirit of democracy, has obscured the language which carefully circumscribes that attack with a concern for the soul, and never in fact even broaches a political recommendation.

All translators, it would appear, infringe the integrity of the dialogue in quite another way: notes. The voice of the teacher, for example, is never very far in Lee's edition. Shorey writes footnotes in profusion, creating as it were a dialogue with the dialogue; I'm not sure whether his method ultimately distracts the reader from Plato's presentation, as Lee's does, or emphasizes it. It is notable that Shorey has no headnotes. Grube uses both kinds, but with great moderation; the headnotes are only a page, and only once per book. Most of the footnotes are explanations of words which lack a precise equivalent in English or are significantly bound up in a cultural context. These notes are often excellent, concise and precise at once:⁸ on *technê*, 332c; on the pun on *skylax*, 375a; on *sôphrosynê*, 430d; on *philosophos*, 376b; on *musikê*, 376e; on *theos*, 377e; on Plato's avoidance of technical terms, 534a. But Grube also interferes. The note to 335d makes sure that everyone is aware of Socrates's "rising to a higher ethic"; the first note in Book V declares that the following books are "formally a digression, but only formally, for they contain vitally important themes." Grube opposes form, apparently unessential, to themes, which are vital. It is true that Plato stages the ensuing discussion as an interruption, but Grube distracts the reader from seeing how the example of the communal-ity of wives shows that the laws and upbringing mentioned at the close of Book IV, and needed to produce the fully just man, cannot be achieved by conventional kingship, as seems to be implied there. The "theme" is not only vital, but formally integral.

And some notes go beyond interfering in the argument; they contain implications which undermine it. "Socrates reminds his hearers that all he has said applies to women too. It reads almost as if Plato had to remind himself!" (p. 167, headnote to VIII). Plato's personal problems also explain 577b, where Socrates and the others pretend to describe the tyrant as members of his household. We are informed that "Plato is here in fact claiming to speak with full

8. But the notes are not fully edited. The one to 361b misquotes the translation of 362a; the name Creophylos in 600b is misspelled Creophilos in the note.

knowledge” based on his visit to Dionysios I. But that makes the passage inductive, when in fact it is deduced from the *logos* of the parts of the soul and their “political” relations. For a discussion of happiness dependent on personal observation we could have stopped at Book II.⁹ Notice, too, that Grube’s use of “knowledge” here denies the superiority of reason to perception.

Grube’s lack of respect for the genesis of the argument in the dialogue and for its discursive development comes out especially in passages which touch on the pervasive problem of the relation of the model city to the world in which we apparently find ourselves, the one in which the dialogue takes place. Our understanding of that relationship is tied up with our notion of the famous “Forms.” I observed above how Plato is careful to ground his first references to the world of absolute truth in common religious feeling. He himself makes scant reference to his “Forms” in the *Republic*, though their importance to the description of the philosopher in Books VI and VII is self-evident. So it is worth noting that Grube introduces them in the notes before Plato does in the text (note to 473a in particular, but cf. that to 402c), and goes to some length to explain them (notes to 476a, e). His explanations involve capitalization: Form, Beauty, Justice, etcetera; and they tend to focus our attention on another world, one entirely distinct from this one.

But in fact Plato does not make things so easy. He smoothly and closely interweaves the levels without loss of distinction. A fairly clear example is furnished by a small remark at 396e2. Socrates dismisses narrative containing impersonation of lesser men; it is something a moderate man won’t engage in, except perhaps for the sake of “play” (Grube; “jest,” Shorey, “amusement,” Lee). Shorey has a sententious note here on the preferability of gross comedy to insidiously false romance. Grube’s note points out the paradox that Socrates usually attaches great importance to play. Their translations of this passage are not inaccurate, but what neither shows is that in b10–c3 Plato had described his conception of the perfectly proper man’s behavior in potential optatives, and then, to explain it more fully, used subjunctive conditional sentences. The subjunctive constructions extrapolate from present situations and provide an empirical model, not an idea. The proviso “except for the sake of play” saves the empirical generalization from challenge and has nothing to do with any ideal notion of play.

