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**TRANSLATING ARTHUR RIMBAUD'S
*ILLUMINATIONS***

by

Evelyne Hervy

A thesis submitted for the degree of
DLang
in the University of St Andrews
October 1998



TR D 276

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Abstract

Title of thesis:

Translating Arthur Rimbaud's *Illuminations*.

The main object of this thesis is to produce a new translation of Rimbaud's *Illuminations* based on a close reading and interpretation of the poet's style and taking into account new developments in translation studies (translation criticism, text processing and production). This thesis aims to demonstrate the validity of a translation grounded in knowledge of the source and target texts and of the source and target languages and cultures. In addition, it sets out to provide a new pathway for reading and interpreting *Illuminations*.

After an Introduction which considers the evolution of literary translation studies and situates the approach applied in this thesis, I explore the problems associated with translating poetry traditionally held as hermetic.

Chapter I is devoted to the characteristics of Rimbaud's writing in *Illuminations*, in order to discuss the unique challenge they present to a translator. I present and discuss the concept of obscurity that underlies most of the thinking on *Illuminations* and assess the implications of this concept for translation. I follow this with a presentation of the style of the poems, outlining an overall strategy for translation which takes into account the tension within the texts between chaos and stability.

In Chapter II, I focus on the need to select a representative corpus of poems and translations. Challenging the current theory of "fragment", I show that texts can be grouped according to common titles and genres. I focus on parody, analysing how this genre functions in *Illuminations* and identifying texts that are potentially "subversive". Following this, I introduce three existing translations by Fowlie, Bernard and Peschel, evaluating the strategies underlying their TTs.

Finally, in Chapter III, after introducing the corpus of texts for translation in more detail, I produce my own critical and annotated translations, drawing on the conclusions reached in Chapters I and II. This is complemented by a study and assessment of earlier translations. My translations are accompanied by footnotes, which alert the readers to decisions of detail affecting the TT.

Abbreviations

ST: source text

TT: target text

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Introduction

There has never been a better time to study translation. From being a marginal activity outside linguistics proper, at the edges of literary study, neglected by anthropologists, ethnographers and philosophers, translation is now being considered, and its fundamental importance in intercultural transfer processes is becoming apparent. [Bassnett 1996, p. 22-3]

This statement encapsulates the general optimism surrounding the still relatively new discipline known as “translation studies”. The impetus to view translation as a fundamental cultural and literary activity is due to a large extent to the decisive theoretical works produced in the last three decades, where the power relationship between writer, translator and reader has been reconsidered. Within this new theoretical framework, translation is held as canon-forming and as a potentially political and social influence, capable of shaping the way in which a society perceives a work, an author, a literature and ultimately a culture. This ability to influence the reception of a given ST — as the translator can decide within her/his cultural context on the final meaning(s) of this ST— gives the translator a great power which may even rival that of a creative author [cf. Alvarez and Vidal 1996, p. 4]. However, the role the translator plays in a culture and a literature is not only viewed in terms of ‘power’, but is also defined in terms of ‘manipulation’ [cf. Lefevere 1992 a]. If translation is held as a manipulative force, it is all the more important to understand the possible outcomes of this manipulation:

Therefore it is important to acknowledge the consequences of manipulating the language and the problem of abuse of power that translation can give rise to. From all this, the importance of knowing what is being rewritten and how it is rewritten stands out [...]. [Alvarez and Vidal 1996, p. 5]

This thesis concentrates on “what is being rewritten” and “how it is rewritten” in the case of Rimbaud's *Illuminations*. Firstly, the thesis sets out to reveal, reassess and interpret the chosen ST, *Illuminations*, taking into account its particular features, its purpose when produced and the context within which it was produced. Secondly, in order to understand how it has been translated on previous occasions, the thesis examines three examples of TTs from different periods. Lastly, it attempts to produce a sample of new translations clearly stating what has been left out of these new translations, what has been added and why and how these choices have been made. The analysis carried out in the thesis emphasises the role played by translation in the construction and possible revision of the reception of *Illuminations*. It is based on a scholarly knowledge of Rimbaud's poetry,

partly gained from the work which I submitted for the degree of Maîtrise at the University of Rennes II in 1993. This work, entitled *Rhétorique des Illuminations* and supervised by Professor Steve Murphy, concentrated on the critical reception of the texts in France. In this respect, it enabled me to gain a clear understanding not only of the literary and critical issues surrounding *Illuminations*, but also of some of the major characteristics of Rimbaud's rhetoric. The present thesis also follows on from and further develops work carried out at the University of St Andrews as part of the M.Litt. in Advanced Translation Studies, which was supervised by Dr Peter Read.

In this introduction, I will initially set out my approach to translating *Illuminations* [pp. 7-14] and then define the role and goals of my translation within the context of the broader discipline of translation studies [pp. 14-16]. In order to place my approach in context, I will firstly analyse the particular status of poetry in literary translation [pp. 3-7]. The confines of this thesis do not allow an exhaustive survey of the history and development of poetry and literary translation studies, but certain relevant aspects of this rapidly-evolving discipline may be considered.

However, as *Illuminations* is a collection of prose poems, it raises the question of whether remarks made on other forms of poetry (mainly verse poetry) in translation are of relevance to the present study. An answer to this question may, in broad terms, be provided by pointing out that the frontier between prose poetry and other forms of poetry has always been ill-defined. Despite many attempts at building a valid aesthetics of the prose poem¹ with varying degrees of success, the reader has yet to find a satisfactory definition which includes all forms of prose poems. Any attempt at offering an exhaustive definition of the genre automatically excludes many texts. Metzidakis even goes so far as to say that the particularity of the prose poem is that it resists prescriptive aesthetics and “forces us to ask ourselves whether there can be one, and only one definition of the genre” [1986, p. 126]. Therefore, I wish to consider the genre prose poem within the wider socio-textual evolution and within a literary continuum with, at one end, fixed forms such as the sonnet, which has a strict structure complete with strict versification and often thematic constraints and, at the other end, freer creative forms. The immediate implication of such an approach is that many

¹The first one being S. Bernard's *Le Poème en Prose de Baudelaire jusqu'à nos jours*, published in 1959. Other studies have since attempted to determine what formal features substitute for the verse in prose poems [see notably Metzidakis 1986].

remarks made on literary translation in general and on poetic translation in particular can apply to the translation of *Illuminations*.

Literary translation studies and the particular status of poetry

The choice to work from literary texts and particularly from poems is motivated by the special status of poetry in translation. Poetry has long been held as a central and decisive test ground in translation practices. It embodies the conflicting views on fidelity and freedom in translation. Furthermore, the much shared belief that “poetry is what gets left out in translation” [Fowler 1973, p. 200] has reinforced the vision of the translator as a mere imitator. Poetry is where translation fails to achieve its goal and remains a poor substitute for the original. It is this vision of poetical translation which is challenged in this thesis.

Poetry as object for translation has been subjected to numerous studies. As Bassnett points out:

Within the field of literary translation, more time has been devoted to investigating the problems of translating poetry than any other literary mode. [Bassnett 1991, p. 81]

Such studies often begin with a pessimistic remark on the ‘untranslatability’ of poetry, which is held as too complex a literary creation to be reproduced in a foreign language. Paz points out the paradox of this pessimistic vision of poetic translation:

The greatest pessimism about the feasibility of translation has been concentrated on poetry, a remarkable posture since many of the best poems in every Western language are translations, and many of those translations were written by great poets. [Paz in Biguenet and Schulte 1992, p. 155]

Statements on the ‘untranslatability’ of poetry are often accompanied by precepts on the “right” or “best” way of translating a poetic text. When considering these precepts two opposite trends emerge: historically, translators have advocated either a “faithful”, even literal translation² of the ST, or a “free” translation. Even if, in practice, such types of translations are rarely found in their ‘pure’ form [see Lefevere 1992 b, p. 18], it still remains that the artificial dichotomy of “faithful” versus “free” translation has shaped most of the thinking on literary translation in Europe and the Americas.

² Nabokov typically represents this trend. Through the practice of extensively annotated interlinear translation, he favours a literal rendering in order “to reproduce with absolute exactitude the whole text and nothing but the text” [Nabokov in Biguenet and Schulte 1992, p. 134].

Poetry originally played a significant role in the bi-polarisation of the thinking on literary translation. Venuti reminds us that “the free translation method was modelled on poetry” [1995, p. 65] and influenced by the work of translators of poetry notably Denham, Dryden, Tytler and Campbell [cf. Venuti 1995, ch. 2] for whom spirit (essence or thought) came before the letter. And indeed, it was in the conflict of priorities between “letter” and “spirit” and between “producing translations dictated by the shape of the source text and [producing] translations designed to match the ideological and «poetological» expectations shared by readers in the target culture” [Lefevere 1992b, p. 18] that the rigid distinctions between “faithful” and “free” translation originated. These two types of translation were meant to be mutually exclusive: the translator either showed allegiance to the original or allegiance to the target audience, adapting the original accordingly. However, they shared a common aim, namely equivalence, the difference being that “faithful” translation sets out to achieve equivalence of letter while “free” translation sets out to achieve equivalence of spirit.

The radical conflict of priorities between “faithful” and “free” translation of literary texts derives, in part, from a varying set of attitudes that are attached to such creative texts and/or to the culture from which they originate. Depending on the historical period and the dominant ideology, literary texts from alien cultures have been regarded either with respect and veneration or with casual distance, even disrespect. In the latter instance, the translation of the foreign text may be fashioned to fit the dominant ideology of the target culture. For example, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the French who thought of their culture as “superior” displayed ethnocentric attitudes and often treated foreign literary texts off-handedly, subjecting them to numerous changes which would allow them to fit the dominant ideology [see Lefevere 1992b, p. 119]. Conversely, in cases where the foreign text and/or culture is awe-inspiring, the act of translating from this text and/or culture is subjected to quasi-religious respect, which verges on superstitious fear. The most extreme example of the taboo affecting the translation of such creative texts is illustrated by the history of Biblical translations where, during the Reformation, translators suspected of deviating from the ST were punished. A translation error was an act of heresy and could result in the death of the incriminated translator [cf. Bassnett 1996]. The vision of literary texts as sacred entities mostly affects literary works that are considered as great “classics”, for which only one translation, usually the first one, may be considered an authoritative text [cf.

Lefevere 1992b, p. 121]. However, in Newmark's definition of literary translation, which he calls "semantic" translation, the religious fear attached to the sacred written word extends to all "serious" literature:

A semantic translation attempts to recreate the precise flavour and tone of the original: the words are "sacred", not because they are more important than the content, but because form and content are one. [Newmark 1988b, p. 47]

Newmark, therefore, constantly reassesses the sanctity of literary texts. This type of attitude is inherited from "the Romantic idea of literature as 'secular scripture'" [Lefevere 1992b, p. 134], which has resulted in translations being seen as inferior products of a lesser and servile activity. It has also, for a long time, justified a dogmatic and normative approach to translation. This situation is best described by Bell for whom translation practice and theory, even in its modern formulation, stems from the prescriptive approach originally adopted by Tytler in his *Essay on the Principles of Translation* of 1791:

Translation theory finds itself today seriously out of step with the mainstream of intellectual endeavour in the human sciences and in particular in the study of human communication; to our mutual impoverishment. The fundamental cause of this state of affairs is, we believe, the normative approach —the setting up of a series of do's and don'ts—[...]. [Bell 1991, pp. 10-11]

Indeed, the normative mind-set still characterises Western thinking about the translation of literary works and in particular to the translation of poetry. Newmark, for example, sets restrictive rules for the translation of poems:

For me, a translation can be inaccurate, it *can never be* too literal. [Newmark 1988a, p. 72 my emphasis]

Whilst I think that all images have universal, cultural and personal sources, the translator of poetry *cannot make any concession* to the reader such as transferring the foreign culture to a native equivalent. [idem, p. 165 my emphasis]

These rules are based on the concept of loyalty to the author, which implies that the translator is capable of betraying the original work:

[The translator's] first loyalty is to the author, his second is to the target language, his last to the reader. [Newmark 1988b, p. 64]

Newmark's position on the translation of creative texts is influenced by Nabokov and Benjamin. Newmark quotes Benjamin's categorical statement: "no poem is written for its reader, nor is regard for those who receive a work

of art useful for the purpose of understanding it” [Benjamin in Newmark 1988b, p. 11. The original statement can be found in Biguenet and Schulte 1992, p. 71]. Newmark perpetuates a tradition which holds poetry as an act of non-communication. If poems have little informative purpose and if “the creative artist writes for his own belief” [Newmark 1988b, p.11], then it is justified to translate them differently from other texts (ie. more literally).

When creative writings are not isolated in translation studies for their sanctity, they are isolated as deviant forms of language not worthy of scientific investigation. Snell-Hornby explains how, for a long time, linguists have worked from the Saussurian dichotomy between “*langue*” and “*parole*”. They were only concerned with “*langue*”, while “*parole*” was deemed as imperfect and too individualistic for scientific study. According to Snell-Hornby, “it was this attitude that deepened the rift between linguistics and literary studies” [1988, p. 40] and, as a result, isolated work on literary translations from linguistic studies. Until recently, the normative approach to language created a situation where literature was held as a deviation. This situation is challenged by Snell-Hornby, who advocates an integrated approach in order to remove “the still rigid division between literary and ‘other’ language in general, and between literary and ‘other’ translation in particular” [1988, p. 51]. Using the notion of “prototypology” borrowed from Neubert, she shows that categories of texts are not as clear-cut as it was previously thought. This position is increasingly relayed by other translators who think that literary texts should no longer be viewed in isolation but as forms of variation in written communication. Poems, as such, do not differ essentially from other texts. They are variations in the communicative process along a ‘continuum’ or ‘spectrum’ of texts. Hatim and Mason work from the basic assumption that poems, like any other texts, are “composed in the full knowledge that they are likely to be read and to elicit a response” [Hatim and Mason 1997, p. vii]. Such a view of poetry is not unanimously accepted and it could be argued that it is possible to find examples of poems where there is no communicative purpose.

The innovation brought about by the integrated approach to translation resulted in the poetic text being viewed as sharing characteristics with other texts, hence allowing for a common approach:

[...] even special languages are characterized by metaphor, and journalistic language abounds in “literary” devices such as alliteration and word-play. It is all a question of *quality* and *intensity*, not one of a basic difference. [Snell-Hornby 1988, p. 51]

However, even if poems share some characteristics with other written texts, they are still thought of as different. What makes poetry different from other texts has been the subject of numerous studies. The formalists, for example, believed that 'poeticity' could be clearly identified and extracted from within a complex textual structure [cf Jakobson 1976]. Rather than seeing poeticity as a particular added feature of a text, Snell-Hornby, on the other hand, views it as the maximum creative exploitation of the language potential:

[...] literary— and in particular poetic— language is concerned with the *exploitation of the entire capacity of a language system*. [idem, p. 52 her emphasis]

The elaborate aspect of the poetic text involves a greater challenge for the translator, but does not justify a particularly different approach from the one adopted for other more purely informative texts.

The evolution from a normative and strongly dichotomous approach of literary translation to a descriptive and integrated approach has in effect reduced the sharp distinction between "literary" and "non literary" texts and as such has helped to breach the gap between two methods which have long been held as mutually exclusive (namely "faithful" and "free translation"). But more significantly, it has led to the abandonment of the concept of equivalence³ (either of "letter" or of "spirit"), which, according to Lefevere, "greatly contributed to the stagnation of thinking about translation" [1992b, p. 10].

The approach applied in this thesis

This thesis advocates a translation of *Illuminations* outside the artificial and controversial concept of equivalence. It holds that a translation always presupposes a certain degree of difference, in that some elements may be added and others may have been lost in the translation. This is what Popovič originally calls "translation shift" [Popovič 1970, p. 78], which describes the inevitable loss and gain involved in the translation process. However, in theories of literary translation based on the concept of "equivalence", the insistence has commonly been on the loss rather than the

³ The quest for equivalence is a central aspect of literary translation up to very recently. The linguistic-based translation methods developed by Nida who introduced the concept of "dynamic equivalence", which is message- and reader-centred is very close to the equivalence of spirit sought by free translations. the concept of equivalence is also central to Newmark's distinction between "semantic" and "communicative" translation.

possible gain. Newmark embodies this position, when he points out the inevitable loss which occurs when translating poetry:

In translating imaginative literature [...] the biggest loss in meaning (i.e. the total effect on the reader) is due to the peculiar metaphorical properties rather than the sound-effects of the foreign language. [1988b, p. 108]

Newmark holds a pessimistic vision of translation loss, using the word “sacrificed” when some of the original features of the ST cannot be conveyed. Such a vision is shared by many translators and Bassnett regrets that there is not more emphasis on the possible gain from translation:

It is again an indication of the low status of translation that so much time should have been spent on discussing what is lost in the transfer of the text from SL to TL whilst ignoring what can also be gained, for the translator can at times enrich or clarify the SL text as a direct result of the translation process. [1991, p. 30]

It is important to accept that no translation is ever perfect as it necessarily involves some changes. For the purpose of this thesis, I adopt the position that translation is a continuous process of multiple compensations in order to reduce the possible loss of one or several levels of the text (semantic, syntactic, lexical, etc.). Compensation is “techniques of making up for the loss of important ST features through replicating ST effects approximately in the TT by means other than those used in the ST”⁴ [Hervey and Higgins, 1992, p. 35].

However, the method of compensation does not apply to all the features of a ST indiscriminately. There is a need for a prior selective choice of the most important features of the ST:

[...] while compensation exercises the translator's ingenuity, the effort it requires should not be wasted on textually unimportant features. The aim is to reduce some of the more undesirable translation losses that necessarily result from the fundamental structural and cultural differences between SL and TL. [idem, 1992, p. 40]

⁴Hervey and Higgins identify four types of compensation:

- “**compensation in kind** compensating for a particular type of textual effect in the ST by using a textual effect of different type in the TT.”
- “**compensation by merging**: condensing the features carried over a relatively longer stretch of the ST into a relatively shorter stretch of TT.”
- “**compensation in place** compensating for the loss of a particular textual effect occurring at a given place in the ST by creating a corresponding effect at a different place in the TT.”
- “**compensation by splitting**: distributing the features carried in a relatively shorter stretch of of ST over a relatively longer stretch of the TT” [Hervey and Higgins 1992, p. 248]

It can be argued that a translation which resorts to compensation would dramatically reduce the literary potential of the original. Newmark sees compensation as being impossible for creative texts such as poems. Since all features cannot be compensated and a large amount of the text is bound to be lost, translation can only be a secondary production which will serve as a type of interpretation:

Inevitably, most texts, particularly those rich in metaphor and polysemy (which cannot be adequately compensated), will be rather clearer, simpler and "poorer" in translation, and will serve as one (of several possible) interpretations of the original. [Newmark 1988b, p. 23]

This pessimistic view of translation may be replaced by a more optimistic stance oriented towards an optimum rendering of texts which minimises the inevitable loss occurring during the translation process. A discriminating sense of priority is central to this approach to translation. Hervey and Higgins use the term 'strategic decisions' [1992, p. 14], which are large-scale decisions made after the assessment of the ST's salient features. For this assessment the translator must develop a method of analysis and investigation. It is this method that I now propose to present.

In outlining the approach adopted in this thesis for evaluating and translating *Illuminations*, I wish to emphasise the importance of the notions of text and discourse. The growing importance of text and discourse in translation studies is directly in opposition to semantic methods, which traditionally favour a mainly lexical or syntactic approach to translation. Newmark denies the possible positive input of a textual and pragmatic approach:

[...] discourse analysis may be only a marginal aspect of translation theory, since the sentence is usually the basic translation unit, and often has a coherent appropriate meaning. Discourse analysis may be mainly an essential point of reference for (a) establishing the significance of all connectives including pronouns and (b) clarifying semantically undermined expressions. [1988b, p. 32]

However, the assessment of the ST for translation, even if it includes a semantic analysis, goes beyond words or sentences to deal with the text as a whole. As a linguistic unit for analysis, the ST is considered both in terms of product and process, thus it will be processed both as a 'text' and as a 'discourse' (cf. Bell's distinction between text-as-product and discourse-as-process 1991, p. 149 and 163). The emphasis on the texture (ie. what makes

a text a text: generic structure, textual structure and cohesion) is different from the emphasis on the discoursal aspects. When processing a ST, the translator studies the interactions between textual and discoursal features and considers different parameters such as structure, cohesion, coherence, informativity, intentionality, intertextuality and above all meaning. "Textual meaning" [Neubert, 1984, p. 57] is a key element for the translator both at the level of text where the translator concentrates on the co-textual meaning (ie. the deciphering of meaning from the immediate linguistic knowledge) and at the level of discourse where the translator concentrates on the contextual meaning (ie. the deciphering of meaning from a wider knowledge which is not necessarily linguistic). The contextual aspect of knowledge is usually implicit. The writer assumes that the information is already known by the reader. These assumptions are a problem both for the reader and the translator of a literary text. In this respect, *Illuminations* can be said to form a case study, as a great number of implications conveyed in the poems are often lost, misinterpreted or are deliberately obscure. The lack of explicitness in *Illuminations* and its implications for translation are analysed in the first chapter of this thesis.

However, any attempt to process a literary text without analysing its context and situation is bound to fail. A literary text does not appear "out of the blue". It derives from a repertory of procedures and practices: genre, form, mode, archetype, rhetoric, symbol, plot, allusion, quotation, parody and language in all its registers. Lefevere, who attempts to define literature and metaliterature, reminds us of the importance of situation and context as literature can only be viewed from a cultural, historical and evolutionary perspective:

Literature evolves both cladogenetically (new independent units arise from a basic unit) and anagenetically (progressive changes take place in the course of time). It is both polytypic (composed of a cluster of types) and polymorphic (consisting of individual shapes). [1978, p. 25]

All texts must therefore be approached following a context-sensitive strategy. For a particular period and a particular context, there is always a set of conventions or norms which will (at least partly) determine the writing of a literary text. This vision of literary texts presupposes that the translator perceives the cultural constraints affecting both the production and the reception of the literary text.

In order to account for a more complex vision of textual and discoursal meaning, various models of text processing have been constructed (cf.

especially Holmes, Bell, Hervey and Higgins, and Hatim and Mason). They determine a set of criteria which are used to process the text for translation. These criteria are related to the general compositional plan (structure) and the texture of the text. They also consider the basic socio-textual units of 'genre' and 'discourse'. My own training has brought me closer to Hervey and Higgins' model, which —like many other current models— is based on a heuristic and descriptive approach to text processing. The translator works from a series of assumptions and hypotheses about texts, discourses and genres that are confirmed or refuted in the light of textual evidence. It is always of paramount importance to keep in mind that in this type of processing, the global approach, which corresponds to the hypothesis testing stage, is relayed by a more local approach and there is constant interaction between the two levels (global and local). Thus the translator will derive large-scale strategic decisions from the text processing but also some very important small-scale decisions. The decision-making involved in the translation process is as comprehensive as possible and always values the entire communicative interaction in context over isolated features.

The fact that the object of this thesis is poetic does not affect the way the ST is processed in order to derive decisions. Poems when processed show a wider "creativity"⁵. The creative function of poetry represents its capacity to realize all possible rules of a language, even when they are dormant in common usage. However, one of the main problems attached to poetry is the problem of meaning. It has to be borne in mind that meaning in poetic texts is not similar to meaning in more informative texts, as it is often obscure, working through a continuous process of allusions and suggestions:

It is always ambiguous by virtue of the symbolic character of *all* poetry — no matter how realistic particular poems may appear to be. Denotation is fictional, often exists outside realistically motivated nets of relationships. It is expressed by means of a heterotype [...], by non standard, original linguistic expressions, created rather than selected from the available vocabulary by an individual author for a specific aesthetic effect. [Jarniewicz 1992, p. 191, author's emphasis]

The translator who adopts an interpretative approach to the translation of *Illuminations*, keeping meaning at the centre of the text processing, knows that the analysis must go further than the linguistic units in relation to their

⁵cf Snell-Hornby: literary language represents the "creative exploitation of the language potential against which ordinary language represents a reduction." [1988 p. 70]

reference⁶. Poetic texts function on several levels simultaneously. The poems of the collection *Illuminations* (as is demonstrated in this thesis) often play on the unexpected or even the incongruous on many levels (lexical, syntactic, stylistic, semantic...). Furthermore, the evocative potential (created by the connotative, emotional, visual and phonic levels...) of the poetic language renders the translator's work more challenging and more demanding. The problem is then to know what should be prioritized, if different aspects of the multi-layered texts are all significant and cannot be ignored in the translation.

The assessment will largely depend on an interpretation of the text, relayed by a knowledge of other works by the same author, other texts (of the same period and genre), and of socio-cultural reality. For the assessment of *Illuminations*, these different parameters are considered. I draw attention to the particular style of the collection of poems, showing how the dominant rules affecting text, genre and discourse are challenged. For this, I refer to studies about the rules of writing at the end of the 19th century (regarding for example description and narration — cf below ch. I, ii). I therefore consider the text from a scholarly point of view. However, my interpretation of the texts for translation is also open to intuition, as poetic effects require a certain freedom to explore the text. This freedom is limited by textual constraints (deictics, connectors, patterns of rhythm, etc.) and extratextual constraints. The translator's intuition is relayed by creativity in order to convey both the dynamism⁷ of the texts and their evocative level. Creativity is an essential element in a process of translation of poetry which values meaning:

Si le traducteur commence par chercher à dégager le sens du texte qu'il se propose de traduire en sachant que ce sens ne se limite pas uniquement à l'instauration d'une relation de désignation entre la chaîne linguistique et un

⁶The term “interpretative approach” (original borrowed from Seleskovitch and Delisle and applied to informative texts) describes here the process of deriving the intended meaning of a text from different clues within the text and outside of the text:

Le principe fondamental de la théorie interprétative — pour le résumer de façon simplificatrice— est qu'on ne peut pas fournir une bonne traduction d'un texte en établissant des correspondances entre éléments linguistiques, mais qu'il faut retrouver par une opération de compréhension qui met en jeu non seulement nos connaissances linguistiques mais aussi tout notre bagage cognitif pertinent, le vouloir dire de l'auteur, dont le texte n'est que la concrétisation. [Laplace 1998, p. 149]

This definition does not imply that the translator may fully disregard the linguistic features of a given ST, but he must understand what motivates their use in the text.

⁷ Dynamism is defined by Hatim and Mason as “a use of language that essentially involves a motivated deviation from some norm” [1997, p. 216].

référent, mais que de multiples fonctions d'évocation viennent enrichir et nuancer cette relation de désignation et peuvent même aller jusqu'à la supplanter et l'occulter totalement, il ne se posera plus le problème de l'intraduisibilité de tel ou tel poème, mais seulement de savoir si sa propre créativité langagière est suffisante pour lui permettre de produire un texte qui sera équivalent à l'original dans toutes ses fonctions de désignation et d'évocation. [Laplace 1998, p. 153]

The method applied in this thesis derives from both a close reading of the text in context and an interpretative and creative stance, bearing in mind that any personal input from the translator is always limited by the context of the ST and the constraints imposed by the target audience. The creativity of the translator affects not only the production of the new text but also the processing of the ST. Snell-Hornby reassesses the role of the translator as an active and creative reader:

For our purpose it must be emphasized that the role of the translator as reader is an essentially active and creative one [...] and that understanding must not be equated with a passive "reception" of the text. [1988, p. 42]

The translator is viewed firstly as a reader and then as a writer. This new perception of translator as reader-translator is largely determined by the influence of hermeneutic approaches to texts which emphasize the importance of reception. The process of translation is assimilated with the process of criticism [cf. Paz 1971 in Biguenet and Schulte 1992, p. 159], in that they both imply reading and creating a metatext. The vision of translation as a text about a text, a comment on a comment or metatext is borrowed from Barthes and used first by Holmes. For Holmes, a translation of a poem is a metapoem which is viewed both as an act of interpretation and as an act of creation:

All translation is an act of critical interpretation, but there are some translations of poetry which differ from all other interpretative forms in that they also have the aim of being acts of poetry... it might be helpful if for this specific literary form, with its double purpose as meta-literature and as primary literature, we introduced the designation "metapoem". [1970, p. 93]

For Holmes (as well as others working from a similar perspective), one must keep in mind the importance of the influence of the translation as a primary text in the literary history of a given period and culture. Holmes is not interested in evaluating translations per se, because he sees them as critical studies and autonomous creations. This determines an entirely revolutionary vision of translation as influencing the recipient culture in which it is embedded. The importance of the role translation plays in the receiving

culture within and outside academe is central to this thesis and I shall now consider this role in more detail.

Role and goals of this thesis

Lefevere defends the position that “translation as metaliterary discipline is better suited to make literary products accessible and can claim a higher degree of scientificity than the other metaliterary activity, [namely] commentary” [1978, p. 7]. Lefevere considers translation and commentary as sub-disciplines of literature forming metaliterature. He views translation within a general evolutionary approach to literary knowledge. What matters is the growth of the literary knowledge, which is an intrinsic process⁸ in constant interaction with extrinsic forces (economic/ social/ cultural/ personal). The work of the translator is to participate in the growth of literary knowledge.

This thesis can be seen within the process of growth of literary knowledge. The collection of poems *Illuminations* has triggered many studies and has been the subject of a long-lasting literary quarrel. Views on the nature of these poems range from seeing them as mystical and obscure objects, on the edge of canonical literature, to political and ideological statements. As the discipline of criticism has failed to make the texts accessible, the production of a new translation is necessary. As a metaliterary subdiscipline, analytical translation can provide a new way of making the poems accessible. The ancillary nature of such a metatextual activity is pointed out by Lefevere:

[Metaliterature] is (becomes) necessary only when the accessibility of valuable works of literature is threatened, in most cases because the procedures they make use of, or the language they are written in, fail to be understood. [Lefevere 1978, p. 23]

There is clearly a demand for a new translation of *Illuminations* adopting the evolutionary approach to literary knowledge. Through translation, my aim is to produce a text which is accessible. Translation goes further than a simple commentary “for the very simple reason that commentary normally renders accessible only works written in the language of the commentary, and if it tries to render accessible works written in a different language it can do so

⁸The intrinsic growth of literary knowledge is achieved on three different levels:

1) non-scientific knowledge: experience gained and shared through the reading and writing of literature

2) scientific knowledge: the procedures available to describe experience

3) metaliterary scientific knowledge (commentary/translation)

only in a much less direct and complete way than translation can.” [Lefevere 1978, p. 23].

However, I do not want my work to be too strongly target- and reader-oriented. If greater accessibility of the text is sought, this does not mean that I intend to over-simplify it or to ignore its particular characteristic features. Lefevere values a largely communicative approach, which may imply adapting or even radically changing the language and style of the original:

It is, for example, quite obvious that a work of literature will be made accessible to a new audience only if it is translated into the stage of literary evolution that the audience is in. [Lefevere 1978, p. 23]

Radically transforming the text to fulfil the demands of a new audience can be seen as an extreme form of domestication and may lead to what Venuti calls “ethnocentric violence” [1995, p. 21]. However, it does not mean that the audience does not play a central role in translation, since all texts can be said to be designed for a special audience and translation is no exception:

Because texts are designed for a specific audience, once they exist, they define that audience; indeed, as no writer can create even a single sentence without a target Imagined Reader, almost every sentence provides some clue(s) about this Reader which allows a Real Reader to build up cumulatively a picture of his/her Imagined counterpart. [Coulthard 1994, p. 5]

A translator works under constraints affecting the purpose and status of translation and the expected readership of the translated text. The translator has to adapt the translation to the potential receiver group. This process is known as “audience design”. The ideal audience intended for this translation will be willing to grasp the complexity of Rimbaud's poetry in both its content and form, whilst demanding texts that can stand on their own.

The difficulty of the present task is to generate the right sort of balance between a translation which has to signify the difference of the foreign text and a translation which is geared towards performability. The risk involved in concentrating on the product and the audience of translation for the growth of literary knowledge, is that you may well end up “writ[ing] down” [Newmark, 1988b] to your reader to the exclusion of an understanding of the process of translation. For a more comprehensive view of the creative nature of translation, it is important to achieve complete ‘visibility’ in the decision making process.

‘Visibility’ in translation has become one of the leitmotive of the 1990s. As pointed out by Bassnett:

Now, in the 1990s, drawing upon the work of the past two decades, the keyword is 'visibility'. [1996, p. 22]

By presenting rationales for her/his practice, the translator makes visible the strategy adopted and the large- and small-scale decisions that have been made in order to arrive at the TT. The translator's approach has to be visible so that the reader can see the process of translation in action and be able to judge for himself the decisions adopted and the translator's deliberate intervention. Visibility is central to this thesis. The disciplined and systematic approach adopted for the processing of the ST and for the production of the target text must be clearly perceptible. By practising self-presentation in the critical apparatus, the translator enhances his significant position in the growth of literary knowledge. He "ceases to be an interpreter and becomes the source writer for the target reader" [Bassnett 1996, p. 11] and as such may reclaim the status of author-translator.

The emphasis which has been put on visibility opens the way for a re-reading of previous translations. The assessment of the translation process adopted by translators will reveal the vision of translation attached to the era in which these translations were produced⁹. Three translations of *Illuminations* are considered in the present work. These translations produced in different periods, namely 50s (Fowlie), 60s (Bernard) and 70s (Peschel), are still currently available in the UK and in America. By paying attention to the context of the translations, I hope to reveal the intention underlying the production of the ST. Overall, the evaluation of translations will follow the criteria adopted for my own translation (criteria which are linked to both text and discourse).

Objectives and organisation of the thesis

My thesis consists of three chapters and a conclusion. My task, in the first chapter, is to determine the characteristics of Rimbaud's writing in *Illuminations* in order to discuss the unique challenge they present to a translator. First of all, it is important to establish precisely how the rewriting of

⁹This is not the sole aim of translation criticism. Newmark sees five purposes to translation criticism:

- (a) to improve standards of translation;
 - (b) to provide an object lesson for translators;
 - (c) to throw light on ideas about translation at particular times and in particular subject-areas;
 - (d) to assist in the interpretation of the work of significant writers and significant translators;
 - (e) to assess critically semantic and grammatical differences between SL and TL.
- [Cf. 1988b, p. 181]

the poems by the critics has influenced the vision of the texts. I demonstrate that the dominant and often negative view of *Illuminations* as a special type of poetry characterised by obscurity, although it corresponds to a degree of linguistic reality, is fabricated and misleading. I follow this with a presentation of the style of the poems. Revisiting the concept of obscurity, I show how the texts challenge accepted textual rules and canons of literature. I also show that the texts, alongside this tendency to challenge rules, create a strongly cohesive ensemble through the use of patterns of parallels and repetitions. The overall aim of this first chapter is to provide the reader with a better understanding of the general context of the poems selected for translation, and the analysis presented in the final chapter constantly draws on this first chapter.

The focus of the discussion then moves to the selection of a representative corpus of poems and translations. Challenging the current theory of “fragment” attached to the poetics of *Illuminations*, I address the question of grouping the texts for translation and show that the poems are written following clear patterns of organisation. The texts are associated according to links established by the poet such as related titles (e.g.: “Enfance” I to V, “Villes” I & II, “Ville”) or following the analysis of recurring characteristics or genres such as parody. The second chapter of this thesis demonstrates that poems in *Illuminations* cannot be translated in isolation, but have to be considered both as part of a whole and as part of smaller possible units within the whole collection. Intra- and intertextuality thus play a determining role in both the assessment and translation of *Illuminations*. In this chapter, I also analyse the approach adopted by three translators of *Illuminations* to the collections of poems as a whole and more particularly to the poems selected for this thesis. I assess the strategies and objectives behind these translations, in order to understand what the translators have set out to achieve. This section will enable the reader to perceive how the translators may have rewritten the texts in order to convey their own vision of the poet. The extent of the “manipulation” is analysed in more detail in the third chapter of this thesis.

In the third and final chapter of this thesis, I produce my own critical and annotated translation of twelve texts from *Illuminations*. I process the poems selected for translation drawing on the conclusions already reached in the first and second chapters. The assessment and translation of the texts is also complemented by the study and assessment of earlier translations. The translations are accompanied by footnotes, which alert the reader to the

decisions of detail affecting the TT. Although these footnotes require a processing effort from the reader, they are necessary in order to highlight and justify the intervention of the translator. The motivation behind the use of footnotes is also to coordinate the audience's expectations with the translator's intention. The examination of the ST in all three chapters is carried out from a heuristic standpoint. I test a certain number of assumptions about the poems. I also discuss and exploit other commentaries on the poems, using them to inform my own analysis of the ST.

Finally, I wish to attract the reader's attention to the fact that the extracts quoted from *Illuminations* have all been reproduced from Guyaux's edition [1985b], in which poems are printed from (available) original manuscripts. Some of the poems may, therefore, differ from earlier editions. Moreover, the translations referred to can be found at the back of this thesis, where they have been reproduced for the convenience of the reader.

Chapter one

Rimbaud's style in *Illuminations*

1.1 The concepts of obscurity, polysemy and “illisibilité” and their implications for translation

What would happen if a translator tried to redirect the process of domestication by choosing foreign texts that deviated from transparent discourse and by translating them so as to signal linguistic and cultural differences? [Venuti 1995, p. 40-41.]

Venuti, when formulating this question, is probably referring to what he calls “marginal texts”. *Illuminations* cannot be considered marginal. It has attained quasi-mythical status in French and indeed international culture. However, the poems have long been considered a literary challenge for the reader, the critic and subsequently the translator. Critics have consistently pointed out the difficulty of the texts. This apparent difficulty has often resulted in *Illuminations* being labelled “obscure and hermetic poetry”. The myth of a mystical and visionary poet, partly created by Isabelle Rimbaud, has reinforced this perception.

The influence of the first “rewriters” of Rimbaud

It is important to understand the role played by the first “rewriters” [cf Lefevre 1992a] of Rimbaud in establishing the parameters of the critical discourse on the poet down to the present. The influence of Rimbaud's sister Isabelle on the early reception of the poet has been amply demonstrated by Reboul [1972 and 1976]. Between 1892 and 1898, Isabelle (later with the help of Berrichon), worked assiduously to impose her image of the poet. Infuriated by the early articles on her brother, she set out to expurgate the commentaries on the works and the life of her beloved Arthur:

En fait de biographie, je n'admets qu'un thème: c'est le mien; je réfute tous les autres comme mensongers et offensants; j'entends du reste qu'on laisse dormir en paix celui qui n'est plus. [Isabelle Rimbaud in a letter to Louis Pierquin, 3/ 1/ 1892. Reproduced in Etiemble 1954, p. 71]

In October 1896, after exchanging many letters with Berrichon, Isabelle sent him a manuscript, which was later published under the title *Rimbaud en Orient*. The manuscript included extracts of Rimbaud's correspondence in Africa. She described the final days of Rimbaud's life in mystical terms:

Par moment il est voyant, prophète, son ouïe acquiert une étrange acuité.

Through this first literary contribution, Isabelle deliberately diverted the attention of the critics from the published work to the personality of the poet.

She shifted the discourse on the poet to a level where she held all the knowledge. She imposed a saintly and prophetic image of the poet, which heavily influenced subsequent readings of his life and works. She based her account of the last days of Rimbaud on parts of *Illuminations*. Several decades later, this rewriting of the life of Rimbaud by his sister was denounced by Etiemble [1952 and 1954]. However, Isabelle's hagiography has had a formidable influence on the reception of *Illuminations*. It resulted in the birth of a critical approach which advocated a mystical and visionary analysis of the poems. *Illuminations* and *Saison en Enfer* especially were increasingly seen as either testimonies of Rimbaud's religious fervour or irrational dreamlike visions. This trend included many Rimbaud specialists, the most famous of whom were Claudel, who promoted Rimbaud as mystic, and Suzanne Bernard, who presented the texts as "poèmes oniriques". Suzanne Bernard also advocated another vision of poems of *Illuminations*, the more descriptive of which she branded "poèmes impressionnistes". In doing so, she joined the ranks of critics for whom Rimbaud is merely an "artisan des mots". This school of thought was initially represented by Dhôtel [1933], whose work was published in reaction to Isabelle and Paterné Berrichon's hagiography¹. Dhôtel opposed the vision imposed by those two accomplices and refused to indulge in any type of interpretation in order to protect the poems from further distortions. As a result, *Illuminations* came to be increasingly viewed as a set of aesthetically pleasing and impressionistic poems.

After Isabelle's intervention, commentators divided into a mystical school and an aesthetic school, but all agreed that the poems of *Illuminations* were somehow special either in their inspiration or in their form and content. Isabelle had thus succeeded in her attempt to impose her biographical account and her vision of the texts as a-political and a-sexual. So much so that interpretations which followed a different approach to the one she initially strove to impose, were often violently rejected by the critics. Reboul [1976] thus evokes the famous outrage which followed the publication of Yves Denis' social and political interpretation of "Après le Déluge" [1968]. The opposition to critics wanting to see the collection from a more historical perspective and analysing it in its socio-cultural context dies hard. Such

¹Documents relating to Isabelle and Berrichon's work started to emerge in 1930 [published by Méléra in *Mercur de France*, 1/4/ 1930], notably the letter to Pierquin quoted above. Dhôtel's reaction was a rejection of the mystical reading which then prevailed:

J'espère qu'il apparaîtra que Rimbaud n'est ni un poète symboliste, ni un mystique, et qu'il a fondé en dehors de toute religion, ses croyances personnelles sur des principes solides. [quoted in Etiemble 1954, p. 203]

critics have been forced to justify the merest allusion to Rimbaud as a polemical writer. Interpretations of obscene details in particular are often rejected as they portray Rimbaud as a “sinner”² contrary to the aesthetic and mystical vision.

However, Isabelle is not the only culprit in the rewriting of Rimbaud's life and works. From 1882, Verlaine also played a major role in moulding Rimbaud's literary reputation. His motives were also personal. At the end of his relationship with Rimbaud, Verlaine embraced religion with an extraordinary fervour and was eager to make amends for his dissolute life. Some aspects of the poets' lives together and of their work had better not emerge and tarnish his saintly resolutions. When presenting Rimbaud's life and works, Verlaine committed the sin of omission and even deliberately told lies. In 1886, in the Introduction to the first edition of *Illuminations* in the magazine *La Vogue*, he was reluctant to evoke the content or possible meanings of the poems:

Le mot Illuminations est anglais et veut dire gravures coloriées, — coloured plates. C'est même le sous-titre que M. Rimbaud avait donné à son manuscrit. Comme on va voir, celui-ci se compose de courtes pièces, prose exquise ou vers délicieusement faux exprès. D'idée principale, il n'y en a pas ou du moins nous n'y en trouvons pas. De la joie évidente d'être grand poète, tels paysages féeriques, d'adorables vagues amours esquissées de la plus haute ambition (arrivée) de style: tel est le résumé que nous croyons pouvoir oser donner de l'ouvrage ci-après. Au lecteur d'admirer en détail.

Verlaine diverted the reader's attention towards the form and the aesthetic impression of the poems. He remained deliberately vague as the poems are also supposed to be “vagues”. He did not comment on any possible overall meaning. The denial of a possible “idée principale” is important for the subsequent evolution of criticism towards an impressionistic reading of the poems. Verlaine's impact on subsequent theories of obscurity was obvious from a very early stage. Beaunier, in 1902, evoked the lack of meaning in *Illuminations*, quoting Verlaine:

[I]l serait difficile, souvent, de déterminer le sens exact de ces petits morceaux et Verlaine avouait n'en pas bien distinguer “l'idée principale”. [Beaunier 1902, pp. 63-4]

Obscurity theorised: the concepts of polysemy and “illisibilité”

The early studies of *Illuminations*, which emphasised the visionary aspect on one hand and the aesthetic aspect of the poems on the other

²Cf the reactions following some of Fongaro's articles (1990b) focusing on obscene details in *Illuminations*.

hand, all presented the texts as essentially hermetic or meaningless. However, the absolute denial of a possible interpretation of Rimbaud's poetry started emerging with the polemic surrounding Faurisson's provocative article "A-t-on lu Rimbaud?" [Faurisson 1961, reprinted 1971], which contained an analysis of the poems "Voyelles", "H", "Bottom" and "Dévotion". Denounced by Etiemble as "paranoïa pansexualiste"³, Faurisson's interpretative approach was eventually discredited after his arrest (4 March 1962) for "offense au chef d'État". His belonging to the O.A.S., his political discourse which bears many resemblances to his aggressive literary discourse, and his subsequent obsession with disproving the existence of concentration camps have contributed to discrediting his literary methods. The unanimous condemnation of Faurisson contributed to the advent of a "positivist" critical approach to Rimbaud. Monosemic interpretations in general (and the type practised by Faurisson in particular) came to be viewed as a "tentative de proposer un autre texte" [Octave Mannoni 1962, p. 22].

The view that a monosemic interpretation is at best a useless "lecture parasite", at worst a potential threat to the text, was accompanied with the emergence of the concept of **polysemy**. From the late sixties, with the advent of Derrida's deconstructivism, the notion of obscurity was suddenly replaced by the notion of polysemy. Rimbaud's poetry was viewed from a multiple and free perspective, open to comparisons with past and present writings. Deconstructivism and the notion of "hypertext" came as the final blow to monosemic reading "anxieuse de s'amarrer au sens tuteur, voire à son référent majeur"⁴. This led to the multiplication of "lectures", all acceptable and accepted in this new atmosphere of socio-cultural relativism.

Two major analyses emerge from this Derridean context of polysemy, namely those of Kittang [1975] and Todorov [1978a]. They both emphasise the relative "illisibilité" of Rimbaud's *Illuminations*. Kittang evokes "l'illisibilité notoire de Rimbaud" [1975, p. 51], whilst paradoxically providing an interpretation or "paraphrase"⁵, consistently pointing out, however, the obscure or mysterious aspects of the poems. Conversely (or so it seems), Todorov emphasises "l'impossibilité principielle de toute «explication»" [1978a, p. 244 my italics]. Kittang and Todorov both condemn the failure of

³For more detail on the Faurisson/ Etiemble quarrel see Etiemble, *Le sonnet des voyelles: de l'audition colorée à la vision érotique*, collection Les Essais, Paris: Gallimard, 1968.

⁴Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, Editions de Minuit, 1972, p. 62 [quoted in Guyaux 1991, p. 200].

⁵Guyaux [1991, p. 201] has pointed out the use of the word "paraphrasons" in Kittang's book.

previous exegetic approaches to *Illuminations*. Kittang evokes the “naïvetés interprétatives de la critique d'érudition” [Kittang 1975, pp. 18-19], while Todorov classifies the different trends of criticism into the following categories: “évhémériste”, “étiologique”, “ésothérique” and “paradigmatique”. According to Todorov, these trends of criticism all show various levels of naïvity and have all failed in that they have seriously underestimated the “real” meaning of *Illuminations*. Todorov's article is probably the most polemical analysis ever produced on the problems of meaning and interpretation in *Illuminations*. Todorov, who works from a structuralist point of view, draws two fundamental conclusions:

1) the texts are essentially discontinuous and the obscurity thus created blocks the identification of the object the sign refers to:

La référence est ébranlée par l'indétermination; elle est rendue problématique au fur et à mesure que grandit la discontinuité; elle est définitivement mise à mort par les affirmations franchement contradictoires. [1978a, p. 248]

2) the texts have one (and one only) meaning which is to have no meaning. Obscurity, preventing the identification of the object the sign refers to, becomes the very object of the poems:

Paradoxalement c'est en voulant restituer le sens de ces textes que l'exégète les en prive — car leur sens, paradoxe inverse, est de n'en point avoir. Rimbaud a élevé au statut de littérature des textes qui ne parlent de rien, dont on ignorera le sens — ce qui leur donne un sens historique énorme. [idem, p. 252]

Todorov's method consists in a de-construction of the texts and an inventory of their tropes. However, he only focuses on a selection of texts, which he refers to as “textes indécidables” from which he builds his analysis and subsequently his theory. The concept of undecidability is inherited from deconstructive criticism. *Illuminations* are “indécidables” because of a lack of morphosyntactic links, the extended use of synectoches, abstractions and oxymorons, the lack of clear referentiality, etc.. He points out that what is particularly unusual in *Illuminations* is the frequency of these morpho-syntactic devices, especially as they are also combined:

Lorsque l'indétermination, la discontinuité, le morcellement des êtres et l'abstraction se conjuguent, il en résulte des phrases dont on a envie de dire qu'on ne sait pas, non seulement de quoi elles parlent, mais aussi ce qu'elles veulent dire. [1978a, p. 251]

Todorov's analysis of obscurity and undecidability stems from the failure of criticism to explain the meaning of *Illuminations*. From a (far from

exhaustive)⁶ critical evaluation of literary criticism, he builds his system, which concentrates solely on problematic or “obscure” extracts from *Illuminations*. Guyaux points out how negative Todorov's stance is and rightly asks: “peut-on fonder une théorie du texte sur les bonheurs et les malheurs de la critique?” [1991a, p. 203].

Furthermore, Todorov is not very clear on the reason for the failure of interpretation. This failure either stems from the poems themselves or from the reader. He seems to evoke both possibilities. On the one hand, “*on ne sait pas* [...] de quoi [les phrases] parlent” and “*on [en] ignorera à tout jamais* [...] le référent et le sens” [Todorov 1978a, p. 251 and p. 252, my italics] on the other hand the “textes [...] ne parlent de rien” [idem, p. 252]. So either the meaning is hidden and it is the *reader* (“on”) who fails to find it, or it is the poetry which fails to make sense (which is clearly not the same thing). Todorov is more inclined towards the second option: “les textes [...] ne parlent de rien”. However, the epigraph to his article is paradoxically a quotation from “Vies”¹ (presumably a poem “qui ne parle[...] de rien”). He later uses the same extract to explain *Illuminations*:

C'est ainsi que je *comprends les phrases de Rimbaud* qui m'ont servi d'épithaphe [*“Ma sagesse est aussi dédaignée que le chaos. Qu'est mon néant auprès de la stupeur qui vous attend?”*]: dans ce qui est sa sagesse, nous ne voyons que du chaos. [ibid., p. 253, my italics]

So, after all, there appears to be something to be understood in *Illuminations*.

This logical contradiction does not undermine Todorov's system, as he later contradicted his position that the entire collection of poems *Illuminations* is obscure:

Il est évident que le sens de certaines *Illuminations* est parfaitement limpide [...]. [1988, p. 12]

The main problem in Todorov's position is that he does not clearly define what constitutes the obscurity of *Illuminations*. Is it the lack of “référent”, the lack of cohesion, the lack of thought or even philosophical system (“si Rimbaud avait eu une philosophie, cela se saurait, après un siècle de commentaires” [1978a, pp. 250-1])? Throughout his analysis, the

⁶He quotes Suzanne Bernard, Adam, and Chadwick. However, he conveniently ignores interpretative approaches by critics such as Étienne, Bonnefoy, Brunel, Eigeldinger or Jean-Pierre Richard who obviously do not fit his categories (“évhémériste”/ “étiologique”/ etc.).

critic tends to amalgamate “vérité”, “référence” and “sens”⁷. His reasoning can be schematised as follows:

the texts describe a world which is not true (“l'auteur prend tous les soins nécessaires pour nous faire comprendre que ce monde n'est pas vrai” 1978a, p. 244), there is no way to identify the objects the texts refer to, hence the texts have no meaning.

The key words in his system are “vérité”, “référence” and “sens”, but it all boils down to the central term “référence”. The “référence” determines both the underlying “truth” of a text and its overall meaning. Even when there is a degree of meaning, the absence of a clear “référence” prevents the reader from deciphering of the overall meaning:

Même lorsqu'on comprend le sens des mots on est incapable de construire leur référence [...]. [1978a, p. 249]

For someone who disqualifies a critical approach based on the finding of a source, Todorov puts rather a lot of emphasis on the source. He sometimes asks rather strange questions such as “Qui est le Prince de *Conte*, Verlaine ou Rimbaud?” [1978a, p. 251]. From these questions, it is easy to see that the critic's task is not to disqualify the texts which anyway are obscure and “pas vrai[s]”, but to disqualify any research based on “référence”. Guyaux who analyses Todorov's confusion between “sens” and “référence” is hence justified in asking:

Et la thèse du non-sens dans les *Illuminations* n'est-elle pas, aussi, le dernier cri de la critique du référent, dont elle procède si bien? [1991a, p. 206]

In his 1988 article, Todorov still defends his position on obscurity now based on the impact of the ‘difficult’ texts of *Illuminations* on the other ‘clearer’ texts and on modern poetry in general:

[...] je reste néanmoins persuadé que ce sont les textes les plus difficiles, ceux où le travail du lecteur est le plus entravé, qui ont joué un rôle historique plus important que les autres, ont davantage influencé la poésie moderne, ont plus fortement infléchi notre idée même de la poésie. [1988, p. 12]

The challenging texts have deformed (“gauchissent”) our vision of Rimbaud and of modern poetry. Ultimately, it is best to give up on these so-called difficult *Illuminations* for which an interpretative approach is clearly a waste of time:

⁷See Fongaro [1985, pp. 5-8] and Guyaux [1984].

Je me demande si les *Illuminations* (ou au moins certaines d'entre elles, ou certaines de leurs phrases) ne représentent pas un cas-limite, où le meilleur hommage de l'interprète consisterait à se taire. [idem, p. 17]

This statement has huge implications for interpretation as well as translation. It is certainly significant that Todorov's article should be included in a book on translating Rimbaud's *Illuminations*. If the collection of poems *Illuminations* is “un cas-limite”, if it embodies hermetic poetry, the only possible approach for translation is a structuralist approach. An interpretative-cum-communicative approach such as the one described earlier could not be applied to the translation process. No meaning at all, or many possible meanings (because of extreme ambiguity or too many syllepses) could eventually invalidate the translation process — even though “non-sense” poetry such as Lewis Carroll's has been translated in the past. However, can (some of) the poems in *Illuminations* really be assimilated to non-sense poetry? The answer to these problems may lie in a reappraisal of the concept of “illisibilité” used by the critics.

Reassessing the concept of “illisibilité”

Todorov's ideas on reading difficulties and hermeticism are not new. His theorisation partly stems from Baudry's work on the significance of the concept of “illisibilité” in modern literature and in Rimbaud's poetry in particular [Baudry 1968 and 1969]. However, Baudry in “Le texte de Rimbaud” works from a completely different position from Todorov's. Although Todorov and Baudry partly agree on the reasons underlying *Illuminations*' obscurity, they diverge on the role of obscurity in Rimbaud's poetry. Todorov's concept of obscurity is built from negative criticism and concludes with the failure of hermeneutics. Conversely, Baudry's concept of obscurity is positive, in that “illisibilité” is viewed as a deliberate process of subversion of traditional aesthetics and epistemological values. If “illisibilité” is historically reassessed as a positive value, it is then possible to view it as a dynamic force. As traditional literary canons are undermined, the reader is obliged to reconsider the text. Unreadability does not destroy the meaning, it simply delays it and makes it accessible at another level of reading. In essence, the challenging writing of *Illuminations* is already meaningful as a subversive force against aesthetic and epistemological canons. Baudry resituates *Illuminations* within literary and cultural tradition, whilst Todorov considers the collection to be “un cas-limite” [1988, p. 17]. And indeed, if one considers the evolution of literature, the vision of culturally challenging

writing delaying a comprehensible message is already expressed in Baudelaire's *Petits poèmes en prose*. Baudelaire experimented with narration by introducing different levels of structure within a single text. He wanted to subvert “le style coulant cher aux bourgeois”. He aimed at the intelligent reader, telling in the poem “La Corde” for example the anecdote of ‘une mère indigne’, which would appeal to the ‘bourgeois’, while at the same time including a reflexion on the failure of reasoning, emphasising the limitation of the narrator's point of view. Although there is no evidence of a direct influence of Baudelaire's *Petits poèmes en prose* on *Illuminations*, Rimbaud may have followed the same path as his predecessor, for whom a text did not have to convey its message at the first level of reading.

Following Baudry's optimistic intuition on unreadability, Riffaterre reassesses in two articles the concept of undecidability introduced by Todorov, namely: “Interpretation and Undecidability” [1981], which relates directly to Todorov's vision of *Illuminations*; and a more general article “Undecidability as Hermeneutic constraint” [1990a]. Riffaterre considers undecidability (“obscurity”, “ambiguity”, “syllepses”) to be an obligatory stage of hermeneutic or “hermeneutic constraint”, which to a lesser or greater extent is part of any literary reading:

In each sense, undecidability is temporary, a kind of initiatory step, but one that must be repeated with each rereading, and one that cannot be taken unconsciously. Undecidability therefore makes for the kind of active and even strenuous, but disciplined commitment that, more than anything else, characterizes literary response to perceived literariness. [1990a, p. 123]

Riffaterre's vision of undecidability stems from his research on *Semiotics of poetry* [1978], which focuses on the process of reading. What the reader seeks is what makes the unity of a text. He will go through two stages of reading. The initial heuristic stage, also called the “deciphering stage”, is the stage where the reader comprehends linguistic signs in a primarily referential fashion. The reader assumes that he can rely on the poem as being representative of reality:

On the surface lies meaning, based upon a real or assumed mimesis of reality as a reassuring guarantee of truth. [1983a, p. 118]

However, he is soon confronted with a sense of “ungrammaticality”, where some signs give bizarre results when interpreted referentially:

[Ungrammaticality is produced by] any verbal feature of the text that the reader finds linguistically unacceptable or incompatible with the context, or jarring in

form and/or content, or, more especially gratuitous or farfetched or esthetically unpleasing [...]. [idem, p. 125]

As a result the reading requires another dimension to explain rhetorical patterns that cannot be interpreted referentially. This second stage of reading is called “retroactive” or “hermeneutic”. It is based on the a priori of organisation of the text and consists in the interpretation of patterns perceived. These patterns, which are linked by a process of repetition, create what Riffaterre calls “significance”. “Significance” is the product of semiosis, which is “the process whereby mimesis is transformed in such a way that a reader must reinterpret it and end up identifying a new object proposed to him in the guise of representation” [idem, p. 118].

Beyond significance, what the reader identifies is a ‘structural matrix’ [see 1978, pp. 6 & 19] . The matrix can be implicit or explicit. In the latter case, at the higher level of significance, everything in the text will be the variant of an original word or sentence. On Rimbaud's poem “Promontoire”, for example, Riffaterre writes:

[...] le poème en prose génère ses constances formelles à partir de la même matrice qui engendre sa signifiante [...].
[Pour “Promontoire”] tout sort du mot *promontoire*, de ses sèmes, du système descriptif dont il est le noyau. [1982, p. 628]

If a prose poem implies a description from an elevated point, as in “Promontoire”, reading constants will be generated: an aesthetic constant (“la constante embellissante”) and a formal constant (“qui consiste à décrire un tout complexe ou démesuré en ne nommant que ses extrémités”). Constants are the markers of the organisational force of the text. They are perceived by the reader as many links between sparse elements and according to Riffaterre are especially useful in understanding the functioning of prose poems. Constants enable the text to “build” from within. The frame thus produced is constructed out of the content and “coextensive with it”. The intertextual reading is generally rendered compulsory for the text to bear significance. This is what Riffaterre calls “obligatory intertext” (as opposed to “aleatory intertext”). The hermeneutic approach of semiotics remains strictly within the boundaries of literature and literariness, as the text relates to a set of pre-texts.

However, such a method which consists in transforming the concept of “unreadability” into a concept of “complex readability” presents some drawbacks. The main problem concerns the supposed universality of readers' perception of reading constants. Riffaterre maintains that readers

are obliged to perceive certain features of intertextuality in order to reconstruct the significance of a text:

[The reader] is therefore under strict guidance and control as he fills the gaps and solves the puzzle. [1978, p. 165]

This raises a few problems. If readers are under such an obligation to achieve the decoding of the semantic and formal features of the matrix of a text, how do we then explain that so many readers of *Illuminations* have failed to notice the repetition of the matrix? If the shift from mimesis to semiosis were in a way compulsory, as it derives from formal properties of the texts, intelligent critics should therefore have followed the path leading to an intertextual reading. This is indeed the main reproach made against Riffaterre's method by linguists such as Culler [1981] or Eisenzweig [1983], their conclusion being that Riffaterre presupposes an erudition that most readers do not possess. Culler even ends up saying that this failure to describe what the readers actually do when they read a text disqualifies the label semiotic:

The more interested one becomes in these interpretations, the more it seems that Riffaterre is not undertaking the semiotics he originally proposed, not describing how readers do and must read, but offering, rather, a genetic theory, a method of interpretation based on a theory of origins. [1981, p. 98]

Riffaterre attempted to justify his method by dissociating two levels of reading: the "intuition" of intertextuality (an obligatory but less advanced stage) and the recognition of a precise source. The need for a shift from mimesis to semiosis is always perceived, but not always achieved:

Je crois que le lecteur est toujours capable de trouver l'intertexte. Mais il n'a pas en général les moyens de le localiser avec précision. [Riffaterre 1983b, p. 172]

Riffaterre defends the concept of universal perception (or intuition) of reading constants, thus confirming the semiotic aim of his method. However, he does not satisfactorily answer the objection of erudition.

Kittang [1992] objects to Riffaterre's semiotic approach to Rimbaud's poetry on the grounds that the critic tends to impose an intertext upon a text. The so-called "ungrammaticalities" of the poems are taken as a pretext for the critic to show his own erudition. Kittang compares Riffaterre's method, as demonstrated in "Interpretation and Undecidability" [1981], with Richer's esoteric approach [1972], studying the way the two critics contextualise the poem "Le loup criait sous les feuilles...". The assimilation of Riffaterre's and

Richer's analyses is at first rather surprising in that Riffaterre works from a linguistic point of view, whereas Richer's approach is much more whimsical. Richer works from an aesthetic and esoteric point of view, using alchemy, magical and symbolic sources such as Tarot cards for his interpretation of the poems. However, Kittang explains that even though the two critics have different approaches, they still share a common vision of Rimbaud:

Tous les deux considèrent le texte poétique comme un syntagme de signes surdéterminés qui réclame un certain découpage et l'établissement d'un interprétant pour devenir lisible. [1992, p. 153]

Their hermeneutic method, it appears, is quite similar. Riffaterre, following the Saussurian theory of anagrams, reveals hidden intertext. Whilst Richer follows the idea that there is hidden or cryptic meaning, which can only be understood once the links between text and (esoteric) intertext have been established. Both Riffaterre and Richer use Rimbaud's writing (external to the text they analyse) to justify and contextualise their analyses.

While comparing Riffaterre's and Richer's methods, Kittang does not judge or condemn either of them but tries to reassess the link between text, intertext and interpretation. He remains within the boundaries of pragmatics (context and intentionality) and semiotics (intertextuality) and offers two conclusions. The first conclusion regards the concept of unreadability, which he views as intentional and poetically meaningful:

[...] la complexité de l'œuvre rimbaldienne est le résultat d'une pratique inouïe de l'écriture qui s'efforce en même temps de «se penser»: de rendre intelligible par ses images et à travers ses réseaux thématiques ce qu'elle comporte d'inconnu et de proprement impensable. En tant que lecture de sa propre illisibilité, l'œuvre s'offre donc à une interprétation dont elle nous indique en même temps les «conditions d'impossibilité». [ibid., p. 158]

Kittang keeps the idea of a meaningfully challenging writing developed by Baudry. The text plays 'hide and seek' with the reader and always emphasises its own complexity. Kittang does not refute the idea of a hidden intertextual content. However, he offers a more careful approach to intertextuality and to the contextualisation of interpretation:

[A] l'inverse de Riffaterre et de Richer, je propose que la contextualisation dont dépend l'acte interprétatif s'opère à partir des signes de l'œuvre même, telles [sic] qu'ils sont déjà organisés en réseaux thématiques en vue d'une lecture de l'illisible. [ibid., p. 158]

Kittang considers a personal (existential) and aesthetic immediate intertext, which he usually builds from a repertoire of the various themes developed in

Rimbaud's poetry, whilst Riffaterre's approach is a compromise between structuralist linguistics and hermeneutics, generally excluding any psychological, ideological or sociological interpretation. However, there is, in fact, no real antinomy between Kittang and Riffaterre, but the illustration of two different hermeneutic biases. Both Kittang and Riffaterre carefully select the texts which can best suit their approach. In Kittang's as in Riffaterre's reading of Rimbaud's poetry there is a refusal to consider an historical approach which replaces the text within its precise socio-cultural and ideological context. This is partly because of the initial perception of *Illuminations* as religious or aesthetic poetry. It is also because of the pitfalls of an approach (biographical, sociological, ideological or psychological) pejoratively qualified as "critique évhémériste" by Todorov. However, a close consideration of the socio-cultural context may well help in deciphering part of the phenomenon of obscurity in *Illuminations*.

Such an historical contextualisation of the texts is proposed by Murphy, who distinguishes between synchronic and diachronic unreadability in Rimbaud's writing. If part of the phenomenon of obscurity is diachronic, unreadable units might also be accounted for by historical and cultural gaps:

Cette illisibilité [illisibilité diachronique] découle de la différence entre les capacités lexicologiques, discursives et symboliques d'un lecteur de 1870 à 1875 et celles d'un lecteur d'aujourd'hui. [Murphy 1988, p. 20]

Most of Murphy's work focuses on the historical and political allusions in *Poésies*, *Album Zutique* and *Illuminations* (mainly "Démocratie", "Après le déluge" and "Bottom"). For these texts, Murphy has concluded that some decisive socio-cultural references were lost to the reader at an early stage or were meant to be perceived only by people who were used to Rimbaud's style (principally "les Zutistes", a literary group to which Rimbaud belonged and which opposed the Parnassian vision of poetry). Murphy believes that a sound reader, with knowledge of the satirical literature of the time, and of the political and historical context, should be able to find the key to many of the enigmas in *Illuminations*. This can only be achieved if the reader goes beyond the synchronic unreadability which he explains as follows:

Si l'illisibilité *diachronique* découle d'éléments oubliés, ainsi que de rapports connotatifs les unissant, ceux-ci tout aussi effacés, l'illisibilité *synchronique* du poème, son originalité, provient de sa focalisation de modes d'implication insolites sous les apparences d'un texte sinon neutre, du moins politiquement...indécidable. [ibid., p. 22, his italics]

The apparent neutrality (or synchronic unreadability) does not allow the reader to settle decisively on a clear historical (political, ideological, etc.) meaning of the poems. The clues to such a meaning are not immediately accessible. They are usually allusive, hidden behind intricate puns as demonstrated by Murphy for "Chant de guerre Parisien" [ibid., p. 22]. Murphy's concept of unreadability derives partly from the poems themselves (synchronic unreadability), partly from the reader (diachronic unreadability). The contingent or diachronic unreadability is separate from an innate and intentional synchronic unreadability. The former can be avoided via study of the (literary, political, sociological, etc.) context of the poems; the latter has to be signalled by the critic.

A translator cannot avoid a reflexion on the particular and complex type of style⁸ illustrated in *Illuminations*. At the same time, it is necessary to reassess the socio-cultural context of the collection:

En *réduisant* le texte rimbaldien à une inscription "thématique", aux dépens de la lexicologie, de connotations historiques, de l'herméneutique, on simplifie la tâche du traducteur en bloquant le mouvement de l'analyse du sens, comme pour étancher une hémorragie sémantique. [ibid., p. 30-31, his italics]

However, Sacchi has pointed out the risks inherent in holding an ideological or historical stance on the meaning of the poems⁹:

[L]e chemin de l'interprétation idéologique peut facilement aboutir à une inversion des priorités explicites: ce n'est plus l'idéologie qui sert à éclaircir le sens de l'œuvre, ce sont plutôt les *disjecta membra* de l'œuvre elle-même (plaquées de vive force sur ce lit de Procuste) qui servent à illustrer les vérités de l'idéologie. [1993, p. 115]

Bearing in mind Sacchi's warning, the poems cannot be strictly held as political or philosophical systems, although they reflect cultural, political, philosophical and linguistic preoccupations, which cannot be ignored. A pluridisciplinary approach avoiding the risk of a crude and reductionist vision of *Illuminations*, is the best approach to translation. The impact and meaning of *Illuminations* (if meaning there is) are not purely historical or ideological, otherwise the poems would only appeal to historians [see Sacchi 1993, p.118]. Their impact is also poetical.

⁸ By style I mean the result of motivated choices made by the writer. Stylistic effects create meaning and as such always possess a purpose. The style of a writer is also influenced by other texts [cf Hatim and Mason 1990, p. 10].

⁹ His remark applies specifically to Anne Berger's approach to *Illuminations* in "Le Statut du féminin dans l'œuvre de Rimbaud", *Rimbaud cent ans après. Parade Sauvage*, Colloque n°3, 1992. Berger advocates a feminist vision of Rimbaud which according to Sacchi "est assurément très suggestif, dès lors qu'on accepte que l'objet d'une telle analyse ne soit pas tellement Rimbaud, mais le féminisme." [Sacchi, 1993, p. 115].

Implications for translation

The assessment of Rimbaud's writing and of *Illuminations* in particular seems to be characterised by a debate between theoretical positions whose emphases range from radical unreadability to radical readability. However, *Illuminations* is probably situated halfway between these two radical conceptions. A degree of unreadability still remains even after the application of an informed interpretative approach. What are the possible implications for translation?

If *Illuminations* deviates from transparent or fluent discourse, the task of the translator is first of all to assess the nature of the deviation. This presupposes the existence of a set of rhetorical conventions in the source language. The question of textual intention(s) is also important at this point. If there is a deviation, (potentially creating obscurity, or unreadability), one must assess whether this deviation is deliberate and meaningful. If there is deliberate and meaningful deviation from particular conventions, the translator must then assess the extent of the deviation, carefully differentiating between actual deviation and possible misunderstanding of the texts due to historical and cultural gaps.

Following Baudry's and Riffaterre's assumptions, if we view deviant use of language in *Illuminations* as a deliberate process aiming at attracting the reader's attention, so that he may reassess the content of the poems, then a degree of deviation will have to be preserved in the translation. Thus the English-speaking reader will be encouraged to go beyond the immediate effect of surprise to discover a deliberately hidden rhetorical purpose. The reproduction of deviant features in the TT is what Venuti partly defines as "foreignizing translation" [1995, p. 20]. The 'foreign-ness' of the TT according to Venuti can be signalled by "experimenting with archaism, slang, literary allusion and convention" [idem, p. 310]. We see this type of experiment being applied for example in Mathieu's translation of *Illuminations* [Mathieu 1979]. Mathieu's translation strategy deviates from the fluent translation strategy adopted by most English-speaking translators in that he chooses to use slang words within the poems to signal their allusive content. We find for example words such as "tits" and "boobs" in "Nocturne vulgaire" and "Villes" ("Ce sont des villes [...]"). However, even though this type of strategy does signal the ST's difference, does it really reveal the culturally challenging nature of Rimbaud's writing? Murphy who analyses

Mathieu's approach to *Illuminations* points out the risk of using unmotivated slang words in the translation:

Il convient de respecter le registre lexical de chaque mot. Si la recherche d'une traduction synchronique nouvelle, adéquate à mimer une synchronie d'il y a un siècle, n'est pas dépourvue d'intérêt, il convient au moins de respecter les frontières entre les lexiques populaires, vulgaires et "académiques". Sinon, on délaisse non seulement la lettre de l'œuvre, mais aussi son esprit, en enlevant des changements de ton important. L'effet paradoxal de rendre par trop vulgaire la langue des *Illuminations* est que les rares locutions délibérément choquantes du recueil en perdent leur force contrastive. [1988, p. 27]

If there are examples of intentional use of slang or even obscene words in *Illuminations* such as "crevaison" in "Démocratie" or "prendre du dos" in "Parade", it remains a relatively restricted feature of the ST. Extending this feature does make the text more foreign, but only to itself.

The translator should limit the 'foreignizing' process to attested obscure or resistant features of the ST. Venuti himself acknowledges the need to restrict the 'foreignness' of the translation as the translator is restricted by the target language canons of fluency:

This means limiting discursive experiments to perceptible deviations that may risk but stop short of the parodic or the incomprehensible [...]. [1995, p. 311]

Secondly, if there is an undeniable need for the translator to signify the challenging rhetorical features of *Illuminations*, this cannot be achieved by an unmotivated switch of register. As Hatim and Mason put it, "whatever options are selected to uphold the register membership of a text, they should always be adequately motivated" [1997, p. 100]. Unmotivated use of archaisms or slang words would be superfluous additions to the ST resulting in unnecessary translation loss. A 'foreignizing' translation of *Illuminations* can only operate satisfactorily within a careful strategy which aims at transposing specifically identified challenging linguistic aspects of the ST to the TT. The transposition of 'resistant' or 'deviant' features of the ST will necessarily result in what Venuti calls "an alien reading experience" [1995, p. 20]. This "alien reading experience" will also emerge from the clear signalling of socio-cultural features, which may have been lost in time. The 'diachronic unreadability' of *Illuminations* will be revealed via an interpretative approach informed by a sound knowledge of the historical context. Without a strong knowledge of the text in context the translation will necessarily be limited and this may have disastrous consequences on the future reception of the ST in an alien culture.

I, ii Revisiting obscurity

Illuminations is often perceived as being affected by opaqueness of intention and/or dislocation (cf. above Ch I, ii). I now would like to reach a better understanding of how the poems work to create this general impression. Some studies have addressed this central issue. The most important one to date is probably Lapeyre's study of the "rhétorique de la rupture" in Rimbaud's writing [Lapeyre, 1981]. Lapeyre, working from a lexical and syntactic approach, lists various features which affect *Illuminations*, but also *Poésies* and *Une Saison en Enfer*. Although her analysis yields interesting conclusions, I wish to reassess the poems through the study of patterns which go beyond the sentence level and consider larger textual units. An analysis of the structure and texture of the poems will help to determine the importance of "markedness" in *Illuminations*. The term "markedness" is borrowed from Hatim and Mason and is defined "either as infrequency of occurrence (that is less frequently occurring expressions are somehow more significant when they do occur) or as informativity (that is, the less predictable in context an item is, the more information it potentially relays)" [1997, p. 12]. Hatim and Mason provide a set of guiding criteria for the study of markedness, namely: hybridization of register; opaqueness of intention; shifts of genres; competing discourses; expectation-defying text structures and marked texture [idem, pp. 194-5]. This checklist will guide the study of *Illuminations*. My assumption is that the challenging features of the poems derive from a conscious selection in order to create a particular effect. In establishing the degree of departure from norms of textual practice, this study will contribute to a clearer picture of Rimbaud's particular style in *Illuminations* and inform the decision-making process essential to the production of lucid and valid translations.

Marked texture

Texture ensures that a given sequence hangs together as a cohesive and coherent whole. While cohesion is created by ties that bind a text together (conjunctive relations, coreference, lexical relationships, etc.), coherence is established at a logical level. For coherence to exist, the concepts and relationships expressed in a given sequence should be relevant to each other, thus allowing the reader to draw plausible hypotheses about underlying meaning. A marked texture is identified when

the ability of a sequence to stand as a cohesive and coherent whole is affected.

Many poems in *Illuminations* are characterised by the absence of verbs, conjunctions and connectives, and the relative abundance of substantive forms [see Eigeldinger, 1986]. As a result, sentences are mainly nominal and are usually characterised by juxtaposition. This particularity of the poems is amply documented and we find many examples of this type of writing. One effect of the strongly elliptical and nominal style of *Illuminations* is an increase in linguistic freedom leading to a perpetual process of stylistic innovation, illustrated, for example, in the following extracts:

“(O palmes! diamant! — Amour, force! — plus haut que toutes joies et gloires! — de toutes façons, partout, — Démon, dieu — Jeunesse de cet être-ci; moi!)”
[“Angoisse”]

“O Douceurs, o monde, o musique! Et là, les formes, les sueurs, les chevelures et les yeux, flottant. Et les larmes blanches, bouillantes, — o douceurs! — et la voix féminine arrivée au fond des volcans et des grottes arctiques.
Le pavillon...”
[“Barbare”]

“O ses souffles, ses têtes, ses courses; la terrible célérité de la perfection des formes et de l'action.
O fécondité de l'esprit et immensité de l'univers!
Son corps! Le dégagement rêvé, le brisement de la grâce croisée de violence nouvelle!”
[“Génie”]

The accumulation of strong punctuation (exclamation marks, dashes, full stops), juxtaposed verbless segments and repeated words is, to say the least, audacious. The rapid succession of elements allows for greater semantic flexibility, resulting in new unexpected alliances of words, which often lead to semantic clashes (cf. “Barbare”). It results in a quasi-eruptive style, marked by forceful rhythm, speed and dynamism.

Conversely, the accumulation of nominal sentences and construction by juxtaposition can also slow some of the poems down. This is the case when the dynamism of the texts is reduced by longer sentences, less forceful punctuation (colons and semicolons) and the addition of numerous qualifying clauses. The following examples display these characteristics:

“Lève la tête: le pont de bois, arqué; les derniers potagers de Samarie; les masques enluminés sous/ la lanterne fouettée par la nuit froide; l'ondine niaise à la robe bruyante, au bas de la rivière; les crânes lumineux dans les plans de pois — et les autres fantasmagories — la campagne.”
[“Métropolitain”]

“Des fanums qu'éclaire la rentrée des théories, d'immenses vues de la défense des côtes modernes; des dunes illustrées de chaudes fleurs et de bacchanales; de grands canaux de Carthage et des Embankments d'une Venise louche; de molles éruptions d'Etnas et des crevasses de fleurs et d'eaux des glaciers; [...]”
[“Promontoire”]

These sequences adopt the asyndeton structure, which is often used for lists and other cumulative structures. Asyndeton is characterised by the absence of co-ordinating conjunctions as defined in *Littré*:

Sorte d'ellipse par laquelle on retranche [...] les conjonctions copulatives qui doivent unir les parties d'une phrase.

Cohesion must then rely on other factors, which often are the structural relationship between the different lexical items. However, in the sequences quoted above, the reader is at first unable to follow a clear semantic thread. The listing of heterogeneous elements makes it difficult to find lexical relationships. The result of this lack of continuity is “contextual ambiguity” [cf. Wirth Fusco 1990, p. 21]. The reader is left to his own devices to find cohesion and coherence in the catalogues of seemingly independent entities.

