A Consideration of "Phoria" as a Metaphor of Translation

Val Morgan

This article argues that Michel Tournier's notion of "phoria," (*Gr. phoreo, pherein;* to carry, bear), as worked out over numerous writings but especially in *Le Roi des Aulnes* (1970), offers a versatile metaphor which can be applied to the process of translation. The spectrum of translation imaged in "phoria" combines elements of Benjaminian metaphysics and Christian asceticism with the paradigm of political constraint as the foundation of liberty in which a constant juggling with "more" and "less" suggests the secularity of flawed human choice and human error. Discussion traces the concept through the social contract, metaphysical betrayal, collaboration, and the iconography of St Christopher, Tournier's chief figure of "phoric heroism," who bears Christ-the-word across the Jordan of ever-fluid signification.

Collaborate: to work in association (sometimes invidiously with an enemy.)
Contract: an agreement on fixed terms.
Translate: to remove to a place, especially beyond death.
Betrayal: disclosure in breach of trust.
Phoria: a mysterious operation which, without any apparent change in the nature of the person or thing, alters its value, putting less where there was more and more where there was less.

Although the last on this list of terms may not be immediately familiar in the area of translation studies, this paper will offer it as a useful concept in thinking about translation issues.[1] Or perhaps it would be preferable to say that, in trying to think about what "phoria" means, transla-

---

1. All the definitions, except "phoria," are from *Chambers English Dictionary* 1990. Thanks are due to Leon Burnett for first suggesting "phoria" as a metaphor for translation.

tion issues, of both a theoretical and practical kind, come readily to mind. The sheer agility of the term, the dynamism with which it holds in tension opposing ends of the spectrum of translation and its imposing authoritative Greekness, (where Ancient Greek is most silent on translation theory), invites it onto the guest list of this paper's eminent terms. They, their etymologies and associative ideas, as applied to translation, supply the key reference points of the paper and indicate its necessary limitations.

"Phoria" was used by the philosopher/novelist Michel Tournier to describe the subject of his major novel *Le Roi des Aulnes* (1970). In *Le Vent Paraclet,* his autobiographico-critical work of 1977, translated as *The Wind Spirit* by Arthur Goldhammer in 1988, he discusses the notion further:

> There is abnegation in phoria, but of an equivocal sort, secretly possessed by the inversion of malign and benign. It is a mysterious operation which, without any apparent change in the nature of the person or thing, alters its value, putting less where there was more and more where there was less.[2] (Goldhammer, 1988, 107, Tournier's italics)

"Phoria" derives from the Greek "phoreo" (*pherein*) which conveys the idea of bearing or carrying. Tournier's "phoric hero" is St. Christopher, the bearer of Christ. The closeness of a conception of bearing or carrying, (over or across), with translation[3] might suggest the translator as a kind of "phoric hero" bearing the Word, as the divine child, across the Jordan of ever-flowing signification from one language to another. According to Tournier, the "phoric hero" humbles himself to bear, submitting himself as mediator or medium of transmission, like St. Christopher humbly bearing the Christ child. In this humility we hear a familiar resonance of the effacement, the absence or, in Venuti's term, the "invisibility," of the translator.

"Phoria," with which Tournier plays most fully in *Le Roi des Aulnes,* claiming it as "The novel's only real subject," (Tournier 106) has obvious points of similarity with many aspects of translation theory. To take just one example, what Tournier calls the abnegation of "phoria" resembles the ascetic tradition of Western translatology. Here I have in mind particularly Douglas Robinson's article entitled "The Ascetic Foundations of Western

---

2. C'est qu'il y a de l'abnégation dans la phorie. Mais c'est une abnégation équivoque, secrètement possédée par l'inversion maligne-bénigne, cette mystérieuse opération qui sans rien changer apparemment à la nature d'une chose, d'un être, d'un acte retourne sa *valeur,* met du plus où il y avait du moins, et du moins ou il y avait du plus.

