

Reading Differently, Rereading for Difference in Versions of Rimbaud's "Mouvement"

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Abstract

How to engage students to reread Arthur Rimbaud's 1886 poem "Mouvement" differently? What can they learn about the poem and in the process about themselves as readers of literature through its various versions and English language translations? Might rereading for difference hold pedagogical promise? How might a comparative study of the poem's various versions in French and in English translation favor active reading and help students embrace the poem as differently meaningful because of its modernity?

[...] si Rimbaud est *illisible*, il doit être *a fortiori* intraduisible.
-- Murphy 19

To translate Arthur Rimbaud's poetry is difficult. Similarly daunting is engaging students in meaningful discussion over the more obscure works of the *poète maudit*. Given Rimbaud's "dérèglement de *tous les sens*," his taste for neologisms, juxtaposition of scientific with natural terms, and shattering of traditional versification (Whidden xv), students find his works challenging. As a result, they often reject Rimbaud's poetry outright as unreadable (Claisse 118). Rimbaud's "modern" texts seem a slap in the face, compared to the traditional or classical poetry with which they are typically most familiar or more comfortable. How to read his hermetic poems (Sacchi viii)? What to make of their "teasing," "unfinished" quality (Staples 50)? Are they meaningless, "textes qui ne parlent de rien, dont on ignorera le sens" (Todorov, "Complication" 252)?

Student bewilderment should not discourage instructors, however. Myriad possible pedagogical strategies, which bypass the "errors" of critical method (Adam 1015) further complicating exegesis, can be employed. Jacques Plessen studies a poem's structure, grammar, and semantics with his classes; he breaks away from the outdated teacher-centered French classroom, its "discours suranné sur la littérature et la poésie," "domination du maître parlant sur un ton oraculaire à partir de certaines subjectives non communicables et a fortiori non critiquables" ("Stratégies" 183-4). Mechthild Cranston finds musical windows through which to help her students access Rimbaud; she juxtaposes his works with those of popular artists such as the Doors and Jim Morrison, for example ("Rhyme" 956). Alternatively, teachers might draw on skills their students already possess to guide and encourage them. Gayle Lévy emphasizes the visual, the importance of seeing words on a page. First-hand experience of the "cooperative act" between poet and reader renders students "co-creators" in the poetic act ("Reading" 38, 44). Alternatively, time spent studying Rimbaud can sensitize students to reading differently, for his works foster mental agility. Thus to read his works is to "acquérir [...] cette mobilité qu'exigent [ses] textes [...] qui sont en même temps conditions du plaisir au texte [...] vivre, dans la lecture du texte lui-même, la dynamique créatrice qui y est inscrite" (Plessen, "Stratégies" 172-3, 180).

The numerous editions and "crowded" field of translations of Rimbaud's works (Whidden) also have instructional currency. Discussing how he had students compare the various texts of Rimbaud's *Les Illuminations* in his original French to their Dutch translations by Hans van Pinxteren, Plessen observes:

là nous avons senti très vite qu'une telle lecture nous renseigne plus concrètement que ne peuvent le faire des analyses structurales ou sémiotiques sur le fonctionnement réel du texte.

Car à chaque instant le traducteur est obligé de choisir explicitement le sens à donner à tel mot ou à telle expression (“Une traduction impossible?” 143).

Just as revealing, though, are the various versions of the same original. For different translations can find different solutions to the same problems. Roger Little’s students, for instance, witnessed the problems and processes of these solutions, gained additional insight into the nature of the original, and as a result, a greater aesthetic awareness of the qualities of literature (“Study” 191).

How to engage students to reread Rimbaud’s 1886 poem “Mouvement”¹ differently? What can they learn about the poem and in the process about themselves as readers of literature through its various versions and English language translations? Might rereading for difference hold pedagogical promise? We propose a series of questions that students might first attempt to answer so as to familiarize themselves with a working version of this “scientific” poem (Forestier 520), its overall structure and possible concerns. They can then be prompted to compare versions of “Mouvement”—both in French and in English translation. This comparative study of the poem will, we suggest, favor active reading. As a consequence, students will become closer, more informed readers than they might have had they only been exposed to one published version of the text. As critical rereaders of the poem, they will be better able to negotiate the interpretive challenges posed by Rimbaud’s text. They will discover that “progress” is not only problematized within the poem but rehearsed across its “competing” (Mason xxxvii) versions by editors and translators. In arriving at a palimpsestic appreciation of its multiple, albeit ambiguous messages, students might ultimately embrace the poem as differently meaningful because of its modernity.

I. INTERROGATING THE “TEXT”

Before comparing versions of “Mouvement,” students should work through a working version of the poem. Because this text is, as Patricia Terry notes, under “constant tension” (61), it is particularly well suited to an interrogative reading. Indeed, some have suggested that it might only be readable through the questions it raises, “*que sur le mode de l’interrogation [...] que comme différence*” (Charolles 113-4). The attention of students can therefore be directed to the questions raised in and by the poem from the start.

What follows is Suzanne Bernard’s 1960 edition, which can be conveniently used as a working version: it is readily available; other editions build upon it; and its published layout across two pages begs the question of how *mise en page* affects or impacts the way a text might be read.²

Mouvement

Le mouvement de lacet sur la berge des chutes du
fleuve,
Le gouffre à l’étambot,
La célérité de la rampe,
L’énorme passade du courant

¹ For more on the dating of the poem, see volume 4 of Steve Murphy’s edition of Rimbaud’s Œuvres complètes (Champion, 2002): 448, 622. Valiquette’s dating of the poem (1872, see Appendix B), for example, is erroneous.

² This version can be substituted with any extant published version and the list of proposed questions tailored appropriately. The versions that are most easily available, which we reproduce in Appendix A, include: those of the *Mercur de France* (1938, 1947, and 1949), Bernard Valiquette (1943), Michel Décaudin (1964), Wallace Fowlie (1966, 2005, and online version), Albert Py (1967), Antoine Adam (1972), Enid Rhodes Peschel (1973), Nick Osmond (1976), Thierry Méranger (1998), Mark Treharne (1998), Lionel Ray (2001), Wyatt Mason (2002), Bruno Claisse (2003), Pierre Brunel (2004), Louis Forestier (2004), and Tim Chilcott (online version).

Mènent par les lumières inouïes
 Et la nouveauté chimique
 Les voyageurs entourés des trombes du val
 Et du strom.

Ce sont les conquérants du monde
 Cherchant la fortune chimique personnelle;
 Le sport et le confort voyagent avec eux;
 Ils emmènent l'éducation
 Des races, des classes et des bêtes, sur ce vaisseau
 Repos et vertige
 A la lumière diluvienne,
 Aux terribles soirs d'étude.

Car de la causerie parmi les appareils, le sang, les fleurs,
 le feu, les bijoux,
 Des comptes agités à ce bord fuyard,
 -- On voit, roulant comme une digue au-delà de la
 route hydraulique motrice,
 Monstrueux, s'éclairant sans fin, -- leur stock d'études;
 Eux chassés dans l'extase harmonique,
 Et l'héroïsme de la découverte.

[page break]

Aux accidents atmosphériques les plus surprenants,
 Un couple de jeunesse s'isole sur l'arche,
 -- Est-ce ancienne sauvagerie qu'on pardonne? --
 Et chante et se poste.