This type of hyperbolic accumulation, where elements are added quasi-indefinitely, is frequent in *Illuminations*, and it has indeed led some critics to evaluate the poems negatively. The following comments show that its effect on some readers is not always felicitous:

However, the impression of complexity risks being counter-balanced by one of mannerism. “Ponts”, “Métropolitain”, the second “Villes”, “Promontoire” and “Scènes” all have the same accumulation of conflicting visual indications ... and a reading of them in close succession leaves one with a feeling of mechanicalness. Indeed Rimbaud's crowding of images into massive blocks seems to me one of his less successful experiments. [Houston 1963, pp. 257-8, quoted in Wirth Fusco 1990, pp. 42-3]

The process of cumulative listing of unrelated elements may therefore be viewed as artificial and even aesthetically unpleasant, qualified as

“mannerism” and “mechanicalness”. Houston's evaluation may shed light, however, on the possible purpose of this feature of style. The lack of cohesion in these lists of unrelated, heterogeneous elements may well be intentional. If we look closely at the following examples, the purpose of cumulative structures becomes clearer:

“Une matinée couverte, en Juillet. Un goût de cendres vole dans l'air; — une odeur de bois suant dans l'âtre, — les fleurs rouies — le saccage des promenades — la bruine des canaux par les champs — **pourquoi pas** déjà les joujoux et l'encens?”
[untitled, my emphasis]

“Défilé de féeries. En effet: des chars chargés d'animaux de bois doré, de mâts et de toiles bariolées, au grand galop de vingt chevaux de cirque tachetés, et les enfants et les hommes sur leurs bêtes les plus étonnantes; — vingt véhicules, bossés, pavoisés et fleuris comme des carosses anciens ou de contes, pleins d'enfants attifés pour une pastorale suburbaine. — **Même** des cercueils sous leur dais de nuit dressant les panaches d'ébène, filant au trot des grandes juments bleues et noires.”
[“Ornières”, my emphasis]

“En quelque soir, par exemple, que se trouve le touriste naïf, retiré de nos horreurs économiques, la main d'un maître anime le clavecin des prés; on joue aux cartes au fond de l'étang, miroir évocateur des reines et des mignonnes, on a les saintes, les voiles, et les fils d'harmonie, et les chromatismes légendaires, sur le couchant.

Il frissonne au passage des chasses et des hordes. La comédie goûte sur les tréteaux de gazon. **Et** l'embarras des pauvres et des faibles sur ces plans stupides!”
[“Soir historique”, my emphasis]

In these examples, the addition of a highly incongruous element suddenly interrupts the poetic effect of accumulation of aesthetically pleasant images. In each instance, the addition is isolated and clearly signposted with the connectors “Pourquoi pas”, “Même” or “Et”. Through the use of the connectors “Pourquoi pas” and “même”, Rimbaud seems to suggest that he is adding another element to the lists as if for good measure. However, the addition is extremely significant. Each time it creates a violent semantic clash. “Les joujoux et l'encens”, connoting a very bourgeois Christmas, are in clear opposition with “Une matinée [...] en Juillet”. The dark (“nuit”,

“ébène”, “juments bleues et noires” — with “bleues” as in “bleu nuit”) procession of “cercueils” contrasts with the colourful “Défilé de féeries”. Finally, “l’embarras des pauvres et des faibles” is poetically (and socially!) jarring amongst the rich artistic settings qualified as “plans stupides”. In these three examples, where images are chain-constructed on the same aesthetic pattern of beauty and “vieillesse poétique”¹, the reader’s expectation is invariably upset, an effect which induces him/her to reassess the content of the text. After the initial shock, the lists come to be viewed as suspicious. From the reading of the poem “Soir historique”, it clearly appears that the accumulation of aesthetically pleasing impressions (“chimie sans valeur, et [...] mélodies impossibles” born of “la magie bourgeoise”) is created in order to be undermined. Houston is therefore justified in referring to “mannerism” and “mechanicalness” when evaluating excessively cumulative structures. These effects are intentional and motivated by a critical and ironic purpose. The stylistic device activated in these texts is described by Genette as “la saturation”, which is “caractéristique de l’exagération pastichielle” [1982, p. 95]. Through excessive use of cumulative structures, Rimbaud copies and condemns “le déballage poétique”, the use and abuse of pleasant images and poetic topoi, devices which can only be appreciated by a naïve reader (cf. “touriste naïf”)².

Cohesion and coherence in texts rely on different factors, and conjunctive relations are one of these factors. However, in the examples analysed above, conjunctive relations depart from their normal use, in that although they are supposed to express the notion of ‘addition’, they in fact introduce a relationship of ‘contrast’. There are other occurrences in the texts where the use of connectors defies the reader’s expectations. The following examples are the most obvious:

“La réalité étant trop épineuse pour mon grand caractère, — je me trouvais **néanmoins** chez ma dame, en gros oiseau gris bleu s’essorant vers les moulures du plafond et traînant l’aîle dans les ombres de la soirée.”
[“Bottom”]

“Ces millions de gens qui n’ont pas besoin de se connaître amènent si pareillement l’éducation, le métier et la vieillesse, que ce cours de vie doit être plusieurs

¹ See also the semantic thread of the past (historical and literary) in “Ornières” and “Soir historique”: “des carrosses anciens ou de contes”, “clavecin”, “reines et mignonnes”, “légendaires”.

² This aspect of our study will be further developed in the close analysis of “Enfance”, “Solde” and “Villes” I & II.

fois moins long que ce qu'une statistique folle trouve pour les peuples du continent. **Aussi comme**, de ma fenêtre, je vois des spectres nouveaux roulant à travers l'épaisse et éternelle fumée de charbon, — [...]" ["Ville"]

The link words used in these sequences are uncommon in their form or in their use. In the first sequence, a preposed clause ("La réalité étant trop épineuse pour mon grand caractère") presumably offers an explanation for what follows. However, the adverb "néanmoins", which introduces an idea of opposition between the preposed clause and the rest of the poem clashes with the main clause. This grammatically impossible construction pulls the sentence in two different directions. The logical opposition between preposed clause and the main clause is emphasised by the punctuation (cf. dash). If we read the text from the point of view of the main clause, the preposed clause cannot express cause, it can only express concession. However, as pointed out by Guyaux:

En principe, une proposition participe ne peut avoir de valeur concessive puisqu'elle a un sens causal et que la concession est l'inverse de la cause. [Guyaux 1985b, p. 221]

The contradiction is irreducible. What is the purpose of such an unusual construction which defies coherence? It acts both as a signal and as a trigger for the reader as the lack of immediate coherence induces him/ her to look for coherence at another level. Some critics (notably Little 1990) have thus produced analyses pointing to a possible intertextual (Shakespeare, Apuleius) or sexual meaning. The title "Bottom" — initially "Métamorphoses", crossed out — guided their interpretation. We may also suspect a playful device, running through the text, inspired by "ma dame" (Madame), leading to possible play on words ("épineuse" > é-pineuse/ é-pine-use; "néanmoins" > néant-moins/ nez-en-moins).

In the second sequence, "aussi comme" is unusual. Because of the "comme", which usually opens a subordinate clause, the reader expects to find a main clause. However, the main clause never appears. The conjunction "comme", like the adverb "néanmoins" in "Bottom", seems somehow out-of-place. Again this apparent "ungrammaticality" may act as a signal for the reader to reconsider the text. In the third chapter of this thesis, I analyse in detail the purpose and implications of this strange construction for the text "Ville".

The final aspect of texture to be considered here is ‘coreference’³. ‘Coreference’ describes the relationships between certain features⁴ of a text and their co-referring expressions. Texts display features that cannot be interpreted without referring to some other feature. At the level of the text, two types of endophoric relationship (relationship within the text or cotextual) can be identified, namely: anaphoric (relations look backwards for their interpretation: eg. “*My parents* stayed at the *Hilton*. ←*They* loved ←*it*.”) and cataphoric (relations look forwards for their interpretation: eg. “Listen to *this*: →*Sally is pregnant*”). Another type of relationship may be added, namely one which takes place outside the boundaries of the text: the exophoric relationship (relations look outside the text — at the context — for their interpretation). Whilst anaphoric relationships are fairly common and usually easily processed by the reader, cataphoric and exophoric relations introduce a level of complexity.

The anticipatory mechanism of cataphora may send the reader forward within or beyond the boundaries of a sentence. However, as pointed out by Hatim:

In either case, the motivation in using cataphora seems to be one of generating uncertainty and thus *arousing the interest of the text receiver* [1997, p. 92 my emphasis]

Cataphora contributes to the markedness of a text in that it creates a momentary gap between the pro-form and the co-referring expression, impelling the reader to read on. Cases of cataphoric coreference are numerous in *Illuminations*. The following examples can be quoted:

- “C’est *elle*, la petite morte [...]” [“Enfance” II]
- “*Tels* qu’un dieu aux énormes yeux bleus et aux formes de neige, la mer et le ciel attirent aux terrasses de marbre” [...]. [“Fleurs”]

Cataphoric constructions affect many demonstrative syntagms. These are some of the occurrences listed by Bivort [1991a]:

“**Cette** idole, yeux noirs et crin jaune” [...] [“Enfance” I, with “cette idole” co-referring to the list of women that follows
 “Qu’on me loue enfin **ce** tombeau”, with “ce tombeau” co-referring to “mon salon souterrain” [“Enfance” V]
 “rassemblons ferveusement **cette** promesse surhumaine faite à notre corps et à notre âme créés: **cette** promesse, **cette** démence! L’élégance, la science, la violence! On nous a promis d’enterrer dans

³ The analysis of repeated forms and lexical relationships follows this part. See I, iii.

⁴ Coreference has been studied in *Illuminations* principally by Bivort [1989 and 1991a], who analyses the features of “article défini générique” and “syntagmes nominaux démonstratifs”.

l'ombre l'arbre du bien et du mal, de déporter [...]” [“Matinée d'ivresse”], where the reference for “cette promesse” is delayed, first by a repetition of “cette promesse” and then by the introduction of another feature (“cette démente”) which co-refers immediately to what follows (“L'élégance, la science, la violence!”, with the phonic repetition [ãs] creating the link with the three nouns) and finally emerges (“on nous a **promis**...”).

Bivort also lists demonstrative syntagms, which introduce a relative clause and are thus cotextually explained:

“la lampe éclaire [...] **ces** journaux que je suis idiot de relire [...]” [“Enfance” V]
“Quels bons bras, quelle belle heure me rendront **cette** région d'où viennent mes sommeils et mes moindres mouvements?” [“Villes” (“Ce sont des villes!”)]
“nous ne passerons pas l'été dans **cet** avare pays où nous ne serons jamais que des orphelins fiancés.” [“Ouvriers”]

If cataphora creates temporary suspense and impels the reader to read on, exophoric coreference is rather more complex in that an external element is required in order to supply the required referential content. In the following example, the pronoun “Elle” is not clearly identifiable in the text:

“Le matin où avec *Elle*, vous vous débattîtes[...]” [“Métropolitain”]

The capital letter “E” also signals this element as being different. There is another such pronoun in the poem “Angoisse”, which the end of “Métropolitain” could be referring to. However, the two texts may not be linked and even if they were, there is still no certainty as to what the pronoun represents in “Angoisse”. Some (presumably) exophoric coreferences affect demonstrative syntagms that are linked to the notion of ‘time’:

“O **cette** chaude matinée de février.” [“Ouvriers”]
“que le monde était plein de fleurs **cet** été!” [“Jeunesse” III, “Vingt ans”]
“Ce soir à Circeto [...]” [“Dévotion”]
“Sachons, **cette** nuit d'hiver, de cap en cap, [...]” [“Génie”]

Bivort rejects the imposition of a possible biographic reference, which would force the fictional text to represent reality. However, he does not undermine the importance of these features, which are relatively rare in *Illuminations*:

Or l'emploi du démonstratif n'est ni gratuit ni même courant en contexte temporel dans les *Illuminations*; partout ailleurs Rimbaud utilise des articles, dont on sait qu'ils ne sont pas caractérisants [...]. [1991a, p. 95]

The effect created can be analysed in terms of a possible inclusion of the reader in the present of the text (cf. : “Génie” and “Dévotion”). Time is fixed eternally and thus “le poème offre une lecture prospective, à jamais valable, à quelque moment qu'on le lise” [Bivort 1991a, p. 96]. As in the case of cataphora, the purpose of such (false?) exophora is to trigger the reader's contribution to the text through her/his inclusion in or her/his exclusion from the knowledge of the speaker.

Expectation-defying text structures

Structure, which is the compositional plan of a text, also determines cohesion and coherence. Within the category of “objective” texts (narration, description, portrait), the poems in the collection *Illuminations* can be divided into texts which are predominantly descriptive and texts which are predominantly narrative. However, description and narration have floating frontiers and narrative features can be introduced in a description. The intrusion of an affective factor is often the mark of a genre-switch (analysed later in this chapter).

The two main tendencies of a predominantly descriptive text are inclusion and resemblance. Description is taxonomic [Hamon 1991, p. 269 and following] and offers a classification or “templum” of a given object. The title “Antique”, for example, is followed by a poem which is built on the semantic thread of the body:

“ton front”, “tes yeux”, “tes joues”, “tes crocs”, “ta poitrine”, “tes bras”, “ton cœur”, “ce ventre”, “le double sexe”, “cette cuisse”, “cette seconde cuisse”, “cette jambe de gauche”.

The type of text thus obtained is a “blason” with a vertical progression from top to bottom. The “blason” is a genre which is commonly associated with Parnassian poetry (notably Banville and Gautier). Its structure is taxonomic, creating poems which are usually cohesive, realistic and semantically predictable as they follow an anatomic progression. “Antique”, however, is characterised by a departure from this organisational norm. Different parts of the description defy realism, namely: “ta poitrine ressemble à une cithare”, “des tintements circulent dans tes bras blonds”, “ton cœur bat dans ce ventre où dort le double sexe”. Furthermore, the poem includes words which are contextually and intertextually odd, as pointed out by Raybaud:

Au caractère “gracieux” qui accompagne l'*antique* au sens des Parnassiens [...] contreviennent tant l'indication des taches de “lies brunes” que “Tes crocs luisent”; puis l'irruption du “sexe”; puis l'insistance sur les “cuisses”, et la

numération insolite qui clôt le texte. Au code littéraire du blason déroge, de même, le “double-sexe”, ambigu, au lieu de la féminité-macrocosme. [Raybaud 1989, p. 13]

The aesthetic constraint (“contrainte du vraisemblable esthétique” cf. Barthes 1991, p. 248) attached to descriptive texts is challenged and the reader, expecting a classical structure, is left destabilised.

Other descriptive poems in *Illuminations* follow a similar tendency. The poem “Promontoire”, for example, for which one would expect a clear referential content, embraces a huge variety of spaces and epochs. The comparisons, which build the picture of the “Villa”/ “Palais”/ “Promontoire”, read like a list of geographical locations:

“Epire”, “Péloponnèse”, “Japon” (x2), “Arabie”, “Etnas”, “Carthage”, “Venise”, “Scabro”, “Brooklyn”, “Italie”, “Asie”, “Amérique”, “Allemagne”

The object described is both ancient (Epirus and Peloponnesus> ancient Greece; “Carthage”, etc.) and modern (“côtes modernes”; “railways”, etc.). The multiplication of heterogeneous referential elements hinders the mimetic potential of the description. The process of accumulation of identified locations results in an impression of chaos, especially as it is very difficult to find a coherent continuity in the series of comparisons and images thus created. The object of the description (“Palais-Promontoire”) becomes, etymologically speaking, a u-topia as it is not possible to attach it to a clear referential system. In “Promontoire”, the referential constraint (“contrainte référentielle” Barthes 1991, p. 249) attached to descriptive texts is not respected. The poem presents a semantic classification, but the purpose of this classification and the logic behind it are obscure.

However, the textual organisation of the poems is not always as chaotic and obscure as in “Promontoire”. Some of the texts are organised following a clear pattern. They can be enclosed in a frame which defines a spatial progression. “Mystique” is built following this type of pattern and follows a “cardinal listing” (“liste cardinale” cf. Hamon 1991, p. 270):

“Sur la pente du talus”
“jusqu'au sommet”
“A gauche”
“Derrière l'arête de droite”
“en haut du tableau”
“en face du talus”
“contre notre face”
“là dessous”

This spatial frame is typical of realistic descriptions, where the same oppositions are always involved (top vs. bottom, left vs. right, on vs. under). However, the realistic effect in “Mystique” created by the juxtaposition of adverbial clauses is undermined by the use of abstract terms:

“A gauche le terreau de l'arête est piétiné par *tous les homicides* et toutes les batailles [...].”
“Et tandis que la bande en haut du tableau est formée de la *rumeur tournante et bondissante* des conqués des mers et des nuits humaines [...].”

The precision and order of the description is clearly undermined by the intrusion of non-realistic and non-referential language. Furthermore, the movement expressed in the poem (eg.: “Des près de flammes bondissent”) tends to confuse the clearly defined spatial boundaries. “Mystique” is no exception. In *Illuminations*, texts abound with abstract words associated with a definite article (cf. “Génie” “Il est l'affection et l'avenir, la force et l'amour que nous, debout dans les rages et les ennuis, [...].”). Bivort analyses this tendency and reveals that definite articles in *Illuminations* are “articles génériques” in that they avoid concrete representation and create absolute categories [1989, p. 94] and thus undermine the referential illusion created by “classical” descriptions.

Although descriptive poems in *Illuminations* on the whole obey literary conventions and follow a taxonomic organisation, the intrusion of incongruous elements creates an element of surprise, which often reduces the readability of the texts. What the reader observes in descriptive poems of *Illuminations* is an exaggeration of the process of discontinuity, which characterises many descriptive texts. Hamon analyses the “propension du descriptif à se confondre avec une esthétique générale du discontinu, de l'émiettement synecdotique, de la mise en cadastre du réel et des lexiques, du «discret», du cloisonnement et du fragmentaire, du rangement dans des espaces [...] et des cadres disjoints” [Hamon 1991, p. 272]. The logic of “cloisonnement” and “rangement” are found in *Illuminations*, where they are imitated and undermined. Rimbaud's work is extremely significant in the context of the 19th century, when description as a genre was at its peak both in poetry — especially since Chateaubriand's definition of “poésie descriptive” (in *Génie du Christianisme*, Livre IV, ch. I and III) — and in prose

(with realism and naturalism)⁵. Rimbaud contributes to the disappearance of the referential illusion of descriptive texts, which was mainly inspired by painting [cf. Barthes 1970, pp. 61-62].

If we now turn to narrative structures, it may be possible to establish whether they are affected by the same degree of markedness. The exact number of narrative texts is difficult to determine. Henry defines poems which are predominantly narrative as “visions parcourues de courants affectifs exprimés” [Henry 1990, p. 187]. About 34 texts of *Illuminations* would qualify, with two texts, “Veillées” and “Métropolitain”, being half-way between description and narration. This definition is not workable, however, as poems which are predominantly descriptive, such as “Mystique”, could be, according to Henry, classified as narrative. I prefer to view narrative as a perceived sequence of non-randomly connected events, which experience a “change of state” or “transformation” [Todorov]. Poems have to show a clear logical pattern of evolution or transformation to conform to this definition of narration.

Coquet [1973] analyses narrative texts in *Illuminations* and attempts to identify such a pattern or discourse grammar. His method is based on Greimas's general actant model (“schéma actantiel”), which determines character roles in narrative⁶. Coquet starts with “Départ” and shows an inversion of textual functions. He divides the poem into two sequences following a clear system of opposition both morphological and lexical. He then demonstrates that at a semantic level the poem shows an opposition between static and dynamic, whilst at an ideological level the poem is built on an opposition between old world (with negative connotations) and new world (with positive connotations). According to Coquet, “Départ” is built on a dual organisation, with on the one hand the rejected old world representing failure and on the other hand the desired new world representing victory. The demonstration is convincing and Coquet applies this semiotic method to many other texts of *Illuminations* in order to show how Rimbaud uses a discourse grammar based on the combination of two categories “failure”/

⁵This work starts early in Rimbaud's production with a parody of ekphrasis (description based on an artistic representation, which is real or imagined), “L'éclatante victoire de Sarrebrück” [cf. Hamon 1991, pp. 120-1]

⁶ Greimas [in *Sémantique structurale*, Larousse, 1966], working along the lines of Propp, proposed that, as general categories underlying all narratives, there were six roles, or “actants”, comprising three interrelated pairs (giver/receiver; subject/object; helper/opponent). These roles interact on three axes: communication axis (“modalité du savoir”), “desire” axis (“modalité du pouvoir”) and participation axis (“modalité du vouloir”).

“victory” (“échec”/ “victoire”). Coquet's results show that out of the 19 poems using both categories, at least 12 close on the theme of failure as opposed to only 7 texts closing on the theme of victory.

However, the entire analysis is based on the critic's own value judgements. Bivort, who also analyses the notions of ‘victory’ and ‘failure’ in *Illuminations*, is more cautious and warns that Coquet sometimes jumps to conclusions in that he interprets the expression of negative feelings, such as sadness, as a sign of failure [cf. Bivort 1990a, p. 208]. The initial negative impression must sometimes be reassessed in its socio-cultural context. Texts which close on the notions of ‘death’ or ‘destruction’, for example (such as “Nocturne vulgaire”), may in fact present a positive image. The problem lies in the value attached to these notions⁷. Furthermore, the precondition for acknowledging failure in the poems is the prior expression of a desire. Bivort proposes to assess failure strictly on the criteria of “unfulfilled desire”:

Il nous faut alors rechercher l'expression d'un désir inassouvi plutôt qu'un texte qui «finit mal». [1990a, p. 208]

Hence, a poem such as “Nocturne vulgaire” does not close on failure as “l'anéantissement ne répond pas à un désir de vivre préalable” (idem). Failure can only be expressed after ‘a wish to have’ or ‘a wish to be’ has been expressed. The desire can be expressed by an imperative form (18 imperative forms in *Illuminations*). However, as Bivort points out, the imperative forms in *Illuminations* tend to be less impetuous than in the rest of Rimbaud's work. Most of them have lost their exclamation marks, as in “Après le Déluge”:

“— Sourds, étang, — Ecume, roule sur le pont, et par dessus les bois;
— draps noirs et orgues, — éclairs et tonnerre, — montez et roulez; —
Eaux et tristesses, montez et relevez les Déluges.”

Desire can also be expressed by a subjunctive, which is rare in *Illuminations*, although one example can be found in “Enfance” V:

“Qu'on me loue enfin ce tombeau, [...] — très loin sous terre.”

An infinitive form can also be used to express a wish as in “Jeunesse” III:

⁷ The value attached to notions such as ‘death’ and ‘destruction’ is not very clear-cut. In Rimbaud's poetry, as in Baudelaire's, death can be viewed positively. For Baudelaire, death is the key to the “Inconnue” (cf. *Les Fleurs du Mal* “La Mort”, CIII “Le voyage”).

In *Saison en Enfer*, Rimbaud evokes death as an object of love:

Comme je deviens vieille fille, à manquer du courage d'aimer la mort!
 (“Mauvais sang”)

“— Un chœur, pour calmer l'impuissance et l'absence!”

The inventory of various means of expressing desire reveals that Rimbaud rarely uses modal forms with a personal construction such as “je dois”. In fact, Rimbaud uses very few indicative forms, preferring forms “[qui] ne rend[ent] pas compte d'une actualité définie” [Bivort 1990a, p. 212].

The conclusion of Bivort's study is that:

Très peu de textes ont véritablement une conclusion exprimant la faillite, car il faut que la volition soit marquée par un indicatif pour que le désir exprimé réclame une résolution immédiate dans l'espace du poème. [idem, p. 213]

Bivort's analysis leads the reader to consider carefully the use of systems, such as Greimas' actant model, for the analysis and interpretation of narrative poems in *Illuminations*. It also sheds light on the fact that patterns of evolution and transformation may not always be as readily perceivable as the reader may expect them to be. The refusal of narrative poems to adapt to traditional views of what a story/fable should be is especially clear in the poem “Conte”. The title “Conte” evokes a certain type of narration (the fairy tale), to which are attached certain constraints and expectations as to its structure and content [cf. Propp's analysis: *The Morphology of the Folktale*, 1928/ tran. 1968]. Some of the constraints imposed by the genre are respected in “Conte” (unusual characters and unusual events). Some are not, however, with discrepancies affecting mainly structural, semiotic and logical aspects. The abstract vocabulary (“la vérité, l'heure du désir et de la satisfaction essentiels”), the absence of clear character and narrator roles, the blurred value system (what is positive, what is negative? is there a happy ending?), the numerous contradictions and the apparently non-evolutionary structure affect the readability and the stability of the text [see Hamon 1979].

The fact that models [Propp-, Barthes- or Greimas-based] fail to explain some texts of *Illuminations* — such as “Conte” — does not undermine the possible existence of narrative frames. These frames are perceivable in poems that are built on a “past”/“present” opposition. At least three texts present such a structure, namely: “Jeunesse” II, “Sonnet”; “Guerre” and “Vies”II.

“Jeunesse” II, “Sonnet”:

“Homme de constitution ordinaire [...]
[...] Mais à présent [...]

[...]; — la force et le droit réfléchissent la
danse et la voix à présent seulement appréciées.”

“Guerre”:

“Enfant, certains ciels ont affiné mon optique: [...]
[...] — A présent [...]
— Je songe à une Guerre, de droit ou de force, de logique bien
imprévue. C'est aussi simple qu'une phrase musicale.”

“Vies” II:

“Je suis un inventeur [...]
[...]. A présent, gentilhomme [...]
[...]— j'attends de devenir
un très méchant fou. ”

The parallel is created firstly by the final sequences, which are all preceded by a dash. The opening sequences of “Jeunesse” II and “Guerre” show an apparently similar structure. However, the word “Homme” in “Jeunesse” II is the equivalent of a Latin vocative, whilst “Enfant”, in “Guerre”, qualifies a period of time and can be replaced by the periphrasis “étant enfant” (“alors que j'étais enfant”). The confusion is possible as both words belong to the same lexical thread and they are both emphasised, in that “Homme” is underlined and “Enfant” is isolated from the rest of the sentence by a comma.

As for their content, the texts “Vies” II and “Guerre” both possess a dual structure. In the first sentence in “Vies” II and the first two sentences in “Guerre”, a “je” recalls an ideal past and evokes a particular type of knowledge, namely musical and scientific knowledge in “Vies” II (“Je suis un inventeur [...]; un musicien même qui ai trouvé quelque chose comme la clef de l'amour”) and visual and affective knowledge in “Guerre” (“Enfant, certains ciels ont affiné mon optique: tous les caractères nuancèrent ma physionomie”). The second half of both texts, introduced by the strong temporal link “A présent”, develops the theme of a revolution. In “Vies” II, there is a final call for madness, which is a revolution of the brain: “j'attends de devenir un bien méchant fou”. In “Guerre”, the prospect of a war (a political revolution) is evoked: “— Je songe à une Guerre, de droit ou de force, de logique bien imprévue”. Both revolutions follow a non-rational logic, in that madness is characterised by a logic of the irrational, whilst the war is here “de logique bien imprévue”. These irrational longings (war and madness) are opposed to the rational, acquired knowledge of the first parts of the texts. From the rational knowledge of the first part to the irrational

longing of the second part, the narrator in both cases is exiled in “la campagne aigre au ciel sobre”, where he experiences scepticism. Conversely, the narrator in “Guerre” is exiled in the world:

“l'inflexion des moments et l'infini des mathématiques me chassent par ce monde où je subis tous les succès civils.”

In all three texts, the general structure is identical, with a first part in which past tenses dominate, a brutal interruption of the present marking the beginning of the second part and a conclusion with present tenses, where in two cases the narrator evokes a prophetic or desired future (“j'attends de devenir”, “je songe à”). The dichotomy between past and present is frequent in Rimbaud's poetry and especially in *Une Saison en Enfer*. Likewise in our three texts, the childhood of an individual or of humanity (“souvenir de l'enfance mendicante”, “— O journées enfantes! —”, “Enfant, certains ciels ont affiné mon optique”) clashes with the present.

The three texts also share a common lexis or develop common lexical threads, such as the arts (“musicien”, “artistes”, “danse”, “ciels”, “phrase musicale”); force (“forcées”, “force” x2); and knowledge and discoveries (“apprentissage”, “inventeur”, “savoir”).

Shifts of genre, competing discourses and tones

A genre is a conventional form of text which, in the case of literature, can be objective (narration, description, portrait), subjective (lyricism, prayer, confession, panegyric), or ideal (aphorism, philosophy, poetry). However, texts are not always clear-cut and a particular predominant genre (macro-genre) may employ other subsidiary genres (micro-genres). The most common shift of genre is the inclusion of narrative features in descriptive texts. In “Villes” (“L'acropole officielle ...”), the narrator's comment starts the description:

“*Impossible d'exprimer* le jour mat produit par le ciel immuablement gris, l'éclat impérial des bâtisses [...]”

This example illustrates a common rhetorical device called “prétérition” or “paraleipsis”, which consists in denying the possibility of describing something whilst giving a precise account of it. Paraleipsis expresses a kind of false “modesty”, in that the narrator points his inability to describe an object. It marks the intrusion of a metatextual comment and may signify a switch of tone, as analysed by Hamon:

La prétérition est donc une sorte de métalangage, d'acte critique et autodescriptif intégré par l'écrivain dans son texte, qui prend souvent une couleur ironique et parodique. [1991, p. 140]

The limits of the narrator's capacities are emphasised throughout the poem, which includes comments on certain baffling aspects of the town described:

“j'ai cru pouvoir juger de la profondeur de la ville.”
“Pour l'étranger de notre temps la reconnaissance est impossible.”

These intrusions within a predominantly descriptive text serve to signal the description as a subjective construct.

Shifting genres and discourses are obvious in many *Illuminations*. The shift is often perceived from the title to the text, as with “Sonnet”, which is not a sonnet, “Marine”, which is a description partly of the sea, partly of the land, or “Démocratie” which adopts a totalitarian discourse. Within some of the texts the shift is constant. A poem like “Solde” employs many sub-genres and discourses including the auctioneer's (“A vendre”), the political (“l'éveil fraternel”, “l'anarchie pour les masses”) and the poetic (“Elan insensé et infini aux splendeurs invisibles”). Similarly “Génie”, a predominantly subjective text, includes both religious and panegyric elements as well as elements which could be found in scientific (“mesure parfaite”, “machine aimée”) or socio-political (“les migrations plus énormes que les anciennes invasions”) discourses. The effect created is one of surprise. The reader at first cannot make sense of these unstable texts switching from one type and from one semantic thread to another.

The instability of some of the poems is increased by a tonal shift, which can affect whole sequences, as in the following example:

“Se peut-il qu'Elle me fasse pardonner [...], — qu'une fin aisée répare [...], — qu'un jour de succès nous endorme [...]

(O palmes! diamant! — Amour, force! — plus haut que toutes joies et gloires! — de toutes façons, partout, — Démon, dieu — Jeunesse de cet être-ci; moi!)

Que des accidents de féerie scientifique et des mouvements de fraternité sociale soient [...].”

[“Angoisse”]

The shift is emphasised by the interruption of a regular grammatical construction [“Se peut-il que”]. The tone of the title and most of the text is anxious, with a series of questions left unanswered. The prevailing anxiety

contrasts greatly, however, with the exclamatory sequence in brackets. A similar effect is created in “Nocturne vulgaire”:

“Ici, va-t-on siffler pour l'orage, et les Sodomes, — et les Solymes, — et les bêtes féroces et les armées, — **(Postillons et bêtes de songe reprendront-ils sous les plus suffocantes futaies, pour m'enfoncer jusqu'aux yeux dans la source de soie).** — Et nous envoyer, fouettés à travers les eaux clapotantes et les boissons répandues, — rouler sur l'aboi des dogues...” [“Nocturne vulgaire”]

The construction “va-t-on” + infinitive (siffler/ nous envoyer/ rouler — or nous envoyer rouler?) is interrupted by a segment in brackets. In both cases it is as if two diametrically opposed voices express themselves within the same text. A verbal struggle is taking place between pleasant and unpleasant impressions. The end of the two poems is quite similar. Both poems close on the idea of pain and violence and share words (“eaux”, “rouler”):

“nous envoyer, fouettés à travers les eaux clapotantes et les boissons répandues, — rouler sur l'aboi des dogues” [“Nocturne vulgaire”]

“Rouler aux blessures, par l'air lassant et la mer; aux supplices, par le silence des eaux et de l'air meurtriers; aux tortures qui rient, dans leur silence atrocement houleux.” [“Angoisse”]

The sudden transition to a joyful tone creates a contrast which emphasises the overall and closing violence of the text⁸.

Shifts of genre, discourse and tone, create a strongly marked text. They require constant agility and flexibility in both the reader and the translator.

Implications for translation

The analysis of the features of markedness carried out in this chapter is not exhaustive. Furthermore, the meaning of these features is only assessed in general terms, mainly because many aspects that determine the style of the texts have not yet been discussed. The complete textual analyses undertaken in part III, will bring a greater understanding of the

⁸ Violence is not necessarily negative in “Nocturne vulgaire”. The term “maison de berger” is a poetic topoi (originally borrowed from Vigny), associated with pastoral and romantic themes. This “vulgar” and stupid (“niaiserie”) vehicle is abandoned (“dételage”), putting an end to “le transport poétique” (literal and metaphoric). The tone immediately switches to violence. The possibility that the vehicle, its postilion and its team of “bêtes de songe” could resume their journey (“reprendront-ils”) is rejected and violence resumes.

phenomenon of markedness in context. However, from the sample of features examined above, it is already possible to perceive how the poems consistently tend to challenge readers' expectations. The language is renewed in ways which force us to reassess our knowledge of linguistic reality.

For the purpose of translation, the issue of markedness is important as it is attached to the notion of 'informativity' [Hatim & Mason 1997, p. 113]. The term 'informativity' refers to the degree of stylistic unexpectedness displayed by an utterance and the theory behind it derives from the rhetorical principle of 'deviation'. Informativity must be accounted for in the translation. However, the translation of motivated unexpected features can be complex, particularly as both their function and effect have to be conveyed. While features such as coreference may be dealt with relatively easily, other features may be problematic. The use of unusual link-words, for example, is a serious hurdle for the translator, especially when this device is semantically significant. This kind of feature cannot be dismissed simply as unfortunate phraseology. Similarly, the English language aversion to excessive nominalization may be a problem when source texts abound in nominal constructions. The translator may choose to stretch this threshold of linguistic tolerance in order to signify the markedness of the ST. However, more often than not a compromise must be struck between ST rhetorical meaning and TL rhetorical conventions. The translator may then choose to signal certain features as being unconventional. The kind of translation procedures adopted when translating the marked style of *Illuminations* can only be based on a continuous process of compensation. A translation strategy must also take into account other features of the texts. I propose to analyse such features in the following section in order to show how, alongside many departures from established norms, new standards of cohesion are also set, bringing the texts a level of stability.

I. iii Stability

The notions of 'equivalence' and 'parallels'

Jakobson was one of the first linguists to attempt a definition of "poeticity". He investigated the correlation between form and meaning in poetic language, basing his work on prosodic rules, which apply to both oral and written discourses. These rules can be divided into two groups. The first set of rules concerns the grammatical, syntactic and logical organisation of a text and determines what is known as 'syntagmatic axis'. This axis dictates the linear disposition or combination of the lexical units of the code. The second set of rules concerns connotative and suggestive aspects of a text and is known as the 'paradigmatic axis', governing the selection of equivalent units of a given code. Hence, prosodic rules determine expectations regarding both the form and the content of a text. In the case of poetry, we have an added principle which affects the syntagmatic and paradigmatic aspects, a principle analysed by Jakobson as a principle of 'equivalence':

The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination. [Jakobson 1960, p. 358]

Jakobson's obsession with symmetry and binary oppositions is best expressed in the principle of "equivalence", which according to the linguist characterises the poetic function. Jakobson's theory is undermined, however, by the fact that non-poetic texts have been shown to be built on the same principle of 'equivalence' (cf. discourse analysis practised by Harris [1963]). Ruwet, working along the lines established by Jakobson, shows that it is possible to "sauvegarder le principe de Jakobson, en lui donnant un contenu plus spécifique" [1975, p. 308].

According to Ruwet, a poetic text, like any other form of discourse, must obey specific semantico-pragmatic rules of language. However, a poem also obeys other principles of structure. These principles are relationships of equivalence (or parallels) between different places in a given text. They may (as in the case of verses) or may not follow precise rules. Such parallels affect the *superficial* level of a poem. Ruwet's reformulating of Jakobson's principle of equivalence reads as follows:

[L]es textes poétiques se caractérisent par l'établissement, codifié ou non, de rapports d'équivalence entre différents points de la séquence du discours, rapports qui sont définis aux niveaux de représentation "superficiels" de la séquence — où, par superficiel, il faut entendre phonétique, phonologique, morphologique, et/ ou syntaxique superficiel. [1975, p. 316, his italics]

Furthermore, the different patterns of equivalence in a text may interact to produce a particular, meaningful effect. They may also overrule the semantico-pragmatic norms of language in the case of what Ruwet calls 'deviations' (also commonly known as 'poetic licence'), a practice which differentiates poems from other types of texts.

It is easy to see the possible relevance of such a theory to *Illuminations*, where many rules of language are challenged. The lack of cohesion or coherence of certain poems could be compensated by parallels at a superficial level. Bivort's analysis is based on Ruwet's assumption that texts which display a high level of creativity, often undermining logico-semantic rules, are built according to such parallels:

[L]a rareté, parfois l'absence totale, des anaphores, le relâchement des connexions [sic] logiques dues aux termes implicatifs et aux présuppositions, ainsi que toutes sortes d'ellipses, sont compensés par des parallélismes de diverses sortes, qui souvent créent entre les éléments qu'ils rapprochent des rapports "symboliques" d'équivalence, d'opposition ou de contiguïté [...]. [Ruwet 1975, p. 323]

I do not aim to present an exhaustive account of parallels in *Illuminations*, but rather to give some indication of the relative cohesion they create. Through perceived recurrence of particular occurrences, the texts build an independent and meaningful system, and this may determine important translation strategies. The exact function of parallels within a given text must be analysed by the translator before these parallels can be transposed in the TT. The suggestive or iconic aspects of parallels (especially rhythmic and phonic ones) call for an interpretation grounded in context.

Lexical and syntagmatic parallels

Illuminations presents many examples of texts characterised by anaphora. The repetition of identical segments at the beginning of sentences or paragraphs creates an effect of cohesion. This type of repetition and its effects will be more fully analysed in the third and final chapter of this dissertation (cf. "Enfance" III, "Enfance" IV, "Dévotion", "Démocratie", "Solde"). I would here like to concentrate on more complex types of lexical parallels. These features often work by suggestion and resemblance. "Barbare" presents an example of such parallels, as pointed out by Bivort [1988, p. 41], where the segment "Les brasiers pleuvant aux rafales de givre" is reproduced in the text in the segment "Les feux à la pluie du vent de diamants". Three types of repetition are activated: lexical

("pleuvant"/ "pluie"), metonymic ("brasiers">"feux" and "rafales">"vent") and metaphoric ("givre"/ "diamants"). The segments "Les feux à la pluie" and "Les brasiers pleuvant" both combine the idea of water mixed with fire, which is repeated later in "Les brasier et les écumes". Bivort underlines a similar process of lexical repetition in "Mystique" [idem p. 41-42]:

"les herbages d'acier et d'émeraude"/"Des prés de flammes"

Another example of such a device can be found in the short poem, beginning "Une matinée couverte [...]", where segments suggesting a similar idea of gloom are repeated:

"Une matinée couverte, en Juillet"/ "Un goût de cendres vole dans l'air"/ "Une ordeur de bois suant dans l'âtre"/ "la bruine des canaux par les champs"

Bivort, following Guyaux's analysis [1985, p. 236], also points out how the title is often repeated in the text; as in "Being Beauteous" translated as "Etre de Beauté". There are other lexical units in the poem which refer directly to the title. They complete the identification of the entity and emphasise the textual cohesion:

"Being Beauteous"/ "Etre de Beauté"/ "corps adoré"/ "la Vision"/ "mère de beauté"/ "elle" (x2)

The process is similar in "Scènes", as shown by Bivort, where we find what he calls "une expolition, ou itération du signifié" [Bivort 1988, p. 42]:

"Scènes"/ "Des boulevards de trétaux"/ "Un long pier en bois"/ "un ponton de maçonnerie"/ "dix cloisons dressées de la galerie aux feux"

In my view, the organisation of "Scènes" is very much determined by the first sentence of the text ("L'ancienne Comédie poursuit ses accords et divise ses Idylles"), which is built around two antithetical verbs, namely: "poursuit" and "divise". The poem follows a logic of continuity and division. If we look closely at the various "isotopies" in the text, we clearly see, from "Des boulevards de trétaux" to the end of the text, a dual organisation, determining two universes following a pattern of alternating paragraphs. The text can be divided as follows to show its organisational logic:

Scènes

(1) L'ancienne Comédie poursuit ses accords et divise ses Idylles:

(2) Des boulevards de tréteaux.

(4) Dans des corridors de gaze noire suivant le pas des promeneurs aux lanternes et aux feuilles.

(6) Des scènes lyriques accompagnées de flûte et de tambour s'inclinent dans des réduits ménagés sous les plafonds, autour des salons de clubs modernes ou des salles de l'Orient ancien.

(8) L'opéra-comique se divise sur une scène à l'arête d'intersection de dix cloisons dressées de la galerie aux feux.

(3) Un long pier en bois d'un bout à l'autre d'un champ rocailleux où la foule barbare évolue sous les arbres dépouillés.

(5) Des oiseaux des mystères s'abattent sur un ponton de maçonnerie mû par l'archipel couvert des embarcations des spectateurs.

(7) La féerie manœuvre au sommet d'un amphithéâtre couronné par les taillis, – Ou s'agite et module pour les Béotiens, dans l'ombre des futaies mouvantes sur l'arête des cultures.

The text is clearly separated into eight sentences which allows for the division. The two groups thus determined follow a clear pattern of semantic repetitions. If we look firstly at the group on the left side, we see a repetition of words belonging to the semantic thread of the 'bourgeois' universe (with connotations of comfort and wealth):

“boulevards”, “corridors”, “réduits ménagés”, “salons de clubs modernes”, “salles de l'Orient ancien”, “galerie”

This universe is characterised by an ordered and manufactured artificiality implied by words such as “tréteaux”, “gaze noire”, “lanternes”, (decorative) “feuilles”, “ménagés”, “cloisons”.

Conversely, the group of sentences on the right side is centred around the description of an external universe, in a natural setting:

“long pier en bois”, “champ rocailleux”, “arbres dépouillés”, “oiseaux”, “ponton de maçonnerie”, “archipel”, “amphithéâtre”, “taillis”, “futaies”

We notice in this list the importance of the sea (“pier”, “ponton”, “archipel” + “embarcations”). Also striking in this group of sentences is the image of a universe stripped of all ornamentation:

“champ rocailleux”, “arbres dépouillés” (contrasting with the “feuilles” in 4), “taillis”, “ombre des futaies”

This barren universe comes alive through the abundance of (sometimes violent) movement:

“évolue”, “s'abattent”, “mû”, “manœuvre”, “s'agite et module”, “mouvantes”

The characters in this group are different from their civilised counterparts: “promeneurs aux lanternes et aux feuilles” and “Béotiens” (reminiscent of “les blêmes figures lunaires, feuilles, seins” of “Nocturne vulgaire”). They are “foules barbares”¹ and “spectateurs” in their “embarcations” forming a multicultural fleet.

The dual structure of the poem is revealed via the semantic threads and results in the construction of two conflicting universes: the first universe, fake and camp, enacting the “scènes lyriques” of a ridiculous “opéra comique”, whilst the second universe creates a magical/mystical show of “mystères” and “féerie”. This vivid and colourful display does not need a “scène”, as it spreads to the sky transforming nature into a vast, antique “amphithéâtre”. Conversely, the bourgeois theatre is constricted and “s'inclin[e] dans des réduits ménagés sous les plafonds”. The two conflictual universes of “l'ancienne Comédie” never meet as the division is maintained to the end [cf. the parallel (1)“divise”/ (8) “se divise”]. However, the show created by “les spectateurs”/ “la foule barbare” is the most striking and it casts a shadow on “la magie bourgeoise” (cf. “Soir historique”).

“Scènes” is not the only text of *Illuminations* which follows this dual structure. Guyaux [1991a, pp. 175-8] has shown how “Marine” also alternates two universes (the sea and the land) and how the alternating pattern is revealed through a series of chiasmus. Henry also evokes the “architecture de compénétration” of “Marine” [1994, p. 124] and draws a parallel with “Barbare”. According to Henry, “Barbare” is entirely built on a dual structure, which is very similar to the one I have analysed in “Scènes”:

Tous les versets pairs se trouvent bien entre eux, ainsi rassemblés, et tous les versets impairs (de même nombre!) font de même. Et l'on pourrait même traiter ces deux séries de versets comme deux poèmes indépendants! [1994, p. 124]

Henry analyses the different thematic threads developed by the two series and shows how the poem is organised like a “composition musicale en profondeur, dans son architecture même, fondée sur un déroulement en alternance” [idem]. The title (“bar/bare”) itself embodies this principle of parallel.

Phonic and rhythmic parallels

¹ For a detailed analysis of the word “barbare” see Steinmetz [1993 pp. 65-6], who reveals the positive connotations of the term. The word “barbare” evokes a colourful and exotic nature as opposed to the bourgeois civilised world.

Assonance and alliteration often occur throughout the texts to create distinctive patterns. These networks of sounds are used in poetry sometimes to achieve a purely aesthetic effect, sometimes to suggest possible relationships of meaning. In *Illuminations*, phonic repetitions can create a meaningful iconic effect. Bivort analyses this feature and suggests that:

Comme la récurrence de formes grammaticales, les parallélismes phoniques tendent à associer et à motiver au niveau du sens les lexèmes et syntagmes au sein desquels ils sont inscrits; plus que d'“harmonie imitative”, — concept qui réduit la réduplication phonique à l'identification du procédé avec un des référents du texte (ou d'un jeu gratuit de sonorités lorsqu'on ne retrouve pas la correspondance)—, on considérera ici les assonances, allitérations et leurs dérivés comme des figures a priori significatives dans l'économie générale d'un texte. [Bivort 1988, p. 43]

Bivort analyses an extract from “Villes” (“Ce sont des villes...”) and shows how the poem's homogeneity is created by carefully elaborated phonic structure affecting particular sequences of the text. He reveals in the sequence “Les vieux cratères [...] la lumière des cimes” an intricate pattern which can be schematised as follows:

↓palmiers de	↑pendus	[p], [d]
↓cuivre	↑les canaux	[k]
↓rugissent	↑sonnent sur	[s], [Ry]/ [yR]
↓mélodieusement	↑amoureuses	[m], [øz]
↓dans les feux	↑des fêtes	[d], [e], [f]

Other sound structures based on parallels are analysed by Bivort, who looks at two particular poems, namely “Veillées” III and “Fleurs”. In “Fleurs”, Bivort points out the phonetic echoes between substantives and adjectives. The parallel is especially obvious in the following pairs:

gradin	>	d'or	[d]
gazes	>	grises	[g] [z]
velours	>	verts	[v] [R]
les disques	>	de cristal	[d] [i] [s] [k] [l]
dôme	>	d'émeraude	[d] [m]
dieu	>	yeux bleus	[jø]

He demonstrates how in “Veillées”, as one word triggers another (“vague”> “mer”), one sound leads to another:

la mer	>	Amélie	[lamɛ] - [amel]
tapis	>	tapisseries	[tapi]
tapisseries	>	taillis (de dentelle)	[ta] [i]

taillis de dentelle	}	teinte d'émeraude	[t] [d]
		tourterelles	[t] [t] [ɛ]
tapis de la veillée	>	tourterelles de la veillée	[t] [dɔlaveje]

The combination of words creates a chain of sounds, which gradually unwinds. The distinctive use of vowels or consonants in an onomatopoeic or symbolic way for expressive purposes is not unusual. It forms part of the music of poetry which for many people identifies the genre. However, in Rimbaud's case the purpose of such associations of sounds is not purely aesthetic, it is meaningful:

Si les parallélismes phoniques sont monnaie courante dans le langage poétique, il faut alors distinguer leur emploi chez Rimbaud: outre leur fonction esthétique orale et la tentative de motivation des signifiants, ils sont un des moyens légitimes de création, par association, de paradigmes neufs [...]. [Bivort 1988, p. 45]

The intricate sound effects created by the segment "**Sa solitude** est la **mécanique érotique**, **sa lassitude**, la **dynamique amoureuse**" in "H" is not only pleasurable and musical, it allows the reader to retrieve the word "sollicitude" (as in "Solde" "insensibles" is built from "insensé" and "invisibles": "Elan **insensé** et infini aux splendeurs **invisibles**, aux délices **insensibles**").

Phonic repetitions are usually allied with rhythmic repetitions, and that is when they are most revealing. Many critics have commented on the rhythm of *Illuminations*. They have especially emphasised the profusion of binary and ternary groups. The most complete study of this particular rhythmic feature of *Illuminations* has been produced by Wirth Fusco [1990, pp. 53-78] in an analysis which also introduces some elements of interpretation. Binary and ternary groups appear in nearly all the texts of the collection. However, Wirth Fusco especially points out the poem "Génie", which according to her, "offers an effective illustration of the ideal structure and evocative possibilities of the binary rhythmic configurations" [1990, p. 63]. The critic considers the musical quality of the text and associates the particularly strong recurrence of binary groups with the affective meaning of the text:

When re-evaluating the phenomenon of the coincidence of the rhythmic configuration with affectivity, then, we are compelled to conclude that the poem's rhythmical animation [...] cannot help but contribute to the protracted fervor and enthusiasm emanating from the poem. [Wirth Fusco 1990, p. 68]

However, by considering the rhythmic feature solely as an expression of affectivity, Wirth Fusco does not entirely grasp its semantic importance. A closer analysis of repetitive rhythm in “Génie”, combined with other types of repetition (lexical, phonic, etc.) will reveal the motives underlying its use.

The opening and closing sequences of the text are mutually related. The relation is established, first of all, through a common rhythm. The opening sequence has a binary structure, marked by a perfect syntactic repetition:

“Il est l'affection et [...]”, “Il est l'affection et [...]”.

This binary structure, dividing the paragraph into two equal sections, is characterised by a strong binary rhythm of pairs with the conjunction “et”. The pairs are distributed evenly between the two sections, with four pairs in the first section and four pairs in the second section. One also notices the striking regularity of the alternation between plural (pl.) and singular (sg.) words within the two sections of the opening sequence. The pattern is as follows:

first section: “Il est l'affection et [...]”

pair 1	pair 2	pair 3	pair 4
sg. nouns	sg. nouns+adj.	pl. nouns	sg. noun+pl. noun+pl. adj. sg. noun+sg. adj.+pl. noun

second section: “Il est l'affection et [...]”

pair 1	pair 2	pair 3	pair 4
sg. nouns	sg. nouns	pl. nouns	sg. noun+sg. noun pl. noun+sg. noun

The closing sequence repeats the binary and quaternary rhythm:

“Il nous a connu tous et nous a tous aimés” (**one pair**)/ “de cap en cap”, “du pôle tumultueux au château”, “de la foule à la plage”, “de regards en regards” (**four pairs to define the place**)/ “forces et sentiments las” (**one pair**)/ “le héler et le voir (1st element/ subpair), et le renvoyer” (**2nd element separated by the comma = one pair**)/ “et sous les marées et au haut des déserts de neige” (**this pair, together with the subpair adding up to four pairs**).

The closing sequence ends with a group of four nouns: a pair of plural nouns “ses vues, ses souffles” and a pair of singular nouns “son corps”, “son jour”.

The second feature that binds the opening and closing sequences is the use of chiasmus.² The first paragraph offers three examples of the device, namely, a phonic chiasmus, a semantic chiasmus and a syntactic chiasmus. In the first section of the opening sequence the reader notices the repetition of the nasal sounds [ã] and [ɔ̃] in pairs at the end of the words:

“affections”, “boissons”, “stations”

“présent”, “aliments”, “fuyants”

The series shows the following pattern:

“Il est [...] [ɔ̃] - [ã]/ [...] lui qui a [...] [ɔ̃] - [ã]/ lui qui est [ã] - [ɔ̃]”, and opens and closes with the sound [ø]. The first and the second phonic pairs of the series form a chiasmus:

[ɔ̃]		[ã]
	\ /	
	/ \	
[ã]		[ɔ̃]

The second line presents a double chiasmus, both phonic and semantic:

l'hiver		[y] - [m] - [ø] écumeux
	\ /	
	/ \	
rumeur [y] - [m] - [œ]		de l'été

The third chiasmus affects one of the pairs listed above, “Le charme des lieux fuyants et le délice surhumain des stations”, thus schematised:

noun	(des)	noun + adj.
	\ /	
	/ \	
noun + adj.	(des)	noun

A grammatical and a semantic chiasmus is to be found in the closing sequence:

connus		tous
	\ /	
	/ \	
tous		aimés

²See also Margaret Davies' analysis of the rhythm of “Génie” [1980].

This is undoubtedly the result of a calculated device, which aims at grouping the [u] sounds and underlining the important relationship between “connaître” and “aimer”. The form of the segment also creates a semantic ambiguity, since in “il nous a connus tous”, “tous” could qualify “nous”, and the segment would then read:

“Ils nous a connus [lorsque nous étions] tous” (lorsque nous ne faisons qu'un).

The second chiasmus of the closing sequence results from the organisation of the pairs from “de cap [...]” to “regards”. The words chosen belong either to the category of human /HUM/ (“château”, “foule”, “regard”), or to the category of nature /NAT/ (“cap”, “pôle”, “plage”) and follow this pattern:

cap /NAT/ pôle /NAT/	=	cap /NAT/ château /HUM/
	\ /	
	/ \	
foule /HUM/ regards /HUM/	=	plage /NAT/ regards /HUM/

The similarities of sound in the words “**pôle**” and “**plage**” highlight the chiasmus, whilst the repetition of the sounds [a] [a], [p] and [g] throughout the series underlines its cohesion.

One can consider that the poem as a whole copies the genre of “oraison”. The term “oraison” goes beyond religious prayers to include any “texte personnel [et de réflexion ou de méditation], au moyen duquel le lecteur se met en présence d'un être transcendant ou immanent (plus puissant, plus profond)” [Dupriez 1984, p. 361]. “Génie”, with its repetition of “O”, its particular iterative style and its use of imperatives, copies the style of a prayer.

The “génie” addressed in this prayer is ambiguous. This ambiguity derives from the polysemy of the word “génie”. *Littré* gives a long definition of the substantive “génie”. The “Génie” addressed by Rimbaud could hence be an **entity**, whether human or superhuman, an **aptitude** or the **prevalent feeling**, opinions or taste of a particular nation, period in history etc., or even all three together. The ambiguity is retained throughout the poem and is left for us to decipher.

However, the idea of **prevalent feeling** evokes for any French reader Chateaubriand's book on the spirit of an epoch: *Le Génie du Christianisme*. “Génie” could stem, at least in part, from the spirit of eulogy of

the book. However, as is often the case with Rimbaud, the poet has here grouped under the same parodic process a dual purpose, both literary and ideological. "Génie" offers an interesting degree of complexity, in that the strong dual structure itself betrays the parodic content. The text combines chiasmus with oxymorons. The poem is punctuated by antithetical pairs of words, such as:

"présent"/ "avenir"; "hiver"/ "été"; "lieux"/ "fuyants"; "amour"/ "rages";
"tempête"/ "extase"; "éternité"/ "fatales"; "épouvante"/ "jouissance";
"aimer"/ "être aimé"; "orgueil"/ "charités"; "ancien"/ "nouveau"

The semantic clashes are emphasised by the style of the poem, characterised by ellipses and appositions, with many commas and colons.

The rhetorical features of chiasmus, pairings, oxymorons converge towards the idea of parallels and mirror images. A mirror characteristically reflects a negative image of the source image. The theme of the mirror and of negative image will help to decipher part of the significance of "Génie".

In Rimbaud's poetry Christianity is often linked to the advent of science with a negative value:

[...] depuis cette déclaration de la science, le christianisme, l'homme *se joue*, se prouve les évidences, se gonfle du plaisir de répéter ces preuves, et ne vit que comme cela! ["L'impossible", *Une Saison en Enfer*]

"Génie" also draws a parallel between the traditional themes of "génie du christianisme" and "génie de la science/ du progrès". The ideas of science and positivist progress are expressed through the words:

"purifier", "mesure", "santé", "machine", "raison", "facultés", "fécondité de l'esprit"

In the poem, the realm of science and physical forces is the object of a fervent cult, similar to the old one, even using the same wording. However, the cult described in "Génie" is addressed to a universe ruled by violence. In this complex universe, "les charités" ["filles de Jésus Christ" in Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme*] have foundered with the old world. "L'Ange des tempêtes, l'Ange du temps, l'Ange de la mort [...] des Génies désagréables aux muses"³ seem to have taken over. All is chaos and destruction, and to a greater extent than in the ancient order. The ancient order was characterised by "superstitions", "agenouillages", "peines", "invasions", "souffrances sonores et mouvantes". The new world

³ *Génie du Christianisme*, Deuxième partie, Livre IV, Ch. 8

brings new values of “santé”, “facultés”, hygiene (“purifi[er]”), but also greater evil with “rages”, “ennuis”, “épouvante”, “brisement de la grâce”, “violence nouvelle”, “égoïs[m]e”, “orgueil”, “malheurs nouveaux”. In “Génie”, two types of “Génie”, two epochs, are recognisable: “le génie du christianisme” and its mirror image “le génie de la science/ du progrès”. The latter now rules, but it retains aspects of the old religion and still inspires the same human fervour.

However, the word “génie” can also denote an **entity** and the poem “Génie”, which is composed in the form of a prayer-eulogy addressed to an anonymous “il”, is mainly based on this meaning of the substantive. In this context, the form and the content of the poem “Génie” evoke other religious and eulogising poems. The most obvious intertextual parallel is with Banville's poem “Le Triomphe du Génie”, from the collection *Sang de la coupe*. The entity addressed in Banville's poem-prayer-eulogy is Victor Hugo. The emphatic tone of the last verse especially is very similar to the tone of “Génie” and one notices in this short extract the importance of binary and ternary rhythms:

O Génie! ô Génie! œuvre de Dieu lui-même,
 Orgueil sacré de l'homme, espoir des cœurs voilés,
 Ton éclat magnifique, éternel et suprême,
 Ne s'éteindra pas plus que les cieux étoilés.
 [Banville, *Poésies 1841-1854*, Paris: Poulet-Malassis et de Broise, 1857, p. 373]

Rimbaud's poem has an ironic tinge which cannot be ignored. Hugo in Banville's poem is “Orgueil sacré de l'homme”, whilst in “Génie” the prayer is humorously dedicated to an entity which embodies “orgueil” itself (“l'orgueil plus bienveillant que les charités perdues”)⁴. Because of Rimbaud's tendency to attack Parnassian poetry and Hugo's ambiguous political and poetical positions⁵, it is easy to see why Rimbaud may have used Banville's dithyramb as a basis for “Génie”. Rimbaud's “Génie” parodies Banville's pompous poem and kills two birds with one stone. Rimbaud essentially attacks the supposed literary talent (see *Littré Génie*

⁴ Traditionally ‘pride’ is supposed to be radically opposed to the virtues of Christianity. Chateaubriand assigns to the sin of “pride” the highest rank in the anti-Christian human sins:

Dans les circonstances particulières de la vie, l'orgueil a des effets encore plus funestes. Il porte ses attentats jusqu'à Dieu. [in *Génie du Christianisme*, Première partie, Livre II, Ch. I: “Vice et Vertus selon la Religion”]

(L'orgueil a) la première place dans l'échelle des dégradations humaines.
 [idem Ch. III: “De l'Espérance et de la Charité”]

⁵ For Parnasse see “Ce qu'on dit au poète à propos de fleurs”, but also our analysis of “Mouvement” in Ch. III. For Hugo see “L'homme juste” analysed by Reboul [1985] and our analysis of the series “Enfance” in the final chapter of this thesis.

“Talent inné, disposition naturelle à certaines choses [...] aptitude particulière dépassant la mesure commune soit dans les lettres et les beaux-arts”) of both Banville and Hugo. But above all, he undermines the emphatic status of “Génie” newly acquired by Victor Hugo (see *Littré Génie* “Terme d'iconologie. Figures allégoriques d'enfants ou d'hommes ailés, qui selon les attributs qu'on leur donne, représentent les vertus, les arts, les passions, etc.”).

With “Génie”, we see that the pairing of words may convey much more than musicality or affectivity. In this case, the repetition of the rhythmic feature determines (and is determined) by the intended message of the text. It is both form and content. This is not to say that the excessive repetition of binary or ternary groupings of words systematically implies a subversive content. However, if one considers the relation of this type of rhythmic devices with meaning (as Wirth Fusco does), it is important to consider fully the context (text and intertext) of the text to gain a complete understanding of their intended meaning.

Through the use of lexical, phrasal, phonic and rhythmic parallels and repetitions, the poetry of *Illuminations* conforms to poetic rules of equivalence as defined by Jakobson and Ruwet. Parallels create coherence, even if they may be sometimes very complex or quite often intertwined. Hence, the poems in *Illuminations* combine two conflicting principles. Markedness or the ability to challenge the reader's expectations is associated with a cohesive factor, which has long been recognised as a creative principle of poetry, namely “parallels”.

Implications for translation

The conclusion of Ruwet's “Parallélismes et déviations en poésie” deals with the problem of translating poetry. According to Ruwet, the main challenge is to retain in translation both the logico-semantic organisation and the parallels recognised in the ST. Ruwet insists on the creativity required to convey both aspects, and particularly parallels:

[T]oute bonne traduction est aussi, par nécessité, invention, création, dans la mesure où elle sera amenée à chercher, dans la langue d'arrivée, dont les matériaux peuvent être très différents de ceux de la langue de départ, des équivalents syntaxiques, morphologiques, phoniques, aux matériaux qui dans l'original ont servi à construire les parallélismes. [1975, p. 346]

Meaningful parallels, when they contribute to the readability of a poem, have to be prioritized.

When considering *Illuminations*, however, the question arises as to whether prose poems can be assessed on the same basis as verse poetry, as Ruwet's article does not differentiate between these two types of poetry. When considering rhythm, for example, the reader/ translator runs the risk of assigning to the poems a system of description which is usually devoted to plotting the metrical norms in traditional verse poetry. This is already common practice for commentators. Fongaro⁶, for example, studies syllable number and accentuation to reveal regular rhythmic forms (especially alexandrines) in many poems. According to Fongaro, *Illuminations* is literally woven with regular verses. Following Dominicy's analysis of "Les Ponts" [1982], Fongaro suggests that the following *Illuminations* close on an alexandrine:

"Les Ponts", "Conte", "Parade" "A une Raison", "Villes" ("L'acropole..."), "Soir historique", "Guerre", "Jeunesse"/ "Jeunesse" IV and "Vagabonds".

The problem with Fongaro's analysis is the way he chooses to count, or rather omit, some syllables. He sometimes chooses to retain or to ignore a dieresis, syneresis or mute e. For example, he retains the mute es in "Parade" but chooses to omit them in "Villes" ("L'acropole...") ["chass(ent) leurs chroniqu(es) sous la lumièr(e) qu'on a créée"]. The way Fongaro breaks down the texts to demonstrate the existence of what he calls "pseudo-alexandrins" is completely arbitrary. The units thus determined do not correspond to the typography of the texts.

However, the fact that Fongaro misuses prosodic notions to study rhythm in *Illuminations* does not disqualify all attempt to account for rhythmic features. These can still be analysed following alternative metrical models. Introducing prosodic notions such as syllable number, tempo, pause and intonation can be fruitful in order to identify patterns within the poems. Once these patterns have been recognised, they must, whenever possible, be conveyed by the translator or else compensated. This must not, however, result in a translation which considerably undermines the visual aspect of the prose poems. Schmidt in his translation of Rimbaud's works has chosen to convey most particularly the syntactic arrangement and the rhythm of *Illuminations*. The translator, concentrating on factors such as line length and syntactic parallels, compares Rimbaud's poetry with modern American Poetry, then transforms the texts and forces them to resemble the irregular

⁶See Fongaro 1983 and 1993.

lines of modern free verse. Although Schmidt justifies his approach from both a stylistic and a cultural point of view (“[the prose poem] has had little currency until recently in English” 1975, p. xvii), his re-working of Rimbaud's free form into verse lines destroys the very nature of the texts. It prevents the reader from differentiating between Rimbaud's last verse poems and his prose poems and between the *Illuminations* “Marine” and “Mouvement” and the other poems of *Illuminations*. Such a radical transformation is not what I have in mind for my own translation of the texts. The translation of parallels will be carried out within the constraints imposed by the genre of the ST.

Chapter two

Selecting a representative corpus of poems and translations

II. i Grouping the texts for translation?

Common features of Rimbaud's style in *Illuminations* have been established and these can help the decision process when translating the poems. However, this approach is not sufficient, mainly because of its extremely general aspect. I wish to complete the analysis of the particular features listed in Chapter I and show that the translation process is also determined by the way the poems were originally grouped or can be grouped. This approach is radically opposed to the prevalent theory of *Illuminations*, which views the poems as independent entities.

After considering the currently dominant theory of 'fragment', I wish to justify a different approach for the translation of *Illuminations*. I will then turn to the selection of a representative corpus of translations and analyse the translation procedures which have determined prior translations of the collection. Finally, I will introduce in more detail the groups of poems selected.

The theory of 'fragment'

Linked to the theory of obscurity is the assumption that *Illuminations* does not possess an overall cohesive structure. Guyaux in *Poétique du fragment* [1985a] defends the theory that, in *Illuminations*, texts gradually detach from each other, each bearing an autonomous and individual structure, each converging towards the creation of a new literary form, which he defines by using the term "fragment". He bases his demonstration mainly on evidence gathered from an analysis of Rimbaud's handwriting in the manuscript of *Illuminations* and on a few letters or books from which he quotes. He defines two stages in the writing of *Illuminations*. The first stage is represented by poems grouped under a common title and the second stage is represented by a series of scattered poems. According to Guyaux, the existence of two heterogeneous groups demonstrates that Rimbaud changed his mind half way through the writing of *Illuminations* and decided to write individual and unrelated texts, thus undermining the very concept of a 'collection'. However, Guyaux's demonstration contains some drawbacks. His main evidence is based on the analysis of the manuscript version and

shows a change in Rimbaud's writing from the first to the second stage. Guyaux's conclusions do not stand up to scrutiny as he tends to forget that the hand-written pages appear to be fair copies, probably for publication, and are probably not contemporary with the actual creation of the poems. The texts may indeed have all been produced at the same time, but were maybe copied at different stages. Furthermore, any evidence of Rimbaud's intention based on the manuscript is unreliable. A close look at the story of its transmission suffices to show that there is no guarantee that the manuscript is actually complete. It seems that in February 1875 in Stuttgart, the manuscript was in Verlaine's hands, as the poet was supposed to pass it on to Nouveau. This information appears in a letter to Delahaye dated 1st May 1875¹:

Si je tiens à avoir des détails sur Nouveau, voilà pourquoi: Rimbaud m'ayant prié d'envoyer, pour être imprimés, des poèmes en prose siens, que j'avais, à ce même Nouveau, alors à Bruxelles (je parle d'il y a deux mois), j'ai envoyé (2frs, 75 de port!!!) illico[...]

The term "poèmes en prose" is vague and it is not clear what it here refers to. However, the context of the letter allows us to conclude that Verlaine is referring to *Illuminations*. Verlaine met Nouveau in London in May 1875. However, Verlaine was only able to obtain the manuscript in 1877, when Nouveau visited the poet in Arras. It is thought that Verlaine then decided to include, in *Illuminations*, verses dating from 1872.

In September 1877, Verlaine went to Paris in a vain attempt to win his wife back. He gave the precious texts to the chansonnier Sivry (his brother-in-law) probably with a view to producing a musical adaptation. Verlaine then moved to Rethel (Ardennes) to replace Delahaye who had resigned from his teaching position. In August 1878, Verlaine visited Paris for the Exposition Universelle and asked Sivry for the manuscript. Verlaine read the poems and gave them back to Sivry for him to write a score. In October 1878, Verlaine wanted the manuscript back together with some other belongings. He asked M. Leleu, a colleague at the school where he was teaching, to collect *Illuminations* on his trip to Paris and advised Sivry of this visit:

M. Leleu frappera à ton huis ès 10 heures du matin, jeudi de cette semaine. [...] Pourrais-tu, si tu en as fini avec les *Illuminations* (coloured plates, etc...) lui confier le paquet dûment enveloppé à mes adresses?

¹The extracts quoted here are reproduced from P. Petitfils: "Les manuscrits de Rimbaud: leur découverte, leur publication", *Etudes rimbaldiennes 2 (Avant siècle 10)*, Paris: Minard, 1970, pp. 41-144.

The manuscript would not be returned to Verlaine. His wife, Mathilde Mauté, who was afraid of seeing her son's reputation tarnished by the publication of Rimbaud's writings, had persuaded Sivry to keep hold of it. In 1886, Mathilde was granted a divorce and was able to marry and change her name. But she still sought revenge and forbade Sivry ever to return the manuscript to Verlaine.

Sivry eventually decided to have the poems published and asked the poet Louis Le Cardonnel to give the manuscript to Gustave Kahn, the well-known publisher. Later, Le Cardonnel remembered receiving some "cahiers de papier à lettre d'égale grandeur, bleu et blanc; l'écriture féminine était élégante, un peu féminine, avec ça et là des ratures". However, at the time, Le Cardonnel was unable to contact Kahn. The manuscript was then passed on to Louis Fièrè, who gave it to Félix Fénéon, a close collaborator of Gustave Kahn. Fénéon also remembered the manuscript, but his testimony is very different from Le Cardonnel's:

Le manuscrit m'avait été remis sous les espèces d'une liasse de feuilles de papier tout rayé qu'on voit aux cahiers d'école, feuilles volantes et sans pagination — un jeu de cartes — sinon pourquoi me serais-je avisé de les classer dans un espèce d'ordre, comme je me rappelle avoir fait? Pas de ratures.

There is a lapse of eight years between the time when the manuscript was given to Sivry and the publication of the poems in the magazine *La Vogue*. During that time the manuscript may have been tampered with. What else could account for Le Cardonnel's and Fénéon's radically different testimonies?

It must be also pointed out that the manuscript encountered other difficulties following its transmission to Fénéon. The poems were initially supposed to be published in six different issues of the magazine *La Vogue*. However, the publication was suddenly interrupted. The explanation is to be found in a letter dated 3 February 1888 from Verlaine to Léon Vanier (his publisher):

Voyez-vous Kahn? Il a toujours à moi mes livres reliés, le manuscrit des *Illuminations* (qu'on se serait partagé, m'a dit Darzens!!!)

The manuscript had simply been divided between Kahn and other mysterious collectors and a section of it had not been published. Some poems were recovered in 1895² by Vanier. In an anonymous note printed in

² Namely: "Génie", "Soldé", "Fairy", "Guerre" and "Jeunesse".

Mercure de France on 16 April 1914, the truth on the whereabouts of the missing section of the manuscript emerged:

Le reste du manuscrit des *Illuminations*, qui provenait de la même personne [Sivry] fut fourni plus tard à Vanier pour son édition des *Poésies Complètes* par MM. Leo d'Orfer et Charles Grolleau.

There is, however, still no certainty about the manuscript and the number of texts initially planned for the collection. Some texts may have been sold to other collectors or may have been lost³. The long series of events leading up to the publication of *Illuminations*, including the intervention of many intermediaries, tends to undermine and even disqualify any conclusion drawn from the manuscript.

The other set of evidence quoted by Guyaux to back his theory of 'fragment' is taken from different and often unrelated letters and writings. He quotes, for example, Verlaine in his article on "Les poètes Maudits" (1883), which refers to *Illuminations* using the word "fragments":

[...] en prose encore une série de superbes fragments, les *Illuminations* à tout jamais perdus nous le craignons bien.

Guyaux also quotes from a letter from Rimbaud to Delahaye, dated "mai 1873", the following extract:

Verlaine doit t'avoir proposé un rendez-vous [sic] au Dimanche 18, à Boulion. Moi je ne puis y aller. Si tu y vas, il te chargera probablement de quelques fraguements [sic] en prose de moi ou de lui, à me retourner.

Verlaine reflects upon this meeting in a letter written from Boulion (18 May 1873) and also uses the word "fragment":

Tu auras bientôt tes fragments.

However, Guyaux does not comment on the fact that Verlaine often uses the word "fragment" to qualify various poetic productions. In "Les Poètes Maudits", for example, his description of Corbière's verses is very similar to his presentation of *Illuminations*:

Ecoutez ou plutôt voyez, voyez ou plutôt écoutez (car comment exprimer ses sensations avec ce monstre-là?) ces fragments, pris au hasard de son *Pardon de Sainte Anne*.

³The possible loss of some of the texts cannot be excluded, especially if it is borne in mind that the manuscript version of the poems "Dévotion" and "Démocratie" were lost following their publication in *La Vogue* (21 June 1886).

Obviously “fragment” here means ‘extract’, otherwise it would have to be accepted that Corbière's poetry follows the same aesthetics as *Illuminations*. If Verlaine's use of the word “fragment” is not always semantically clear, it still remains true that Rimbaud may have used this term to convey the nature of his poetry. However, if one takes a closer look at the extract from the 1873 letter, two important details emerge, namely the strange spelling “fraguemant” and the qualification “*de moi ou de lui*”.

Referring to the spelling “fraguemant”, Guyaux explains that it is “calquée sur craquement [et] semble faire ressortir par mimétisme l'idée de cassure interne qu'implique le sens du mot” [Guyaux 1985a]. This hypothesis, although interesting, ignores the context of the letter. In the same letter, other words are subjected to a transformation. We find “mother” for “mère”, “Charlestown” for “Charleville” and more interestingly “Nôress” for “Nord-Est”, “contemplotate” for “contemplation” and finally “m'absorculant” for “m'absorbant”. The deliberate misspelling of words and the creation of neologisms is undoubtedly humorous. In the light of this highly ironic context, Guyaux's interpretation of the word “fraguemant” needs to be reassessed. I believe that the humorous spelling of “fragment” is probably directed at Verlaine's pronunciation of the word or simply at his over-use of the word. In the letter, Rimbaud makes it clear that he cannot possibly put up with any more mediocrity and his irritation may well be directed at Verlaine's literary tics.

Secondly, when Rimbaud writes of these “quelques fraguemants en prose de moi ou de lui”, he may be referring to 1) his own writing, 2) Verlaine's writing, or 3) to a common work either aborted or lost. The two poets used to exchange literary ideas. Delahaye even recalls a common project which would have been entitled *Histoire magnifique avec Photographies du temps passé* (In Delahaye, *Verlaine*, Paris: Messein, 1919). However, if the sentence refers to Rimbaud's work, there is no guarantee that it is *Illuminations*. The rest of the letter evokes these “petites histoires en prose”, which were to become a “Livre païen ou Livre nègre”, that is to say the first draft of *Saison en Enfer*. Rimbaud could therefore be referring to a series of extracts from that project.

Besides being an anachronism⁴, the theory of ‘fragment’ contradicts Rimbaud's prior work. In fact, it would be quite easy to invert Guyaux's

⁴ The idea of “fragment” — in the modern sense of the term — is a 20th century concept. Furthermore, if one considers, in parallel with *Illuminations*, the structure of other contemporary collections of poems, it quickly becomes clear that their structure was not always very rigid. Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal*, for example, is divided into sub-sections.

reasoning and to say that fragmentation is the first creative stage, whilst the most structured texts were the ultimate target of the collection. His theory presents *Illuminations* as a non-cohesive collection, in which the poet apparently developed his technique of fragmentation whilst writing the texts. Guyaux presupposes that Rimbaud changed his mind half way through the writing and still put texts together that were not supposed to be linked. The very concept of “littérature fragmentée” reflects the critic's bias more than the nature of *Illuminations*. The apparent lack of cohesion has more to do with the original aspect of the manuscript than with its content. Fénéon describes the manuscript of *Illuminations* as “un jeu de cartes”. The metaphor is apt to describe *Illuminations*, as cards can be mixed and matched randomly. However, — and to complete the metaphor — within the game for which they were intended, the cards — some of which may have been lost — must have been meant to follow a clear organisation.

The grouping of texts according to titles and themes

Grouping the texts for translation makes sense in that many of the texts were originally grouped and were meant to be read as clusters. However, it must be clear that I am only grouping the texts for analysis and translation. If a new translation of the poems were to be published, this processing technique could be explained to readers. The poems would still follow the order assigned by the first edition (in the magazine *La Vogue*), even though it is not certain that this order was the one intended by Rimbaud. I do not wish to impose an artificial order on *Illuminations*, but rather I propose to show that the poems can be organised according to common themes or writing techniques, which determine constraints for the translator.

The grouping of the poems for translation must follow the constraints imposed by the texts themselves. The groups either follow pre-determined units or are formed according to possible thematic links. Some poems in *Illuminations* were originally grouped under a common title, namely: “Enfance” I, II, III, IV, V; “Jeunesse” I, II, III, IV; “Vies” I, II, III; “Veillées” I, II, III; “Villes” I, II. These groups of texts constitute the first category of poems for

However, Baudelaire often replaces titles with numbers or repeats the same title. The section entitled “Spleen et Idéal”, for example, includes nine numbered poems and four successive poems with the same title “Spleen”. Rimbaud reflects this tendency. In *Vers Nouveaux*, some texts have no titles. In *Saison en Enfer*, “Mauvais sang” and “Délires” II are designed as a succession of poems typologically separated. In *Illuminations*, many poems are likewise grouped under a common title, whilst others are simply separated on a same page (cf. “Phrases”).

translation. However, were these poems put together haphazardly or because they are in some way related?