3. Emphasised in the Latin *transferre = to carry over or across; latum - past participle of fero = I carry.*

Translatology: Jerome and Augustine" (Robinson 3-35). Robinson argues that even though Cicero and other classical theorists survived even within Christian asceticism, there is no Western definition of translation that does not betray its ascetic aims: "The history of Western translatology is the history of ascetic discipline. After Jerome and Augustine even worldly rebels against ascetic translatology typically only modify the prescribed ascesis" (Robinson 6).

Robinson distinguishes two strains within the ascetic tradition which he calls the "eremitic" and the "cenobitic," the strain of hermit or monastic, of the solitary and the social. The eremite subdues his own flesh, the cenobite submits to strict monastic discipline. In both strains abnegation is the fundamental principle; a principle which George Steiner also emphasises in his observation: "the need for self-effacement, for submissive scruple is imaged in 'to understand'" (Steiner 395).

When associated with the translator, the abnegation and the humility of phoria imply renouncement of the world, a foregoing of the lure of colour, sound, taste, smell, and all sensory pleasures. Benign enjoyments of the sense become malign temptations of the devil's perpetual seduction towards "mistaking" or "misunderstanding." So the translator, like the ascetic, is urged to subdue all personal biases, predilections, preferences, to resist the temptation to error which results from the interposition of a feeling self. Perfect fidelity or faith can only be reached by abstracting 'sense' while eschewing the heady 'senses' or sensuousness of language. The primary and most enduring metaphor of translation, fidelity, has its origins in Christian asceticism. Faithful to what? The Christian ascetic is faithful to the Word made flesh, for the translator the answer is not so clear. Some, like Schopenauer, suggest fidelity to the author, others semantic or stylistic fidelity, while historically fidelity to some kind of "spirit" of the original was advocated. Less frequently now, because of the difficulties of locating it, and the fallacy associated with it, "intention" has been suggested as the locus of fidelity. Poststructrualism, deconstruction and other schools of theory have problematized "intention" to the extent that not only is intention impossible to recover in hermeneutics, it is difficult to establish seriously as a philosophical concept.[4]

---

4. Venuti draws attention to the inadequacy of intention as an authorial matter when discussing Wittgenstein: "Wittgenstein's own philosophy warns against this assumption [that language can express ideas without destabilising and reconstructing them] by questioning the possibility of personal expression arguing that statements of intentionality are matters of linguistic convention, not logical necessity [....] Language is prone to ... the

Walter Benjamin is perhaps one of the most influential theorists to address the philosophical dimension of translation, taking "intention" out of the domain of the biographical and experiential and placing it in language. He speaks of "intention" as inherent in language itself, not merely as something belonging to the users of language. In *The Task of the Translator* he calls the notion of intention "a basic law" of the philosophy of language. This law rests on the distinction between the "intended object" and the "mode of intention." Modes of intention relate to the intentionality of every language, an intention imperfectly realised in single languages yet potentially realised in the totality of their intentions which supplement one another or put together fragments of language, finally becoming "*reine Sprache*" or "pure language." Thus, for Benjamin "intention" becomes something inherent in an abstract notion of language, it can only be striven for in languages and only arrived at in "language" itself. Similarly the Platonic theory of ideal forms suggests the existence of imperfect observable forms through which the "intention" of our reasoning minds (minds committed to the ratio or Logos) might perceive the absolute perfect Ideal forms. These forms exist in immanent Mind and are the true intelligibilities. Benjamin's "intention" of language exists in the principle of language itself, or Logos or Word. The miracle of Pentecost, Perfect Mind (Logos) speaking Perfect Word (Logos) would make translation redundant by returning us to the harmony before Babel. This would represent the return of all languages to what Steiner calls "their common source of life" which is eternally seeking the "intention" inherent in language. The translation of one language into another therefore implies the presence of a third active force - "pure language" or the ghostly presence of God's Word. According to Benjamin's metaphysics the translator's task is therefore a mysterious and a quasi-holy one, conducted under the auspices of a Higher Intention.