Once students have read the poem aloud, they should work sequentially through the following list of questions. Through "interrogating" the text in such a way, they will familiarize themselves with it. After reading different versions of the poem thereafter, they should realize that their initial desire for resolution is inappropriate, out of place, and that to reread "Mouvement" requires them to read differently.

- 1) How to describe this poem?
 Descriptive? Narrative? Other?
- 2) How is the poem set up? Does its structure help you describe it?
- 3) (How) does the title anticipate the structure?
 Explain the title.
- 4) How to justify the division of the poem into stanzas? Into verses?
- 5) Is there a rhyme scheme? A meter that is respected?
- 6) Would you consider this a poem? Why or why not?
- 7) How is punctuation used? Does it help to order the poem in some way?
- 8) This poem is published as part of a collection (see table of contents of Bernard edition in Appendix A). What might the poems preceding and following "Mouvement" reveal about it? Do the poems seem to be organized as part of a larger whole? Consider, for instance, "Après le déluge," "Départ," and "Marine." Should we be attentive to this context when reading

- “Mouvement”? Is reading the poem on its own tantamount to reading a chapter of a novel or an act of a play in isolation?
- 9) What do you know about the poet Arthur Rimbaud? About the period in which he lived and wrote? Might biographical details about Rimbaud or information about the concerns or trends of the period in which he wrote help one appreciate or better understand his poem?
 - 10) In the first stanza of the poem what is/are the subject/s of the verb “mener”? What is/are the object/s of the same verb?
 - 11) What does the fact that we are only aware of “les voyageurs” near the end of the stanza suggest about their relative importance and their potential role in the poem?
 - 12) What to say about the accumulation of hydraulic forces (“le mouvement de lacet sur la berge des chutes du fleuve,” “le gouffre à l’étambot,” “la célérité de la rampe,” “l’énorme passade du courant”) that constitute the first half of the stanza and foreground the travelers “moved” by them?
 - 13) By the end of the first stanza do we have any indication of the travelers’ identities? Of where they might be going? Or from whence they might be coming?
 - 14) How to characterize the adjectives employed in the first stanza? Are they descriptive? Subjective? Does “énorme” (in “énorme passade”) work the same way, for example, as “inouïes” (in “lumières inouïes”) or “chimique” (in “nouveau chimique”)?
 - 15) From which, or whose, perspective are the lights unheard-of? Are they new or novel in the same way that the chemicals are in the phrase suggesting chemical novelty?
 - 16) How does the second stanza build upon the first? Is its structure the same or different? And is this structure meaningful?
 - 17) What more do we learn in the second stanza about the travelers of the first stanza? Are they painted in a positive or negative light? And what might the way they are portrayed tell us about the perspective of the poetic voice in the poem? Is it objective? Subjective?
 - 18) What is the travelers’ means of transport? What is/are their purpose/s for traveling?
 - 19) In what sense is the juxtaposition of “repos” with “vertige” contradictory? Out of place? What to make of the fact that there is no verb? Is this a state? A fragment?
 - 20) Do the adjectives in the second stanza shed light on the possible sense of the poem or perspective/s in it? In what sense, for instance, can evenings of study be considered “terribles”? In a positive or negative sense?
 - 21) Does the use of semi-colons and commas in the second stanza make it more or less readable? Is this punctuation used consistently throughout? And how to justify the use of the comma after “bêtes” and before the phrase “sur ce vaisseau”?
 - 22) What more by the end of the second stanza have we learned about the “mouvement” ostensibly at the heart of, or driving, the poem? Is it the motion of travelers by a moving vessel on moving water alone? Or is there also movement at an/other level/s? Horizontal and/or vertical, for instance?
 - 23) By beginning with the transition “Car,” the third stanza seems to be set up as an explanation in much the same way that the second stanza seems to be a close-up view of the anonymous travelers of the first stanza. Does it function that way, though? In what sense does it (or does it not) justify what comes before?

- 24) What more do we learn in the third stanza about the travelers? About the vessel on which they are traveling? About their on-board possessions? About the perspective of the poetic voice?
- 25) How to reconcile “sang,” “agités,” and “monstrueux”—all seemingly negative—with “extase harmonique,” “héroïsme,” and “découverte”—all seemingly positive?
- 26) Does the introduction of a dash in the third stanza shed further light on the perspective of the poetic voice? How does the phrase set off by the dash function in the context of the stanza? And of the whole? Is it parenthetical? Revealing? Metatextual? Helpful?
- 27) A page break occurs after the line “Et l’héroïsme de la découverte.” Should the four lines following it be considered part of or separate from the third stanza?
- 28) Assuming that they can indeed be considered the fourth stanza of the poem, do these final four lines reveal anything more about those the travelers? About the perspective of the poetic voice? About the possible biblical undercurrent in the poem?
- 29) How to contextualize and interpret the line “Aux accidents atmosphériques les plus surprenants”?
- 30) Why might a youthful couple be so isolated?
- 31) Might the poem be considered a critique of colonialism? And does Rimbaud shed a positive or negative light on the scientific and technological progress suggested in it?

This interrogative scaffolding familiarizes students with the poem while leaving many of its questions still unresolved. With the stage now set to read the poem differently, students can compare versions of “Mouvement,” reread it for difference. As a result, they will see first-hand the role others have had in constructing and reconstructing the text. They will also ultimately understand that the Rimbaudian text, “lieu de contradictions qui remettent en question fondamentalement le projet du commentaire” (Charolles 111) is designed to resist exegesis.

II. FROM THE INDUCTIVE TO THE COMPARATIVE: TOWARDS THE POETIC PALIMPSEST

French Versions

Students can save time and foster the spirit of collaborative inquiry desired in most student-centered classrooms by first comparing the various versions of “Mouvement” in small groups then reporting back their findings and the additional questions raised by rereading the poem comparatively to their class as a whole. For illustrative purposes, we will juxtapose our working version by Bernard with those editions of the poem most readily available.

When considered sequentially, the following questions will guide students in their comparative study and help them recognize the multiple levels of possible meaning in the poem.

- 1) How to characterize the differences between the versions of Rimbaud’s poem? Major? Minor? Meaningful? Other?
- 2) Consider these differences in punctuation:
 “rampe,” (Bernard) vs. “rampe” (Treharne);
 “jeunesse” (Bernard) vs. “jeunesse,” (Fowlie 1966);

“courant” (Bernard) vs. “courant,” (Adam, Brunel, Chilcott, Claisse, Forestier, Harding & Sturrock, Méranger, Osmond, Sorrell, Treharne);

“appareils,” (Bernard) vs. “appareils, --” (Adam, Brunel, Chilcott, Claisse, Forestier, Fowlie 2005, Fowlie online, Harding & Sturrock, Mason, Méranger, Osmond, Sorrell, Treharne);

“sang,” (Bernard) vs. “sang;” (Adam, Brunel, Forestier, Fowlie 2005, Méranger, Osmond);

“bijoux,” (Bernard) vs. “bijoux --” (Adam, Brunel, Claisse, Forestier, Fowlie 2005, Fowlie online, Harding & Sturrock, Osmond), and “bijoux, --” (Mason, Sorrell, Treharne);

“harmonique,” (Bernard) vs. “harmonique” (Adam, Brunel, Chilcott, Claisse, Forestier, Fowlie 2005, Fowlie online, Harding & Sturrock, Méranger, Osmond, Sorrell, Treharne);

“surprenants,” (Bernard) vs. “surprenants” (Adam, Brunel, Chilcott, Claisse, Forestier, Fowlie 2005, Fowlie online, Harding & Sturrock, Mason, Méranger, Osmond, Sorrell, Treharne);

“pardonne? --” (Bernard) vs. “pardonne?” (Adam, Chilcott, Forestier, Mason, Méranger, Osmond, Sorrell), and “pardone? --” (Peschel);

“d’études;” (Bernard) vs. “d’études; --” (Brunel, Chilcott, Claisse, Forestier, Harding & Sturrock, Méranger, Sorrell, Treharne);

“vaisseau” (Bernard) vs. “Vaisseau.” (Adam, Brunel, Chilcott, Claisse, Forestier, Fowlie online, Harding & Sturrock, Mason, Sorrell, Treharne), “Vaisseau” (Fowlie 2005, Osmond), and “vaisseau.” (Valiquette).