In the simile of the divided line, 509d–511c, the word for “form,” *eidos*, occurs four times. The first time, before the line is introduced, it is a synonym for *genos* in the presentation of the two realms which are to be discussed. “So you have two kinds, the visible and the intelligible.” The second use occurs in 510b8 where Socrates is discussing how the soul makes its way in the uppermost section of the line, that is, in the upper section of the part which represents the intelligible *eidos*; he will later call this method *noêsis*. It proceeds,

9. In so far as Plato means, by the pretense, to suggest an example from experience, it would need to be part of the audience’s experience too. Critias will do, we need not go abroad.

he says, *αὐτοῖς εἶδει*, “by forms themselves” (Lee; “by ideas only,” Shorey). For this instance of the word Grube shifts to his uppercase and inserts a definite article, “the Forms themselves.” He thereby imposes a sharp and unwarranted distinction in terminology between the two *kinds* that constitute the two realms of the line’s major divisions, and the *forms* with which the upper part of the line is concerned. The third use is in the explanation of the lower section of the upper part, the section of *dianoia*, in 510d5. Here the plural of *eidos* signifies the “visible figures” (Grube)—items of the upper section of the lower half—about which one talks while reasoning about what they represent or imitate. This use refers back to the first one, in 507d4, but the plural here indicates particular items within the class while the qualifier “visible” seems to be the key to distinguishing these *eidê* from the ones *noêsis* works through. These latter are once again referred to in the fourth use, 511c2, where they are in contrast but not opposition to the assumptions (*hypotheseis*) used in the third section (that of *dianoia*) and, at first, in the fourth. Since the assumptions are based on the visible *eidê*, the distinction between *eidê* as “figures” and as “Forms” which Grube insists on here seems unjustified (Grube drops the article in 511c2, although the Greek is virtually identical to 510b8). Plato’s vocabulary does not lead to clear and easily understood distinctions here, and does not justify translating *eidos* as if its uses in relation to the uppermost section were self-evidently distinct from the others, even if the translator is prepared to argue that such a meaning is implied by considerations not immediate to the text. Grube’s practice responds not to the text of Plato, but to a presumptive concern to present an exposition of Platonic Forms.

The force of Grube’s concern can be measured at 511b8, where Socrates says that in *noêsis* the *logos* reaches *μέχρι τοῦ ἀνυποθέτου ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ πάντος ἀρχήν*, “that which is beyond hypothesis, the first principle of all that exists” (Grube). By translating *hypothesis* throughout by its transliteration and derivative, “hypothesis,” rather than by its meaning, “assumption” or “pre-supposition,” Grube renders the whole discussion of the upper line all but incomprehensible. Leaving that problem aside, however, compare Shorey’s version: “that which requires no assumption and is the starting point of all.” In his notes throughout, Shorey tries to lower the ceiling in the discussion, and insists that the *archê*, the idea of the good, is never anything but the sufficient “sanction” sought in any given discussion of ethics and politics. He is zealous in separating the significance from the “transcendental rhetoric” (II 106, note a); thus he chooses “starting-point.” The “of all” is an embarrassment he attempts to explain away. Grube obviously disagrees. But only by reference to that modern dispute can we understand Grube’s addition of “that exists” and the essentially emotional translation of *μέχρι τοῦ ἀνυποθέτου* as an invitation to that boundless empyrean “beyond hypothesis.”

The concentration on “Forms” leads to a further consequence. Grube tends to skew the whole presentation of the upper half of the line towards an empha-

sis on the objects of the mental process described there. It is just this predisposition toward the “Forms” and toward objects that leads to the debate over whether or not Plato conceives of “mathematicals” as objects of reasoning intermediate between Forms and sensible objects. Throughout this passage Plato refers to objects of the upper half and especially to those of the third section with a maximum of indefiniteness, achieved in large measure by a reliance on neuter pronouns, passive participles and vague prepositional phrases. In the face of this familiar problem of translation, Grube allows more independent and substantial terms to appear. Thus in 511e2 “the things over which they [the “processes” (Grube) of the soul] are” becomes “the content of its particular section.” The clarity of the discussion is also clouded by a mishandling of a partitive genitive in 511c5–6 and of one of the vague neuter pronouns of c8. Insofar as Plato does present the “objects” of the upper half he does so only in metaphorical extensions of the visible objects of the lower half. The fullest presentation of that metaphor—perhaps better, of that simile within a simile—is Glaucon’s expression of his understanding in 511c3–d5; the verbs Glaucon uses for the activity of *noêsis* are basically visual (as Lee notes). Grube’s translation of them ignores the metaphor. This passage goes farther than any other in specifying the existence of the “objects”; Socrates’s reply to it is *ικανώτατα*—“quite sufficient” (Shorey), not Grube’s “very satisfactory.” For it is precisely on the problem of these “objects” that Socrates abandons the simile in 534a. The cumulative effect of Grube’s translations disposes the reader not to strive to follow up Plato’s emphases, but to stay within the confines of the contemporary classroom.