Although this is an immensely potent way in which to think about translation in purely theoretical terms, and one which has been highly influential, a particular aspect of it does tend to raise questions immediately when one begins to think about the practice of translation. This is Benjamin's tendency to speak of "language" as a concept apart from "the users of language" which, then, seems not fully to cover the whole sense of what is implied by "intention." While the transcendental notion of language is sig-

---

collective force of linguistic forms that outstrips any individual's control and complicates intended meanings" (Lawrence Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation* 108). Venuti's notion of "the remainder" as a collective force undermines the assumption that a translation mirrors the "intention" of an author or translator.

nificant in theorising translation - abstracting notions of users and usage - in practice language is always mediated by the agency of users and users are situated, politically, socially, historically, in a context of usage. It is with this situatedness in mind that I would now like to return to Tournier's notion of "phoria."

We have seen how Tournier conveys the metaphorical import of "phoria" through the iconography of St. Christopher. The "phoric hero," humbly bearing the divine burden of trust in an act of humility, has metaphysical resonances with Benjamin's "pure language," another reach towards the transcendental. But the second part of Tournier's definition of "phoria" runs counter to this. The mysterious altering of value, of "putting less where there was more and more where there was less," suggests a very secular insufficiency, at odds with the phoric ideal of St. Christopher's perfect translation. Juggling with "more" and "less" relates closely to a sub-group of metaphors in which notions of "equivalence," "compensation," "weighing," "balancing," "coinage," "debt," "interest," and "loan" are prominent as well as to the whole process of discrimination and selection by which the practice of translation proceeds. Selection, it seems to me, as the means of altering value, is the crucial issue, the point at which the translator may on the one hand "remove to a place especially beyond death," or on the other, become *traditore*/betrayer.

The expression *traduttore/traditore* seems to contain an economical insight worthy of some deliberation. I would like to explore it through Tournier's notion of "phoria," Rousseau's "social contract," and Derrida's "Babelian situation." By following this line of inquiry I will argue the view that while the notions of "contract" "collaboration" and "betrayal" are always inherent in the process of translation, they are instantly and dangerously unconfined at the moment of selection when the full implications of "phoria" come into play.

Firstly, the notion of betrayal or treachery must always be preceded by some notion of collaboration. There can be no betrayal of trust where there was no anterior confiding of trust. The confiding of trust is implicit in the act of working together - collaboration - and therefore devolves to every member of a civil society, since civil society proceeds by infinite acts of collaboration.[5] The notion of treachery, the concept of a traitor, are primarily civil ones; thus a "traitor to the state" stands at the apex of criminality, for though other criminals may renege on one or several confidences of trust,

---

5. In the 2002 Reith Lectures, Oona O'Neil took up this subject in the form of an examination of "trust," emphasising how collaborative trust is fundamental to social functioning.

one has reneged on all. The punishment is immediate withdrawal of civil trust followed by ejection from civil society (death or imprisonment; in earlier times, exile.) All acts of betrayal can be seen as a breaking of civil trust, the trust implicit in collaboration which sanctions and enables civil society. Again, the "collaborator" who conspires with a civil enemy betrays the trust confided to him by his compatriots when they assumed (as is implicit in the word) a common love of country. To "collaborate with an enemy" is to renege on the collaboration contract one had with civil society and which overrides all other collaboration contracts.

By now I have suggested two lexical inscriptions of "collaboration" most useful to my argument. First, "to work in association with" (the text? colleagues? civil society?). And second, "to work invidiously with the enemy." The term "invidious" moves the inquiry forward because, aside from its common meaning of "likely to incur or provoke ill-will," it has a further sense of "offensively discriminating." To discriminate is to note the difference of, to distinguish from others, to favour or disfavour, to treat differently. This term and the activity it denotes are unfashionable, even heretical, in our current state of civil society and politically correct utterance. However, the word "discrimination," when applied to translation, nominates the crucial moment of selection. Among all the various possibilities which the accommodating language offers the stranger word, one term or set of terms, or combination, or formula (idiom, metaphor, trope), must be preferred. Discrimination is positively promoted by translation: the translator must promote certain textual elements and demote others, thus altering value by "putting less where there was more and more where there was less." To some extent translation demands an approach and methodology that runs counter to the current *doxa* of most Western civil societies. Selection implies both the freedom of preference and the constraint of rejection.