Are these differences major? Minor? Meaningful? And are there other punctuational differences that you notice between the various published versions of “Mouvement”?

3) Consider these differences in spelling:

“au-delà” (Bernard) vs. “au delà” (Bernard, Forestier, Fowlie 1966, Fowlie 2005, Fowlie online, Mason, Mathieu, Méranger, Peschel, Sloate, Valiquette);³

“comfort” (Bernard) vs. “confort” (Bernard, Fowlie 1966, Fowlie 2005, Fowlie online, Peschel, Sloate, Valiquette);

“pardonne” (Bernard) vs. “pardone” (Peschel);

“atmosphériques” (Bernard) vs. “athmosphériques” (Claisse, Méranger⁴).

“entourés” (Bernard) vs. “entourées” (Chilcott);

“terribles” (Bernard) vs. “tembles” (Chilcott).

Are they major? Minor? Meaningful? Typographical errors? Do you notice any others?

³According to Antoine Fongaro, “C’est incontestablement « en delà » que donne le manuscrit, où la distinction entre le u et le n est très nette” (Segments 15).

⁴ In his edition of Rimbaud’s works, Méranger notes that the latter is the way the word used to be spelled (171).

- 4) Is the fact that in some versions of the poem the noun “vaisseau” is capitalized somehow meaningful?
- 5) Consider the differences in line breaks between the Bernard version of the poem, which you studied in detail first (see first series of questions above), and those in other published versions:

“du/fleuve,” (Bernard) vs. “du fleuve,” (Adam, Brunel, Chilcott, Claisse, Forestier, Fowlie 1966, Fowlie 2005, Fowlie online, Mason, Méranger, Peschel, Py, Sloate, Treharne, Valiquette);

“les fleurs,/le feu, les bijoux,” (Bernard) vs. “les/fleurs, le feu, les bijoux --” (Adam, Forestier), “les fleurs, le/feu, les bijoux--” (Brunel, Fowlie online, Osmond), “les fleurs, le feu, les bijoux,/--” (Chilcott), “les fleurs, le feu, les bijoux--” (Claisse), “les fleurs, le feu, les bijoux,” (Fowlie 1966, Sloate), “les fleurs, le feu, les bijoux--” (Fowlie 2005), “les fleurs, le feu, les bijoux, --” (Mason), “[les fleurs, le feu/les bijoux--” (Méranger), “les/fleurs, le feu, les bijoux, --” (Treharne), “les fleurs,/le feu, les bijoux,” (Valiquette);

“de la/route hydraulique motrice,” (Bernard) vs. “de la route hydrau-/lique motrice” (Brunel), “de la route hydraulique motrice,” (Chilcott, Claisse, Sloate), “de la/route hydraulique motrice” (Forestier), “de la route hydraulique/motrice” (Fowlie 1966), “de la route hydraulique/motrice,” (Fowlie 2005), “de la route/hydraulique motrice” (Fowlie online), “de la route hydraulique motrice:” (Mason), “de la route/hydraulique motrice,” (Osmond, Treharne), “de la route/[hydraulique motrice” (Valiquette);

Are they major? Minor? Meaningful? Do you notice other such differences between published versions of the poem? How might type size and restrictions imposed by *mise en page* influence the way we ultimately read and/or interpret the poem? Do you believe these line breaks to be intentional? The result of editorial decisions? How to interpret the final long stanza in Bernard’s version of the poem? As separated into two parts by a page break? Or actually constituting two stanzas? And are there other differences in line breaks?

- 6) Consider the differences in indentation between various versions of the poem:

“*[indent]* fleuve,” (Mathieu);

“*[indent]* du fleuve,” (Sloate);

“*[indent]* fleurs, le feu, les bijoux -- ” (Adam, Mathieu);

“*[large indent]* fleurs, le feu, les bijoux -- ” (Forestier);

“*[indent]* bijoux -- ” (Fowlie 2005);

“*[large indent]* [les fleurs, le feu, les bijoux -- ” (Méranger);

“*[indent]* feu, les bijoux -- ” (Osmond);

“*[indent]* le feu, les bijoux,” (Peschel, Py);

“*[indent]* les fleurs, le feu, les bijoux,” (Sloate);

“*[indent]* fleurs, le feu, les bijoux, --” (Treharne);

“*[large indent]* [le feu, les bijoux,” (Valiquette);

“*[indent]* route hydraulique motrice,” (Adam, Py);

"[*large indent*] route hydraulique motrice," (Forestier);

"[*large indent*] motrice," (Fowlie 1966);

"[*indent*] motrice" (Fowlie 2005);

"[*indent*] route hydraulique motrice," (Mathieu, Peschel);

"[*large indent*] [route hydraulique motrice," (Méranger);

"[*indent*] "hydraulique motrice," (Osmond, Treharne);

"[*indent*] de la route hydraulique motrice," (Sloate);

"[*large indent*] [hydraulique motrice," (Valiquette);

"Car de la causerie parmi les appareils, -- le sang; les fleurs, le
 [*hanging indent*] feu, les bijoux --
 Des comptes agités à ce bord fuyard,
 -- On voit, roulant comme une digue au-delà de la route hydrau-
 [*hanging indent*] lique motrice,
 Monstrueux, s'éclairant sans fin, -- leur stock d'études; --
 Eux chassés dans l'extase harmonique
 Et l'héroïsme de la découverte." (Brunel)

"[*indent*] -- Est-ce ancienne sauvagerie qu'on pardonne? -- (Fowlie 1966);

"[*large indent*] -- Est-ce ancienne sauvagerie qu'on pardone? --" (Peschel);

"[*indent*] d'études" (Sloate).

In Valiquette's version, partial brackets, indicating that the indentation is due to space restrictions, are used. Yet in other versions, no such partial brackets are used. Do you believe that the indentations are therefore meaningful?

- 7) Do you notice any other differences of note between the various published versions of the poem? Are all of Fowlie's versions the same, for instance? What might such differences tell us about the authority or authenticity of a text published in print versus that of a text published online? About the role a publisher or editor might play in framing the way a text is read, perceived, interpreted?

At this stage of the comparative exercise, students will have still more questions about the poem than they did after reading and discussing its working version. Through rereading the poem for difference though, they will also usefully be questioning the status of what they are reading. What is the relationship between the text/s they are reading and the poem as penned by Rimbaud? Does each published version of the poem merely duplicate it or does it build upon, somehow modify it? Represent critical progress? And are Rimbaud's own editorial decisions respected by his editors and translators?