Perhaps the most famous passage in all the *Republic* is the introduction of the “philosopher-king.” Far more than the close of Books IX and X it seems to form the modern, certainly the popular, notion of how Plato would bridge the gap between the world of real ideas and this one. It will serve as a final example of how the characteristics of Greek as a language, the flexibility of the style, and the conversational context of the dialogue encumber the translator’s effort to convey Plato’s meaning.

After Socrates finishes describing the way of life of the citizen in the model city, Glaucon challenges him to show how the city is possible in practice (471c4). Socrates reminds him that the whole exercise sprang from the attempt to find the effect of justice on happiness, and compels assent to the notion that a verbal construct can be truer than any practical construction. Having thus let himself off the hook, he proceeds to answer the question in terms of present circumstances: what is there in cities now that prevents them from being like the verbal model—the question is asked in the indicative, 473b5–6—and what one smallest change would make them such as it is—the possibility is raised with a potential optative, 473b7 and c3. The change of moods helps insure a distinction of present conditions and ideas. The famous dictum introducing the philosopher-king is now spoken, but it is cast as a negative

present general condition: a subjunctive clause extrapolates from present conditions to discuss what now is. The sentence explicitly answers the first question, what is now wrong, not the second, what would effect the change: “Unless philosophers become kings. . . , there is no rest from evil for the cities . . .” The force is: “as long as philosophers are not becoming kings, there is no rest . . .” The protasis is quite long, and expresses the condition in several alternatives (unless philosophers become kings, if kings do not become philosophers, unless political power and philosophy combine, unless the practitioners of each separately are constrained, . . .), but the construction never changes. Only in the second part of the apodosis (after the parenthetical expansion of “the cities” to the “human race”) does the implied answer to the second question begin to become evident, though still in a negative statement: Socrates uses an idiomatic form of emotional negative prediction (*οὐ μὴ* with the subjunctive) to add that the city will not “grow into a possibility or see the light of day.” Socrates then explains that he had been reluctant to put forward an idea so contrary to expectation (*para doxon*—the translators use “paradox,” from which the modern reader will inevitably infer a reference to a more substantial or immediate kind of internal contradiction). Finally, in the last sentence, using the potential optative, he says that no other city would be happy.

Socrates’s statement, then, focuses our attention on what is necessary and lacking in our present cities. The context (473c1–3) leaves no doubt that what is necessary is also sufficient; but the emphasis is on the need. References to the actualization of the city are carefully distinguished by verbal mood from discussions of present circumstances. The possibility envisaged is never stated positively, and never in the usual form of a conditional with future reference (subjunctive apodosis), let alone with an unconditional future indicative. The closest Socrates comes to that is with an idiom remarkable for its emotional rather than logical force. The philosopher-king’s city is never asserted nor anticipated. The optatives instead keep the idea before us purely as an idea. This is consistent with the care with which Socrates entered upon the topic and the turn of the discussion to a definition of philosophic activity.¹⁰ His practical suggestion in 541a—to expel everyone over the age of ten—assumes the prior existence of the philosopher-king, as do the diagnoses of change in Books VIII and IX, which describe the degeneration of the city, not its coming into being.

Grube inverts the opening conditional, and translates the present tense *esti* of the apodosis as future: “Cities will have no respite from evil . . . , unless . . .” This shifts the emphasis away from current conditions, and towards future events, and destroys the contrast with the second part of Socrates’s statement (the *οὐ μὴ* clause). Such changes appear to be small, and they achieve an easy English idiom. But without the meticulously logical structure and without the distinctions drawn by the idioms of the three moods of the Greek

10. The restatement in 499 is equally circumspect in regard to suggesting an effective action.

verb, the answer appears to be more satisfying than what Socrates actually says. For in fact Socrates is not concerned with closing the gap between the two worlds in the way that Glaucon asked.