The next step has recourse to what Jacques Derrida calls "the Babelian situation," which he describes as an agreement, a contract which precedes all other contracts, an agreement which recognises the differences of languages, not their translatability: "If one can translate purely and simply, there is no agreement. And if one can't translate at all there is no agreement either. In order for there to be an agreement there has to be a Babelian situation." The translation contract precedes and overshadows all others, says Derrida: "There is no contract possible - no social contract possible - without a translation contract" (Derrida 185).

Once the translation contract is recognised the social contract becomes possible which engenders multifarious organisational forms. In its linguistic aspect it will have to construct and police meanings, codify the lexicon,

empower norm-making bodies, suppress or licence certain discourses and so on. Within these normative agencies, the translator undertakes the search for equivalence, for equitable value through compensation, conversion exchange, payment, reconciliation, etc. The process is subjected to the greatest frustrations due to the Babelian situation, which says that translation is possible but not purely or simply: it is, like entering the Kingdom of Heaven, possible only with difficulty. And, of course, the great metaphorical marker of that difficulty is Redemption. The nature of translation equivalence, as an attempt to match one set of semantic polyvalencies to another through a translation unit (word, phrase, idiom or trope), is encapsulated in the set of metaphors we commonly use: compensation, conversion exchange, payment, reconciliation, and many others, which borrow the terminology of the economy of a redemptive process.

The redemptive transfer is undertaken by the translator in a situation governed by the translation contract which is prior to, and paradigmatic of, the social contract. Inevitably, the pre-existing translation contract edges the translator into vulnerable solitude where he collaborates with the foreign word housed in a civil society to which he is not contracted. However many languages a translator may command, he is rarely, if ever, contracted to more than one civil society. Many translators who are bi-lingual and bi-cultural, would perhaps claim emotionally to be wholly bi-partisan and feel equally beholden to, or participants in, two or more civil societies. Further inquiry would almost always reveal that this emotional commitment does not withstand the application of strict criteria for membership of a civil society, which concern property. This does not mean the right to buy or hold property so much as the right to give up measured parts of your property to the civil society to which you are contracted. In other words, to whom do you pay taxes? Invariably translators of dual or even triple nationality only pay one set of taxes and that identifies the civil society to whom they are contracted. I would consider this to be a rational, as opposed to emotional, statement of their commitment, and therefore this would constitute proof, or the nearest we could get to proof, of their claimed status.

As an initial stage, the move into solitude typifies the convention of non-specific silent reading. Before s/he can translate, the translator is a reader, contracted to a civil society, inscribed into a system, an ideology, a lexicon, owing allegiance to "mother tongue" and "patrie" - father country. A complex of confidences inheres in the situation - (con-fidere, the giving of trust). Thus, by the fact of being a member of a given civil society, the translator is understood to engage in certain allegiances and to have received confidences of trust from other members of the civil society.

Within this nexus of civil and linguistic allegiances s/he also "collaborates" with a text, i.e., reads it with a view to translation. But this type of collaboration, while at a low level *cultural* (for it certainly is not *natural*) is not a civil activity. It is solitary; one reads, one translates in solitude. Group readings, colloquies and conferences do not really nullify this point, because finally, ineluctably, comes the moment when the translator must *select,* must make the lonely choice to decide for this or that alternative. (Even supposing an editor has the final say on a given word and his choice stands then he is the translator of that word). At this moment of selection the translator is most vulnerable to deception, error, falsity, the inversion of malign and benign, i.e., *"belles infidèles"* and *"faux amis."* These terms of treachery are not it seems merely tropes or clever coinings, but really denote the issue of phoric discrimination and selection.