The fact that the poems are all systematically numbered tends to suggest that their order had been carefully thought out. A study of the semantic threads developed in these poems and of their evolution confirms this hypothesis. Such a study on the pre-determined group "Enfance" is carried out at the end of this chapter.

Another possible grouping can be made according to a common theme. This is already common practice for *Illuminations*. For example, Brunel *In Rimbaud: projets et réalisations* (1983), proposes such a classification, which follows his own interpretative approach. The poems are ordered following a progression and are analysed as illustrating the themes of drugs, destruction, failure, autobiography, etc.. Such a grouping is, however, largely subjective. For the purpose of this study, the texts will be grouped according to their titles. The most obvious example of such a grouping is represented by the poems whose titles are semantically linked to the theme of the city ("Ville", "Villes" I & II), which I have chosen to translate⁵. Guyaux himself perceives the thematic links between some of the poems, but he does not consider them in detail as they would undermine the fragment theory developed in his thesis. The translator will have to take into account the possible semantic or syntactic links between some of the poems, as these links will determine the interpretation and translation of the texts and confirm the validity of such a grouping for the translation process. Such a study will be carried out at the end of this chapter on the poems of the city. However, all the poems cannot be allocated to a certain thematic category and I do not claim that such a forced grouping would be fruitful for the analysis and translation of *Illuminations*.

Grouping some of the texts according to genre

Another grouping of the poems in *Illuminations* is possible from the criterion of genre. A grouping following this criterion could result in some of the texts already classified according to a common title or a common theme being subsequently incorporated in the groups thus determined. This double inclusion is not damaging to the translation process, as it results in more accurate constraints for the translator. For the purpose of this study, I will

⁵Another possibility of grouping is, for example, texts whose titles belong to the semantic field of "arts and entertainment" ("Conte", "Fairy", "Scènes", "Parade", "Antique", "Fête d'hiver", "Nocturne vulgaire", "Marine").

retain only the genre of parody⁶. My choice is determined by the assumption that Rimbaud pursues in *Illuminations* a type of critical and humorous writing which started early in his literary career. Critics such as Murphy [see notably 1990 and 1991] or Wetzel [notably 1992] have amply documented the 'subversive' [Murphy 1990] aspect of his early poetry. On Rimbaud's *Poésies*, the critics conclude that Rimbaud often alludes to heterogeneous intertextual sources. They show that the analysis of the intertextual features of the text often reveals the underlying meaning of the poems [Murphy 1990, p. 22]. Murphy emphasises the recurrence of polemical themes in apparently neutral poems:

En un mot, les vers que nous étudierons le [Rimbaud] montrent préoccupé avant tout par la politique, la sexualité et le rôle de l'écrivain et de l'écriture face à ces dimensions capitales de la condition humaine.
[1990, p. 23]

More importantly, Wetzel and Murphy suggest that Rimbaud's 'subversive' writing is greatly influenced by caricaturists. Rimbaud admires Faustin, Le Petit and of course Gill whom he met in March 1871 [Murphy 1985, p. 52]. Wetzel and Murphy demonstrate that Rimbaud uses a particular technique of writing inherited from satirists. Rimbaud excels in the art of puns and the double-entendre. His technique is based on homonyms and polysemy, as pointed out by Wetzel:

Or Rimbaud, loin d'être gêné par l'homonymie, en exploite systématiquement les vertus poétiques. [Wetzel 1992, p. 65]

If *Illuminations* also contains parodies or satires, this must be recognised by the translator. However, before approaching the problem of identifying such poems, it is necessary to explain how parody works. A definition of parody may be found in Gradus:

Parodie: imitation consciente et volontaire, soit du fond, soit de la forme, dans une attention moqueuse ou simplement comique. [Dupriez 1984, p. 331]

Different aspects emerge from this definition. The first aspect concerns the intertextual source of parody defined as "imitation". The second aspect concerns the orientation of the parody which can affect the form and/ or the content of an intertext, hence can be rhetoric and/ or semantic. The definition also emphasises the importance of the author's intention with the adjectives

⁶It would be possible to consider other such groupings based on poems which are predominantly narrative or descriptive (as analysed in I, ii).

“consciente” and “volontaire”. And finally the notion of purpose emerges (intention of the genre). The effect of a parody should be derision (“moqueuse”) or laughter (“comique”). This rather simplified definition of the genre emphasises crucial notions, namely structure, texture, context (source, intention, register) and rhetorical purpose.

Literary parody is usually constructed from a previous text or a set of conventions representing the literary norm of an epoch. However, intertextuality in itself does not determine the genre of parody, or one would fail to differentiate parody from other types of attested intertextual constructions such as plagiarism. The intertextual inclusion in parody has a particular purpose. *Gradus* defines this purpose as being the creation of derision or laughter, thus emphasising mainly a negative aspect of parody. However, derision and humour do not characterise all parodies. Some literary productions have a more serious purpose. This is the main aspect of Hutcheon's analysis of parody [Hutcheon 1978 and 1981]. Hutcheon bases her approach on the etymology of the word parody. “Para” means “against”, hence the negative aspect of some parodies, creating a destructive comparison with another text. But “para” also means “along”, which conversely implies an idea of association with another text. Parody therefore can be negative (this is usually defined as satiric parody) or positive and formative. The critical process of parody either counters or reassesses the intertext. The reassessment of the intertext is what Hutcheon defines as ‘modern parody’ [1978, p. 470]. This type of parody implies both respect and critical distance, incorporating the intertext along with the new production and contrasting it (cf. along/ against). The critical and contrastive purpose of parody is usually signalled by the use of irony [Hutcheon 1978, p. 468]. Hutcheon also points out an important communicative aspect governing both the genre of parody and the trope of irony. They are both intentional and calculated to create an effect on the reader. However, if the intention is not perceived by the reader the text loses its effect:

Si, en revanche l'ironie (ou la parodie ou la satire) échappe au lecteur, celui-ci lira le texte tout simplement comme il lit n'importe quel autre. [Hutcheon 1981, p. 150]

This is the problem with *Illuminations*, where the texts appear more obscure than other literary texts and are often not perceived by the reader as being parodies or as using irony. This may derive from what Murphy [1988] calls ‘diachronic obscurity’, whereby the precise socio-textual or socio-cultural context of the poems has been lost (see my analysis above Ch. I, i). The

reader hence possesses insufficient knowledge to perceive the parody or ironic intention.

However, the failure to perceive parody or irony can also be due to the texts themselves. Irony is generally difficult to grasp in literary texts. Hutcheon explains that the more subtle irony is, the more complete are its effects. The 'synchronic obscurity' [Murphy 1988] or opaqueness of intention of *Illuminations* makes it even more difficult for the reader to recognise an ironic intention. Hutcheon introduces the notion of deviation as a possible clue to ironic intention in parody:

Il y a des normes (syntaxiques, sémantiques, diégétiques) à la fois analysables et établies dans le texte lui-même qui sont en état de fournir au lecteur (à partir de leurs transgressions) les signaux d'une évaluation ironique surtout quand ces transgressions sont répétées ou juxtaposées. [Hutcheon 1981, p. 153]

However, the deviation from literary conventions or norms is an important factor of creative and dynamic writing in general and poetry in particular [cf. Ruwet 1975]. *Illuminations*, as demonstrated in the first chapter of this thesis, is teeming with such deviations, making it difficult for the reader to distinguish between what is irony and what is purely creative writing. Although the perception of deviation may be useful in recognising an ironic intention, the reader needs clearer signs which confirm his intuition of irony.

At this stage, I wish to introduce the notion of 'signes d'assise'. 'Signes d'assise' act as pointers, which can reveal a *shift of register*, which will in turn reveal an ironic content. These crucial pointers signal the particular situation of a textual unit within the syntagmatic or paradigmatic context:

Signes d'assise: (Néol.) Signes qui transcrivent le ton particulier à une citation, une réplique, un titre, etc. et indiquent donc la situation (l'assise) du segment par rapport à son contexte syntagmatique ou au contexte réel évoqué. Dans le texte, ces signes s'ajoutent aux autres signes de ponctuation, ce qui montre qu'ils constituent une catégorie à part. [Dupriez 1984, p. 79].

These pointers betraying a shift in register can be typographical, consisting in a different type, size or place of letters. This first category is relatively rare in *Illuminations*. However, some words are underlined in a few texts, namely:

"Homme" in "Jeunesse" II; "Assassins" and "mon" (x2) in "Matinée d'ivresse"; "chère image" in "Ouvriers"; "luxe" in "Parade"; "relevés" in "Génie"; "alors" in "Dévotion", etc.

Although the shift thus signalled may not always have an ironic purpose, in some cases the humorous intent is clearly apparent. In "Génie", the

underlined word “relevés” in “les agenouillages anciens et les peines relevés à sa suite” reveals a deliberate play on words between “relever les agenouillages” and “relever les peines” (as in “lever une peine de prison”). It also entices the reader to reconsider the particular form “agenouillages”. The word “agenouillages” is a neologism. The suffix “age” implies that it is a pejorative term and it thus becomes doubly associated with the word “peine”. The gesture of humility or adoration becomes a sort of punishment ‘lifted’ by the “Génie”.

More interesting and more frequent is the use of signs such as inverted commas and dashes to signal the shift. The use of dashes is a recent phenomenon in French literature, as pointed out by Bivort in his article “Le tiret dans les *Illuminations*” [1992a, p. 2]. Dashes can be written marks of a dialogue or can signal “une rupture dans le discours” [idem, p. 2]. It is the latter type which particularly interests us. The two common forms of dashes are the single dash and the double dash or interpolated clause. The double dash can introduce an “épiphraise” defined in *Gradus* as “partie de phrase qui paraît ajoutée spécialement en vue d’indiquer les sentiments de l’auteur ou du personnage” [Dupriez, p. 194]. Interpolated clauses hence can mark the intrusion of a different tone, what Bivort calls “voix narrative supplémentaire” [1992a, p. 3]. They can also include a ‘modality’ (assertion, question, injunction). *Illuminations* includes some examples of interpolated clauses:

“— Il y a quelques jeunes, — **comment regarderaient-ils Chérubin?**— pourvus de voix effrayantes et de quelques ressources dangereuses.” [“Parade”]
“[...] le pauvre frère se levait, la bouche pourrie, les yeux arrachés, — **tel qu’il se rêvait!**— et me tirait dans la salle en hurlant [...]” [“Vagabonds”]
“[...] je vois des spectres nouveaux roulant à travers l’épaisse et éternelle fumée de charbon, — **notre ombre des bois, notre nuit d’été!** — des Erinnyes nouvelles [...]” [“Ville”]

Although interpolated clauses do not systematically reveal an ironic purpose, they often betray the presence of a narrator, who evaluates the content of the text. In “Ville”, however, the dashes certainly signal an ironic intention, as analysed by Murphy:

[L]’expression «notre ombre des bois, notre nuit d’été!» serait-elle plutôt, comme nous le pensons, une définition parodique et bucolique de la pollution qui vient d’être indiquée: «l’épaisse et éternelle fumée de charbon»? [Bivort & Murphy 1994, p. 152.]

Single dashes, in that they often create a syntactic gap with the rest of the text, can also introduce a critical or ironic dimension. In *Illuminations*, they are often found at the end of the poems, where they introduce a metatextual comment, as in “Vies” II “— j’attends de devenir un très méchant fou”; in “Guerre” “— Je songe à une Guerre, de droit ou de force, de logique bien imprévue”; in “Dévotion” “— Mais plus alors!”; and finally in “Nocturne Vulgaire”: “— Un souffle disperse les limites du foyer”. Single dashes sometimes contradict the content of the text as in “Conte” (“Toutes les femmes qui l’avaient connu furent assassinées. [...] — Les femmes réapparurent.”).

Inverted commas sometimes also play a metatextual role in some of the poem and may even signal an ironic intention as in “Génie”:

“«Arrière ces superstitions, ces anciens corps, ces ménages et ces âges. C’est cette époque-ci qui a sombré!»”.

In this segment, a recognisable Christian sentence is used to fulfil an ironic purpose. “Arrière” stems from “arrière Satan” (“vade retro Satanas”), for which the common English wording would be “Get thee behind me, Satan”. The traditional religious wording, as well as being copied, is illustrated. The backward movement implied in “Arrière”, which stems from the Latin “vade retro”, is mimicked through a rhythmic descent: “ces superstitions” (5), “ces anciens corps” (4), “ces ménages” (3), “ces âges” (2). The progressive retreat is especially striking in the echo of the last syllable of “ménages” in “âges”.

However, it must be said that inverted commas with the function of pointers (rather than quotation marks) usually affect words or expressions. Guyaux defines them as “guillemets modernes de différence et d’insistance” [1991b, p. 32]. Their meaning and value are always speculative in *Illuminations* and both are linked to the understanding of the context of the poems (socio-textual and socio-cultural). For example, in “Villes” (“L’acropole officielle...”), the inverted commas of “«Comté»” may indicate a borrowing from English, whilst in “Enfance” I, the inverted commas of “«cher corps»” and “«cher cœur»” may signal a borrowing from Baudelaire’s poem “Le Balcon” (see our analysis of “Enfance” I) with an ironic purpose.

Brackets, like dashes and inverted commas, can have a signalling function. They form a digressive rupture in the reading process. They may also create an “épiphraise”. Take for example this extract from “Barbare”:

“Le pavillon en viande saignante sur la soie des mers et des fleurs arctiques; (elles n'existent pas.)”

The unit thus enclosed contradicts the rest of the sentence. However, although there is again a process of differentiation involved, the real intention of the author is not clear. The ironic intention is more apparent in the case of “Enfance” II:

“— Le petit frère — (il est aux Indes!) là, devant le couchant, sur le pré d'œilletts.”

The segment in brackets is signalled as heterogeneous and doubly so if we consider the exclamation mark. Riffaterre has revealed a humorous effect with the creation of a play on words from the collocation “œilletts d'Inde” [see Riffaterre 1990b].

The “signes d'assise” often introduce an ironic metatextual⁷ intervention. The presence of irony may signal the text as being a parody. The limits of such an approach are, however, immediately apparent. How can the reader distinguish between pointers introducing irony and signs with a different function? If there is irony, how can the reader be sure that the poem belongs to the genre of parody? Finally if the texts are parodies, how can the reader recognise the type of parody involved (satiric parody, destructive parody, playful parody, creative parody, etc.)? The answer to these questions is that there is no possible predictability in the recognition of irony or parody. My approach, based on analysis of “signes d'assise” and metatextual interventions revealing the author's intention, relies entirely on a sound appraisal of the context of the poems. The opaqueness of intention of most of Rimbaud's prose poems requires both intuition and expertise. The poems in the last group of texts have been selected on the assumption that they are parodies, because of their aspect, copying accepted forms, genres or discourses (verse poetry, prayer, the discourse of the auctioneer, the discourse of the dictator) and the particular pointers they display (underlined words, inverted commas, etc.). The analysis of the structure, texture, context and purpose of these poems will, I hope, demonstrate that my assumption is well-founded.

⁷Cf. the use of the word ‘metatext’ by Popovic (“Aspects of Metatext”, *Canadian review of Comparative Literature*, Fall, 1976, pp. 225-235). The metatext is defined as a form of literature which functions as a critical evaluation of another/other form(s) of literature.

The translation of irony and parody is a major challenge for the translator. This is mainly because in the case of irony (often revealing a parody) the meaning is implied. The first challenge for the translator is at the level of recognition. The recognition of an ironic purpose in an utterance is possible from crucial pointers, as demonstrated above. These pointers will attract the translator's attention to a particular utterance. However, this is only the first aspect of the recognition process. The translator must then recognise the intertext that is being echoed. The intertextual process involved in irony has witnessed recent developments centred around the notion of "relevance". Sperber and Wilson have introduced the term "second-order interpretation" [1981] in order to explain the process of recognition which consists in perceiving that the speaker (or narrator) is echoing some utterance from which he is dissociating himself by implication. Irony can thus be explained in terms of echoic use:

By representing someone's utterance, or the opinions of a certain type of person, or popular wisdom, in a manifestly sceptical, amused, surprised, triumphant, approving or reproving way, the speaker can express her own attitude to the thought echoed, and the relevance of her utterance might depend largely on this expression of attitude. [Sperber and Wilson 1986, p. 239]

In Sperber and Wilson's definition, the notions that have underlined our study of irony and parody so far, namely intertextuality and the introduction of a shift in tone, betraying the speaker's or narrator's attitude, can be perceived. The translator's task is to recover both the intertext (echoed utterance...) and the attitudinal meaning (attitude expressed by the speaker). To simplify this, one may say that the entire process of recovery in fact boils down to a recognition of two contradictory attitudes: what is being echoed (intertextually) is an attitude held by someone other than the speaker, who in turn reveals his/ her attitude to the opinion echoed. A successful translation will depend on whether or not the translator is able to perceive what is implied by the ironic statement. The translator when perceiving all the implicatures⁸ is still faced with the problem of conveying the irony. S/he may have to resort to additional cues so that "the TT reader can successfully achieve second-degree interpretation with minimal extra-processing effort" [Hatim & Mason 1990, p. 100]. Restoring or adding pointers to the translated texts is justified so that the reader may perceive the

⁸The notion of "implicature" stems from the Gricean theory of communication. According to Grice, speakers cooperate with each other by observing what he calls "conversational maxims" (maxims affecting the quantity, the quality, the relevance and the manner of utterances). When one or several of these maxims are flouted, implicatures arise which allow meaning(s) to be recovered by the interlocutor [see Hatim 1997, p. 215].

point in the text where the narrator is referring to a source from which he is dissociating himself.

However, translating irony and parody does not only involve perceiving a source. To explain the functioning of texts, Snell-Hornby introduces the terms “dimension” and “perspective” [cf. Snell-Hornby 1988, p. 52]. “Dimension” “refers to the linguistic orientation realized in lexical items, stylistic devices and syntactic structures” whilst “perspective” is “the viewpoint of the speaker, narrator or reader in terms of culture, attitude, time and place” (idem). In parody, the perspective shifts. This shifting perspective can be compared with the process described in echoic use of utterances identified by Sperber and Wilson. However, “perspective” always work closely with “dimension” and the two are complementary. Poetic texts (with a greater use of creative metaphors) and parodies are characterised by their multidimensionality as well as their shift of perspective. That is to say that their internal aspects — lexical items, stylistic devices and syntactic structures— are closely interwoven with multiple levels of shifting focus. Therefore, the translator will aim at “identifying and recreating multiple relationships in both cultural association (perspective) and language (dimension)” [Snell-Hornby 1988, p. 53].

II, ii Why Fowlie, Bernard and Peschel?

The decision to include previous translations of *Illuminations* is motivated by a methodological principle. The study of translations serves two purposes: it may help the decision-making process on problematic points and, more importantly, it allows the reader to understand the complicated process which leads a translator (consciously or unconsciously) to distort an original. Hence, before evaluating a particular translation one must evaluate the translation procedures, when available. The translator always makes decisions concerning the features that are going to be prioritised in his TT. These decisions are accessible from the translator's strategy made explicit in introductions and other writings that may be attached to the TT. This evaluation of what the translator sets out to achieve can then be compared with what has actually been achieved. This procedure is outlined by Hatim and Mason:

Once again, we must place the act of translating within a social context. Since total re-creation of any language transaction is impossible, translators will always be subject to a conflict of interests as to what are their communicative priorities, a conflict which they resolve as best they can. It follows from this that, in assessing translations, the first thing to consider is the translator's own purpose, so that performance can be judged against objectives. [Hatim and Mason 1990, p. 15]

A better understanding of the objectives of the translations selected for the purpose of this study is the first step, before evaluating the translations. Some crucial questions can be asked (How do the translators view the ST? Why have they set out to translate the texts? What is their target audience? What are the translators aiming at?) which help us to understand the context of the translations produced. These questions also enable us to understand the extent of the manipulation of the original by the translators, who may be influenced by the poetics of their time and culture [cf. Lefevere 1992a].

The choice of three particular translators of Rimbaud is motivated solely by the impact these translators have had and still have on the reception of the ST in English-speaking countries. The translations selected are still available, in libraries and book shops, either in their original or reprinted versions. By far the most widely distributed in both Britain and the USA is Fowlie's translation of *Illuminations* originally written in the 1950s and reproduced in *Rimbaud, Complete works and Selected Letters* [1966], which I was still able to purchase in its reprinted version in 1994. The popular Penguin translation by Bernard [1962] was reprinted in 1986. As for

Peschel's more recent translation [1973], it has been selected for its reputation and status. Etiemble thinks that her rendering of *Une Saison en Enfer* and *Illuminations* is better by far than Fowlie's translation:

Et que mon cher Fowlie me pardonne: je crois que Mrs Peschel le bat d'une bonne tête quand il s'agit des *Illuminations*. [foreword for *Flux and reflux*, Peschel 1977, p. 11]

In 1980, Etiemble goes even further and claims that Peschel's translation is the best translation ever produced:

En anglais, [la traduction] d'Enid Rhodes Peschel est de loin la meilleure parce qu'elle colle à Rimbaud, au risque s'il le faut de gallicisme (“ennuis”, pour “ennuis” par exemple”). [Etiemble 1980, p. 79]

Etiemble's remarks are based mainly on his analysis of several translations of “Génie”. His laudatory comments on Peschel's translation skills guarantee a certain prestige in literary circles.

Fowlie

It is possible to understand Fowlie's approach to *Illuminations* from the introduction of his 1953 translation of the collection of poems (which does not greatly differ from the 1966 edition, still in print today). In this lengthy introduction, Fowlie expands on the theme of “angelism” already developed in an earlier book on Rimbaud [Fowlie 1946]. He claims that the prose poems of *Illuminations* are like no others, because they are not rhetorical productions, they are visions:

The poet-rhetorician stays with the objects he sees and describes, but the visionary moves beyond them and liberates himself from them. The “invention” which Rimbaud's poetry represents is of a mystical order. [1953, p. 140]

For Fowlie, Rimbaud is a “poet-angel” who has achieved with *Illuminations* a creation which is immanent and all encompassing, even supernatural:

Rimbaud tried to make of poetry a magic means of seizing and articulating what is ineffable, and therefore to make of the poet a kind of medium, as receptive to poetic speech as an angel's will is receptive to God's. [1953, p. 155]

In that sense Fowlie reflects the myth, which was prevalent at the time, of the mystical and visionary writer¹. For Fowlie *Illuminations* is a personal

¹The myth was already quite strong during the 30s and 40s in Britain and the USA, with the influence of Delmore Schwartz and Lionel Abel, two translators of Rimbaud, and of Morten Dauwen Zabel [cf. Etiemble 1954, pp. 400-1].

creation, in which the poet translates his own soul:

The soul of the poet is the protagonist of *Les Illuminations*. It is alternately enhanced by the appearances of the world and harassed by the contradiction of the world. [1953, p. 47]

The ambivalence of this alternately “enhanced” and “harassed” soul becomes the main subject of poems, which are built from Rimbaud's experience. Because Rimbaud in *Illuminations* is subjected to visions, his poems are not literary in nature, they are more like oracles. This position on the poems probably explains Fowlie's rejection of interpretation:

They [the poems] so closely approximate the ineffable that no exegesis is possible for them. [1953, p. 48]

Fowlie labels *Illuminations* “pure poetry” and claims that they possess “no obvious philosophical content or theme, no didactic intention, no moral lesson” [idem]. He goes even further on the nature of the texts, which he believes reflect only the internal chaos of the poet, claiming that all phrases are “generated by chance” [1953, p. 23].

Although he seems to think that Rimbaud “doesn't really know what he is doing” [1953, p. 20] and is only the medium of a greater power, Fowlie nevertheless feels the need to provide his own commentary on the texts. The man who repeatedly claims that “no exegesis of *Les Illuminations* is really possible” [1953, p. 50], indulges in a kind of mystico-bibliographico-magical reading, which is supposed to reveal a hidden meaning. Since Rimbaud did not really have the time to explain all his allusions, Fowlie rewrites his “cryptic utterances and visions” [p. 22]. Fowlie's approach is justified by the immaturity of Rimbaud's introverted adolescent mind:

No precautionary method can be adopted for studying a mind that reveals not the imprint of a learned logic, but the chaotic unsystematized experience of a primitive. To explain Rimbaud is futile. [idem, p. 26]

Fowlie quite clearly downgrades Rimbaud's literary production in favour of the poet's “soul”. The excesses brought about by a biographical approach of the texts are all too visible in Fowlie's work. He reads the text as an indicator of this soul and therefore continues the work begun by the first hagiographers of the poet. This continuity can be traced in Fowlie's adoption of Verlaine's term “coloured plates” [1953, p. 23] and in the presentation of *Illuminations* as an impressionistic artistic creation comparable with a painting:

[*Illuminations*] traduisent la richesse élastique d'un rythme survivant à l'initiale secousse et matent l'exaltante vigueur par des touches de pinceaux impalpables, incolores, mais sûres dans leur nouvelle vigueur découverte pendant un orage de clarté. [Fowlie 1941, p. 62]

Fowlie also interestingly introduces the notion of "fragmentariness" to explain the collection's discontinuity:

The prose poems are all illuminations of a secret catastrophe we can only guess at. Their universe is incoherent. Their fragmentariness, despite the frequent sumptuousness of their language, sets them off from our familiar world of appearances. Their element is discontinuity. Each poem is separated from all the rest, and strains to discover again its context. [1953, p. 21]

Padoxically Fowlie's task, in the last chapter of his introduction, is to find common themes in the texts in order to group them. After having claimed that no theme could be found [idem, p. 48], Fowlie rearranges the collection under artificial headings, namely "Childhood", "Life of the poet", "Nature", "City", "Mystic vision". The progression from "childhood" to "Mystic vision" is logical as, in Fowlie's view, *Illuminations* is written according to a narrative, which he sums up as follows:

Their [*Illuminations*] story is of a peasant boy waking up to find himself an angel. [1953, p. 51]

This artificial re-organisation of the texts according to a simplistic story reflects Fowlie's prejudices and his wish to sanctify the poet. Rimbaud's evolution from a peasant boy (which he never was, even if his maternal grand-parents were land-owning farmers) to an angel is not innocent. Rimbaud is hence pictured as finishing his literary career (Fowlie thinks that *Illuminations* comes after *Une Saison en Enfer*) in a state of absolute redemption. This insidious manipulation of the texts has the purpose of purifying the image of the poet, thus continuing the work of the first rewriters (see above ChI, i).

In 1953, Fowlie considers himself a literary critic rather than a translator. Fowlie even refers to his 1953 edition as "more purely literary criticism" (cf. "acknowledgments" in Fowlie 1965). This is probably why there is no clear picture of what the translator sets out to achieve apart from a "new Translation and the French Text of the Poems" [cf. title, Fowlie 1953]. In 1966, his discourse shifts abruptly. Fowlie tackles Rimbaud's complete works (including letters), from a non-critical point of view:

A new era in the understanding of Rimbaud has begun. Heretofore most critical-interpretative studies have exploited poetic data with the usually

unavowed intention of advancing a personal psychological theory. Rimbaud's poetic act has been countless times explained in accord with a given psychological or even religious conviction. These monographs are not without value, but they tend to irritate the new reader in search of enlightenment. [1966, p. 5]

The translator claims in fact that he belongs to the “new era”. The audience he desires for his new translation can discover the original text without his help. Even if traces of his past critical work are still apparent (e.g.: “Rimbaud's work is a cleavage between himself and a certain past that he faintly evokes”), his emphasis is on Rimbaud's language. This sudden apparent change in Fowlie's approach to Rimbaud has been triggered by Etiemble's work:

Etiemble's thesis of gigantic proportions, *Le Mythe de Rimbaud*, appearing in 1952-54, denounced the critical method so widely used in turning Rimbaud into this or that mythical figure: angel or demon, Catholic or surrealist, *voyant* or *voyou*. The castigating effect of Etiemble's investigation has been in part, responsible for initiating a new type of study in which the focus is on the problem of poetic expression. [idem, p. 5, Fowlie's emphasis]

Fowlie is particularly worried on his own account following the publication of Etiemble's thesis. Etiemble's impact on Fowlie is already apparent in 1965 when, in an appendix to his new book on Rimbaud, the translator presents Etiemble's work and the critical debate which ensued, insisting on Etiemble's particularly vitriolic style. Fowlie announces the beginning of a new era and attempts to salvage his respectability as literary critic². Fowlie particularly stresses Adamov's intervention in the literary debate, as it seems to back up his own position that Etiemble must be in fact be “put out by any attention given to Rimbaud” [1965, p. 266]. Fowlie is very cautious not to attack Etiemble directly, there are too many risks involved. Later in 1966, it

²Fowlie was one of Etiemble's prime targets. In a chapter dedicated to the reception of Rimbaud in Britain and the USA, Etiemble writes a lengthy account of Fowlie's work and, in pure Etiemble style, “ne mâche pas ses mots”:

De 1945 à 1950, et de toute sa finesse; M. Wallace Fowlie se fait le fidèle desservant du culte; tous les avatars lui sont bons, lui sont vrais: ange, enfant-prophète, Christophe Colomb et saint François d'Assise, je retrouve chez lui les constantes de la fable, la plupart des archétypes. En guise de prière les héros de ses romans meurent avec du Rimbaud à la bouche. Mais voici bientôt dans un article d'une démesurée violence lyrique, Henry Miller lui disputer son Dieu. Chez lui aussi se fondent ou se confondent toutes les images légendaires, et si contradictoires qu'elles puissent nous paraître.

Il me faut l'avouer: quelque abondamment qu'aient été commentés les livres de Jean-Marie Carré, et (je les cite dans la mesure où ils s'en prennent aux fables familiales) et ceux de Miss Enid Starkie, le mythe de Rimbaud, ces dernières années, ne fait que croître en virulence: de l'Université où il enseigne, M. Fowlie s'ingénue à le perpétuer; [...]. [Etiemble 1954, p. 400]

seems that Fowlie has resigned himself to renouncing some of his interpretations of Rimbaud.

However, as far as the actual translation of *Illuminations* is concerned nothing has changed. The translation is mostly identical to the 1953 version. If anything this supposedly new 1966 translation is even less reliable, in that Fowlie keeps the artificially adopted order of the poems — which completely derived from his unfounded critical analysis — without warning the readers that this is not a feature of the original. He still closes the collection on “Génie”, which according to him so aptly illustrates Rimbaud's personality and ultimate aim:

Génie is the fusion of an ideal being and a human being. This prose poem is both a climatic piece in Rimbaud's art and the apotheosis of a world. In it the poet is engineer showing us the plans of a future universe. [1966, p. 5]

Rimbaud has effectively been metamorphosed into a semi-god, a prophet in his time. Fowlie has taken the rewriting of *Illuminations* one step further in imposing an edition which matches his own vision of the poet.

Bernard

Bernard's translation of Rimbaud is based on a non-critical stance. He refuses to provide an interpretation of the texts for various reasons, the first being the risks involved in entering the critical debate on Rimbaud:

In an age when criticism has never had it so good, a poet with no claims to scholarship will think twice about writing an introduction to Rimbaud's works. [1962, p. xxiii]

The general climate of fear of interpretation after the publication of Etiemble's thesis pushes the translator to be extremely cautious. The second reason Bernard provides is that enough has already been said by eminent critics, mainly “by Dr Enid Starkie, or Jean-Marie Carré, or the editors of the Pléiade themselves [Rolland de Renéville and Jules Mouquet]” (idem). Bernard defends the right of the texts to speak for themselves:

[D]oes not every poem and prose poem and letter between these covers really exist in its own right? [idem]

And finally he evokes Rimbaud himself and his disdain for literary critics:

What Rimbaud himself would have thought of a conventional critical introduction may be guessed from part of the *Lettre du Voyant*: ‘Romanticism has never been properly judged. Who was there to judge it? The Critics!!’ [...] All I know, then, of Rimbaud's attitude to these matters supports me against taking the critical approach. [pp. xxiii- xxiv]

Bernard voices his refusal of literary criticism, to which he prefers “the bare facts of Rimbaud's life”. Bernard's prospective audience is mainly formed of those who do not want “to absorb a whole body of critical opinions along with the facts” [p. xxiv]. For those who may be more curious, Bernard suggests the reading of “Dr Starkie's remarkable book”, which does not come as a surprise since it is one of the only readings in English still recommended by Etiemble. Bernard sets out to provide for the reader a “plain prose translation of each poem” (cf. title). His ultimate aim is “a literal translation” which will convey “all literal meanings” (p. xxiv). However, because of the obscurity of some of the texts, this is not always possible. Hence, after denying the importance of criticism for the understanding of the original, Bernard advocates a mystical interpretation:

[S]ome of Rimbaud's poems are obscure even in the original, even to educated French people, unless they have some knowledge of alchemy and magic. [idem]

The translator bases his vision of the poet on a magical, religious quest for godliness:

[M]agic and alchemy were a substitute for religion. Better than that: they were the means of becoming god-like, and therefore “better than” religion. [p. xxv]

He borrows his interpretations from Starkie's commentaries (e.g.: “Phrases” and “Enfance”, although he is more cautious when it comes to her interpretation of the earlier poem “Voyelles”). Bernard also turns to Freud when interpretation is required:

In terms of Freudian psychology, Rimbaud's homosexual tendencies can, no doubt, be simply explained from his attitude towards his parents: fear of his mother (mixed with love); longing for his father (mixed with rejection). [p. xxix]

Where esoteric mystery and psychoanalysis rule, the temptation to disregard a linguistic analysis of the text is greater. The translation process is viewed in terms of equivalence. It is described mainly as a word-for-word approach:

I have tried to confine myself to the possible and give English equivalents for French words, occasionally for French phrases. [p. xxxii]

Bernard would like us to believe that he translates “plainly” what he reads and insists on a non-interpretative approach to reading the text. This openly “objective” position, however, is undermined by the presence of personal,

magical and alchemical interpretations, which are one aspect of the type of literary rewriting he disavows. Bernard's rewriting of poet and of his works is also apparent in the way he chooses to place *Illuminations* before *Une Saison en Enfer*. The translator sets out to provide the reader with "a guide to [the] literal meaning of [Rimbaud's works]" [p. xxiii], rejecting literary speculations since "no amount of research explains why they are poems" [p. xxviii]. However, Bernard's entire presentation is oriented towards "Adieu" in *Une Saison en Enfer* and the ultimate silence of the poet. What he wants to convey is that *Illuminations* is simply an experimental exercise on the road to godliness and silence. In *Illuminations*, Rimbaud mostly describes "his spiritual condition at a moment when the 'disordering of all the senses' has been most completely successful" [p. xviii]. The use of drugs by Rimbaud is amply documented in Starkie [1938], and allegedly explains many of Rimbaud's strange, wild imaginings. Bernard adopts this interpretation without discussion:

[T]he *Illuminations* called 'Métropolitain' and 'Villes' seem to be very vivid and convincing descriptions of the horror of a large city such as London was at the time. The possibility that Rimbaud and Verlaine learned to smoke opium in Chinese dens near the Docks would help to explain the distortion of vision one encounters in these prose poems. [p. xix]

However, such an interpretation gives a purely personal and accidental character to Rimbaud's poetry, dispossessing the writer of any more literary intentions. Furthermore, by finding such extra-literary causes for the composition of the texts, the translator justifies his own non-analytical point of view. In effect, this gives him carte blanche to translate however he fancies, since what matters is the impression of insubstantial and distorted visions that emerges from Rimbaud's period of drunkenness.

Peschel

Rimbaud's poetry is not merely an exercise in daring language and beautiful imagery; it is the intellectual, emotional and spiritual struggle of a brilliant and tormented writer who is perpetually exploring himself in his baffling, elusive relation to childhood, adulthood and eternity. [Peschel 1973, p. 38-9]

This interpretation of Rimbaud's poetry as influenced by the poet's personal struggle is the basis for the book in which Peschel most clearly explains her understanding of Rimbaud: *Flux and Reflux: Ambivalence in the Poems of Arthur Rimbaud*. Published in 1977, after the translation, *Flux and Reflux* includes chapters which result from earlier research undertaken at

the time of the translation. In *Flux and Reflux*, ambivalence is perceived as the mainspring of Rimbaud's creation. From an analysis of Rimbaud's character, Peschel attempts to explain this particular characteristic of his writing. Rimbaud's life feeds the critic's analysis, which is based on a Freudian approach. Her emphasis on the life of the poet induces her often to refer to the narrator of the poems as being Rimbaud himself³:

[S]ometimes it is difficult to distinguish between the narrator of the poem and the poet himself. [1977, p. 124]

As for *Illuminations*, Peschel's interpretation derives mainly from Suzanne Bernard's vision of *Illuminations* as a perpetual contest between "l'esprit de système" et "l'anarchie destructrice" [S. Bernard 1959, p. 153]:

Creation and destruction are particularly evident in the *Illuminations*. These warring contraries elucidate individual works, while adding dynamism to the poem's force and flux. [Peschel 1977, p. 42]

From this inherent conflict, she proceeds to classify some of the poems according to four main types of design: an illuminated picture ("Fleurs" and "Mystique"), a circular pattern ("Barbare", "Nocturne vulgaire"), a quasi-circular framework ("A une raison", "Depart"), and a disintegrating or vanishing vision ("Après le Déluge", "Soir Historique", "Vies"). Peschel importantly recognises a pattern of organisation in the texts. Her classification is thematically and syntactically determined. Not unlike Fowlie, she views the texts as stories (mainly autobiographical) that can be told⁴, but she also perceives some important syntactic devices, notably repetitions and partial repetitions. More significantly, however, Peschel recognises an evolution from a politically revolutionary poetry⁵ to a purely personal and visionary poetry of "illuminated pictures, vibrant moving visions frequently permeated by Rimbaud's aesthetics of ugliness" [1977, p. 52].

³See for example Peschel's analysis of "Barbare" where she first evokes the narrator of the text ("the narrator", "he"), and then, with the use of the same deictic "he", suddenly switches to the author (with the reference to Rimbaud's possible use of hallucinogenic drugs) [1977, pp. 43-4].

⁴This tendency to view the poet as a story teller and the poems as true stories probably explains Peschel's abusive use of paraphrasis in her analysis. See for example her analysis of "Vies" III:

At age twelve, the narrator had astonishing knowledge and power, he says: "Dans un grenier où je fus enfermé à douze ans j'ai connu le monde, j'ai illustré la comédie humaine." During this past, too, he met marvelous beings, "toutes les femmes des anciens peintres". He lived a fantastic, productive and celebrated life [...] [1977, p. 51]

⁵"In Rimbaud's writings after the letter of May 15, 1871, the *voyant* abandons his potentially political role as the philosopher king of the future [...]" [1977, p. 51 Peschel's emphasis]

Peschel sets out to translate the original for her own intellectual fulfilment. The first translations are attempted in parallel with the writing of her doctoral dissertation on Rimbaud at Harvard University and are not produced in order to gain a better understanding of the poet:

I did not start translating Rimbaud with the aim of understanding him better, however. I first translated him just to enjoy myself and to rekindle my delight in the poetry I had chosen to analyze for my thesis. [Peschel 1988, p. 220]

Gradually, she realises the potential of this work as a way to shed new light on her reading and interpretation of the text. Peschel sees Rimbaud's poetry as a puzzle and a temptation. The taunt contained in the sentence "Je réservais la traduction" ["Délires" II, *Une Saison an Enfer*] encourages her to take up the challenge of translating Rimbaud's poetry.

Peschel comes to think her approach to translation as "an act of love" that demands a perfect communion or empathy to achieve re-creation:

Translating is, in a way, like an act of love. It is reaching out toward something that is different from, but profoundly appealing to, the self. It is a pleasure-filled encounter that is sensuous, emotional and spiritual, exhilarating, broadening and deepening. The translator of poetry merges with the original poet thinks his thoughts, feels his feelings, sees his visions, experiences and comprehends his images, perceptions and points of view. Then, through an empathy so strong that it might seem at times like self-identification, the translator re-creates, in another tongue and form, the original artist's creation. For translation is at its best a re-creation of art, by means of art. [1981, p. 67]

The symbiosis created in the translation process provides the best access to poetry. Peschel ultimately views the translator as a creator and critic, whose valuable work can best reveal the original:

Translating is [...] both a supremely critical and a supremely creative act. It encompasses both the critic's act of reading, interpreting and understanding, and the poet's act of creating. For these reasons, translating is one of the finest ways of coming closer to a text. For translating permits — more, it forces — one to explore, experience and re-create the multiple meanings, mystery and magic of the original poem. [idem 1981, p. 69]

The published translation is produced with this enlightened vision of the translator. She wants to share some of the love she has for both the poetry and the poet. Her translations have in mind an audience, which would share her love of poetry and which would be unable to read the texts in the original.

I hope that my translation will enable those who are not well versed in the French language and literature to understand something of the brilliance of this amazing poet and the relevance of his ideas to today's world. [1973, p. 35]

Although she sees translation as a way of feeding the interpretation of Rimbaud's poetry, her presentation of the impact the translations can have on the audience's reception of the texts is rather low-key. The emphasis is on meaning as she insists on the relevance of the poet's ideas for today's readers. "Meaning" seems to be the translator's main priority, even though she also acknowledges the importance of form:

Although my primary concern has been to be faithful to Rimbaud's meaning, I have still tried to utilize some of his poetic devices. Thus I have attempted to reproduce his alliterative effects, but I have never sacrificed sense in an effort to mimic sound per se. [1973, p. 37]

This same priority is repeated later when Peschel recalls her experience of translating Rimbaud:

In translating poetry — Rimbaud's or anyone else's — I try to be faithful to the poet's meaning, which generally means his meanings. I believe that fidelity to the poet's meanings offers a key to his universe. [1988, p. 219]

There is no clear indication as to how Peschel defines "meaning". The process of deciphering meaning seems to derive from a close reading of the texts:

This translation of *A Season in Hell* and *Illuminations* is the result of countless hours of study and appraisal of Rimbaud's words, ideas, sounds and rhythms. [Peschel 1973, p. 35]

In the translator's introduction to her bilingual edition of *Saison en Enfer* and *Illuminations*, Peschel makes many remarks on the meaning of certain polysemous words such as "science" and "esprit". But the translator's lexical interest is not limited to polysemous words, it extends to a patient and thorough lexical analysis of the ST. Peschel's quest for meaning is described as a process of interpretation largely based on a complete lexical analysis, as she herself explains:

[I]n order to to translate Rimbaud, I looked up every single word, including all the words I did not know (of course), and all the words I knew were difficult and/or ambiguous, and all the words that I knew — or believed — I knew very well. [...] Over the years, I have used this tedious, thrilling process both for my subsequent translating and for studying poems or passages in English. [1988, p. 220]

The approach described here resembles greatly a word-for-word approach to translation and seems to contradict Peschel's systematic vision of the texts expressed in *Flux and Reflux*. There is no mention of any intention to

translate the poems following particular types of texts. There is no vision of a textual approach to the poems, or of an approach which would consider a possible grouping. The texts follow an unusual order and are all numbered without any comment on why these numbers have been added. Furthermore, the translator clearly separates the translation of meaning, which is achieved through this lexical aspect of the translation process, from the translation of what she calls musicality:

Along with trying to capture Rimbaud's — or any poet's meaning(s) when I translate, I also aim to try to re-create a sense of the poet's musicality. [1988, p. 220]

The translator's own insistence on respecting "Rimbaud's meaning" by retaining the exact meaning of the words and also "Rimbaud's word order so that the flow of his thought may proceed as it does in the French" [1973, p. 37] is understandable from her perception of *Illuminations*. If the poems are "pictures" or "visions" with a purely personal and aesthetic content, the translator does not need to go further than the words. Any analysis of possible textual influences would be superfluous as only words matter.

Through the presentation of the translation procedures adopted by Fowlie, Bernard and Peschel, we can perceive a clear evolution. Fowlie does not outline at all what he intends to achieve and eventually renounces the interpretation of the texts which accompanied the first translation (for fear of further reprisals from Etiemble). Bernard claims to refuse to take a critical stance for fear, as he puts it repeatedly, of "overreaching himself" and instead advocates a "literal" rendering of the original. Finally, Peschel explains in greater detail her view of translation, which practice resembles a word-for-word approach with a psychological bias. Etiemble's role can certainly partly account for this evolution. The translators' explicitness or lack of explicitness as to how they express (or repress in Fowlie's case) their view of the texts is at least partly determined by the French critic. This is all too clear with Fowlie who deliberately hides his vision of the poet and his own subjective manipulation of the texts. Etiemble's influence ("tel la statue du Commandeur") can also account partly for Bernard's rejection of a critical approach and for his adoption of Starkie's theories. Peschel, on the other hand, is less inhibited as her translation was blessed on its publication by Henry Peyre with words such as "The translation here offered is faithful, precise, yet never prosaic or ponderous" ["Foreword" Peschel 1973, p. V] and subsequently by Etiemble who praised her "intelligence et sensibilité"

[Peschel 1977, p. 11]. This may well explain her willingness to speak about her translation procedures in subsequent books and articles.

However, these three translators are not as different as it at first may seem. And in fact, after closer investigation, it appears that they share the same poetics. They all share the importance they give to the meaning of the texts and they all have one meaning in mind, which is usually biographically based. Hence, they all prioritise a particular personal aspect, which allegedly best represents the life and works of the poet. It is easy to see that they all participate in the rewriting of Rimbaud, which was started by the first French hagiographers and was continued by subsequent literary critics in France and abroad. However, they each add their own personal touch to this rewriting of the texts. Fowlie is inclined towards angelism, Bernard is seduced by chemical and alchemical explanations, whilst Peschel's interpretation is based mainly on Freudian theories of personality.

II, iii Presentation of the groups of texts for translation

“Enfance” I to V

“Enfance” is a group of five numbered texts. Critics do not always agree on the status of these texts. According to Fongaro, the poems could well be “cinq fragments groupés (artificiellement, selon toute probabilité)” [1985, p. 13]. The word “artificiellement” implies that the grouping of the poems was achieved (1) after they were written and (2) haphazardly. Whilst it is likely that Rimbaud delayed the grouping of the poems in *Illuminations* (and this has been confirmed by analyses of the handwriting of the manuscripts), it does not necessarily follow that the poems were thoughtlessly chosen or ordered. Henry thinks that there was an intentional link between the five poems in “Enfance”:

Rimbaud s'est trouvé [...] amené à grouper des morceaux révélant tout à coup des parentés, et il a même pu inventer alors des pièces complémentaires. [1989, pp. 16-17]

His basic hypothesis is that if the poems have been grouped in a particular order, there was a good reason underlying this choice. It is therefore worth investigating whether and, if so, how the five poems are connected. This introduction will reveal immediate translation constraints, which will be added to the internal constraints inherent in each individual poem.

Is the group of poems “Enfance” a cohesive group?

All the poems of the series “Enfance” show an extreme simplification of structure. The sentences, especially in the first poem, are largely nominal and are characterised by a lack of co-ordinating links, which creates an elliptical style of appositions and insertions. The first four poems are built following the same model of the list. “Enfance” I is an enumerative list of women. The second poem is a methodical and progressive description of a universe. “Enfance” III is built on a song-like repetitive model listing various elements of a same wood. “Enfance” IV is an enumeration of heterogeneous identities from “le saint” to “le petit valet”. “Enfance” III and IV, are determined by the stylistic feature of anaphora, which contributes to their enumerative aspect. Although “Enfance” V has been excluded from the enumerative model, it still offers a very systematic and organised aspect. It presents a description in layers starting from the tomb and gradually moving towards the surface.

In all of the poems of the series “Enfance”, the closing sequence offers a contrast with the rest of the text:

- “Quel ennui, l'heure du «cher corps» et «cher cœur».”
- “Les nuées s'amassaient sur la haute mer faite d'une éternité de chaudes larmes.”
- “Il y a enfin, quand l'on a faim et soif, quelqu'un qui vous chasse.”
- “Que les oiseaux et les sources sont loin! Ce ne peut être que la fin du monde, en avançant.”
- “Pourquoi une apparence de soupirail blêmirait-elle au coin de la vouôte?”

The contrast is often characterised by the introduction of an affective tone, which marks the appearance of a critical intervention. This critical intervention is usually negative with words such as “ennuis”, “larmes”, “faim et soif” or “fin du monde”. The closing sequences all mark the awareness of a contradiction between an enthusiastic and often lyrical approach and an ultimate negative discovery.

Finally, the poems are bound by a series of words, which compel the reader to consider “Enfance” as a whole:

“les fleurs de rêve tintent” (“Enfance” I), “les fleurs magiques bourdonnaient” (“Enfance” II); “le clair déluge qui sourd des prés” (“Enfance” I), “sur le pré d'œillet” “Les prés remontent aux hameaux” (“Enfance” II); “à la lisière de la forêt” (“Enfance” I), “sur la route à travers de la lisière du bois” (“Enfance” III), “la route rouge” (“Enfance” II), “sur la route à travers de la lisière du bois” (“Enfance” III), “le piéton de la grand'route par les bois nains” (“Enfance” IV); “les terrasses voisines de la mer” (“Enfance” I), “la haute mer” (“Enfance” II), “la mer de Palestine”/ “la jetée partie à la haute mer” (“Enfance” IV), “mers et fables” (“Enfance” V); etc.

Lawler, who also analyses the long list of lexical repetitions in “Enfance”, thinks that “it marks a tightly welded composition whose progression signifies an extreme tension of mind and feelings” [Lawler 1992, p. 93]. The impression that poems are welded together by a cohesive force induces some critics to talk about a progression or a predetermined order of composition.

An ordered composition?

Many critics have tried to find an explanation for the particular order of the poems in “Enfance”. Even Guyaux, who overall advocates a fragmentary vision of *Illuminations*, considers “Enfance” as an entity which follows a

particular organisation. He explains the particular order of the poems from the strategic position of "Enfance" III:

[...] *Enfance* III devient, par sa position centrale et sa différence, un axe de symétrie de l'ensemble. De part et d'autre les quatre textes ne se regroupent pas nécessairement deux à deux, mais ils présentent des analogies telles que le nombre de paragraphes, quatre pour les deux premiers, cinq pour les deux derniers. [Guyaux 1985b, p. 76]

His explanation derives mainly from a cautious stylistic approach. Guyaux does not at first provide a semantic reason for the particular layout of the poems. However, at the end of his analysis, he offers another explanation which is based on a more semantic approach:

Du premier au cinquième texte, on va de la troisième personne à la première [...]. Chacun des cinq textes fait dériver le sujet d'un espace réel vers un espace fictif. [ibid, p. 88]

A thematic progression is evoked from the first to the final poem. However, Guyaux's approach remains carefully distant. Whilst there is no possible denying of the objective facts described, Guyaux does not offer any hermeneutic reason for the particular progression of the text.

Henry sees two possibilities for the interpretation of the series. He considers the first four poems of "Enfance" both separately and together. In both cases, he isolates the final poem. He sees in "Enfance" a series of poems illustrating the theme of childhood-adolescence. He sums up what he calls "unité codée" as follows:

Enfance I: construction d'un monde de présence (féminine), qui, finalement, n'inspire qu'ennui;

Enfance II: construction d'un monde d'absence (nature, vide humain), assurant une solitude qui, finalement, sombre dans une poignante mélancolie;

Enfance III: dans la nature apparemment le plus à l'abri, solitude finalement sapée par l'hostilité de l'autre;

Enfance IV: dans la sérénité du monde intérieur, solitude finalement sapée par l'angoisse métaphysique que suscite le paysage;

Enfance V: seul recours, peut-être, le retrait total dans un monde souterrain dont on espère qu'il sera sans le moindre contact avec l'extérieur. [1989, p. 35]

Henry analyses some of the stylistic features of the poems, but concentrates more clearly than Guyaux on the semantic aspect. He deciphers a progression in the content of the poems. His decision to isolate the final poem, although sustainable, is based mainly on intuition. Henry considers

the poems from a romantic point of view¹. However, even if Rimbaud did inherit elements of romantic vision, he cannot be classified as a romantic poet and appearances could be deceptive.

Some critics view Rimbaud's writing in "Enfance" as being solely based on personal experience and hence consider an autobiographical progression in the writing of the poems. Fowlie offers a psycho-biographical analysis of the series in which he traces the chronological progression of the poet through various stages of childhood:

The prose poem "Enfance" traces the poet's passage through three major kingdoms of his childhood: the scenes of fairy stories which are called up and dispelled by magic, where the boy plays many roles; literal fragments of the Ardennes which Arthur knew and walked over; and finally the subterranean warmth of mother love, imagined as a whitened cell always threatened by a possible opening out on the world where he would have to break the silence so totally established in the womb. [1953, p. 60]

This position can be sustained by the fact that at least two of the poems are first person narratives. There is, of course, a serious risk in adopting a purely biographical approach to the analysis of Rimbaud's poetry. The life of the poet (or at least what we know of it) may be forcibly twisted to match the content of his poetry and vice versa. Fowlie's own account of Rimbaud's "life" can be rather whimsical. Recalling Hackett's parallel between "Enfance" V and "Les Effarés" via the noun "soupon" [Hackett 1948, pp. 73-86], Fowlie draws a puzzling comparison between the tomb of "Enfance" V and "the subterranean warmth of mother love". "La mère Rimb"'s ascendancy over Arthur may have been a bit claustrophobic ("une mère aussi inflexible que soixante-treize administrations à casquettes de plomb"²), but certainly not warm. This extremely stern woman was nicknamed "la bouche d'ombre" by her son. Moreover, even if Rimbaud's poetry is based on personal experience, it has much wider literary implications. Rimbaud seeks what he calls "poésie objective", as opposed to a lyrical explosion of personal reminiscence.

Other critics have hence adopted a less biographical point of view on the poems of the series "Enfance". Although they still retain the idea of personal poetry, they extend this to a wider conception of what they call "le moi poétique". Sacchi, for example, offers this careful definition of "Enfance":

¹ "L'ensemble exprime l'effort douloureusement délectable vers une maîtrise idéale de l'univers intérieur, contre les hommes. Thèmes romantiques." [Henry 1989, p. 34]

² In a letter to Paul Demeny, dated "Charleville 28 août 1871".

Retour virtuel aux origines premières, *Enfance* pourrait bien aligner, l'une après l'autre [...], *les phases marquantes d'une mémoire "fondatrice du moi"*. [1992a, p.130, my italics]

The more general scope still values an empirical approach to writing. The human experience of childhood, the "vécu" Sacchi is referring to, then represents the source of the series. Although Sacchi does not refer to any precise biographical content, his view of the poems remains tinted by a psycho-biographical approach, what Raybaud calls "la «mascarade» du retour du refoulé" [1989, p. 157].

Raybaud's position is yet more general, in that he values a cultural [idem, p.161-6] rather than biographical definition of "le moi poétique". He views the series as being inscribed in a cultural and literary tradition. The romantic tradition defines "le moi poétique" from two essential notions, namely "imagination" and "mélancolie", referred to by Raybaud as "l'indissociable couple du *vague des passions* au XIX^e siècle". To the notion of culture, he adds the notion of strategy. From a convincing analysis of Rousseau, Nerval, Hugo and Baudelaire's writings, Raybaud demonstrates how the discourse defining "le moi poétique" is usually built from a personal approach ("stratégie d'aveu") and from a historico-mythological approach ("stratégie de «mythographie», par essai et remploi d'archétypes mythologiques" 1989, p. 161). Raybaud refuses to define "Enfance" as biographical poetry. He recognises in "Enfance" what he calls "une interrogation mythologique" and "des paroles culturelles, et non pas exclusivement personnelles" [Ibid, p. 200]. He values a critical aspect of Rimbaud's writing in "Enfance", which forces the reader to reconsider the inherited romantic vision based on "imagination" and "mélancolie". He classifies the five poems according to literary genres:

[...] récit mythologique (I), romans des familles (II), chansons (III) [...] Évangile johannique (IV), *Histoires extraordinaires* de Poe (V). Tous textes qui ont à voir, non avec des aventures de l'enfant, mais avec la disparité de ses lectures [...]. [Ibid., p. 197]

What we can retain from Raybaud's analysis may be summarised as the importance of intertextuality and literary background for the understanding of "Enfance". He distinguishes between three effects of the intertextual phenomenon:

- "effet de somme" (accumulation of various intertextual referents)
- "effet de *ménippée*" (quotation of specific extracts, often with an ironic purpose)

— “effet de *polytope*”, (“travail de montage et de dissonance”, quotation and rewriting of an intertextual source to underline its contradictions).
[Ibid., p. 198-9]

Despite his very gradual and systematic approach, Raybaud has a tendency to reduce the poems, simplifying them solely to their intertextual content and critical purpose. For “Enfance”, he concentrates on the “effet de polytope” and explains “Enfance” IV, for example, from the sentence «Je suis le chemin, la vérité et la vie» from the “Évangile johannique”. He identifies in this sentence:

[L]a clé d'un *Je* instable et labile (je suis le saint — le savant — le piéton), en dénaturant l'ouverture du «chemin» (l'enfant abandonné sur la jeté; le petit valet suivant l'allée; les sentiers sont âpres) et en traduisant l'eschatologie d'Apocalypse par «fin du monde en avançant». [Ibid., p. 199]

The risks of talking in terms of “clé” and other ready-given explanations are readily apparent. Raybaud's “cultural” approach, in the end, may involve the same drawbacks as the psycho-biographical approach, in that the poems may be forced to match hypothetical intertextual sources.

Implications for translation.

Returning to our original question, as to whether there is a coherence in the “Enfance” poems, there is clear evidence to suggest that there are stylistic and semantic patterns binding the five poems of the series. The real significance of these cohesive patterns will be assessed when closely analysing the different poems. However, a few guiding principles can be defined and these will enable the translator to assess the translations produced and determine some general rules for translating “Enfance”.

A translation of “Enfance” will have to convey the cohesive features binding the five poems. The translator must reproduce as far as possible the enumerative and elliptical style of the series. When translating into English, it is sometimes tempting to reduce the elliptical aspect of the ST. Translators sometimes add co-ordinating links, alter the punctuation or transform the grammatical structure, in order to reduce the stark effect of a literal translation. This is especially true of Fowlie (and to a lesser extent of Bernard). A closer analysis of Fowlie's rendering of the poems will confirm this tendency to modify the phrasal structure of “Enfance”. A closer analysis of the translations will also enable us to assess how successfully the translators have conveyed the effect of lists in the poems.

The closing sequences also bind the series in that they have in common the same contrastive affective tone, marking a critical intervention. They also, at least for “Enfance” I to IV, have in common the emergence of time, with the words: “l’heure”, “une éternité”, “enfin, quand” and the ultimate spatial and temporal limit of “la fin du monde”. This temporal aspect, which is conveyed in both Bernard's and Peschel's translation, is lost in Fowlie's translation:

- in the first poem “The boredom of saying ‘dear body,’ ‘dear heart.’ ” [author's punctuation]
- and partly in the third poem “**And then** there's someone who chases you off when you're hungry and thirsty.”

The semantic cohesion, created by the repetition of words or group of words from one poem to the next is usually conveyed in the translations with the exception, however, of the words “mer/ haute mer” , which become:

- in Fowlie's translation “ocean”, “sea”/ “high seas”, “high seas”
- in Bernard's translation “sea”, “sea”/ “open sea”, “sea”.

At least two translators work from an autobiographical vision of “Enfance”. Peschel, from a Freudian stance, sees traces of an unhappy childhood in the poems of the series:

[R]esonances of Rimbaud's own unfortunate childhood reverberate, vying with or obliterating his reinvented glorious childhood. [Peschel 1977, p. 107]

Fowlie views “Enfance” as an autobiographical creation, which influences his analysis of the poems and consequently his translation. Fowlie thus needs to put a name and a face to the various characters of the series, so the “général” can only be “General Noiset, who lived near Charleville”. “L'idole” of “Enfance” I becomes a representation of Rimbaud himself:

[H]e would rather be the fabulous child of a Mexican family than a boy of the Ardennes. This would be a revenge on the tyrannical and society which misunderstood him. [Fowlie 1953, p. 57]

This type of interpretation can only lead to a very subjective translation. I will determine in the course of my analysis of “Enfance” how much Fowlie's pre-conceived ideas may have affected his translation. As a general rule, the translator must adopt a systematic approach to the poems pointing out similarities and differences. He may only apply intertextual or biographical hypotheses to his analysis and translation if such hypotheses can be verified and attested.

“Ville”, “Villes” I & II

“No other theme is more clearly developed and richly ornamented in *Les Illuminations* than that of the city” [Fowlie 1953, p. 93]. This is how Fowlie introduces the seventh chapter of *Rimbaud's “Illuminations”, a Study in Angelism*, entitled “Vision of the city”. And indeed it is quite common for critics³ to analyse the possible link between poems of *Illuminations* which illustrate the theme of the city. Guyaux himself, who insists that each poem should be analysed separately, concedes the existence of a degree of cohesion between some of the poems. He quotes in particular the two “Villes”, to which he links the poem “Ville”.

Fowlie's “Vision of the cities” includes nine poems, namely: “Ouvriers”, “Les Ponts”, “Ville”, “Ornière”, the two “Villes”, “Métropolitain”, “Promontoire” and “Barbare”. From this extended list, I have retained only three texts, namely: “Ville”, “Villes” I & II. My grouping is determined by the titles, which most obviously refer to the theme of the city. However, my reasons for linking the poems can be further substantiated by looking at various formal features binding the texts.

A cohesive ensemble?

The two “Villes” are linked by a common title. Guyaux shows how the numbers appear to have been changed:

[L]e chiffre romain *I* figure sous le titre, biffé de cinq traits fins horizontaux et suivi d'un point. [1985a, p. 95]

Guyaux's hypothesis is that Germain Nouveau made a mistake when copying “Villes” (“L'acropole [...]”), which he reproduced at the wrong place in the manuscript. Guyaux hence suggests going back to the original headings, “Villes” I (“L'acropole officielle”) and “Villes” II (“Ce sont des villes”), rather than adopting an apocryphal order.

If we consider the poems “Villes” I & II in relation to “Ville”, it is possible to distinguish many common features. The poems all evoke a “ville”, “acropole” or “métropole” and the semantic thread of the town is illustrated in all of them. In these towns, the reader recognises houses, streets, boulevards and suburbs:

³ See for example Bancquart 1980, Raybaud 1989, Marcotte 1989.

“les ameublements et l'extérieur des maisons” [“Ville”]; “Là encore les maisons ne se suivent pas” [“Villes” I]; “le mouvement d'un boulevard de Bagdad [“Villes” II]

The various settings evoked in the three poems share a common atmosphere of smoke, mist and fog (“l'épaisse et éternelle fumée de charbon” [“Ville”]; “jour mat”, “ciel immuablement gris” [“Villes” I]; and the night is omnipresent (“nuit d'été” [“Ville”]; “la lune brûle et hurle”, “fête de la nuit” [“Villes” II]). Besides sharing semantic threads, the poems have in common the inclusion of external cultural elements (mythological, historical, geographical) within the descriptions. The geographical and historical cultural elements in “Villes” I are heterogeneous with “Hampton-Court”, “Nabuchodonosor norvégien”, “Brahmas”, “Sainte-Chapelle”, “Londres”, “Paris”. The word “acropole” itself is reminiscent of Greece and Athens, whilst the word “Nabuchodonosor” is linked to Babel. “Villes” II evokes the mountains “Alleghanis” and “Libans” and the town of “Bagdad”. Finally, in “Ville”, the narrator evokes “le continent”. The poems also offer many mythological allusions, such as “les Erinnyes” in “Ville”. However, “Villes” II is the most striking, in that it multiplies mythological and literary characters: “Vénus”, “Diane”, “Rolands”, “Mabs” and “Bacchantes”.

A logical progression?

Is it possible to distinguish a clear progression in the group of poems “Ville”, “Villes” I & II? According to Fowlie, there is a clear progression from “Ouvriers” to the two “Villes”, which he explains as follows:

Ouvriers is the poem on the suburbs, and hence on the approach of the city, which is still at some distance off. *Les Ponts* is literally that: the bridges which seem to lead directly into the city and which give already the vision of complexity and the cacophony of confused sounds. *Ville* is a sober poem, composed of deliberate and almost factual statements where the poet calls himself a citizen of the metropolis. In *Ornières* the enchantment begins, and it is closely comparable to the fairy world enchantment of other *Illuminations* where an ambulatory circus metamorphoses the city. Then two more intricately detailed poems, both called *Villes*, provide grandiose synthetic pictures of the dream cities in an amazing richness of colour and bold architectures. [1953, pp. 96-7]

When Fowlie provides a possible order of progression from the suburbs to the town centre and from reality to vision, he only relies on impressions and intuitions. His system based on a principle similar to the one used to explain pre-determined series such as “Enfance”, can very easily be dismantled. Fowlie's system is over-simplifying, in that it does not account at all for the

particularities of each poem. “Ouvriers”, for example, is certainly more than a poem of the suburbs⁴ and in any case cannot be reduced to a geographical introduction to the poems of the city.

It is difficult to determine a particular order of composition, or indeed any logical progression. The manuscript versions are insufficiently reliable to state a possible date of composition which could help the classification. Rather than determining a possible progression, it would be interesting to analyse the process of writing common to some of the poems. Critics usually point out the historical, geographical, literary and cultural background, which may have influenced the writing of the poems of the city. Raybaud, who applies a cultural approach to the study of the poems of the city, distinguishes between two main tendencies:

- “le monde en miettes”
- “la réactualisation en vrac de la mémoire totale du monde” [1989, p. 73]

His analysis is sustained by the importance of the cultural references, analysed earlier. The effect of cultural synthesis pointed out by Raybaud is also perceived by critics such as David Scott who evokes Rimbaud's task in terms of summary, where the poet aims at “raccourcir [l'] infini” and “résumer le gigantesque” [1992, p. 975] of the town.

Many critics, like Raybaud, are interested in revealing a possible source, which could have influenced Rimbaud's representation of the city. The concept of “vision”, used by Fowlie, is an aspect that has been more systematically developed in recent years. Following what Raybaud would call a “cultural” approach, Steinmetz draws a parallel between the “visions” of Rimbaud's poetry and the images produced by dioramas, magic lamps and shadow theatres [Steinmetz 1990]⁵. He qualifies Rimbaud's poetry as “photographies spirituelles” or “projection de l'intérieur”, hence emphasising a similar artistic but also technical process. Fongaro builds on this hypothesis and suggests further comparisons with precise contemporary dioramas. Fongaro [1994, pp. 51-54] demonstrates the importance of panoramas and dioramas for 19th century literature, particularly in Musset's and Gautier's writings. More importantly, he analyses some of the new techniques introduced by the dioramas, notably the techniques of movement and lighting. He quotes another extract from Gautier, taken from *Arria Marcella*⁶:

⁴ See for example Fongaro “«Ouvriers» «particuliers»” in Fongaro 1989, pp. 77-89.

⁵ Parallel first suggested by Grojnowski [1984, p. 107] and Noguez [1986, p. 41].

⁶ Théophile Gautier, *Arria Marcella*, 1852.

La ville se peuplait graduellement comme un de ces tableaux de diorama, d'abord désert, et qu'un changement d'éclairage anime de personnages invisibles jusque là.

Fongaro draws a comparison between this extract and *Illuminations*, including the poems “Ville” and “Villes” I & II. From the theory of “chose vue” as a model for some of the settings in *Illuminations*, Fongaro refines his approach to focus on various techniques of representation. The hypothesis that Rimbaud could have used the dioramas as a source of his poetry seems particularly convincing. However, because of Rimbaud's particularly “visual” writing, there is a possible influence of the dioramas, panoramas and shadow theatres not only on the poems of the city, but on all the poems of the collection *Illuminations*. Although Fongaro's conclusions regarding the new techniques of representation introduced by the dioramas are most instructive, his analyses still do not allow us to perceive the characteristics particular to the poems of the city.

Conversely, Raybaud lists specific features of the group formed by the poems “Villes”, I & II and “Ville”. He identifies three main characteristics of the poems [1989, p. 83], namely:

- “le narrateur investigateur”
- “l'appropriation de la nature et la résurgence de l'archaïsme”
- “la syntaxe mécanicienne du nouveau discours architectural des architectes-ingénieurs”, which he sees reflected especially in “Villes” (I & II), illustrating what Raybaud calls “une métrique réglée des mots”.

The two crucial ideas I would retain from Raybaud's analysis are linked to the process of narration (“narrateur investigateur”) and description (“discours architectural”). For a better understanding of the poems of the city, it may be useful to assess the balance between narration and description. This approach could well be more revealing from the point of view of translation than a purely thematic approach.

Implications for translation

This first set of guidelines for translating “Ville”, “Villes” I & II does not essentially vary from the general rules devised for translating the series “Enfance”. The translator needs to pay particular attention to the various semantic threads binding the series. This is generally achieved by Bernard, Fowle and Peschel.

The accumulation of cultural references is an outstanding characteristic of the poems. However, these cultural references are

sometimes modified in the translations with possible semantic loss. I will refer later in my analysis to Fowlie's particular translation of the word "Erinnyes" in "Ville".

Finally, in the course of my analysis, I will also try to assess how the author creates a universe which always provides clear evidence of the ongoing process of narration. This position is radically opposed to Fowlie's approach as, according to the translator, the poems of the city are gratuitous visions which "form before the poet without his willing them" [1953, p. 95].

"Démocratie", "Dévotion", "Mouvement" & "Solde"

The final group I have chosen to process for translation is formed of poems which are not obviously related. Unlike the series "Enfance", these texts are not grouped under a common title and unlike the poems of the city, they are not linked by a common theme. It is, however, possible to determine common outstanding features which will dictate for each of these poems an identical technique of approach.

A cohesive ensemble?

These poems are linked by common words and ideas. The semantic coincidence is most strikingly illustrated in the poems "Mouvement" and "Solde":

"mouvement" (x2), "voyageurs", "sport", "comfort", "races", "harmonique", "inouïes", "fortune", "comptes" ["Mouvement"]

"mouvement", "voyageurs", "sports", "comforts", "race", "harmonie", "inouïe", "richesses", "opulence", "calcul" ["Solde"]

The group of poems "Démocratie", "Mouvement", "Solde" and, to a lesser extent, "Dévotion" also share common semantic threads. The main semantic strands of themes are:

novelty/ positivism: "science", "confort" ["Démocratie"]; "comfort", "nouveau", "découverte", "inouïe" ["Mouvement"]; "science", "comforts", "avenir", "inouïes", "trouvailles" ["Solde"]

movement: "marche", "En avant" ["Démocratie"]; "mouvement" (x2), "courant", "célérité", "voyageurs", "roulant" ["Mouvement"]; "voyages" ["Dévotion"]; "jaillissant", "mouvement", "élan", "migrations", "voyageurs", "sauts" ["Solde"]

The poems likewise share **negative impressions:**

“monstrueuses”, “immonde”, “cynique”, “féroce”, “ignorants”
[“Démocratie”]; “monstrueux”, “terribles”, [“Mouvement”]; “maudit”,
“infernale”, “atroce”, “insensé”, “effrayante” [“Solde”]

and **positive impressions:**

“extase harmonique” [“Mouvement”]; “fraternel”, “unique”,
“satisfaction”, “supérieurs”, “parfaits”, “harmonie”, “splendeurs”,
“délices”, “gaîté” [“Solde”]

At a formal level, the texts include particularly repetitive patterns. Anaphora is an obvious characteristic of most of the poems in the group. It sometimes entails the repetition of words, or the copying throughout a text of the structure of a sentence. “Dévotion” is based on such an anaphoric pattern, with the quasi-systematic repetition of the structures “à ” and “à ... pour”:

“A ma sœur [...] pour [...]
A ma sœur [...] pour [...]
A Lulu
A l'adolescent [...]”
etc.

“Solde” and “Démocratie” present a very similar syntactic and rhythmic functioning. “Solde” is characterised by the anaphoric repetition of the segment “A vendre”:

“A vendre ce que les Juifs n'ont pas vendu [...]
A vendre les Corps [...]
A vendre l'anarchie [...]
A vendre les habitations [...]
A vendre les applications [...]
A vendre les Corps [...]”

“Démocratie” is based on the anaphoric repetition of “au(x)”:

“[...] au paysage immonde
Aux centres [...]
Aux pays poivrés [...]
Au revoir ici [...]”

A strong binary rhythm also affects the poems “Solde”, “Dévotion”, “Démocratie” and “Mouvement”.

Finally, the poem “Mouvement” repeats the same syntactic and graphic organisation in three distinct paragraphs. Each paragraph corresponds to a sentence and each graphically isolated line within the paragraphs forms a syntactical unit.

A common objective?

Critics have sometimes emphasised the unusual aspect of some of the poems. Fowlie says of “Dévotion” that it is “one of the most curious of the prose poems and one of the most paradoxical, perhaps, to place among the seeming exercises of mysticism” [Fowlie 1953, p. 119]. The peculiar verse form of the prose poem “Mouvement” has sometimes resulted in its isolation from the rest of *Illuminations*⁷. The quotation marks of “Démocratie” set the poem apart within the collection. “Solde” has often been considered a synthesis of Rimbaud's poetry and has been assimilated to the poem “Adieu” in *Saison en Enfer*. As such, it has acquired a kind of mythical status.

The poems have all been described as “different”. However, they are all connected by a common feature. Each poem ‘looks like’ or even ‘is cast in the form of’ a particular genre or type of text. “Dévotion” presents many characteristics typical of religious texts. The title “Dévotion” even refers to a type of religious prayer. “Mouvement” resembles verse poetry. “Solde” copies the salesman's patter. “Démocratie” presents many features of authoritarian discourse and recalls the style of a military harangue.

Secondly, all these poems are based on an ambiguous title, to the extent that it may be difficult at first to determine their actual, exact object. This initial ambiguity thus leaves room for a greater awareness of allusive meaning and double-entendre. Vigilance is required as well as an awareness of possible playful dimensions, especially as the poems quite often play on structures as well as words. For example, the reader notices in poems such as “Dévotion” and “Démocratie” the gradual deterioration of a repetitive pattern. The prayer to various entities in “Dévotion”, following an identical structure, gradually deteriorates:

“**A** ma sœur
A ma sœur, [etc.]
A tout prix et **à** tous les airs [...] — Mais plus **alors**.”

The syntactical parallel in “Démocratie” shows the same type of distortion:

“[...] **au** paysage immonde
Aux centres [...]
Aux pays poivrés [...] **au** service
Au revoir ici [...]”

⁷ “Mouvement” is excluded from *Illuminations* in Hackett's edition [1986, p. 47].

Moreover, the clear-cut rhythm of these poems further emphasises the ironic tone (mock-religious and mock-authoritarian).

Other clues to a critical, derisive, ironic content include:

— intrusion of narrator within the discourse, expressing a thought or passing a comment, as in “Mouvement” (“— Est-ce ancienne sauvagerie qu'on pardonne?”) and in “Solde” (“Les vendeurs ne sont pas à bout de solde! Les voyageurs n'ont pas à rendre leur commission de si tôt!”)

— use of “signes d'énonciation” or “signes d'assise” (see our analysis of irony and parody in the second section). The most obvious example being the quotation marks of “Démocratie”, which —as I shall demonstrate later— act as a warning for the reader and emphasise a critical distance between author and narrator.

The ironic component is undeniable in the poems “Démocratie”, “Dévotion”, “Mouvement” and “Solde”, which represent no more than a significant sample of parodies in *Illuminations*. Parody affects both form and content. This is usually perceived, first of all, through the form, via the recognition of a subversive force affecting the language. The reader notices the use of homonyms, polysemous words, polysemous structures, the subversion of clichés, etc. Some critics acknowledge a certain degree of parody or irony in the poems. They usually agree at least on the author's relative playfulness. Guyaux's objective and rather formal comments, for example, evoke a possible ironic content in some of the poems. On “Dévotion”, he writes:

[T]out le texte se paraphrase de cette manière: à tout ce qu'on veut, au nom de la *dévotion*-dérision. [1985b, p. 257]

On “Démocratie”:

[L]'objet formel de cette parodie est le discours rhétorique d'un tribun. [idem, p. 260]

On “Solde”:

On peut mesurer à la longueur du texte le temps d'usure de la parodie, et voir dans le retrait où se place l'avant-dernier paragraphe, puis dans la synthèse que fait le dernier, le rejet d'un modèle oral sur lequel le texte, pourtant, se construit. [ibid, p. 269]

On “Mouvement”:

[I]l y a sans doute ici une apparence et même un trompe-l'œil. [Guyaux 1991a, p. 173]

Though Guyaux recognises a deliberate play on form, he leaves out a possible hermeneutic interpretation of the syntactic and grammatical phenomenon. However, an interpretation of ironic formal content cannot be sufficient without a concomitant evaluation of the writer's intention(s), a factor which obliges us to adopt an hermeneutic approach. During the translation process, I will seek to establish the reason(s) underlying the poet's systematic subversion of language.

Implications for translation.

The translator needs to see beyond the "strange" or incongruous aspect of some of the poems, which may in the past have resulted in their being set apart and even ostracised (cf. "Mouvement") from the collection *Illuminations*. The semantic and structural similarities shared by the poems "Démocratie", "Dévotion", "Mouvement" and "Solde" must be acknowledged. Moreover, grouping the poems will help in elaborating a method of translation when approaching overt or covert irony and parody.

In *Rimbaud's Illuminations: A Study in Angelism*, Fowlie groups under the heading "Mystic vision" the poems "Mouvement", "Dévotion" and "Solde" together with the poems "Génie", "Départ", "Royauté", "À une raison", "Mystique", "Veillées" and "Soir historique". Like the poems of the city, these texts all share, according to Fowlie, a 'visionary aspect'. He considers the poems "Soir historique", "Mouvement", "Dévotion" and "Solde", to be "«exercices» on a mystical approach to the world" [1953, p. 112]. Fowlie's personal view of Rimbaud's poetry determines his grouping of the poems. Although he concedes that his categories are "arbitrary" [Ibid, p. 112], they still form the basis for his entire analysis and subsequent translation of the poems.