Here indeed we may find the image of our own difficulties. We read the book to learn something, but it does not follow that a primary function of the book is to answer the questions we ask. The *Republic* seeks to persuade us to believe that we will achieve the greatest happiness by disposing our souls in a certain manner, the manner which is justice. The argument is expressed and explained through a political comparison, and in consequence there is much in the book that has to do with politics, with the grounds of persuasion, and with the soul. As has often been said, there are few topics the *Republic* does not touch on. To this diversity, add the original force of Plato's mind, his representation of the Greek tradition, and his seminal position in the history of Western philosophy, science and religion. It is no wonder that there are so many, diverse questions which we might ask when reading this book.

Fidelity to the author, however, tells us to be modest in our requests. The questions he wishes to ask and to answer must take first place. The translator, therefore, must display a scrupulous courtesy in his attention to detail, and not allow his own wishes to interfere with his guest's pleasures. But a perfect compliance proves to be impossible, for the resources at hand are those of our language, the English of the schools of the Twentieth Century, and the guest makes demands on those of his native time and place.

The good translator, then, must take the measure of his insufficiencies, and make the possible adjustments. If, indeed, he decides that his own problems are the most pressing, he can do as Cornford did, and paraphrase. The disadvantages of that method do not need to be elaborated. But if all we seek is such answers as Plato gives or suggests to what we define as problems of doctrine, Cornford offers a clear rendition of the substance of the *Republic*.¹¹ Mostly, however, we do not choose to ignore Plato to such a degree and prefer a more "literal" version that still maintains a familiar style, such as this one by Grube. I remain unconvinced that this represents the best choice, for what is familiar usually turns out to be what is expected. The modern conceptions of what Plato ought to be teaching and of the nature of his importance have interfered in the translation as surely, if not so extensively, as they would in a paraphrase. The result is a slightly different and rather less coherent book than Plato's *Republic*. A student who reads it as an exposition of what Plato thought, under the guidance of a teacher well-acquainted with the original, will not be seriously mis-

11. It is interesting that Cornford handles with ease and grace the transition, in Book I 331c, from small-talk to a philosophical conversation. This passage is one of the most illuminating examples of the closeness of dialectic and ordinary conversation. In the original the transition is quite adroit. Plato preserves the colloquial tone and key-words of the preceding remarks, but also introduces the specificity and exactness needed for a dialectical examination. Grube, Shorey, and Lee all tend to be heavy-handed, and to disrupt the continuity.

led, perhaps, but he is also not likely even to understand that he is being challenged to think his questions in a new—to him—and foreign way.

In contrast, consider Shorey's bilingual Loeb edition. Though the rendering is awkward or a bit confusing at times, and the translator rides his hobby-horses and champions his interpretations throughout the notes, the reader can never lose sight of the authority of the Greek.¹² Shorey presents his translation as interpretive: “. . . following the text closely, to use a justifiable apparent freedom in order to bring out the precise meaning of passages which long experience as a teacher and reviewer has taught me are liable to misapprehension” (p. liii). The notes and the awkwardness are a constant reminder that the conversation is not of our making. Indeed, by their very copiousness the notes honor the dialogue's authority to define the subject matter. Obviously the loss of a literary grace natural to English and corresponding to the original's weakens this text (though a certain pungency is retained), and for some creates an adventitious obstacle to reading and comprehension. But overall it is enough that Shorey's style is serviceable, consistent, and supple.

So the problem with Grube's version may lie not so much in the execution as in the plan. I wonder why the goal of “natural readability” seems so self-evidently sound; why, indeed, it should be easy to read Plato's *Republic*. Fully to understand it and to feel its persuasive force requires that one learn ancient Greek, a somewhat laborious undertaking, and acquire a considerable knowledge of the cultural background. Put into English the *Republic* requires less work; it remains a twenty-five-hundred-year-old document in another language no matter how we present it. If we expect it to contribute to our own and our students' understanding of the origin of modern thought and its significance, let alone if we wish to preserve some of the good of the original exhortation, we will have to work at it a bit, and accept, not disguise, the moderate difficulty.

II

Shorey's version is more difficult than Grube's, but he does address “an attentive and educated English reader” (p. liii). Grube doesn't describe his reader but clearly he would be the same man, though perhaps at the end of the Twentieth Century he is not quite so well educated. Lee, in preparing his revised Penguin edition, had in mind not only the “general reader” of Dr. Rieu's original instructions, but “students or others engaged in academic work” as well. He still aimed at a “swift, natural version” but revised “to bring the English more

12. I should emphasize that my consideration of Shorey is only of the fully annotated Loeb edition. The text of Shorey's translation is reprinted without notes in Hamilton and Cairns, ed., *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, Bollingen series, 71 (New York, 1961), but the effect is quite different. Shorey's notes comment on the translation to such a degree that they must be considered a part of it; conversely, the translation without the notes is incomplete.