Alone with the text, the translator is tasked with the discriminatory process of selection in order to construct meaning and value. In a sense this is what the translation is, the reconstruction of meaning and value in which "intention" (the author's or translator's or, following Benjamin, the intention of language itself) has played a part. But to construct meaning and value is to create a moral world. To construct them in solitude is to create an unsanctioned moral world. Therefore, the action of the translator is to come and go on the periphery between the contractually sanctioned (the moral world of the civil society to which the translator is contracted), and the contractually unsanctioned (the amoral world of meaning and value constructed outside the social contract) while carrying a burden of trust. The translator is therefore "free" in the peripheral isolation of the discriminatory process, while at the same time constrained by the trust of the social contract. This is a paradoxical moment of simultaneous freedom and constraint, wherein we might wish to locate the "mysterious operation" of "phoria."[6]

Questions of freedom and constraint, liberty and law, were fundamental to social contract thinking in the 17th and 18th centuries. For Locke liberty is not the equivalent of licence, since liberty, *ab initio,* is under the constraint of reason. We have a similar distinction between liberty and licence in Hobbes, Rousseau and Pope and in many Enlightenment texts. It is a crucial distinction on which 18th century theories of political liberty are founded.

---

6. "Mystère," "profondeur," and "ambiguite," "terrible dialectique" are terms Tournier uses to designate phoria and to suggest its paradoxical nature. Even for Tournier it is a slippery device. On the one had he never precisely defines it and on the other he universalises the concept: "... the phenomenon of phoria [...] beyond the extraordinary case of Abel Tiffauges, affects all mankind" (WS. 103).

Constraint, restriction and limits actualise liberty and freedom which could not be experienced without them. In *Essay on Criticism* Pope suggests a similar reciprocity between freedom and constraint in the realm of art which derives its precepts from Nature: "Nature, like Liberty is but restrained/By the same laws which first herself ordained" (90-91).

For Rousseau, too, political freedom only exists within the constraint of law. In his social contract theory one's freedom consists in abiding by the laws to which one has consented and in whose formulation one has participated. The law, arrived at by the "general will" after "particular wills" have been accommodated or cancelled out, is the guarantor of liberty. On this view, political liberty is produced by constraint, for it has to be wrested from, and delineated sharply against the perpetually threatening background of anarchy. For Pope, too, Art is produced by adhering to the rules of Nature; expression in language follows nature's way:

> But true expression, like th'unchanging sun
> Clears and improves whate'er it shines upon
> It gilds all objects, but it alters none.
> (Essay on Criticism 315-317)[7]

Spending so much time in a short essay on social contract theory and political liberty may seem unnecessarily discursive; it usefully re-directs us to the inevitable fact that translation does not escape political associations. When, for example, Andre Lefevere says: "Translation is to do with authority, legitimacy and therefore ultimately with power" (Lefevere 3), he is saying it is political. This would follow very logically from the Babelian situation. If the translation contract precedes and empowers the social contract it is, *de facto,* the original political paradigm. So, just as politics is involved on every level when we work in association, i.e., collaborate in civil society, it is paradigmatically present when we collaborate with a text. This is only to be expected for politics; like translation, it is one of humanity's numerous *finesse* activities, wholly dependent on language use

---

7. For Pope's "true expression" we might substitute original or first language expression. This, he says, does not alter the object. Phoria, on the other hand, causes "no apparent change" but "alters the value." Phoric expression, or translation, presents an object, say, *Death in Venice* in English. Insofar as most Anglophones would say this "object" that they had read in English was written by Thomas Mann, there would be no "apparent change" in the thing. However, the *value* of *Death in Venice* (to German speakers, to the literary system etc.) would be altered. Thus the ambivalent play between "no apparent change" and the "alteration of value" which Tournier locates in "phoria" would fit this aspect of the translation process.

and misuse. Perhaps it is the anterior existence of the Babelian translation contract that enables Rousseau's political theories to transfer (or translate) so well to the domain of translation. In *The Social Contract,* Rousseau points out:

> There is often a great deal of difference between the will of all and the general will; the latter considers only the common interest while the former takes private interest into account, and is no more than the sum of particular wills; but take away from these same wills the pluses and minuses that cancel one another, and the general will remains the sum of the differences.[8]