Fowlie, despite his religious and mythical view of Rimbaud, sometimes perceives the potential irony or parody of the poems. On "Démocratie", which he classifies under the heading "Childhood", he writes:

Démocratie is the one prose poem, composed in one coherent tone, which recalls the earlier truculence of social opposition, of ironic portraiture of social types, of revolt against the established order. [1953, p. 64]

For "Dévotion", he draws a parallel with Villon:

The entire piece is patterned on a litany of prayers almost Villonesque in tone, because it is never without a strong element of irony. [*ibid*, p. 119].

He sees irony in the names of the first two sisters, “comically long and foreign names” [idem]. In “Solde” he recognises the same “Villonesque” tone:

Again one thinks of Villon and more insistently this time, where the itemization of the sale is lengthy and vigorously stated. [idem]

Likewise, Peschel perceives the irony in “Mouvement” (“As Rimbaud describes these ‘conquérants du monde’ his irony pierces through his phrases” [1977, p. 47]) as well as the “fundamental irony of this purported ‘clearance sale’ ” [idem, p.41] in “Solde”. Concerning “Dévotion”, she asks “Are the poet's devotions serious or sarcastic in the poem?” [idem p. 49]. She is, however, certain of the humorous intentions of “Démocratie” in which “irony pervades the poet's portrayal of military power” [idem p. 117]. However, even if the translators perceive the potentially subversive tone of some of the poems, their approach never prioritises this aspect. Even when the ironic intention of a particular utterance in the poems is recognised, translators will generally opt for a literal rendering. Such a rendering “simply defies the ultimate communicative objective of a given text in this regard” [Hatim 1997, p. 195].

The poems “Démocratie”, “Dévotion”, “Mouvement” and “Solde” share common words and structures. Whenever possible, these common features should be conveyed in the translation. Overall, the translators have conveyed the semantic threads common to the five poems. However, some of the semantic repetitions are lost. The loss is especially apparent for the poems “Solde” and “Mouvement”, which share seven common words:

“mouvement” (x2), “voyageurs”, “sport”, “comfort”, “races”, “harmonique”, “inouïes” [“Mouvement”]

“mouvement”, “voyageurs”, “sports”, “comforts”, “race”, “harmonie”, “inouïe” [“Solde”]

The semantic parallel is not perceived or is insufficiently communicated in Peschel's, Bernard's and Fowlie's renderings:

movement, travelers, sport, comfort, races, harmonic, **unheard-of** [“Movement”] Peschel
movement, travelers, sports, comforts, race, harmony, **unprecedented** [“Clearance Sale”] Peschel

movement, travellers, **amusement**, comfort, races, harmonic, unheard-of [“Movement”] Bernard

movement, travellers, **sports**, comfort, race, harmony, unheard-of
[“Clearance Sale”] Bernard

motion, voyagers, sports, comfort, races, harmonic, **unimaginable**
[“Movement”] Fowlie

movement, travelers, sports, comfort, race, harmony, **unheard-of**
[“Clearance Sale”] Fowlie

Similarly, translators have often failed to recognise or to reproduce the repetitive structures, which form a crucial feature of the poems. I shall establish later, in my own analysis of the poems, the extent of the structural translation loss in Fowlie's, Peschel's and Bernard's renderings of the STs.

As a general rule, the translator should reproduce, whenever possible, the formal and semantic complexity of the poems. Quite often a departure from literal translation is inevitable. The translator may face a difficult challenge when rendering the comic effect of the various puns and games (with both structures and words). He has to rely on compensation and transposition when a literal rendering would result in the loss of allusive meaning, ironic content, etc.. For this group of poems, the inevitable multiple translation loss will have to be balanced by a process of multiple compensation.

“Enfance” I, analysis and strategic decisions

1. Proliferation

The poem “Enfance” I is characterised by multiplication and multitude. In the first two paragraphs, the effect of proliferation is mainly due to the absence of link words. Furthermore, the textual elements seem to be indefinitely added. This is especially striking in the groups of words “grecs, slaves, celtiques”, “tintent, éclatent, éclairent”, “ombrent, traversent et habillent” and “les arcs-en-ciel, la flore, la mer”. The process of multiplication and proliferation is especially vivid in the third paragraph (from “Dames” to “malheureuses”). The whole paragraph is a single sentence which covers nearly half of the poem and possesses only one verb (“tournoient”). The effect of multiplication and proliferation is partly due to the syntactic device of asyndeton (see above ch. I, part ii). In the third paragraph, heterogeneous objects are accumulated without ordinary co-ordinating or subordinating conjunctions. Each element or group of elements of the description is separated from the next by commas, dashes, colons and semicolons. Each grammatically isolated element has no real function, as verbs have practically disappeared. The impression of proliferation is emphasised, as the objects described are usually plural and devoid of deictics (“Dames”, “enfantes et géantes”, etc.). The disappearance of deictics in the third paragraph also results in increased anonymity. The absence of articles and the predilection for plural nouns result in an increased imprecision, as the referential function is diminished. Furthermore, importance is not given to one object rather than the other, creating a seemingly random list in which no effort is made to dissociate one object from the next and the object from its action. The description puts object and action at the same level, so that the “dames” become their eternal eddying and the “sultanes” and “princesses” are assimilated to their “démarche”. The poem goes from one group to the next and each element of the description is cut from a temporal context as, apart from “tournoient”, there is no principal verbal form assigning a position in time. Hence, the description seems fixed in eternal contemplation. Todorov [1978, p. 212] evokes an effect of temporal “immobilisation”, which is created by the over-nominalisation. The general “flou artistique” created by the cumulative structure and the over-nominalisation results in a pictorial effect. This probably explains Henry's comparison of “Enfance” I with Gauguin [Henry 1989, pp. 20-21].

Implications for translation

The impression of accumulation and chaos, the speed of the poem created by the relative absence of co-ordination or subordination links has to be conveyed in the TT. The translators have sometimes chosen to add extra link words or to transform the punctuation in order to avoid starkness in their translation, or in order to explain a poetic image they thought might appear incongruous. Fowlie changes the punctuation of the poem in several instances, adding full stops, omitting commas, etc. The most striking changes of punctuation appear in the first paragraph, where Fowlie changes the structure of the ST:

“more princely than the Mexican and Flemish fairy story. His land **of** blatant blue and green”.

More importantly Fowlie adds a link word in the first paragraph:

“This idol, black-eyed and yellow haired, no parents and no palace, **but** more princely”

Likewise, Bernard transforms the extremely elliptical style of the ST, to create a more fluid TT, as in the first paragraph:

“his domain, insolent azure and green, runs along beaches **which the shipless waves call** by names ferociously Greek, Slav, Celtic”

The lack of verbs, which contributes to the static quality of the ST has to be conveyed in the TT. However, the absence of verb is more unusual and therefore starker in English. This probably explains why verbs or verbal forms have sometimes been added in some of the translations, as in Fowlie:

“young mothers and tall sisters whose eyes **reflect** their pilgrimages”
“The boredom of **saying**”

and Bernard:

“jewels **standing** on the rich soil of the groves”.

Both Bernard and Fowlie, in an effort to reduce the starkness of the TT, add extra verbs, which although they clarify the meaning of the segment diminish the effect of “immobilisation” described by Todorov.

2. Organisation

“Enfance” I is based on a descriptive constant of two elements, namely the object and the location of this object. This thematic binary pattern

of /object/ and /location/ is echoed in the rhythm and the structure of the poem. The whole poem is an enumeration of feminine characters, which are all associated with a place. The entire list of women can be divided into two. A first group of two women (“Cette idole”, “la fille à lèvres d’orange”), who are characterised by the singular and strong deictics (“cette”, “la”) and who are both associated with a natural (as opposed to humanised/cultural) environment (“des plages”, “la lisière de la forêt”). A second group consists of several women: “Dames”, “enfants et géantes, superbes noires”, “bijoux [...] — jeunes mères et grandes sœurs [...], sultanes, princesses [...], petites étrangères et personnes doucement malheureuses”, words which are all indefinite plural nouns associated with a mainly cultural or humanised environment (“terrasses”, “bosquets”, “jardinets”).¹

If we consider the first sequence of the poem from “ Cette idole” to “celtiques”, the polarisation /object/ /location/ is very clear. The sequence can be divided into two segments at the semicolon, the first segment being the description of the object (“cette idole”) and the second segment being the description of the location (“son domaine”). The two segments present many similarities. At the level of content, both segments describe the physical aspect of the object and the location (segment 1: “yeux noirs et crin jaune”; segment 2: “azur et verdure insolents”) and their genealogical aspect (by negation and contradiction in segment 1: “sans parents ni cour, plus noble que la fable”; segment 2: “sur des plages nommées, par des vagues sans vaisseaux de noms férocement grecs, slaves, celtiques”). Both segments open on a strong deictic and a noun. However, they have a very different structure. Whilst the first segment is mainly nominal, the second segment is grammatically more complex with a verb and its complements.

The impression of parallel is however sustained by three stylistic effects. The first effect is the delay and isolation in both segments of the last grammatical unit. The grammatical pattern of the first segment is very simple with nouns (N.) and adjectives (Adj.) combined as follows:

N. / N. -Adj. & N. -Adj. / N. & N./ (plus) Adj. (que) N. / Adj. & Adj.

¹ The single dash preceding “jeunes mères et grandes sœurs” may be considered as introducing an explanatory list / enumeration attached to the noun “bijoux”:

[L]e tiret, en début de phrase, indique que l’on passe au point suivant d’une série.
[Dupriez 1984, p. 80]

Thus the reader understands “bijoux” = “jeunes mères et grandes sœurs [...], sultanes, princesses [...], petites étrangères et personnes doucement malheureuses”. Consequently, this second sub-list is attached to the location of “bijoux”, which is “bosquets” and “jardinets”.

The pattern of grammatical pairs is broken by the comparison which delays the expected pair of adjectives. Although the meaning of the sentence may retain some ambiguity, the punctuation (comma before “mexicaine”) clearly shows that the adjectives “mexicaine et flamande” qualify “idole” and not “fable”.

The same phenomenon of delay can be observed in the second segment with the same apparent ambiguity. The agent (“par des vagues sans vaisseaux”) is placed early in the sentence, breaking the expected grammatical pattern and delaying the complement of the participle (“de noms féroce^{ment} grecs, slaves, celtiques”). Consequently, the adjectives “grecs, slaves, celtiques” are emphasised at the end of the segment echoing “mexicaine et flamande”. The unusual position of the agent creates an ambiguity and the segment “par des vagues sans vaisseaux” has thus sometimes been wrongly considered to be an adverbial phrase of place [cf. Fongaro 1985, pp. 81-82].

The parallel between the first and the second segment is further emphasised by a very strong rhythmic pattern in both segments:

segment 1: 1) Cette idole, 2) yeux noirs et crin jaune, 3) sans parents ni cour, 4) plus noble que la fable, 5) mexicaine et flamande;
segment 2: 1) son domaine, 2) azur et verdure insolents 3) court sur des plages nommées, 4) par des vagues sans vaisseaux, 5) de noms féroce^{ment} grecs, slaves, celtiques.

Finally, the parallel is emphasised by the homonyms “cour” and “court” and the repetition of the sounds [k] and [r] in both segments, as follows:

yeux noirs et crin jaune/ sans parents ni cour/ plus noble que la fable/ mexicaine et flamande;
 /rkr/ /rkr/ /k/ /kk/

azur et verdure insolents/ court sur des plages nommées/ par des vagues sans vaisseaux/ de noms féroce^{ment} grecs, slaves, celtiques.
 /rrr/ /krr/ /r/ /rrkk/

Whilst the first sequence shows a clear dichotomy between /object/ and /location/, the second sequence mixes the two elements:

“A la lisière de la forêt — les fleurs de rêve tintent, éclatent, éclairent, — la fille à lèvres d'orange, les genoux croisés dans le clair déluge qui sourd des prés, nudité qu'ombrent, traversent et habillent les arcs-en-ciel, la flore, la mer.”

This sequence opens on the /location/ (“A la lisière de la forêt”) and closes on the /location/ (“les arcs-en-ciel, la flore, la mer.”). The /object/ (“la fille à lèvres d'orange”) is described in this location (“les genoux croisés dans le clair déluge qui sourd des prés”) and gradually the /location/ becomes part of her body:

“nudité (/object/)qu'ombrent, traversent et habillent les arcs-en-ciel, la flore, la mer (/location/).”

The poem has evolved from a mainly binary rhythm to a mainly ternary rhythm, already announced at the end of the first sequence by the three adjectives “grecs, slaves, celtiques”. Overall, this sequence is radically different from the rest of the poem, with a distinctive ternary rhythm and a structure harmoniously integrating /object/ and /location/. One also notices the many accumulated verbs (seven in total).

For the second group of women (“Dames qui tournoient [...] malheureuses”), the rhythm accelerates as the /object/ is multiplied and the style is increasingly elliptical. The description is triggered by the noun “Dames” which is defined after the semi-colon, the following segment (“enfants [...] malheureuses”) being the expansion of the noun “Dames”. The reader perceives within this segment the development of two integrated lists:

1) the list explaining the noun “Dames”:

“enfants et géantes”, “superbes noires”, “bijoux” > “Dames”

2) The sub-list explaining the noun “bijoux”:

“jeunes mères et grandes soeurs”, “sultanes”, “princesses”, “petites étrangères et personnes” > “bijoux”, which is itself included in the first list. All the /objects/ are matched in pairs within the lists:

list for “Dames”: “enfants et géantes” /sound -ãt/; “superbes noires”, “bijoux” /beauty/

sub-list for “bijoux”: “jeunes mères et grandes soeurs” /family/; “sultanes”, “princesses” /nobility/; “petites étrangères et personnes” /anonymity/.

As opposed to the previous sequence, the /objects/ take over the location as the women seem to invade the setting.

In the closing sequence, the text returns to the initial binary rhythm and polarization of the first sequence. The /location/ (“cher corps”) precedes the /object/ (“cher cœur”), thus inverting the initial pattern. The plain identity between /object/ and /location/ is underlined by the same adjective “cher” to qualify both “cœur” and “corps” and the sound [k] repeated at the initial of each noun.

The constant /object/ /location/ constitutes a strong cohesive pattern binding the poem. The constant evolves towards an imbalance in the third paragraph as the objects multiply whilst the setting recedes. In the closing sequence, all trace of the natural setting disappears, the /location/ and /object/ become “corps” and “cœur” grouped within the single unit of the feminine body.

The phonic repetitions also create an effect of cohesion. The repetition of the sounds [k] and [r] has already been described in the analysis of the first sequence. The two sounds are still largely found in the second sequence ([k] is repeated six times and [r] seven times). The sound [r] is still very present in the third sequence (repeated twenty times). Some words present phonic similarities, which are sometimes extremely striking. They are usually adjacent in the ST and hence echo the systematic pairing of nouns in the poem (with the exception of the second paragraph):

- “**azur** et **verdure**”
- “**tintent**”, “**éclatent**, **éclairent**”, where the sounds [k], [t] and [r] onomatopoeically illustrate the verbs “tintent” and “éclatent”.
- “**tournoient**” “**terrasses**”
- “**enfantes**” and “**géantes**”
- “**jardinets**” and “**dégelés**”
- the systematic pairing of words and sounds is ultimately illustrated in the “«**cher corps**» et «**cher cœur**»”, which closes the poem

Implications for translation

A translation of “Enfance” I will have to convey the different elements of cohesion creating an impression of organisation and order. The poem is a systematic and organised listing of feminine characters. However, Bernard, Fowlie and Peschel consider the first character “Cette idole” to be masculine. This sometimes derives from their personal interpretation of Rimbaud's poetry. Fowlie, who is largely influenced by a mythical vision of Rimbaud's poetry, claims that the word “idole” (which is undeniably a feminine noun in French) is an image of Rimbaud himself (who had, by the way, blue eyes):

[H]e [Rimbaud] speaks of himself directly in his self-identification with a doll, an ‘idol’ that is orphaned and of some strange geographical origin. [Fowlie 1953, p. 57]

This assumption disrupts the essential effect of the poem which is the quasi-mechanical multiplication of the feminine characters from the single “idole” to the many “Dames” of the third sequence. It is important to respect the effect of list created by this multiplication; hence translating “enfantes” by

“children”, as Fowlie does, is clearly unsatisfactory. The poet deliberately chose “enfants”, which is a very rare form of the noun in French (one would usually find “une enfant”), in order to underline the femininity of the word, whilst creating a parallel with the ending of “géantes”.

Translators sometimes fail to reproduce the rhythmic patterns of the poem. Fowlie does not respect the syntax of the first sequence. He ignores the punctuation of the poem and thus fails to notice the first delay:

“This idol, black-eyed and yellow-haired, no parents and no palace,
but more princely than the Mexican and Flemish fairy story”

Besides misunderstanding the grammar of the sentence (“mexicaine et flamande” qualify “idole” and not “fable”), he loses the strong quintuple rhythm common to both segments of the first sequence. In the second segment, he clarifies the structure of the ST, but loses again the strong segmentation and ends up with a ternary rhythm, thus totally losing the parallel:

“1) His land of blatant blue and green, 2) covers beaches named by
shipless waves, 3) with names that are ferociously Greek, Slav,
Celtic.”

Any attempt to clarify the structure of the first sequence results in the loss of the structural ambiguity of the segment and the loss of its fragmentation. Bernard also fails to convey the rhythmic effect of the ST, when he chooses a direct construction with a relative clause for the second segment:

“his domain, insolent azure and green, runs along beaches which the
shipless waves call by names ferociously Greek, Slav, Celtic.”

The last sequence which echoes the parallel of the opening sequence with its dual “cher corps” “cher cœur” is also poorly rendered by translators. Bernard translates by “beloved body” and “dear heart” and thus completely loses the parallel. Fowlie loses the ST rhythm when translating:

“The boredom of saying ‘dear body,’ ‘dear heart.’” [Fowlie's
punctuation]

Any translation must try to respect the rhythmical patterns of the poem, which implies reproducing the punctuation. The list-effect created by co-ordinated and unco-ordinated nouns must also be conveyed although, as English favours closed co-ordination, the form of the ST will sometimes have to be slightly modified.

Finally, the phonic aspects of the poem should be reproduced whenever possible, especially in the first sequence where phonemes appear to follow a very regular pattern. The pair of words associated for their phonic quality have sometimes been ignored by translators. Fowlie who translates “azur and verdure” by “blue and green” loses the similarity of endings, while Peschel remains very literal with the translation “azure and verdure”. The group of verbs “tintent, éclatent, éclairent” is rendered by Fowlie as “tinkle, burst, illuminate”. Peschel gets closer to the ST with “tinkle, sparkle, illuminate”, where the two first verbs are more closely linked. Bernard's translation (“tinkle, flash, flare”) creates a very interesting parallel on the last two verbs, though this solution still isolates the first verb.

Fowlie's translation of “Enfantes et géantes”, which reads “giants and children”, respects neither the order nor the phonic aspects of the ST. Both Peschel and Bernard translate by “little girls and giantesses”, thus losing the phonic repetition and the proximity of the words “infante” and “enfante”. The phonic repetitions of “jardinets dégelés” are lost in all three translations, but partially compensated for by the phonic proximity of “grove” and “gardens”. The last sequence of the poem with the phonic parallel “«cher corps»”, “«cher cœur»” and the repetitions of the sounds [k] and [r] is partially compensated for by Bernard with the sound [b] and the vowel “o”:

“What a **bore**, the **moment** of the ‘**beloved body**’ and ‘**dear heart**’.”

Both Bernard and Fowlie translate the group of words “tournoient” “terrasses” by “strolling” “terraces”, which is phonemically an apt translation, but does not respect the meaning of the text. Peschel's translation of “tournoient” by “turn round and round” is more semantically accurate, but lengthens the rhythm of the segment.

3. Allusive meaning and clichés

The theme of femininity is part of the theme of childhood, as it combines both memory (“jeunes mères”, “grandes sœurs”), desire (“fille à lèvres d'orange” with the emphasis on the lip and the knees) and imagination especially with the word “idole” from greek *eidôlon* meaning “image” (but also the words “sultanes” and “princesses”). The different women of the poem match the stereotypes of escapist literature, which is favoured by children and adolescents. Rimbaud in an earlier poem, “Les poètes de sept ans”, already evokes the same themes of exotic settings and exotic women as a source of naïve literature:

A sept ans, il faisait des romans, sur la vie
Du grand désert, où luit la liberté ravie,
Forêts, soleils, rives, savanes! — Il s'aidait
De journaux illustrés où, rouge, il regardait
Des Espagnoles rire et des Italiennes.

The binary order of /location/ and /object/ here again is essential. Literary imagination, when inspired by femininity, appears to be trapped in the stereotypical binary order of /location/ and /object/ — or /corps/ and /cœur/. What Baudelaire calls “le vert paradis des amours enfantines”², the magic paradise of sensual femininity, becomes “ennui” in Rimbaud's “Enfance” I. The word “ennui” also means in the context of the XIXth century: “Tourment de l'âme causé par la perte de l'espérance” (*Littré*) and is thus a word bearing strong negative connotations. The boredom and torment of femininity when used as a source of inspiration is in “Enfance” I illustrated in the binary rhythm, the phonic and semantic pairings and the plain parallels of the poem, summed up in the final “cher corps” “cher cœur”.

The binary order “cœur”/ “corps” is opposed to the ternary order “corps, cœur, âme”, only illustrated in the rhythm of the third sequence, which is radically different in both style and images³. The poetry of femininity more often than not lacks the “âme”. It only offers “corps” and “cœur”, which Rimbaud deliberately emphasises with the quotation marks. The quotation marks also suggest an intertextual content, recalling Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal* and especially “Le Balcon”:

Je sais l'art d'évoquer les minutes heureuses,
Et revis mon passé blotti dans tes genoux.
Car à quoi bon chercher tes beautés langoureuses
Ailleurs qu'en ton cher cœur et qu'en ton cœur si doux?

The woman in Baudelaire's poem and especially her heart (“cher cœur”) is the source of the memory. But her body is also evoked throughout the poem:

Que ton sein m'était doux! que ton cœur m'était bon!

The woman and her /corps/ /cœur/ is a source of memory and creation. In Rimbaud's “Enfance” I, the theme of the woman is exploited as a catalogue of images⁴ (cf “idole”), which inspires only boredom.

² In “Moesta et Errabunda” *Les Fleurs du Mal*.

³ The group “corps, cœur, âme” is mythically and symbolically considered as the most achieved state of perfection. See especially the kabbalistic theories of “Sephiroth” (kabbalistic numbers) and the “tétraktis” according to which “trois est l'union de l'esprit et de la matière” [Chevalier & Gheerbrant 1982, pp. 972-6].

⁴ The poem can be considered as a catalogue of images, especially if, as Bivort believes, the entire list of women explains the first “idole” [1991a, p. 93].

The allusion to Baudelaire is also sustained by the fact that some of the characters described in Rimbaud's poem are found in *Les Fleurs du mal* (for "idole" see "Hymne", for "bijoux" see "Les Bijoux" and "Lola de Valence", for "superbes noires" see "Sed non satiata", for "sœurs" see "L'invitation au voyage" and "Femmes Damnées" and for "sultanes" see "Allégorie"). The most interesting comparison that may be drawn is of the word "géantes" with Baudelaire's poem "La Géante", the dream woman who becomes a landscape:

Du temps que la nature en sa verve puissante
Concevait chaque jour des enfants monstrueux,
J'eusse aimé vivre auprès d'une jeune géante,
Comme aux pieds d'une reine un chat voluptueux.

J'eusse aimé voir son corps fleurir avec son âme
Et grandir librement dans ses terribles jeux;
Deviner si son cœur couve une sombre flamme
Aux humides brouillards qui nagent dans ses yeux;

Parcourir à loisir ses magnifiques formes;
Ramper sur le versant de ses genoux énormes,
Et parfois en été, quand les soleils malsains,

Lasse la font s'étendre à travers la campagne,
Dormir nonchalamment à l'ombre de ses seins,
Comme un hameau paisible au pied d'une montagne.

Baudelaire's sonnet could well form part of the intertext of "Enfance" I. The reader recognises the model of writing used in the second sequence of "Enfance" I, where the setting becomes part of the character. The reader also recognises the vocabulary of the poem: "jeune géante", "ses yeux", "ses genoux", and especially "corps" and "cœur" to which Baudelaire adds "âme", the third element of the perfect ternary order missing in Rimbaud's poem.

However, the different women described by Rimbaud can be more generally said to belong to a cultural and literary tradition of real ("jeunes mères", "grandes sœurs", "petites étrangères") and imaginary women ("sultanes", "princesses"). As such they form literary clichés.

⁵ Fongaro [1988, pp. 51-56] also analysed "Enfance" I in parallel with Baudelaire's *Fleurs du mal* and noted the strong intertextual links between the two:

Un lecteur ne peut qu'être frappé par l'accumulation de termes baudelairiens dans le deuxième segment de ce troisième paragraphe d'*Enfance I*.

Implications for translation

The translator has to keep in mind that “Enfance” I transgresses and copies the canons of the accepted poetic language of femininity, using Baudelaire as intertextual background. The translator can only convey the ironic effect of the text by keeping the form of the expression. Any failure to reflect the form of the ST, by not respecting the structural, phonic and rhythmic features of the poem, reduces the chance for the reader to grasp the hermeneutic content of the poem. The translation should still communicate the ironic subversion of the stereotypes of the lyrical poetry of femininity.

TT

Childhood

I

This (1) idol, with black eyes and yellow mane (2), without kin or court (3), nobler than fable, Mexican and Flemish; her (4) domain, garish (5) azure and verdure, runs along (6) beaches named, by shipless waves, with names ferociously Greek, Slav and (7) Celtic.

At the edge of the forest — the dream flowers tinkle, burst and blaze (8) — the orange-lipped girl, cross-kneed (9) in the clear flood gushing up from the meadows, nudity shadowed, streaked (10) and clothed by the rainbows, the flora and (7) the sea (11).

Ladies eddying (12) on the terraces near the sea; little girls (13) and giantesses, superb black women in the verdigris moss, jewels upright on the rich soil of the groves and of the small, thawed gardens (14) — young mothers and big sisters, their eyes filled (15) with pilgrimages, sultans' wives and princesses (16) tyrannical in bearing and costume, little foreign girls and quietly unhappy women (17).

What a bore, the time of the “darling (18) body” and “darling heart” (19).

Decisions of detail

1. **This**: the strong deictic “cette” (cataphoric) which implies a direct link between the noun “idole” and the rest of the feminine characters has been conveyed in the TT.

2. **with black eyes and yellow mane**: the insertion of “with” reduces the extreme starkness of the ST structure. The pejorative noun “crin” is softened with “mane”, which does not evoke the same ideas of coarseness and untidiness.

3. **without kin or court**: the pair “kin” “court” compensates for the loss of some of the phonic pairing of words, such as “jardinets” “dégelés”. The repetition of the sound [k] throughout the first paragraph is hence partly conveyed in the TT (black, kin, court, Mexican, Greek, Celtic).

4. **her**: it is important at this point to correctly translate the possessive adjective, as it affects the perception of the whole paragraph and subsequently of the rest of the poem. “L'idole” is the initial feminine character, which determines and embodies the entire catalogue of women.

5. **garish**: the possible play on the proximity of the adjectives “insolent”/“insolite” analysed by Henry “**insolent**: étymologisme, ‘insolite’ (par leur intensité chromatique)” [1989, p. 22] is lost in the TT.

6. **runs along**: it is important to keep the personification of the ST “son domaine [...] court”. The ST active verb “courir” contrasts with the rest of the poem and especially the third paragraph where the location is entirely static and gradually fades away, overcrowded by the women. However, the parallel of the homophonic words “cour” and “court” is unfortunately lost in the TT.

7. **and**: I have added a conjunction to the two group of three words closing paragraphs one and two as the TT would have been too stark, English favouring closed co-ordination rather than apposition.

8. **tinkle, burst and blaze**: the phonic parallel “éclatent” “éclairent” is partly lost in the TT, although I have maintained a certain degree of euphony. “Tinkle, blast and blaze” would be phonemically more accurate. However, the word “blast”, because it is used as an ejaculation, and because of its association with explosives, seems too violent to evoke the image of bell-like flowers opening their petals to reveal colourful luminosity.

9. **the orange-lipped girl, cross-kneed**: there is a loss of the ST structure and use of nouns, which however increases speed and emphasises the ST effects of rhythmic and syntactic parallels. Furthermore, the incongruity of the expression “les genoux croisés” (instead of “en tailleur” or “les jambes croisées”) is also conveyed in the TT with “cross-kneed” constructed from the expression “cross-legged”.

10. **streaked**: Henry draws a parallel with “Vagabonds” “Je créais par delà la campagne **traversée** par des bandes de musique rare [...]” (Henry 1989 p. 22) and opts for the pictorial meaning of the verb “traverser” in “Enfance” I (as in ‘marquer de bandes et de reflets transversaux’), hence our translation by the pictorial verb “to streak” (as in “dawn was beginning to streak the sky when she left”).

11. The active structure (“qu'ombrent [...]”) has been rendered by a passive structure, which although it reduces the dynamism of the ST and the idea of an active setting, keeps the word order and hence the second paragraph still opens and closes on the setting (“At the edge of the forest” [...] “the rainbows, the flora and the sea.”).

12. **Ladies eddying**: the phonic effect created by the words ladies eddying compensates for the loss of the phonic repetitions “tournoient” “terrasses”.

13. **little girls**: the translation of the incongruous “enfantes” (one would expect “enfants” or “infantes”) is a challenge for the translator. “Little girls” only retains the semantic aspect of the ST and loses its strangeness.

14. **the small, thawed gardens**: the rare noun “jardinets”, suitably bourgeois and evoking a shrunken world where nature has been both tamed and dwarfed, is lost in the translation even if “small” does sound disparaging. The phonic effect “jardinets dégelés” is also lost in the translation although it is partly compensated by the phonic repetition in “small” and “thawed”. The repetition of the sounds [g] and [r] in “groves” and “gardens” is also compensatory.

15. **their eyes filled with pilgrimages**: I suspect the expression “aux regards pleins de pèlerinages” is constructed from the expression “les yeux pleins de larmes”, hence the translation “filled with”.

16. **sultans' wives and princesses**: many translators have chosen to translate “sultanes” by “S/sultanas” (Fowlie, Bernard and Peschel), which most commonly suggests a juicy raisin. The absence of conjunction “sultanas, princesses” increases the danger of unintentional humour. I have translated “sultanes” by sultans' wives to eliminate the danger of misunderstanding and I have added a conjunction as the TT would have been too stark without it.

17. **quietly unhappy women**: the ambiguity of the structure is lost in that “doucement malheureuses”, which could qualify “petites étrangères et personnes” or simply “personnes” only qualifies “personnes” in the TT. The postposition of the group “quietly unhappy” would result in a gallicism. The noun “people” is too neutral to translate “personnes” (feminine noun) and it breaks the effect of list created by the accumulation of female objects. Besides, “personne” can be used as a synonyme for “femme” in French (as in “elle est bonne personne”).

18. **darling**: the irony of the ST is conveyed in the TT, as the adverbial use of the noun “darling” is quite often ironic in English.

19. **“darling body” and “darling heart”**: the phonic parallel “corps”/“cœur” has been lost in the TT.

II

C'est elle, la petite morte, derrière les
rosiers. — La jeune maman trépassée
30 descend le perron — La calèche du cousin crie
sur le sable — Le petit frère — (il est aux Indes!)
là, devant le couchant, sur le pré d'œILLETS.
— Les vieux qu'on a enterrés tout droits dans le
rempart aux giroflées.

35 L'essaim des feuilles d'or entoure la maison
du général. Ils sont dans le midi. — On suit
la route rouge pour arriver à l'auberge vide.
Le château est à vendre; les persiennes sont
détachées. — Le curé aura emporté la clef de
40 l'église. — Autour du parc, les loges
des gardes sont inhabitées. Les palissades sont
si hautes qu'on ne voit que les cimes bruissantes.
D'ailleurs il n'y a rien à voir là dedans.

45 Les prés remontent aux hameaux sans
coqs, sans enclumes. L'écluse est levée.
O les calvaires et les moulins du désert,
les îles et les meules.

50 Des fleurs magiques bourdonnaient. Les
talus le berçaient. Des bêtes d'une élégance
fabuleuses circulaient. Les nuées s'amassaient
sur la haute mer faite d'une éternité de
chaudes larmes.

From Guyaux 1985b, p. 19.

“Enfance” II, analysis and stategic decisions

1. Cinematographic style

The first poem of the series “Enfance” is mainly constructed around multiple feminine characters, which have in common their anonymity. Conversely, the beginning of “Enfance” II describes mainly singular objects. The poem is strikingly characterised by the use of definite articles (“la petite morte”, “la jeune maman”, etc.). The different elements of the description are clearly detached from one another. The individuality of each element (or group of elements) of the description is emphasised by the use of dashes, especially in the first and second paragraph, creating a clear typographic and rhythmic demarcation.

The first two paragraphs especially have in common a very bare grammatical style with only one adverb (“d'ailleurs”) and many appositions, and the use of dashes and interpolated clauses. Overall, the poem is built on the syntactical device of asyndeton which we also analysed in “Enfance” I. The disjointed style thus created gives the poem a ‘cinematographic’ effect, as the focus moves constantly from one element to the other. The effect of moving focus is emphasised by the use of active verbs in the description, namely “descend”, “entoure”, “suit” and “remontent”. The use of definite articles and the disjointed style of the poem result in an effect of presence. Each character seems to appear as in film and is pointed out (“c'est elle”). The fact that the description is anchored in the present tense, in the first, second and third paragraphs, also conveys the idea of instantaneous apparition.

The reader follows the spatial progression of description. In the first sequence, the descriptive sentences follow a very stable minimal grammatical pattern of /subject/ + /verb/ + /location/, with a few minor alterations. One notices the frequent use of prepositions (“derrière”, “sur”, “devant”, “sur”, “dans”). In the second sequence, the reader is taken out of the setting of the house and out of this regular grammatical pattern. Included in an impersonal “on”, the reader follows the progression down a road (“on suit la route rouge”) going past different elements of a universe, presumably a village with its castle and church. The description gains in speed as the sentences seem to flow more freely. The reader follows the narrator's reasoning as the intrusions in the description become frequent. These intrusions are obvious in the following examples:

“L'essaim des feuilles d'or entoure la maison du général. *Ils sont dans le midi.*”

“Le curé *aura emporté* la clef de l'église”

“Les palissades sont si hautes qu'on ne voit que les cimes bruissantes. *D'ailleurs il n'y a rien à voir là dedans*”

Different elements are evoked and conclusions are drawn. However, the speed of this mental process sometimes eludes grammatical correction as in the first example (“L'essaim des feuilles d'or entoure la maison du général. Ils sont dans le midi.”) were one would expect “il (le général) est dans le midi”. This grammatical oddity conveys the speed and dynamism of the narrator's logic. It is as if what is inferred was common knowledge, the “ils” presumably referring to the family of the general.

The reader is implicitly supposed to accept the narrator's thoughts. At this point, description verges on narration and the reader is drawn into a story which, he should feel, is somehow familiar. This story, however, is full of gaps, creating an impression of mystery. The view of the reader is as restricted as the view of the narrator. The restriction of the narrator's vision and knowledge of the world is especially obvious in the following sentence:

“Les palissades sont si hautes qu'on **ne** voit **que** les cimes bruissantes.”

The impossibility of seeing exactly what is going on results in a feeling of “inquiétante étrangeté” emphasised by the repetition of the sound [s] (in “palissades/ sont/ si/ cimes/ bruissantes”).

In the third paragraph, the impression of free movement is increased, especially after “l'écluse est levée”, as the description flows unfocused from one element to the other and the verbs disappear. The intrusion of the narrator in the description is once more perceived through the change of tone. The description is interrupted by a nominal sentence introduced by “O”, which possesses both oral and affective functions¹:

“O les calvaires et les moulins du désert, les îles et les meules!”

A rhythm is created by the two pairs of plural nouns in apposition with a phonic harmony.

¹ Henry points out the striking difference in tone:

[...] seule phrase exclamative, qui fonctionne vraiment, diraient les musiciens, comme une modulation (l'interjection et la mélodie exclamative font passer dans une autre tonalité). [Henry 1989, pp. 22-3]

Implications for translation

The poem is characterised by the rhetorical device of asyndeton, which results in a very disjointed style, focusing on one element at a time. The ‘cinematographic’ effect thus created must be conveyed in the TT. The relative grammatical simplicity will have to be retained, even if it results in the poem sounding starker. The syntactical simplicity conveys a certain degree of bareness. Fowlie translates the first two sentences as follows:

“That’s she, the little girl behind the rose bushes, **and she’s dead**.
— The young mother, **also dead**, is coming down the steps.”

Instead of translating using direct adjectives, Fowlie chooses attributive forms, thus losing the bare rhythm and structure of the ST. He also adds active verbs where the ST has opted for passive forms:

“The old men *they’ve buried* upright in the wall covered with gillyflowers.”

The direct construction creates a link between this sentence and what precedes as the reader gets the false impression that the previous characters “la petite morte”, “la jeune maman”, “le cousin” and “le petit frère” have collectively buried “les vieux”. Furthermore, Fowlie does not entirely reproduce the punctuation of the ST and drops some of the dashes, which results in a reduction of the staccato rhythm:

“The priest must have taken away the key of the church. Around the park, [...]”

Likewise, Bernard does not respect the strong punctuation of the ST, which often doubles dashes and full stops creating strong divisions in the poem:

“It is she, the little dead girl, behind the rose-bushes — The young mamma, [...] in the meadow of pinks — The old men [...] They are in the South — You follow [...] the shutters are hanging loose — The priest [...] the key of the church — Around [...]”

The ‘cinematographic’ style of the ST is emphasised by the use of the present tense, which creates an effect of instantaneous action. To describe an action taking place literally before the reader’s eyes, translators have sometimes hesitated between a non progressive and a progressive form. The following examples reveal the discrepancies from one translation to the next:

“The deceased young mamma **descends** the flight of steps.”
(Peschel)

“The young mamma, deceased, **comes down** the steps” (Bernard)

“The young mother, also dead, **is coming down** the steps.” (Fowlie)

The inclusion of the reader in the narration, through the use of “on” in the ST, must be rendered in the TT. Some translators have chosen to emphasise the effect of inclusion by translating “on” by “you”:

“**You** take the red road” (Fowlie)

“**You** follow the red road” (Bernard)

“**You** can only see the tree tops” (Fowlie).

Peschel chooses the impersonal “one” to translate “on”, which, although it is more literal, partly loses the effect of inclusion:

“**One** follows the red road to arrive at the empty inn.”

“**one** sees only the rustling treetops.”

A passive construction creates a more impersonal effect, but avoids having to choose between “you” and “one”, as in the translation adopted by Bernard for “on ne voit que les cimes bruissantes”, which reads “nothing can be seen but the rustling tops of trees”.

The process of inferring conclusions and hypotheses from visual clues, which betrays the presence of the narrator and his lack of full knowledge of the universe he describes, is not always conveyed in the translations. For example, the use of a hypothetical future perfect in “le curé **aura emporté** la clef” is not conveyed in Fowlie and Peschel's translations:

“**must have taken away** the key of the church.”

The use of “must” conveys the impression that the narrator is self-confident about his knowledge.

2. Presence and absence

The poem “Enfance” II is built on a paradox. The effect of presence, conveyed by the multiplication of instantaneous apparitions and by the lively style of the description using verbs expressing movement, is undermined by the actual content of the poem. The paradox is pointed out by Guyaux in his analysis of the first paragraph:

[L]a phrase réunit un principe de présence et un principe adjacent et contradictoire d'absence. [1985b, p. 80]

It is as if the various elements of the description, whose existence should be granted by the verb “être” (repeated many times: “c'est elle”, “il **est** aux Indes!”, “le château **est** à vendre”, “les persiennes **sont** détachées”, etc.), were denied any form of life.

The characters described in the first paragraph are linked by a common death conveyed through the adjectives “morte”; “trépassée” and “enterrés”. Various generations of characters are affected by death. They are presumably different members of a same family, namely two feminine characters (“la petite morte” and “la jeune maman”), two masculine characters (“cousin” and “petit frère” which echoes “petite morte”) and a group of old people (“les vieux”). Death is associated with the theme of flowers: “rosiers”, “œillets” and “giroflées”.

In the second paragraph, although the theme of death is not clearly expressed, the content strongly evokes absence and emptiness, through the words “dans le midi”, “vide”, “à vendre”, “détachées”, “emporté”, “inhabitées” and “rien”. The dominant negative feeling of emptiness affects different types of buildings, namely: “la maison du général”, “l'auberge”, “le château”, “l'église”, “les loges”. They all represent different orders of society and, in many ways, the description is organised according to the same logic as for the semantic thread of the family exploited in the first paragraph which follows a hierarchy of age. The different levels of society evoked in the second paragraph are the army (“général”), the tradespeople (“auberge”), the bourgeoisie or nobility (“château”), religion (“curé”, “église”), and finally the rural or municipal police (“loges des gardes”). Different personalities of this stratified universe are evoked (“général”, “curé” and “gardes”). They are all away, as if they had fled a catastrophe, not even bothering to close the shutters. The theme of vegetation is again present and seems to enclose the paragraph with the segments “l'essaim des feuilles d'or” and “les cimes bruissantes”, which are both linked to the idea of noise. Furthermore, both the first and the second paragraphs close on surrounding walls with “rempart” and “palissades”, which suggest the idea of a secluded world.

In the third paragraph, the description still retains the impression of absence of the second paragraph with the repetition of “sans” (“**sans** coqs, **sans** enclumes”). The universe described is characterised by the absence of human or animal noise. Although this universe is not as enclosed as the universe of the two previous sequences, negative impressions still prevail, conveyed through the words “calvaires” and “moulin du désert”. Isolation is also suggested in the words “hameaux” and “îles”.

Throughout the poem, the poverty of the phonic effects also emphasises the impression of bareness and absence conveyed by the grammatical structures and the themes. The sound [r] is predominant throughout the poem, notably in the first sentences, together with the sound [p]:

petite morte **d**errière **r**osiers **t**répassée **p**erron **c**rie **p**etit **f**rère **p**ré
enterrés **d**roits **r**empart

One also notices, in the first paragraph, the repetition of the violent sound [k] in:

calèche **c**ousin **c**rie **c**ouchant

In the third paragraph, the phonic repetitions affect the sounds [k], [m] and [l]:

“**L**es près **r**emontent aux **h**ameaux sans **c**oqs, sans **e**n**cl**umes.
L'**e**cluse est levée. O **l**es **c**alvaires et **l**es **m**oulins du désert, **l**es îles
et **l**es **m**eules.”

Once more, the repetition of the sound [k] conveys an impression of violence.

Contrary to the rest of the poem, the closing sequence suggests presence rather than absence. The different “actants” are vegetal (“les fleurs magiques”), animal (“des bêtes”) and human with (“le”—underlined in the manuscript). It is impossible to decide on the identity of the character “le” refers to. The adjectives “magiques”, “fabuleuse” suggest an imaginary world. While the rest of the poem was chiefly characterised by singular definite articles, this sequence alternates plural definite and indefinite articles at the beginning of each sentence:

“Des fleurs”; “Les talus”; “Des bêtes”; “Les nuées”

In the last sequence, the description switches from the present to the past tense. The verbs are less static than in the rest of the poem (“bourdonnaient”, “berçaient”, “circulaient”, “s'amassaient”). This sequence creates a contrast both because of the movement conveyed by the different verbs and the impression of presence.

However, the closing sequence is still linked to the rest of the poem, notably because of the parallel between the first sentence of the closing sequence (“Des fleurs magiques bourdonnaient”) and the opening of the second paragraph (“L'essaim des feuilles d'or”). Both segments work on the same metaphoric device, as the vegetal element is described using a word

normally attributed to insects. The two segments strikingly form a chiasmus, as the two categories /insect/ and /vegetal/ are inverted:

“l'essaim” (bees, flying insect)	$\backslash /$ $/ \backslash$	“feuilles d'or” (vegetal)
“les fleurs magiques” (vegetal)		“bourdonnaient” (bees, flying insect)

Finally, the last sentence of the closing sequence, after the euphoria suggested by the rest of the paragraph, reveals a darker, more pessimistic mood. This sentence is longer and syntactically more elaborate. Its construction is strikingly different as the verb is not in final position. It also presents a very regular rhythm, formed by two segments of eleven syllables:

“Les nuées s'amassaient sur la haute mer” (11 syllables with possible dieresis on “nu-ées”)/ “faite d'une éternité de chaudes larmes” (11 syllables)

While the first segment is built on the idea of a rising momentum (also reflected in the words “s'amassaient”, “haute”), the tone of the second segment breaks the lyrical ascension. The sequence thus closes on the word “larmes” which contrasts with the joyful vision of “fleurs magiques” and “bêtes d'une élégance fabuleuse”. The last impression, after an optimistic interlude, is one of desperation and sadness.

Implications for translation

The paradox underlying “Enfance” II lies in the movement and life of the description with its fast moving focus being contradicted by a general impression of death and emptiness. The paradox seems to illustrate the idea of “taking a trip down memory lane”, as the reader is taken down a path populated by absence and death. (I shall analyse this idea in greater depth in the following paragraph.) The paradox has to be conveyed in the TT, which can only be achieved by a good rendering of the ‘cinematographic’ style of the ST.

The absence of animal and human noise conveyed in the third paragraph by the plain repetition “sans coqs, sans enclumes” is not perceived by Peschel, who translates “coqs” by “weathercocks”.

Fowlie loses the parallel created by the segments “essaim des feuilles”, “cimes bruissantes” and “fleurs bourdonnaient”. The theme of noisy vegetation is not fully rendered as he translates “bruissantes” by “moving in

the wind". As for the chiasmus formed by the semantic parallel between the segments "l'essaim des feuilles d'or"/ "des fleurs magiques bourdonnaient", both Fowlie and Bernard offer a semantically apt translation:

Fowlie:	"A swarm"		"gold leaves"
		\ /	
		/ \	
	"Magic flowers"		"were buzzing"
Bernard:	"A swarm"		"golden leaves"
		\ /	
		/ \	
	"Magic flowers"		"were droning"

Peschel, however, translates "bourdonnaient" by "murmuring", losing the semantic effect of repetition.

Bernard is the only translator who attempts to compensate for the loss of alternating definite and indefinite articles of the ST. He alternates nouns without articles and nouns with articles:

"Magic flowers", "The slopes", "Fabulously elegant beasts", "The clouds"

Fowlie emphasises the regular movement of the final sentence, cut into two rhythmic groups by an added comma:

"Clouds were massed together over the high seas, made of the warm tears of all time."

3. Intertextual content

In the first paragraph of this analysis, I have shown how the description is not always objective as the narrator sometimes intervenes to pass a judgement or give reasons for his incomplete knowledge. The narrator's intrusion is also apparent in other instances and notably in the first paragraph, where the description is interrupted by an exclamation in brackets "(il est aux Indes!)". The exclamation mark, the dash after "le petit frère" and the brackets isolate this lexical unit and act as "signes d'assise" (cf. above, ch. II, i). The narrator provides an item of information, which is meant to surprise. And indeed the reader is surprised as he notices a denotative contradiction between the exclamation "il est aux Indes!" and the subsequent adverbial reference "là". The description is inconsistent. How can the little brother be "aux Indes" and "là" at the same time? This

incongruity is meant to trigger the reader's reaction, enabling him to perceive the irony of this section of the poem.

In the sentence: "Le petit frère — (il est aux Indes!) là, devant le couchant, sur le pré d'œillet", Riffaterre [1990b] has pointed out a play on the culturally recognizable unit "œillet d'Inde". The play on words is meant to be perceived by the reader. The logical contradiction "il est aux Indes"/ "là, devant le couchant, sur le pré d'œillet" is supposed to attract the reader's attention to the content of the poem. The transgression of this stable unit of the lexicon has a humorous effect, which the poet underlines with the exclamation mark. However, Riffaterre did not entirely perceive the blackness of this humour, as in the 19th century "l'œillet d'Inde" was otherwise named "fleur des morts" (see *Littré*, for "œillet"). This suggests that, like the two initial characters, the little brother is also dead².

Henry thinks that the same kind of transgression could apply to the word "giroflées". Rimbaud could have derived his image ("Les vieux qu'on a enterrés tout droit dans le rempart aux giroflées") from the name of the flower "giroflée des murailles" [Henry 1989, p. 24]. Gillyflowers were traditionally associated with walls. In many literary productions, this flower, sometimes nicknamed "l'amante des ruines" (from 1806 in a poem by Joseph Treneuil, "Les tombeaux de Saint-Denis"), is described growing from ruins and walls³. This is probably why *Littré* quotes Lamartine's lines "L'humble giroflée aux lambris suspendue/ Comme un doux souvenir flottant sur les débris". This quotation takes on a humorous note when put in parallel with "Enfance" II via the expression "vieux débris", which denotes old people.

Fongaro, in his detailed analysis of the possible literary sources of the word "giroflées" [1994, pp. 43-50], puts forward the possible political implications of the use of the word "giroflée" in the context of the Commune⁴.

² One may also consider in parallel expressions such as "Manger/sucer les pissenlits par la racine".

³ The word "giroflée" is linked to the words "mur", "muret" and "murette", for more perverse reasons. In Timmermans's dictionary [1903] we find the following explanation:

Giroflée: on l'appelle en rouchien [patois from the north of France] *cocardeau*. Ce mot traduit *muret*, autre nom de la *girofle* au parfum pénétrant. Cette fleur pousse sur les *murs*. Malheureusement au pied des murs il pousse des *murettes* qui ont leur odeur nauséabonde, car les gens pressés profitent de cet abri pour *cocarder* [faire un étron tirebouchonné]. Voilà ce que veut dire *murette*. — *Muret*, devait conduire à *murette* et *murette* à *cocardeau*, étant donnée l'habitude de rechercher les associations par jeux de mots; *cocarder* à *coquer*, fiche, foutre. Celle-ci est triviale. On devrait laisser les fleurs tranquilles.

⁴ Fongaro offers in fact two possible explanations to the use of the word "giroflées" in "Enfance"II:

Il n'est pas impossible, d'abord, que les souvenirs de lectures et les souvenirs vécus [...] aient été réveillés par l'emprisonnement de Verlaine en juillet 1873: dans ce cas «les vieux» serait un terme désignant familièrement les prisonniers, et les giroflées n'auraient absolument aucun sens politique. Mais il se peut aussi que «les vieux qu'on a enterrés tout droits» soit une

Although we may doubt his political conclusions, it is interesting to see how all three sources quoted by Fongaro describe the flower in association with walls and more specifically the walls of prisons. The semantic thread *gillyflowers > walls > death*, however, is clearer still if we bear in mind that the plant was also commonly associated with death in the 19th century:

En discours jardinier, la giroflée se trouve être un métonyme de la mort, cette fleur ayant joué dans les bouquets funéraires du temps de Rimbaud le rôle aujourd'hui monopolisé par le chrysanthème. [Riffaterre 1990b, p. 95]

Riffaterre suggests that the poem is built overall around the word “memory” and the idea of living dead souvenirs [idem, p. 94]. The characters of the world of “Enfance” II are still alive, although paradoxically they are dead, which is why the style of the description contrasts with the themes of death and absence. I would like to add that this paradox of memory is also evoked in some of Baudelaire's *Fleurs du mal*, and notably in “La Chevelure”:

[...]
Extase! Pour peupler ce soir l'alcôve obscure
Des souvenirs dormant dans cette chevelure,
Je la veux agiter dans l'air comme un mouchoir!

La langoureuse Asie et la brûlante Afrique,
Tout un monde lointain, absent, presque défunt,
Vit dans tes profondeurs, forêt aromatique!

Rimbaud could have borrowed the idea of living-dead childhood from many literary sources, as it is a topos of literary creation. However, we can draw another parallel with Hugo's *Les chansons des rues et des bois*, a collection of poems published in 1865. In the introductory paragraph dated “Hauteville-House octobre 1865”, Hugo presents his “chansons” as a product of nostalgia for childhood and adolescence, which he compares with a dead woman:

Notre adolescence, cette morte charmante, nous apparaît, et veut qu'on pense à elle.

His words are strikingly reminiscent of “Enfance” II, where a deceased young lady appears like a ghost (“C'est elle, la petite morte, derrière les rosiers”).

Rimbaud's poem is an ironic, literal rendering of this vision of memory. Memory becomes the land of death and absence described by

allusion aux Communards emprisonnés après la semaine sanglante de mai 1871 [...]. [1994, p. 50]

Baudelaire, whilst the imaginary world of the last sequence, which could offer an ultimate lyrical escape, is threatened by the clouds and the sea of tears. The motif of “haute mer faite d'une éternité de chaudes larmes” is itself derived from the phrasal intertext “pleurer à chaudes larmes”, which suggests ultimate sorrow.

Implications for translation

The lexical and phrasal intertextual features must be transposed whenever possible. The first rule concerns the respect of punctuation. The segment “(il est aux Indes!)” is graphically isolated in order to attract the reader's attention. Fowlie does not respect the ST punctuation and misses out the dash before the brackets, which reduces the effect of isolation. The play on the collocation “œillet d'Inde” is, however, a challenge for the translator. It is practically impossible to achieve without radically changing the sentence as the English for “œillet d'Inde” is “French marigold”. Hence, the translation would read: “The little brother — (he is in France!) there against the sunset, in the meadow of marigolds”. This loses the idea of being away in the distant land of memory. One could consider other names of plants such as “African violet” (saintpaulia). The problem, however, is the loss of the connotations of “œillet d'Inde” as “fleur des morts”. The translator may choose to ignore the humour of the poem and translate literally. This is the solution adopted by Fowlie, Bernard and Peschel. However, it seems to me that a satisfactory translation should retain at least the idea of a play on the notions of death and flowers.

As for “chaudes larmes”⁵, the literal rendering of “pleurer à chaudes larmes” being “to cry one's eyes/one's heart out”, there is a need for compensation. Peschel offers an interesting solution with:

“the high sea made of an eternity of **bitter** tears”

This is more idiomatic and faithful than the literal “warm tears” found both in the translations by Fowlie and Bernard.

⁵ Fongaro [1985, pp. 21-30] backing Denis' theory, points out that this image probably comes from either Michelet's *La Sorcière*, where the Church will be defeated by “l'humble flot des tièdes larmes qu'un monde a versées, une mer de pleurs”, or from Hugo's *Contemplations*:

Les siècles devant eux poussent, désespérés,
Les révolutions, monstrueuses marées,
Océans faits des pleurs de tout le genre humain.

If we give credit to this interpretation, the other possible translation would be “tears of blood” which could retain the idea of revolution and destruction, but also the idea of warmth.

TT

II.

There she is (1), the dead little girl, behind the rosebushes. — The deceased young mamma (2) comes down the steps — The cousin's carriage creaks (3) on the sand — the little brother — (he is a long way off in India (4) !) — right there against the sunset, in the field of forget-me-nots (5). — The old folks (6) who have been buried upright in the rampart shrouded (7) with wallflowers (8) (9).

Dead foliage swarms gold around the general's house (10). They are in the south. — You follow the red road and reach (11) the empty inn. The castle is up for sale; the shutters are unhinged. — The priest will have taken away the key of the church. — Around the park, the gatekeepers' lodges are uninhabited. The palisades are so high that you can only see the rustling treetops. Besides, there is nothing to see inside.

The meadows slope up (12) to the hamlets with no cockerels (13), no anvils. The lock gate is up. O the calvaries (14) and the mills of the wilderness, the islands and the haystacks! (15)

Magic flowers were buzzing (16). The embankments were cradling him. Fabulously elegant beasts were moving along. The clouds were heavily piling up (17) over the open sea (18) made of an eternity of salt (19) tears.

Decisions of detail

1. **There she is:** the effect of presence (both of a character and of a narrator) is emphasised in the TT through the ejaculation. The reader perceives the effect of instantaneous apparition and is thrown into the universe of the text.

2. **young mamma:** in order to differentiate between the “jeunes mères” of “Enfance” I and “la jeune maman” of “Enfance” II and in order to emphasise the childlike register of the ST, I have chosen the word “mamma” (also adopted by both Bernard and Peschel). It evokes, however, a rather Victorian setting which results in a strong socio-historical particularisation. I have also considered “mummy” and “young mum”. However, because of the possible semantic clash with the homonym “Egyptian mummy”, “mummy” may sound too intrusive and incongruous. “Young mum” is also inappropriate as it sounds too much like tabloid journalism and connotes a lower-class sociolect.

3. The ST phonic effect is partly reproduced in the TT with the repetition of sound [k] in “cousin's carriage creaks”. The proximity of “crie sur” and “crisser” is lost.

4. **he is a long way off in India:** I have retained “India”, and have emphasised the idea of distance so that the reader may perceive a

denotative contradiction between the exclamation “he is a long way off in India!” and the subsequent adverbial reference “right there”.

5. **in the field of forget-me-nots**: the play on the semantic unit “œillets d'Inde” is lost. An equivalent pun with ‘African violet’ could have been used, however the association of flowers with death would then have been lost. The word “daisies” is euphemistically used to evoke death as: “push up the daisies”, “under the daisies”, “grin at the daisies”, “turn up (one's) toes to the daisies”. However, I have chosen “forget-me-nots” in order to point out the importance of living-dead souvenirs. Furthermore, the repetition of the sound [d] in “field of forget-me-nots” compensates for the loss of the repetition of the sound [e] in “pré d'œillets”. I have chosen the word “field” rather than the word “meadow”, as “meadow” has pastoral connotations and evokes fresh colours, spring and summer, whereas “field” via the expressions “killing field”, “battle field”, “Elysean Fields” or “fields of poppies” evokes death. However, one may object that this results in the loss of the cohesive effect created by the repetition within the series “Enfance” of the word “pré”.

6. **the old folks**: “les vieux” is a familiar and sentimental way of designating old people. I have kept the tone and register of the ST with “old folks” and I have avoided a possible particularisation (cf. “old men” in Fowlie, Bernard and Peschel).

7. **the rampart shrouded**: I have chosen “shrouded” rather than “overgrown” (Bernard) or “covered” (Fowlie) in order to convey the connotations of death implied by the word “giroflées”. To shroud means “to cover as to conceal” and “to put a shroud on a corpse, lay in a shroud; hence, to prepare for burial, bury” [Oxford Dictionary].

8. **wallflowers**: the possible play on the lexical unit “giroflée des murailles” (“l'amante des ruines”) is emphasised through the translation “wallflowers” (rather than “gillyflowers”), which contains the substantive wall.

9. The repetition of the harsh sounds [p] and [k] has been partly lost. However, this loss is compensated by the repetition of the sounds [d] (in “dead”, “deceased”, “down”, “sand”, “India”, “field”, “shrouded”) and [k] (in “coming”, “cousin”, “carriage”, “creaks”, “folks”)

10. **Dead foliage swarms gold around the general's house**: a more literal translation such as: “The swarm of golden leaves surrounds the general's house. They are in the south.” changes the meaning and structure of the poem as the reader may feel that the deictic “they” refers back to “golden leaves”. Hence, the decision to translate “feuilles” by a singular collective noun. “Golden leaf” (tobacco) or “gold leaf” would create unfortunate collocations. The choice of “dead foliage” emphasises the semantic threads of “death” and “flora”. “Swarms gold” creates a poetical cliché which is apt in rendering the ST, it also points out the impression of “inquiétante étrangeté”.

11. **the red road and reach**: the ST repetition of the sound [r] (route rouge arrive) are reproduced in the TT.

12. **the meadows slope up**: the progression of the narrator's view, which follows the line of the horizon is rendered in "slope up".

13. **cockerels**: I have opted for the meaning of "coqs" here, rather than "weathercocks". The hamlets are silent, there is no activity whether human or animal. The word "cockerels" avoids the word "cocks", which could create unintentional humour.

14. **calvaries**: I have chosen the religious word "calvaries" rather than a less technical "crosses" (Fowlie), as the word "calvaries" etymologically stems from the Latin "calvaria" (skulls) and bears stronger connotations of death and human suffering than "crosses".

15. The sounds [k] and [l] (especially in the words "**coqs**, **enclumes**, **écluse**, **calvaires**") are partly lost. However, they have been compensated for in the words "**cockerels**, **lock**, **calvaries**, **haystacks**".

16. **Magic flowers were buzzing**: through the use of the verb "to buzz" which usually applies to insects, I have conveyed the semantic effect of parallel "L'essaim des feuilles d'or"/ "Des fleurs magiques bourdonnaient".

17. **The clouds were heavily piling up**: the loss of the substantive "nuées" ("heavy clouds") has been compensated by splitting with the adverb "heavily".

18. **open sea**: "haute mer" cannot be translated literally by "high sea(s)" (Peschel & Fowlie). A culturally and semantically apt translation of "haute mer" (also found in "Enfance" IV) can only be "open sea".

19. **salt tears**: the loss of the phrasal intertext "pleurer à chaudes larmes" is compensated by the salt tears which evokes the expression "to weep salt tears".

III

55 Au bois il y a un oiseau, son chant vous
arrête et vous fait rougir.

Il y a une horloge qui ne sonne pas.

Il y a une fondrière avec un nid de
bêtes blanches.

60 Il y a une cathédrale qui descend et un
lac qui monte.

Il y a une petite voiture abandonnée
dans le taillis, ou qui descend le sentier
en courant, enrubannée.

65 Il y a une troupe de petits comédiens
en costumes, aperçus sur la route à travers
la lisière du bois.

Il y a enfin, quand l'on a faim et soif,
quelqu'un qui vous chasse.

From Guyaux 1985b, p. 20.

“Enfance” III, analysis and strategic decisions

1. Textual organisation

Spitzer analyses in “Enfance” III a stylistic feature he calls “chaotic enumeration” [Spitzer 1961]. “Enfance” III creates a universe characterised by lack of coherence and cohesion. The immediate impression of chaos described by Spitzer is also perceived by Suzanne Bernard who sees in “Enfance” III “des évocations insolites et présentées sans lien” [Bernard and Guyaux 1981, p. 485]. The impression of chaos stems from the variety of the elements described, but also from the syntactic form of the poem. The poem is mainly constructed from the rhetorical process of parataxis and visual juxtaposition. Parataxis is defined as the “dispos[ition] côte à côte [de] deux propositions sans marquer le rapport de dépendance qui les unit” [Dupriez 1984, p. 328]. In “Enfance” III, the process is exemplified through the list of grammatically and syntactically unrelated elements (“il y a un oiseau”, “il y a une horloge”, “il y a une cathédrale”, etc).

However, the apparent chaos of the description is counteracted by an impression of order and organisation. The enumeration in “Enfance” III contrasts with the enumeration of “Enfance” I & II. In “Enfance” I especially, as each element of the enumeration emerges independently, without being linked by co-ordinating conjunctions to the preceding element. Hence, the poem gradually forms a catalogue with each object being interchangeable. In “Enfance” III, each element is introduced by “il y a”. The poem is completely dependent on the anaphoric repetition of “il y a” for its structure. Each “il y a” seems to assert the unique individual existence of each of the objects described. The poem's structure is characterised by syntactic predictability with the anaphora “**il y a**” always followed (with the exception of the closing sequence) by a noun or an adjective and a noun:

“Au bois **il y a** [...]
Il y a [...]
Il y a [...]
Il y a [...]” etc.

The structure is often coupled with a relative clause, which adds to the repetitious style of the poem:

“[...] **qui** ne sonne pas
[...] **qui** descend
[...] **qui** monte
[...] **qui** descend
[...] **qui** vous chasse”

At the semantic level, one notices the strict organisation of the different elements enumerated in the description. If we exclude the final sequence, natural and artificial (man-made) elements systematically alternate, as follows:

“oiseau” (NAT.)
“horloge” (ART.)
“fondrière” (NAT.)
“cathédrale” (ART.)
“lac” (NAT.)
“petite voiture” (ART.)

The last element “troupe de petits comédiens” is a mixture of natural and artificial. The artificial objects enumerated are characterised by a kind of inconsistency. The clock does not strike. The cathedral “descend”, when such edifices usually rise proudly to the sky (“se dressent”, “s’élèvent”), an ascending movement suggesting spiritual aspiration and elevation. “La petite voiture” presents an impossible alternative; it is either immobile (“abandonnée dans le taillis”) or mobile (“qui descend le sentier en courant”). These incongruities suggest that the description is the product of imagination, or that some of the artificial elements are to be considered in their metaphorical acceptation. The forest, for example, may be metaphorically compared with a religious temple.¹

The different elements of the enumeration are linked by the colourful impressions they inspire. As opposed to “Enfance” II, “Enfance” III is full of lively presence creating noise (“chant”), movement (“descend”, “monte” and “qui descend le sentier en courant”) and colour (“rougir”, “blanche” and “enrubannée”). Colour is strikingly the final impression of the first, third and fifth paragraphs. The adjective “enrubannée” is syntactically isolated at the end of the fifth paragraph creating an intensifying effect. The isolation of the adjective “enrubannée” at the end of the fifth paragraph reveals a symmetrical syntactic pattern creating an effect of chiasmus:

¹ Cf Baudelaire in “Obsession”, *Les Fleurs du Mal*, “Spleen et idéal”, CXVIII “Grand bois, vous m’effrayez comme des cathédrales” and “Correspondance”. See also Hugo in “L’Eglise” *Les chansons des rues et des bois*, part two, “Sagesse”:

J’arrivai tout près d’une église,
De la verte église du bon Dieu [...]
C’était l’église en fleurs, bâtie
Sans pierre, au fond du bois mouvant,
[...]. [Hugo 1974, p. 144]

[adjective] "abandonnée"		[location] "dans le taillis"
	\ / / \	
"qui descend le sentier" [location]		"enrubannée" [adjective]

The phonic proximity of the adjectives "**abandonnée**" and "**enrubannée**" emphasises the chiasmus. The feast of sensations (noise, movement and colours) is metaphorically embodied by the "troupe de petits comédiens en costumes".

Different images of innocence constitute another strong semantic thread. The singing of the bird "fait rougir", with shame, joy or embarrassment². "Les bêtes blanches" could be ermines called "bêtes blanches" in the language of childhood. Ermines traditionally symbolise purity and innocence: "La robe, le camail, la fourrure d'hermine symbolisent l'innocence et la pureté, dans la conduite, dans l'enseignement, dans la justice" [Chevalier & Gheerbrant 1982, p. 500]. The nest is also traditionally an image of innocence. Finally, the adjective "petit(e)", in "petite voiture" and "petits comédiens", also evokes a world of childhood and innocence.

Repeated sounds also bind the poem, particularly the repetition of soft nasal sounds in the words:

chant, **fondrière**, **blanches**, **descend**, **monte**, **abandonnée**, **dans**, **descend**, **sentier**, **courant**, **enrubannée**, **comédiens**, **faim**

Other effects of phonic repetition that can be found in the poem include:

au bois oiseau [o wa wa o]
bêtes blanches
cathédrales lac
comédiens costumes troupe route travers
enfin a faim et soif

² In Hugo's poetry the bird is often associated with bad or amusing talk. In "Comédie dans les feuilles" *Les chansons des rues et des bois*, part two, "Sagesse" [Hugo 1974, p. 153], the bird is depicted as a playful creature with a gift for humour. The blackbird in "Le lendemain" is said to have a foul mouth:

Le merle oiseau leste et braque,
 Bavard jamais enrhumé,
 Est pitre dans la baraque
 Toute en fleurs, du mois de mai.

Il contait au pot aux roses
 Un effronté boniment,
 [...]
 Gare au mauvais goût des merles!
 J'omets ses propos hardis;
 [...]. [idem, part 1, "Jeunesse", p. 76]

Finally, the poem is organised according to the repetition of the noun “bois” (“Au bois”>“du bois”). This unique repetition of a noun determines the spatial cohesion of the description at the same time as it isolates the final sequence of the poem. The repetition of the noun “bois” sets the limits of a type of description characterised by the multiplication of heterogeneous objects creating a joyful festival of colours, innocence and simplicity.

Implications for translation

A translation of “Enfance” III will have to convey both the effects of chaos and organisation. The main effect of organisation is created by the anaphoric repetition of “il y a”. Peschel and Bernard have reproduced the anaphora. Fowlie, however, has altered the form of the poem by adding “and then” at the beginning of the last paragraph, thus breaking the anaphora:

“In the woods there's [...]
There's [...]
There's [...]
And then there's [...]”

The repetition of the structure /“il y a” + [adjective] noun/ is often coupled with a relative clause. The strict repetition of the relative pronoun “qui” is not always rendered by the translators. Peschel and Fowlie translate “qui” by “that”, “which” or “who”:

Peschel

“that does not strike”
“that descends”
“that rises”
“which [...] goes racing”
“who chases you away”

Bernard

“that never strikes”
“that goes down”
“that goes up”
“which runs down”
“who drives you away”

Fowlie, however, changes the form of the ST and discards some of the relative clauses:

“which doesn't strike”
“coming down”
“going up”
“rolling down”
“who chases you off”

The semantic cohesion of the poem created by the impressions of life and colour and by the different images of innocence, should be reproduced in the TT. The final impression of colour, in paragraphs one, three and five, is not always conveyed. The adjective “blanches” in “bêtes blanches” is automatically placed before the noun when translating “white beasts / animals” (Peschel, Bernard & Fowlie).

The adjective “enrubannée” isolated at the end of the fifth paragraph, is not in the final position in Peschel's translation:

“There is a little carriage abandoned in the thicket, or which, adorned with ribbons, goes racing down the path.”

This results in the loss of the chiasmus, which is already compromised by the partial loss of the grammatical and phonic proximity of “abandonnée” and “enrubannée”. The effect of parallel “abandonnée”/ “enrubannée” is a challenge for the translator as “enrubannée” is hard to convey by a single adjective (Bernard “with ribbons on it”, Fowlie “with ribbons all over it”). The phonic proximity is only conveyed in Peschel's translation with “**abandoned**” and “**adorned**”.

The various images of innocence should also be conveyed. The “bêtes blanches” which evoke ermines, a traditional image of purity, (see for example Leonardo di Vinci “The woman with the ermine”) cannot be “beasts” (Peschel) as the noun bears very negative connotations. However, the noun “animals” (Bernard, Fowlie) may not be sufficiently childlike.

The repetition of the noun “bois”, which marks the division of the poem into two periods is respected by Peschel and Bernard, who both translate with a plural:

“In the **woods** [...] [...] of the **woods**”

Fowlie breaks the perfect dual repetition of the noun “bois” as he translates first with a plural and then with a singular (“In the **woods** [...] of the **wood**.”). Furthermore, he adds another repetition of the noun when (mis)translating “dans le taillis” by “in the **woods**”.

2. The closing sequence

In the final sequence the structure /"il y a" + (adjective) noun/ is altered as the object described is delayed after the adverb "enfin" and the adverbial phrase of time "quand l'on a faim et soif". The syntactic erosion confirms the isolation of the final sentence from the rest of the poem. Time is introduced doubly with "**enfin**" and "**quand** l'on a faim et soif". This is an important change, if one bears in mind that time had been silenced in the rest of the poem through the use of the present tense describing a quasi-immutable situation and through the image of the "horloge qui ne sonne pas". The other great change is that an event, "quelqu'un qui vous chasse", constitutes the last element of an enumeration, which until then had listed objects, animals and humans. This event is temporally marked and is not the object of an alternative, unlike "la petite voiture" which can be either immobile or mobile.

The clause "quelqu'un qui vous chasse" is the ultimate impression of the poem and a rather negative one. The sentence contrasts with the rest of the poem by its violence. The verb "chasser" bears negative connotations. It is difficult to decide on the meaning of the verb in the poem. It could be "Poursuivre le gibier, les bêtes fauves, pour les tuer ou les prendre" [*Litttré*], in which case the narrator would evoke a strange manhunt taking place in the woods. However, the allusion to hunger and thirst ("quand on a faim et soif") implies the idea of begging. In this context, the meaning of "chasser" would be "écarter ce qui est importun" [*Litttré*]. The needy person begging for food and drink is chased away. The hunger and thirst of "Enfance" III could be figurative. The themes of hunger and thirst are already exploited in Rimbaud's *Vers nouveaux*, in "Comédie de la soif" and "Fêtes de la faim". The poet suffers a thirst for an ideal in "Comédie de la soif" and he is offered a universe of fantasy populated by "Ondines", "Vénus" and "Juifs errants de Norwège" that do not quench his thirst ("légendes ni figures ne me désaltèrent"). He is offered the intoxication of nature and turns it down ("plus ces paysages"). The woods of "Enfance" III, populated by naive and innocent objects, likewise offer no respite from hunger and thirst.

The rhythm and the phonemes of the closing sequence also convey the idea of violence. The rhythm is broken by the delay of "quelqu'un" and the apposition of the two elements of time. The sentence is divided by two commas into three neat sections:

"Il y a enfin, (1)/ quand l'on a faim et soif, (2)/ quelqu'un qui vous chasse (3)."

The regularity of the rhythm of the two first segments (il y a enfin /4/ quand l'on a faim et soif /6/) is broken in the final segment (quelqu'un qui vous chasse /5/). The closing sequence is also characterised by the repetition of the harsh sound [k] in “**qu**and”, “**quelqu'**un” and “**qui**”.

The anonymous “quelqu'un” contrasts with all the other elements of the description, which are always qualified by an adjective, a relative clause or a segment. All these elements are introduced by the indefinite article “un(e)”: “**un** oiseau, **une** horloge, **une** fondrière”, etc. “Un” is also found in “quelqu'**un**”, but at the end of the word not at the beginning. The tone, structure and content of the closing sequence contrast greatly with the rest of the poem, creating an anticlimax.

Implications for translation

The isolation of the closing sequence is semantic, syntactical and phonic. This isolation must be rendered in the TT.

The syntactic alteration with the delayed position of “quelqu'un qui vous chasse” after “enfin” and “quand on a faim et soif”, is not reproduced by Fowlie, who reorganises the ST, as follows:

“And then there's someone who chases you off when you're hungry and thirsty.”

The whole effect of the ST is lost as the last impression is not the violence of “chasser”, but the deprivation of food and drink. The sentence is also much more regular and hence runs more smoothly than in the ST. The adverb “enfin”, which marks the end of the enumeration and the irruption of time is not rendered in Fowlie's translation.

The violence of the closing sequence is not always conveyed in the various translations. The ambiguity of the verb “chasser” is not conveyed as the translators have all opted for the meaning “*écarter ce qui est importun*” [*Littre*] with “chase off” (Fowlie), “chase away” (Peschel) and “drive away” (Bernard). The repetition of the sound [k] is lost and not compensated for. The strong ternary rhythm has not been kept in Peschel's and Bernard's translations:

“There is /1/, finally /2/, when you are hungry and thirsty /3/, someone who chases you away/ drives you away /4/.”

3. Intertextual content

The repetitive use of the naive “il y a” and the short paragraphs with simple syntax and rhythm create a singsong style. The poem, through the

repetition of “il y a” and the theme of the wood, evokes popular songs and nursery rhymes such as “Y a qu'un cheveu sur la tête à Mathieu” or “Nous n'irons plus au bois”. During the 19th century, this type of song was a common poetical inspiration. For example, from the song “Nous n'irons plus au bois”, Banville produced in *L'Artiste*, 4 mai 1845, a poem entitled “Les Lauriers”:

Nous n'irons plus au bois, les lauriers sont coupés.
Les Amours des bassins, les Naiades en groupe
Voient reluire au soleil en cristaux découpés
Les flots silencieux qui coulaient de leur coupe.
Les lauriers sont coupés et le cerf aux abois
Tressaille au son du cor; nous n'irons plus au bois,
Où des enfants charmants riaient la folle troupe
Sous les regards des lys aux pleurs du ciel trempés,
Voici l'herbe qu'on fauche et les lauriers qu'on coupe.
Nous n'irons plus au bois, les lauriers sont coupés.

Furthermore, the theme of the wood, “la folle troupe” of Banville's poem is reminiscent of the “troupe de petits comédiens en costumes” of “Enfance” III.

Hugo also exploited the tradition of “chansons populaires”. In his effort to rival Béranger, “l'homme-nation”, who died in 1857, Hugo published in 1865 *Les chansons des rues et des bois*. Following Baudelaire's precept, he wanted to:

[...]rendre à la jeunesse un hommage profond,
— A la sainte jeunesse, à l'air simple, au doux front,
A l'œil limpide et clair ainsi qu'une eau courante,
Et qui va répandant sur tout, insouciant
Comme l'azur du ciel, les oiseaux et les fleurs,
Ses parfums, ses chansons et ses douces chaleurs!³

His naive collection of poems is mainly based around the themes of “enfance” and “souvenir”. In the introductory paragraph to *Les chansons des rues et des bois* dated “Hauteville-House octobre 1865”, he evokes the themes of dream and souvenir as a source of inspiration:

Ce livre est écrit beaucoup avec le rêve, un peu avec le souvenir. Rêver est permis au vaincus; se souvenir est permis aux solitaires.

With titles such as “Oiseaux et enfants”, “Le Nid” or “Comédie dans les feuilles”, Hugo builds a sweet and innocent universe populated by legendary figures and fairies, where flora and fauna speak and watch (see for example “Comédie dans les feuilles” or “Célébration du 14 juillet”).

³ *Les Fleurs du Mal*, Spleen et idéal, V.

Nature in *Les chansons des rues et des bois* is a refuge against the grim reality of the present and especially the reality of the town. The woods in “Fuite en Sologne” [Hugo 1974, p. 102] are directly opposed to Paris:

Ami, viens me rejoindre.
Les bois sont innocents.
Il est bon de voir poindre
L'aube des paysans

Paris, morne et farouche,
Pousse des hurlements
Et se tord sous la douche
Des noirs évènements.[...]

The innocent and protective woods are compared with a church “la verte église du bon Dieu” in “L'Église” (see above note n°3), where the poet joyfully feels the presence of a divine “quelqu'un”:

En regardant par la croisée,
O joie! on sentait là quelqu'un.