severely close to the Greek,” steering between the Scylla of Shorey and the Charybdis of Cornford.¹³ In respect to their audience the three do not differ much, but Lee is more akin to Grube. The samples quoted above are sufficient to show that the two share many qualities; Lee however manages not to stumble into Grube’s excesses and misapprehensions. Like Grube he is willing to rewrite, for example, the paragraph introducing the philosopher-king, and often his language is freer. But he does not have a set of pre-established doctrines to exhibit, and the style is overall more varied and lively. His weakness is an excessive colloquialism of tone—this version, like Jowett’s, will age rapidly—and the lack of that formality or grace whose presence distinguishes Grube’s translation. Plato’s plain style becomes too much of a low style in Lee’s hands. Some readers will also be annoyed that he has abandoned the traditional book divisions (the book numbers and Stephanus pagination are given in the margins and in the analytical table of contents). I have already mentioned the copious, didactic notes.

Two additional translations merit our attention before I attempt to weigh the advantages of the available translations against each other. Both share with Shorey the starting premise that there are real difficulties of form and substance to be encountered by the English reader who hopes to understand Plato, and they seem to have these difficulties in mind more than the character of the reader. One, nonetheless, should be grouped with Grube and Lee as a translator who addresses the general reader; A. D. Lindsay’s version belonged originally in the *Everyman* series. But I will turn first to a translation that begins where my remarks on the difficulty of Plato leave off.

Allan Bloom is quite willing to forgo the “easygoing charms of a more contemporary style” in favor of the goal of “literal translation”; for “[*The Republic*] is in itself a difficult book and our historical situation makes it doubly difficult for us. This must not be hidden.” A translation is for those who will do the hard work; even more, it should mean to make the work available to one who has the potential to understand it better than does the translator, who must not pretend to have adequately grasped the book’s teaching. Bloom would emulate William of Moerbeke’s Latinization of Aristotle. Such measures better allow a reader to understand ancient authors as they understood themselves. And in this case, the reader will be spared the easy assumption that we now have terms for Plato’s ideas; rather, he is given the opportunity to explore, through the different meanings of terms, “the true history of political thought.”¹⁴

To free the reader from “the tyranny of the translator” Bloom proposes a “slavish, even if sometimes cumbersome literalness—insofar as possible al-

13. Pp. 9, 56–58. The difference between Lee’s two editions is considerable and my comments apply only to the second edition.

14. *The Republic of Plato*, translated, with notes and an Interpretive Essay, by Allan Bloom (New York and London: Basic Books, 1968), pp. vii, xii, xiv, xix. Bloom analyzes Cornford’s apologia at length in his introduction. Note that his references to Lee, p. ix, are to the first edition.

ways using the same English equivalent for the same Greek word” (p. vii). Meaningful terms are “translated as they have been by the great authors of the philosophic tradition”; terms of recent origin are especially eschewed (p. xiii).

Furthermore, Bloom pays rigorous attention to the dialogue format. He criticizes the tendency to discover “Plato the poet” apart from “Plato the philosopher” as a false distinction between form and substance. The dialogues are organically unified; every detail deserves the closest scrutiny; every argument must be interpreted dramatically and vice versa. The translation pays meticulous attention to the turns of conversation. There is even a separate index of terms of familiar address, and at the top of every page the speakers on the page are listed. It is, Bloom holds, our weariness or ignorance that disparages any facet of the construction. Whenever we find the language or construction most strange or cumbersome, we should be thereby warned to look most closely for the meaning we don’t expect or easily accept.¹⁵

On the basis of this proposal one would look for a rather awkward and forbidding text. In fact, despite awkward moments, Bloom is for the most part quite readable. He manages to convert clumsiness into a style more muscular and forcible than Grube’s, though like Grube’s it suffers from a certain inflexibility. Thus the end of Book III, the life enjoined on the guardians, comes over with much more vigor and feeling. Still not as dramatically forceful as the original, it is much truer to it in spirit. The end of Book IX, on the other hand, lacks the elevation and quiet strength of conviction that Grube captures. In general, Bloom’s style is the one more suitable to a conversation such as Plato reports.