English Versions

As Daniel Sloate observes, the translations of Rimbaud's poetry are "un moyen *privilegié* d'être sensible à [sa] praxis verbale" ("Comment" 129). But how to translate this particular poem which for Michel Charolles derives its meaning only through its contradictions, "*ne signifie rien que ces contradictions et la dynamique qu'elles entraînent*"? One way to think about the poem is as an untranslatable text, "*car il porte en lui-même interrogation sur son sens et sur les codes par lesquels il signifie*" (111). So if translators have been "tempted" by its "mysterious beauty," its "formidable energy," if they have been

influenced by the “directness” with which it assaults readers and compels them to Rimbaud’s “sway” (Peyre v) have they ultimately also failed to translate it?

Students will be forced to pay close attention to the poem’s internal dynamic by comparing the attempted “translations” ranging from that of Fowlie, which is purportedly “most faithful” to Rimbaud’s original text (Whidden xv) and ideal for the student of French “who wishes to read the original but requires a crutch” (Mason xli), to that of Enid Rhodes Peschel, which is supposedly distinguished by its “scrupulous fidelity,” its capacity to lure the reader back to “a more intense enjoyment of the original” (Peyre vi). Does this dynamic “dépote de l’intérieur un système,” as Charolles suggests (113)? And is the movement the poem seems to rehearse progressive or self-cancelling?

When comparing the English versions of “Mouvement,” students might work first in groups and then report their findings back to their class. The following suggested list of questions to be considered sequentially does not address issues of punctuation, capitalization, or *mise en page*, as these should already have been considered in the comparative analysis of the poem’s published French versions.

- 1) Fowlie and Carlile choose to translate the title of the poem as “Motion,” whereas, Bernard, Chilcot, Harding & Sturrock, Leclercq, Mason, Mathieu, Peschel, Rootham, Schmidt, Sloate, Sorrell, and Treharne translate it as “Movement.” Based on your familiarity with the poem, which title seem more appropriate?
- 2) To what degree do the translators of the poem embellish it? Consider the following word choices, for example:

berge: “bank” (Chilcott, Fowlie, Harding & Sturrock, Leclercq, Mathieu Sloate, Treharne) vs. “embankment” (Bernard), “chute” (Carlile), “banks” (Mason), “steep banks” (Peschel), “curve” (Rootham), “rapids” (Schmidt), and “tumbling riverside” (Sorrell);

énorme passade: “huge passing” (Fowlie 1966, Fowlie 2005, Fowlie online, Mathieu) vs. “vast to and fro” (Bernard), “enormous thrust” (Carlile), “massive to-and-fro” (Chilcott), “beaten track” (Harding & Sturrock), “enormous leap-frogging” (Leclercq), “pull” (Mason), “enormous passing” (Peschel), “ceaselessly moving mass” (Rootham), “overwhelming passage” (Schmidt), “mighty passage” (Sloate), and “vast to-and-fro” (Sorrell, Treharne);

inouïes: “unheard-of” (Bernard, Carlile, Mathieu, Peschel,) vs. “extraordinary” (Chilcott, Schmidt, Treharne), “unimaginable” (Fowlie, Mason), “strange” (Harding & Sturrock), “incredible” (Leclercq, Rootham); “unheard of” (Sloate), “outlandish”(Sorrell);

nouveauté chimique: “chemical newness” (Fowlie, Mathieu) vs. “chemical change” (Bernard), “chemical innovation” (Carlile, Peschel), “new chemical wonders” (Chilcott), “chemical surprise” (Harding & Sturrock), “chemical novelties” (Leclercq), “new elements” (Mason), “chemical discovery” (Rootham), “chemical wonders” (Schmidt), “innovations in chemistry” (Sloate), and “chemical invention” (Sorrell);

comptes agités: “agitated accounts” (Fowlie 1966, Fowlie 2005, Fowlie online, Peschel) vs. “anxious calculations” (Bernard), “shaky reckonings” (Carlile), “fevered calculations” (Chilcott), “nervous calculations” (Harding & Sturrock), “accounts bandied” (Leclercq), “uneasy accountings” (Mason), “agitated counting” (Mathieu), “busy calculations” (Schmidt), “restless calculations” (Sloate), “agitated reckonings” (Sorrell, Rootham), and “agitated calculations” (Treharne);

accidents atmosphériques: “atmospheric accidents” (Chilcott, Leclercq, Mason, Peschel, Schmidt, Sloate) vs. “meteorological events” (Bernard), “atmospheric incidents” (Carlile), “atmospheric happenings” (Fowlie), “wild phenomena in the sky” (Harding & Sturrock), “incidental transactions” (Mathieu), “atmospheric activity” (Sorrell), and “atmospheric events” (Treharne);

ancienne sauvagerie: “an ancient coyness” (Fowlie) vs. “primitive shyness” (Bernard), “primitive savagery” (Carlile), “age-old savagery” (Chilcott), “earlier crimes” (Harding & Sturrock), “ancient savagery” (Leclercq, Mathieu, Rootham), “ancient savageries” (Mason), “primitive savagery” (Peschel), “past savagery” (Schmidt, Sorrell, Treharne), and “bygone madness” (Sloate);

arche: “ark” (Bernard, Chilcott, Harding & Sturrock, Mason, Peschel, Schmidt, Sloate Sorrell, Treharne) vs. “archway” (Fowlie), “pump box” (Leclercq), and “arch” (Rootham);

se poste: “stands guard” (Fowlie) vs. “mounts guard” (Bernard), “assume position” (Carlile), “take up watch” (Chilcott), “take the watch” (Harding & Sturrock), “take their stand” (Leclercq), “standing watch” (Mason), “*stands pat*” (Mathieu), “takes its post” (Peschel), “stationed there” (Rootham), “upon their watch” (Schmidt), “take up their posts” (Sloate), “take up their stations” (Sorrell), and “take up their watch” (Treharne).

Why do you think certain words or phrases give rise to a greater number of different translations than others? Is the status of those sections of the poem giving rise to a larger number of translations different from those translated consistently?

- 3) In which translation does it seem that the translator most implicates the reader? In which version does the reader seem most distant from the scene being portrayed or problematized? Consider the following:

Ils: “These” (Bernard, Carlile, Chilcott, Harding & Sturrock, Leclercq, Mason, Mathieu, Peschel, Rootham, Schmidt, Sorrell, Treharne) vs. “They” (Fowlie);

On voit: “You can see” (Fowlie, Mathieu, Treharne) vs. “One sees” (Carlile, Peschel, Rootham), “You can make them out” (Harding & Sturrock), “You see” (Leclercq), “We see” (Mason), “visible” (Schmidt), and “Can be seen” (Sloate, Sorrell).

- 4) Bernard, Leclercq, Mason, Mathieu, and Sloate choose not to translate the noun “strom,” although Leclercq and Mason italicize it, and Mathieu spells it with a “ø.” Others do translate it:

“Maelstrom’s valley” (Carlile);

“whirlpool” (Chilcott, Schmidt);

“current” (Fowlie);

“waterspouts and whirlpools” (Harding & Sturrock);

“stream” (Peschel, Rootham); and

“riptide” (Sorrell).

Why do you think Bernard and Mason chose to preserve this, and no other, French words in their translation of “Mouvement”? And what effect does it have in the English version of the text?