In Rimbaud's “Enfance” III, Hugo's type of “fleur bleue” writing based on “rêve” and “souvenir” is clearly subverted⁴. The text expresses a clear refusal to idealise the past. The past and the woods are not amiable and protective. They form a frightening and potentially harmful universe, where an unidentified “quelqu'un”, assimilated to the ugly wolf of childhood tales, can hunt you down or chase you away. Although the refuge of the woods of childhood may at first seem innocent, it is depicted as a place of rejection, which cannot protect from the reality of the world. Ultimately, the poem attacks a source of inspiration as well as an attitude. Childhood is a deceptive and dry source, unable to quench the thirst and hunger for superior poetry. Furthermore, turning to childhood betrays an attitude of withdrawal into one's shell, producing a form of poetic introversion when poetry needs to be “en avant” and tackling reality.

⁴ Rimbaud is not the first poet to subvert Hugo's *Chansons*. Baudelaire wrote in a letter to Mme Aupick, dated 3 novembre 1865:

Désappointement de tous les gens d'esprit, après qu'ils l'ont lu. — Il [Hugo] a voulu, cette fois, être joyeux et léger, et amoureux et se refaire jeune. C'est horriblement lourd. (Baudelaire, *Correspondance*, texte établi, présenté et annoté par Claude Pichois, avec la collaboration de Jean Ziegler, NRF, Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, t. II, p. 541)

Soon after their publication, Hugo's *Chansons* were considered a poetic fiasco, which gave birth to some (in)famous parodies. Monselait published in 1866 an *Almanach des Rues et des Bois, citadin, champêtre et poétique*, while André Gill in 1867 published his own illustrated *Chansons des Grues et des Boas*.

Implications for translation

The TT must reproduce the musical quality of the ST. The lexical and phonic repetitions must be conveyed or compensated for and the regular rhythm of the ST must be reproduced. Only then will the reader be able to perceive the important literary intertextual level and to decipher the ironic content of "Enfance" III.

TT

III

In the wood there's a bird, its warbling (1) stops you and makes you blush (2).

There's a clock that does not strike.

There's a hollow with a nest of animals all white (3).

There's a cathedral that goes down and a lake that goes up (4) .

There's a little carriage (5) abandoned in the copse, or that goes racing down the path, beribboned (6).

There's a troupe of little strolling players in their costumes (7), glimpsed on the road through the edge of the wood (8).

There's finally, when you are hungry and thirsty (9), someone that (10) chases you away (11).

Decisions of detail

1. **warbling**: the subversive content of the poem is conveyed as “warbling” usually has ironic connotations, suggesting singing, which is out of tune or tuneless.

2. I have tried to compensate for the phonic loss and especially the loss of the repetitions of the sounds [o] and [wa] in “au bois” / “oiseau”. The TT offers an atonement of ws, ls and bs:

“In the **w**ood there's a **b**ird, its **w**arbling stops you and makes you **bl**ush”.

3. **animals all white**: I have tried to keep the order of the ST so that the adjective is in the final position. “White” in final position echoes slightly the “strike” of the preceding paragraph. I have also added “all” which creates an effect of phonic repetition with the noun “animals” (“**animals all**”). The inverted TT word order (noun+ adjective) is specifically poetic or song-like, hence there is a switch of register from ST to TT. The childlike language with the use of “bêtes” is lost in the TT.

4. **goes down/goes up**: the semantic opposition “descendre” “monter” is underlined here through the parallel “goes down”/ “goes up”, which has also been adopted by Bernard.

5. **carriage**: the meaning of the word “voiture” is difficult to establish. Does the poem refer to a pram, to a toy carriage or to a small horse drawn carriage such as a buggy? I have chosen “carriage” as it the least semantically restrictive and can denote both a baby carriage and a horse-drawn carriage.

6. **abandoned/beribboned**: the syntactic chiasmus, especially emphasised by the phonic proximity of the words “abandonnée” and “enrubannée” is reproduced in the TT. The phonic repetition in **abandoned/beribboned**, also emphasises the chiasmus.

7. The TT creates an effect of phonic repetition through the words “troupe”, “little”, “strolling” and “costumes”.

8. The lexical repetition “au bois”/“du bois”, which partially results in the isolation of the final paragraph is reproduced in the TT.

9. The repetition of the harsh sound [k], which conveys the contrastive violence of the final paragraph is lost in the TT.

10. **someone that**: the choice to repeat “that” throughout the poem results in the creation of a colloquial turn at this point of the text. However, as for the repetition of “there's” this fits the tone of the popular song better.

11. **chases you away**: the ambiguity of the verb “chasser” is lost in the TT and only one meaning is conveyed, namely “écarter ce qui est importun” [*Littre*]. The rhythm of the ST is kept, however, with a clear cut ternary progression.

IV

70 Je suis le saint, en prière sur la terrasse,
—comme les bêtes pacifiques paissent jusqu'à
la mer de Palestine.

Je suis le savant au fauteuil sombre. Les
branches et la pluie se jettent à la croisée de
75 la bibliothèque.

Je suis le piéton de la grand'route par les
bois nains; la rumeur des écluses couvre mes
pas. Je vois longtemps la mélancolique
lessive d'or du couchant.

80 Je serais bien l'enfant abandonné sur la
jetée partie à la haute mer, le petit valet,
suivant l'allée dont le front touche le ciel.

Les sentiers sont âpres. Les monticules se
couvrent de genêts. L'air est immobile.

85 Que les oiseaux et les sources sont loin! Ce
ne peut être que la fin du monde, en avançant.

From Guyaux 1985b, p. 21.

“Enfance” IV, analysis and strategic decisions

1. Anaphora, lexical repetitions, organisation

As a first-person poem, “Enfance” IV is distinguished from the first three poems of the series. However, it still retains some of the characteristics previously analysed. It reproduces the anaphoric pattern of “Enfance” III, replacing “il y a” with “je suis”. The anaphora creates the effect of a list, which is now familiar, as it already characterised the first three poems, only this time, the enumeration concerns the identity of the narrator. In the fourth paragraph, the verb “être” switches to the conditional “je serais bien”. This slight modulation, affecting the last identity of the narrator, disrupts the strict anaphoric pattern. The intrusion of the conditional has been variously interpreted by critics. They usually see the expression of a desire or of a hypothesis. Guyaux opts for hypothesis: “le verbe être passe de l'indicatif au conditionnel, de la certitude à l'hypothèse” [1985b, p. 84]. Angelet recognises what he calls a “préludique” conditional, explaining that children before a game “procèdent à une distribution des rôles” [1986, p. 127]. However, there is a third possibility (especially as the poem is an enumeration). “Je serais bien l'enfant” could express preference and “bien” would be a synonym of “volontiers” (“Je serais volontiers l'enfant [plutôt que le saint, le savant ou le piéton]”).

The sense of familiarity, created by the renewed use of an enumeration, also stems from the repetition in “Enfance” IV of lexical units found in the first three poems of “Enfance” [“Enf.”], namely:

“terrasse” (“Enf.”I), “bêtes” (“Enf.”II), “la mer” (“Enf.”I), “la haute mer” (“Enf.”II), “route” (“Enf.”II & III), “bois” (“Enf.”III), “écluses” (“Enf.”II), “or” (“Enf.”II), “couchant” (“Enf.”II), “sentiers” (“Enf.”III), “oiseaux” (“Enf.”III).

“Enfance” IV, like “Enfance” I, consists of five paragraphs and the fifth paragraph also contains five sentences. The rhythmical pattern of “Enfance” IV is, in many respects, similar to the first poem of the series. As in “Enfance” I, the rhythm of the opening and closing sequences appears to follow a clear organisation. The opening sequence shows a regular decreasing rhythmical pattern, which is reminiscent of the regular rhythm of the first sequence of “Enfance” I:

“Je suis le saint, en prière sur la terrasse [12 syllables with dieresis on “pri-ère”] — comme les bêtes pacifiques paissent [10 with last e mute] jusqu'à la mer de Palestine [8].”

Likewise, the closing sequence of “Enfance” IV follows an extremely regular pattern which alternates decasyllables and segments of five syllables:

“Les sentiers sont âpres. [5] Les monticules se couvrent de genêts. [10 with final e of “monticules” mute]. L'air est immobile. [5] Que les oiseaux et les sources sont loin! [10] Ce ne peut être que la fin du monde, [10 with final e of “monde” mute] en avançant [4].”

The final unit, “en avançant” is rhythmically isolated from the rest of the sequence. It is also isolated both phonemically (repetition of the sound [ã]) and semantically as it clashes with the words “immobile” and “fin”. The final unit is emphasised by its isolation and position at the end of the poem. The reader is thus compelled to focus the reading of the poem on the concept of progression both spatial and temporal.

Implications for translation

The impression of cohesion both within the poem, with the rhetorical device of anaphora, and within the series “Enfance”, through the syntactic, lexical, rhythmic and phonic repetition, will have to be conveyed in the TT. The anaphora has usually been aptly translated. The only problem concerns the slight modulation of the fourth paragraph, where the text switches from the indicative to the conditional: “Je serais bien l'enfant”. It is difficult to estimate clearly the value of this conditional. Translators have either opted for a conditional expressing doubt (where “je serais bien” is the equivalent of “je serais peut-être bien”), thus translating “I might be” (Bernard, Fowlie), or they have translated with a conditional expressing hypothesis (in this case “je serais bien” is the equivalent of “il se peut que je sois”: translated by Peschel: “I could well be”). The latter presents the advantage of keeping the “bien” in the translation. Translators have usually ignored the fact that “Je serais bien” could express preference.

As “Enfance” IV synthesises the different settings of the previous poems of the series, it is important to reproduce the lexical units. Hence translating “haute mer” of “Enfance” II and IV by “open sea” for “Enfance” II, and by “sea” for “Enfance” IV (cf. Bernard: “[...] the jetty washed out to sea”) is clearly not satisfactory.

The rhythmic patterns of the ST are usually disregarded by translators who value a “literal ” translation. The regular decreasing rhythm of the first sequence (12-10-8 rhythm) presents a challenge for the translator. Most translations result in an uneven effect and only succeed in reproducing the

rhythmic descent of the sequence. The last sequence is equally tricky. The last segment of the ST (“en avançant”) should be clearly rhythmically isolated in the TT, while the rest of the sequence should follow a strictly regular pattern of short and long segments (5-10-5-10-10 rhythm). Translators, however, create a clear imbalance in the TT especially in the translation of “Les sentiers sont âpres”/“L'air est immobile”, which in Bernard and Peschel's translations becomes: “The paths are rough”/“The air is motionless” (with the second segment longer), and in Fowlie's translation: “The pathways are rough”/“The air is still” (with the first segment longer). In all three translations, “en avançant” is reduced to a simple “ahead”, which forms a rhythmic contrast with the rest of the TT, but loses the idea of action (also illustrated by the gerund) and of a regular progression emphasised by the phonic repetition of the sound [ã] and the four-part rhythm.

2. “en avançant”: the autobiographical quest

The isolation of “en avançant” at the end of the poem compels the reader to pay attention to the semantic thread of ‘progression’ developed in “Enfance” IV. This progression is of two kinds:

- progression of the nature of the identity enumerated by the anaphora; from “saint” to “petit valet” (or vertical progression in the text)
- spatial progression throughout the poem (or horizontal progression associated with the words: “jusqu'à”, “grand'route”, “allée”, “sentiers”).

The different identities of the “je” seem to follow a pattern of progression from a solemn, pious and ideal figure (“le saint”), to the child (“l'enfant”, “le petit valet”). The first two archetypal¹ figures (“le saint” and “le savant”) can be isolated. They are both described in their settings. They are both associated with dual structures, which are grammatically very similar. Both sequences present a very regular sound pattern from the echo of the openings: “**Je suis le saint**” and “**Je suis le savant**” to the repetition of the plosive consonants:

“en **p**rière sur la terrasse, — comme les **b**êtes **p**acifiques **p**aissent jusqu'à la mer de **P**alestine.”

/p b p p p/

“au fauteuil **s**ombre. Les **b**ranches et la **p**luie se jettent à la croisée de la **b**ibliothèque.”

/b b p b b/

¹I am using the adjective “archetypal” because of the definite articles preceding the substantives. Compare in French: “Je suis le saint” with “Je suis un saint”.

Both figures are static. Whilst “le saint” is represented in prayer, “le savant” seems to be attached to his armchair, as if it were part of himself². However, the idea of fixedness is paradoxically associated with the idea of mobility.

In the first sequence, this is illustrated by the prosaic comparison:

“— comme les bêtes pacifiques paissent jusqu'à la mer de Palestine.”

Comparisons are rare in *Illuminations* and Rimbaud draws attention to this one with the use of a single dash. The very heavy sounds seem to mimic phonemically the slow rhythm of the prayer, which is compared with the grazing and chewing of animals:

“— **comme les bêtes pacifiques paissent jusqu'à la mer de Palestine.**”

The animals seem to eat their way to the Holy Land (“paissent jusqu'à”) as the Saint prays his way to God³. The choice of the word “bêtes” to evoke the prayer of the saint seems rather incongruous. The noun “bêtes” is out of place in the context of the prayer because of its earth-bound animality and lack of spirituality. The coined collocation “bêtes pacifiques”, by contrast with “bêtes féroces”⁴, suggests the traditional “bêtes de somme” or “bêtes de trait” (donkeys, etc.) with connotations of hard work but also mulish stupidity.

In the second sequence, the image of the scholar in his armchair is associated with the violence of the external world (“les branches et la pluie se jettent”). The horizontal movement expressed in the first sequence (“paissent jusqu'à”) is still present in “se jettent à”. However, “le calme céleste” of the prayer is replaced by tempestuous rage. The work of the mind is illustrated by a violent image.

Conversely, the two following paragraphs are linked to an idea of movement with the archetypal figures of “le piéton”, “l'enfant” and “le petit valet”. The first segment of the third paragraph is constructed on the same phrasal model as the two previous paragraphs. Its rhythm can be compared with the rhythm of the first paragraph:

² The reader can draw a comparison between the syntactic construction of the segment “le savant au fauteuil sombre” and “la fille à lèvres d'orange” of “Enfance” I. A similar image is evoked in the poem Rimbaud's poem “Les Assis”, where the bureaucrats become assimilated to their chairs (“Ces vieillards ont toujours fait tresse avec leurs sièges”).

³ Rimbaud evokes the peaceful movement of the prayer in more poetic terms in *Une Saison en enfer*, “Mauvais sang” “Si Dieu m'accordait **le calme céleste, aérien, la prière**, — comme les anciens saints. — Les saints! des forts! les anachorètes, des artistes comme il n'en faut plus!”. “Saints” and “anachorètes” are strong (“des forts”). In “Enfance”IV, they become the highest order of identity from which the other identities are enumerated.

⁴ These “bêtes féroces” appear in “Nocturne vulgaire” (*Illuminations*).

“1) Je suis le saint, 2) en prière 3) sur la terrasse, 4) — comme les bêtes pacifiques paissent jusqu'à la mer de Palestine. ”

“1) Je suis le piéton 2) de la grand'route 3) par les bois nains; 4) la rumeur des écluses couvre mes pas. ”

However, a further sentence is added, which breaks the parallel:

“Je vois longtemps la mélancolique lessive d'or du couchant.”

“Le piéton” is an active figure, who reaches the “grand'route” through the miniature world of “bois nains”⁵. The image is built on a chiasmus, which emphasises the semantic opposition:

“grand”		“route”
	\ /	
“bois”	/ \	“nains”

The rhythm also illustrates the opposition big/small (“Je suis le piéton de la grand'route [10] par les bois nains; [4]”). The idea of progression here is, however, balanced by the idea of static contemplation:

“Je vois longtemps la mélancolique lessive d'or du couchant.”

This progression is also denied as the footsteps are drowned by the noise of the locks.

The choice of the word “lessive” to qualify the sunset is arresting. As with the choice of the verb “paître” to illustrate the prayer, the noun “lessive” is incongruous in its banal domesticity. It clashes with the noun “or” in that it evokes diluted and dim colours⁶. This idea of harmonic clash is also illustrated throughout the sequence by the opposition between the harsh sounds [k], [r] and the soft fricatives and liquid sound [l]:

⁵ The child, in order to become an adult, must travel through childhood. It is also interesting to read this segment in parallel with the poem “L'Impossible” in *Une Saison en enfer*, where the words “enfance” and “grande route” are linked:

“Ah! cette vie de mon enfance, la grande route par tous les temps, [...]”

⁶ See also in Rimbaud's “Les premières communions” VI, the negative connotations of the word “lessive”:

Dans la cour où les cieux bas plaquaient d'ors vermeils
Les vitres; les pavés puant l'eau de lessive
Soufraient l'ombre des murs bondés de noirs sommeils.

The clash is even more apparent here between the precious colours “ors vermeils” and the word “lessive”, which is associated with grey and dark tones (“ombre” and “noirs”). For a 19th century reader, the association was normal since the suds used for washing were commonly made of ashes. See in *Littre*, the definition of “lessive”:

Dissolution alcaline qui sert à blanchir le linge, et que l'on prépare en faisant passer de l'eau chaude sur un lit de cendre de bois neuf ou sur un lit de soude.

“la rumeur des écluses **couvre** mes pas.”

/l r r k k v r/

“Je **vois** longtemps la **mélancolique** lessive d'or du **couchant**.”

/v l l l k l k l v r k/

The phonic echo created by the words “**couvre**” and “**couchant**” is reminiscent of the effect created by “pacifiques” and “Palestine”, in the opening sequence.

In the following sequence, the rule imposed by the rest of the poem of one character per paragraph is suddenly disrupted. After the first segment: “Je serais bien l'enfant abandonné sur la jetée partie à la haute mer”, one would expect to find a second segment still qualifying “l'enfant”, instead of which another character is introduced: “le petit valet”. The universe of the poem has become more precarious with the conditional (“Je serais bien”) replacing the indicative. This instability is also illustrated by the image of the abandoned child perilously cast out to sea. Whilst “l'enfant” is moving, he is paradoxically trapped and isolated on the wharf: “abandonné sur la jetée partie à la haute mer”.

Similarly, “le petit valet” walks down the path with ease (“le petit valet suivant l'allée”). However, his universe is strangely restricted by “le ciel”. It is difficult to decide here on the actual meaning of the noun “front”. The absence of comma before “dont” would suggest that the clause qualifies “l'allée” and not “le valet”. Both Hackett [1938, p. 148] and Suzanne Bernard [Bernard & Guyaux 1981, p. 486, note n°15] link the word “front” to the word “valet”, with the meaning of “forehead”. Sacchi, who points out the grammatical parallel between the segments “la jetée partie à la haute mer” and “l'allée dont le front touche le ciel”, is more inclined to link the clause to the word “allée”:

[...] “dont le front” suit immédiatement “l'allée”, exactement comme (dans la séquence précédente) “partie à” déterminait immédiatement la “jetée”. [Sacchi 1992a p. 140, note n°68]

He also points out the particular use of the word “front” (“le front des palais”) in “Aube”, where it is linked to a non-animate object. However, the use of the word “front” in “Aube” is different from the use of the word “front” in “Enfance” IV. Whereas in “Aube”, “front” is used to denote the “étendue que représente le devant de certaines choses” as in “le front d'un bâtiment” [Littré], in “Enfance” IV, the word is used in its rarer poetical acceptance to denote the

top or the summit of something. *Littré* illustrates this meaning with an extract from Lamartine:

Pourquoi balancez-vous **vos fronts** que l'aube essuie,
Forêts, qui tressaillez avant l'heure du bruit?
[“Harmonie”, I, 3]

In the *Robert Dictionnaire Alphabétique et analogique de la langue française*, the same meaning is illustrated by an extract from Vigny, where the grammatical construction is quite similar to the construction found in “Enfance” IV:

Monts gelés et fleuris, trône des deux saisons,
Dont le front est de glace et le pied de gazon [...].
[*Poésies*, “Le Cor”, I]

Depending on whether the reader opts for the meaning of “forehead” or for the meaning of “crest”/“summit”, the poem offers two different images. The first one would be the “valet” with the sky coming right down to his forehead, whilst the second one would show the sky and the top of the path joining and fusing in the same horizon line. However, both images illustrate the idea of a limit imposed by the sky on the progression. Both “la haute mer” and “le ciel”, two images of immensity, would thus crush or trap the character.

The themes of limitation and difficulty are developed in the closing sequence⁷, where the main subject and “actant” (“je”) disappears, overcome by the setting (“les sentiers”, “les monticules”, “l'air”) which completely takes over. The verb “être”, which was so far only used in connection with the personal pronoun in search for a multiple identity, is now solely used in connection with the setting. The human subject has totally faded away. The spatial progression, which started in the third paragraph, is increasingly difficult as the setting becomes more hostile, preventing all progression (“âpres”, “genêts”, “immobile”). It finally comes to an absolute standstill illustrated by the ultimate paradox: “la fin du monde, en avançant.”

The vertical progression, which takes us in a retro-motion from the “Saint” (ultimate stage of wisdom) to the “petit valet” and finally to a lost identity (expressed in the final paragraph through the disappearance of the “je”), also closes on the idea of “fin” and fiasco. The **spiritual** knowledge (“le saint”) is successively replaced by a **scientific** knowledge (“le savant”)

⁷ The closing sequence of “Enfance” IV presents some similarities of construction with the closing sequence of “Enfance” II. The reader recognises the pattern /plural nouns/ + /verbs/.

and a **perceptive** knowledge (“le piéton”). When the narrator reaches the age of **innocence** (“l'enfant”, “le petit valet”), all knowledge disappears and the narrator is quite literally swallowed by the elements. The “retour aux sources” is a dead-end (“la fin du monde”). The autobiographical quest, taking us back to the stage of “Enfance”, is a precarious trip, which is highly deceptive and never fully achieved. This sense of non-achievement is expressed in the exclamation “Que les oiseaux et les sources (of childhood) sont loin!”. Sacchi recognises and sums up this impression of failure of the quest for childhood expressed in “Enfance” IV:

L'enfance demeure, on l'a vu, mais en même temps la source est tarie; ce printemps enfantin ne subsiste bien souvent que sous les formes creuses, dégradées, pitoyables de l'infantilisme. [1992a, p. 141]

His conclusion which points out the emptiness expressed in the poem (“les formes creuses, dégradées”) sends us back to “Enfance” II and its predominant themes of death and absence.

Implications for translation

The poem is built from a paradoxical union of two constants /movement/ and /non-movement/. An attention to detail is required, in order to convey the different linguistic features (rhythmic, phonic, semantic and syntactic) determined by this paradox. Whenever possible, the translator has to respect the rhythmic features of the ST, especially as they reflect the semantic content of the poem. The rhythm is an important feature of the opening sequence, where it reflects the calm of the prayer. It is also important in the third sequence (“Je suis le piéton de la grand'route par les bois nains”), where the opposition “grand”/“nain ” is underlined by the rhythmic descent. This rhythmic feature is lost in Fowlie's translation:

“I am the wanderer along the main road running through the dwarfish woods.”

where both segments are roughly equal, which results in a loss of the swiftness of the ST and of the rhythmic parallel with the opening sequence.

The phonic parallels throughout the poems cannot always be successfully reproduced. In the opening sequence, it is possible to retain some of the ST phonemes and this has been achieved by both Bernard and Peschel, who create a phonic link between “peaceful”, “beasts”, “sea” and “Palestine”. In the second sequence the plosive sounds generally disappear in the different translations, with the exception of Fowlie's:

“**B**ranches and rain **b**eat against the **l**ibrary window.”

However, the choice of “beat against” for “se jettent à” lessens the idea of a violent horizontal movement. The opposition between liquid sounds and harsh sounds in the third paragraph is also generally lost in the different translations. Fowlie creates an alliteration in [s] clashing with dental sounds:

“The noise of the **s**luices **d**rowns my footsteps. For a long time I can see the **s**ad **g**olden wash of the **s**unset.”

Bernard compensates for the loss of the phonic pairing “couvre”/“couchant” by creating an interesting double parallel with “road”/“roar” and “watch”/“wash”. The phonic effect created by the association of the words “valet”, “suivant” and “l’allée” is lost in all three translations.

The comparison “— comme les bêtes pacifiques paissent jusqu’à la mer de Palestine” is clearly isolated from the rest of the paragraph by the dash. As in “Enfance” II, where the play on the lexical unit “oeillets d’Inde” is partly revealed by the brackets, the single dash in “Enfance” IV emphasises the prosaic aspect of the comparison. This completely disappears in Fowlie’s translation:

“I am the saint in prayer on the terrace like the peaceful animals that graze as far as the sea of Palestine.”

Fowlie also loses the opposition “bêtes féroces”/“bêtes pacifiques” (“wild beasts”/“peaceful beasts”), as he translates “bêtes” by “animals”. Bernard reproduces the punctuation of the ST, but adds a nuance which suggests a downward movement instead of a continuous horizontal progression:

“— as the peaceful beasts graze **down** to the sea of Palestine.”

This betrays the spirit of the text and the idea summed up in the final “en avançant”. Peschel offers an apt translation of the comparison:

“— as the peaceful beasts graze **even** to the sea of Palestine. ”

She keeps the idea of horizontal, regular progression by adding on “even”.

The image “la mélancolique lessive d’or du couchant” is 1) incongruously domestic, 2) grammatically heavy, with a double possessive

phrase⁸. All three translators have chosen to translate “lessive d'or du couchant” by “golden wash of the sunset”, which loses the heaviness of the ST, while creating an unintentionally humorous clash with the collocation “golden shower”. Moreover, the noun “wash” in the context of the TT sounds artistic, evoking somehow the vocabulary of water-colour painting. This is completely inappropriate in the context of the ST, in that “wash” is not incongruous and fails to shock the TT reader. The ST image becomes conventionally painterly.

⁸ See for a comparative purpose a similar construction of image in “Tête de Faune”: “Le Baiser d'or du Bois”. It is also important to remember the worrying “essaim des feuilles d'or” of “Enfance” II.

I am the saint, in prayer on the terrace, — as (1) the peaceful beasts graze their way (2) to the sea of Palestine (3).

I am the scholar in the dark armchair (4). Branches and rain hurl themselves at (5) the library casement.

I am the wayfarer on the high road through the dwarf woods (6). The murmur of the locks (7) covers my footsteps. I see for a long while the melancholy golden suds (8) of the sunset (9).

Would I were the child (10) abandoned on the jetty cast off to the open sea (11), the little valet (12), walking down (13) the lane whose brow touches the sky (14).

The paths are craggy (15). The knolls grow covered (16) with broom. The air is now (17) still. The birds and the springs are so far away! (18) It can only be the end of the world, moving forwards (19).

Decisions of detail

1. **as**: like “comme”, “as” possesses a comparative and a temporal value, which is not the case for “like”, chosen by Fowlie.
2. **their way**: to keep the idea of an horizontal and continuous progression I have translated “jusqu'à” by “their way to”.
3. Some of the phonic features of the ST have been lost. However, I have tried to compensate by keeping the phonic link between “peaceful”, “beasts”, “sea ”and “Palestine” (see also Bernard and Peschel).
4. **in the dark armchair**: does not render the idea of a compact being “savant-fauteuil”, which would only have been possible with a compound adjective.
5. **hurl themselves at**: this translation which was favoured by Bernard is an apt rendering of the violent image of the ST.
6. **the high road through the dwarf woods**: the chiasmus of the ST is lost; however, the opposition “grand”/ “nains” is kept. The familiar register conveyed by the abbreviation “grand'route” is also lost.
7. **locks**: for the purpose of cohesion, I have translated using the same word as in “Enfance” II.
8. **golden suds**: the word “suds” is sufficiently domestic and conveys the incongruity of the ST noun “lessive”.
9. The opposition between harsh sounds and liquid sounds in the ST is partly lost in the TT. The TT offers the repetition of the letter “w”, which is apt in conveying the liquids of the ST.

10. **would I were the child:** “bien” is lost and can only be kept with “could”. However, a solution such as “I could well be” (Peschel’s translation) does not clearly express preference. If “je serais bien” expresses a preference (“je serais bien l’enfant *plutôt que les autres*”), it is then possible to translate by “would I were”, which clearly conveys the idea of preference and emphasises the switch to the conditional.

11. **open sea:** I have translated as in “Enfance” II by the idiomatic “open sea” as opposed to an unidiomatic “high seas” (Fowlie).

12. **valet:** Bernard’s “farm boy”, and Fowlie’s “farmhand” are both particularisations of the word “valet”.

13. The phonic effect of the ST (“**valet**” *suisant l’allée*”) is lost in the TT. However, the fluidity of the ST is kept in the liquid sounds: “The **little valet walking down** the lane”.

14. **whose brow touches the sky:** the ambiguity “front du valet”/ “front de l’allée” is kept here as the word “brow” can mean both “forehead” and “summit”. This was clearly perceived by Peschel. However, Bernard with “whose crest touches the sky” and Fowlie with “whose top reaches the sky”, both lessen the ambiguity and clearly favour the topographic meaning of the noun.

15. **craggy:** the word “âpre” comes from the Latin word *asper*, which is also the stem for the word “aspérité” (see in *Robert* “les aspérités du sol: rugosités, saillies”) and hence evokes idea of a harsh, rough or troublesome surface conveyed in “craggy”.

16. **grow covered:** the ST clearly conveys the idea of an active process (“les monticules *se couvrent* de genêts” as opposed “sont couverts de genêts”), which results in an increasing difficulty. This effect is reproduced in the TT.

17. I have tried as much as possible to keep the rhythm 5/10/5/10/10/4, hence my choice of “craggy” instead of “rough”. This also explains the presence of the adverb “now” (“The air is **now** still”) which also emphasises the idea of an active process also implied by the verbal form “se couvrent”.

18. **the birds and the springs are so far away!:** the position of “loin” at the end of the sentence is important, as all the preceding sentences in this final paragraph follow the same pattern and the final word always bear a negative connotation: “âpres”/ “genêts”/ “immobile”/ “loin”. The translators distort this regular pattern, when choosing to translate the exclamative sentence “Qu[’ils] sont loin!” by “How far away are [they]/ [they] are!”.

19. **moving forwards:** both the semantic and the rhythmic features of “en avançant” are rendered. The main aspect is the semantic aspect and the idea of progression, which is partly lost in “ahead” (Peschel, Bernard, Fowlie).

V

90 Qu'on me loue enfin ce tombeau, blanchi
à la chaux avec les lignes du ciment en relief
— très loin sous terre.

Je m'accoude à la table, la lampe éclaire
très vivement ces journaux que je suis idiot de
relire, ces livres sans intérêt.

95 A une distance énorme au dessus de
mon salon souterrain, les maisons s'implantent,
les brumes s'assemblent. La boue est rouge ou
noire. Ville monstrueuse, nuit sans fin!

100 Moins haut, sont les égouts. Aux côtés,
rien que l'épaisseur du globe. Peut-être les
gouffres d'azur, des puits de feu. C'est peut-être
sur ces plans que se rencontrent lunes et
comètes, mers et fables.

105 Aux heures d'amertume je m'imagine des
boules de saphir, de métal. Je suis maître
du silence. Pourquoi une apparence
de soupirail blémirait-elle au coin de la
voûte?

From Guyaux 1985b, p. 22.

“Enfance” V: Analysis and strategic decisions

1. Cohesive features within the series

As the adverb “enfin” closed the enumeration of “Enfance” III (“Il y a enfin, quand on a faim et soif, quelqu'un qui vous chasse”), it puts an end to the series “Enfance” with the initial injunction of “Enfance” V: “Qu'on me loue enfin ce tombeau [...]”. The presence of the adverb “enfin” betrays a calculated organisation of the poems following a strict progression.

The opening sequence of “Enfance” V possesses a feature distinct from the other poems of the series. It opens on an affective sentence, which in a way recalls the exclamation of the closing sequence of “Enfance” IV (“**Que** les oiseaux et les sources sont loin!”). However, the affective tone in “Enfance” V is different, as the sentence no longer expresses regret, but an impatient injunction. The wish expressed in the opening sequence for “ce tombeau”, is granted in the rest of the poem either in the narrator's reality or in his imagination.

The opening sequence also presents many links with the other poems of the series. As in “Enfance” I (cf. “Cette idole”), it presents a demonstrative noun phrase, “ce tombeau”, in which the apparently non-referential demonstrative becomes explicit later in the context with “mon salon **souterrain**”, which echoes “très loin **sous terre**”. Like “Enfance” IV, it opens with a first person narrator. The closing sequence even repeats the anaphora of “Enfance” IV with “**Je suis** maître du silence”.

A feature of “Enfance” V, which also sends us back to the end of “Enfance” IV and the segment beginning “Je serais bien”, is the increasing impression of uncertainty. This is illustrated by the repetition of the adverb “peut-être” in the fourth paragraph (“**Peut-être** les gouffres d'azur, des puits de feu. C'est **peut-être** [...]”). This repetition conveys an impression of gap in the narrator's knowledge of the world he is describing. A similar effect has been analysed in “Enfance” II. The narrator's presence, already apparent in the initial injunction, is hence betrayed. The narrator's intrusion casting doubt on the validity of the description and/or of the world described also affects the final question¹:

¹ However, the final question could be considered as a rhetorical question, which, although it would express a certain amount of doubt, would not in effect bear any consequence on the reality of the speech (a rhetorical question being, by definition, asked for the sake of effect, to impress people, no actual answer being needed or expected). The poem thus opens and closes on rhetorical effects:

the injunction, which propels the subsequent description and attracts the attention of an (imaginary) audience,
the rhetorical question, with which the speaker addresses this same audience.

“**Pourquoi** une apparence de soupirail **blêmirait**-elle au coin de la vouôte?”

Here the uncertainty is expressed by the conditional and the conjunction “pourquoi”, but also by the words “apparence” and “blêmir”, which evoke an increasingly fading reality.

Like “Enfance” I (cf.: “mexicaine et flamande”), the first paragraph of “Enfance” V presents a particular syntactic form, with the isolation of “— très loin sous terre”. This isolation is reinforced by the dash and the rhythm, which alternates short and long segments:

“Qu'on me loue enfin ce tombeau, [8] blanchi à la chaux [5] avec les lignes du ciment [8] en relief [4 with dieresis on “relief”]— très loin sous terre [4].”

The rhythm of “— très loin sous terre” is reminiscent of the final “en avançant” of “Enfance” IV. It is also quite striking that the whole opening sequence of “Enfance” V reproduces the nasal phonemes of “en avançant”:

“Qu'**on** me loue **enfin** ce **tombeau**, **blanchi** à la chaux avec les lignes du **ciment en** relief — très **loin** sous terre. ”

The dash which precedes “très loin sous terre” is in an equivalent graphic location to the dash which precedes the comparison in “Enfance” IV, namely at the end of the first paragraph and just before the last grammatical segment. This punctuation feature emphasises the segment. The effect on the reader is similar to the rhythmical, syntactic and semantic isolation of “en avançant” and attention is similarly focused on the semantic content of the segment.

Implications for translation

The impression of cohesion within the series “Enfance” will have to be conveyed in the TT. The translator will have to pay particular attention to the opening sequence and the isolation of “— très loin sous terre” as the segment determines, as I shall demonstrate later, many features of the poem.

The tone of the first sentence must be conveyed in the TT, as the injunction of the first sentence literally propels the rest of the poem. The outburst of the first segment is the mental base of the imaginary world, as the tomb is the mental foundation of the description. Peschel and Bernard both

attempt to convey the impersonal “on” in their translations of the first segment:

“**Let them** at last rent me this tomb” (Peschel)

“**Let them** rent me this tomb at last” (Bernard)

The effect of the TT is less abrupt and more personal. “Them” suggests that the narrator is referring to a designated group of people. The TT's reader then wonders who these people are. The form of the injunction is comparable to the well-known phrase: “Qu'on le jette aux lions!”, in which “on” does not refer to anyone in particular, but is used to produce an active and authoritative tone instead of using a passive form such as “Qu'il soit jeté aux lions!”. Fowlie, with his “now hire for me” mistranslates the segment, although he rightly keeps the idea of an imperative and does not use an intrusive pronoun.

The isolation of the last segment of the opening sequence is graphic and rhythmical, and must be reproduced, as it focuses attention on the theme of verticality. The rhythmical and phonic patterns of the ST are a challenge for the translator and existing translations have largely failed to reproduce them. Fowlie keeps the rhythm of the last segment with his “far underground” [4], but the emphasis on distance in the ST (with the adverb “très”) is lost in the TT. It is possible to reproduce the graphic isolation of the last segment by copying the punctuation of the ST. Fowlie and Bernard reproduce the dash, but omit the comma.

2. Textual organisation: verticality

The graphic and rhythmic isolation of the last segment of the opening sequence (reminiscent both of the isolation of the comparison and of the last segment in “Enfance” IV) focuses the reader's attention on the idea of verticality. The idea of verticality or of vertical descending progression is also a major theme of “Enfance” IV, illustrated in the hierarchic evolution from “saint” to “petit valet”. “Enfance” V offers a continuity with the preceding text, which was itself linked to “Enfance” III by the anaphora. The idea of verticality is expressed by prepositions, adverbs, adjectives and nouns and is sometimes linked to the idea of distance:

“très loin sous terre”, “à une distance énorme au dessus de”, “souterrain”, “Moins haut”, “Aux côtés”, “épaisseur”, “gouffres”, “puits”, “au coin de la voûte”.

The idea of verticality is also illustrated in the image of “descente au tombeau”, which is the main theme of the poem, the word “tombeau” being used both literally and metaphorically (as I shall demonstrate later on).

After the first sequence, the whole description in the poem is organised from the “salon souterrain” and the narrator offers a sort of cross-section of the universe (cf.: “égouts”, “épaisseur”). This description in successive layers² has geological connotations. The layering of the setting copies the list-effect, which was also applied in the four previous poems of “Enfance”. The setting is methodically described through a pattern of adverbial phrases of place in the third and fourth paragraphs:

“**A** une distance énorme **au dessus** de [...].”
“Moins haut [...]. **Aux** côtés [...] sur ces plans [...].”

The adverbial phrases of place opening paragraphs three and four and the repetition of “à”, “au” and “aux” create a reading expectation for the fifth paragraph. Although the first word of the fifth paragraph is “aux” (reminiscent of “au dessus” and “aux côtés”), the reader's expectation is disappointed as the adverbial phrase opening the fifth paragraph is temporal (“**Aux** heures”) and not spatial.

This sudden irruption of time in the fifth paragraph sends us back to the closing sequence of “Enfance” I³ (which also happens to be the fifth paragraph of the poem):

“Quel ennui, **l'heure** du «cher corps» et «cher cœur».”

In “Enfance” I, time is associated with “ennui”, whilst in “Enfance” V it is associated with “amertume”. Both words belong to the same semantic thread, especially if one keeps in mind the accepted meaning of the word “ennui” in the 19th century (cf. *Littré*: “**Tourment de l'âme** causé par la perte de l'espérance.”)

As the poem plays on the effect of list in the description of the setting, the style is often elliptical especially in paragraphs 4 and 5:

“Ville monstrueuse, nuit sans fin!”
“Aux côtés, rien que l'épaisseur du globe. Peut-être les gouffres d'azur, des puits de feu.”

² The description in layers reminds the reader of other descriptions as in Zola's *Pot Bouille* or Dante's *Inferno*.

³ It also sends us back to the end of “Enfance” III, and the closing sequence: “Il y a **enfin**, **quand** l'on a faim et soif, quelqu'un qui vous chasse.”

Sentences present many appositions of words or group of words, often following a parallel grammatical pattern:

“ces journaux que je suis idiot de relire, ces livres sans intérêt” (two deictics, two masculine plural nouns, two segments qualifying the nouns);

“Les maisons s'implantent, les brumes s'assemblent” (two feminine plural nouns, two reflexive verbs);

“Ville monstrueuse, nuit sans fin” (two feminine nouns without articles, notice also the echo “sans intérêt”, “sans fin”);

“Les gouffres d'azur, des puits de feu”⁴ (two masculine plural nouns and possessive phrases with two masculine singular nouns);

“lunes et comètes, mers et fables” (four feminine plural nouns in pairs, no articles);

and note the final alteration of the parallel grammatical patterns in the last paragraph: “des boules de saphir, de métal” where the reader would expect a feminine plural noun before “métal”.

The many appositions of the description create a ‘cinematographic’ effect, comparable with the second poem of the series, which also offers many prepositions (“derrière”, “devant”, etc.). Although the style of the description in “Enfance” V is, in many ways, disjointed, with sentences following very minimal grammatical patterns, it is overall more discursive than the style of the previous poems of the series. The strong presence of the first-person narrator throughout the poem creates the impression of cohesion. While the other poems (“Enfance” I and III especially) create an effect of superposition of images, “Enfance” V builds up a cohesive universe from a single focal point, “mon salon souterrain”.

Implications for translation

The cohesive pattern of verticality will have to be conveyed in the TT. The erosion of the repetition of adverbial phrases of place, with the intrusion of the adverbial phrase of time “Aux heures d'amertume”, will also have to be conveyed. The repetition of the adverbial phrases of place in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the ST create a reading expectation for the last sequence, which begins with “aux” but introduces an adverbial phrase of time instead of an adverbial phrase of place. This feature is not reproduced in any of the three translations:

“**At** a tremendous distance **above**[...] **At** my side [...] **In** moments [...]”

⁴ This construction is attested by the *Manuscrit de la Bibliothèque Nationale* and reproduced by Guyaux in his edition of *Illuminations*. It is interesting to compare this construction with “**Les** saints! **des** forts! **les** anachorètes, **des** artistes [...]” in “Mauvais sang” (*Une Saison en enfer*) which establishes a semantic equivalence of the two segments.

(Fowlie)

“**At** an enormous distance **above**[...] **At** each side [...] **In** my hours [...]”

(Bernard)

“**At** an enormous distance **above**[...] **At** the sides [...] **In** hours [...]”

(Peschel)

Fowlie translates “amertume”, which recalls “ennui” (“Enfance” I), but also “âpre” (“Enfance” IV), by “depression” and thus fails to convey the parallel with the other poems.

The cohesive style of the poem contrasts with the style of rest of the “Enfance” poems. However, it is still relatively elliptical. The sentences should retain their grammatical simplicity, as their structure underlines the bareness of the universe described. Fowlie sometimes reconstructs the ST, losing some of the ellipses:

— by changing the punctuation “Monstrous city! Endless night!”

— by adding an extra verb and a conjunction: “Perhaps **there are** pits of azure **and** wells of fire?”

Likewise, he sometimes loses the parallel grammatical structures of the ST, most obviously in his translation of “les maisons s'implantent, les brumes s'assemblent” which becomes “houses grow **like plants, and** fogs gather”. Peschel and Bernard also fail to reproduce some of the parallels as they translate for example “Ville monstrueuse, nuit sans fin” by “Monstrous city, night without end”, inverting the order in the second segment, the qualifying phrase being after the noun. The effect of incomplete parallel in the segment “des boules de saphir, de métal” is lost in Fowlie's translation (“I imagine sapphire **and** metal balls”).

3. Intertextual level

The first sentence of the poem associates two contradictory terms: “louer” and “tombeau”. The tomb is traditionally “de toute éternité” and represents the final and eternal dwelling. The poet plays on the semantic ambiguity of the word “tombeau”. “Tombeau” commonly denotes the grave and is associated with the idea of “souvenir”:

Monument funéraire [...] pour commémorer le souvenir d'un ou de plusieurs morts. [*Littré*]

Not only does this meaning fit the context of the poem, with the evocation of “descente au tombeau” (associated with “très loin sous terre” and “salon souterrain”), but it also corresponds to some of the themes of other poems of “Enfance”, especially “Enfance” II.

The verb “louer”, in this context, appears to be a semantic anomaly. Unless, like Fongaro, we consider another acceptance of the word (which he quotes from Hugo's *Les Misérables*):

Je rappelle qu'on emploie le mot «tombeau» même dans le langage courant pour désigner l'endroit où quelqu'un s'enferme à l'écart du monde. Comme l'atteste cette phrase du chapitre 3 du livre V de la première partie des *Misérables*, où le mot «tombeau» voisine avec le mot «rêvoir»:
“On n'en continua pas moins de dire que personne ne pénétrait dans cette chambre et que c'était une caverne d'ermite, un rêvoir, un trou, un tombeau.”
[Fongaro 1989, p. 49]

This second meaning of the word elucidates the apparent incongruity of the association “louer”/ “tombeau”, as well as the image of “salon souterrain”. The idea of isolation linked to the theme of “Enfance” is also evoked in “Enfance” IV:

“Je serais bien l'enfant abandonné sur la jetée partie à la haute mer”⁵

With the word “tombeau”, the poet can play on three different meanings: 1) “lieu de retraite et d'habitation” (associated with “louer” and “salon”); 2) “lieu de souvenir”; 3) “lieu de mort”⁶.

In “Enfance” V, two different worlds are opposed, namely the surface world (“ville”) and the underground world. The surface world is clearly isolated from the underground world: “A une distance énorme au dessus”. Everything spreads horizontally inwards (“s'assemblent”), or outwards (“s'implantent”). The two reflexive verbs associated with the plural nouns (“les maisons”, “les brumes”) evoke a growing process (especially underlined by the verb “s'implanter”, which stems from the word “plante”). This type of reflexive verb associated with the same effect can also be found in “Enfance” II (“Les nuées s'amassaient”) and in “Enfance” IV (“Les monticules se couvrent”). The town spreads not only horizontally, but also vertically (“les égouts”), with a common denominator: “la boue [...] rouge ou noire”. The reality thus described creates an effect of “inquiétante étrangeté” confirmed by the adjective “monstrueuse”.

⁵ In this sentence, we interpreted the conditional “Je serais bien” as being an expression of preference. The cautious wish to be the child subjected to isolation in “Enfance” IV becomes an absolute demand in “Enfance” V with the injunction “Qu'on me loue enfin [...]”.

⁶ The word “blanchi” also calls for another meaning in association with the expression “sépulcre blanchi”, which “s'applique à tout ce qui a plus d'apparence et de brillant que de fond et de réalité” [Rat 1957, p. 359]. The expression connotes hypocrisy.

The underground world, predominant in the poem (paragraphs 1, 2, 4 and 5), is represented by the “salon souterrain” and the supposedly imaginary world of “gouffres” and “puits”. Both universes are linked with creative imagination, in that “salon souterrain” is linked with literary imagination (“journaux”, “livres”), “boules de saphir, de métal” and “gouffres” and “puits” are linked with “fables”⁷. “Imagination” and “creation” are Baudelairian themes *par excellence* and it is interesting to compare the second paragraph of “Enfance” V with the first quatrain of “Le Voyage”⁸:

Pour l'enfant, amoureux de cartes et d'estampes,
L'univers est égal à son vaste appétit.
Ah! que le monde est grand à la clarté des lampes!
Aux yeux du souvenir que le monde est petit!

This extract coincides with some of the themes of the series “Enfance”: childhood (“enfant”), desire (“appétit”), imagination and memory. It also corresponds to particular elements of “Enfance” V, namely: the universe in a structured representation (“le monde”, “cartes”), the lamp, artistic creation (“estampes”). Baudelaire's vision of childhood is positive, the child uses imagination and images (“cartes et estampes”) to embellish the world. For Baudelaire, the child grows up not so much to become a man, as a creator (through the power of imagination). The literary sources of childhood imagining (“livres”, “journaux”) and the isolation they presuppose are undermined in “Enfance” V. The food of imagination is “idiot” or “sans intérêt”, the environment of imagination (“souvenir” and “Enfance”) is compared with a tomb. The world created by the imagination is colourful (“azur”, “feu”, “saphir”, “métal”), but illusory and precarious (cf. “peut-être” x2) in comparison with the dark and infinite reality of the town (“Ville monstrueuse, nuit sans fin!”). All contact with external reality is rejected in the final question. The “soupon”, which in a tomb is an access for the outside world, is evoked and at the same time denied by the vain rhetorical question and the pejorative terms describing it (“apparence”, “blêmir”). “Enfance” is the comfortable and “bourgeois” (cf. “salon”) world of imagination, with deadly implications of isolation. In this world only “silence”

⁷ Notice how “saphir” is linked to “azur”: “**Saphir**: Pierre céleste par excellence, le saphir reconduit toute la symbolique de l'azur [...] [Chevalier & Gheerbrant 1982, p. 846]. Similarly, “métal” echoes “feu” as the “rapport de la forge [activité d'ordre infernal] avec le feu **souterrain**, donc avec l'enfer, est significatif” [idem, p. 628]. Finally, the various elements “saphir”, “feu”, “azur”, “métal” are linked because of the parallel of grammatical structures: “des puits de feu”/ “des boules d'azur, de métal”.

⁸ In Baudelaire's *Fleurs du mal*, Poèmes apportés à l'édition de 1861 [Fin de *La Mort*].

can be mastered. The mastery of silence is ironic in the underground world where everything is “silencieux comme la tombe”.

Implications for translation

The various intertextual features will have to be rendered in the TT, in order to convey the pessimistic and ironic tone of “Enfance” V. The word “tomb”, which was chosen by Peschel, Bernard and Fowlie does not entirely convey the different meanings of “tombeau”. More importantly, the key expression of the ST, which is “descendre au tombeau” is lost. The word “grave”, although it could convey this set expression (as it immediately suggests the “to go to one's grave”) is also inappropriate. The word “grave” denotes a plain “hole in the ground for a corpse” (*Oxford Dictionary of Current English*) and clashes with the idea of a whitewashed room, with lines of cement. The problem here is partly cultural, French cemetery architecture being different from British architecture. The translator has no choice but to keep “tomb” (rather than the archaic “sepulchre” or cist”). Although it loses some of the connotations of the French word “tombeau”, it still retains the idea of “retraite sombre” and of “silence” (“silent as the tomb”). The translator has then to compensate for the loss of the connoted meaning “descendre au tombeau”.

Translating “souponrail” by “vent” (Peschel) shows a clear misunderstanding of the context of the poem. The end of the poem expresses the refusal of a false (“apparence”, “blêmir”) external help which could come from the town, but is more likely to come from a supernatural power. The reader could be justified in suspecting a supernatural intervention because of the presence of the verb “blêmir”, which also features in “Après le déluge”, where it suggests divine intervention:

“le sceau de Dieu blêmit les fenêtres”.

The poem hence would evoke divine intervention in the form of a skylight appearing in the corner of the vault. This hypothesis is quite likely, especially if the reader bears in mind the religious connotations of the word “souponrail”. In *Littré*, the noun ‘souponrail’ denotes an “ouverture pratiquée au sommet d'une voûte d'aqueduc, et par extension, d'une voûte quelconque. «Lorsqu'un caveau contenait le tombeau du saint, le besoin [...] de faire voir facilement aux fidèles sans qu'ils descendissent dans la crypte même, fit que dans plus d'une basilique, au dessous de l'autel [...] on ouvrit un

soupirail à travers les voûtes souterraines» [Lenoir, *Architecture monastique*, 1852, p. 214]”.

Fowlie translates “soupirail” by “cellar window” which is the wrong particularisation, as the setting is not a cellar but a tomb. The correct technical translation is “squint” or “hagioscope”. However, the shift to a specific technical term would unnecessarily puzzle the reader. The word “skylight” (Bernard) is thus semantically probably the most satisfactory.

The word “salon”, which connotes ideas of comfort and bourgeois interior, is translated by “drawing room” (Peschel), “living-room” (Bernard) and “room” (Fowlie), (a clear case of generalisation). All three translations lose the phonic repetition of “**s**alon **s**outerrain”. The word “lounge” is more appropriate, because it creates a phonic repetition (“**u**nderground **l**ounge”) and it evokes the right bourgeois connotations via the expression “lounge lizard”.

Rent me (1) at last (2) this tomb, whitewashed with the lines of cement in relief — very deep down underground (3).

I lean my elbows on the table, the lamp very vividly lights up these newspapers which I am stupid to reread, these pointless (4) books.

At an enormous distance (5) above my underground (6) lounge, the houses are taking root (7), the mists (8) are gathering (9). The mud is red or black. Monstrous city, endless night (10)!

Less high up, are sewers. At each side (5), nothing but the thickness of the globe. Perhaps the chasms of azure, wells of fire (11). These are perhaps the levels where moons and comets, seas and fables meet (12).

At times (5) of bitterness, I imagine balls of sapphire and metal (13). I am master of the silence. Why should a vague skylight grow ghostly (14) pale in the corner of the vault?

Decisions of detail

1. **Rent me:** I chose a simple imperative form, which, although it differs from the imperative form “Qu'on me loue”, is not as ambiguous as the solutions adopted by the other translators. It avoids the intrusive pronoun “them” (“Let them rent me” Bernard, Peschel) and the Americanism of Fowlie's translation “Now hire for me”.

2. **at last:** the parallel with “Enfance” III (“Il y a enfin [...]”) is partly lost in the ST, as the translation of “enfin” differs from one TT to the other.

3. **very deep down underground:** the TT has to convey the idea of verticality especially in order to compensate for the semantic loss of the noun in “tomb”, which does not convey the idea of vertical descending immediately implied by “tombeau” via the set expression “descendre au tombeau”. The isolation of the segment is reproduced in the TT. The repetition of the harsh sound [t] is lost but compensated for by the repetition of the sound [d], which also emphasises the effect of isolation.

4. **pointless:** placed in the same position as “sans fin”, at the end of paragraph three, “pointless” has been chosen with “endless” to underline the parallel between “sans intérêt” and “sans fin” (“pointless”, “endless”), although it does not convey such a strong connotation of boredom as “sans intérêt”.

5. **At an enormous distance[...] At each side [...] At times [...]:** the textual organisation, which plays on the repetition of an identical structure distorted in the last paragraph, is reproduced in the TT. Although a translation such as “very far above” would be more idiomatic and would reduce the heavy nominalisation, it would result in a loss of the syntactic parallel.

6. **underground**: the TT reproduces the parallel “sous terre”/“souterrain”, with “very deep down underground”/“underground lounge”.

7. **the houses are taking root**: the idea of outward horizontal spreading implied in “s’implantent” is partly lost in the TT, although the verb emphasises the idea of “inquiétante étrangeté”, whilst retaining some of the connotations of “s’implanter” which stems from the noun “plante”.

8. **the mists**: Fowlie, Bernard and Peschel translate “brumes” by “fogs”. Given the importance of the word “brume” in Rimbaud’s vocabulary (cf. in “Soir historique”: “cette atmosphère personnelle, brume de remords physiques, dont la constatation est déjà une affliction”, in “Métropolitain”: “les nappes de brume échelonnées en bandes affreuses” and in *Une Saison en enfer*, “L’impossible”: “nous cultivons la brume”, etc.), the distinction between “mist” and “fog” is crucial.

9. **are taking root [...] are gathering**: a progressive verb tense has been chosen to underline the continuous process expressed by the verbs “s’implantent” and “s’assemblent”. However, the strict parallel of the two segments (reflexive verbs + repetition of the sound [ã]) is lost in the TT.

10. **Monstrous city, endless night!**: the parallel structure (“ville monstrueuse, nuit sans fin!”) is kept, although the nouns are in second position.

11. **the chasms of azure, wells of fire**: the syntax “Les gouffres d’azur, des puits de feu” implies that the segments “gouffres d’azur” and “puits de feu” are equivalent. This equivalence is reproduced in the TT.

12. **These are perhaps the levels**: the syntax of the ST has been altered, as a literal translation results in an unidiomatic sentence [cf. “It is perhaps on these planes” (Peschel), “Perhaps it is on these levels” (Bernard)].

13. **balls of sapphire and metal**: a conjunction is required resulting in a partial loss. The TT loses the rhythmic imbalance of the syntax of the ST and creates a possible ambiguity in meaning, as these “boules” could be an alloy of sapphire and metal. The literal translation of the syntax results in an effect of nominalisation. A more idiomatic rendering would be “sapphire and metal balls”. This translation would, however, result in the parallel with the preceding “gouffres d’azur”/ “puits de feu” being lost.

14. **vague skylight [...] ghostly**: it is tempting to calque the syntax of the ST, which results in an excessive nominalisation (cf. “appearance of a vent” Peschel and “appearance of a cellar window” Fowlie). Bernard’s translation: “something which resembles a skylight” is extremely longwinded. His choice of the verb “resemble” to convey the noun “apparence” is unsatisfactory, as the word “apparence” bears negative connotations (cf. *Littré*: “apparence 6) Faux-semblant *Il n’y a point d’apparence que je m’y doive fier*, CARL. IV” and the popular expression “Ne vous fiez pas aux apparences”, where “apparence” is clearly pejorative). It is also interesting to notice in the ST the play on the lexical proximity (etymologically) between “apparence” and “apparition”. The pejorative value of “apparence” and its proximity with the

word “apparition” both justify the choice of the adverb “ghostly”, which is also more idiomatically correct. The impression of fading reality conveyed by the verb “blêmir” (which can also be attributed to humans) is translated by splitting with “vague” and “ghostly”. The possible religious allusions conveyed by “blêmir” (cf. in “Après le déluge”: “le sceau de Dieu blêmit les fenêtres”) are not entirely lost, as the adverb “ghostly” may recall “holy ghost”.

“Ville”, analysis and strategic decisions

1. Cohesive description

The poem “Ville” offers a description of a town which follows a clear progression. The first part of the description (from “Je suis un éphémère [...]” to “[...] les peuples du continent.”) is general and offers a gradually enlarged aesthetic survey of the town from the inside and the outside of the houses “l’ameublement” and “l’extérieur des maisons”, to the global “plan de la ville”. The vocabulary used is plain (“extérieur”), technical (“ameublement”, “plan”) and political (“citoyen”, “métropole”). From the aesthetic and cadastral (cf. “plan”) survey, the poem evolves to a sociological (“la morale”, “la langue”, “l’éducation”, “le métier”) and demographic survey (“la vieillesse”, “ces millions de gens”, “ce cours de vie”, “statistique”, “les peuples du continent”). The vocabulary used is extremely abstract (“morale”), technical (“statistique”) and impersonal (“gens”). The description, which follows a clear and logical progression, copies the style of positivist texts. This is also reflected in the grammatical structures of the poem. The text offers many connectors (often expressing causality and comparisons creating an effect of strong cohesion, quite unusual for poetic discourse:

- 1) “une métropole crue moderne **parce que** tout goût moderne a été éludé dans [...]”
 - 2) “[...] **aussi bien que** dans le plan de la ville”
 - 3) “Ces millions des gens [...] amènent **si** pareillement l’éducation, [...] **que** ce cours de vie”
 - 4) “[...] plusieurs fois **moins long que** [...]”
- And in the second part of the poem:
- 5) “**Aussi comme**, de ma fenêtre, je vois”
 - 6) “devant mon cottage qui est ma patrie et tout mon cœur **puisque** tout ici ressemble à ceci”

The various phonic repetitions also convey an effect of cohesion. The cohesive chain of sounds created by the words “éphémère”, “mécontent”, “métropole”, “moderne”, “ameublement”, “maison”, “monument”, “morale”, “millions”, “amènent”, “pareillement”, “métier”, is especially striking. Some restricted parallels of sounds can also be pointed out such as:

“trop mécontent”, “métropole”
“tout goût connu”

and the endings in “superstition”, “expression”, “millions” and “éducation”, which are specific to abstract French words.

Implications for translation

The objective and positivist aspects of the description are illustrated in the vocabulary used to describe the town (“plan”, “statistique”, etc.) and in the extreme cohesion of the poem. These outstanding characteristics of the poem have largely been disregarded by translators. The description favours general and abstract terms, including “la morale”, “la langue”, “l'éducation”, “le métier”, “la vieillesse”. The poet thus emphasises the impersonal and objective effect of the description. This effect is partly lost if the syntax of the ST is changed. The passage “amènent si pareillement l'éducation, le métier et la vieillesse, que ce cours de vie”, has been translated as :

“conduct **their** education, **their** trade, and **their** old age with such similarity that the duration of **their** lives” (Fowlie)

“carry on **their** education, **their** work, and **their** old age so similarly that the course of **their** lives” (Bernard)

“conduct **their** education, occupation and old age so similarly that **their** course of life” (Peschel)

The possessive adjectives completely change both the effect and the meaning of the ST. In my view, the poet sets out to emphasise the absurdity and the danger of “empty” abstractions. Any political discourse (or ideology, positivism included) favours abstractions and “mots d'ordre” such as “la démocratie” and “le progrès”. The ST associates two common political “mots d'ordre” linked to the concept of progress, namely “l'éducation” and “le métier”, but the third word of the enumeration is surprisingly “la vieillesse”. The reader would expect a word also associated with the concept of progress such as “l'hygiène” or “la santé”. The noun “vieillesse” in the final position is even more incongruous, as it seems to be the logical consequence and the ultimate goal of “l'éducation” and “le métier”. The reader already suspects a certain degree of irony in the poem. I shall demonstrate how this irony undermines the positivist discourse, forcing the reader to question the apparent objectivity of the description.

2. Undermining the objectivity of the description

The objectivity and technicality of the description are undermined by the subjectivity of the discourse. This is striking from the first sentence of “Ville” which is undermined by a litotes:

“Je suis un éphémère et **point trop mécontent** citoyen”

The negation¹, (“**point**” and “**mécontent**”) characteristic of litotes, and the “trop” convey the affected tone of the segment. It has an immediate effect on the reader, who understands the euphemism “point trop mécontent” as an expression of the narrator's irony². The adjective “mécontent” is, furthermore, quite commonly used in often ridiculed popular litotes, such as “Je ne suis pas mécontent de moi”, where the adjective “mécontent” evokes a self-sufficient character.

The narrator's intrusion is also apparent in the interpolated clause “— notre ombre des bois, notre nuit d'été! —”. The segment is isolated by the punctuation (comma, dashes and exclamation mark)³. The graphic isolation points out this segment as being different from the rest of the sentence. The reader is meant to see that the isolated segment “— notre ombre des bois, notre nuit d'été! —” works in parallel with the preceding unit “l'épaisse et éternelle fumée de charbon” and shows a striking similarity of construction (namely feminine noun + noun phrase):

“fumée	de charbon”
“ombre	des bois”
“nuit	d'été”

The three nominal units “fumée de charbon”, “ombre des bois” and “nuit d'été” exploit the same semantic thread of darkness, through the nouns “charbon”, “ombre”, “nuit”. The segment “— notre ombre des bois, notre nuit d'été! —” is in fact a double semantical reformulating of “fumée de charbon”. The link between the two is achieved by the play on the recognisable unit “charbon de bois”. The equivalence in meaning between “— notre ombre des bois, notre nuit d'été! —” and “éternelle fumée de charbon” is also clear

¹ See the definition of “litote” in *Gradus* :

La litote prend toutes les formes de l'atténuation [...] mais surtout celle de la négation du contraire. Cette forme est très courante dans la langue parlée. [...] C'est devenu un mode de soulignement, que l'on retrouve aussi dans la langue écrite. [Dupriez 1984, pp. 277-9]

²

Preminger range sous la rubrique ironie la litote, l'hyperbole, l'antiphrase [...] Ceci est conforme au sens grec du terme: *éirônéia*, ‘interrogation’: Il faut que le lecteur s'interroge sur ce qu'on a pu vouloir dire. [Dupriez 1984, p. 264]

In the last sentence it is also possible to identify an example of antiphrasis: “joli Crime” (especially in parallel with the popular expression “c'est du joli!”) which would betray the same type of irony from the narrator. Sacchi also suspects irony and qualifies the syntactic unit “joli Crime” of “jolieste antiphrasique” [1992b, p. 218].

³ This is reminiscent of the isolation of “(il est aux Indes!)” in “Enfance” II, which underlines the play on the collocation “oeillet d'Inde”.

in the use of the possessive adjective “notre”, which is used to evoke the same relation of identity in:

“— la Mort sans pleurs, **notre** active fille et servante”

It is the contrast between the bucolic Shakespearean (cf. “nuit d’été”) expressions “ombre des bois” / “nuit d’été”⁴ and the heavy pollution described in “épaisse et éternelle fumée de charbon” which creates irony.

The same type of irony affects the segment “mon cottage qui est ma patrie et tout mon cœur”. A reader (or at least a 19th century reader) would have expected the word “chaumière”, instead of the exotic noun “cottage” as in the popular expression “**une chaumière et un cœur**”. Rat, in his *Dictionnaire des locutions françaises*, reminds us of the precise literary context underlying this expression:

C'est pour certains l'idée du bonheur: amour et calme. La formule, qui est ancienne, a été popularisée par un vaudeville à couplets de Scribe, intitulé *Une chaumière et son cœur* (1835). A la fin de la pièce, Jenny, abandonnée par John, fils d'un fermier, son compagnon d'enfance, épouse d'ailleurs, déçue, un riche fermier et chante:

“Pour être heureuse, *un cœur, une chaumière,*
Ne suffisent pas, j'en ai peur.”

[Rat 1957, p. 91]

Rimbaud deliberately chooses the exotic noun “cottage”⁵ rather than the expected French word “**chaumière**”. As a bucolic symbol of individual bourgeois rural property, the English “cottage” is not entirely similar to the French “chaumière”. However, the reader can still perceive the intertextual expression “une chaumière et un cœur” and draw a comparison between Jenny⁶ and the narrator of “Ville”. Unlike “Jenny” in Scribe's play *Une*

⁴ Although Murphy does not analyse the play on “charbon de bois”, he also suggests a parodic content:

[L]’expression «notre ombre des bois, notre nuit d’été!» serait-elle plutôt, comme nous le pensons, une définition parodique et bucolique de la pollution qui vient d’être indiquée: «l’épaisse et éternelle fumée de charbon»? [Bivort & Murphy 1994, p. 152]

Note also here how “éternelle” and “nuit” are close to “Ville monstrueuse, **nuit sans fin!**” (“Enfance” V), which is also constructed on a parallel structure with an exclamation mark. Another such parallel construction is the repetition of «cher corps» and «cher cœur» in “Enfance” I.

⁵ Hackett also suggests that the choice of “cottage” is semantically motivated:

Il est possible que Rimbaud ait ignoré le sens précis de ce terme, que *Littre* définit comme «petite maison de campagne d'une simplicité rustique mais élégante». Il est probable au contraire que Rimbaud, connaissant bien le sens du terme, l'a employé à dessein, afin d'introduire une note discordante dans ce poème pleins d'échos de divers temps et de diverses époques. [1987, p. 196]

⁶ The ironic allusion to Scribe's play is quite likely, as the playwright was commonly parodied at the end of the 19th century. The *Dictionnaire des littératures de langue française* reminds us of the symbolic status of Scribe:

chaumière et son cœur, the narrator seems rather satisfied with his dwelling. In fact, in the “métropole crue moderne”, this unexpected (both linguistically and contextually) bucolic cottage has become the motto of patriotism (“patrie”) and personal fulfilment (“cœur”).

Another mark of the narrator's intrusion is the use of the verbs “croire” and “devoir” (modalité) expressing an opinion or hypothesis, in the sentences:

“une métropole **crue** moderne” (opinion on other people's opinion)
“Ce cours de vie **doit** être plusieurs fois moins long”

In both cases, the accuracy and objectivity of the description is undermined as the narrator distances himself from the content of his description.

Ultimately, the prevailing impression in “Ville” is that one cannot get a clear-cut definition of the aesthetic, sociological and demographic aspects of the town. These aspects are systematically described in an indirect way. Using comparisons and negations, in effect, always results in a lack of definition. In the affirmation: “ce cours de vie doit être plusieurs fois moins long que ce qu'une statistique folle trouve pour les peuples du continent”, the information is clearly denied. The comparison creates a hierarchy and a proportion between “ville” and “continent” but does not reveal the actual longevity of either of the people⁷.

Similarly in the sentence “Ici vous ne signaleriez les traces d'aucun monument de superstition”, the strong negation “ne...aucun” denies the description. The reader knows what is not in the town (although the expression “monument de superstition” is not in itself very clear), but it is impossible to know what actually is in the town. The verb “signaler” is thus completely semantically unmotivated, since clearly “il n'y a rien à signaler”. Bancquart [1980] has pointed out how this contradictory sentence parodies the style of the tourist guide and thus reveals the narrator's irony.

Scribe est un auteur-symbole: dès la fin du XIXe, il paraissait démodé, et l'on ironisait déjà sur son écriture bâclée et remplie de clichés, sur ses personnages stéréotypés, sur sa philosophie des petites causes et des grands effets, sur ses collaborateurs et sur ses 350 pièces. [Beaumarchais, Couty and Rey 1984, pp. 252-3]

Furthermore, Scribe is Rimbaud's prime target in the poem “Michel et Christine”, which is the title of a vaudeville by Scribe and Dupin (cf. “Michel et Christine” analysed by Etiemble and Gauclère, “A propos de ‘Michel et Christine’”, *Cahiers du Sud*, Marseille, déc. 1936, pp. 927-931).

⁷ See Herschberg-Pierrot's analysis of “Parallèles”:

Expression privilégiée de l'endoxal, comme la comparaison «à parangon» (*similitudo*), le parallèle, lieu argumentatif, substituée à la définition une proportion, marquée par les tournures du type de «plus... plus», «moins... moins», ou «plus... que», «aussi... que», «moins... que» (*comparatio*), permettant de poser une hiérarchie, **sans définir les termes**, et sans mettre en question le jugement supporté, préasserté. [1988, pp. 94-5]

The description is denied or conveys an impression of reductionism. This is especially striking in the verbs “réduire” and “ressembler” and the expression “amener pareillement” (a periphrasis for “standardiser”), which all evoke the idea of “nivellement par le bas”. The narrator's irony is summed up in the verb “éluder”. All known historical and cultural references are “éludées” in the town planning, pretty much in the same way as the description itself is “éludée”. The reader knows that the town cannot be aesthetically compared, but at the same time he does not get a clear idea of what it looks like.

Implications for translation

A translation of “Ville” will have to convey the salient opposition between objectivity and subjectivity, between positivist and affective tone in the description. The affective tone of the text, which often goes hand in hand with irony, is not always perceived or conveyed by the translators. The verb “croire”, which was analysed as creating an effect of distance from the description, disappears in Fowlie's translation replaced by “obviously” (“a metropolis obviously modern”) when one would have expected the adverb “presumably”. Bernard and Peschel differ on the translation of “croire” (“deemed”, Peschel and “which is believed to be”, Bernard). “Croire” can cover both meanings in French. When followed by an adjective, the meaning is likely to be “juger, estimer” (e.g.: “je la crois digne de respect”). However, since the text challenges the faith in the new religion of modernity, progress and positivism, I would keep the idea of belief.

The translator should pay special attention to the rendering of the litotes which is anteposed in the first sentence: “pas trop mécontent citoyen”. Fowlie interestingly transforms the litotes in a compound adjective: “not-too-discontented”. The translation thus compensates in form for the anteposition. The litotes is conveyed in a form which assumes the status of other, often clichéic, compound adjectives such as “well-to-do” or “good-for-nothing”.

The ironic parallel “fumée de charbon”> “ombre des bois”> “nuit d'été” is conveyed in Peschel's and in Bernard's translations:

“coal-smoke”> “woodland shade”> “summer's night” (Bertrand)
“coal fumes”> “forest shade”> “summer night” (Peschel)

But it is lost in Fowlie's translation:

“coal smoke”> “shadow **in the woods**”> “summer night”

The play on the unit “charbon de bois” (charcoal) disappears in English and doubly so in Peschel's translation with “forest” for “bois”.

The exoticism “cottage” is particularly challenging for the translator, as a literal rendering (cf. Bernard, Peschel, Fowlie) inevitably results in a translation loss.

The particularity of the sentence: “Ici vous ne signaleriez la trace d'aucun monument de superstition”, which ironically imitates the style of the tourist guide, is sometimes lost in translation. Bernard loses the conditional “signaleriez” when translating “here you **cannot** point out”. Fowlie translates “signaler” by “discover” and thus completely loses the humorous content.

3. Parallels: “Tout ici ressemble à ceci”

The last sentence is distinct from the rest of the poem. It is the longest sentence, covering nearly half of the text, with a complex syntax. Although the description retains the irony of the rest of the poem (“notre ombre des bois, notre nuit d'été”), the poem shifts:

— from a global (“plan”) to a restricted point of view (“de ma fenêtre”, “devant mon cottage”)

— from a hypothetic (“doit être”) and impersonal (“vous ne signaleriez”) description to a direct observation (“je vois”).

The sentence is introduced by the unusual connector “aussi comme”. It has sometimes been pointed out that the segment “aussi comme” creates a kind of grammatical imbalance in the sentence. Guyaux explains that “L'originalité syntaxique, — et donc stylistique, — de la phrase est qu'elle se compose comme une subordonnée, introduite par *comme*, mais trouve aussitôt en elle-même une valeur d'indépendante. Au fur et à mesure des mots, le lien de subordination, la dépendance, s'efface, les mots paraissent oublieux de la structure syntaxique principale” [1985b, pp. 178-9].

However, there is no consensus around Guyaux's position. Critics either refuse to see a syntactic or grammatical anomaly⁸, which would give “comme” an unusual independent status, or they suspect “une erreur de

⁸ Steinmetz does not acknowledge the grammatical imbalance in the closing sequence and thinks “comme” is an intensifying adverb:

La longue phrase qui commence par ces mots a été jugée obscure. Elle s'éclaire si on voit dans “comme”, non pas le premier terme d'une comparaison, appelant une proportion subordonnée (de même que), mais une adverbe de manière, à valeur intensive (combien). [1989, p. 344, note n°12]

transcription” [Giusto 1980, p. 299], which sometimes results in the ST being corrected⁹.

Bivort [1992b], anxious to find the key to this syntactic puzzle, sheds new light on the the concept of “agrammaticalité” which is often hastily used by the critics. Bivort, who clearly distinguishes between grammatical-syntactical and pragmatic approach, each offering a different definition of the concept of “agrammaticalité”, favours the first approach. Following Chomsky's dichotomy [*Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*, 1965], he then proceeds to determine whether the sentence is grammatically correct/incorrect or semantically acceptable/unacceptable. After analysing the two functions of “comme” solely considered by the critics (namely adverb or conjunction), he finally suggests another solution. In his ground-breaking analysis, he groups “aussi” and “comme” into a single unit (“aussi comme”) and reveals that this grammatical unit is attested at least up to the 18th century. He also finds in *Littré* a definition of this archaic form:

au XVIIe siècle, on disait, conformément à l'usage des siècles précédents, *aussi comme*, pour lequel nous disons présentement *aussi que*. [Bivort 1992b, p. 47]

According to Bivort, the archaic grammatical unit “aussi comme” would establish a comparison and/or an analogy¹⁰ between the first and the second part of “Ville” and would thus read “*de la même façon*, [de ma fenêtre, je vois...]”. In order to support this hypothesis, he points out that the poem “Ville” offers other semantically equivalent units, such as:

“aussi bien que”, “si pareillement”, “plusieurs fois moins long que”

The use of an archaic form would be justified in the context of the poem, as “Rimbaud décri[t] le leurre du modernisme dans le seul langage qu'il lui reconnaisse, un langage rétrograde” [idem, p. 49].

Extending Bivort's convincing analysis, I would like to point out how in the closing sequence of “Ville”, the description is achieved by a series of semantically equivalent parallels and appositions:

⁹Raybaud reproduces the text in *Fabrique d' Illuminations* and modifies the punctuation as follows:

“Aussi, comme [,] de ma fenêtre, ” [1989, p. 85, my emphasis]

¹⁰ Bivort considers that the analogy is between the reality of the town and the vision:

[...] cette conjonction apparaît en effet dans *Ville* comme une charnière syntaxique de part et d'autre de laquelle se déploie le texte, assurant un lien analogique non pas entre deux phrases (au sens grammatical), mais entre deux parties, entre la réalité et la vision (je vois...) [idem, p. 48].

- 1) “des spectres nouveaux”/ “des Erinnyes nouvelles”/ “la Mort sans pleurs” + “un Amour désespéré”+ “un joli Crime”
- 2) “épaisse et éternelle fumée de charbon” / “notre ombre des bois”/ “notre nuit d'été”.
- 3) “mon cottage”/ “ma patrie”/ “tout mon cœur”
- 4) “la mort sans pleurs”/ “notre active fille et servante”

The description thus appears to illustrate the affirmation: “puisque tout ici ressemble à ceci”. Everything is equivalent in the closing sequence and everything is equivalent before and after the archaic connector “aussi comme”. The first part of the description is ruled by abstraction, the second part of the description is equally abstract¹¹. The irony of the last sentence relies on the fact that the only actants which are really described in the town are not real (“des spectres”). They are enumerated in three abstractions: “Mort”, “Amour”, “Crime”, personified by the capital letters. The three abstractions mix positive and negative aspects:

- positive: “sans pleurs”, “active fille et servante”, “Amour”, “joli”
- negative: “Mort”, “désespéré”, “Crime”, “boue”.

They are reminiscent of the three Furies (Latin: Furiae) or Erinyes (Greek), known as Alecto (“unceasing”), Megaera (“grudging”) and Tisiphone (“avenging murder”), the persecutors of men and women who transgressed natural laws, representing both justice (positive) and vengeance (negative). In Aeschylus' *Eumenides* (literally the “kind-hearted”), which presents a more positive side of the Furies, they haunt Orestes for the matricide of Clytemnestra. As such they assume the old position of the Furies, persecuting those who broke bonds of kinship. The link with the “Erinnyes nouvelles” and the old Furies (Erinyes or Eumenides) could be in the avenging of the crime against the city, especially if we keep in mind the etymology of “métropole” (*meter*: mother and *polis*: the city). The three new

¹¹ At the end of the 19th century, many writers (including Flaubert with his project of *Dictionnaire des idées reçues*) and literary critics openly expressed their hatred of a political style woven with abstractions and clichés. The following extract from *Esthétique de la langue française* by de Gourmont reveals what was at the time perceived as clichés and worthless journalistic and political abstractions:

Les professions qui comportent l'usage courant de la parole ou de l'écriture sont des conservatoires tenaces de clichés. On sait le rôle politique de la Sphère, de l'Hydre, du Spectre. [...] le mot [sphère] est arrivé au dernier période de l'abstraction, mais il semble même la plupart du temps, n'avoir qu'une valeur de redondance oratoire, ne correspondant à rien. Il en est de même des hydres et des spectres, deux mots tellement dénués de valeur visuelle qu'ils sont presque toujours interchangeables dans les locutions chères aux parlementaristes. [1899, pp. 308-9]

It is easy to draw a parallel with the poem “Ville” and the vision of a layered society defined by and in its abstractions. This extract also highlights the banality of the literary and political theme or motif of the spectre (which regains its visual reality in “Ville”).