Although Bloom intends the merits of his method to be measured by the effect of reading the translation through, it is not unrevealing of both merits and defects to examine his version of passages already discussed. The discussion of the relation of superficial beauty to good character, 400d–401d (above, p. 91) could stand as a model of how care for Plato’s arguments and his words (especially, in this case, *eu-* and *logos*) can produce a translation both faithful and comprehensible. The introduction of the philosopher-king in 473 (above, p. 96) is rendered very strictly, and though it lacks the color of the Greek, it retains the exactness of the thought in its context. In the discussion of the divided line (509d–511e, above, p. 94), “forms” are always “forms,” never “Forms.” The *isonomikos* of 561c1 (above, p. 92) is felicitously “the man attached to the law of democracy.”

As for the lapses, one notes that Bloom sometimes handles grammar oddly. In 401d the works of the craftsmen should lead children to likeness with fine speech, not lead them to fine speech with likeness (dative of association, not

15. P. xviii *et passim*. I think it is fair to wonder if the indications of speaker announced on every page do not in their way violate the literalness of the re-presentation; if Plato had wanted the reader to determine so easily whether Glaukos or Adeimantos were speaking he could have used their names.

dative of means). In 511b, where the *logos* reaches the first principle, the prepositional phrases are skewed: the feminine pronoun which refers to the *archê* is translated as if it were neuter, referring to “what is free from hypothesis.” In matters of vocabulary Bloom has not eliminated all confusing inconsistencies. In 342c (above, p. 88), he uses “command” for *kratein* but retains “of the stronger” for the cognate *kreittonos*, losing the connection. In 454a (above, p. 88), which “provides a first commonsense view of [dialectic’s] meaning” (Bloom’s note *ad loc.*), he adopts Shorey’s expedient of using common words once (“quarreling . . . discussing”) and the technical “eristic . . . dialectic” once, but nothing in the note or the text makes it clear that the corresponding words in each pair are from common stems. Sometimes Bloom’s literalness is simply unhelpful. To take a small example, in 430b “lyes . . . Chalestean soda and alkali” will not wash out the qualities with which the the guardians are dyed—and he even needs a note to explain “Chalestean,” a word which in Burnet’s text is given as common, not proper. More striking is the use of “demon” throughout for *daimon*. The note is scarcely adequate to the trouble this will cause; and no amount of close study of context in this one book will really cure a problem of what is—however revealing of the history of religious terminology it may be if investigated in depth—a mistranslation.

The problem with *daimon* illustrates a more serious problem inherent in the goal of literal translation. The English word used turns out to be actually or symbolically a transliteration: for “demon” read *daimon*, for “virtue” read *aretê*. Bloom’s *Republic* works as well as it does because in fact “literalness” is applied as a standard only with judgment, a judgment based on his understanding of Plato’s *Republic*. As will be evident to anyone who reads the interpretive essay placed between the translation and the notes, the understanding demands respect, and so does the judgment. Where “literalness” is not called for in his judgment, Bloom translates words and sentences according to the sense which is required by taking into consideration the context and the variety of English meanings to which the word corresponds in Greek literature. He does not have the Thracians “send” a procession in the opening paragraph, but “conduct” one. Bloom had to make decisions, some of which from the point of view of a reader ignorant of the understanding must seem arbitrary (for example, “discussing . . . dialectic”), and some of which from the point of view of the theory are arbitrary. Thus in the difficult passage about correlatives (above, p. 87), Bloom uses “related” but not “qualified”: Lindsay (see below) makes the opposite choice.

It is just as well that Bloom’s judgment is better than his theory, for the literalness he seeks is restrictive and probably chimerical anyhow. It reduces language to basic terms and propositions with insignificant developments of grammar and style. Is the circumstantial participle always to be translated by the same English construction? Clearly not. I have commended the vigor of his

reading of the end of Book III, but in fact he uses the English future for both the impersonal *dei*-plus-infinitive and for the monitory condition. Nor will one find the distinction between optative and subjunctive rigorously observed. Bloom's introduction emphasizes the importance of dramatic composition, but the translation reduces that to formulae of exchange. Particles, phrasing, rhetorical devices—all these are also part of the drama. All too often the effect must be captured in English by the very variation in vocabulary which is taboo to a literalist. I cite these shortcomings not to carp at the translation but to point out the inherent limitations of the project. The translation derives its fundamental character from Bloom's design of the best approach to an understanding of Plato.