- 5) When compared to the others, Mason’s translation differentiates itself in other ways too. Would you consider it more efficient? Less cumbersome? Is his seemingly pared-down version of the poem somehow more suggestive of the speed of the movement it rehearses? Would you consider it more or less upbeat than the other translations? What, for example, to make of his choice of “They bring knowledge” for “*Ils emmènent l’éducation*” instead of the following:

“They carry away with them the education” (Bernard);

“They take along the education” (Chilcott);

“They take the education” (Fowlie);

“They load this Vessel/With the education” (Harding & Sturrock);

“They take away the education” (Peschel);

“They carry with them on this vessel/The education” (Rootham);

“With them is the education” (Sloate);

“They bear away the education” (Sorrell); and

“They carry off the education” (Treharne)?

Leclercq and Schmidt translate the line in a similarly upbeat way: “They bring with them onto this ship/The education [...]” and “They bring education”, respectively. Are the rest of their translations as upbeat, though? And what to make of Carlile’s “They bring off the education?”

- 6) Are the syntactic differences for “Monstrueux, s’éclairant sans fin, -- leur stock d’études;” significant?

“Monstrous, lighting up without end -- their store of studies;” (Bernard);

“Monstrous, lit-up endlessly -- their haul of learning;” (Carlile);

“Monstrous, endlessly alight, -- their stock of studies; --” (Chilcott, Treharne);

“Monstrous, illuminated endlessly, -- their stock of studies (Fowlie);

“And their wad of surveys [...] [...] Monstrous, and lit without end” (Harding & Sturrock);

“Monstrous, lighting up endlessly, -- you see their/stock of studies;” (Leclercq)

“Their monstrous store of studies, illuminated endlessly -- ” (Mason);

“Monstrous, endlessly illuminated -- their stock of/studies;” (Mathieu);

“Monstrous, lighting up endlessly, -- their stock of studies;” (Peschel);

“Monstrous, endlessly enquiring -- their stock of studies;” (Rootham);

“Is their stock of studies visible/[...] Monstrous, endlessly lighting its way -- ” (Schmidt);

“Monstrous, endlessly brightening -- their stock/of studies;” (Sloate); and

“Monstrous, endlessly illuminated, -- their stock of studies; -- ” (Sorrell)?

- 7) Consider the translation of the poem’s final stanza. What do the differences in the way the youthful couple is portrayed as separate from the other travelers reveal? Is “withdraws into the archway” (Fowlie) for “s’isole sur l’arche” the same as the following, for example?

“holds aloof on the ark” (Bernard);

“disembark alone” (Carlile);

“stand alone upon the ark” (Chilcott);
 “isolated on the ark” (Harding and Sturrock);
 “finds isolation on the pump box” (Leclercq);
 “remains alone on the ark” (Mason);
 “isolates itself on the ark” (Peschel);
 “isolate themselves” (Rootham);
 “stand out alone upon the ark” (Schmidt);
 “stands aloof on the ark” (Sloate);
 “Standing apart on the ark” (Sorrell); and
 “stand alone on the ark” (Treharne)?

- 8) And are there other differences between the translations that you believe to be meaningful or significant?

Through rereading the French and English versions of “Mouvement” for difference, students will be empowered to read modern poets such as Rimbaud differently. After all, one does not read Rimbaud for answers but rather for the pleasure to be derived from his texts’ instability, from their transgressiveness, their “systematized disorganization” (Bonenkamp 759). Like nearly all the poems of *Les Illuminations*, “Mouvement” showcases multiple possible meanings or messages. Within this text where all is movement there is, one soon discovers, no fixed point of reference.

One solution to the practical impossibility of translating the poem satisfactorily might be a series of translations, as Sloate suggests. Each could give rise to different versions. When translated on different levels, all of them would be read as a poetic palimpsest until the reader got the same “multiple messages” as in the original “creative process” (“Translating” 96).

But hermetic poems like “Mouvement” were conceived to provoke. Sergio Sacchi raises the question of whether, once they have provoked the reader, such poems warrant further attention: “pourquoi les lire encore après le tout premier effort de la provocation?” (“Préface” ix). As students reread “Mouvement” in its various versions, “interpréter à leur gré dans l’exercice créatif qu’est la lecture” (Plessen, “Strategies” 175), as they move beyond the “passage initiatique” that its unreadability seems to be (Riffaterre 632), they should most importantly realize the stakes of their engagement: that they are ultimately responsible for making their learning meaningful. By rereading the palimpsest that the versions of various editors and translators also ultimately represent, students might begin to access its multiple messages, make their own interpretive discoveries—heroic or otherwise. As teachers, co-collaborators in the poetic act, we should guide and prompt them in their movement forward.⁵

⁵ I am grateful to Dr. Marlene Birkman of Webster University for inviting me to teach Rimbaud’s poem through “interrogation” to the students in her “Poetry on the Planet” seminar.

Appendices

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B. FRENCH VERSIONS

Mouvement

Le mouvement de lacet sur la berge des chutes du fleuve,
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Ce sont les conquérants du monde
Cherchant la fortune chimique personnelle ;
Le sport et le confort voyagent avec eux ;
Ils emmènent l'éducation
Des races, des classes et des bêtes, sur ce vaisseau :
Repos et vertige
A la lumière diluvienne,
Aux terribles soirs d'étude.

Car de la causerie parmi les appareils, -- le sang, les fleurs,
le feu, les bijoux,
Des comptes agités à ce bord fuyard,
On voit, -- roulant comme une digue au delà de la
route hydraulique motrice,
Monstrueux, s'éclairant sans fin, -- leur stock d'études;
Eux chassés dans l'extase harmonique
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Et chante et se poste.
[Mercure de France 1938]

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Car de la causerie parmi les appareils, le sang, les fleurs,
[le feu, les bijoux,

[Mercure de France 1947]

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TEXTE DE L'ÉDITION PRÉORIGINALE (la *Vogue hebdom.*, t. I, p. 310-311).
[Mercure de France 1949]

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 [Décaudin 1964]

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 [Fowlie 1966]

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 [Py 1967]

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 [Adam 1972]

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 [Peschel 1973]

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 [Osmond 1976]

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 [Méranger 1998]

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 [Treharne 1998]

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 [Ray 2001]

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 [Mason 2002]

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 [Claisse 2003]

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 Le gouffre à l'étambot,
 La célérité de la rampe,
 L'énorme passade du courant,
 Mènent par les lumières inouïes
 Et la nouveauté chimique
 Les voyageurs entourés des trombes du val
 Et du strom.

Ce sont les conquérants du monde
 Cherchant la fortune chimique personnelle;
 Le sport et le confort voyagent avec eux;
 Ils emmènent l'éducation
 Des races, des classes et des bêtes, sur ce Vaisseau.
 Repos et vertige
 A la lumière diluvienne,
 Aux terribles soirs d'étude.

Car de la causerie parmi les appareils, -- le sang; les fleurs, le
 feu, les bijoux --
 Des comptes agités à ce bord fuyard,
 -- On voit, roulant comme une digue au-delà de la route hydrau-
 lique motrice,
 Monstrueux, s'éclairant sans fin, -- leur stock d'études; --
 Eux chassés dans l'extase harmonique
 Et l'héroïsme de la découverte.