Furies “la Mort sans pleur”, “un Amour désespéré” and “un joli Crime” present an ancient and a modern face. The last two especially recall cheap detective fiction and adventure story clichés. Furthermore, Bancquart [1980] points out a possible intertext in the Christian expression “votre pieuse (respectueuse) fille et servante”. The knowledge of this intertext reveals additional ironic implications (echoing the irony of “notre ombre des bois, notre nuit d’été”). Death, described like one of the brides of Christ, is not pious and docile but “active”, serving a pagan (“Erinnyes”) purpose of revenge (spreading something which is obviously not “la Bonne Nouvelle”). The “spectres nouveaux” of “Ville” contradict the positivist spirit of a town where “vous ne signaleriez la trace d’aucun monument de superstition”, as they traditionally embody popular superstition¹².

Implications for translation

The last sentence marks a turning point in the text. The grammar of the sentence, which is so peculiar, with the archaic connector “Aussi comme”, is particularly problematic for the translator. Fowlie, rather than establishing the actual function of the conjunction, chooses to ignore it: “From my window, I see new ghosts rolling through the thick, everlasting [...]”. Bernard changes the meaning of the sentence and his translation of the connector “aussi comme” does not convey analogy but consequence: “**Thus**, from my window, I see new apparitions roaming through the thick and endless [...]”. Only Peschel seems to recognise the type of grammatical link created by “aussi comme”, but translates the two words separately: “**Also, as it were**, from my window, I see new specters rolling through the thick and everlasting [...]”.

The word “Erinnyes”, of Greek origin with both positive and negative connotations, becomes “Furies” (Latin word) in Peschel’s translation and “Eumenides” in Fowlie’s translation. This last translation is the most problematic as it completely transforms the ending of the poem. Aeschylus’ *Eumenides* are the Furies tamed after the intervention of Athena, the patron of the city. Only once they have been tamed do they receive the title *Eumenides* (“the kind-hearted”), *Semnai Theai* (“venerable goddesses”), or *Charites* (“spirits of forgiveness”) and are they welcomed to Athens.

¹² In *Littre*, see for “superstition: «Otez la crainte des spectres et vous bannirez de la société la superstition.» Diderot in *Opinions des anciens philosophes* (Hobbisme)”.

I am an ephemeral and not-altogether-dissatisfied (1) citizen of a metropolis believed (2) to be modern because all known taste has been cleverly (3) avoided in the furnishings and the exterior of the dwellings as well (4) as in the plan of the city. Here, you could not indicate (5) a single trace of a monument to superstition. Morality and language are, at long last (6), reduced to their simplest expression! These millions of folk (7), who do not need to know each other, so similarly bring about (8) education, trade (9) and old age, that this lifespan (10) must be many times shorter than what a mad statistic estimates for the peoples on the continent (11). In like wise (12), from my window, I see new spectres (13) rolling through the thick eternal coal smog (14), — our woodland shade, our summer night! — new Erinyes, in front of my English cottage (15) which is my homeland and all my heart since everything here looks like this, — tearless Death, our active daughter and handmaid (16), a hopeless (17) Love and a pretty (18) Crime whining in the gutter (19).

Decisions of detail

1. **not-altogether-dissatisfied**: the litotes “pas trop mécontent” has been translated by an equivalent English litotes in the form of a compound adjective, which compensate for the loss of the emphasising anteposition. Furthermore, the adjective “dissatisfied” recalls “self-satisfied” which connotes complacency.

2. **believed**: as opposed to “deemed” (Peschel) as it conveys the underlying superstitious belief in the positivist ideology of progress.

3. **cleverly**: the verb “éluder” (=“éviter avec adresse”, *Larousse*) is translated by splitting adding the adverb “cleverly”, which suggests the idea of a frame-up from the town planners as well as from the narrator of “Ville” who cleverly avoids a precise description of the town.

4. **dwellings as well**: (as opposed to “houses”): the echo “dwellings”/ “as well” compensates for the loss of the parallel “trop mécontent”/ “métropole”. It also emphasises the technical side of the poem.

5. **indicate**: to convey the verb “signaler”, which parodies the type of vocabulary typical of the tourist guide (“sur la carte on signale”: “the map indicates”).

6. **at long last**: “enfin!” marks an intrusion of the narrator and an ironic judgement on the sociological aspects of the town. It is wrongly translated by “in short” by Peschel, Bernard and Fowle.

7. **folk**: it is necessary to render the opposition “gens” (impersonal and pejorative) and “peuples” (positive cf. “Villes”: “Ce sont des villes! C’est un peuple [...]”). The noun “folk” is also chosen in relation to the set expression “city folk” (“les gens de la ville”).

8. **bring about**: “amener” also means “occasionner, entraîner” (cf.: “la guerre amène bien des maux”). It is necessary to distinguish between “emmener”/“amener” in Rimbaud's *Illuminations* (see for example in “Mouvement” “Ils **emmènent** l’éducation des races, des classes et des bêtes”).

9. **trade**: more technical and abstract than “work” (Bernard) or “occupation” (Peschel).

10. **lifespan**: as opposed to “course of their lives” (Bernard) or “their course of life” (Peschel). It also conveys the objective and technical tone of the ST.

11. **on the continent**: the narrator seems to adopt an English perspective, thus reinforcing the impression that his description could be referring to London. “On the continent” is the standard English expression when viewing the European mainland.

12. **In like wise**: I chose thus to render the archaism “aussi comme”, which is semantically very important, as it contrasts with the very idea of modernity and conveys the idea of analogy between the modern town and the ancient spectres. “In like wise” is the obsolete original form of “likewise” and means “in the same manner” (*Oxford Dictionary of English*).

13. **spectres**: it is necessary to keep this word as only this word can convey both a literal and figurative (“le spectre de la crise, de la famine, de la guerre”) meaning of “spectre” and abstractions.

14. **coal smog**: instead of “fumes” (Peschel). “Smoke” (in the expression: “the (big, great) smoke”) is a possible translation in that from 1864, it is a colloquial name for London (“Country people when going to the Metropolis say they are on their way to the Smoke”, in *Oxford dictionary*). Furthermore, many critics believe that the 19th century London may have inspired the description of “Ville”. However, “coal smog” is a more valid translation. Although the TT does not render the play on the semantical unit “charbon de bois”, it conveys the idea of smoke from coal-fires and fog mixed together, which was a famous London trademark and ironically constitutes the permanent new summer's night of “Ville”.

15. **English cottage**: the exoticism is lost in the translation, however I have tried to convey part of the connotations of the word “cottage” by adding on the adjective “English”.

16. **handmaid**: the Christian intertext is conveyed in the translation, as the noun “handmaid” has religious connotations. However, the ironic and deadly connotations are lost.

17. **tearless [...] hopeless**: the repetition of adjectives with ending in “-less” emphasises :

- 1) the process of parallels and equivalences in the ST illustrating the segment “tout ici ressemble à ceci”.
- 2) the process of defining by negations and comparisons.

18. **pretty**: the antiphrasis “joli Crime”, which evokes the colloquial “c'est du joli!” is conveyed by “pretty crime”, which evokes similar colloquial expressions in English (cf. “And what a pretty picture they make!”).

19. **gutter**: the noun “gutter” is an apt translation of “boue”, since, like the French noun “boue”, it possesses socio-cultural connotations (“sortir de la boue du ruisseau”=“to rise from the gutter”).

Villes
[I.]

L'acropole officielle outre les conceptions de la barbarie moderne les plus colossales. Impossible d'exprimer
5 le jour mat produit par le ciel immuablement gris, l'éclat impérial des bâtisses, et la neige éternelle du sol. On a reproduit dans un goût d'énormité singulier toutes les merveilles classiques de l'architecture. J'assiste à des expositions de peinture dans des
10 locaux vingt fois plus vastes qu'Hampton-Court. Quelle peinture! Un Nabuchodonosor norvégien a fait construire les escaliers des ministères; les subalternes que j'ai pu voir sont déjà plus fiers que des Brahmas et j'ai tremblé à l'aspect des gardiens de colosses et
15 officiers de constructions. Par le groupement des bâtiments en squares, cours et terrasses fermées, on a évincé les cochers. Les parcs représentent la nature primitive travaillée par un art superbe. Le haut quartier a des parties inexplicables: un
20 bras de mer, sans bateaux, roule sa nappe de grésil bleu entre les quais chargés de candélabres géants. Un pont court conduit à une poterne immédiatement sous le dôme de la Sainte-Chapelle. Ce dôme est une armature d'acier artistique de
25 quinze mille pieds de diamètre environ.

Sur quelques points des passerelles de cuivre, des plates-formes, des escaliers qui contournent les halles et les piliers, j'ai cru pouvoir juger la
profondeur de la ville. C'est le prodige dont je
30 n'ai pu me rendre compte: quels sont les niveaux des autres quartiers sur ou sous l'acropole? Pour l'étranger de notre temps la reconnaissance est impossible. Le quartier commerçant est un
35 circus d'un seul style, avec galeries à arcades. On ne voit pas de boutiques. Mais la neige de la chaussée est écrasée; quelques nababs aussi rares que les promeneurs d'un matin de dimanche à Londres, se dirigent vers une diligence de diamants. Quelques divans de velour rouge: on sert des boissons
40 polaires dont le prix varie de huit cents à huit mille roupies. A l'idée de chercher des théâtres sur ce circus, je me répons que les boutiques doivent contenir des drames assez-sombres. Je pense qu'il y a une police; mais la loi doit être
45 tellement étrange, que je renonce à me faire une idée des aventuriers d'ici.

Le faubourg aussi élégant qu'une belle rue de Paris est favorisé d'un air de lumière. L'
50 élément démocratique compte quelque cent âmes. Là encore les maisons ne se suivent pas; le faubourg se perd bizarrement dans la campagne, le "Comté" qui remplit l'occident éternel des

55 forêts et des plantations prodigieuses où les
gentilshommes sauvages chassent leurs chroniques
sous la lumière qu'on a créée.

From Guyaux 1985b, pp. 37-38. On line 14-15 "aspect des gardiens de colosses et officiers de constructions" (wrongly) corrected by Guyaux "aspect de colosses des gardiens et officiers de constructions".

“Villes” I, analysis and strategic decisions

1. Cohesive description of the town

“Villes” I (“L’acropole officielle [...]”) is the longest poem in *Illuminations*, with twenty-three full sentences. The comparison with “Ville” is possible on many levels, as my analysis will demonstrate. However, the two towns are examples of two extreme conceptions, which may be seen as opposites. “Ville” represents extreme simplification as “tout goût connu a été éludé”. “Villes” I, however, represents extreme complexity as “on a reproduit dans un goût d’énormité singulier toutes les merveilles classiques de l’architecture”.

The description of the town offered in “Villes” I is cohesively organised in layers. It mainly covers three dimensions of the town: “l’acropole”, “le quartier commerçant” and “le faubourg”, thus following a downward and outward progression from “l’acropole” (in *Larousse* “Partie la plus élevée des citées grecques servant de citadelle”) also called “le haut quartier”, to “le faubourg” and “la campagne”. The progression is also from an official and organised space (cf. the words: “officielle”, “impérial”, “gardiens”, “officiers” and “groupement”) to a lush and wild space, although shaped by a human hand in the form of a “Comté” with “plantations” and artificial light (“la lumière qu’on a créée”). The horizontal spreading of the town corresponds to an increased human intervention, detected in the segments “[o]n a reproduit dans un goût d’énormité singulier”, “[l]es parcs représentent la nature primitive travaillée par un art superbe” and “sous la lumière qu’on a créée”, which betray the artificiality of the universe described.

The horizontal spreading of the town also corresponds to the vertical spreading of society following a hierarchy with “subalternes”, rich “nababs”, and feudal “gentilshommes sauvages”. The parsimony of the demographic constituent (“quelques nababs”, “l’élément démocratique compte quelque cent âmes”) contrasts with the exuberant abundance of the setting:

“énormité”, “toutes les merveilles classiques”, “locaux vingt fois plus vastes qu’ Hampton-Court”, etc.

The description is strikingly technical in the choice of certain words. The poem presents a complex catalogue of architectural terms:

“acropole” (x2), “bâtisses”, “locaux”, “architecture”, “escaliers” (x2), “squares”, “cours”, “terrasses”; “parcs”; “candélabres”¹, “pont”,

¹ In *Larousse*: “Lampadaire de voie publique”.

“poterne”, “dôme”, “armature”, “passerelles”, “plates-formes”, “halles”, “piliers”, “circus” (x2), “galeries”, “arcades”, “boutiques” (x2), “chaussée”, “théâtres”, “faubourg”(x2), “maisons”.

This inventory of various and heterogeneous architectural elements creates the effect of a list or catalogue.

The sentences are relatively unelaborated (except for the last one) and sometimes reminiscent of the style of the tourist guide. This is especially striking in the following examples:

“Ce dôme est une armature d’acier artistique de quinze mille pieds de diamètre environ.”

“Le quartier commerçant est un circus d’un seul style, avec galeries à arcades.”

The apparent mathematical precision of certain details of the town also emphasises the description's technicality and objectivity:

“vingt fois plus vastes”, “quinze mille pieds de diamètre environ”, “le prix varie de huit cents à huit mille roupies”, “quelque cent âmes”.

Cohesion is also created by phonic repetition. The first sentence, with the repetition of the sounds [k], [r] and [o] and the word “moderne”, sends us back to “Ville”:

“L’**acropole** officielle outre les **conceptions** de la **barbarie moderne** les plus **colossales**.”

The opening sentence of the second paragraph is also characterised by a striking repetition of [k], [p] and [l]:

“Sur **quelques points** des **passerelles** de **cuivre**, des **plates-formes**, des **escaliers** qui **contournent** les **halles** et les **piliers**, j’ai **cru pouvoir** juger la **profondeur** de la **ville**.”

The closing sequence partly echoes the opening sequence with the repetition of the sounds [r], [k] and [o] (see especially the phonic proximity of the words “acropole”/ “démocratique”/ “chroniques”/ “créées”):

“L’élément **démocratique** compte **quelque** cent âmes. Là **encore** les **maisons** ne se suivent pas; le **faubourg** se perd **bizarrement** dans la **campagne**, le “**Comté**” qui **remplit** l’**occident** éternel des **forêts** et des **plantations** **prodigieuses** où les **gentilshommes** **sauvages** chassent leur **chroniques** sous la lumière **qu’on a créée**.”

The translator may also take into account other phonic parallels, such as:

“**Nabuchodonosor norvégien**”
 “un **pont court conduit à une poterne**”
 “une **armature d’acier artistique**”
 “Le **quartier commerçant** est un **circus** d’un **seul style**, avec **galeries à arcades.**”
 “**diligence de diamants**”
 “**divans de velours rouge**”.

The poem is characterised by short sentences, with a regular and even flat rhythm. A few groups of three words distinctively convey an impression of systematic and ordered enumeration:

“le ciel immuablement gris, l’éclat impérial des bâtisses, et la neige éternelle du sol”
 “Le groupement des bâtiments en squares, cours et terrasses fermées”
 “des passerelles de cuivre, des plates-formes, des escaliers”.

Implications for translation

The translator should respect the different semantic parallels and semantic threads within the poem, as they maintain its cohesion. Amongst the different semantic threads running throughout the poem, are those linked to architecture and to artifice. Translators sometimes pay too little attention to these parallels. This is striking in Bernard’s translation of the word “faubourg”, which he translates firstly by “outlying part” and then by “suburb”. The town is strictly organised into layers and “quartiers” (“haut quartier”, “autres quartiers”, “quartier commerçant”). Bernard, although he conveys the repetition and translates “quartier” by “district”, fails to see that “haut quartier” is synonymous with “acropole” and cannot therefore be translated by “better district”. Fowlie translates “haut quartier” by “the upper part of the city”, which although it retains the semantic content is not sufficiently technical. The semantic thread of artificiality is not rendered or is not always perceived by translators. The translation of “travaillée” in “la nature primitive **travaillée** par un art superbe” by “cultivated” (Peschel and Bernard) or “laid out” (Fowlie) does not render accurately the verb “travailler” deliberately chosen by the poet for its Latin etymology (tripalium). Moreover, the meaning of the sentence is ambiguous since it is not clear whether the “nature primitive” is shaped (as in “travailler la terre”) or tormented (as in “être travaillé par la fièvre”) by “un art superbe”, or even, if it is the end product of “un art superbe”. This would be the ultimate contradiction or the ultimate arrogance, hence the word “superbe” with the Latin etymology *superbus* (arrogant, proud). The idea of arrogance is not conveyed in Bernard’s translation

where “superbe” becomes “marvellous”. The segment “un air de lumière” also conveys the idea of man-made universe. Peschel’s translation of “un air de lumière” is “an atmosphere of light”, which does not convey the meaning of the ST. Bernard is closer to the ST with “an appearance of light”, although he then transforms the end of the poem, when he chooses to translate the impersonal “la lumière qu’on a créée” by “the light which is their own creation”. Bernard’s and Fowlie’s translation of the pronoun “on” (in “on a reproduit”, “on a évincé” and “on a créée”) is “they” and “their”. This choice is too personal, especially in contrast with the official and impersonal tone of the ST.

The various phonic effects have often been lost in the translations. Translators sometimes compensate for the loss of some of the repeated sounds. Peschel tries to create euphony whenever possible, as in the following examples:

“**dull daylight produced**”
“**p**ainting in **p**remises”
“the **s**uburb disappears **s**trangely into the countryside”
“fills the endless **w**est with **f**orests and with **p**rodigious **p**lantations”.

2. Subjectivity of the description

“Villes” I, like “Ville”, is characterised by the intrusion of a first-person narrator in an apparently objective description. The first-person narrator first appears in the fourth sentence. However, the second sentence already betrays the presence of a narrator through the rhetorical device of *paraleipsis*:

“Impossible d’exprimer le jour mat produit par le ciel immuablement gris, [...]”.

The *paraleipsis* emphasises both the content of the segment and the ongoing process of narration². Like the *litotes* (used in “Ville”), the *paraleipsis* is a “figure fausse”. It results in an ironic contradiction, in that the narrator pretends to be unable to convey his impressions, whilst expressing them very clearly and in a very systematic way. His clarity of thought is obvious from the vertical progression of the description from “ciel”, to “bâtisses” and finally to “sol”.

² “**prétérition**: Rem.1 Ce procédé paradoxal est éminemment rhétorique. Il met en évidence le jeu de l’énonciation (action d’énoncer) et de l’énoncé (ou contenu, lexis, dictum)” [Dupriez 1984, p. 359].

The impossibility of explaining, expressing or understanding prevails in the poem and undermines the precision of the technical and architectural discourse:

“Le haut quartier a des parties **inexplicables**”

“J’ai cru pouvoir juger la profondeur de la ville. C’est le prodige **dont je n’ai pu me rendre compte**: quels sont les niveaux des autres quartiers sur ou sous l’acropole?”

“Pour l’étranger de notre temps **la reconnaissance est impossible.**”

“**je renonce à me faire une idée** des aventuriers d’ici”.

The negations underline the failure of the narrator to fulfil the descriptive task.

The town is described in comparison with other geographical, architectural and cultural landmarks. However, the multiplication of heterogeneous elements results in a feeling of bewilderment. The town is compared with London (“Hampton-Court”, “Londres”) and Paris (“Sainte-Chapelle”, “Paris”) but also evokes Athens (“acropole”), Babylon (“Nabuchodonosor”), Norway (“norvégien” with its English spelling) and India (“Brahmas”, “Nababs” and “roupies”)³. The multiplication of cosmopolitan landmarks, creating a kaleidoscopic geography, results in a failure to locate and identify the town.

Descriptions of towns in many literary texts use multiple cultural references⁴. This is true of Vigny for example, who, in his poem “Paris”, associates different types of towns with his classical description of Paris (with its “palais”, “jardins and “parcs”) including a medieval town with “donjons”, “châteaux-forts” and “remparts”, and an oriental town with “minarets”, “obélisques” and “dômes”. His description results in a fantastic urban landscape. The same impression of “inquiétante étrangeté” is conveyed in Rimbaud’s poem, notably in the adjectives “singulier”, “inexplicable” and “étrange”, as well as the adverb “bizarrement”. The strangeness of the town is conveyed also in its proportions. The description is characterised by a hyperbolic style. The town is the space of excess, expressed in “colossales”, “colosse”, “éternel(le)”, “énormité”, “vastes”, “géants”, “prodige”, “prodigieuse”. The tendency to exaggerate is clearly

³ The mixture of styles from different periods characterises Paris at the end of the 19th century. Gaillard underlines how “Napoléon III et Haussmann empruntent leurs modèles au passé ou à l’étranger pour répondre à des nécessités politiques et sociales présentes” [1975, p. 23].

⁴ See David Scott [1992].

announced in the first sentence with verb “outrer”⁵ and the superlative “les plus colossales”. The poem pushes hyperbole to its limit. The “adynaton”⁶ “dôme [...] de quinze mille pieds de diamètre environ” exemplifies this tendency. This typical example of exaggeration affects the reality of the town described and/or the validity of the narrator’s testimony. The town becomes either a monstrous inhuman construction or a genuine fake. The idea of a counterfeit product is evoked in:

“On a reproduit dans un goût d’énormité singulier”
“Les parcs représentent la nature primitive travaillée par un art superbe”
“air de lumière”
“sous la lumière qu’on a créée”.

At the same time, the validity of the narrator’s testimony is also questioned in the poem. The narrator says “on ne voit pas de boutique” and later evokes the “boutiques” in “les boutiques doivent contenir des drames assez sombres”. The reader then understands that the conjunction “mais” qualifies what precedes. The narrator implies from an independent element, namely “la neige de la chaussée [...] écrasée”, the presence of the shops. This deduction is only speculative and underlines the limit of the narrator’s perception and thus the limit of a description, which is purely personal (“j’ai tremblé”, “j’ai cru pouvoir juger”, “je n’ai pu me rendre compte”, “je renonce”). The town is both a challenge to the narrator and a challenge to traditional representations. It is described as a fantastic potemkin town of indiscernible “profondeur”, where everything is transfixed as in a stage setting. This is conveyed by “immuablement”, “neige éternelle”, “occident éternel”.

The end of the text with the image of “gentilshommes sauvages [qui] chassent leurs chroniques” is humorous. The noun “gentilshommes”⁷, which connotes well-bred and stylish men, clashes with the adjective “sauvages”. The irony becomes even more blatant in “chassent leurs chroniques”, which

⁵ The verb “outrer” is rarely constructed with a direct object. The meaning of “outrer” is then “exagérer quelque chose, donner une importance exagérée” [in *Trésor de la langue française*].

⁶ “**Adynaton**: Hyperbole impossible à force d’exagération.” [Dupriez 1984, p. 28]

⁷ The use of the word “gentilshommes” with its aristocratic connotations is understandable in the context of the “faubourg”. In Paris, the “faubourg” was considered “une sorte de province aristocratique figée dans le passé et l’immobilisme” [Gaillard, *ibid.*]. It is also understandable in the context of “Comté”. Finally, it may be useful to remember that the Faubourg Saint Germain for example was commonly called “le noble faubourg”, because it was “habité, surtout de 1875 à 1870, par l’aristocratie parisienne, par opposition aux faubourgs populeux St Antoine et St Denis” [Timmermans, 1903].

is an inversion of “chroniques de chasse”. The inversion results in an image which is semantically challenging for the translator, as it is difficult to decide on the exact meaning of the words “chasser” (to hunt or to chase away?) and “chroniques”⁸. The segment “chassent leurs chroniques” is not the only case of lexical inversion in the poem. The segment “un matin de dimanche” is an inversion of the more idiomatic “dimanche matin”. Likewise the poem presents three examples of post-position of the adjective:

“les conceptions de la barbarie moderne **les plus colossales**” (for “les conceptions les plus colossales de la barbarie moderne”)
“un goût d’énormité **singulier**” (for “un goût singulier d’énormité”)
“une armature d’acier **artistique**” (for “une armature artistique d’acier”).

The inversion results in the adjectives being emphasised. The three adjectives “colossales”, “singulier” and “artistique” sum up the very nature of the town.

Some details of the poem further add to the ironic effect of “Villes”^I, which on this point is comparable with “Ville”. Such irony is exemplified in the following sentences:

— “J’assiste à des expositions de peinture dans des locaux vingt fois plus vastes qu’Hampton-Court. Quelle peinture!”, where it is not clear whether the elliptic exclamative segment “Quelle peinture!” conveys sarcasm or admiration, especially as “Quelle peinture!” may recall the ironic exclamation “Quel tableau!”.

— “une armature d’acier artistique de quinze mille pieds de diamètre environ”. The adverb “environ” is a completely superfluous qualification of such an enormous and clearly impossible size.

— “À l’idée de chercher des théâtres sur ce circus, je me répons que les boutiques doivent contenir des drames assez-sombres”. The irony here lies in the way the different ideas are associated in the mind of the narrator. Clearly, the word “circus”, which may refer to architecture (cf. London Picadilly Circus) or to performance art, leads to the word “théâtres” (likewise belonging to the semantical threads of architecture and performance art), which itself leads to the word “drames”. However, the word “drames”, which

⁸ Fongaro offers an interesting analysis of the segment “les gentilshommes sauvages chassent leurs chroniques” [Fongaro 1989, pp. 101-104]. He considers that “Villes”^I could be “un centon concentré des textes de Vigny” [1989, p. 102] and following this assumption, he states that the “gentilshommes sauvages” and “la chasse des chroniques” of “Villes”^I are possible allusions to Vigny’s *L’Esprit pur*.

can qualify either fiction or reality, becomes farcical when associated with the word “circus”⁹.

— “on sert des boissons polaires dont le prix varie de huit cents à huit mille roupies.” The exaggeration is easily apparent in the adjective “polaire” and in “de huit cents à huit mille roupies”. The metaphor “boisson polaires” successfully combines the idea of icy cold with the idea of cosmopolitanism, as it humorously compresses the collocations “boissons froides/ glacées” and “froid polaire”.

Implications for translation

The different levels of irony in the poem are a challenge to the translator. An analysis of the translations of Fowlie, Bernard and Peschel reveals that some ironic aspects of the text are not always perceived or conveyed. The main example of irony is in the last paragraph with the association of the words “gentilshommes” and “sauvages” and the inversion of the semantically recognisable unit “chroniques de chasse”. Both Fowlie and Bernard choose the journalistic meaning of the word “chroniques” when translating respectively by “news columns” and “news”. This choice results in the loss of the humorous content. Furthermore, Bernard particularises the adjective “sauvages”, which he translates by “misanthropic”. He thus creates a possible intertextual allusion to Molière’s play and loses the essential idea of humanised primitive nature expressed in “la nature primitive travaillée par un art superbe” and, in the last paragraph, with “Comté”, “plantations” and “lumière qu’on a créée”.

The association of ideas expressed in the sentence “A l’idée de chercher des théâtres sur ce circus, je me réponds que les boutiques doivent contenir des drames assez-sombres” is aptly rendered by Bernard and Peschel. However, Fowlie changes the beginning of the sentence to introduce an adverbial phrase of time:

“While on the point of looking for theatres in this circus, I tell myself that the shops must contain fairly tragic dramas.”

⁹ Fongaro (1989, p. 142) points out that Baudelaire in *Écrits esthétiques*, “Salon de 1859”, chapitre VIII, writes about Méryon’s “ville immense”:

la profondeur des perspectives [est] augmentée par la pensée de tous les drames qui y sont contenus.

Rimbaud ironically ridicules the bourgeois concept of “drame” in “Jeunesse” I, which offers the description of a claustrophobic society with its “misérable femme de drame” who “soupire après des abandons improbables”. The same irony is applied in “Villes” I.

Fowlie thus loses the detail which betrays the humorous cogitation of the narrator using deductions and hypotheses.

Finally, “boissons polaires” which compresses “boissons froides/ glacées” and “froid polaire” becomes “polar drinks” in Bernard’s and in Peschel’s translations and “North Pole drinks” in Fowlie’s translation¹⁰. Since the idiomatic translation for “froid polaire” is “arctic cold”, one would expect “boissons polaires” to be translated by “arctic drinks”.

¹⁰ These translations amusingly collide with the brand name “Pola Cola”.

Cities,
[I.]

The official acropolis exceeds the *most colossal* (1) plans of modern barbarity ever conceived (2). Impossible to convey the dull daylight (3) produced by the perpetually grey sky, the imperial sheen of the buildings and the eternal snow on the ground. All the classical architectural wonders have been reproduced with a *singular* (1) taste for the enormous. I attend exhibitions of paintings in premises (4) twenty times vaster than Hampton Court. What painting! A Norwegian Nebuchadnezzar had the staircases of the ministries built; the subordinates I could see are already prouder than Brahmins and the aspect of the building-officers and of the colossus-guards (5) made me quiver. The way the buildings have been grouped in squares, courtyards and enclosed terraces has squeezed out the coachmen (6). The parks represent primitive nature worked over (7) with superb artistry. Parts of the upper quarter are inexplicable: an arm of the sea, with no boats, rolls its sheet (8) of blue sleet between quays overlaid with giant candelabrad lamp-posts (9). A short bridge leads to a postern immediately below the dome of the Sainte-Chapelle (10). This dome is an *artistic* (1) steel framework fifteen thousand feet in diameter or thereabouts (11).

From some vantage points on the copper footbridges, the platforms and the staircases which wind round the covered markets and the pillars, I thought I could gauge the depth of the city! This is the prodigious achievement I could not grasp (12): what are the levels of the other quarters above or below the acropolis? The latter-day outsider (13) cannot find his bearings (14). The business quarter is a circus in a single style, with arcaded galleries. No shops can be seen. However, the snow on the roadway is trampled; a few nabobs, as rare as Sunday morning walkers in London, make their way towards a diamond carriage (15). A few red velvet divans where Arctic drinks are served for prices ranging from eight hundred to eight thousand rupees. At the thought of looking for theatres in this circus, I tell myself that the shops must contain some rather-dismal dramas (16). I think there is a police force; but the law must be so strange that I give up trying to imagine the local adventurers.

The suburb, as elegant as a beautiful Paris street, is favoured with an appearance (17) of light; the democratic element numbers about a hundred souls. Here again, the houses straggle along; the suburb oddly peters out into the countryside, the "County" which fills the eternal Occident of forests

and prodigious plantations where savage gentlemen (18) hunt their chronicles (19) in the artificially created (20) light.

Decisions of detail

1. **most colossal, singular, artistic:** in the ST, the adjectives “colossales”, “singulier” and “artistique” are all separated from the noun they qualify. The isolation results in the adjectives being emphasised. In the TT, the isolation in place cannot be reproduced. In order to compensate for this loss, the adjectives have been graphically isolated.

2. **the most colossal plans of modern barbarity ever conceived:** a literal translation of the ST sentence results in a somewhat odd nominalisation, especially because of the word “conceptions” (see “the most colossal conceptions of modern barbarity/ barbarism” Bernard, Peschel/ Fowlie). Although the syntax of the ST is modified in the TT, the sentence is more idiomatic. Furthermore, the word “plans” fits the context of the text, which exploits the semantic thread of architecture.

3. **dull daylight:** some of the phonic repetitions are later lost in the ST, especially for the following :

“un pont court conduit à une poterne”

“une armature d’acier artistique”

“diligence de diamants”

The loss of these effects of phonic repetition is here compensated in place with the repetition of the sounds [d] and [l].

4. **premises:** the word “premises” for the French word “locaux” (see also Peschel’s translation) aptly emphasises the technicality of the description.

5. **of the building-officers and of the colossus-guards:** whilst the compound noun “building-officers” may easily be perceived as an official title, “colossus-guards” is more marked and may puzzle the reader. Hence the choice to place it in second position in order to signify its modelling on “building-officers”. The denominations “gardiens de colosses” and “officiers de constructions” are not commonly used in French. The second one is calqued on hierarchical and military ranks such as “officier de marine”, “officier d’ordonnance”, etc.. Both introduce connotations of authority and order, which are strongly reminiscent of the Second Empire spirit of building policies and the military preoccupations underlying the reconstruction of Paris by Baron Haussmann. Hence, although, the word “foremen” (see Bernard’s translation) in effect conveys the actual meaning of “officiers de construction”, which is a pompous title for “chefs de chantiers”, it fails to reproduce the connotations of the ST. Besides, the binary rhythm of the parallel grammatical pattern in “gardiens de colosses et officiers de construction” is lost if “officiers de constructions” is translated by a single word.

6. **squeezed out the coachmen:** it is difficult to decide on the meaning of the verb “évincer” in the ST. The restructuring of the “squares”, “cours” and “terraces” evoked in the ST calls for the a physical and spatial meaning of the verb “évincer”. Hence, the translation “squeezed out”. For the social and political implications of the sentence see the article on Haussmann’s Paris

by Babelon in *Encyclopedia Universalis*, which puts on the same level the restructuring of the town (by the creation of green spaces) and the reorganisation of public transport resulting in the disappearance of private companies:

Enfin, les espaces verts atteignent 1800 hectares, grâce aux vastes parcs créés par Alphand à l'Est et à l'Ouest [...], aux jardins et squares disséminés dans Paris. Notons aussi [...] la fusion des compagnies de gaz et d'omnibus. [p. 518]

This political aspect is lost by Bernard, who misreads the ST (“clochers” for “cochers”) and thus wrongly translates “they have squeezed out the bell-towers”.

7. **worked over**: the choice of verb “travailler” in the ST not only underlines the idea of the town as a fake, but also, through its Latin origin (*tripalium*), accentuates the idea of the suffering of the natural setting. “To work over” also bears pejorative connotations, as it is a synonym of “to assault”, and hence conveys the violent action of men on nature.

8. **sheet**: the ST sentence plays simultaneously on both the literal and the urban meanings of the words “nappe”, “chargés” and “candélabres”: *nappe d'eau* > *nappe de table*; *charger* > *charger une table*; *candélabres de décoration* > *candélabres de ville*. The translation of “nappe” by “sheet” breaks the subtle double semantic thread of the ST.

9. **candelabrad lamp-posts**: the denotation of the noun “candélabre” in the context the town is “Lampadaire de voie publique” [*Larousse*]. However, a literal translation by “lamp-posts” would result in the loss of the association “candélabre”/ “nappe”. Whilst the English word “candelabra” (Peschel, Bernard, Fowlie) by itself loses the essential meaning of “lamp-posts” and only retains the secondary meaning of “ornamental holder”. The TT offers a semantic compromise resulting, however, in a change of syntax. The form “candelabrad” is attested in the *Oxford English Dictionary*: “Furnished with or as with a candelabrum.”

10. **Sainte-Chapelle**: translators have disagreed over whether to keep the French word and thus create an exoticism in the TT (Peschel, Fowlie) or to translate by “Holy Chapel” (Bernard) thus losing some of the cultural connotations. It is not sure whether Rimbaud really alluded to the French Sainte-Chapelle in Paris, especially as the building, which dates from the reign of St Louis, does not possess a steel dome but a painted blue dome. However, because of the capital letters, the first Sainte-Chapelle that comes to mind is the Parisian one. As the ST multiplies cosmopolitan landmarks, I have chosen to keep the French word and its cultural connotations. The intrusion of an exotic word in the TT also partly compensates for the loss of the exotic spelling of the adjective “Norwégien”.

11. **or thereabouts**: the irony of the ST (expressed in the superfluous “environ” to qualify the clearly impossible size of the building) is conveyed with “or thereabouts”, which is placed at the end of the sentence and is thus emphasised.

12. **prodigious achievement I could not grasp**: the overall meaning of the sentence is lost in Peschel's (“I was not able to account”) and Bernard's

translations (“I was unable to verify”). The impossibility of humanly comprehending the town is expressed both through “prodige” (“c’est prodigieux!”) and “dont je n’ai pu me rendre compte”. I have emphasised the effect of mental incapacity by choosing the verb “grasp” (“understand with the mind”).

13. **the latter-day outsider**: the segment “l’étranger de notre temps” is a challenge for the translator as it is both inclusive (“notre temps”) and exclusive (“étranger”). Out of the various hyponyms (“outsider”, “stranger” and “foreigner”), “outsider” is the least particularising. The term “étranger de notre temps” appears to be the modern equivalent of the traditional “flâneurs” and wanderers who form a poetical cliché from Du Bellay to Baudelaire (on the theme of the “flâneur” see *French Forum*, 21, n°2, May 1996). The adjective “latter-day” conveys and emphasises this idea as it is used to describe something which is a modern equivalent of something or someone in the past.

14. **cannot find his bearings**: both Peschel and Bernard offer “exploration” for “reconnaissance” as in “partir en reconnaissance”. However, the context suggests a different meaning as in “il ne s’y reconnaît plus”.

15. **diamond carriage**: the alliteration in [d] of the ST is lost, as well as the ideas of speed and antic carriage conveyed by the word “diligence”.

16. **rather-dismal drama**: the manuscript clearly shows a hyphen, which should be reproduced in the TT. The repetition of the sound [s] in “assez-sombres” cannot be reproduced but is compensated for by the repetition of the sounds [d] and [a].

17. **appearance**: the idea of the town as a counterfeit product expressed in “air de lumière” is conveyed in the ST.

18. **savage gentlemen**: the clash between the noun “gentilhommes” and the adjective “sauvages” is reproduced in the TT.

19. **hunt their chronicles**: if we accept Fongaro's analysis of the poem (see footnote n°8), the meaning of the verb “chasser” would be “poursuivre pour attraper” which is conveyed by “hunt”. Furthermore, in Fongaro's logic, “chroniques” can only be translated by “chronicles” (“historical record”), as opposed to “news” (Bernard) or “news columns” (Fowlie).

20. **artificially created light**: as opposed to “which they (les gentilshommes?) invented” (Fowlie) and “which is their (les gentilshommes?) own creation” (Bernard). The idea of counterfeit and the possible (ironic) biblical undertones are conveyed in the TT.

1

[II.]

Ce sont des villes! C'est un peuple pour qui se sont
montés ces Alleghanys et ces Libans de rêve!
Des chalets de cristal et de bois qui se meuvent sur
5 des rails et des poulies invisibles. Les vieux cratères
ceints des colosses et de palmiers de cuivre rugissent
mélodieusement dans les feux. Des fêtes amoureuses
sonnent sur les canaux pendus derrière les chalets.
La chasse des carillons crie dans les gorges. Des
10 corporations de chanteurs géants accourent dans des
vêtements et des oriflammes éclatants comme la
lumière des cimes. Sur les plates formes au milieu
des gouffres les Rolands sonnent leur bravoure.
Sur les passerelles de l'abîme et les toits des auberges
15 l'ardeur du ciel pavoise les mâts. L'écroulement
des apothéoses rejoint les champs des hauteurs où
les centaureses séraphiques évoluent parmi les
avalanches. Au dessus du niveau des plus hautes
crêtes une mer troublée par la naissance éternelle
20 de Vénus, chargée de flottes orphéoniques et de la
rumeur des perles et des conques précieuses, — la mer
s'assombrit parfois avec des éclats mortels. Sur
les versants des moissons de fleurs grandes comme
nos armes et nos coupes, mugissent. Des cortèges
25 de Mabs en robes rouges, opalines, montent des
ravines. Là haut, les pieds dans la cascade et les
ronces, les cerfs tettent Diane. Les Bacchantes
des banlieues sanglotent et la lune brûle et hurle.
Vénus entre dans les cavernes des forgerons et des
30 ermites. Des groupes de beffrois chantent les idées
des peuples. Des châteaux bâtis en os sort la
musique inconnue. Toutes les légendes évoluent et
les élans se ruent dans les bourgs. Le paradis des
orages s'effondre. Les sauvages dansent sans cesse
35 la fête de la nuit. Et une heure je suis descendu
dans le mouvement d'un boulevard de Bagdad où des
compagnies ont chanté la joie du travail nouveau,
sous une brise épaisse, circulant sans pouvoir
éluder les fabuleux fantômes des monts où l'on a dû
40 se retrouver.

Quels bons bras, quelle belle heure me rendront
cette région d'où viennent mes sommeils et mes
moindres mouvements?

From Guyaux 1985b, pp. 39-40.

“Villes” II, analysis and strategic decisions

1. Chaotic description

Some of the words used in “Villes” II belong to semantic thread of the town, thus creating a link with the description of towns in “Ville” and “Villes” I. However, the list of technical, architectural and urban words in “Villes” II is singularly restricted:

“rails”, “poulies”, “colosses”, “canaux”, “plates-formes”, “passerelles”, “toits”, “auberges”, “banlieues”, “beffrois”, “châteaux”, “bourgs”, “boulevard”.

As opposed to “Ville” and “Villes” I, the architecture of the town(s) of “Villes” II is scarce and completely unconventional in its representations. The building materials used for the constructions are not traditional:

“chalets **de cristal** et de bois”, “colosses et [...] palmiers **de cuivre**”, “châteaux bâtis en **os**”.

The type of description in levels, analysed in “Ville” and “Villes” I, is not as clearly applied in “Villes” II, even if the space described is divided into different locations. These locations, quite often rural, with the notable exception of the words “banlieues” and “boulevard”, are merely settings which are not central to the description. The greatest difference from “Villes” I is, however, in the abundance of characters within the space described. Even inanimate objects are curiously animated by the use of verbs expressing an animal or a human action and become “actants”:

“La chasse des carillons **crie**”
“Les vieux cratères **rugissent**”
“des moissons de fleurs [...] **mugissent**”.

The characters take over the setting in the description. This impression is increased by the use of plurals of names which would usually be singular:

“les Rolands”, “des cortèges de Mabs”.

These proper nouns take the plural form and become common nouns¹ which refer to groups of people sharing the same particularity. Furthermore,

¹ This rhetorical process is called “antonomasia” and is used also at the beginning of the poem with “ces Alleghanis” and “ces Libans”. An antonomasia often expresses “l’incarnation d’une vertu dans une figure” [Barthes quoted in Dupriez 1984, p. 58] such as Amyclas for poverty. Roland de Roncevaux is a mythical hero in the 19th century, especially after the

there are many examples of organised groups of people in the poem, which tends to reinforce this theory:

“corporations de chanteurs géants”, “cortèges de Mabs”, “groupes de beffrois”, “peuples”, “compagnies”.

The characters referred to in the poem are generally imaginary characters taken from literary and mythical sources of different periods and places. The reader thus recognises “les Rolands” as fictitious versions of the one and only “Roland de Roncevaux”, one of the most favoured “images d’Epinal” of Christian France. “Vénus” appears twice in the poem evoking in the first instance Botticelli’s painting *The Birth of Venus*. Diane, her traditional opponent, is also represented. Shakespeare’s queen Mab from *Romeo and Juliet*, like Roland de Roncevaux, is multiplied in “cortèges”. The “Bacchantes” of the Dionysiac cult move to the suburbs.

These heterogeneous and often mythical characters are not introduced for the purpose of comparison. “Villes” II is not the same type of construct as the poems “Ville” or “Villes” I, which both bring in references to other cultures or places in order to establish a comparative picture. In “Villes” II, the references are literally taken out of their context and transferred to the setting of the town(s)².

However, the traditional representations borrowed from different cultures are somehow distorted in the process. These distortions can be humorous. The word “bravoure”, for example, in “les Rolands sonnent leur bravoure” is ironic. Roland is famous for his courage and for the call of his horn (“olifant”). In the poem, Roland’s courage and the horn call collide in a kind of metonymic short-cut. This mythological topos of French Christianity is ridiculed:

- by the plural of “Rolands”, which contradicts the fact that Roland de Ronceveau is uniquely courageous
- by the use of the verb “sonner” in “sonnent leur bravoure”, which can have the literal meaning of “sonner”, as in “sonner le clairon”, or the meaning of “annoncer”, as in “sonner la charge”.

Diana is affected by a similar irony. The segment “les cerfs tettent Diane” evokes the myth of Romulus and Remus suckled by the wolf,

publication of the 1837 edition of *La Chanson de Roland*. As a defender of French Christian values, he embodies courage.

²A similar process is used in “Bottom” for example, where “les Sabines” become “les Sabines de la banlieue”.

however, the image of stags suckling the goddess is grotesque³. I suspect that Rimbaud most certainly constructed this image from the play on words: “Diane: Déesse de la chasse-teté”. The strangely archaic spelling of “tettent” has a clear purpose, in that its incongruity triggers the reader's attention, enabling him to perceive the ironic content. This silly pun, which was probably familiar to all the “potaches” of the time, is based on the homophonic proximity of “déesse de la chasse”/ “déesse de la chasteté”⁴. The image thus created is humorous, especially if we take into account Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and the story of the punishment inflicted by Diana on Actaeon. To punish Actaeon, who had seen her naked, the Goddess turned him into a stag and had him savaged to death by his own hounds.

The disruptions in the poem do not only affect the characters. One of the main characteristics of the poem is the use of oxymorons or contradictions, such as:

“Les vieux cratères [...] **rugissent mélodieusement**
 “l'**écroulement des apothéoses**”
 “les **centauressees séraphiques**”⁵
 “la mer **s'assombrit** parfois avec des **éclats** mortels”.

The text offers examples of incongruities. The sea is “au dessus du niveau des plus hautes crêtes”; the Bacchantes “sanglotent”, when they traditionally roam the mountain in ecstatic whirling dances; the moon “brûle” like the sun. These incongruities illustrate the poem's tendency to follow a logic of inversion. This logic is also illustrated in the inversion of collocations, which has already been analysed in “Villes” I with “chassent leurs chroniques”, an inversion of “chroniques de chasse”. The same principle is applied in “Villes” II to the following examples:

— “l'**ardeur du ciel** pavoise les mâts”, which is copied from “l'ardeur du soleil” (the heat of the sun), for “le ciel ardent pavoise les mâts”

³ Rimbaud evokes Cybèle in “Soleil et Chair” [*Poésies*], where she also assumes the role of a feeder.

⁴ This pun is quoted in an article by Thomas, where he analyses “l'introduction d'une nécessité analytique dans un vague rapport de similitude homophonique” [1981, p. 137].

⁵ The feminine word “centauressees” is itself a contradiction, as Centaurs are traditionally male beasts with the body of a horse and the face of a man. They represent the animal part of man and their savage passions are quickly roused by the smell of wine or the sight of a woman. Hence, they are the absolute antithesis of the modest seraphs, which represent the highest category of angels:

[...] ayant chacun six ailes: deux pour se couvrir la face (par peur de voir Yavhé), deux pour couvrir les pieds (euphémisme pour désigner le sexe), deux pour voler. [Chevalier & Gheerbrant 1982, p. 865]

— (and possibly) “une mer [...] chargée de flottes orphéoniques et de la rumeur des **perles** et des conques **précieuses**” for “une mer [...] chargée de flottes orphéoniques et de la rumeur des conques et de/ des **perles précieuses**”.

The text, through numerous contradictions, oppositions and inversions, evokes an image of chaos, which is illustrated in the sentence:

“L’écroulement des apothéoses rejoint les champs des hauteurs où les centauresse s s éraphiques évoluent parmi les avalanches”.

Besides offering two oxymorons (“l’écroulement des apothéoses” and “les centauresse s éraphiques”), the sentence confuses high (“hauteurs”, “s éraphiques”) and low levels (“champs”, “centauresse s”), as well as ascending (“apothéoses”, “rejoint”) and descending (“écroulement”, “avalanches”) movements.

Chaos is ultimately illustrated in the overall structure of the text. The poem does not offer the expected cohesion of a description of town(s), which is announced in the title “Villes”. The sentences are apparently unrelated and all present a different, independent picture. Grammatical links between the sentences are scarce. The poem is mostly constructed on the model of asyndeton, which is a traditional way of expressing disorder [cf. Spitzer 1970, p. 283]. The different characters proliferate with no apparent logic or cohesion.

Implications for translation

The text appears to be ruled by a salient principle of chaos, which is conveyed by the general aspect of the poem built on the model of asyndeton and by the oxymorons, disruptions and distortions. Some of these (often ironic) effects are lost in the translation process. The irony affecting the traditional representation of Roland de Ronceveau is usually conveyed in the translations, as all translators keep the plural form. The amusing segment “sonnent leur bravoure” is aptly rendered by Bernard and Peschel with “trumpet”, which conveys both the idea of musical instrument and of pretentious boasting. Fowlie although he does not render this last aspect with “blare forth”, suggests the idea of “horn” (“blaring horn”). However, he adds connotations of unpleasant and harsh sounds, which are not conveyed in the ST.

The most obvious example of irony is found in the segment “les cerfs tettent Diane”, where the underlying play on words “**Diane**: Déesse de la chasse-tété” is very difficult to convey and is lost in all three translations.

Other inversions, such as: “l’**ardeur du ciel** pavoise les mâts” and “une mer [...] chargée de flottes orphéoniques et de la rumeur des **perles** et des conques **précieuses**”, are lost in some of the translations. Bernard, for example, translates “perles et conques précieuses”, by “precious pearls and conchs”, thus distorting the ambiguity of the ST.

The syntactic device of asyndeton, which is characterised by the absence of coordinating conjunctions, is a salient feature of the poem. Overall, the translators have conveyed the elliptical style of the ST.

2. Organised chaos

However, the impression of chaos in the ST is quickly replaced by a sense of organisation. This stems firstly from the different semantic threads, which hold the tapestry of the poem together. As many as six different semantic threads coexist in “Villes” II. The first two are expressed mainly in the poem’s verbs, which can be roughly divided into two groups:

— verbs expressing **sounds** and especially verbs linked to music: “rugissent”; “sonnent” (x2); “crie”; “mugissent”; “sanglotent”; “hurle”; “chantent”; “ont chanté”; to which can be added: “mélodieusement”; “la chasse” (in *Trésor de la langue française* : “air de musique qui reproduit les airs utilisés dans les chasses à courre”); “carillons”; “chanteurs”; “orphéoniques” (**orphéon**: “chorale de voix d’hommes ou de voix mixtes d’enfants”, in *Larousse*); “rumeur”, “musique”;

— verbs expressing **movement**: “se meuvent”; “accourent”; “rejoint”; “évoluent” (x2); “montent”; “entre”; “sort”; “se ruent”; “s’effondre”; “dansent”; “suis descendu”, “viennent” to which can be added “mouvement”, “circulant” and “mouvements”.

The movement expressed in “Villes” II and the violence of certain words, such as “rugissent”, “mugissent”, “crie” and “hurle”, contrast greatly with the static and passive description of “Villes” I.

The description in “Villes” II is also unexpectedly organised around the semantic thread of the mountain, with words such as:

“Alleghanys”, “Libans”⁶, “chalets” (x2), “cratères”, “gorges”, “cimes”, “plates formes”, “gouffres”, “passerelles”, “abîme”, “hauteurs”, “avalanches”, “crêtes”, “versants”, “ravines”, “cascade”, “cavernes”, “monts”.

Some of these words can be organised into two groups, namely:

- words expressing the idea of **summit**: “cratères”, “cimes”, “plates-formes”, “passerelles”, “hauteurs” (and “là-haut”), “crêtes”.
- words expressing the idea of **chasm**: “cratères”, “gorges”, “gouffres”, “abîme”, “ravines”.

These categories are linked to the idea of descending (“écroulement”, “avalanches”, “cascade”, “s’effondre”, “suis descendu”) and ascending (“se sont montés”, “rejoint”, “montent”).

Two remaining semantic threads are more or less included in the concepts of movement and life. They are attached to the ideas of light and colour (“cuivre”, “feux”, “des vêtements et des oriflammes éclatants”, “lumière”, “l’ardeur du ciel”, “apothéoses”, “éclats”, “rousses”, “opalines”, “brûle”) and work (“corporations”, “forgerons”, “travail”, “bras”).

Finally, the semantic thread of imagination, dream and myth is largely exploited in “Villes” II, not only through the mythological characters but also through the words “rêve”, “légendes” and the group “fabuleux fantômes” (with the emphatic initial position of the adjective “fabuleux”).

The different semantic threads create a cohesive pattern in a text otherwise characterised by disparate elements. The cohesion is emphasised by the numerous plural nouns. Singular nouns are rare and apart from “la mer”, “la lune”, “musique” and “la fête de la nuit”, not central to the description or otherwise linked to a plural noun, as in:

“la chasse des carillons”, “l’écroulement des apothéoses”, “la rumeur des perles et des conques précieuses”, “le paradis des oranges”.

In “Villes” II, as in “Ville” and “Villes” I, the reader also notices the organisation of space. With a few exceptions, all sentences contain an adverbial phrase of place.

However, this is not the most striking form of organisation in the poem. At first, the reader may only notice three main divisions in the text, namely:

⁶ Cf. *Larousse*: “**Alleghanis** ou Allegheny, nom donné autrefois aux massifs de l’Est des USA; il désigne aujourd’hui le rebord du plateau appalachien” and “**Libans**: Montagne de la république du Liban.”

- the opening sequence (from “Ce sont [...]” to “[...] de rêve!”)
- the closing sequence (from “Quels bon bras [...]”)
- the central part of the text corresponding to the longest section.

Opening and closing sequences are mutually related through a common binary rhythm. A comparison between the opening and closing sequences reveals a striking rhythmic similarity:

“Ce sont des villes!/1/ C’est un peuple” /2/ “ces Alleghanys /1/ et ces Libans de rêve!”/2/
 “Quels bons bras, /1/ quelle belle heure” /2/ “mes sommeils /1/ et mes moindres mouvements?” /2/.

The parallel construction of the closing sequence (“Quels bons bras, quelle belle heure”) echoes the parallel construction of the opening sequence (“Ce sont des villes! C’est un peuple”). Furthermore, both sequences are closed by a pair of quasi-similar segments:

ces + noun & **ces** + noun + possessive phrase
mes + noun & **mes** + adj. +noun.

Moreover, the central part of the text can be divided into four subsections following the repetition of the structure “Des + noun + de + noun”. The central section thus follows the pattern:

- 1) “Des chalets de cristal [...]” (group of four sentences)
- 2) “Des corporations de chanteurs [...]” (group of six sentences)
- 3) “Des cortèges de Mabs [...]” (group of four sentences)
- 4) “Des groupes de beffrois [...]” (group of six sentences).

To this complex division of the text into four groups corresponds a complex phonic scheme illustrating the themes of music and harmony. The phonic links are within the sentences, from one sentence to the following within the group and from one group to the other. The phonic scheme can thus be represented as follows:

First group from “Des chalets [...]” to “[...] gorges.”

sentence1	cristal	
		poulies rails
sentence2	cratères colosses cuivre	
		palmier rugissent mélodieusement feux
sentence3		fêtes amoureuses
	canaux chalets	
sentence4	chasse carillons crie	
		gorges

Second group from “Des corporations [...]” to “[...] mugissent”

sentence1 **chanteurs géants**
corporations accourent éclatants comme
sentence2 **sur les plates-formes**
sentence3 **sur les passerelles pavoise abîme ardeur**
sentence4 **apothéose évoluent avalanches**
hauteurs centauresse sésaphiques
sentence5 **niveau hautes Vénus perles précieuses**
mer rumeur mer mortels
sentence6 **comme coupes moissons armes mugissent**

Third group from “Des cortèges [...]” to “[...] ermites”.

sentence1 **cortèges Mabs montent**
robes rousses opalines ravines
sentence2 **cascade ronces cerfs**
sentence3 **Bacchantes banlieues sanglotent**
la lune brûle hurle
sentence4 **cavernes Vénus**

Fourth group from “Des groupes [...]” to “[...] retrouver.”

sentence1 **beffrois chantent**
sentence2 **châteaux bâtis**
sentence3 **bourgs**
les légendes évoluent les élans
sentence4 **effondrent**
sentence5 **sauvages sans cesse**
dansent fête
sentence6 **descendu dans mouvement d’ de Bagdad chanté**
circulant sans éluder
fabuleux fantômes des monts.

The main phonic link throughout the poem is created by the repetition of the sound [k]:

“cristal”, “cratères”, “colosses”, “cuivre”, “canaux”, “carillons”, “crie”, “corporations”, “crêtes”, “conques”, “comme” (x2), “coupes”, “cortèges”, “cascade”, “cavernes”, “compagnies”, “quels”, “quelle”, “qui” (x2), “accourent”, “éclatant”, “éclat”, “écroulement”, “Bacchantes”, “inconnue”, “circulant”.

The cohesion between the different parts of the text is also created by the repetition of semantically equivalent segments. “La lumière des cimes”, for example, is a semantic reformulation of “cratères [...] dans les feux”. Likewise, “le paradis des orages s’effondre” recalls “l’écroulement des apothéoses”, especially if we consider the historical meaning of the word “apothéose” and its link with paradise and lightning.

Parallels are common in the text because of the extended use of the different semantic threads. However, some are more striking than others. It is

easy to see the semantic proximity between “des **groupes** de beffrois **chantent** les idées des peuples” and “des **compagnies ont chanté** la joie du travail nouveau”. Moreover, the beginning and the end of the poem are linked by the proximity between “fêtes amoureuses” and “fête de la nuit”⁷, “se sont **montés** ces **Alleghanys** et ces **Libans** de rêve” and “les fabuleux fantômes des **monts**”. The cohesion of the poem is obvious through this last example. From the beginning to the end of the text, the description is constructed around the segment “Alleghanys et Libans de rêve” and their curious “peuple” of “fabuleux fantômes”.

Implications for translation

A translation of “Villes” II has to take into account the two conflictual principles of the description, namely order and disorder. The TT ideally will convey both the effects of cohesion and the effects of chaos.

The parallel rhythm of the opening and closing sequences is one of the cohesive patterns of the ST. The effect of phonic and rhythmic repetition conveyed in the sentences “Ce sont des villes/C'est un peuple” and “Quels bons bras/quelle belle heure” is lost in Bernard's and in Peschel's translations, which read:

“**What** cities these are/**This** is a people” and “What good arms/what fine hour” (Peschel)

“**What** cities/**This** is a people” and “What kind arms/what lovely hour” (Bernard)

The cohesion is also partly assured by the rich and heterogeneous semantic threads. The different threads are not always acknowledged in the various translations. The two main semantically cohesive patterns are linked to the ideas of music and of movement. Within the semantic thread of music, two words are difficult to capture in all their guises, namely the words “chasse” and “orphéoniques”. The translations offered for the word “chasse” by Fowlie (“the **pack**”) and by Bernard (“the **hunting**”) ignore the musical meaning of the word and only retain the idea of hunting, further underlined in Bernard's translation with his rendering of the verb “crie” by “halloos”. Although this translation conveys both the semantic threads of sound and

⁷The proximity is also on a mythical level (myths being one of the principal sources of “Villes” II):

Dans la cosmogonie orphique, la Nuit et le Vide sont à l'origine du monde. La nuit enfante un œuf d'où sort l'Amour [...]. [Chevalier & Gheerbrant 1982, p. 35]

hunting⁸, it is semantically incongruous in comparison with the verb “crier” and may unnecessarily puzzle the reader. Peschel partly conveys the musical meaning of “chasse” in “the **play** of the chimes”. She offers “clamors” for “crie”, thus creating an interesting phonic effect (“clamors in the gorges”). However, “clamor” is quite a formal literary word, with connotations of anger, which at this point contrast too greatly with the harmonic musical word “chasse”.

As for the adjective “orphéoniques”, both Bernard and Peschel retain the musical meaning of the word with “**choral** fleets”, but lose part of the semantic content expressed in the etymology of the word. Fowlie, however, conveys the origin of the word with “**Orphic** navies”, but does not clearly convey the musical meaning.

The movement of the poem is mainly expressed through the verbs of action, which are not always aptly translated. For example, the violence of the verb “s'effondre” in “le paradis des orages s'effondre” is conveyed in Fowlie's translation by “comes to an end” and by “subsides” in Peschel's and in Bernard's translation. These choices do not connote the brutal motion implied in “s'effondrer” and do not sufficiently underline the link with the segment “l'écroulement des apothéoses”.

Within the sub-semantic threads (such as that of work with the words “corporations”, “forgerons”, “travail”, “bras”), translation problems also occur. These mainly regard the word “bras” translated literally by Peschel, Bernard and Fowlie as “arms”, which results in the loss of the meaning of “travailleurs” (as in “on manque de bras”).

The cohesion of the poem is also created by the different patterns of phonic parallels. Although Fowlie and Bernard create a few subtle effects of repetition in their TT, they lose the overall phonic cohesion of the ST. Peschel succeeds in creating some very harmonic effects of euphony as in the following examples:

“the **sea** grows **somber** sometimes with **fatal** **flashes**”

“Processions of **Mabs** in **russet** **robes**, **opaline**, **ascent** from the **ravines**.”

⁸ In *Oxford English Dictionary*, the definition of “hallow or halloo” is “to shout aloud”; it also denotes the “shout to urge on dogs to chase, assist combined effort, or attract attention”.

These are cities! This is a people (1) for whom these dream Allegheny and Lebanon mountains rose up (2)! Chalets of crystal and wood move on invisible rails and pulleys. The old craters girdled with colossi and copper palm-trees roar melodiously in the fires. Love feasts ring out over the canals suspended behind the chalets. The hunting-song (3) of the chimes cries in the gorges. Guilds of giant singers rush together (4) with clothes and oriflammes blazing like the light of the summits (5). On the platforms amidst the abysses, Rolands trumpet their bravery (6). On the footbridges across the chasm and on the inns' roofs, the fire of the sky (7) decks the masts with flags. The collapse of apotheoses heads for (8) the high pastures (9) where seraphic centaureses move among the avalanches. Above the level of the highest crests, a sea blurred by the eternal birth of Venus, heavy with fleets of Orphic choirs (10) and with the murmur of the pearls and the precious (11) conches; — the sea sometimes darkens with deadly glares (12). On the slopes, harvests of flowers, large as our weapons and our cups, howl (13). Processions of Mabs in russet and opaline robes climb from the ravines. Up there, with their feet in the waterfall and the thorns, the deer suckle at Diana's breasts (14). The suburban Bacchantes sob and the moon burns and bellows (15). Venus enters the caves of blacksmiths and hermits. Groups of belfries sing out the peoples' ideas (16). From castles built of bones comes the unknown music. All the legends evolve and bursts of enthusiasm surge into (17) the villages (18). The stormy paradise collapses (19). The savages ceaselessly dance the nocturnal feast (20). And, for an hour, I went down into a bustling Baghdad boulevard (21) where companies sang the joys of (22) the new work, in a heavy breeze, moving about unable to escape the fabulous phantoms of the mountains where we must have found ourselves again (23).

What hardy hands, what holy hour (24) will give me back this region whence my slumbers and my slightest (25) movements rise?

Decisions of detail

1. **These are cities! This is a people:** the parallel structure of the ST is partly lost, as the article “des” disappears in the translation.

2. **these dream Allegheny and Lebanon mountains rose up:** the added noun “mountains” underlines the link with the end of the poem in “les fabuleux fantômes des monts”, where “monts” refers to “Alleghanys” and

“Libans”, and it compensates for the loss of the verb “monter” (Latin etymology: mons, montis).

3. **hunting-song**: the musical meaning of the word “chasse” is conveyed by “hunting-song” in *Oxford English Dictionary*: “a song during a hunt, or relating to hunting, usually characterised by melodic phrases imitating the sound of a hunting horn; also applied to an instrumental composition of the same character.”

4. **rush together**: compensation by splitting for “accourent”.

5. **blazing like the light of the summits**: “blazing” underlines the semantic link between “vieux cratères [...] dans les feux” and “lumière des cimes”.

6. **On the platforms [...] Rolands trumpet their bravery**: the phonic repetition of the sounds [p], [t] and [l] underlines the grotesqueness of the situation. The verb “trumpet” (see also Bernard and Peschel) conveys the ironic content of the ST.

7. **the fire of the sky**: the effect of inversion conveyed by “l'ardeur du ciel” (for “ciel ardent”) is lost in the TT, where only the idea of heat is retained.

8. **heads for**: rather than “joins” (Fowlie) or “overtakes” (Bernard, Peschel) as the ST is constructed from the expression “joindre/gagner les hauteurs”> “head for the hills”.

9. **the high pastures**: conveys both the semantic threads of “height” and “mountains” and is more idiomatic than “higher fields” or (Bernard) “fields with the highlands” (Fowlie)/ “fields of the hill tops” (Peschel).

10. **Orphic choirs**: although the noun orpheonist is attested in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the adjective “orpheonic” does not exist; it is hence necessary to compensate by splitting with “Orphic choirs”.

11. **of the pearls and the precious conches**: the inversion of the ST is conveyed in the TT, but results in the loss of the syntactic ambiguity.

12. **darkens with deadly glares**: the opposition of the ST words “s'assombrit”/“éclats” is conveyed in the TT. The repetition “éclatants”/ “éclats” is unfortunately lost.

13. **harvest of flowers [...] howl**: the repetition of the sound [m] in “moissons” and “mugissent” is partly compensated by this new pattern of phonic repetition.

14. **the deer suckle at Diana's breasts**: the humorous content of the poem with the play on the proximity of the words “chasteté”/ “chasse tettée” (see above) is lost in the TT.

15. The distinction between the two groups of phonemes [b] + [ã] and [l] + [r] + [y] is lost as the pattern is replaced by a less complex repetition of the sounds [s] and [b].

16. **the peoples' ideas:** by adding the definite article the connotations of socialism and democracy are retained.

17. **bursts of enthusiasm surge into:** it is difficult to decide on the exact meaning of the word "élans", as it denotes both "elk" (Bernard) and "enthusiasm" (Peschel). However, because of the poet's tendency to associate abstract and concrete words (e.g.: "les Rolands sonnent leur bravoure") and given the importance of the semantic thread of movement, the word is more likely linked to the idea of "surge" or "spirit" (Fowlie). Moreover, there are two other occurrences of the noun "élan" in *Illuminations* in "Génie" ("élan de nos facultés") and in "Solde" ("Élan insensé et infini") with no possible ambiguity of meaning. I have compensated by splitting ("bursts of enthusiasm") thus emphasising the association of abstract and concrete words and the idea of movement.

18. **villages:** the opposition between "faubourg" ("Villes" I) and "bourgs" ("Villes" II) is lost.

19. **collapses:** the semantic parallel between "l'écroulement des apothéoses" and "le paradis des orages s'effondre" is emphasised by the choice of "collapse" (verb and noun).

20. **dance the nocturnal feast:** the construction "chantent la joie du travail nouveau" is direct, hence the choice of a direct construction in the TT (as opposed to Bernard's translation "at the nocturnal festival", Peschel's "in celebration of the night" and Fowlie's "in the celebration of night").

21. **a bustling Baghdad boulevard:** the alliteration in [b] is further reproduced in the TT.

22. **sang the joys of:** as in "sing the praises of". The plural form "joys" fits the context of multiple plural nouns.

23. **where we must have found ourselves again:** the different possible meanings of "se retrouver" make translation difficult. Bernard offers "where they must have met", Peschel "where one had to find himself again" and Fowlie "where people had to find themselves again". However, the context is clearly of a place ("mountains"). "Se retrouver" must hence have a spatial meaning (as in "Après avoir erré pendant des heures, il se retrouva place de la Concorde"). The "brise épaisse" (one would expect "brouillard épais") probably explains the confusion of the narrator, who ends up where he started in the dream mountains with the "fabuleux fantômes" ("on" = "je" + "fabuleux fantômes").

24. **What hardy hands, what holy hour:** the word "bras" and its connotations of "manual work" is conveyed in "hands". Moreover, a strong effect of euphony is created, which underlines the parallel of rhythm and structure and which compensates for the loss of the sound [b].

25. **my slumbers and my slightest movements:** the repetition of the sound [m] in "moindres mouvements" is lost but compensated in place by the repetition of the group of sounds [s]+[l] in "slumbers" and "slightest".

“Démocratie”, analysis and strategic decisions

Elle [l'histoire] vous flétrira du nom de
“Thierroristes” et ce sera là une épithète plus
ridicule et plus infâme que celle que vous essayez
de nous infliger.

[in *Le Père Fouettard*, n°2, 1871]

1. Military democracy

In *Littre*, the noun “Démocratie” is defined as “société libre et surtout égalitaire où l'élément populaire a l'influence prépondérante”. The word “Démocratie” connotes both freedom and equality. However, the poem “Démocratie” does not exploit either of these semantic values. On the contrary, an analysis of the vocabulary of the poem reveals that many words belong to the semantic thread of military power:

“drapeau”, “tambour”, “service”, “militaires”, “conscrits”, “marche”, “En avant”

Many words bear very negative connotations. The imposition of a harmful or deadly power is expressed through the words:

“étouffe[r]”, “prostitution”, “massacr[er]”, “exploitations”, “féroce”, “crevaision”

The language in “Démocratie” is violent with extremely strong words (“crevaision”, “massacr[er]”) describing an absolutely abject universe, as illustrated in the adjectives:

“immonde”, “cynique”, “monstrueuses”, “féroce”, “ignorants”, “roués”

The violence reaches extremes when it comes to exploitation, as conveyed through the superlative forms:

“**la plus cynique** prostitution”/ “[l]es **plus monstrueuses** exploitations industrielles ou militaires”

The “parole” of the speakers of “Démocratie” is qualified as “patois” (“**notre patois** étouffe le tambour”). “Patois” is a socially determined language “qui n'est plus en usage que pour la **conversation** parmi les gens de la province, et particulièrement parmi les paysans et les ouvriers” [*Littre*]. And indeed, “Démocratie” is characterised by its oral style. The quotation marks, which exclude the title, present the poem as being in direct speech, in which the first person plural rules (“**notre** patois”, “**nous**

alimenterons”, “**nous** massacrerons”, “**nous** aurons”). Another aspect of the speech is the use of the future tense and of exclamatory forms (“Aux pays poivrés et détrempés!”, “En avant, route!”). Future and exclamatory forms announce an immediate and imperative programme; they also contribute to creating the impression of power and violence. The violence is hence expressed both through the words and the style, which are both characteristic of an authoritarian military tone. The style is extremely concise without link words. The appositions are brutal and systematic as in the group “ignorants **pour** la science, roués **pour** le confort; la crevaision **pour** le monde qui va”, which repeats three times a quasi-identical structure.

However, the word patois is also “par dénigrement langue **pauvre** et **grossière**” [*Littre*]. This aspect of the definition explains the presence of the noun “**crevaision**”, extremely incongruous in a poetic context. “Crevaision” is classified by *Littre* as a “Terme tout à fait trivial” to denote “mort” (as in “Il a fait sa crevaision”). The poverty of the language is striking in a poem where words are anything but poetical (“prostitution”, “détrempés”, etc.). The poem is also woven with abstractions, such as:

“exploitations industrielles ou militaires”, “philosophie féroce”,
“science”, “co[m]fort”

The rhythm is extremely spasmodic, mainly because of the lack of coordination. The first three paragraphs are characterised by a strong binary structure:

«Le drapeau va au paysage immonde /1/, et notre patois étouffe le tambour./2/
«Aux centres nous alimenterons la plus cynique prostitution./1/ Nous massacrerons les révoltes logiques. /2/
«Au pays poivrés et détrempés! /1/— au service des plus monstrueuses exploitations industrielles ou militaires. /2/”

In the final paragraph, the pairing of apposed segments is even more systematic:

“«Au revoir ici /1/, n'importe où /2/. Conscrits du bon vouloir /1/, nous aurons la philosophie féroce /2/; ignorants pour la science /1/, roués pour le confort /2/; la crevaision pour le monde qui va. C'est la vraie marche. En avant /1/, route! /2/ »”

The systematic pairing of brief segments rhythmically evokes the sound of the drum calling to arms. The same effect is echoed in the repetition of the harsh sounds [k], [d], [p] and [t] in the phonic pattern of “Démocratie”:

drapeau paysage **patois**
étouffe tambour

centre alimenterons cynique massacrerons prostitution

pays poivrés **détrempés** monstrueuse exploitations industrielles

conscrits confort crevaison monde qui va
aurons philosophie féroce ignorants roués route

The sound [p] is especially predominant with the words “paysage”, “patois”, “prostitution”, “pays”, “poivrés” and the repetition of “pour” in the final paragraph:

“ignorants **pour** la science”
“roués **pour** le confort”
“crevaison **pour** le monde qui va”

The plosive sounds evoke both the drum roll and the marching of troops.

Implications for translation

A translation of “Démocratie” will have to convey the military tone of ST. Special attention will be paid to style, rhythm and phonemes. The violent terms of the poem are not always well rendered by the translators. The verb “massacre[r]”, for example, which implies the idea of bloodshed, is softened in translations by Peschel (“destroy”) and Fowlie (“smash”). Fowlie also translates “féroce” by “savage”. This is a serious mistranslation, if we consider the positive connotations attached to the word “sauvage” in Rimbaud's poetry. The word is often linked to the ancient and lost ideal (see for example “Mouvement”: “Est-ce ancienne sauvagerie qu'on pardonne?”).

Bernard and Peschel choose to translate “patois” by “dialect”, whilst Fowlie opts for the neutral “speech”. The connotations of “patois” need to be conveyed, something which is clearly not achieved by Fowlie. The noun “dialect” bears more positive connotations than “patois”. It is necessary to keep the specific socio-economic value as well as the idea of vulgarity connoted by the word “patois”.

The noun “crevaison” has generally been perceived as a colloquial term by the translators. However, Fowlie with “let the rest of the world blow up” is less semantically accurate than Bernard (“let the rest of the world kick the bucket”) and Peschel (“let the rest of the world drop dead”). All translators ignore the parallel structure “ignorants **pour** la science”, “roués **pour** le confort”, “crevaison **pour** le monde qui va”:

“ignorant in science, rakes where our comfort is concerned; and let the world blow up!” (Fowlie)

“ignorant of science, cunning for comfort; let the rest of the world kick the bucket.” (Bernard)

“ignorant as regards science, crafty for comfort; let the rest of the world drop dead.” (Peschel)

The loss of some of the phonic repetitions are compensated by Bernard, who creates some interesting effects, such as:

“our **dialect drowns** the sound of the **drum**”

“**conscripts** of our own **accord**”

“**cunning** for **comfort**”

“**kick** the **bucket**”

2. irony

The poem is mainly based around the repetition of the structure “Au(x)”+ noun:

paragraph 1:	[...] au paysage
paragraph 2:	Aux centres
paragraph 3:	Aux pays poivrés
	[...] au service
paragraph 4:	Au revoir

A syntactical parallel does not automatically imply a grammatical parallel. If the first three occurrences are adverbial phrases of place, the last two, although they reproduce an identical pattern, are of a different nature. Both “au service” and “au revoir” are set phrases. The semantic distortion of the repetitive pattern creates a humorous effect of surprise. “Au revoir ici, n'importe où” is especially incongruous, because it is addressed to a place rather than a person and because of the association of two semantically opposed terms “ici” and “n'importe où”.

The same incongruity affects the segment “c'est la vraie marche. En avant, route!”, which is built both from the inversion and association of expressions. The inversion affects the words “marche” and “route”. The reader expects “En avant, marche!” and thus is tempted to invert the nouns “route” and “marche” (“C'est la vraie route! En avant, marche!”). The segment stems from play on words based on the superposition of three military orders to march “**en route!** (mauvaise troupe)”, “**en avant**” and “**en marche**”².

² Cf. “A une raison”: “Un pas de toi, c'est la levée des nouveaux hommes et leur en-marche.” “A une raison” exploits the same semantic thread of military power with the words “tambour”, “levée”, “hommes”, “en-marche”.

The traditional wording of these orders, although it still remains implicitly present, is eroded. The military imperative tone is hence ridiculed.

However, the biggest irony lies in the title “*Démocratie*”, which seems rather incongruous in association with the violent “patois” of the poem. The semantic and stylistic content of the poem spells tyranny rather than “*Démocratie*”. The title is ironically used “par antiphrase”. An “antiphrase” is when “On emploie un mot[...] dans le sens contraire à celui qui lui est [...] naturel” [Fontanier 1968, p. 266]. The antiphrasis is perceived because of the context of the poem. The text requires a degree of complicity between writer and readers³. Rimbaud also echoes the political reality of a time when the word “*démocratie*” was increasingly meaningless and was to be found in the mouths of the entire political spectrum⁴. This is reflected through a comment which appeared in *Le Public* (jeudi 13 mai 1869):

On ose à peine, aujourd'hui, se dire républicain, tant la République est devenue chez nous synonyme de désordres, d'émeutes et d'impuissance. On peut toujours se vanter d'être démocrate. **Car le mot Démocratie s'accommode plus volontiers de tous les régimes.** [extract reproduced in Dubois 1962, see word index]

Implications for translation

The irony of the poem, which is chiefly perceived through the contrast between the title and the content, is also conveyed by syntactic and semantic features. Translations have failed to reproduce the syntactic parallel created by the repetition of the structure “au(x)” + noun (“[...] **au** paysage”, “**Aux** centres”, “**Aux** pays poivrés”, “[...] **au** service”, “**Au** revoir”):

“[...] **to** that filthy place”, “**In** the centers”, “**To** the peppery dried-up countries”, “[...] **in** the service”, “Goodbye **to** this place” (Fowlie)
“[...]the filthy landscape”, “**In** the interior”, “**To** the spicy softened countries”, “[...] **at** the service”, “**Until** we meet again” (Bernard)
“[...] the foul landscape”, “**In** the centers”, “**To** the spicy and sodden lands”, “[...] **at** the service”, “**Till** we meet again” (Peschel)

³ **Antiphrase** “rem 1 La force de l'antiphrase dérive d'une affirmation implicite comme “*ce que nous voulons dire est si vrai qu'on peut même dire le contraire sans danger d'être mal compris*”. Elle dépend donc du contexte.” [Dupriez 1984, p. 57]

⁴ Dubois analyses the semantic evolution of the word “*démocratie*” since the Revolution:

La série étymologique [“*Démocrate*”, “*démocratie*”, “*démocratique*”] se maintient ensuite à travers les régimes et les révolutions, héritage de 1789 jusqu'au moment où elle subit pendant le Second Empire une profonde modification. En effet, le régime impérial comme les autres «pouvoirs», la reprend à son compte [...]. On précise la valeur d'emploi du mot par un qualitatif approprié: H. Dameth énumère ainsi tous les démocrates possibles: “*démocrates socialistes*”, “*démocrates révolutionnaires*”, “*démocrates bourgeois*”, “*démocrates impérialistes*”, “*démocrates néo-chrétiens*”, etc. [Dubois 1962, pp. 109-110]

The ironic process of semantic and syntactic distortion has been lost in all three cases.