We might, for example, allow ourselves to speak of the "general will" of a text, especially one that is frequently translated into the same language. This would establish something like "the invariant core" of the original, an agreement among translations which suggests a fundamental consensus, in other words, that which is transmitted whole, as it were, or at least about which there is the least dispute: the part of the original text that displays least variance or polyvalence in translations. The "general will" of the text would be that which remains when the "particular wills" of individual translators and schools of interpretation (Feminist, Marxist, New Historicist, etc.), have cancelled each other out and produced the sum of differences.[9] Although the Babelian situation invites the possibility of theorising a "general will" of text, in practice this would be challenged by the actual situation of solitude in which the translator is placed. In the free practice of discriminatory and selective processes, the translator is constrained by the charge of trust placed in him by the social contract.

"It is important to remember," states Andre Lefevere, "that the trust is invested in the producer of the translation, not necessarily in the product itself."[10] I take the producer of the translation to be a person, a moral being or agent, not the social or historical, literary or commercial forces that make the translation occur. The trust is personal, invested in a person, not a system, a methodology, a process. The moment of selection is a moment of naked, solitary person-hood confronted at the boundary between the moral and

---

8. Jean-Jacques Rousseau 203.
9. Suspecting the problem here, Rousseau himself adds a footnote in the original edition explaining that if there were no different interests the common interest would barely be felt since it would encounter no obstacle: "... all would go of its own accord and politics would cease to be an art." Translation, like politics, might be seen as a proximate language-art which requires obstacles. J. J. Rousseau 202.
10. Andre Lefevere, 2.

immoral worlds while carrying a charge of trust. This is the *mysterium* of translation, the exposure to ontology, where the translator is forced to reveal him/herself in the choices s/he makes, disclosing subjective preference, unmasking the person behind the occupation. Under these pressures, the moment of selection actually becomes an interrogation of the self by the Word, by language itself, by God the confounder of Babel, when the translator is forced to confront the question: Who are you? On this view the Babelian situation is comparable to the Christian ascetic perspective. In Christian asceticism the self is not dispersed or artificially constructed through language; rather what is foreseen is an interaction between language and the pre-existing self, which ultimately answers only to Logos/Word, that is to say, to God.

One comes back to the religious, ascetic tradition of translatology and to Tournier's "phoric hero," St. Christopher, bearing the word/child across the fluid medium of signification from one linguistic bank to another. If the moment of selection is as much about a deep looking inward as it is about lexicons, grammars and stylistics, it is subjective as well as technical. If one has superb linguistic competencies but little self-understanding, is one a proper medium for the translation of the word? The story that mythically poses this question in its most graphic form is the story of the events in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Just to recap for a moment and then to come back to Gethsemane, I have been suggesting that "phoria," the carrying across from one language to another, is always preceded by a confidence of trust validated by the social contract, accompanied by the breaking of trust in the moral vacuity of the discriminatory act, and followed by a final "disclosure in breach of trust," which is the translated text. Trust and betrayal are terms that evoke active agency and personal moral will. To talk about a translation as a betrayal is to signify something very different from "transformation" or "deformation" or even "defamiliarisation," which are terms it is sometimes yoked with. But if anything like this were so, how is it ever possible for the translator to "remove to a place especially beyond death"? How can the act of betrayal lead to immortal life?[11] The question once again invokes Gethsemane.

To the Christian West, Judas is the arch villain of all time, because he was a betrayer. But less obviously, he was the archetypal collaborator. Before

---

11. I am thinking particularly of Benjamin's famous reference to "the afterlife of the text" in "The Task of the Translator," published in John Biguenet and Rainer Schulte eds., *Theories of Translation*. London: U of Chicago P, 1992) 71-82.