Aux accidents atmosphériques les plus surprenants
 Un couple de jeunesse s'isole sur l'arche,
 -- Est-ce ancienne sauvagerie qu'on pardonne? --
 Et chante et se poste.
 [Brunel 2004]

Mouvement

Le mouvement de lacet sur la berge des chutes du fleuve,
 Le gouffre à l'étambot,
 La célérité de la rampe,
 L'énorme passade du courant,
 Mènent par les lumières inouïes
 Et la nouveauté chimique
 Les voyageurs entourés des trombes du val
 Et du strom.

Ce sont les conquérants du monde
 Cherchant la fortune chimique personnelle;
 Le sport et le confort voyagent avec eux;
 Ils emmènent l'éducation
 Des races, des classes et des bêtes, sur ce Vaisseau.

Repos et vertige
 A la lumière diluvienne,
 Aux terribles soirs d'étude.

Car de la causerie parmi les appareils, -- le sang; les
 fleurs, le feu, les bijoux --
 Des comptes agités à ce bord fuyard,
 -- On voit, roulant comme une digue au delà de la
 route hydraulique motrice,
 Monstrueux, s'éclairant sans fin, -- leur stock d'études; --
 Eux chassés dans l'extase harmonique
 Et l'héroïsme de la découverte.

Aux accidents atmosphériques les plus surprenants
 Un couple de jeunesse s'isole sur l'arche,
 -- Est-ce ancienne sauvagerie qu'on pardonne?
 Et chante et se poste.
 [Forestier 2004]

Mouvement

Le mouvement de lacet sur la berge des chutes du fleuve,
 Le gouffre à l'étambot,
 La célérité de la rampe,
 L'énorme passade du courant
 Mènent par les lumières inouïes
 Et la nouveauté chimique
 Les voyageurs entourés des trombes du val
 Et du strom.

Ce sont les conquérants du monde
 Cherchant la fortune chimique personnelle;
 Le sport et le confort voyagent avec eux;
 Ils emmènent l'éducation
 Des races, des classes et des bêtes, sur ce Vaisseau
 Repos et vertige
 A la lumière diluvienne,
 Aux terribles soirs d'étude.

Car de la causerie parmi les appareils, -- le sang; les fleurs, le feu, les
 bijoux --
 Des comptes agités à ce bord fuyard,
 -- On voit, roulant comme une digue au delà de la route hydraulique
 motrice,
 Monstrueux, s'éclairant sans fin, -- leur stock d'études;
 Eux chassés dans l'extase harmonique
 Et l'héroïsme de la découverte.

Aux accidents atmosphériques les plus surprenants
 Un couple de jeunesse s'isole sur l'arche,
 -- Est-ce ancienne sauvagerie qu'on pardonne? --
 Et chante et se poste.
 [Fowlie 2005]

Mouvement

Le mouvement de lacet sur la berge des chutes du fleuve,
 Le gouffre à l'étambot,
 La célérité de la rampe,
 L'énorme passade du courant
 Mènent par les lumières inouïes
 Et la nouveauté chimique
 Les voyageurs entourés des trombes du val
 Et du strom.

Ce sont les conquérants du monde
 Cherchant la fortune chimique personnelle;
 Le sport et le confort voyagent avec eux;
 Ils emmènent l'éducation
 Des races, des classes et des bêtes, sur ce Vaisseau.
 Repos et vertige
 A la lumière diluvienne,
 Aux terribles soirs d'étude.

Car de la causerie parmi les appareils, -- le sang, les fleurs, le
 feu, les bijoux --
 Des comptes agités à ce bord fuyard,
 -- On voit, roulant comme une digue au delà de la route
 hydraulique motrice,
 Monstrueux, s'éclairant sans fin, -- leur stock d'études;
 Eux chassés dans l'extase harmonique
 Et l'héroïsme de la découverte.

Aux accidents atmosphériques les plus surprenants
 Un couple de jeunesse s'isole sur l'arche,
 -- Est-ce ancienne sauvagerie qu'on pardonne? --
 Et chante et se poste.
 [Fowlie 2005, online version]

Mouvement

Le mouvement de lacet sur la berge des chutes du fleuve,
 Le gouffre à l'étambot,
 La célérité de la rampe,
 L'énorme passade du courant,
 Mènent par les lumières inouïes
 Et la nouveauté chimique
 Les voyageurs entourées des trombes du val
 Et du strom.

Ce sont les conquérants du monde
 Cherchant la fortune chimique personnelle;
 Le sport et le confort voyagent avec eux;
 Ils emmènent l'éducation
 Des races, des classes et des bêtes, sur ce Vaisseau.

Repos et vertige
 A la lumière diluvienne,
 Aux tembles soirs d'étude.

Car de la causerie parmi les appareils, -- le sang, les fleurs, le feu, les bijoux,
 --
 Des comptes agités à ce bord fuyard,
 -- On voit, roulant comme une digue au-delà de la route hydraulique motrice,
 Monstrueux, s'éclairant sans fin, -- leur stock d'études; --
 Eux chassés dans l'extase harmonique
 Et l'héroïsme de la découverte.

Aux accidents atmosphériques les plus surprenants
 Un couple de jeunesse s'isole sur l'arche,
 -- Est-ce ancienne sauvagerie qu'on pardonne?
 Et chante et se poste.
 [Chilcott, online version]

C. ENGLISH VERSIONS

Movement

The curve of rushing waters where the river falls steeply,
 The deep eddies by the rudder,
 The rush of the descent,
 The ceaselessly moving mass of the current
 All lead -- by incredible suggestion
 And the latest chemical discovery --
 The travellers, surrounded by the water-spouts of the
 valley
 And of the stream.

These are the world's conquerors
 Adventuring in quest of personal fortune;
 Sport and comfort voyage with them;
 They carry with them on this vessel
 The education of races, of classes, and of beasts.
 There is repose and vertigo
 In the deluge of light
 During the terrible evenings of study.

And between talks among the apparatus
 The blood, the flowers, fire and gems;
 Between agitated reckonings on this fugitive shipboard,
 One sees -- rolling like a dyke beyond the propelling,
 hydraulic track,
 Monstrous, endlessly enquiring -- their stock of studies;
 Themselves hunted into harmonious ecstasy
 And the heroism of discovery.
 In most surprising atmospheric effects
 A youthful pair isolate themselves on the arch,
 -- Is it some ancient savagery one is pardoning? --
 And stationed there, they sing.
 [Rootham 1932]

Movement

The oscillation of the riverfall on the bank,
 The abyss at the stern post,
 The celerity of the slope,
 The enormous leap-frogging of the current,
 By means of incredible lights
 And chemical novelties
 Lead the travelers who are surrounded by
 whirlwinds of the valley
 And waterspouts of the *strom*.

These are the conquerors of the world
 Seeking personal chemical fortune;
 Sport and comfort travel in their company;
 They bring with them onto this ship
 The education of races, of classes and of beasts:
 Repose and vertigo
 With diluvian light,
 With terrible evenings of study.

For, from the chatter amid appartuses, blood,
 flowers, fire, jewels,
 From the accounts bandied on this fleeting ship,
 You see --rolling like a dike beyond the hydraulic
 propelling road,
 Monstrous, lighting up endlessly -- you see their
 stock of studies;
 They, hidden in the harmonic ecstasy
 And the heroism of discovery.