“C'est la vraie marche. En avant, route!”, which is built from the distortion of three military orders and the inversion of the nouns “route” and “marche” is translated:

“This the real march. Forward, men!” (Fowlie)
“That's the real way. Forward — march!” (Bernard)
“That's real progress. Forward, let's go!” (Peschel)

None of the translators convey the humorous erosion of the ST. Bernard even corrects the ST and re-establishes a more conventional wording.

3. Prosopopeia

Guyaux in “Mystères et clartés du guillemet rimbaldien” [1991b] draws a comparison between “Démocratie” and *Saison en Enfer*. He especially analyses the use of quotation marks and puts forward the idea that the quotation marks of “Démocratie” introduce a prosopopeia. This idea is interesting if we consider that prosopopeia usually implies a theatrical build-up. *Gradus* defines prosopopeia as:

Mettre en scène les absents, les morts, les êtres surnaturels, ou même inanimés: les faire agir, parler, répondre. [Dupriez 1984, p. 364]

However, a prosopopeia is usually clearly announced. In “Démocratie”, there is no sentence or paragraph introducing the text. Because of the absence of any sort of contextualisation, the reader does not know who is actually speaking. The absence of contextual information tends to suggest that “Démocratie” is a parody. The quotation marks act as a warning for the reader that the poem is not to be taken at face value, not to be accepted literally as the poet's speech. Through the use of quotation marks, the author distances himself from the content of his poem. Plessen thinks that the quotation marks of “Démocratie” “sous-entendent un sujet déclarant: ‘je cite’, ce qui peut être interprété comme: je prends distance, j'ironise” [Plessen 1983, p. 19]. It is important for the translation purpose to determine the target of this irony.

According to Fowlie “the entire piece is spoken by soldiers who combine in their make-up brutality, obscenity and a somewhat startling degree of pedantry in their verbal expression”. Fowlie rightly recognises the military tone of the poem, but jumps to a conclusion. He probably associates “Démocratie” with the poem “Le Cœur volé”, which was long considered to

be Rimbaud's testimony against the cruelty of soldiers. He particularises the discourse of "Démocratie" and sees a personal attack by Rimbaud against the army. He does not stipulate whether the poet is referring to soldiers in general, the Versaillais or the Communards. In my view, it is perfectly possible to identify precisely the voice behind this violent pseudo-democratic discourse.

In *Centenaire de la Troisième République*, Girardet describes a very significant historical moment, which took place in Longchamp on 29th June 1871, immediately after the Commune, when an army of 120 000 men marched past Thiers. He recalls how, when Thiers hugged Maréchal Mac-Mahon, "de la foule, et d'une foule non négligeable — il s'agissait de plusieurs centaines de milliers de personnes — un double cri s'éleva alors "Vive l'Armée, vive la République!". According to Girardet, "Ces deux cris, qui allaient être longtemps et simultanément répétés, consacrent une alliance, celle de la République et de son armée" [Girardet 1975, p. 79].

The Third Republic was strongly attached to its military values and quickly built up the largest and strongest army possible. This was achieved by Thiers in 1872 with the new system of conscription and compulsory military service for everyone. The satirical journal *L'Eclipse* published on the 8th September 1872 a drawing by Gill [see illustration 1] showing Thiers as *le premier soldat de France*. Ducatel comments on this drawing in his *Histoire de la III^e République*:

La conscription commencera et constituera pendant longtemps les préoccupations de la jeunesse. Thiers qui en est le promoteur devient **le premier conscrit**. [Ducatel 1975, p. 32]

This drawing can be linked to "Démocratie" to help us decipher the oxymoron "conscrits du bon vouloir". A "conscrit" (in *Littré* "jeune homme inscrit au rôle de la conscription") was not the product of his own "bon vouloir" but was "désigné d'office". In my view, the poem refers in fact to the people personally responsible for conscription, namely Thiers "le premier conscrit" and his "parti de l'ordre". At this stage, the Third Republic was so closely linked to the army that the country itself seemed to be turning into a huge military force⁵.

⁵ Several drawings illustrate the new obligatory military service and the reorganisation of the army, designed to include as many people as possible. See for example Moloch "Tout le monde soldat" (23/6/ 1872) in *La Scie*; Cottin "Bon pour le service" (17/11/1872) in *Le Sifflet*; H. Kat "Les volontaires d'un an" (24/11/1872) in *La Guêpe*; A. Humbert "La réorganisation de l'armée" (5/5/ 1872) in *Le Sifflet* [reproduced in Ducatel 1975, pp. 30-36].

In 1872, on the day the issue of compulsory military service was discussed at the Assemblée Nationale, the Duc d'Aumale pronounced a much admired patriotic speech on the importance of the “drapeau tricolore”, “ce drapeau chéri auquel les Français de toute opinion et de toute origine se sont ralliés pendant la guerre et qui est resté dans notre malheur l'emblème de la concorde et de la discorde”. After defeat by Germany, Thiers literally had to buy the right to keep the French flag. He had to raise the huge sum of 42 billion Francs through the “emprunt de libération”. The French flag was for Thiers the emblem of the victory against the red flag of the Commune. Ducatel reminds us of the political importance of the flag at the beginning of the Third Republic:

Le drapeau devenait le symbole des divers clans, mais autour du drapeau tricolore se réunissaient tous ceux qui suivaient la République conservatrice que dirigeait avec une poigne de fer A. Thiers. [Ducatel 1975, p.19]

The poem “Démocratie” evokes precisely this flag and plays on the ambiguity of the verb “aller”. The flag of the conservative Republic is conquering France. However, it also suits a country which has become ghastly (“immonde”) as one may say of a colour that “ça lui va au teint”. “Immonde” is indeed an apt adjective to describe a French and Parisian landscape stained by the blood shed during the Franco-Prussian war and during the Commune.

The poem “Démocratie” illustrates the spirit of the Third Republic, whose “mots d'ordre” were “revanche” and “reconquête”. The Third Republic started in 1871 with the repression of the Commune de Paris (“la semaine sanglante”) and the deportation from 1872 of 4400 communards to Guiana and New Caledonia by “les conscrits du bon vouloir”. Murphy analyses the segment “pays poivrés et détremés” and recognises “une insinuation métonymique dont la saveur nous est quelque peu masquée aujourd'hui [...] le poivre suscite l'idée de Cayenne et, plus précisément, de la colonie pénitentiaire, à laquelle Rimbaud fait d'ailleurs des allusions assez évidentes dans *Ce qu'on dit au Poète à propos de fleurs*” [Murphy 1986, pp. 91-93] (see illustration 2). He also notes that “dans *Le Père Duchêne* [...], on évoque souvent la récolte du poivre par les Républicains exilés, mais *Le Père Duchêne* associe cette récolte pénale au travail d'assécher les marais des colonies” [idem, p. 93].

The repetition of the plosive sound [p] and of the preposition “au” in “**au** paysage”, “**aux** pays poivrés”, evokes the military order “**au pas**”, which also echoes semantically the final “en avant”. In my view, the

association of the words “conscrits”, “pas” and “en avant” would have evoked one of Béranger's popular songs *Le vieux caporal*:

Conscrits au pas, Ne pleurez pas, Marchez au pas, au pas, au pas [quoted in *Littré*, see “conscrits”].

In the poem's logic, it is les “conscrits du bon vouloir” who will “mettre le pays au pas” and lead “le monde qui va” towards its “crevaision”. “La vraie marche” is not the “marche” of the military men, “la vraie marche” is the march of the whole country. The poem significantly opens and closes on the theme of movement expressed through the verb “va” and the segment “En avant, route!”. The poem opens on the idea of a patriotic and conservative movement symbolised by the “drapeau” and closes on the idea of colonialism. The metaphor “pays poivrés” which evokes Cayenne can easily be linked to the noun “route” via the expression “route des épices”. Furthermore, the moving road is reminiscent of “la route hydraulique motrice” of “Mouvement”, which also offers many allusions to colonialism. However, as often in Rimbaud's poetry, many connotative levels interact, so “route” could also be an allusion to prostitution. In the late-nineteenth century, the words “route” is associated with the word “routière”, a prostitute who worked the street [cf. Timmermans, 1903]. The “democratic” programme tends to “aliment[er] la plus cynique prostitution”. Both France, Paris and the Republic are assaulted by the conservative government in their “cynique prostitution”. The assault on republican values is a common theme at the beginning of the Third Republic. In a caricature by Moloch (a pseudonym for Alphonse Hector Colomb) entitled *Tentative de vio⁶*, Thiers with a fleur-de-lys tattooed on his back, is shown assaulting the Republic, while Favre, the minister of foreign affairs under Thiers, holds a candle.

Thiers and the repressive violence of his government are at the origin of the word “thierrorisme”, coined by the satirical journal *Le Père Fouettard* in 1871. “Démocratie” also demonstrates that, at the beginning of the Third Republic, “Thierrorisme” and “patrouillotisme⁷” have become the predominant reality in France.

⁶ Caricature published in May 1871. Reproduced by Ross as part of his analysis of “Chant de guerre parisien” [Ross 1988, p. 142].

⁷ Word found in Rimbaud's *Lettre du 25 aout 1870 à Izambard*, but also used in *Le Vengeur*, dimanche 2 avril 1871, to describe the pseudo-democrats whose patriotism is characterised by a will to increase military “patrouilles”:

est-ce que nous allons recommencer un régime de “patrouillotisme” aussi gaspilleur et aussi corrupteur? [quoted in Dubois 1962, see word index].

Implications for translation

The historical intertext is an important feature of “*Démocratie*”. A translator with a good knowledge of the specific cultural background is able to identify the complex range of perspectives that have to be dealt with. A successful translation will need to render the linguistic particularities showing the intertextual content.

The idea of movement and march conveyed in the text both through rhythm, phonemes and content is not always satisfactorily conveyed. Bernard, Fowlie and Peschel all lose the ambiguity of the verb “*aller*” in the first paragraph. Only Fowlie conveys movement with “the flag's off to that filthy place”, whilst Bernard and Peschel only retain the aesthetic dimension with “the flag suits the filthy landscape” (Bernard) and “the flag fits the foul landscape” (Peschel). The second use of the verb “*aller*” in the incongruous segment “*le monde qui va*” has often been left untranslated [cf. “and let the world blow up!” (Fowlie), “let the rest of the world kick the bucket” (Bernard) and “let the rest of the world drop dead” (Peschel)]. I suspect that irony is involved in the segment “*le monde qui va*”. The reader is meant to wonder “*où va le monde?*”, to which the poem answers “*à la crevaision*”. If the world is going anywhere it must be “*à sa perte*”.

Some of the phonic and rhythmic effects evoking the military march “*au pas*” may be lost in the process of translation. They will, when possible be compensated for.

The allusion to Cayenne, its pepper and its swamps in “*pays poivrés et détrempés*” should be immediately apparent to the reader. Peschel and Bernard's translations are too general with “spicy”, which evokes chili and India or Mexico rather than pepper and Cayenne. Fowlie is more semantically accurate with “peppery”, but mistranslates “*détrempés*” by “dried up”, hence evoking a completely different context. Likewise, Bernard's choice of “softened” conveys the wrong connotations given that Cayenne was the harshest penitentiary of all French penitentiaries.

The oxymoron “*conscrits du bon vouloir*”, which refers to Thiers and his system of conscription, is satisfactorily rendered by Bernard, who emphasises the paradox, with “conscrits of our own accord”.

Illustration n°1

Drawing by Gill, in *L'Éclipse* (08.09.1872), showing Thiers as "Le premier soldat de France."

LE PREMIER SOLDAT DE FRANCE, PAR GILL



Illustration n°2

It reads: "Tu veux que je dépose ma trique... As-tu fini! D'abord, montre ce que tu caches derrière toi, petit Foutriquet!..."

In *Le Fils du Père Duchêne* (07.05.1871). Drawing showing Thiers as Philippe II's jester "le petit foutriquet" (nickname attributed to him by Klenck in his *Profils Politiques*). Thiers is being beaten up by "le guignol communard" but hides his revenge: a box of Cayenne pepper.

LE FILS DU PÈRE DUCHÊNE

ILLUSTRÉ

Paraissant deux fois par semaine

LES GUIGNOLS POLITIQUES



« Tu veux que je dépose ma trique... » — « Non, Buil! D'abord, montre donc ce que tu caches derrière toi, petit Foutriquet!... »

TT

Democracy.

“The flag goes with (1) the foul landscape, and our patois (2) stifles the drum.

“By fair means or foul (3), in the centres, we will sustain the most cynical prostitution. We will slaughter all (4) logical revolts.

“By the right (5), to the peppery, swampy lands! (6)— in the service (7) of the most monstrous industrial and military exploitation.

“Bye-bye (8) here or anywhere really (9). Conscripts of our own accord (10), we shall (11) have a ferocious philosophy; fools for science, rakes for comfort. A last croak (12) for the world finally going (13). That's the real march. Forward, en route! (14) (15)”

Decisions of detail

1. **The flag goes with:** the ambiguity of the verb “aller” (“aller aux vèpres”/ “ça lui va au teint”) is partly conveyed.

2. **patois:** the French word “patois” has been kept rather than translated by “dialect” (Bernard, Peschel) or “speech” (Fowlie), which do not possess the same linguistic and socio-economic connotations.

3. **By fair means or foul:** the ST form and content have been altered in order to compensate for the loss of the syntactic repetition of the structure “au(x)” + noun. The addition, although it is a translation loss, keeps the ST link between the first and the second paragraph (“[...] au paysage immonde”/ “aux centres”) through the repetition of the adjective “foul”. It also succeeds in conveying the pejorative and tyrannical tone of the ST.

4. **all:** with the form “will” (rather than “shall”) emphasises the systematic nature of the military programme.

5. **By the right:** once more the form and content have been altered in order to compensate for the loss of the syntactic repetition of the structure “au(x)” + noun. The text is built around the idea of movement and military march, which is also expressed in the order “aux pays poivrés [...]”. Through the addition of “by the right”, the military tone and content of the poem have been emphasised.

6. **peppery, swampy lands:** the historical reference to Cayenne and its penitentiary must still be recognisable. This is only possible through a direct allusion to Cayenne pepper and the land's swamps.

7. **[...] in the service:** the parallel created by the syntactic repetition of the structure “au(x)” + noun is lost. Rimbaud plays on the military meaning of “service” and on the expression “être au service de quelqu'un/ quelque chose”. The double entendre is still possible in the TT.

8. **Bye-bye**: the humorous deterioration of the repetition of the structure “au(x)” + noun is partly compensated, through an identical process of graphic and phonic parallels:

“**By** fair means or foul [...]”

“**By** the right [...]”

“**Bye-bye** [...]”

“**Aux** centres [...]”

“**Aux** pays poivrés [...]”

“**Au** revoir [...]”

9. **Bye-bye here or anywhere really**: bye-bye is more informal than “au revoir”, which results in a shift of register. However, the ironic subversion of the military tone observed in the closing segment “En avant, route!” is emphasised here. The tone is suddenly childlike or feminine contrasting greatly with the military “by the right” of the preceding paragraph. The equivalence “ici”= “n’importe où” (linguistic, political and economic equivalence, as, in the context of poem, both France and its colonies are condemned to the same “crevaision”) is conveyed and the cynicism of the speakers emphasised with “really”.

10. **Conscripts of our own accord**: the contradiction of the words “conscripts” and “bon vouloir” is conveyed in the TT, hence making it possible for the reader to perceive the historical reference to Thiers and the conscription system.

11. **shall**: creates a euphony with the words “ferocious” and “philosophy”. Although “shall” is not as strong as “will”, which evokes the idea of “will power” and imply a more systematic and implacable thought than “shall”.

12. **A last croak**: I have reproduced the repetition “ignorants **pour** la science”, “roués **pour** le confort” and “crevaision **pour** le monde qui va” with: “fools **for** science”, “rakes **for** comfort” and “A last croak **for** the world”. The loss of the strong colloquial word “crevaision” is partly compensated as the noun “croak” evokes the verb “to croak”. The colloquial meaning of the verb is attested in the *Oxford English Dictionary*:

to croak (intr.) slang. to die.

1812 in J.H. Vaux *Flash Dictionary*: “They go monching along as if they were croaking.”/ 1873 *Slang Dictionary* Croak to die from the gurgling sound a person makes when the breath of life is departing Morrison *Child of Jago* XXVIII 272 “Run, for Gawd’s sake, or the woman’ll croak!”/ 1961 J. Welcome *Beware of midnight* ii 33 “Your old man has croaked and left you the lot.”

(trans.) to kill, to murder, to hang dial. or slang.

1823 P. Egan Grose’s *Dictionary of Vulgar Tongue*. A flash term among keepers of prisons, who speaking of a thief that was executed, observe, “He was croaked”/ 1945 L. A. G. Strong *Othello’s Occupation* 123 “Who croaked Enameline?”

“A last croak” is also reminiscent of “the last gasp”. Finally, the words “crevaision” and “croak” are phonemically quite close.

13. **the world finally going**: The idea of death and catastrophe implied by the expression “le monde qui va” (“à la crevaision”, “à sa perte”) is emphasised through the addition of the adverb “finally” which is an allusion to the “final solution” offered to the country by Thiers. The TT conveys the idea of perdition implied by the expression “le monde qui va” (see also the expressions “going to the devil/dogs”).

14. **That's the real march. Forward, en route!**: the subversion of military tone is compensated with the inversion of the words "march" and "route" from the expression "route march". The reader also perceives an erosion of the military orders "Forward, march!" and "en route". Although the sexual connotations of the ST, through the words "route">"routière", have been lost, the colonialist connotations are kept as the noun route in "en route" evokes "the spice route/trail".

15. The phonic pattern and particularly the repetition of the plosive sounds, which convey the idea of marching troops "au pas", is lost. However, I have tried to compensate for this loss through the repetition of the sounds [s] and [t] in the first three paragraphs, which convey a certain degree of violence:

land**s**cape, patois, **s**tifles, **s**ustain, **m**ost, **c**ynical, prostitution, **c**entres, **s**laughter, revolts, **s**wampy, **s**ervice, **m**ost, monstrous, industrial, military, exploitation

and through the repetition of the harsh sounds [r] and [k] in the final paragraph:

con**s**cripts, **a**ccord, **r**akes, **c**omfort, **c**roak.

1

Dévotion

A ma sœur Louise Vanaen de Voringhem: — Sa cor-
nette bleue tournée à la mer du Nord. — Pour les nau-
fragés.

5

A ma sœur Léonie Auboïs d'Ashby. Baou — l'herbe
d'été bourdonnante et puante. — Pour la fièvre des
mères et des enfants.

10

A Lulu, — démon — qui a conservé un goût pour les
oratoires du temps des Amies et de son éducation
incomplète. Pour les hommes! A madame ***.

A l'adolescent que je fus. A ce saint vieillard, ermi-
tage ou mission.

15

A l'esprit des pauvres. Et à un très haut clergé.
Aussi bien à tout culte en telle place de culte mémo-
riale et parmi tels événements qu'il faille se rendre, sui-
vant les aspirations du moment ou bien notre propre vice
sérieux,

20

Ce soir à Circeto des hautes glaces, grasse comme le
poisson et enluminée comme les dix mois de la nuit
rouge, — (son cœur ambre et spunck), — pour ma seule
prière muette comme ces régions de nuit et précédant des
bravoures plus violentes que ce chaos polaire.

A tout prix et avec tous les airs, même dans les
voyages métaphysiques. — Mais plus alors.

From Guyaux 1985b, p. 71.

“Dévotion”, analysis and strategic decisions

Breton once said of “Dévotion”:

Il y a toujours un coin du voile qui demande expressément à ne pas être levé; quoiqu'en pensent les imbéciles, c'est là la condition même de l'enchantement.
[Breton 1949, p. 24]

The taboo imposed on “Dévotion” dies hard, if we consider the pseudo-mystical position held by Richter [1986], who supports Breton's rejection of analysis and interpretation. The mysterious aspects of the poem also explain the reluctance to tease out the meaning. However, some critics, such as Ascionne [1986] have been tempted by the mystery of the poem. For them, “Dévotion”, like “H”, is a puzzle which triggers a quest for the real identity of its ‘actants’.

The first clue to the poet's intentions is in the title “Dévotion”. The noun “Dévotion” initially has the religious meaning of “attachement aux pratiques religieuses” [*Litttré*]. However, the form of the poem with the repetition of the construction “à [...] pour” suggests another more specific meaning of the word “dévotion”, which is:

Avoir dévotion à, adresser ses prières à un saint, à une église, à une image, etc [*Litttré*].

Both religious meanings of the word “Dévotion”, since the 17th century, have been pejoratively connoted, as pointed out in *Litttré*:

Dans le courant du XVIIIème siècle, dévotion se prend en mauvaise part pour fausse dévotion, hypocrisie.

The most famous “faux dévot” is Molière's Tartuffe also evoked in Rimbaud's “Le Châtiment de Tartufe (sic)”, where he embodies the dissimulation and hypocrisy of the 19th century¹. The poem “Dévotion”, as I shall demonstrate, illustrates the three possible meanings of the title, namely faith, prayer and hypocrisy.

1. Parallels

The poem “Dévotion” presents a particularly repetitive pattern. It is characterised by the repetition, often anaphoric, of the preposition “à”:

¹ See Murphy's analysis of “Le Châtiment de Tartufe [sic]” [1991] where the identity of Rimbaud's Tartufe [sic] is revealed as being Napoléon III.

“À ma sœur [...]”
 “À ma sœur [...]”
 “À Lulu [...]”
 “À Madame***”
 “À l'adolescent [...]”
 “À ce saint veillard [...]”

“À l'esprit [...]”
 “(Et) à un très haut [...]”
 “(Aussi bien) à tout culte[...]

“(Ce soir) à Circeto [...]”

“À tout prix [...]”

The preposition is echoed, to a certain extent, in “a-vec tous les airs” and “Mais plus a-lors”. The repetition of the preposition “à” is motivated by the title of the poem “dévotion” (“Avoir dévotion à”). The poem consists of a series of prayers to different entities. Initially, the preposition “à” is associated with an attributive form:

“Pour les naufragés.”
 “Pour la fièvre des mères et des enfants”
 “Pour les hommes!”

The association disappears until the seventh paragraph (“à Circeto [...] **pour** ma seule prière muette”). Guyaux [1985b, p. 254] considers the syntactic form “À [...] Pour” to be inherited from the Latin double dative. In the first three paragraphs, the devotion is addressed to a single entity for a group of people, hence, the three prayers are three examples of “mémentos”². This traditional religious form is, however, slightly modified as the name of the beneficiary is delayed. An intermediary segment is added, which qualifies the objects of the prayers:

“— Sa cornette bleue tournée à la mer du Nord.”
 “Baou!— l'herbe d'été bourdonnante et puante.”
 “— démon — qui a conservé un goût pour les oratoires du temps des Amies et de son éducation incomplète.”

These segments form a transition between the object of the prayers and the beneficiaries. The nature of the link thus created is obscure. However, in the first “mémento” a semantic link is created from the object to the beneficiary of the prayer, in that the word “sœur” leads to the word “cornette”, the word “bleue” to “mer du Nord”, which itself finally leads to “naufragés”. As shipwrecks were often perceived as punishments from above, “la sœur” would be required through her prayers to intercede on behalf of the sailors.

² Le **mémento** est une demande très générale faite pour autrui. La Puissance est requise de “se souvenir” d'un mort ou d'un vivant. [Dupriez 1984, p. 429]

The “mémento” is a type of “épiclèse” defined in *Gradus* as a “prière impétoire, c'est à dire qu'on fait en vue d'obtenir qqch. dont on sent le besoin individuellement ou collectivement” [idem].

In the second “memento”, the transition between the object of the prayer and the beneficiary is both phonic and semantic. The link between the object and the intermediary segment is phonic through the repetition of the sounds [b], [a] and [u]:

“Aubois d’Ashby. **Baou!** — l’herbe d’été **bourdonnante**”

From the intermediary segment to the beneficiary of the prayer, the link is logico-semantic, “l’herbe”³ being a remedy for “la fièvre”⁴. Finally, the nature of the link between the different segments of the third “memento” is, as I will demonstrate later, both intertextual and ironic.

The similarity of syntactic and semantic features is not the only aspect linking the first three paragraphs. Phonic repetition also strikingly links the paragraphs. All three entities addressed have names beginning in l: “Louise”, “Léonie” and “Lulu”. The first two names are names with a handle constructed on the same pattern, the first one of Flemish inspiration “Louise Vanaen de Voringhem”, the second one of British inspiration “Léonie Auboys d’Ashby”. The opening invocation “**À ma** sœur”, repeated in the second paragraph is also partly echoed in “**À ma**-dame****” which closes the series of prayers to an entity for external beneficiaries.

With the fourth paragraph, the apparent religious tone of the beginning of the poem starts to shift. The beneficiary of the prayer disappears (this is already the case with “À madame****”), but more importantly the subject of the prayer also becomes object of the prayer with “À l’adolescent que **je** fus”.

A clear pattern of parallels is used for both the fourth and the fifth paragraphs, in which two invocations are coupled. The two elements of the first pair of invocations are semantically opposed (“adolescent” vs. “vieillard”). From this opposition, a similar semantic opposition between “l’esprit des pauvres” and “un très haut clergé” can be deduced. The two elements “l’esprit des pauvres” and “un très haut clergé” are both alterations of pre-set associations of words. “L’esprit des pauvres” is an inversion of the biblical expression “pauvres d’esprit”, which is commonly ironically used as

³ There is a possible link between the strange onomatopoeic word “baou” and the substantive “herbe”. Claisse [in “Post-scriptum: Baou (suite... mais pas fin)”, *Parade Sauvage* n° 7, pp. 104-105] offers an interesting analysis of the word “Baou”. Rimbaud could have coined “baou” from the Latin verb “baubari”. Claisse quotes Marouzat in *Récréations Latines* [Privat/Didier 1940, p. 32]:

Le chien à l’attache aboie: bâou-wâou! Il fait bâou, disaient les Latins, qui exprimaient l’aboiement par le verbe baubari (au prononcé *aou*, mais non pas, à la française: *o*).

⁴ “Chaque herbe passait autrefois pour avoir des vertus propres: [...] la petite centaurée [était] l’herbe à la fièvre [...]”. [Rat 1957, p. 210]

a synonym for half-wits⁵. The collocation is revived and an interesting new association emerges. The latter focuses on the "l'esprit" (wit as in "faire de l'esprit") rather than on the poverty and is thus in apparent opposition to the original collocation, which is commonly associated with the idea of stupidity⁶. "L'esprit des pauvres" also evokes the religious motif of "le saint-esprit". In the invocation "à un très haut clergé", two religious expressions collide, namely:

"le très haut" (i.e. God) and "haut clergé" (vs. "bas clergé")

The repetitive effect in the names of the first group beginning in "L" (Louise, Leonie and Lulu) is echoed in:

"À l'adolescent [...]
"À l'esprit [...]"

The sixth and seventh paragraphs form a single sentence, in which the initial form of invocation is further eroded. The anaphora disappears as the preposition "à" is no longer at the beginning of the paragraphs but is preceded by "Aussi bien" (§6) and "Ce soir" (§7). The derogatory "aussi bien" expresses the indifference towards the object of a humdrum incantation, which is becoming increasingly meaningless. Although the "memento" is supposed to be dedicated to another person, in the seventh paragraph, the beneficiary of the prayer becomes the prior himself and his "prayer". The cycle of distortions now seems complete. However, the final paragraph takes it a stage further.

In the final paragraph, the meaning of the anaphoric preposition "à" completely breaks down⁷. A play on words is created with "à tout prix". The play on words results from the phonic proximity between the set expression "à tout prix" (reminiscent of "à tout culte") and the formulae of dedication. The same process is echoed in "a-vec tous les airs". Fongaro [1985, pp. 87-94] pointed out the pun "prière" ("prix-airs") in the segment "à tout **prix** et avec

⁵ Expression évangélique, que le populaire traduit (parfois malicieusement) par faible d'esprit, imbécile, mais qui veut dire en réalité, au début du «Sermon sur la montagne» (Matt. V, 3), «ceux qui vivent comme s'ils étaient pauvres...». [Rat 1957, p. 297]

⁶ However, Rimbaud is most certainly ironic when invoking "l'esprit des pauvres". Poverty and religion are already a source of derisive humour in Rimbaud's verse poetry and particularly in "Les pauvres à l'église":

Heureux, humiliés comme des chiens battus,
Les pauvres au bon Dieu, le patron et le sire,
Tendent leurs oreilles risibles et têtus.

⁷ This stylistic feature is called "antanaclase" [cf. Dupriez 1984, p. 50].

tous les **airs**” which entices us to follow the same humorous logic of distortion and split the final “a-lors /à l'or”.

Plessen explains how in *Illuminations* “très souvent les parallélismes syntaxiques qui devraient appuyer une homologie sémantique finissent par être pervertis insidieusement” [1986, p. 179]. *Dévotion* is a perfect example of a gradual distortion of a traditionally repetitious literary form. However, the ironic distortion is not purely syntactic and semantic, it is also a vehicle for another more insidious process.

Implications for translation

The mock-religious tone of the poem is reflected through the subversion of an institutionalised and respected form of prayer. Any translation approach which ignores the formal features of the ST cannot succeed in conveying the humorous spirit underlying “Dévotion”. Care will be taken in translating the various graphic and syntactic patterns of repetitions.

The translators, although they capture some of the echoing syntactic structures, sometimes fail to render them adequately. Fowlie does not respect the layout of the paragraphs and does not graphically separate the first and second paragraphs. As a result the anaphoric repetition of “à” is partly lost or at least not as readily perceptible. Moreover, Fowlie transforms the form of the “memento” by adding on the verb “pray” (“Pray for the shipwrecked”). However, he is not consistent and does not apply this pattern when translating “pour ma seule prière muette”. Finally, the regular punctuation of the ST with numerous dashes is only partly respected, which also diminishes the effect of strong syntactic parallels.

Most translation problems occur at the end of the poem with the subverted devotions “à tout prix”, “a-vec tous les airs” (prix-airs) and “mais plus a-lors”. Translators at this point tend to choose a literal rendering of the ST, which sometimes results in mistranslating (see Fowlie):

“At all costs and in every manner [...] But no more *thens*.” (Fowlie)
“At any price, under any semblance [...] But *then* no more.” (Bernard)
“At any price and in all atmospheres [...] But no more *after* that.” (Peschel)

Translators lose both the pun “prix-airs” and the fake repetitive effect of the three parodies of devotions. Furthermore, some words are simply mistranslated, as is the case for “airs” (cf. Fowlie and Peschel) which, given

the concept, can only mean “semblance” (Bernard). Finally, the parallel “à tout culte”/ “à tout prix” is, more often than not, ignored.

2. “double entendre” and “faux semblant”

The structure of parallels and repetitions and the gradual humorous subversion of a culturally received literary form reveal a deliberately ironic intention. The parody affects not only the purely linguistic form of the poem, but also its content. The reader is in effect compelled to decipher this hidden content and to become a detective. As the prayer adopts an increasingly mysterious tone, exacerbated by the anonymous dedication “A madame ***”, the reader begins to question the identity of the different “actants”. The asterisks evoke the style of a “roman à clefs” [Guyaux 1985b, p. 255], where deliberate omissions trigger the reader's curiosity. The idea of a double or hidden identity suggests a double or hidden meaning of the poem. This impression is emphasised by the incongruity of a prayer addressed to non-sacrosanct entities, which is obviously an act of mockery. The reader may suspect the trick and soon discover that the secret lies in the superimposition of different semantic threads.

The whole poem is constructed from the initial ambiguous, religious noun “dévotion” bearing literary and popular connotations of hypocrisy. However, the expression “faire ses dévotions”, in the 19th century, also covers a sexual meaning in a homosexual context⁸. Hence, from the initial polysemous noun “dévotion” stem three semantic threads, namely religion, hypocrisy and (homo)sexuality. These semantic threads quite often collide as the poem favours polysemy and double entendre. A list of the potentially ambiguous words can be established.

The double dedication “à ma sœur”, analysed as incongruous in a religious context, plays on the religious meaning of the word “sœur” as in “bonne sœur” and “sœur de charité”. However, the expression “sœur de charité” is often used in the 19th century as a synonym for female crook. Timmermans [1903] attests this meaning:

Sœur de charité, femme escroc qui fait la quête à domicile sous prétexte d'en employer le produit à des œuvres charitables.

⁸ See, for example, Adler *La Vie Quotidienne dans les maisons closes 1830-1930*, Paris: Hachette, 1990, p. 135:

Il existe quatre à cinq maisons de ce type pour tribades mondaines où les femmes entretenues et les femmes du monde viennent souvent le soir mystérieusement et, dans le plus strict incognito, «faire leurs dévotions» (expression Adler quotes from Taxil in *La prostitution contemporaine*)

Claisse draws a parallel between the two “sœurs” of “Dévotion” and the verse poem “Les Sœurs de charité”. In the poem from June 1871, the religious terminology is combined with a more sensual and heavily sexualised vocabulary [Claisse 1990, p. 96], which is not uncommon at the time. Claisse quotes a 19th century song by Béranger entitled *Les deux Sœurs de charité*, respectively “une beauté leste et bien mise” and “une sœur grise”. The word “sœur” in itself already possesses sexual connotations⁹. As a literary motif, it is also heavily connoted. We find the word quite often in Baudelaire's poetry (see for example the two poems entitled “Femmes damnées”) or Verlaine's poetry to qualify the lesbian lover. In Verlaine's *Parallèlement* the active lesbian lover is a “sœur”:

La plus jeune étend les bras et se cambre,
Et sa sœur, les mains sur ses seins, la baise,¹⁰

The mock-religious tone of “Dévotion” is obvious. The prayer becomes heresy, when the entity invoked is a “démon”. The idea of hypocrisy and betrayal, already implied by the noun “dévotion”, reappears with the noun “démon”:

Pour la démonologie chrétienne, selon le Pseudo-Denys l'Aéropagite, les démons sont des anges qui ont trahi leur nature, mais qui ne sont mauvais ni par leur origine, ni par leur nature [...] *La race des démons n'est donc pas mauvaise en tant qu'elle se conforme à sa nature mais bien en tant qu'elle ne s'y conforme pas* (PSEO, 118-119). [Chevalier & Gheerbrant 1982, p. 348, my italics]

The taste that the nicknamed “Lulu, — démon” has for the very religious “oratoires” seems rather incongruous and even blasphemous. However, it can be explained through the popular expression “le diable/le démon chante la grand-messe”, which again connotes hypocrisy and “faux-semblant”. Rat gives a definition of this expression:

Se dit d'un hypocrite qui prend le masque de la piété ou de la vertu. [Rat 1957, p. 158]

It is also important to point out that the word “oratoire” is commonly used in the erotic literature of the time. Claisse quotes *L'oratoire d'une dévote* in Béranger's *Chansons érotiques*.

⁹ “**Sœur** (populaire), maîtresse d'un homme marié: sœur de lit de sa femme.” [Timmermans 1903]

¹⁰ *Parallèlement*, “Les Amies”, II “Pensionnaires”, In Verlaine, *Œuvres poétique complètes*, N.R.F., Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Gallimard: Paris, 1962, p. 487.

The sixth paragraph of the poem is highly ambiguous chiefly because of the complicated structure of the sentence and the use of polysemous words. Ascione points out the complexity of the sentence. He concludes that the clause introduced by “que” is relative and not concessive, which could well change the meaning of the sentence:

Qu'il faille se rendre peut être non une concessive mais une relative (au subjonctif, régulièrement, à cause de la détermination par *tout* de l'antécédent). *Que*, pronom, représente tout culte. Dès lors, le sens du pronominal *se rendre* est bien différent: non plus «se déplacer» mais «se vouer». [Ascione 1986, p. 80, his italics]

The sexual connotations of the expression “se rendre un culte” (with a possible play on the repeated word “cul-te”) match the spirit of the poem. Moreover, the use of the expression “place de culte” instead of the usual collocation “lieu de culte” also betrays a deliberate subversion of the language. Rimbaud could well be referring to the “les dévots de place” (hypocrites) denounced by Molière:

Que ces francs charlatans,
Que ces dévots de place [Mol. *Tartuffe*, I, 6 as quoted in *Littre*]

The presence of the word “vice”¹¹ is also incongruous in a purely religious setting and it is another reason for giving an erotic cast to this part of the poem.

In the following paragraph, the name “Circeto” is most probably a “mot-valise” composed of the words “Circe” the witch / “ceto” (Latin Cetus: big sea creature). It is a strange association between a witch who turns men into pigs and a mysterious marine animal. The mock-religious tone is still apparent in the description of Circeto. The phonic proximity of the words “glaces” and “grasse” suggests the homonym “grace” and reminds the reader of a common joke in relation to the French Hail Mary: “Je vous salue Marie pleine de Grace (>pleine et grasse)”.

The final materialistic devotion “A tout prix (coûte que coûte), avec tous les airs” and the play on the word “prière” (prix-airs) also evokes a hypocritical devotion. Furthermore, “avec tous les airs” is reminiscent of the expression “être à plusieurs airs” (“être à double face, changer de ton suivant son intérêt”, in Timmermans 1903).

¹¹ The word “vice” is also heavily sexually connoted. It also sometimes denotes prostitution. See for example: “*Aller au vice*, aller voir les filles: *être du vice*, en norm., veut dire être débauché.” [Timmermans 1903, p. 416].

Implications for translation

Any translation which fails to recognise or reproduce the word-game structure based on the initial polysemous word “Dévotion” will lose the essential humorous aspect of the poem. Slote — who published an article about the particular problems of translating “Dévotion” — points out that “[Rimbaud] covers over the trails, piles allusion upon allusion until the play's the thing” [1978, p. 96]. He then goes on to produce his own rather disappointing analysis of “Dévotion”, which only recognises a few of these allusions. This analysis provides the basis for a rather unsatisfactorily ‘literal’ translation of “dévotion”. Slote, acknowledging his relative failure, suggests that the solution to the various levels of translation loss is in a series of renderings of the same poem “like some poetic palimpsest” [idem, p. 96]. This solution is clearly not satisfactory. The translation, even though it may sometimes sound incongruous, should include as many levels of humour and parody as possible. After all, the incongruity of the TT is only a result of the incongruity of the ST. The decision to include the incongruous playful aspect of the ST in the TT forces the translator to make use of compensations and transpositions, which inevitably results in a less literal poem. The play on words will sometimes have to be emphasised or replaced, as English and French cultures have different perceptions of salacious and anti-religious humour.

Overall, translators have failed to recognise the polysemous aspect of many words and expressions in the poem. They have failed to notice or have simply overlooked the semantic threads of both sexuality and hypocrisy. Apart from the inversion of the religious expression “pauvres d'esprit”, which is rendered simply through a literal translation, the various salacious puns of the ST have been lost and/or left uncompensated for. It must be said that the translations of “Dévotion” are all semantically very disappointing, as they are most of the time mere word-for-word transcriptions in English of the French ST.

3 intertext

The association of religion and sexuality is a traditional aspect of French humorous literature. The characters commonly targeted are priests, monks and nuns as they are bound by their vows of chastity. Rimbaud follows the tradition and attacks all forms of ambiguous religious devotion of the sort practised by Léonard towards Thimotina Labinette in *Un Cœur sous une soutane* (et sacré cœur que celui-là):

Thimotina! je t'adore, toi et ton père et ton chat...
 Thimotina Vas devotionis,
 Rosa mystica,
 Turris Davidica, Ora pro nobis!
 Coeli porta,
 Stella Maris,

The sensual religion parodied by Rimbaud is also characteristic of Verlaine's religion. The collections *Liturgies Intimes* and the earlier *Sagesse* offer many examples of the Sainte Thérèse d'Avila style often adopted by Verlaine:

— Seigneur, j'ai peur. Mon âme en moi tressaille toute.
 Je vois, je sens qu'il faut vous aimer: mais comment
 Moi, *ceci*, me ferai-je, ô vous Dieu, votre amant,
 [*Sagesse* IV]

Many hints in the poem suggest that Verlaine could well be a direct target of Rimbaud's humour. Verlaine was *risqué* before becoming religious. The *Album Zutique* offers many examples of Verlaine's humour, amongst which the poem “À Madame****”:

Si tu le veux, femme à l'œil fauve,
 Je serai ton fauve lion,
 Et je te ferai dans l'alcôve
 La di-li-gen-ce de Lyon.
 Trou-la-la ou...

The word “Amies”, which is graphically differentiated in “Dévotion”, is reminiscent of the group of poems entitled “Les Amies” in the collection *Parallèlement*, previously published in Belgium in 1867 under the pseudonym Pablo-Maria de Herlañes. And the “sœurs” could well be “frères” especially in relation to the dedication to “Lulu” in the third paragraph, which has often been analysed as a possible nickname for Verlaine. Moreover, Fongaro points out that:

[A]utrefois l'homosexualité se travestissait souvent à l'envers en littérature. On a justement un bel exemple de ce type de camouflage dans la quatrième des *Ariettes oubliées* (*Romances sans paroles*), où Verlaine et Rimbaud sont présentés comme «deux jeunes filles». Or au cinquième vers de ce poème on lit «âmes sœurs que nous sommes». [1985, p. 87]

Verlaine's religion can be quite ambiguous. Ascione [1986, p. 86] quotes a strange poem included in a letter to Lepelletier dated 24-28 Nov. 1873 and later in the collection of poems *Cellulairement*. The poem has a Greek title “ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΘΕΟΥ ΥΙΟΣ ΣΩΤΗΡ”, the initials of each of the words forming the word ΙΧΘΥΣ (fish), the emblem of the first Christians.

Ascionne draws a parallel between the Christian fish and Circeto. He also demonstrates how the poem IXΘΥΣ is “le reflet de la sexualité du prisonnier Verlaine” [ibid., p. 87]. In “IXΘΥΣ”, Verlaine inverts the Christian logic of dissimulation. The fish, instead of being a hidden representation of Christ, is hidden in the title of the poem and behind the pseudo-prayer to the “Sauveur”. The same logic of dissimulation and “devinette” is applied in the name Circeto. Something fishy is also hidden.

The reader may wonder what could be the general meaning of a poem which uses ambiguous expressions related to religion, sex and hypocrisy, at the same time as it refers to Verlaine. Rimbaud's poem “L'Homme juste” can help us decipher this meaning. In “L'Homme juste”, Rimbaud ridicules Hugo and his renewed fervour for religious prayer:

Alors, mettrais-tu tes genouillères en vente,
O Vieillard? Pèlerin sacré! barde d'Armor! [...]
Socrates et Jésus, saints et justes, dégoût!¹².

Throughout “L'Homme juste”, we are reminded of Rimbaud's attitude of contempt for any late and remorseful religious conversion. The mock-religious tone of “Dévotion” is also directed against the type of behaviour adopted by Hugo, who like many others had joined the religious fervour which swept France after the Commune. At the time, France was entranced by religious miracles and pilgrimages and the Church was successfully promoting its new motto of penitence and devotion: “Gallia poenitens et devota”.

Rimbaud's main target, however, is most certainly his old companion Verlaine. Verlaine sweated religious devotion during his time in prison while at the same time indulging in a rather humorous sexual poetry (see for example in *Cellulairement* the poem “Vieux Coppée” dated “été 1873”). The double aim of “Dévotion” is to condemn an obsolete religious form and beyond that to condemn the dissimulation of sexuality behind religious fervour. The pairing of religious morality and (homo)sexuality is already denounced by Baudelaire in “Femmes Damnées”, “Delphine et Hyppolite”:

Celui qui veut unir dans un accord mystique
L'ombre avec la chaleur, la nuit avec le jour,
Ne chauffera jamais son corps paralytique
A ce rouge soleil que l'on nomme l'amour!

¹² Hugo could be “ce saint vieillard”.

The setting in which Circeto evolves is reminiscent of Baudelaire's metaphors mixing infertile and cold with fertile and warm elements and mixing night with day.

The enigma of "Dévotion" has still not been fully deciphered. The technique of "double-entendre" is so sophisticated and the allusions so... allusive, that the conclusions we have reached may sometimes seem far-fetched. However, the ironic aspects are undeniable. As Fongaro puts it at the end of his analysis of some of the details of the poem:

Au total, la technique des "termes insoupçonnés" (*Solde*) fait de *Dévotion* un texte homogène, ironique et sarcastique dans tous ses détails et d'un bout à l'autre. [1994, p. 117]

Implications for translation

"Dévotion" for Kittang is "une parodie de cette communication qu'est la prière, et un jeu avec les structures d'apostrophe et de communication en général" [Kittang 1975, p. 297]. However, in my view, the process goes a step further and includes beyond the immediately accessible parody of the subjective genre of the prayer, a more subtle level of parody which is only accessible through the intertextual allusions. The perception of the intertextual level is linked to the perception of the polysemous words. If the plays on words, which form the very fabric of the poem, are disregarded, the intertextual level also suffers.

Some of the most obvious intertextual features, such as the direct quotation of the title of a poem, can easily be emphasised. The poem itself graphically differentiates the references to the poems "Les Amies" and "A Madame****". Hence if, like Fowlie, the translator decides to translate "le temps des Amies" by "the time of the friends", the intertextual level will be lost. Fowlie also replaces the asterisks of "A madame****" by suspension points, which completely destroys the ST effect. The devotion is left open-ended instead of being closed and the deliberate effect of enigma is not as obvious.

TT

Devotion (1)

To my Sister (2) Louise Vanaen de Voringhem: — Her blue cornet (3) pointed towards the North Sea. — For the castaways (4).

To my Sister Léonie Auboïs d'Ashby. Bow-wow (5) — the summer grass humming with bugs and reeking (6). — For the fever in mothers and children.

To Lulu, — demon — who is still a fond cantor (7) at the chapel services (8) from the days of *Les Amies* (9) and of her incomplete education. For the men! To *Madame* *** (10).

To the adolescent I once was. To that Holy Elder (11), hermitage or mission.

To the spirit of the poor (12). And to a clergy very much on high (13).

Just as much, to any (14) cult in such and such a place (15) of memorial cult and amid such events that one must come (16) to, acting on the fancies (17) of the day or else our own serious vice,

Tonight, to Circeto of the tall ice floes, queer and fat as fish (18), and illuminated like the ten months of the red night, — (her heart of amber and spunk [19]), — for my fundamental (20) prayer, silent as these nocturnal regions while preceding purple passages (21) more violent than this polar chaos.

To the highest bidder (22) with all appearances (23), even on metaphysical journeys. — But to hell with that. (24)

Decisions of detail

1. **Devotion:** the translation problem that arises immediately is the loss of the connotations of hypocrisy and other “Tartufferies”, as well as the loss of the sexual connotations of the title “Dévotion”.

2. **To my Sister:** It is necessary to keep the possessive adjective and add a pseudo-respectful capital letter to convey the mock-religious tone of the invocation. The connotations of prostitute and crook in the expression “Sœur de Charité” are lost.

3. **cornet:** rather than “coif” as cornet is the religious technical term for the great white head-dress of Sisters of Charity.

4. **Castaways:** rather than “shipwrecked” and this for two reasons: if the word “nafragés” is translated by “shipwrecked”, the effect of cohesion created by the plural beneficiaries of the first three paragraphs is partly lost in the TT; secondly, the word “nafragés” has a possible social meaning (cf. the theme of “déluge” in *Illuminations*). The social meaning of “castaways” is

attested by the *Oxford English Dictionary* "One cast adrift upon the world, or by society, an outcast."

5. **Bow-wow!**: Underwood [1955] has suggested the onomatopoeic "bow-wow" has a possible source for the word "baou". "Bow-wow": is close enough to the Latin verb "baubari".

6. **Humming with bugs and reeking**: the segment reproduces and emphasises the effect of disgust of the verbs "bourdonner" and "puer". The possible play on words: "Humming with bugs">"humbug" compensates partially for the loss of the connotations of hypocrisy in the title.

7. **A fond cantor**: I have tried to compensate chiefly for the loss of the hidden expression "le diable/ le démon chante la grande messe", which connotes hypocrisy. The translation renders the religious and musical aspects of the word "oratoires" through the word "cantor". It also creates a play on words with the doublet "cantor"/ "canting". The ambiguity of the nicknamed "Lulu" is also emphasised through the noun "cantor", as the religious term usually only applies to men.

8. **Chapel services**: the religious connotations are preserved and the loss of the sexual connotations hidden behind the word "oratoires" is here compensated through the word "services". The sexual connotations of the word "service" (as attested by Rawson's *Dictionary of Euphemisms and other Doubletalk*, Macdonald and Co.: London & Sydney, 1979) date back from the 14th century ("the flesh's service", "the service of Venus"). The word "service" qualifies a sexual act or, as a verb, the performance of one. However, the humorous process here is emphasised by the creation of another effect of parody. Behind the words "demon", "cantor" and "chapel" the reader may recognise the expression "Where God has his church, the devil will his chapel", which compensates for the loss of the hidden expression "le diable/ le démon chante la grande messe".

9. **Les Amies** : it is necessary to keep the French title here, as a translation would result in a loss of the intertextual reference. However, this results in the creation of an exoticism, which compensates for the loss of exoticism created by the use of the English word "spunk".

10. **To Madame** ***: translating "madame" by "mylady" would compensate for the loss of the repetition of the syllable "ma" (**my** Sister x2/ **mylady**). However, it would sound too archaic and would also result in the loss of the intertextual reference to Verlaine's salacious poem.

11. **Holy Elder**: the noun Elder has religious connotations and emphasises the mock-religious tone of the poem. Its association with the adjective "Holy" is reminiscent of "Holy Father" humorously transformed in "Holy Grandfather". The opposition adolescence/senescence, so important in *Une Saison en Enfer*, is still emphasised through the parallel "adolescent"/ "elder".

12. **the spirit of the poor**: the translation is literal, as the word "spirit" is also polysemous in English allowing for the same play on words.

13. **a clergy very much on high**: the pun “très haut/ très haut clergé” is lost in the TT. However, I have partially compensated for this loss by translating très haut by “very much on high” thus playing on the religious expression “God on high”.

14. **Just as much, to any**: Fongaro thinks that “Aussi bien, à tout culte” means “à n'importe quel culte” [1994, p. 111]. The meaning of “aussi bien” in first position, followed by “tout” (“n'importe quel”) and as part of a list of devotions to different entities is more likely to be “just as much” than “moreover” (Peschel) or “also” (Bernard).

15. The allusion to the expression “**dévot de place**” is lost in the TT. A possible compensation would be “Pharisaic place”, where the word “Pharisaic” is reminiscent of the word “Pharisee” (a synonym for hypocrite). However, this would result in too great an incongruity. Moreover, the words “Pharisee” and “Pharisiac” are culturally dated referring to the group of Jews, mentioned in the Bible, which believed in strictly obeying the laws of Judaism. The expression “dévot de place” bears very different cultural connotations, as it refers to Molière's *Tartuffe*.

16. **come**: the double pun on the word “cul-te” and the ambiguous expression “se rendre un culte/ à un culte” is lost in the TT. However, the ambiguity of the verb “se rendre” is compensated by the use of the verb “come”, which is now the most common non-clinical term to describe the sexual orgasm. Rawson points out in his *Dictionary of Euphemisms and other Doubletalk* that “come started out as a euphemism, being essentially a bland generalized allusion to a specific intense event” (cf. TT “amid such **events** that one must come”).

17. **fancies**: the semantic thread of (homo)sexuality is partly lost in the translation process. For example, the word “sister” is not as current as the French “sœur” in a homosexual context. Likewise, the word “aspirations”, literally translated by “aspirations”, loses its polysemy. The word “fancy” (as in “fancy gentlemen”) compensates for this loss, as it commonly describes “the love that dare not speak its name”.

18. **queer and fat as fish**: the play on the homonyms “grasse”/ “grace” is lost. However, another effect is created similar to the effect created by the inversion “pauvres d'esprit” with the subversion of the collocation “queer fish”. The expression “queer fish” should alert the TT reader of the importance double-entendre which characterises “Dévotion”. Moreover, the word “queer” for today's readers is also a synonym for “homosexual”, which fits the sexual spirit of the mock-religious poem.

19. **her heart of amber and spunk**: the effect of exoticism created by the use of an English word is lost. The word spunk is better kept than approximately translated (see Fowlie's translation “her heart amber and spirited”). Any such decision results in a semantic loss as pointed out by Murphy [1988, p. 26]. The translation retains the shock value of the ST and echoes the expression “heart of gold”.

20. **fundament-al**: proceeds from the same humorous spirit as the pun “cul-te” which is lost in the TT.

21. **purple passages:** the word “bravoures” is ambiguous in the ST. In “Villes” II (“Ce sont des villes[...]”), it is used in correlation with “Rolands” (Roland de Ronceveau). The context is not as purely historical and literary in “Dévotion”, however, the literary meaning is not excluded. Besides, the expression “purple passages” fits both the context of the poem and the importance given to colours (“rouge”, “ambre”) and creates an amusing double-entendre as it echoes the expression “back passage”.

22. **To the highest bidder:** a literal translation (“**At** all cost”) excludes the possibility of creating the effect of subversion of the repetitive pattern analysed in the ST.

The expression “à tout prix” is materialistic and commercial. Fongaro's hypothesis is that Rimbaud evokes an auction where he would ironically be selling himself whatever the price:

[prix-airs] Jeu de mots sarcastique qui invite à donner à *prix* le sens de récompense, de gain, et à *airs* le sens d'expression des traits, d'apparence. *Rimbaud déclare donc qu'il est prêt à se vendre à tout coup pour l'argent, pour n'importe quelle somme, et à prendre (= “avec”) pour cela tous les masques.*[1994, pp.116-117, my italics]

Although the expression “to the highest bidder” is more restrictive than “à tout prix”, it still fits the context of self-auction analysed by Fongaro.

23. **appearances:** the play on the word “prière” (prix-airs) is lost in the translation. Only the semantic aspect of the ST is conveyed. The effect of repetition of the expression “a-vec tous les airs” is also lost. However, “with all appearances” is close enough to the set expression “to all appearances” for the ironic intention still to be perceived.

24. **to hell with that:** the play on both form and content in “mais plus alors” is particularly challenging. The meaning of this last segment is difficult to establish because of the ambiguity of “plus”, which can both mean “more” and “no more”. I have chosen the negative meaning of “plus” and hence I interpret the final exclamation as dismissive. The poet rejects the hypocrisy of this poetic “alors”, at the same time as he longs for the “réalité rugueuse” of “l'or”. I have, once more, given priority to the mock-religious aspect of the poem and to the gradual deterioration of an accepted religious form. I have also integrated the idea of dismissal of hypocrisy, sending it quite literally to hell where it belongs. However, the loss of the possible materialistic and commercial prayer “à l'or” (echoing “à tout prix”) is semantically regrettable.

“Mouvement”, analysis and strategic decisions

The poem “Mouvement” has often been isolated from the rest of *Illuminations*. In his 1986 edition of Rimbaud's *Œuvres poétiques*, Hackett chose to put “Mouvement” in the section *Derniers vers*. He viewed the poem as a transition from verse poetry to prose poetry. This is mainly due to the form adopted by the poem. The manuscript version of “Mouvement” shows a deliberate organisation in stanzas. The poem is clearly divided into four stanzas of decreasing length. In each stanza, single sentences have been broken down into subsections. Each of these sections resembles a poetic line because of the initial capital letter. The view commonly held by many critics that “Mouvement” is free verse is hence understandable, as the poem assumes many characteristics of the genre. Fowlie thinks that “Mouvement” is “cast in the form of free verse” [1953, p. 118]. And indeed, “Mouvement” has long been associated with ‘verslibrisme’. Even Delahaye saw in Rimbaud a possible precursor of ‘verslibrisme’:

Les verslibristes ont revendiqué pour leur école Marine et Mouvement. Rimbaud ne fut-il pas en littérature partisan et souvent promoteur des innovations les plus hardies? [Delahaye 1927, p. 81]

However, such a statement is a pure anachronism. “Marine” and “Mouvement” were published in *La Vogue* in June 1886, but were written at least twelve or thirteen years before ‘verslibrisme’ became fashionable. Furthermore, despite Delahaye's assertion, at the time the French ‘verslibristes’ did not consider Rimbaud a precursor. The assimilation of Rimbaud and ‘verslibrisme’, according to Etiemble, “fait partie du mythe de Rimbaud” [1966, p. 415]. The reality is that, overall, “Mouvement” does not follow a clear and recognisable metrical and rhythmical pattern. To fit any pattern the poem has to be further broken down and reassembled (see, for example, Murat 1986). “Mouvement” is meant to look like verse poetry, although it is not verse poetry. The prose has been sectioned and reorganised to create an appearance of verse. As I shall demonstrate, this poetic “optical illusion” fulfils a parodic purpose.

1. Movement

The polysemous word “mouvement” belongs to the realms of aesthetics (music and poetry) and politics (“mouvement ouvrier”, “anarchiste”, “mouvement de capitaux”, “de population”, etc.). However, the

primary sense of the word “mouvement” is to be found in the poem itself, its themes and its form.

The idea of movement is central to the first paragraph. The title is even repeated and followed by the description of the movement of the river, with the words:

“mouvement de lacet”/ “chutes du fleuve”/ “gouffre à l'étambot”/ “célérité de la rampe”/ “passade du courant”/ “mènent”/ “trombes du val et du strom”.

From then on, the theme of movement gradually fades. The second paragraph still evokes movement but this time focused around “les voyageurs”, who “voyagent”, and “emmènent”. The third paragraph describes the movement of the “stock d'études” “roulant comme une digue”, whilst the final paragraph closes on a perfectly static verb “se poste”, which completely contrasts with the opening paragraph.

The strongest impression of movement relies on the initial words “mouvement de lacet”. The movement is not straight but curvy. The idea of non-linear movement is also evoked through the word “passade” which commonly denotes to and fro motion. In *Littre*, these two definitions of the noun “passade” can be found: “course d'un cheval qui se compose le plus souvent d'une demi-volte, faite rapidement aux deux extrémités d'une piste, pour revenir au point de départ”, and (theatre) “les allées et venues en travers de la scène”. The idea of a to-and-fro motion is further illustrated through the constant switch of focus in the description from the land (“berge”, “rampe”), to the river (“chutes du fleuve”, “gouffre”, “courant”) and to the boat (“étambot”), which is perfectly illustrated in the last two lines of the first paragraph:

“Les voyageurs [boat] entourés des trombes du val [land] et du strom [river].”

The movement evoked in the first paragraph is chaotic. It is vertical, descending (“chutes”, “gouffre”) and ascending (“trombes¹”), and horizontal, from right to left and from left to right (“passade”) and in arabesques (“lacet”).

Conversely, the structure of the poem appears relatively simple as each graphically isolated line forms a syntactical unit. In the first paragraph, the (pseudo) verses are formed following the natural movement of the

¹ **Trombe** in *Littre*:

Météore consistant en une colonne d'eau conique, enlevée par des tourbillons de vent, tournant sur elle-même avec une très-grande vitesse, et produisant les plus grands ravages; il y a des trombes de terre et des trombes de mer.

sentence, with the exception of the last line of the first paragraph and the delay of the segment “Et du strom”. In the following paragraphs, especially three and four, the sectioning is less systematic, but the lines still follow the natural pauses in the rhythm of the sentences. Guyaux evokes the “verticalité analytique” [1992, p. 82] of the poem, thus implying a strong cohesion between form and content. The vertical, progressive and systematic graphic organisation of the poem creates the impression of movement.

However, the relative simplicity of the layout contrasts with the grammatical complexity of the poem. The grammatical form is determined by the principle of organised chaos analysed in the first paragraph. The prose is a complex construct of appositions and clauses, which sometimes results in the main grammatical elements such as object, verb or subject being delayed or lost in the poem's grammatical density. In the first paragraph, the verb “mener” is preceded by a multitude of apposed subjects and its object is delayed until after the phrase “par des lumières inouïes et la nouveauté chimique”. However, it is in the third paragraph that this device is most strikingly illustrated. The syntax appears to be dislocated, as clauses, juxtapositions and appositions are accumulated (“le sang; les fleurs, le feu; les bijoux”; “comme une digue au delà de la route hydraulique motrice”; “monstrueux, s'éclairant sans fin”). The structure of the sentence is difficult to decipher. The third paragraph exemplifies a writing technique of grammatical detours. The long-winded sentence syntactically illustrates the initial segment “mouvement de lacet”.

The segment “mouvement de lacet” is also illustrated through the phonic effects of the text. The association of sounds from one line to the next creates a distinctive pattern of phonic periods:

mouvement **berge** **étambot** **rampe** **courant** **lacet**
mènent **lumières** **inouïes** **nouveauté**
voyageurs **val** **entourés** **trombes** **strom**

conquérants **monde** **cherchant** **chimique** **fortune** **sport** **comfort**
emmènent **lumière** **rares** **classes**
vaisseau **repos** **vertige** **lumière** **diluvienne** **terrible** **étude**

car **causerie** **comptes** **parmi** **appareils** **fleurs** **feu** **fuyard**
roulant **route** **au-delà** **motrice** **monstrueux** **hydraulique**
harmonique **héroïsme** **stock** **études** **extase** **découverte**

accidents **atmosphériques** **couple** **arche** **chante** **pardonne** **poste**

The poem functions by the repetition in different combinations of phonemes which create a phonic interplay. This is especially striking in the first paragraph, where the various alliterations and assonances are combined to create movement:

**Mouvement> berge> étambot> rampe> énorme> lumière>
chimique> trombe> strom**

Once more the movement is “en lacet” following the curves of the letter “m”, which is combined with new letters, creating new sounds.

The iconic illustration of the seme “mouvement” is also achieved through the repetition of identical key words from one paragraph to the next. These words create a phonic and semantic chain binding the poem:

paragraph 1

mouvement/ mouvement/ mènent/ lumière/ chimique/ voyageurs

paragraph 2

chimique/ voyagent/ (em)mènent/ lumière/ étude

paragraph 3

étude

The repetitions gradually disappear and are absent from the final paragraph, which corresponds to the disappearance of the semantic thread of movement.

Implications for translation

A translation of “Mouvement” should convey the effect of movement. Care will be taken in the translation of the opening segment “le mouvement de lacet”, as it determines many features of the poem. Fowlie, Bernard and Peschel partly lose the metaphor:

“**The swaying motion** on the bank of the river falls” (Fowlie)

“**The rocking movement** against the embankment” (Bernard)

“**The swaying movement** on the steep bank” (Peschel)

They all suggest a rather different type of movement (“rocking” and “swaying”), but do not convey the idea of a winding and curvy motion, which is so strikingly illustrated through the grammatical disposition of the sentences. The translation loss is quite considerable, as the image they offer is also more static and the movement they describe is limited in its scope.

The translators respect the grammatical disposition of the text even if they do not respect the punctuation of the original manuscript version. The phonic interplay, which also illustrates the metaphor “le mouvement de

lacet” is the most challenging aspect for translation. Compensation may be required to convey the rich harmonic flow of “Mouvement”. Peschel's translation offers some interesting phonic effects, especially in the first paragraph:

“The **swaying** movement on the **steep** bank 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**.”

In her rendering of the first paragraph, she succeeds in producing many alliterations, which result in a very harmonious translation. However, the iconic effect created by the repetition of the letter and sound [m] is lost in her TT.

The repetition of key words, which form a phonic and semantic chain binding the first three paragraphs of the poem should be reproduced in the TT. All translators lose the striking parallel of the verbs “mènent”/“(em)mènent”:

“conduct”/ “take” (Fowlie)
“bring”/ “carry away” (Bernard)
“conduct”/ “take away” (Peschel)

Fowlie also loses the repetition “voyageurs”/ “voyagent” (“voyagers”/ “travel”).

2. Paradox

The theme of movement is a salient feature of the poem. However, in this poem dedicated to movement, there are only seven main verbs, seven particles and sixteen adjectives as opposed to fifty-three nouns. This in itself is a syntactic paradox, movement being traditionally expressed through verbal forms. The only exception to this is in the final paragraph with the succession of verbs “s'isole[...], chante et se poste”, which paradoxically describes a static attitude as pointed out by Plessen:

Ce poème de la mobilité vertigineuse se termine par l'évocation d'une stabilité souveraine. [1967, p. 206]

Plessen evokes the idea of “mobilité vertigineuse” to describe “Mouvement”. The theme of movement, which corresponds to the semantic threads of

water and vertigo (both speed with “célérité” and altitude with “gouffre”) is amply illustrated in the poem. However, the numerous nominalisations contradict the title “mouvement”. The accumulation of genitives and even double genitives (“la berge des chutes du fleuve”), a stylistic trait which Flaubert hated, form a very important feature of the poem:

“mouvement de lacet”/ “berge des chutes du fleuve”/ “célérité de la rampe”/ “passade du courant”/ “trombes du val et du strom”/ “conquéranants du monde”/ “éducation des races, des classes et des bêtes”/ “soirs d’étude”/ “stock d’études”/ “héroïsme de la découverte”/ “couple de jeunesse”

The use and abuse of the genitive form slows down the rhythm. Heaviness is created by the substantivation of verbal and adjectival forms, such as:

- “la célérité de la rampe” instead of “la rampe (en pente) rapide”
- “la nouveauté chimique” instead of “la chimie nouvelle”
- “l’héroïsme de la découverte” instead of “l’héroïque découverte”
- “un couple de jeunesse” instead of “un jeune couple”

The rhythm, because of the nominalisations, is mainly binary and quaternary, which evokes calm rather than speed.

The syntactic and rhythmic paradox is summed up in the oxymoron “**repos et vertige**”, which roughly corresponds to the graphic central point of the poem. “Mouvement” is paradoxically both static and active. The movement is constrained as the river is constrained by its “berge”, as the travellers are constrained by the elements (“entourés des trombes du val et du strom”). The third paragraph is directly linked to the oxymoron “repos et vertige”, because of the conjunction “car”. The paradox hence affects the entire paragraph. “L’étude” and its product, which should be static, are the real active (present participle “roulant”) and dynamic force, separated from the boat “roulant comme une digue au delà de la route hydraulique liquide”. “Les voyageurs”, meanwhile, are static and “chassés dans l’extase harmonique”. However, both propositions are again paradoxical. A “digue” is normally stable and hence cannot “rouler”. The violence and movement implied by “chassés” contradict the idea of “extase harmonique”.

Implications for translation

The ST is characterised by over-nominalisation, a style which contradicts the key theme of movement. These nominalisations, somewhat inelegant in English, will have to be conveyed as they are syntactically significant, especially in the case of substantivations as illustrated in the

segments “la célérité de la rampe”, “la nouveauté chimique”, “l'héroïsme de la découverte” and “un couple de jeunesse”.

The translators have respected the syntax of the ST. The substantivisations have been reproduced with the exception of “un couple de jeunesse”, for which all of them choose an adjectival form: “young couple” (Bernard) and “youthful couple” (Fowlie and Peschel).

3. Irony and parody

The poem “Mouvement” is marked by contradiction, in that it assumes the form of a verse poem, but it is not a verse poem and in that it is dedicated to movement, but suggests rigidity through its syntax. Guyaux analyses the form of “Mouvement” and concludes that it is “une apparence et même un trompe-l'œil” [1991a, p. 173]. He hence puts forward the idea of parody as underlying the writing of the poem.

Parody is revealed by the language of “Mouvement”, which is characterised by heaviness and paradox. It is sometimes extremely technical and specialised, with nouns such as “étambot²”, “rampe³”, “passade”, “trombes” “strom” and “appareils” and complex adjectives ending in “-ique” such as “chimique”, “hydraulique”, “harmonique” and “atmosphériques”. The tone thus created is knowledgeable and rather pompous. However, the irony affecting the poem is clearly perceptible in the segment:

“ils emmènent l'éducation des races, des classes et des bêtes”

The segment associates two words which both belong to the semantic thread of things human. These words are logical in the context of education. The third word of the enumeration (“les bêtes”), however, is incongruous as it does not fit the context of education (“dresser une bête”/ “éduquer un humain”). The reader would expect a word with political and social connotations, such as “masses”, which would also fit the pattern of phonic repetitions. The association of the nouns “races” and “classes” with “bêtes”

² In *Littré*, **étambot**:

Terme de marine. Forte pièce de bois élevée à l'extrémité de la quille sur l'arrière du bâtiment. L'étambot sert de support au gouvernail.

³ In *Grand dictionnaire universel du XIXe siècle*, Larousse (1875), **rampe**:

Sur le bord des rivières encaissées, ou soumises à un régime nécessaire pour la navigation, on établit des rampes, à l'aide desquelles on peut faire parvenir sur le quai les marchandises débarquées.

results in the assimilation of the word “éducation” to the word “dressage”, which bears negative connotations⁴.

Likewise, the ironic intention is apparent in the strange reformulating of simple textual elements, such as:

“route hydraulique motrice” for “fleuve/ voie fluviale”
“bord fuyard” for “vaisseau”
“accidents atmosphériques les plus surprenants” for “trombes”

“Route hydraulique motrice” appears to stem from the verb “rouler” and collides with the collocation “roue motrice”, whilst “bord fuyard” is built from the expression “à bord”. The adjectival use of “fuyard”, which quite often bears pejorative connotations, appears rather incongruous in this context. The reformulating both distorts and dilutes the language, rendering it obscure. This is also emphasised through the numerous abstractions of the poem, such as:

“célérité”, “éducation”, “races”, “classes”, “repos”, “vertige”, “causerie”, “extase”, “héroïsme”.

The irony affects the description of “Mouvement”, especially as the narrator interferes with the description. He is the one who sees (“on voit”), but he also judges and questions what he sees:

“— Est-ce ancienne sauvagerie qu'on pardonne?—”

The segment is isolated by the punctuation, which echoes the isolation of the couple from “les conquérants du monde”, of “jeunesse” from presumably old age. The isolation and singing is ironically “ancienne sauvagerie” in a universe ruled by the new and monstrous logic of material possession (“cherchant la fortune chimique personnelle”).

In “Mouvement”, the aim of the parody is two-fold: both literary and political. Claisse reminds us of the fascination of Parnassian poetry with “la navigation esthétique”:

Impatients de rompre avec l'utile et de se retremper dans la Beauté, les Parnassiens ont été de grands voyageurs, et la plaisance les a particulièrement fascinés. [Claisse 1991, p. 187-8]

He quotes an extract from Banville's *La mer de Nice*, which evokes Alexandre Dumas' yacht:

⁴ We have already analysed a similar ironic process in “Ville” with the segment “amènent si pareillement l'éducation, le métier et la vieillesse”, where the third substantive “vieillesse” is also incongruous and obliges the reader to question the content of the poem.

[I]ls dorment dans les rayons et sous les yeux enflammés des astres, ils surprennent des secrets inconnus de couleurs et de rythme; volontairement exilés hors de la foule c'est pour elle cependant qu'ils travaillent. [idem]

The themes and style of this extract are rather similar to Rimbaud's "Mouvement". However, I would like to cite a poem by Heredia entitled "Les Conquérants", which was considered a typical example of Parnassian poetry (quoted in *La Légende du Parnasse contemporain*) and was originally included in the collection of poems *Sonnets et Eaux fortes* published in December 1868, with illustration by Popelin:

Les Conquérants
Comme un vol de gerfauts hors du charnier natal,
Fatigués de porter leurs misères hautaines,
De Palos de Moguer, routiers et capitaines
Portaient, ivres d'un rêve héroïque et brutal

Ils allaient conquérir le fabuleux métal
Que Cipango mûrit dans ses mines lointaines,
Et les vents alizés inclinaient leurs antennes
Aux bords mystérieux du monde occidental.

Chaque soir, espérant des lendemains épiques,
L'azur phosphorescent de la mer des Tropiques
Enchantait leur sommeil d'un mirage doré;

Ou, penchés à l'avant des blanches caravelles,
Il regardaient monter dans un ciel ignoré
Du fond de l'Océan des étoiles nouvelles.

Heredia's "Conquérants"-Conquistadors are reminiscent of Rimbaud's "conquérants du monde". They all seek their fortune:

"Ils allaient conquérir le fabuleux métal"
"Cherchant la fortune chimique personnelle"

However, the irony stems from the contrasts between the two poems. "Les conquérants du monde", still dazzled by light, travel on a river, whilst their Spanish counterparts travelled on "l'azur phosphorescent de la mer des Tropiques". The horizon of Rimbaud's "voyageurs" is limited by "la berge" and "les trombes". In "Les Conquérants", men and nature are linked by a perfect complicity. In "Mouvement", "la nouveauté chimique" transforms nature into a huge mechanical device. The river thus becomes "route hydraulique motrice". Heredia's "Conquérants" are poor but noble "routiers et capitaines", "fatigués de porter leurs misères hautaines" and seeking "des lendemains épiques". Conversely, "les conquérants du monde" are attached

to bourgeois values of “sport” and “comfort” (the same “sport” and “comfort” sold in “Solde”). They pursue a colonialist and positivist ideal of “éducation” or rather “dressage”. The theme of education is also linked to the theme of enlightenment, hence the recurrent motif of “lumière” (“lumières inouïes”, “lumière diluvienne”, “s'éclairant sans fin”). However, their aim is mainly commercial, as implied by the words “fortune”, “comptes” and “stock” (in *Littré*, “stock”: “Terme de commerce, quantité d'une marchandise quelconque qui se trouve en magasin et dans les entrepôts ou sur les marchés d'une place de commerce”). Their boat carries the precious “sang”, “fleurs”, “feu” and “bijoux”, objects of “la causerie” and so characteristic of the themes and metaphors of Parnassian poetry. “Sang”, “fleurs”, “feu” and “bijoux” form the “monstrueux [...] stock d'études”. The parallel between “stock d'études” and the enumeration is drawn by the punctuation. Each of Rimbaud's “conquérants” is “Commerçant! colon! médium!” (cf. “Ce qu'on dit au poète à propos de fleurs”) selling values which belong to the dominant ideology (“sport” and “comfort”).

The poem “Mouvement”, when placed in parallel with Heredia's “Les Conquérants”, can clearly be defined as a parody of Parnassian poetry. Through the form of “Mouvement”, the parody affects the Parnassian obsession with rhymes and stanzas⁵. Furthermore, the allusions to the Bible, through the themes of the Ark (“sur l'arche”) and of the Flood (“lumière diluvienne”) allow us to recognise an attack on the dominant poetic spirit of the time, represented by l'Académie, also known as l'“Arche de Noë”⁶. However, the target of the parody is also political. The dominant ideology of the time is undermined and particularly its obsession with the positivist values of “nouveau” and “comfort” and its glorification of colonialism (also expressed in poems such as “Les Conquérants”). Parnasse and ideology are jointly undermined as, in Rimbaud's view, they both exalt imperialist ideals. The poetry of Parnasse corresponds to a commercial and colonialist society, in which the only movement is the movement of money.

Implications for translation

⁵ In “Ce qu'on dit au poète à propos de fleurs”, Rimbaud already attacks the form of Parnassian poetry:

L'Ode Açoka cadre avec la
Strophe en fenêtre de lorette;
Et de lourds papillons d'éclat
Fientent sur la Pâquerette [...]

⁶ **Arche de Noë**: “les quarante de l'Académie: allusion aux quarante jours durant lesquels l'arche flotta sur les eaux du déluge” [Timmermans 1903, p. 20]. Timmermans also analyses the expression ‘aller à l'arche’, which means “chercher de l'argent”.

The irony and parody in "Mouvement" is most readily accessible through the language of the poem itself. A translation, to be satisfactory, will have to reproduce the characteristics of this language, such as the technical vocabulary, the abstractions and "strange" or incongruous formulations.

Translators have sometimes simplified or misunderstood the specialised vocabulary of the poem. Fowlie for example mistranslates the noun "rampe" by "hand-rail", thus losing the meaning of the segment. The noun "passade" is only semantically translated by Bernard, who offers "the vast to and fro of the current", whilst Fowlie and Peschel both opted for the word "passing". The German word "strom" only appears in Bernard's translation and is translated into English by Peschel ("stream") and Fowlie ("current"). With "current", Fowlie creates a repetition, which does not exist in the paragraph ("The huge passing of the current"/ "Voyagers surrounded by the waterspouts of the valley and the current"). The translators render literally "route hydraulique motrice", and lose the play on "route motrice"/ "roue motrice":

"hydraulic motor road" (Fowlie)
"hydraulic propulsive road" (Bernard)
"hydraulic power road" (Peschel)

The metaphor "bord fuyard", which implies a play on the expression "à bord" is translated "on board this fugitive ship" by Bernard and "aboard this fugitive ship" by Peschel. In effect they interpret rather than translate the metaphor, which results in the loss of the essential poeticity and incongruity of the language. The word "comfort" is deliberately spelled in English, thus recalling a popular idea of the late-nineteenth century that progress and "confort" were successfully achieved by the English system. The exoticism of the spelling of "comfort" is lost in the various translations.

All three translations of "Mouvement" succeed in conveying the verse effect of the ST. The parody of the verse layout is generally respected, except for the third paragraph. In the manuscript of "Mouvement", Rimbaud deliberately crammed all his pseudo-verses into a single line so that all the lines could begin with a capital letter. When he ran out of space, rather than starting on the next line, he finished his pseudo-verse in a poetic manner with a square bracket in the right margin of the page. The verse effect is hence emphasised. Whilst Fowlie respects the disposition of one line for one verse, Peschel and Bernard choose to start on a new line when they run out of space, which distorts the deliberate effect of parody. The original punctuation of the manuscript version is not respected and this results in

discrepancies, especially in the third paragraph where the graphic parallel between the enumeration “— le sang; les fleurs; le feu; les bijoux—” and the segment “—leur stock d'études;—” is lost in all translations.