he could betray Christ, he had to collaborate as a disciple. That the events in the garden, enacted between Christ and Judas constitute a metaphysical model of translation is suggested by Jorge Luis Borges in his short story "Three Versions of Judas." In this story Borges sees Judas as "a disciple of the word" and the betrayal as "preordained fact which has its mysterious place in the economy of redemption" (Borges 126). This encapsulates the central mystery of translation: the word in one form is betrayed, but in another is redeemed to eternal life. If the translator is "a disciple of the word" the analogous relation between Borges' story and the ascetic tradition is striking. Judas' crime, he says, was not acted out of greed but had a motive of "hyperbolic and even unlimited asceticism" (Borges 127). He became a phoric hero, the pure vessel of the translation of Christ from leader of a band of disciples to Redeemer of the world. Borges reinforces the notion of self-understanding by pointing out that Judas understood himself through asceticism:

> The ascetic, for the greater glory of God, vilifies and mortifies his flesh; Judas did the same with his spirit. He renounced honour, morality, peace and the kingdom of heaven, just as others, less heroically, renounce pleasure. With terrible lucidity he premeditated his sins.... Judas chose those sins untouched by any virtue: violation of trust and betrayal. (Borges 127)

The redemptive turn assures us that although agreed in a fallen state, the Babelian contract also agrees to the possibility of Pentecostal *translatio*. Therefore, in order to engage the Pentecostal energies, the proper attitude to translation is one of phoric abnegation in the humble recognition that we will "put less where there was more and more where there was less." We will never achieve perfect self-understanding, we will betray to redeem. Translation will always be self-revelatory, personal, subjective, having to do with the senses, taste, preference, choice, discrimination and pleasure, but we will never fully disclose the self, just as the translating self will never fully disclose the original. Full disclosure would be faith unto death, we would die for the Word in the full revelation of the self; these would be the only terms on which we could keep faith with the original. This is the shared fundamental insight of Western translatology and the ascetic tradition, which says that you translate as you are, but you always ought to be better.

One aspect of Tournier's "phoria" returns us to this originating spirit of Western translatology in the vision of St. Christopher submitting to Higher Intention by becoming the humble bearer of the word. Yet the spectrum of translation imaged in the metaphor of "phoria" is extensive and dazzling. It

combines elements of Benjaminian metaphysics and Christian asceticism with the paradigm of political constraint as the foundation of liberty in which a constant juggling with "more" and "less" suggests the secularity of human choice and human error. It extends to embrace even the "postmodern turn" where the self is exposed to questioning, then comes full circle by re-connecting the translator to the ascetic tradition. Just as the ascetic's search for perfect self-knowledge and oneness with Logos/God is forever denied, so the translator's situation is perpetually open-ended in its engagement with error and imperfection. In conclusion, then, we could say that "phoria" is a powerful and versatile metaphor for translation which presents the translator's situation in the iconographic mode of St. Christopher as one of solitary, peripheral freedom, subject to the constraints of the self, charged with a burden of trust, and poised at a moment of interrogation.

University of Essex
United Kingdom

Works Cited

Benjamin, Walter. "The Task of the Translator." *Theories of Translation*. Eds. John Biguenet and Rainer Schulte. London: U of Chicago P, 1992.

Borges, Jorges Luis. "Three Versions of Judas." *Labyrinths*. Eds. Donald A. Yates & James E. Irby. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970. 118-124.

Derrida, Jacques. *The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation*. Trans. Peggy Kampf. New York: Schocken Books, 1985.

Lefevere, Andre. Ed. *Translation/ History/ Culture: A Source Book*. London: Routledge, 1992.

Robinson, Douglas. "The Ascetic Foundations of Western Translatology: Jerome to Augustine." *Translation and Literature* 1 (1993): 3-25.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *The Social Contract and Discourses*. Trans. G.D.H Cole. London: Everyman-Dent, 1993.

Steiner, George. *After Babel*. Oxford: OUP, 1992.

Tournier, Michel. *The Wind Spirit*. Trans. Arthur Goldhammer. London: Collins, 1988. Trans. of *Le Vent Paraclet*. Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1977.

Venuti Lawrence. *The Scandals of Translation*. London: Routledge, 1998.

—. *The Translator's Invisibility*. London: Routledge, 1995.