We can note, then, some distinguishing features of the translation that belong to the design. Above all, *The Republic* is to be approached through the tradition of political philosophy that it and kindred works spawned. This represents a significant amendment to the goal of presenting the ancients as they understood themselves, and explains, for example, why *aretê* is rendered "virtue," and not "excellence." To understand Plato as his contemporaries would have, within the bounds of literalism, one would need to translate terms by the one word which fits into Greek authors from Homer to Isocrates, not by the word which is used by such subsequent authors as Cicero and William of Moerbeke. Furthermore, Bloom emphasizes the dramatic representation of Socrates as a citizen-philosopher among other citizens. The roles of the dialogue are the roles of men as actual or potential participants in the public realm. The brothers of Plato as interlocutors in this narrated dialogue are as radically distinguished as Theaetetus and Theodoros in a dramatic dialogue. The playfulness of speech is subordinated. Speech is thought leading to choice among actions—the value of speech therefore lies in its terms, definitions, and propositions. The effect of speech as action (given much credit in the "Interpretive Essay") is constructed out of this conception of its significance.

The great strength of this version is a rigorous and orderly reading of the text. Of all the translations this is the one least likely to disappoint the reader who subjects a passage to close scrutiny, and least likely accidentally to mislead the casual reader into thinking that Plato concerned himself with what he in fact did not. It is certainly the translation to be used by readers with some experience in the history of Western philosophy or in the analysis of political thought, be they advanced undergraduates or scholarly or amateur specialists in the ideas or practices of medieval or modern times. To those without this experience—beginners or those approaching it with other kinds of knowledge—this may not be a helpful book. The presentation will seem arbitrary or irrelevant. The beginning undergraduate is in danger of adopting it as a dogma, a sturdy handle on right opinion to get him through the course (the "Interpretive Essay" augments this danger), rather than as a provocation to philosophic

thought. Not surprisingly, the limitations of this translation will seem most cogent to those readers who would do with it what Bloom considers an abuse: read it, as one book among many, without study.

Unlike the others A. D. Lindsay has nothing to say about his readers, and he also has very little to say about his theory of translation.¹⁶ He includes in his introductory discussion and summary (40 pages) a paragraph on Plato's language. He emphasizes Plato's use of conversational language for "metaphysical instruction" and his avoidance of technical terms. "It is hard, if not impossible, to reproduce in English the conjunction of simple language and profound thought . . ." so he resists the use of a "dead and technical word where Plato uses a word that was alive and meant something." In particular he tries to avoid "words like 'correlative,' 'essence,' 'absolute,' or 'thing in itself.' Such words have in most cases been so affected by later philosophical usage that they suggest wrong meanings in Plato, and in any case they give an appearance of technicality which is alien to the conversational form of the *Republic*" (pp. xxxiv, xxxv). Like Bloom, he is concerned with capturing the form, and discouraging misunderstandings of the substance. The similar impetus leads to quite different choices.

Where Bloom renders *daimon* and its adjective form by "demon" and "demonic" Lindsay uses: "god, lesser deity, daemon, spirit, divine, heavenly, miraculous, more than human, demi-god, ghostly, angel" (the last in the myth of Er). He obviously seeks the English word most vivacious in context. He not only avoids technical terms, he undermines any attempt to find a consistent use of terms for the development of a consistent argument. This procedure accords with the understanding advanced in the introduction, in which he emphasizes *The Republic's* variety of subjects, changes in form, and final reliance on the representation of Socrates as the answer to its inquiries. The complete lack of notes also suggests a strong emphasis on the experience of reading the book as a whole and a disinclination to make much of the integrity of separate arguments. This is not to say, however, that Lindsay is insensitive to the course taken by any particular argument.

Overall, the translation reads well and gets its points across directly. The Thracians "ordered" their procession (327a); "men's opinions on what is noble and disgraceful have the following origins" (589c, above, p. 85), the ambivalent gender of the pronoun in the double question of 332c (above, p. 86) is resolved each time by "to whom or what." The notorious correlatives of 438a appear clearly in "whenever you have terms which imply something else, the qualified terms, I think, imply a qualified, and simple unqualified terms a simple"; the problem of lies in 382 (above, p. 89) is handled very much as it is by Shorey.

Like the others, Lindsay sometimes loses the exact sense. In 342c the English word "subject" by implying Plato's point obscures the explication of it:

16. *The Republic of Plato*, tr. with an introduction by A. D. Lindsay, a Dutton Everyman Paperback (New York, 1957; originally publ. 1935).