Finally, the intertextual level of irony and parody is not always perceived and/or conveyed by the translators. Fowlie completely fails to recognise the clear allusions to the Bible and mistranslates the adjective “diluvienne” by “torrential” and the noun “arche” by “archway”, which results in a loss of the ironic allusion to the Academy.

TT

Movement.

The curving movement (1) along the bank of the river's rapids,
The chasm at the stern-post,
The speed of the ramp,
The tremendous to-and-fro (2) of the current,
Carry (3) through the unheard-of lights
And chemical newness (4)
The travellers surrounded by the waterspouts
Of the valley and the strom (5).

They are the conquerors of the world
Seeking their exclusive chemical wealth (6);
Sport and English comfort (7) travel with them;
They carry away (3) the education
Of races, of classes and of animals, on board this ship.
Repose and frenzy (8)
In the diluvian light (9),
In terrible evenings of study.

For from the talk amid the tackle (10), — blood; flowers; fire, jewels—
From the accounts rocked on this fugitive board (11),
—You can see (12), rolling like a dike beyond the hydraulic motive road,
Monstrous, endlessly lighting its way, — their stock of studies;—
While they are driven into harmonic ecstasy,
And the heroism of discovery.

In the most amazing atmospheric accidents,
A couple of youthfulness (13) isolate themselves on the ark,
—Could this possibly be sometime savagery (14) forgiven? (15)—
And sing and take up position.

Decisions of detail

1. **curving movement**: The initial key segment “mouvement de lacet”, which determines many features of the poem is conveyed in the TT. The choice of “curving” is semantically determined, as it can both apply to a river and to a road (“route hydraulique motrice”). It is also phonemically determined, as the sound [k], combined with other sounds is repeated several times in the first paragraph (**bank**, **chasm**, **current**, **carry**, **chemical**)

2. **tremendous to-and-fro**: the idea of a to and fro motion denoted by the noun “passade” (cf. *Littré*, quoted above) is conveyed in the TT.

3. **carry/carry away**: the parallel “mènent”/“(em)mènent” is kept in the TT replaced by the parallel “carry”/“carry away”.

4. **chemical newness**: the substantivisation “nouveau chimique” is reproduced in the TT.

5. **Of the valley and the strom**: the exoticic word “strom” has been kept in the translation. The seventh line breaks earlier in the TT (after “waterspouts”). This modification, although it results in the loss of the isolation of “strom”, is rhythmically better and avoids a possible syntactic ambiguity in the TT.

6. The repetition of the sounds [k], [l] and [w] compensates for the loss of some of the phonic parallels: “conquerors of the world/ Seeking their exclusive chemical wealth”.

7. **English comfort**: the effect of exoticism created by the English spelling of the word “comfort” is lost in the TT. However, the semantic loss is compensated by adding the adjective “English”.

8. **Repose and frenzy**: the oxymoron “repos et vertige” is emphasised in the TT with the word “frenzy” rather than “vertigo” (Peschel, Bernard) which is more semantically restrictive than “vertige” (“le vertige de la gloire”/ “une vitesse vertigineuse”).

9. **the diluvian light**: the adjective “diluvienne” which is associated in the ST with the word “arche” has been conveyed in the TT.

10. **tackle**: the technical aspect of the poem is conveyed through this nautical noun.

11. **the accounts rocked on this fugitive board**: the metaphor “bord fuyard” built from “à bord” is rendered in the TT. The expression “on board” has been split by adding the adjective “fugitive”. One hesitates between two possible meanings of “fuyard”, either “qui est porté à s'enfuir”, or “se dit d'une chose qui est soustraite à l'usage auquel elle devrait servir” [both *Larousse*]. The adjective “agités”, which belongs to the semantic thread of the sea (as in “mer agitée” or “flots agités”) is translated by “rocked”. The sentence is closer to the spirit of the ST than for example Bernard's translation (“the anxious calculations on board this fugitive ship”).

12. **you can see**: the translation of “on voit” is difficult at this point. However, I have chosen “you” rather than a too impersonal and distant “one” in order to convey the immediate effect of vision of the ST.

13. **a couple of youthfulness**: although the substantivisation sounds incongruous in the TT, it is no more incongruous than the expression “couple de jeunesse” with the singular “jeunesse”.

14. **sometime savagery**: what is “ancien” is not necessarily bad in Rimbaud's poetry (cf. the numerous references to “l'âge d'or”). The adjective “ancient” bears negative connotations, as in “it's ancient!”. However, it is important to keep the strong opposition ‘ancien’/‘nouveau’ (social, political and literary), which is not sufficiently underlined by “old” (also pejorative). The literary adjective “sometime” is not pejorative and it suggests the idea of a historical as well as literary past (from before Parnassian poetry).

15. **Could this possibly be sometime savagery forgiven?**: the ironic tone of the ST is conveyed in the TT through the adverb “possibly”, which emphasises the feigned doubt of the narrator.

1

Solde.

A vendre ce que les Juifs n'ont pas vendu, ce que noblesse ni crime n'ont goûté, ce qu'ignorent l'amour maudit et la probité infernale des masses: ce que le temps ni la science n'ont pas à reconnaître:

5

Les Voix reconstituées; l'éveil fraternel de toutes les énergies chorales et orchestrales et leurs applications instantanées; l'occasion, unique, de dégager nos sens!

10

A vendre les Corps sans prix, hors de toute race, de tout monde, de tout sexe, de toute descendance! Les richesses jaillissant à chaque démarche! Solde de diamants sans contrôle!

15

A vendre l'anarchie pour les masses; la satisfaction irrésistible pour les amateurs supérieurs; la mort atroce pour les fidèles et les amants!

A vendre les habitations et les migrations, sports, féeries et comforts parfaits, et le bruit, le mouvement et l'avenir qu'ils font!

20

A vendre les applications de calcul et les sauts d'harmonie inouïs. Les trouvailles et les termes non soupçonnés, possession immédiate,

Elan insensé et infini aux splendeurs invisibles, aux délices insensibles, — et ses secrets affolants pour chaque vice — et sa gaîté effrayante pour la foule—

25

A vendre les Corps, les voix, l'immense opulence inquestionnable, ce qu'on ne vendra jamais. Les vendeurs ne sont pas à bout de solde! Les voyageurs n'ont pas à rendre leur commission de si tôt!

From Guyaux 1985b, p. 74.

“Solde”, analysis and strategic decisions

The meaning of the noun “Solde” has been questioned by Henry [1989, p. 77-93]. According to Henry, Rimbaud could not have used the word “solde” to denote “vente au rabais”, as the word initially (1866) applied to fabric — “reste d'étoffe, coupon” (in *Trésor de la langue française*) — and the poem evokes a “solde de diamants”. Furthermore, Henry emphasises that this meaning usually requires the plural form of the noun “solde” (“les soldes”). Henry's hypothesis is that Rimbaud has coined his own meaning of the word:

J'en viens à me demander s'il n'y a pas là une acception personnelle, tout simplement ‘vente’, à la rigueur, ‘vente au moment où l'on cesse toute affaire’. De toute manière, pas question de ‘liquidation’! [idem, p. 85]

In response to Henry's semantic restrictions, Claisse points out a definition of “Solde” he found in *Grand Dictionnaire universel du XIX^e siècle*, Larousse, 1875:

On a vu que le *solde* est un reste, un reliquat de compte, ce qui forme l'appoint d'une liquidation particulière. Par analogie, on a désigné de la même façon des *lots de marchandises* provenant de liquidations de fonds de commerce ou de ventes forcées, soit après saisies, soit pour cause d'expropriation ou de changement de domicile, soit enfin pour quelque autre raison, telle, par exemple, qu'une lourde échéance. Dans certaines industries et certains commerces, notamment ceux des tissus de coton et de soie, on forme des lots de marchandises défraîchies, passées de mode ou d'un débouché trop restreint, et l'on vend ces lots, afin de renouveler le capital immobilisé, à des *Juifs ou marchands forains* dans des conditions exceptionnelles de bon marché. Ces marchandises sont revendues à prix relativement très réduits, ce qui en active le débouché. Ces circonstances, connues du public, font que ces occasions sont recherchées par lui, parce que la dépréciation subie par les marchandises ne porte que sur l'apparence et non point sur la qualité; aussi les marchands dits *au déballage* exploitent-ils ce genre d'attraction en annonçant la vente d'un *solde* de marchandises de provenance plus ou moins réelle. Certains grands magasins eux-mêmes emploient le même procédé de réclame et affichent la vente d'un *solde* de marchandises montant parfois à un chiffre énorme et avec un rabais considérable. [quoted in Claisse 1996, pp. 68-69]

Although this definition is quite a late one (1875), dictionaries never reveal a completely synchronic state of the language. Claisse is inclined to associate Rimbaud's “solde” with this definition. This, mainly, because of the word “Juifs” found in both Larousse and Rimbaud's poem, which is more than coincidental. I would also point out that “les voyageurs” of the end of the poem evoke “les gens du voyage”, “marchands forains” or “commis voyageurs”. According to Larousse's definition, the singular “solde” could designate numerous objects other than fabric (“lot de marchandises”). More

importantly, however, it highlights the fact that the word “solde” was already negatively connoted and used as a commercial device to attract consumers. Hence, Henry's fear “qu'on ne le sente aujourd'hui anachroniquement péjoratif” [1989, p.84] would be groundless.

1. Parallels

In many respects, “Solde” is reminiscent of “Dévotion”. Like “Dévotion”, the title “Solde” is a generic singular noun, a characteristic which determines the strongly repetitive pattern of the poem. The form of the poem is regular with eight paragraphs of roughly equivalent length. The poem is characterised by the anaphoric repetition of the segment “à vendre”. The anaphoric structure with the initial repetition of the preposition “à” in “à vendre” is reminiscent of “Dévotion”, especially as the preposition is sometimes associated with an attributive form introduced by “pour”:

“pour les masses”
“pour les amateurs supérieurs”
“pour les fidèles et les amants”

The anaphora “à vendre” is broken twice in the second and in the seventh paragraphs. This disruption of an otherwise regular pattern results in the isolation of the opening and closing paragraphs. These two paragraphs share many characteristics. They both have the same number of full words (fifteen) and make extensive use of negative forms:

“ce que les Juifs n'ont pas vendu”
“ce que noblesse ni crime n'ont goûté”
“ce que le temps ni la science n'ont pas à reconnaître”

“ce qu'on ne vendra jamais”
“les vendeurs ne sont pas à bout de solde”
“les voyageurs n'ont pas à rendre leur commission”

They also both define a category of salesmen, “les Juifs” and “les voyageurs” and introduce different times through the same verb “vendre” (“ce que les Juifs n'ont pas vendu”, “ce qu'on ne vendra jamais”). The time and space of “Solde” is hence situated between the two tenses of the verb “vendre” and between the two cultural entities “les Juifs” and “les voyageurs”. To mark the unity of the poem, the title is repeated in the closing sequence: “les vendeurs ne sont pas à bout de **solde**”. Furthermore, the last paragraph recalls two very important objects, which are also graphically

of the opening and closing sequences. They capture some of the parallels of the opening and closing sequences, notably the negative structures and the semantic echoes. However, they do not reproduce the capital letter (“les Corps”) in the closing sequence. The parallel “les Juifs”/“les voyageurs” is not clearly emphasised in Fowlie and Bernard's translations, as the deictics are differentiated: “the Jews”/“Travelers” (Fowlie) and “the Jews”/“Our travellers” (Bernard). Both translators also ignore the grammatical similarities of “les vendeurs”/ “les voyageurs”. Fowlie omits the second definite article: “the salesmen”/ “travellers”, whereas Bernard transforms the perspective of the passage and replaces the first plural noun by a singular noun: “the firm”/ “our travellers”.

It is not always possible to convey the phonic parallels reinforcing the cohesive aspect of the poem. Compensation may be required where effects of repetition are lost in the TT. Fowlie ignores the phonic effect created by the pair “immense opulence”, which he translates by “the tremendous unquestionable wealth”. Although Bernard and Peschel are closer to the ST, they separate the adjective “immense” from the noun “opulence” (“the immense, unquestionable opulence”), which affects the rhythm and phonic pattern of the TT. Another striking effect of phonic repetition is the combination of the adjectives “**insensé**” and “**invisible**” to create the adjective “**insensible**”. This effect is lost in all three translations:

“wild”, “invisible” and “immaterial” (Fowlie)
“wild”, “invisible” and “intangible” (Bernard)
“mad”, “invisible” and “unconscious” (Peschel)

Likewise the strong phonic cohesion of paragraphs four, five and six (“**A vendre l'anarchie**”, “**A vendre les habitations**”, “**A vendre les applications**”) is lost in the different translations:

“For sale anarchy”, “For sale dwellings”, “For sale results” (Fowlie)
“For sale anarchy”, “For sale dwelling-places”, “For sale unheard-of applications” (Bernard)
“For sale anarchy”, “For sale settlements”, “For sale applications” (Peschel)

2 The sale

a) Announcing the sale.

The opening paragraph announces the sale. The segment “à vendre” places the reader within the immediate context of the sale. The salesmen of “Solde” are differentiated from another category of salesmen, namely “les Juifs”. The sale is introduced as unprecedented, the salesmen offer a

unheard-of deal. Even Jews, who have a reputation for knowing a great deal about business, have yet to offer such a deal. The multiplication of the negative structures (“n'ont pas vendu”, “n'ont goûté”, “ignorent”, “n'ont pas à reconnaître”) suggests that what is on offer surpasses everything that is known. The poem evokes, for a comparative purpose, different abstract entities which have no sensual or intellectual experience of what is on offer. Pairs of singular abstractions (“noblesse ni crime”, “l'amour maudit et la probité infernale des masses”, “le temps ni la science”) are used to refer to specific social categories, namely “les nobles” and “les criminels”, “les amants maudits” and “les honnêtes gens”, “les historiens” and “les scientifiques”. Strongly antithetical values are paired in these abstractions. The nouns “noblesse” and “crime” represent two values of society, which are traditionally diametrically opposed. Likewise, decadent love (“amour maudit”) is opposed to “probité”. This type of opposition is stereotypical and representative of a cliché style¹. The irony lies in the fact that these strongly antithetical terms should be linked. “Noblesse” and “crime” are placed on the same scale of taste (“goûter”), whilst “amour maudit” and “probité” are linked by the knowledge they share.

The different abstractions and the wide spectrum of social categories they represent are used as a bait for the buyer. The discourse of the salesman sounds knowledgeable with the use of sophisticated terms (“probité”, “masses”) and the clear logical progression from sensual (“goûter”) and popular (“masses”) knowledge to acquired (“temps”, “science”) knowledge. The logical and systematic progression of the argument up to the highest category of knowledge is also emphasised through the hammered repetition “ce que [...], ce que [...], ce que [...]: ce que [...]”. The co-ignorance or dismissal (“n'ont pas à reconnaître”) of the different socio-categories greatly contrasts with the apparent knowledge of the salesman. The ignorance of the people who should know is also in itself the evidence of the outstanding quality and originality of the merchandise.

The wish to convince is strong, so strong that the sellers, carried away by their speech, produce a double negation:

“ce que le temps ni la science n'ont pas à reconnaître” (as opposed to “ce que le temps et la science n'ont pas à reconnaître”).

¹ Herschberg-Pierrot [1988] analyses the same type of “stéréotypie fondée sur le développement de prédicats antithétiques” in Flaubert's *L'Education sentimentale*:
[Les riches] se gorgeant de **crimes** sous leurs plafonds dorés, tandis que **les pauvres**, se tordant de faim dans leurs galetas, **cultivaient toutes les vertus**.

After the enticing and attractive introduction, the catalogue of merchandise can begin.

b) Merchandise

The catalogue of merchandise is divided into six sections and the closing paragraph sums up the list of merchandise offered. The atmosphere is reminiscent of auctions, each of the six paragraphs describing a lot being offered for sale. The lots are heterogeneous. They are formed of very abstract objects. The vocabulary used to describe the merchandise can be classified according to the following categories:

science

énergies, applications, applications de calcul, trouvailles et termes non soupçonnés

politics and society

éveil fraternel², race, sexe, descendance, anarchie, habitations, migrations, sports, comforts, mouvement, avenir

arts

chorales, orchestrales, féeries, sauts d'harmonie³, trouvailles et termes non soupçonnés

feelings

sens, satisfaction irréprouvable, bruit, splendeurs, délices, secrets, gaîté

Some terms cannot be classified because they are too ambiguous or too extreme, such as the words “mort”, “élan”, “corps” and “Voix”. The noun “Corps” can denote (super-)human bodies, but can also be a social (“corps social”, “corps industriel”, etc.) or a scientific (“tout corps plongé dans l'eau[...]”) term. The same ambiguity applies to the word “Voix” especially as the noun is followed by “l'éveil fraternel”. Is the poem referring to “les belles voix”, “la voix du peuple” or “la voix de la raison”?

The semantic threads are closely related. In paragraph six, art and science are so closely linked that some words could belong to either of the categories. The confusion stems from the mishmash of products offered, ranging from human qualities to political abstractions.

² Dubois points out that the word “fraternel” “en 1871 fait encore partie du vocabulaire révolutionnaire” [1962, p. 82].

³ Although the substantive “harmonie” also possesses political and social connotations: Le terme qui s'associe le plus souvent à ‘corps social’ est celui d’‘harmonie’ [...] terme usuel dans les traités d'économie politique, il sert souvent de titre à des projets de réformes sociales.[Dubois 1962, p. 89]

Overall, the products offered do not commonly have a market value. These objects or notions cannot be evaluated according to the usual commercial and cultural norms. The salesmen seem to fulfil the promise of the opening sequence of the poem, in that their trade is clearly not usual.

c) The discourse of the salesmen

The poem is strongly elliptical and repetitive. It is characterised by appositions of often verbless, sentences. The grammatical links between these sentences are scarce. The best example of this syntactic device is in the fifth paragraph:

“A vendre les habitations et les migrations, sports, féeries et comforts parfaits, et le bruit, le mouvement et l'avenir qu'ils font!”

The sentence sounds technocratic, because of the abstract nature of the accumulated unrelated nouns, especially those ending in “-tion” and “-ment”. These suffixes are often used to name doctrines or systems. Dubois points out that “les mots en -ment -age et -tion sont anciens dans la langue et appartiennent au fond commun du vocabulaire usuel; c'est au cours de l'histoire que ces termes ont acquis une valeur d'emploi politique” [1962, p. 159].

Another characteristic of the discourse of the salesmen is the tendency to exaggerate. The hyperbolic style is illustrated through the profusion of plural nouns. It is also most striking in the multiplication of the adjectives “tout” and “chaque”:

“toutes les énergies”, “toute race”, “tout monde”, “tout sexe”, “toute descendance”, “chaque démarche”, “chaque vice”

The exaggeration, however is not only quantitative but also qualitative. The inexhaustible abundance of merchandise is qualified by a profusion of valorising adjectives. Bearing in mind the commercial adage that “marchandise qui plaît est à moitié vendue”, the salesmen cannot stop praising their products:

“fraternel”, “unique”, “supérieurs”, “parfaits”, “inouïs”

The praise is emphasised by the abundance of exclamations (eight in total). The qualitative and quantitative abundance of the products is summed up in the melodic pair of words “immense opulence”.

However, the numerous adjectives and adjectival phrases qualify abstract nouns or concrete nouns which are empty of referential content. The

lack of referential content is emphasised in the third paragraph with “sans prix, hors de toute race, de tout monde, de tout sexe, de toute descendance![...] sans contrôle!” and through adjectives such as “inouïs” or “non soupçonnés”. The irony stems from the fact that adjectives are multiplied to qualify objects which are immaterial (“l'anarchie”, “la satisfaction”, “la mort”,...) or do not yet exist (“l'avenir qu'ils font!”) or cannot be sold (“qu'on ne vendra jamais”). The abundance of adjectives is thus used as a mask covering the emptiness of the sale. The more abstract and immaterial the products, the more adjectives seem to proliferate, up to the climax of the seventh paragraph:

“Élan insensé et infini aux splendeurs invisibles, aux délices insensibles, — et ses secrets affolants pour chaque vice — et sa gaîté effrayante pour la foule—”

The proliferation of the adjectives in this paragraph emphasises a strong semantic paradox in the salesman's pattern. Most of the adjectives used are negative with the prefix in- (**in**-sensé, **in**-fini, **in**-visibles, **in**-sensibles). At first, they seem to fulfil the original task of describing the unprecedented. However, they absolutely contradict the object they describe. The objects presented — “élan insensé”/ “splendeurs invisibles”/ “délices insensibles” — are completely virtualised. The objects sold cannot make sense, be seen or felt, when that should be their very nature. This is ironically reminiscent of the king's suit of clothes in Andersen's tale. Once more, the buyer is being conned by the salesman and robbed of his money. The salesman gives the language an abstract quality and deludes the buyers with an illusion of reality through the multiplication of adjectives. The salesman literally “vend du vent/ du rêve”. In my view, this expression explains the ultimate paradox of the closing sequence:

“ce qu'on ne vendra jamais. Les vendeurs ne sont pas à bout de solde! Les voyageurs n'ont pas à rendre leur commission de si tôt!”

The discourse of the salesman is the only actual product on sale (“Les Voix!”). And according to the last sentence (“les voyageurs n'ont pas à rendre leur commission de si tôt!”), the salesman is doing quite well for himself. In the last two paragraphs of the poem, the sale is clearly denounced as a deception. The discourse of the salesman is wordy and full of paradoxes. The only real value in the face of the numerous abstractions is the “commission”. It is the last element of the poem and the only aim of the entire discourse.

Implications for translation

A translation of “Solde” should reproduce the systematically repetitive and abstract style of the opening sequence. The balance of the pairs of abstractions will be respected:

“noblesse ni crime” (noun + noun)/ “l'amour maudit et la probité infernale” (noun and adjective + noun and adjective)/ “le temps ni la science” (noun + noun).

Bernard particularises “noblesse” (“noblesse de titre” but also “de cœur”) with “noble birth”, thus losing the strict repetitive pattern. Translators have failed to recognise the double negation of the last sentence and have all corrected the ST:

“what time and science need not recognize” (Fowlie)
“what neither time nor science has to acknowledge” (Peschel)
“what neither time nor learning need recognize” (Bernard)

The forceful double negation is a deliberate effect of the ST and hence should be reproduced in the TT.

A translation of “Solde” should reproduce the different characteristics of the salesman's patter. The salient nominalisation will have to be conveyed, although it may result in a slightly unidiomatic translation. It may hence be necessary to attenuate the effect of nominalisation in the TT. The effect of profusion and abundance created by the numerous plural words, the numerous appositions and the repetitive use of “tout” and “chaque” will also have to be conveyed.

Bernard and Fowlie choose to ignore the repetition of “tout(e)” in the third paragraph:

“not belonging to any known race, world, sex, progeny!” (Fowlie)
“not to be found in any race, world, sex, or line of descent!” (Bernard)

Only Peschel respects the repetitive patterns:

“beyond any race, any world, any sex, any lineage”

Some of the plural nouns disappear in Fowlie's translation:

“the brotherly awakening of all choral and orchestral **power**”
“**Wealth** rising up at each step”
“For sale dwellings and migrations, sports, fantasies and perfect **comfort**”
“Wild and infinite leap to invisible **splendour**”

The effect of abundance is thus reduced.

The various oxymorons and paradoxes have to be rendered as they betray the ironic content of the poem. This is especially challenging in the seventh paragraph where the translator has to underline the semantic contradictions. The adjective “insensé”, meaning both “mad” and “without direction” (“in-sensé”) thus clashing with the noun “élan” (there is always “élan vers quelque chose”), is differently rendered by the translators with an emphasis on the madness:

“wild” (Fowlie/ Bernard)/ “mad” (Peschel)

3. Prosopopœia

Many critics ignore the last paragraph of the poem (“Les vendeurs ne sont pas à bout de solde! Les voyageurs n'ont pas à rendre leur commission de si tôt!”) and consider “Solde” to be Rimbaud's personal statement against his own poetry, in other words the liquidation of his poetic “trouvailles”⁴. This choice is reflected in the tradition of placing “Solde” at the end of *Illuminations*, as “Adieu” closes une *Saison en Enfer*. However, as in “Démocratie”, the discourse is not necessarily Rimbaud's own discourse. The text is personal only in one instance, in the last sentence of second paragraph, “L'occasion, unique, de dégager **nos sens!**”, where “nos” refers to the buyers and Rimbaud could well include himself in this group. Claisse thinks that “*Solde s'apparente en réalité à ces prosopopées dans lesquelles les pamphlétaires font parler leurs adversaires*” [1996, p. 71]. The main voice expressed in the poem is not Rimbaud's but the voice of “les vendeurs”. Claisse also establishes a parallel between “Solde” and an extract from *Histoire de la Société française pendant le Directoire* by Edmond and Jules Goncourt:

Boulevard ruiné! si bien ruiné qu'il est à vendre, à vendre comme un ci-devant hôtel ou une ci-devant communauté. À vendre le boulevard du Temple! À vendre la salle de spectacle de Lazary, ci-devant la salle des élèves de l'Opéra! À vendre le terrain du pâtissier Roussard! [...]. [cited in Claisse 1996, pp. 67-68]

⁴ See notably, Fowlie:

Rimbaud holds up for exhibition and sale what he possesses and what no one else has. Superhuman in his will, he offers everything — in order to get everything, knowing that if the sale is made, he will be a thousand times richer. [1953, p. 120]

and Peschel:

Presumably in *Solde* Rimbaud is offering up everything for sale. [1977, p. 41]

See also: S. Bernard [1981, p. 522], and Adam [1972, p. 1006].

In this extract, E. and J. Goncourt reproduce the patter of salesmen in order to satirise the vast sale of the period following the Directoire.

The poem "Solde" is woven with cliché poetic, political and social words. They partly represent the bourgeois discourse defined in terms of "idéologèmes" such as the words "sports", "comforts" and "race", common to both "Mouvement" and "Solde". These words are, at the end of the 19th century, monopolised by the Establishment, which forms the dominant ideology. Together with the scientific words ("énergies", "applications", "applications de calcul", "trouvailles" and "termes non soupçonnés"), they betray a conservative and scientific view of social progress⁵. It is interesting to notice how the merchandise for sale evolves within the poem. This evolution is achieved according to ideological notions, namely:

order ("fraternel", "chorales", "orchestrales")/ **disorder** ("sans contrôle")/ **anarchy** ("l'anarchie")/ **social progress** ("habitations", "migrations", "sports", "féeries", "comforts", "avenir")/ **artistic and scientific progress** ("applications de calcul", "sauts d'harmonies", "trouvailles").

Clichés affect poetry with sentences such as "la mort pour les amants et les fidèles", which is a commonplace from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* to Baudelaire's "La mort des amants".

Through the discourse of the salesmen, the dominant conservative view of society is under attack. However, the parody goes even further to include another level. In my view, the poem plays on a double standard. On the one hand, we have a **valorising discourse** (cf. the words: "fraternel", "unique", "supérieurs", "parfaits", "inouïs"). This valorising discourse is associated with the capitalist ideology of progress. Everything is justified, even social and political aberrations, such as "vendre les Corps", which is formed from the expression "vendre son corps", a common euphemism for prostitution, or the antithetical pair "les habitations et les migrations", which is reminiscent of Haussmann's town planning policies, which intended to build new rich suburbs and clear "les faubourgs" of their paupers. On the other hand, we have a **pejorative discourse**, with an abundance of

⁵ Dubois analyses the use of the word "progrès" in both conservative and socialist circles in the 19th century France and points out that:

les conservateurs [...] prennent le terme «progrès» dans son acceptation générale et non dans sa valeur politique. [...] Pour en briser le contenu politique, il faut employer le qualificatif «social» [...]. [1962, p. 72]

He also quotes from E. Lockroy's *A bas le progrès*, Paris: Paris, 1870:

Les défenseurs du gouvernement ont toujours le mot progrès à la bouche. [Idem, p. 385]

negative adjectives in direct opposition to the positivist discourse, analysed earlier:

“maudit”, “infernale”, “irrépressible”, “atroce”, “insensé”, “affolants”, “effrayante”.

Some of these adjectives are extremely violent and convey both horror and disgust. This pejorative discourse also contains ideas of ignorance and misunderstanding, illustrated through the words:

“n'ont goûté”/ “ignorent”/ “n'ont pas à reconnaître”/ “insensé”/ “affolants”

They are reminiscent of Flaubert's definition of “progrès” in *Dictionnaire des idées reçues*:

progrès toujours **mal entendu** et trop **hâtif** [my emphasis]

This amusing definition reflects the popular fears that are attached to the word “progrès”. The idea of hastiness (a theme also attached to the poem “Mouvement”) is one of the characteristics of the text with the words:

“instantanées”, “jaillissant”, “immédiate”

Overall, the discourse of the poem plays on this double standard, mixing both the words of the dominant ideology and the words of “le peuple”, which can be contradictory. Hence, we sometimes find antithetical associations or oxymorons such as “probité infernale” or “gaîté effrayante”. We also find words bearing both pejorative and valorising connotations. The word “anarchie”, for example, embodies both “le spectre rouge” and social progress. Dubois analyses the political content of the word:

Le Réveil des peuples écrit que dès 1848 «Les bourgeois» parlaient d'écraser «l'hydre de l'anarchie». [1962, p. 68]

At the same time, the word is used to promote social progress, notably by Hugo:

toute cette anarchie-mère d'où sortira l'affranchissement. [in *L'Homme qui rit*, VIII, p. 454].

The parody in “Solde” affects both popular and bourgeois language. The language of the salesmen mixes on the same level “langue de bois” and “langue du peuple”.

The voice of the poet is superimposed, emphasising the contradictions and paradoxes and bringing his own judgement on the so-called progress, which boils down to “le bruit” and “le mouvement” (or “beaucoup de bruit pour rien”). The intervention of the author is common in prosopopœia as analysed by Dupriez:

La prosopopée rhétorique utilisée comme argument est **aventurée**. Quand L. Pauwels, dans sa *Lettre ouverte aux gens heureux*, fait parler Lénine, le style reste celui de Pauwels. [1984, p. 366 my emphasis]

Likewise, Rimbaud's mark on the poem is easily identifiable. Play on sounds (such as “insensé, invisibles> insensibles”, analysed earlier) and play on words are characteristic of Rimbaud's irony. Behind the segment “secret affolant pour chaque vice”, the reader recognises the expression “vice secret”. Likewise, “joie effrayante pour la foule” is constructed from the expression “foule en liesse”. “Corps sans prix” contradicts the adage “chaque chose a son prix”. The word “démarche” in “les richesses jaillissant à chaque démarche” implies a play on the word “démarcheur”. Finally, the word “comfort” is deliberately spelled in English, referring to the late-nineteenth century idea that progress was best illustrated by the English system. Hugo wrote in a letter to the editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, dated 26 April 1869:

Ce que l'Angleterre verra dans l'homme qui rit, c'est ma profonde sympathie pour son progrès et pour sa liberté. [in *Correspondance*, Paris Imprimerie nationale, 1952, vol. III p 187]

In “Solde”, the poet denounces mercantilism, which values everything, precious and non-precious, on the same financial scale. Mercantilism is tacitly accepted, as implied by the neologism “inquestionable”, which is built from the English adjective “unquestionable”.

Implication for translation

The translator has the choice as to whether to reinforce or to play down the prosopopœia. The prosopopœia can be reinforced by emphasising the clash of the two discourses, namely bourgeois and popular, which in itself is sufficient to convey Rimbaud's irony. Bernard chooses to emphasise the detached and judgmental position of the narrator by adding a personal pronoun in the last paragraph: “our travellers”. Although, this reinforces the prosopopœia, it also partly results in the loss of the parallel “les Juifs”/ “les voyageurs”.

The clear indications of Rimbaud's irony, such as the play on words and the anglicised word, should be conveyed. In his 1953 edition of *Illuminations*, Fowlie points in a note to the English spelling of "comfort" and the fact that the spelling of "inquestionable" "is neither English nor French". These indications disappear in his 1966 edition of Rimbaud's works. The words are not, however, clearly differentiated in the translation and neither are they in Bernard's and Peschel's versions of "Solde". Finally, the play on the expression "foule en liesse" is lost in Fowlie's translation as he translates "foule" by "masses", where Rimbaud deliberately differentiated the political term (masses) from the popular term (foule).

Sale.(1)

For sale what the Jews have not sold, what neither nobility nor crime have relished, what accursed love and the masses' infernal probity do not know: what nor time nor science need recognise (2):

The reconstituted Voices; the fraternal awakening of all choral and orchestral energies and their immediate application; the absolutely unique opportunity (3) to free our senses!

For sale priceless (4) Bodies, beyond any race, any world, any sex and any kin (5). Riches springing up at every step (6)! Limitless (4) sale of diamonds!

For sale anarchy for the masses; irrepressible satisfaction for superior connoisseurs; dreadful death (7) for the faithful and lovers!

For sale habitations (8) and migrations, perfect sports, enchantments (9) and English comforts (10), and the noise, the movement and the future they make!

For sale applications of calculations and unheard-of harmonic leaps. Serendipities (11) and unsuspected terms, cash and carry(12),

Surge of insane and endless fervour (13) with (14) its invisible splendours, its insensible (15) delights, — and its startling secrets for every vice — and its frightening gaiety for the crowd — (16)

For sale the Bodies, the voices, the un-questionable (17), immense opulence (18), all that will never be sold. The salesmen have not exhausted their clearance stock! The travellers do not have to give up on their sales commission for some time yet! (19)

Decisions of detail

1. **sale**: conveys the pejorative connotations of the title "solde".
2. The ST double negative can be an archaism (see Grevisse 1980 ref. n° 2495/2, p. 1242: "Dans l'usage classique, *ni*, au sens de *et*, pouvait joindre deux éléments négatifs construits avec *ne...pas*, *ne ...point*, *ne...jamais*, etc."). In the TT, the reader can find a similar archaic form (*nor...nor* instead of *neither...nor*).
3. **absolutely unique opportunity**: as the postposition of the adjective is not idiomatic in English, I have chosen to underline the adjective by adding an adverb of intensity.
4. **priceless, limitless**: the parallel "sans prix", "sans contrôle" is respected in the TT. (See Fowlie: "priceless"/ "with no control" Bernard: "above price", "unrationed" Peschel: "priceless", "without control").

5. **beyond any race, any world, any sex and any kin**: the hyperbolic style of the ST has been reproduced in the TT with the repetition of “any”.

6. **springing up at every step**: the translation creates an appropriate phonic effect. Moreover, as it is built in parallel with the expression “with a spring in his step”, it partly compensates for the loss of the pun on “démarche”/ “démarcheur”.

7. **dreadful death**: the phonic effect “mort atroce” is compensated by the alliteration in [d] **dreadful death**. The adjective “atroce” is often used to express a literary appreciation in Rimbaud's poetry (cf.: “les atroces fleurs” of “Métropolitain”). The disgust for literary clichés is conveyed through the adjective “dreadful”.

8. **habitations**: rather than “dwellings” (Fowlie), “dwelling-places” (Bernard) or “settlements” (Peschel), as it is necessary to keep the phonic cohesion of paragraphs four, five and six.

9. **enchantments**: conveys the connotations of dupery and stage tricks of the noun “féeries” (in *Littré*: “Pièce de théâtre où paraissent des personnages doués d'une puissance surnaturelle, comme les fées, les démons, les enchanteurs, etc. qui donnent lieu d'exécuter devant les spectateurs des prodiges de magnificence dans les décorations, les costumes, les changements à vue”).

10. **English comforts**: the exoticism created by the English spelling of the word “comfort” is lost in the TT. However, I have chosen to add the adjective “English” in order to avoid further semantic loss.

11. **serendipities**: the word “trouvaille” denotes “find”, but implies a degree of luck and inspiration best translated by the English word “serendipity”.

12. **cash and carry**: the expression “possession immédiate” throws us directly into the mercantilist and capitalist spirit of the poem. The expression “cash and carry” (“a system whereby the purchaser pays cash for goods and takes them away himself” *Oxford English Dictionary*) emphasises this spirit. The expression “cash and carry” could be considered an anachronism; however, it is attested as early as 1917 in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

13. **surge of [...] fervour**: “élan” is a difficult word to capture in all its guises. It has polysemous facets in French (see also “Villes” II “Ce sont des villes!”). However, the sentence appears to be built around the missing word “cœur” linking the words “élan”, “secrets” and “gaieté”, as in “élan du cœur”, “pénétrer dans le secret des cœurs” and “de gaieté de cœur”. Hence the choice of “surge of fervour” (cf. the set phrase “surge of emotion”), which compensates by splitting for the movement implied in “élan”.

14. **with**: translators appear to have misunderstood the form “élan aux” and assimilated it with the form “élan vers”. Hence, the following translations: “Wild and infinite leap to invisible splendor, to immaterial delights” (Fowlie), “Wild and infinite impulse towards invisible splendours, to intangible

delights" (Bernard), "Mad and endless transports to invisible splendors, to unconscious delights" (Peschel).

15. **Insane endless invisible insensible**: the sound pattern of the source text "insensé" + "invisible" > "insensible" is lost in the TT. However, I have tried to compensate for this loss through the association of the adjective "Insane"+"endless"+"invisible"> "insensible".

16. **gaiety for the crowd**: the double pun on the expression "de gaîté de cœur" (light hearted) and "foule en liesse" ("jubilant crowd") is lost in the TT.

17. **un-questionable**: the effect created by the neologism "inquestionable" is lost in the TT. However, I have chosen to attract the reader's attention to the adjective by splitting prefix and stem. This also draws attention on the overall negativity of the paragraph.

18. **immense opulence**: the phonic effect of the ST is reproduced in the TT.

19. The negative connotations of the word "solde" are emphasised with "clearance stock". However, it results in the loss of the repetition of the title in the closing sequence is lost here. This loss is partly compensated in place with "sales commission". The last sentence is built from the expressions "commis voyageur", "travailler à la commission" and a third expression [suggested by Nakaji 1992, p. 244] "rendre son tablier". I chose to transpose the intertextual features by playing on the proximity of the expression "to give one's notice", "travelling salesman" and "work on commission". I have kept the idea of "commission", lost in Bernard's translation, where it becomes "accounts".

Conclusion

Summary

The main object of this dissertation was to produce a new translation of Rimbaud's *Illuminations* based on close reading and interpretation of the poet's style and taking into account new developments in translation studies (translation criticism, text processing and production).

The thesis consists of three chapters. In the first chapter, I presented and discussed the concept of obscurity that underlies most of the thinking on *Illuminations* and assessed the implications of this concept for translation. I have showed that apparent obscurity, although it corresponds to a degree of linguistic reality, has been largely the product of a rewriting process, which started with the intervention of Rimbaud's sister in the hagiography of the poet and reached its climax with Todorov's theorisation of the concept of obscurity. Following more recent developments in Rimbaud studies (including work by Riffaterre and Murphy), I set out to reassess the concept of obscurity. The re-evaluation of obscurity in terms of "markedness" (Hatim and Mason 1997) has revealed that Rimbaud's style in *Illuminations* consistently challenges socio-textual norms by creating lack of stability at different levels of the texts in order to obtain a critical response from the reader. I have also explained that, concomitantly, the poems display a certain degree of stability through the use of parallels, thus enabling the reading process to continue. This study has shown that Rimbaud produced a dual form of writing by creating an opaqueness of intention, using a marked texture and breaching norms of genres and discourses, while creating texts that are strongly cohesive and tightly welded. Because Rimbaud's style creates surprise and incongruity (provoking a re-evaluation of classical norms of representation) at the same time as it imposes various levels of organisation, the reader is involved in a constant process of evaluation and creation, which has to be conveyed in the translation.

In the second chapter, I presented the corpus of texts and translations selected for this study. I challenged the current prevailing theory of "fragment" and showed that some of the texts can be grouped according to common titles ("Enfance"), themes ("Ville", "Villes" I & II) and genres (parody: "Démocratie", "Dévotion", "Mouvement" and "Solde"). The analysis of the functioning of parody in literary texts has provided relevant insights that have been used to identify texts that are potentially "subversive" in *Illuminations* and to translate these texts. It has introduced the notion of crucial pointers

("signes d'assise") as a key element in the recognition of irony and parody both in STs and in TTs. Following this, I introduced three existing translations (Fowlie's, Bernard's and Peschel's), evaluating the strategies underlying the translators' works. I showed that the translations are all based on a common poetics prioritising a mainly biographical approach. Finally, I introduced the groups of texts selected for translation showing that they display cohesive features which determine further constraints for the translator. This introduction also considered the ways in which Fowlie, Bernard and Peschel approached these texts.

In the third chapter, building on the conclusions reached in chapters I and II, I processed the selected groups of poems. This took the form of a close reading and emphasised the recurrence of significant features of stability (repetition and parallel) and chaos (markedness). These features were then interpreted in terms of purpose and intention revealing, in some instances, possible sources underlying a number of Rimbaud's poems. Some of these sources had not been considered in other studies of *Illuminations*. Their discovery was only made possible by a constant interaction between text and intertextual context (genres, discourses and texts). The text processing determined important decisions that were adopted for translating significant features, which were compared with the decisions adopted by previous translators. The new translations thus produced include notes on more local decisions, often signifying the loss or gain which may have occurred during the translation process.

Theoretical and practical implications

I hope that this thesis has demonstrated the validity of a translation grounded in knowledge of the source and target texts and the source and target languages and cultures. The translations produced in this thesis have prioritised the evaluative and creative processes operating in Rimbaud's poetry. They have emphasised the importance of assessing context when processing literary texts. For an accurate evaluation of context, it is important to go beyond the immediate context of the collection to include the wider contexts of literature and culture. This is why my reading of the poems is based not only on Rimbaud's works, but also on other literary texts and on knowledge of the culture, which may reveal the purpose behind some of the poems. I have relied on archaic dictionaries (e.g.: *Littre*) and on analyses of social, cultural and political language of the late 19th century (e.g.: Dubois 1962) to establish the meaning of certain lexical and syntactic features of the

text. These tools have been complemented by commentaries on the poems which value a cultural and intertextual approach.

If the approach taken in this thesis has valued knowledge of the STs and of their purpose and meaning in their original culture, knowledge of the target language and culture has also determined the translation process. It has affected both large-scale (see, for example, the rendering of the military tone in “*Démocratie*”) and small-scale decisions (cf. the references to “idiomatic expressions”). The knowledge of the target language and culture is necessary in order to avoid the pitfalls of a literal translation of certain features of the texts, whose effects may be startling and, at times, even comical.

When producing new translations, I have always tried to strike the right balance between signifying the “foreignness” [Venuti] of the originals and complying with audience expectations of ‘performable’ pieces of creative writing. To this end, I have set out to produce translations that communicate the content and form of the original. For example, I have chosen to recreate excessive nominalisations, which formed an important aspect of the ST “*Mouvement*”. Likewise, some of the translations which emulate the originals present syntactic and textual structures that may be alien to the target readers (see for example the translations of “*Enfance*” V and “*Dévotion*”). In addition, I have sought to create a ‘pleasurable’ reading experience. Hence, I have tried to convey in the translation the musical aspect of some of the STs, compensating, whenever possible, for the loss of particular rhythmic and phonic features.

While it is now clear that the approach applied in this thesis has valued a sound knowledge of the source texts and culture and of the target language and culture, the importance played by the knowledge of target texts should not be overlooked. Through the study of existing translations by Fowlie, Bernard and Peschel, some differences have appeared, which have often exposed areas of difficulty. Differences may be attributed to mistranslating, but have more often revealed the ideology of the translators and their wish to disregard an approach which is not aesthetic or biographical. The study of existing translations has served two purposes. It has helped the decision-making process on problematic points and it has allowed the reader to understand the complicated process which leads a translator to transform the ST.

The study presented in this thesis can therefore be seen as the result of a dual focus on both the process and the product of translation. The

process of translation has been demonstrated through the practice of close reading and interpretation drawing both from literary and linguistic knowledge. It has been made “visible”, throughout the thesis in order to attract the reader's attention to the “manipulation” [Lefevere] which it inevitably involves. At the same time, the product of translation, through the study of target texts and of the strategies underlying them, has been brought to the fore. The systematic interpretative method, practised here, which considers both process and product, can help to inform commentary on *Illuminations* and ultimately influence the reception of the texts. Etiemble, who advocates translation and the study of existing translations as the ultimate reading of literary texts, even goes so far as to say that “on ne lit vraiment que les textes que l'on traduit” [Etiemble 1980, p. 82]. Through translation and translation criticism, I have been able to question *Illuminations* in a more thorough and systematic way. The many “trouvailles” and “termes non soupçonnés” [“Solde”] that have been revealed during the translation process confirm the validity of this type of investigation for reading literary texts.

From the experience gained in writing this thesis, I believe that translation studies can be made to interact meaningfully with other forms of metaliterature. Translation is an effective tool for guaranteeing the healthy survival of a text, whilst influencing its reception. It is also an effective tool (especially when combined with translation criticism) for enabling a better understanding of a text. Translation, as practised in this thesis, can thus be seen as a new approach to literary commentary and a new medium or pathway for reading literary texts. As such, it is at the centre of the circulation and expansion of literary knowledge. This is why, following Lefevere's path, I wish to advocate the practice of translation from a scholarly point of view:

If scholars translate, if they analyse translations, and if they analyse the part played by translations in the receiving literatures and cultures, chances are not only that we shall learn much more about the workings of the complex phenomenon known as culture, but also that translation studies may come to occupy a place in academe that reflects the importance of translation in the culture that has produced academe. [Lefevere 1992b, p. 140]

A translation which promotes the understanding and teaching of foreign literary texts deserves a prominent place in research.

Finally, I hope that my work may prove instrumental in developing a new complete translation of *Illuminations*. Translation is a continuous process open to suggestions and improvements, in the same way that literary commentaries are open to suggestions. The way TTs are presented

in this thesis encourages a greater interaction from the reader, who may choose to join the quest for a better understanding and translating of Rimbaud. There is room for applying the method developed here to a larger sample of texts. I have had to discard the analysis and translation of two texts ("Métropolitain" and "Génie") for reasons of space but, in the near future, I would like to include these texts in a new version of *Illuminations*. Aspects of the analysis of Rimbaud's style developed during the processing of the texts may be developed and refined. Features of markedness and features of parallel and repetition analysed in their broad aspects in the first chapter could form material for a new study on Rimbaud. Within the confines of this thesis, I have been able to draw important conclusions regarding the functioning of parody and irony in *Illuminations*. These conclusions could serve as important clues in a larger study which would consider the role of parody in Rimbaud's writing.

More generally I hope that this thesis may make some contribution to future research in translation studies (translation criticism, text processing and production). The analysis of the strategies underlying existing translations of Rimbaud that I proposed in Chapter II, part II may prove useful to the study of the reception of Rimbaud's poetry abroad. It may provide a starting point for further research into the rewriting of Rimbaud in the UK and the USA. As regards text processing, this thesis emphasises the validity of a pluridisciplinary approach which considers text, context and purpose. It has shown that a literary text is a dynamic and multi-level phenomenon which can only be accounted for by considering its overall purpose(s) and meaning(s).

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Translations by Fowlie, Bernard and Peschel.

“Enfance”
Fowlie

Childhood

I

This idol, black-eyed and yellow-haired, no parents and no palace, but more princely than the Mexican and Flemish fairy story. His land of blatant blue and green, covers beaches named by shipless waves, with names that are ferociously Greek, Slav, Celtic.

At the forest's edge— the dream flowers tinkle, burst, illuminate — the girl with the orange lips, her knees crossed in the limpid flood rising up from the fields, a naked body shadowed, penetrated, and clothed by rainbows, flowers, the ocean.

Ladies strolling on the terraces near the sea; giants and children, magnificent blacks in the green-gray moss, jewels erect on the rich ground of groves and thawed gardens— young mothers and tall sisters whose eyes reflect their pilgrimages, sultanas, princesses of tyrannical walk and costume, foreign girls and some others sweetly unhappy.

The boredom of saying “dear body,” “dear heart.”

II

That's she, the little girl behind the rose bushes, and she's dead.— The young mother, also dead, is coming down the steps.— The cousin's carriage crunches the sand.— The small brother (he's in India!) over there in the field of pinks, in front of the sunset.— The old men they've buried upright in the wall covered with gillyflowers.

A swarm of gold leaves smothers the general's house. They're in the south.— You take the red road to reach the empty inn. The château's up for sale and the shutters are coming loose.— The priest must have taken away the key of the church. Around the park, the keepers' cottages are uninhabited. The fences are so high that you can only see the tree tops moving in the wind. Anyway, there's nothing to see there.

The fields roll up to the villages without roosters and without anvils. The sluice is open. Oh! the crosses and the windmills of the desert, the islands and the haystacks!

Magic flowers were buzzing. The slopes rocked him like a cradle. Animals of fabulous beauty walked about. Clouds were massed together over the high seas, made of the warm tears of all time.

III

In the woods there's a bird whose singing stops you and makes you blush.

There's a clock which doesn't strike.

There's a clay-pit with a nest of white animals.

There's a cathedral coming down and a lake going up.

There's a little carriage abandoned in the woods or rolling down the path, with ribbons all over it.

There's a troupe of child actors, in costume, whom you can see on the road through the edge of the wood.

And then there's someone who chases you off when you're hungry and thirsty.

IV

I am the saint in prayer on the terrace like the peaceful animals that graze as far as the sea of Palestine.

I am the scholar in his dark armchair. Branches and rain beat against the library window.

I am the wanderer along the main road running through the dwarfish woods. The noise of the sluices drowns my footsteps. For a long time I can see the sad golden wash of the sunset.

I might be the child abandoned on the wharf setting out for the high seas, or the farmhand following the path whose top reaches the sky.

The pathways are rough. The slopes are covered with broom. The air is still. How far away are the birds and the springs of water! This must be the end of the world, lying ahead.

V

Now hire for me the tomb, whitewashed with the lines of cement in bold relief — far underground.

I lean my elbows on the table, and the lamp lights brightly the newspapers I am fool enough to reread, and the absurd books.

At a tremendous distance above my subterranean room, houses grow like plants, and fogs gather. The mud is red or black. Monstrous city! Endless night!

Not so high up are the sewers. At my side, nothing but the thickness of the globe. Perhaps there are pits of azure and wells of fire? On those levels perhaps moons and comets, seas and fable meet.

In moments of depression, I imagine sapphire and metal balls. I am master of silence. Why should the appearance of a cellar window turn pale at the corner of the ceiling?

Bernard

Childhood

I

That idol, black eyes and yellow mop of hair, without ancestors or court, nobler than fable, Mexican and Flemish: his domain, insolent azure and green, runs along beaches which the shipless waves call by names ferociously Greek, Slav, Celtic.

At the edge of the forest — dream flowers tinkle, flash, flare — the girl with orange lips, her knees crossed in the clear flood surging from the meadows, nakedness shaded, crossed, clothed by rainbows, flora, the sea.

Ladies strolling on terraces by the sea; little girls and giantesses, superb negresses in the verdigris moss, jewels standing on the rich soil of the groves and the little thawed gardens — young mothers and elder sisters with their eyes full of pilgrimages, Sultanas, princesses with tyrannical costumes and carriage, little foreign girls and gently unhappy people.

What a bore, the moment of the 'beloved body' and 'dear heart'!

II

It is she, the little dead girl, behind the rose-bushes — The young mamma, deceased, comes down the steps — The cousin's carriage squeaks on the sand — The little brother — (he is in India!) there, against the sunset, in the meadow of pinks — The old men who are buried upright in the rampart overgrown with wallflowers.

A swarm of golden leaves surrounds the general's house. They are in the South — You follow the red road and arrive at the empty inn. The country house is for sale; the shutters are hanging loose — The priest will have taken away the key of the church — Around the park, the keepers' cottages are uninhabited. The fences are so high that nothing can be seen but the rustling tops of trees. Besides, there is nothing to be seen in there.

The meadows climb up to hamlets without cockerels or anvils. The sluice gate is raised. O the Calvaries and windmills of the wilderness, the islands and the stacks!

Magic flowers were droning. The slopes cradled him. Fabulously elegant beasts wandered about. The clouds gathered over the open sea which was formed of an eternity of the warm tears.

III

In the woods there is a bird, his song makes you stop and blush.

There is a clock that never strikes.

There is a hollow with a nest full of white animals.

There is a cathedral that goes down and a lake that goes up.

There is a little carriage left in the copse, or which runs down the lane with ribbons on it.



There is a troupe of little actors in costume, glimpsed on the road through the edge of the woods.

There is, finally, when you are hungry and thirsty, someone who drives you away.

IV

I am the saint, praying on the terrace — as the peaceful beasts graze down to the sea of Palestine.

I am the scholar in the dark armchair. Branches and the rain hurl themselves at the library windows.

I am the traveller on the high road through the stunted woods; the roar of the sluices drowns [the sound of] my steps. I watch for a long time the melancholy golden wash of the sunset.

I might be the child left on the jetty washed out to sea, the little farm boy following the lane whose crest touches the sky.

The paths are rough. The hillocks are covered with broom. The air is motionless. How far away the birds and the springs are! It can only be the end of the world, ahead.

V

Let them rent me this tomb at last, whitewashed and showing the lines of cement in relief — far down under the ground.

I lean my elbows on the table, the lamp lights up brightly these newspapers which I am a fool to read again, these books devoid of interest.

At an enormous distance above my underground living-room, houses spread their roots, fogs gather. The mud is either red or black. Monstrous city, night without end!

Not so high up, there are sewers. At each side, nothing but the thickness of the globe. Perhaps chasms of azure, wells of fire. Perhaps it is on these levels that moons and comets, seas and fables, meet.

In my hours of bitterness I imagine balls of sapphire, of metal. I am the master of silence. Why should something which resembles a skylight pale at the corner of the vault?

Peschel

Childhood

I

That idol, black eyes and yellow mane, without kinsmen or court, more noble than fable, Mexican and Flemish: his domain, insolent azure and verdure, extends over the beaches named by the waves without ships with names fiercely Greek, Slav, Celtic.

At the edge of the forest — the dream flowers tinkle, sparkle, illuminate, — the girl with orange lip, her knees crossed in the clear flood that gushes from the meadows, nakedness which the rainbows, the flora, the sea shade, traverse and clothe.

Ladies who turn round and round on the terraces adjacent to the sea; little girls and giantesses, superb black women in the verdigris moss, jewels upright on the rich earth of the groves and of the thawed small gardens,— young mothers and grown-up sisters with glances full of pilgrimages, sultanas, princesses tyrannical in bearing and in dress, little foreign girls and persons quietly unhappy.

What a bore, the hour of the “dear body” and “dear heart”!

II

It's she, the little dead girl, behind the rosebushes. — The deceased young mamma descends the flight of steps. — The cousin's carriage creaks on the sand. — The little brother — (he is in the Indies!) there, against the sunset, in the meadow of pinks. — The old men who have been buried upright in the rampart with the gillyflowers.

The swarm of golden leaves encircles the general's house. They are in the south. — One follows the red road to arrive at the empty inn. The castle is for sale; the shutters are unhinged. — The parish priest must have taken away the key of the church. — Around the park, the keepers' lodges are uninhabited. The fences are so high that one sees only the rustling treetops. Besides, there is nothing to see inside.



The meadows rise again to the hamlets without weathercocks, without anvils. The floodgate is raised. O the calvaries and the mills of the wilderness, the islands and the millstones!

Magic flowers were murmuring. Embankments cradled him. Beasts of a fabulous elegance moved around. Storm clouds accumulated over the high sea made of an eternity of bitter tears.

III

In the woods, there is a bird; his song arrests you and makes you blush.

There is a clock that does not strike.

There is a gully with a nest of white beasts.

There is a cathedral that descends and a lake that rises.

There is a little carriage abandoned in the thicket, or which, adorned with ribbons, goes racing down the path.

There is a company of little actors in costumes, glimpsed on the road through the edge of the woods.

There is, finally, when you are hungry and thirsty, someone who chases you away.

IV

I am the saint, at prayer on the terrace, — as the peaceful beasts graze even to the sea of Palestine.

I am the scholar in the dark armchair. The branches and the rain fling themselves at the casement of the library.

I am the pedestrian on the highway through the stunted woods; the din of the floodgates muffles my steps. I view for a long time the melancholy golden wash of the sunset.

I could well be the child abandoned on the jetty washed away to the high sea, the little valet following the lane whose brow touches the sky.

The paths are rough. The knolls are covered with broom. The air is motionless. How far away are the birds and the springs! It can only be the end of the world, ahead.

V

Let them at last rent me this tomb, whitewashed with lines of cement in relief, — very far under the ground.

I lean on my elbows at the table; the lamp very vividly lights up these newspapers which I'm an idiot to reread, these uninteresting books.

At an enormous distance above my subterranean drawing room, houses take root, fogs gather. The mud is red or black. Monstrous city, night without end!

Not so high up, are the sewers. At the sides, nothing but the thickness of the globe. Perhaps whirlpools of azure, wells of fire. It is perhaps on these planes that moons and comets, seas and fables meet.

In hours of bitterness I imagine balls of sapphire, of metal. I am master of the silence. Why would an appearance of a vent grow pale in the corner of the vault?



“Ville”

Fowlie

City

I am an ephemeral and not-too-discontented citizen of a metropolis obviously modern because every known taste has been avoided in the furnishings and the outsides of the houses as well as in the layout of the city. Here you would not discover the least sign of any monument of superstition. In short, morals and speech are reduced to their simplest expression. These millions of people who have no need of knowing one another conduct their education, their trade, and their old age with such similarity that the duration of their lives must be several times shorter than, according to some insane statistics, is the case with the people on the continent. From my window, I see new ghosts rolling through thick, everlasting coal smoke — our shadow in the woods, our summer night! — new Eumenides in front of my cottage which is my country and my heart since everything here resembles it — Death without tears, our active daughter and servant, a desperate Love, and a pretty Crime crying in the mud of the street.

Bernard

City

I am an ephemeral and not at all too discontented citizen of a metropolis which is believed to be modern because every known taste has been avoided in the furnishing and the exteriors of the houses as well as in the layout of the city. Here you cannot point out the trace of a single monument to the past. Morals and language have been reduced to their simplest expression, in short! These millions of people who have no need to know each other carry on their education, their work, and their old age so similarly that the course of their lives must be several times shorter than the findings of absurd statistics allow the people of the continent. Thus, from my window, I see new apparitions roaming through the thick and endless coal-smoke — our woodland shade, our summer's night! — new Erinnyes, in front of my cottage which is my country and my whole heart since everything here is like this: Death without tears, our active daughter and servant, a desperate Love and a pretty Crime whimpering in the mud of the street.

Peschel

City

I am a transitory and not too dissatisfied citizen of a metropolis deemed modern because all recognized taste has been avoided in the furnishings and the exterior of the houses as well as in the plan of the city. Here you would not mark the traces of a single monument to superstition. In short, morality and language are reduced to their simplest expression! These millions of people who have no need to know one another conduct their education, occupation and old age so similarly that their course of life must be several times shorter than that which insane statistics establishes for the peoples of the continent. Also, as it were, from my window, I see new specters rolling through the thick and everlasting coal fumes — our forest shade, our summer night! — new Furies, in front of my cottage which is my homeland and all my heart since everything here is like this, — Death without tears, our busy daughter and handmaiden, a Love despondent and a pretty Crime whining in the filth of the street.

“Villes” I

Fowlie

Cities II

The official acropolis surpasses the most colossal conceptions of modern barbarism. Impossible to express the flat daylight produced by this unchanging gray sky, the imperial glitter of the buildings, and the eternal snow on the ground. In a singular taste for the gigantic they reproduced all the classical architectural marvels, and I visit exhibitions of paintings in rooms twenty times larger than Hampton Court. What paintings! A Norwegian Nebuchadnezzar built the stairways of the government buildings; the underlings I saw are already prouder than ... and I trembled at the sight



of the guards of the colossi and the building officials. By arranging the buildings into squares, closed courtyards, and terraces, they cheated the cab-drivers. The parks represent a primitive nature artfully and proudly laid out. The upper part of the city has inexplicable parts: a river from the sea, without boats, unfolds its blue slate water between wharves supporting tremendous candelabra. A short bridge leads to a postern right under the dome of the Sainte-Chapelle. This dome is an artistic framework of steel, about fifteen thousand feet in diameter.

From a few points of the copper foot-bridges, and platforms and stairways surrounding the markets and pillars, I thought I could estimate the depth of the city! This is the miracle I was not able to judge: what are the levels of the other parts above or below the acropolis? For the foreigner of our day, reconnoitering is impossible. The business quarter is a circus constructed in a uniform style, with arcade galleries. You cannot see any shops, but the snow of the highway is flattened; a few nabobs, as rare as Sunday morning walkers in London, are moving toward a diamond coach. A few divans of red velvet. They serve North Pole drinks at a price between eight hundred and eight thousand rupees. While on the point of looking for theatres in this circus, I tell myself that the shops must contain fairly tragic dramas. I think there are policemen. But the law must be so unusual that I give up imagining what adventurers are like here.

The suburb, as elegant as a beautiful street in Paris, enjoys an air of light, and the democratic constituency numbers a few hundred souls. Here, too, the houses do not follow one another. The suburb melts strangely into the country, the "County" filling the eternal west with forests and gigantic plantations, where savage nobles hunt their news columns in the light which they invented.

Bernard

Cities

The official acropolis outdoes the most colossal conceptions of modern barbarity. It is impossible to describe the dull light produced by the unchanging grey sky, the imperial brightness of the masonry, and the eternal snow on the ground. They have reproduced, in singularly outrageous taste, all the classical marvels of architecture. I go to exhibitions of painting in places twenty times vaster than Hampton-Court. What painting! A Norwegian Nebuchadnezzar designed the staircases of the ministries; the minor officials I did see are prouder than Brahmins as it is, and the looks of the guardians of colossi and of the building foremen made me tremble. By their grouping of the buildings, in closed squares, terraces, and courtyards, they have squeezed out the bell-towers. The parks present primeval nature cultivated with marvellous art. There are parts of the better district which are inexplicable: an arm of the sea, without boats, rolls its sheet of blue ground glass between quays covered with giant candelabra. A short bridge leads to a postern immediately below the dome of the Holy Chapel. This dome is an artistic framework of steel about fifteen thousand feet in diameter.

From certain [vantage-]points on the copper foot-bridges, the platforms, the stairways which wind round the covered markets and the pillars, I thought I could judge the depth of the city. This was the marvel I was unable to verify: what are the levels of the other districts above or below the acropolis? For the foreigner in our times exploration is impossible. The commercial district is a circus in the same style, with galleries of arcades. One can see no shops, but the snow on the roadway is trampled; a few nabobs, as rare as walkers on a Sunday morning in London, move towards a stage-coach made of diamonds. There are a few red velvet divans: polar drinks are served, whose prices range from eight hundred to eight thousand rupees. To my idea of looking for theatres in this circus, I reply that the shops must contain some pretty gloomy dramas? I think there is a police force; but the laws must be so strange that I give up trying to imagine what the adventurers of this place are like.

The outlying part, as elegant as a fine street in Paris, is favoured with the appearance of light; the democratic elements numbers a few hundred souls. Here again, the houses are not in rows; the suburb loses itself oddly in the country, the "County" which fills the endless west with forests and huge plantations where misanthropic gentlemen hunt for news in the light which is their own creation.



Peschel

Cities

The official acropolis exceeds the most colossal conceptions of modern barbarity. Impossible to convey the dull daylight produced by the immuable gray sky, the imperial splendor of the buildings, and the eternal snow on the ground. They have reproduced with a singular taste for enormity all the classical marvels of architecture. I attend exhibitions of painting in premises twenty times more vast than Hampton Court. What painting! A Norwegian Nebuchadnezzar had the staircases of the ministries built; the subordinates I was able to see are already prouder than Brahmans, and I trembled at the sight of the guardians of colossi and supervisors of structures. By the grouping of buildings, in squares, courtyards and enclosed terraces, they have ousted the coachmen. The parks exhibit primitive nature cultivated with a superb art. The upper quarter has some inexplicable parts: an arm of the sea, without boats, rolls its cover of blue sleet between quays laden with gigantic candelabra. A short bridge leads to a postern immediately beneath the dome of Sainte-Chapelle. This dome is an artistic framework of steel about fifteen thousand feet in diameter.

From some points of the copper footbridges, of the platforms, of the staircases which wind round the markets and the pillars, I thought I could judge the depth of the city! This is the marvel for which I was not able to account: what are the levels of the other quarters above or below the acropolis? For the stranger of our time exploration is impossible. The business quarter is a circus in a single style, with galleries in arcades. One does not see any shops, but the snow of the roadway is trampled; a few nabobs, as rare as pedestrians on a Sunday morning in London, make their way towards a stagecoach of diamonds. A few divans of red velvet: polar drinks, whose price varies from eight hundred to eight thousand rupees, are served. At the thought of looking for theaters in this circus, I tell myself that the shops must contain some rather gloomy dramas? I think that there is a police force; but the law must be so strange, that I give up forming an idea of the adventurers of this place.

The suburb, as elegant as a beautiful street in Paris, is favored with an atmosphere of light; the democratic element comprises a few hundred souls. There, too, the houses do not follow each other; the suburb disappears strangely into the countryside, the "County" which fills the endless west with forests and with prodigious plantations where savage noblemen hunt their chronicles by the light which has been created.

"Villes" II

Fowlie

Cities I

They are cities! They are a people for whom these Alleghanies and dream Lebanons have risen up. Swiss chalets of crystal and wood move along invisible rails and pulleys. Old craters girdled by colossi and copper palm trees roar tunefully in the midst of fires. The sounds of love feasts ring out over canals suspended behind the chalets. The pack of chimes clamors in the gorges. Guilds of gigantic singers come together in clothes and banners as shining as the light on the mountain tops. On platforms, within precipices, Rolands blare forth their valor. On foot bridges spanning the abyss and on the roofs of the inns, the burning sky decks out masts. The collapse of apotheoses joins the field with the highlands where seraphic centaresses move about in avalanches. Above the level of the highest crests, a sea, disturbed by the eternal birth of Venus, heavy with Orphis navies and the roar of pearls and precious shells, the sea sometimes grows dark with mortal splendor. On the slopes, harvests of flowers as big as our weapons and our tankards bellow. Long lines of Mabs in red and opal dresses come up from the valleys. There, with their feet in the waterfall and the briars, deer suckle at the breasts of Diana. The Bacchantes of the suburbs sob and the moon burns and shouts. Venus goes into the caverns of blacksmiths and hermits. Groups of belfries intone the ideas of the people. Unfamiliar music comes from the castles built of bones. All legends gyrate and the impulses of the living hurl themselves about in the villages. The paradise of storms comes to its end. The savages dance ceaselessly in the celebration of night. And for an hour, I went down into the animated Baghdad boulevard where



groups sang the joy of new work, in a sluggish breeze, moving about without eluding the fabulous phantoms of the mountains where people had to find themselves again.

What good arms, what precious hour will give me back that place from whence come my sleep and my slightest movements?

Bernard

Cities

What cities! This is a people for whom these dream Alleghanies and dream Lebanons were staged! Chalets of crystal and of wood which move on invisible rails and pulleys. The old craters surrounded with colossi and copper palm-trees roar melodiously in the flames. Feasts of love sound across the canals hanging behind the chalets. The hunting of the chimes halloos in the passes. Guilds of gigantic singers come flocking with robes and oriflammes as dazzling as the light of the mountain-tops. On platforms in the midst of the gulfs, Rolands trumpet their valour. On the foot-bridges across the abyss, and on the roofs of the inns, the sky's heat decks the masts with flags. The crumbling of apotheoses overtakes the higher fields where angelic centaresses move about among the avalanches. Above the level of the highest crests, a sea stirred up by the continual birth of Venus, bearing choral fleets and the murmur of the precious pearls and conchs — the sea darkens at times with deadly flashes. On the slopes, harvests of flowers, huge as our weapons and goblets, bellow. Processions of Mabs in russet and opaline robes climb from the ravines. Up there, their feet in the waterfall and the brambles, the deer suckle at the Diana's breast. The Bacchantes of the suburbs sob, and the moon burns and howls. Venus enters the caves of blacksmiths and hermits. Groups of belfries sing out the ideas of peoples. From castles built of bones comes unknown music. All the legends develop and the elks rush into the towns. The paradise of storms subsides. The savages dance without ceasing at the nocturnal festival. And, at one time, I went down into the bustle of a Baghdad street where gatherings of people sang of the joy of new labours, in a heavy breeze, moving about without being able to escape the incredible phantoms of the mountains where they must have met.

What kind arms, what lovely hour will bring me back that region from which my slumbers and my slightest movements come?

Peschel

Cities

What cities these are! This is a people for whom these dream Alleghanies and Lebanons rose up! Chalets of crystal and wood that move on invisible rails and pulleys. Old craters surrounded by colossi and copper palm trees roar melodiously in the fires. Love feasts resound over canals suspended behind chalets. The play of chimes clamors in the gorges. Guilds of giant singers flock together with vestments and oriflammes as dazzling as the light of the summits. On platforms in the midst of whirlpools Rolands trumpet their bravery. On the footbridges of the abyss and roofs of the inns the fire of the sky adorns the masts with flags. The collapse of apotheoses overtakes the fields of the hilltops where seraphic centaresses revolve among the avalanches. Above the level of the highest crests, a sea troubled by the eternal birth of Venus, filled with choral fleets and the murmur of precious pearls and conches; — the sea grows somber sometimes with fatal flashes. On the slopes, harvests of flowers large as our weapons and our goblets, bellow. Processions of Mabs in russet robes, opaline, ascend from the ravines. Up there, with their feet in the waterfall and the brambles, deer nurse at the Diana's breast. The Bacchantes of the suburbs sob and the moon burns and howls. Venus enters the caves of blacksmiths and of hermits. Groups of belfries sing the ideas of the people. From castles built of bone issues unknown music. All legends evolve and the enthusiasms rush through the towns. The paradise of storms subsides. The savages dance ceaselessly in celebration of the night. And, once, I went down into the bustle of a boulevard of Baghdad where companies sang the joy of the new work, in a heavy breeze, going about unable to elude the fabulous phantoms of the mountains where one had to find himself again.

What good arms, what fine hour will give me back this region from which my slumbers and my slightest movements come?



“Démocratie”

Fowlie

Democracy

“The flag's off to that filthy place, and our speech drowns the sound of the drum.

“In the centers we'll feed the most cynical whoring. We'll smash all logical revolts.

“To the peppery dried-up countries! — in the service of the most gigantic industrial or military exploitation.

“Goodbye to this place. No matter where we're off to. We conscripts of good will are going to display a savage philosophy; ignorant in science, rakes where our comfort is concerned; and let the world blow up! This is the real march. Forward, men!”

Bernard

Democracy

“The flag suits the filthy landscape, and our dialect drowns the sound of the drum.

“In the interior we shall nourish the most cynical prostitution. We shall massacre all logical revolts.

“To the spicy softened countries! — at the service of the most monstrous industrial or military exploitations.

“Until we meet again: here, no matter where. Conscripts of our own accord, we shall have a ferocious philosophy; ignorant of science, cunning for comfort; let the rest of the world kick the bucket. That's the real way. Forward — march!”

Peschel

Democracy

“The flag fits the foul landscape, and our dialect stifles the drum.

“In the centers we shall support the most cynical prostitution. We shall destroy the logical revolts.

“To the spicy and sodden lands! — at the service of the most monstrous industrial or military exploitations.

“Till we meet again here, no matter where. Conscripts of good will, we shall have our ferocious philosophy; ignorant as regards science, crafty for comfort; let the rest of the world drop dead. That's real progress. Forward, let's go!”

“Dévotion”

Fowlie

Devotion

To Sister Louise Vanaen de Voringhem: with her blue coif turned toward the North Sea. Pray for the shipwrecked. To Sister Léonie Auboïs d'Ashby. Baou! — the buzzing, smelly summer grass . — Pray for the fever of mothers and children.

To Lulu — a devil — who has kept a taste for oratories of the time of friends and her incomplete education. Pray for men! — To Madame ...

To the adolescent that I once was. To that holy elder, hermitage or mission.

To the spirit of the poor. And to a very high-ranking clergy.

As well as to every devotion in every place of age-old worship and to such events where one has to go, to observe the aspirations of the moment or our own ingrained vice.

This evening to Circeto of the cold heights, fat as a fish, and illuminated like the ten months of the red night — (her heart amber and spirited) — for my one prayer silent as those night regions and preceding bravery more violent than this polar chaos.

At all costs and in every manner, even in metaphysical journeys. — But no more *thens*

Bernard

Devotion

To Sister Louise Vanaen de Voringhem — her blue coif turned towards the North Sea — For the shipwrecked.



To Sister Léonie Auboïs d'Ashby. Baow! — the buzzing, stinking summer grass .
— For the fevers of mothers and children.

To Lulu — demon — who has, still, a taste for the oratories of the period of *Les Amies* and of her incomplete education. For men — To Madame ***.

To the adolescent that I was. To this holy old man, hermitage or mission.

To the spirit of the poor. And to a very high clergy.

Also to every cult in such a place of memorial cult and among such events that one must surrender, according either to the aspirations of the moment or to our own serious vice.

This evening, to Circeto of the icy heights, fat as a fish and illuminated like the ten months of the red light — (her heart amber and spunk) — as my only prayer which shall be as silent as those regions of night, and shall go before feats of daring more violent than this polar chaos.

At any price, under any semblance, even in metaphysical journeys— But *then* no more.

Peschel

Devotion

To my sister Louise Vanaen de Voringhem: — Her blue coif turned toward the North Sea. — For the shipwrecked.

To my sister Léonie Auboïs d'Ashby. Baou! — the summer's grass buzzing and stinking. — For the fever of mothers and of children.

To Lulu, — demon — who has retained a taste for the chapels of the time of the *Amies* and of her incomplete education. For the men. — To Madame ***.

To the adolescent that I was. To this saintly old man, hermitage or mission.

To the spirit of the poor. And to a very high clergy.

Moreover, to every cult in such place of memorial cult and among such occurrences that it may be necessary to surrender, following the aspirations of the moment or else our own serious vice.

This evening, to Circeto of the towering ice, fat as the fish, and flushed like the ten months of the red night — (her heart amber and spunk), — for my own only prayer silent like these regions of night and preceding acts of bravery more violent than this polar chaos.

At any price and in all atmospheres, even in metaphysical travels. — But no more *after that*.

“Mouvement”

Fowlie

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 harmonic ecstasy,
And the heroism of discovery.

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

Bernard

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 fortune;
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,
In the terrible nights of study.

For from the talk amid 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 propulsive 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.

Peschel

Movement

The swaying movement on the steep bank 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 the 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 dike beyond the hydraulic power
road,
Monstrous, lighting up endlessly, — their stock of studies;
The people driven into harmonic 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.

“Solde”

Fowlie

Sale

For sale what the Jews have not sold, what nobility and crime have not enjoyed, what the fatal love and the infernal honesty of the masses do not know; what time and science need not recognize;

Revived Voices: the brotherly awakening of all choral and orchestral power and their immediate application; the unique opportunity of freeing our senses!

For sale priceless Bodies, not belonging to any known race, world, sex, progeny!
Wealth rising up at each step! Sale of diamonds with no control!

For sale anarchy for the masses; irrepressible satisfaction for superior amateurs;
terrible death for the faithful and lovers!

For sale dwellings and migrations, sports, fantasies and perfect comfort, with the noise, movement, and future they create!

For sale results of mathematics and unheard-of scales of harmony. Discoveries and unsuspected terminologies, immediate possession,

Wild and infinite leap to invisible splendour, to immaterial delights, — and ravishing secrets for each vice — and its terrifying gaiety for the masses.

For sale bodies, voices, the tremendous, unquestionable wealth, what will never be sold. The salesmen have not reached the end of the sale! Travelers do not have to render accounts immediately!

Bernard

Clearance Sale

For sale what the Jews have not sold, what neither noble birth nor crime have tasted, what accursed love and the infernal integrity of the masses know nothing of; what neither time nor learning need recognize:

The Voices reconstituted; the fraternal awakening of all choral and orchestral energies and their immediate applications; the opportunity, unique, of freeing our senses!

For sale bodies above price, not to be found in any race, world, sex or line of descent! Riches spurting at every step! Unrationed sale of diamonds!

For sale anarchy for the masses; irrepressible satisfaction for connoisseurs; frightful death for the faithful and for lovers!



For sale dwelling-places and migrations, sports, perfect magic and perfect comfort, and the noise, the movement, and the future they create!

For sale unheard-of applications of reckoning and leaps of harmony. Lucky finds and terms unsuspected, with immediate possession.

Wild and infinite impulse towards invisible splendours, intangible delights, with its maddening secrets for every vice and its frightful gaiety for the crowd.

For sale bodies, voices, the immense unquestionable opulence, that which will never be sold. The firm is not at the end of its clearance stock! Our travellers won't have to turn in their accounts for a long time yet!

Peschel

Clearance Sale

For sale what the Jews have not sold, what neither nobility nor crime has tasted, what accursed love and the infernal probity of the people do not know; what neither time nor science has to acknowledge:

The Voices restored; the fraternal awakening of all choral and orchestral energies and their instantaneous applications; the opportunity, unique, to free our senses!

For sale priceless bodies, beyond any race, any world, any sex, any lineage! Riches springing up at every step! Clearance sale of diamonds without control!

For sale anarchy for the masses; irrepressible satisfaction for superior amateurs; excruciating death for the faithful and the lovers!

For sale settlements and migrations, sports, fairylands and perfect comforts, and the noise, the movement and the future they create!

For sale applications of calculation and unprecedented leaps of harmony. Discoveries and terms not suspected, immediate possession.

Mad and endless transport to invisible splendors, to unconscious delights, and its bewildering secrets for every vice and its grim gaiety for the crowd.

For sale the bodies, the voices, the immense, unquestionable opulence, that which will never be sold. The vendors have not reached the end of their clearance sale! The travelers will not have to render their commission for some time to come!