From the most startling of atmospheric accidents
 A youthful couple finds isolation on the pump box
 (Is it ancient savagery that we forgive?)
 To sing and take their stand.
 [Leclercq 1960]

Motion

The swaying motion on the bank of the river falls,
 The chasm at the sternpost,
 The swiftness of the hand-rail,
 The huge passing of the current
 Conduct by unimaginable lights
 And chemical newness
 Voyagers surrounded by the waterspouts of the valley
 And the current.

They are the conquerors of the world
 Seeking a personal chemical fortune;
 Sports and comfort travel with them;
 They take the education
 Of races, classes, and animals, on this boat

Repose and dizziness
 To the torrential light
 To the terrible nights of study.

For from the talk among the apparatus, blood, flowers, fire, jewels,
 From the agitated accounts on this fleeing deck,
 -- You can see, rolling like a dyke beyond the hydraulic motor road,
 Monstrous, illuminated endlessly -- their stock of studies;
 Themselves driven into harmonious ecstasy,
 And the heroism of discovery.

In the most startling atmospheric happenings,
 A youthful couple withdraws into the archway,
 -- Is it an ancient coyness that can be forgiven? --
 And sings and stands guard.
 [Fowlie 1966]

Movement

The swaying movement on the steep banks of the river's falls,
 The whirlpool at the sternpost,
 The speed of the slope,
 The enormous passing of the current
 Conduct through the unheard-of lights
 And the chemical innovation
 The travelers surrounded by the waterspouts of the valley
 And of the stream.

These are the conquerors of the world
 Seeking their personal chemical fortune;
 Sport and comfort travel with them;
 They take away the education
 Of races, of classes and of animals, on this ship
 Repose and vertigo
 In the diluvial light,
 In terrible nights of study.

For from the talk amid the apparatus, the blood, the flowers,
 the fire, the jewels,
 From the agitated accounts aboard this fugitive ship,
 -- One sees, rolling like a dyke beyond the hydraulic power
 road,
 Monstrous, lighting up endlessly, -- their stock of studies;
 The people driven into harmonious ecstasy,
 And the heroism of discovery.

In the most amazing atmospheric accidents,
 A youthful couple isolates itself on the ark,
 -- Is it primitive savagery that people pardon? --
 And sings and takes its post.
 [Peschel 1973]

Movement

A winding movement on the slope beside the rapids of the river.
 The abyss at the stern,
 The swiftness of the incline,
 The overwhelming passage of the tide,
 With extraordinary lights and chemical wonders
 Lead on the travelers
 Through the windspouts of the valley
 And the whirlpool.

These are the conquerors of the world,
 Seeking their personal chemical fortune;
 Sport and comfort accompany them;
 They bring education for races, for classes, for animals
 Within this vessel, rest and vertigo
 In diluvian light,
 In terrible evenings of study.

For in this conversation in the midst of machines,
 Of blood, of flowers, of fire, of jewels,
 In busy calculations on this fugitive deck,
 Is their stock of studies visible
 -- Rolling like a dike beyond
 The hydraulic propulsive road,
 Monstrous, endlessly lighting its way --
 Themselves driven into harmonic ecstasy
 And the heroism of discovery.

Amid the most amazing accidents,
 Two youths stand out alone upon the ark
 -- Can one excuse past savagery? --
 And sing, upon their watch.
 [Schmidt 1976]

Movement

The rhythmic movement on the river falls' bank,
 The whirlpool at the sternpost,
 The swiftness of the hand-rail,
 And the huge passing of the current
 Conduct through unheard-of lights
 And a chemical newness
 The voyagers surrounded by the waterspouts of the
 valley
 And the strøm.

These are the conquerors of the world
 Seeking a personal chemical fortune;
 Sports and comforts travel along with them;
 They bring the education [*sic*]
 Of races, classes, and animals, on this boat,
 Repose and vertigo
 To this diluvian light,

To terrible nights of study.

Since from the talk among the apparatus, the blood, the
 flowers, the fire, the jewels,
 From the agitated counting aboard this fugitive ship,
 --You can see, roling like a dyke beyond the hydrau-
 lic power road,
 Monstrous, endlessly illuminated -- their stock of
 studies;
 Themselves hunted into harmonic ecstasy,
 And the heroism of discovery.
 During the most unbelievable incidental transactions,
 A young couple moves apart at a bridge
 -- Is it an ancient savagery that has to be forgiven? --
 And sings and *stands pat*.
 [Mathieu 1979]

Movement

The zigzag movement along the bank
 of the river's falls,
 The whirlpool at the sternpost,
 The rapidity of the rail,
 The mighty passage of the current,
 Lead, amid the unheard of lights
 And the innovations in chemistry
 The travellers, amid the waterspouts of the vale
 And the strom.

They are the conquerors of the world
 Each seeking his own chemical fortune;
 Sports and comforts are travelling with them;
 With them is the education
 Of peoples, classes and animals, on the Vessel.
 Repose and giddiness
 In the torrential light,
 In the awesome nights of study.

For, from whispered talks amid the apparatus --
 blood, and flowers, and fire, and gems --
 And restless calculations on this runaway ship
 -- Can be seen, rolling like a dam above
 the hydraulic powered road,
 Monstrous, endlessly brightening -- their stock
 of studies;
 They've been driven into harmonic ecstasy
 And the heroism of discovery.

Amidst the most amazing atmospheric accidents
 A youthful couple stands aloof on the ark
 -- Is bygone madness forgiven? --
 And sing as they take up their posts.
 [Sloate 1990]

Movement

The rocking movement against the embankment at the river falls,
 The whirlpool at the sternpost,
 The swiftness of the slope,
 The vast to and fro of the current
 Bring through unheard-of lights
 And chemical change
 The travellers surrounded by the waterspouts of the valley
 And of the storm.

These are the conquerors of the world
 Seeking their personal chemical fortunes;
 Amusement and comfort travel with them;
 They carry away with them the education
 Of races, of classes, and of animals, on this vessel
 Repose and vertigo
 In the diluvian light,
 And the terrible nights of study.

For from the talk among the equipment, the blood, the flowers
 the fire, the gems,
 From the anxious calculations on board this fugitive ship,
 --You can see, rolling past like a dyke beyond the hydraulic pro-
 pulsive road,
 Monstrous, lighting up without end -- their store of studies;
 Themselves driven into harmonic ecstasy.
 And the heroism of discovery.

And among the most extraordinary meteorological events,
 A young couple holds aloof on the ark,
 -- Is it a pardonable primitive shyness? --
 And sings and mounts guard.
 [Bernard 1997]

Movement

The twisting movement against the bank at the river falls,
 The chasm at the sternpost,
 The swiftness of the ramp,
 The vast to-and-fro of the current,
 With extraordinary lights
 And chemical wonders
 Lead the travellers on through the waterspouts of the valley
 And the whirlpool.

These are the conquerors of the world
 Seeking their private chemical fortunes;
 Sport and comfort travel with them;
 They carry off the education
 Of races, classes and animals, on this Vessel.
 Rest and vertigo

In the diluvian light,
During the terrible nights of study.

For from the talk in the midst of machines, -- the blood, the
flowers, the fire, the jewels, --
From the agitated calculations on this fugitive deck,
-- You can see, rolling like a dyke beyond the hydraulic
power of the road,
Monstrous, endlessly alight, -- their stock of studies; --
Themselves driven into harmonic ecstasy
And the heroism of discovery.