“the arts govern and are masters of their subject” (cf. Lee, “subject-matter”); and, again, the etymological connection with “of the stronger” disappears. The introduction of dialectic and eristic (454a–b) uses “discussion . . . contention” and “contention . . . scientific arguments,” and so fails to prepare the topic adequately. It doesn’t help at all to call the *isonomikos* “the man to whom all laws are equal” (561e). Even worse, in 400–401 (the relation of surface beauty to character) Lindsay is inconsistent in his use of both key terms, *logos* and *euphōs* = “the happy gift”) and the argument is even harder to trace here than it is in Grube’s version. But Lindsay himself does not lose the argument: *kalos logos* is “the principle of beauty” not the “beauty of reason” (Grube).

What makes this translation work is that in the end Lindsay turns out to be following where Plato leads. In 509–511 (the divided line) he uses “classes” and “Forms” very much like Grube, but the mind reaches “as far as that which is not hypothesis, the first principle of everything” and no further. He uses the future in the conditional sentence that opens the paragraph on the philosophizing, but he does not invert the clauses to change the emphasis. Lindsay seems always to stand at a certain distance from the original, never nearer, never farther. His text will not allow a close analysis, as Grube’s often does and Bloom’s demands, so that the reader can follow an argument with exactness, but it never lets him get so distant that he wanders, as often he must with Grube, into a different discussion.

Lindsay’s position is thus one in which he can allow himself a considerable but controlled freedom, and from this position he achieves for his version one very important distinction. Lindsay exhibits throughout a wonderful adaptation to the varying styles of the original, whether the moving dignity that closes Book IX, the seriousness of Er’s story (with appropriate variation for the herald: “The responsibility is on him that chooseth. There is none on God”); the absurdity of the democrat at 561c7 (“fluting down the primrose path of wine”); the urgency with which Socrates pronounces the regulations on the lives of the guardians at the end of Book III (“This will be their salvation, and the salvation of the city”). Whatever reservation one may have about the other consequences of Lindsay’s emphasis on variety, his appreciation of this aspect of it produces an indisputable excellence.

The five translations that I have discussed here differ sufficiently in their intentions and styles for them not to be compared as simply better or worse. Bloom’s version differs the most and its advantages and weaknesses have already been discussed. Lindsay’s version can be neatly opposed to Bloom’s. For the reader of some general education and understanding who wishes to know broadly what *The Republic* has to say, and to comprehend how it has come to stand as the high tower of thought from which men take their bearings, Lindsay’s is the one to read. His version will also serve well in a general survey course where only the outline can be discussed.

Shorey, again, demands more of his reader than Lindsay does, not just more

attention, but a good acquaintance with literature, history, modern languages—the educational baggage of a late Victorian. For the accomplished student of what we now call the humanities, Shorey's is the version of choice; he might also be helpful in a "senior seminar" of mixed readings. But for those without the necessary sophistication, Shorey must be conceded to be too cumbersome, and confusingly idiosyncratic.

Some readers will want and some students (particularly in introductory courses) will need a translation that allows closer scrutiny and gives more help than Lindsay's does, and is more accessible than either Shorey's or Bloom's. Such a beginner's version is of limited use, but Plato's success in playing his role in our generation in large measure depends on how well such a version introduces him. I am partial to the tone and moderation of Grube's rendition, but it does, finally, misrepresent how Plato presented his thought and so, too often, what Plato thought. Lee's is more responsible overall, however varied his treatment of the small points may be, and he is certainly more stimulating. He must be given the nod, though the classroom teacher who is dealing mainly with selected passages, or who can take the time to undo some of Grube's misconstructions, may prefer that more straightforward version.

Fired by a sentimental attachment to democracy, our youth exercise, sporadically, their recently gained franchise. We wish them to live lives happier than the one Alcibiades led, and in cities better than the one Polemarchos found. If this ancient constitution is to be of any help, it will have to be studied, which means read more than once. So it is good that the translations exhibit different strengths and problems. Bloom, ever aware of difficulties, remarks that "at the very least, one can say that a literal translation is a necessary supplement to more felicitous renditions which deviate widely from their original" (p. viii). The student who puts Shorey or Lindsay next to Bloom or next to each other will discover important things. But there is a more literal and felicitous version yet. The text of *The Republic* can no more be the sum of its translations than it can be, for us, naturally readable. Certainly, as long as those eager for philosophy are not pursuing knowledge of Greek, there is no rest from the misunderstanding of Plato in our studies.