Amid the most extraordinary atmospheric events
Two young people stand alone on the ark,
-- Past savagery excused? --
And sing as they take up their watch.
[Treharne 1998]

Motion

The ricochet down the chute of rapids
The whirlpool astern
The rampant swiftness' glide
The current's enormous thrust,
Led on by unheard-of lights
And chemical innovation
The voyagers whirl through waterspouts into the
Maelstrom's valley.

These are the world-conquering
Fortune-hunting chemical personnel:
Sports and comforts come along for the ride.
They bring off the education
Of races, classes and animals on this Vessel:
Repose and vertigo
To the floodlit glow
In terrifying nights of study.

For out of the babble among the systems,
-- The blood, the flowers, the fire, the jewels --
Out of the shaky reckonings on this pitching deck
-- One sees, rolling like a levee
Beyond the motorized hydraulic highway,
Monstrous, lit-up endlessly--their haul of learning:
-- They've ransacked harmonic ecstasy
And the heroism out of discovery.

Among the most amazing atmospheric incidents
A young couple disembark alone
-- Is this primitive savagery forgivable? --
And sing and assume position.

[Carlile 2001]

Movement

The swaying movement by the tumbling riverside,
 The vortex at the sternpost,
 The speed of the ramp
 The vast to-and-fro of the current,
 Among outlandish lights
 And chemical invention
 Steer the travellers through the valley's waterspouts
 And the riptide.

These are the conquerors of the world
 Seeking their own chemical fortune:
 Sport and comfort travel with them;
 They bear away the education
 Of races, classes, beasts, on this Vessel.
 Rest and vertigo
 In the diluvian light,
 On terrible nights of study.

For, from the talk among the machinery, -- the blood,
 the flowers, the fire, the jewels, --
 From the agitated reckonings on these fugitive boards,
 -- Can be seen, rolling like a dyke beyond the
 roads hydraulic motor power;
 Monstous, endlessly illuminated, -- their stock of studies; --
 Themselves driven into harmonic ecstasy
 And the heroism of discovery.

Amid the most astonishing atmospheric activity,
 Standing apart on the ark, two young people,
 -- Past savagery pardoned perhaps? --
 And sing and take up their stations.
 [Sorrell 2001]

Movement

The wagging movement along the banks of the river's falls,
 The gulf at stern,
 The slope's speed,
 The current's pull
 Flows through unimaginable lights
 And new elements
 Travelers enveloped in a valley of waterspouts
 And *strom*.

These are the world's conquerors
 Seeking their own elemental fortunes;
 Sport and comfort travel with them;
 They bring knowledge
 Of race, classes, animals.
 Aboard this Vessel.

Rest and restlessness
 Under a flood of light
 During terrible evenings of study.

Because from the banter around the instruments -- blood, flowers, fire,
 Jewels --
 From the uneasy accountings aboard this fugitive craft,
 We see, rolling like seawalls past a motorized hydraulic road:
 Their monstrous store of studies, illuminated endlessly --
 They are driven into harmonic ecstasy,
 And heroics of discovery.
 Beneath astonishing atmospheric accidents
 A young couple remains alone on the ark
 -- Can ancient savageries be absolved? --
 And sings, standing watch.
 [Mason 2002]

Movement

The swaying motion on the bank beside the falls,
 The eddies at the sternpost,
 The speed of the ramp,
 The beaten track of the current, huge,
 Past strange lights
 And chemical surprise --
 Bring the travellers through the vale
 Of waterspouts and whirlpools.

These are the conquerors of the world,
 Seeking their personal chemical fortunes;
 Leisure and comfort travel with them;
 They load this Vessel
 With the education of races, classes, animals.
 Repose and vertigo
 In the diluvian light
 During terrible evenings of study.

From the banter in the machinery -- the blood and
 flowers, the fire and jewels --
 From the nervous calculations on these fugitive decks,
 You can make them out -- driven to harmonic Ecstasy,
 the heroism of discovery --
 And their wad of surveys, rolling like a dyke
 Beyond the hydraulic pull of the channel,
 Monstrous, and lit without end.

Surrounded by wild phenomena in the sky,
 Two young people, isolated on the ark
 -- Earlier crimes excused? --
 Sing as they take the watch.
 [Harding & Sturrock 2004]

Motion

The swaying motion on the bank of the river falls,
 The chasm at the sternpost,
 The swiftness of the hand-rail,
 The huge passing of the current
 Conduct by unimaginable lights
 And chemical newness
 Voyagers surrounded by the waterspouts of the valley
 And the current.

They are the conquerors of the world
 Seeking a personal chemical fortune;
 Sports and comfort travel with them;
 They take the education
 Of races, classes, and animals, on this Boat
 Repose and dizziness
 To the torrential light,
 To the terrible nights of study.

For from the talk among the apparatus, -- blood, flowers, fire,
 jewels,
 From the agitated accounts on this fleeing deck,
 -- You can see, rolling like a dyke beyond the hydraulic motor
 road,
 Monstrous, illuminated endlessly, -- their stock of studies;
 Themselves driven into harmonious ecstasy
 And the heroism of discovery.

In the most startling atmospheric happenings
 A youthful couple withdraws into the archway,
 -- Is it an ancient coyness that can be forgiven? --
 And sings and stands guard.
 [Fowlie 2005]

Motion

The swaying motion on the bank of the river falls,
 The chasm at the sternpost,
 The swiftness of the hand-rail,
 The huge passing of the current
 Conduct by unimaginable lights
 And chemical newness
 Voyagers surrounded by the waterspouts of the valley
 And the current.

They are the conquerors of the world
 Seeking a personal chemical fortune;
 Sports and comfort travel with them;
 They take the education
 Of races, classes, and animals, on this Boat.
 Repose and dizziness
 To the torrential light,

To the terrible nights of study.

For from the talk among the apparatus, -- blood, flowers, fire,
jewels --
From the agitated accounts on this fleeing deck,
-- You can see, rolling like a dyke beyond the hydraulic motor
road,
Monstrous, illuminated endlessly, -- their stock of studies;
Themselves driven into harmonious ecstasy
And the heroism of discovery.

In the most startling atmospheric happenings
A youthful couple withdraws into the archway,
-- Is it an ancient coyness that can be forgiven? --
And sings and stands guard.
[Fowlie 2005, online version]

Movement

The twisting movement at the bank by the river-falls,
The vortex at the stern,
The swiftness of the ramp,
The current's massive to-and-fro,
Past extraordinary lights
And new chemical wonders
Steer the travellers through the valley's waterspouts
And the whirlpool.

These are the conquerors of the world
Seeking their very own chemical fortune;
Sport and comfort travel by their side;
They take along the education
Of races, classes, animals, on this Vessel.
Rest and vertigo
In the diluvian light,
During terrible nights of study.

From the talk among the machines, -- the blood, the flowers, the
fire, the jewels, --
From the fevered calculations on this fleeting deck,
You can see, rolling like a dyke beyond the motorised hydraulic
road,
Monstrous, endlessly alight, -- their stock of studies; --
And them, driven to harmonic ecstasy
And the heroism of discovery.

Amid most wondrous atmospheric accidents
A young couple stand alone upon the ark,
-- Is it an age-old savagery that's forgiven? --
And sing and take up watch.
[Chilcott, online version]

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