

Abstract (100 words)

This joint article proposes a *comparative encounter* involving Baudelaire-Bertrand-Rimbaud to show that pieces of verse and prose by Charles Baudelaire and Aloysius Bertrand are as much about split identities as Arthur Rimbaud's poetry foregrounding the demise of Cartesian unity in the *I*. We assess the other as a locus of contrasts in the verse of Bertrand's "Boutade bacchique" and Baudelaire's "Alchimie de la douleur" from *Les fleurs du mal*, then distinguish prose-based manifestations of the other in Baudelaire's *Le spleen de Paris* alongside Bertrand's *Gaspard de la nuit*, before considering others as a heterogeneous collective in Rimbaud's "Parade" from *Illuminations*.

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4659 words

Destabilizing the Other in Baudelaire-Bertrand-Rimbaud

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CHARLES BAUDELAIRE, in the dedicatory remarks to Arsène Houssaye at the beginning of *Le spleen de Paris* (1869), cites Aloysius Bertrand's *Gaspard de la nuit* (1842) as an inspiration:

C'est en feuilletant, pour la vingtième fois au moins, le fameux *Gaspard de la Nuit*, d'Aloysius Bertrand [...] que l'idée m'est venue de tenter quelque chose d'analogue, et d'appliquer à la description de la vie moderne, ou plutôt d'une vie moderne et plus abstraite, le procédé qu'il avait appliqué à la peinture de la vie ancienne, si étrangement pittoresque. [...]

Mais, [...] [s]itôt que j'eus commencé le travail, je m'aperçus que non seulement je restais bien loin de mon mystérieux et brillant modèle, mais encore que je faisais quelque chose [...] de singulièrement différent. (OC 1:275-76)

Baudelaire dexterously orchestrates this declaration of a partial debt to Bertrand's prose *fantaisies*. As Steve Murphy observes, "lorsqu'on parle de 'lettre' à Arsène Houssaye, il faut se rappeler que l'on n'est pas en présence d'une expression spontanée et primesautière destinée uniquement à Houssaye: il s'agit [...] d'un métatexte soigneusement composé."¹ Baudelaire's letter to Houssaye on Christmas Day in 1861 pointedly downplays stylistic commonalities between *Le spleen de Paris* and Bertrand's works in prose: "mon point de départ a été *Gaspard de la Nuit* d'Aloysius Bertrand [...]; mais j'ai bien vite senti que je ne pouvais pas persévérer dans ce pastiche et que l'œuvre était inimitable."² Théophile Gautier, one of the first readers of Baudelaire's prose poetry, follows the author's lead in asserting the disparate nature of the posthumously published collections: "il n'est pas besoin de dire que rien ne ressemble moins à *Gaspard de la Nuit* que les *Petits Poèmes en prose*. Baudelaire lui-même s'en aperçut dès qu'il eut commencé son travail et il constata cet *accident*."³ In recent studies of *Le spleen de Paris*, the concept of Bertrand's influence on Baudelaire is a perennial fount of caveats: James Hiddleston remarks on "the profound differences" between each

author's poetry;⁴ Sonya Stephens suggests that Baudelaire's acknowledgement of Bertrand "must [...] be ironic;"⁵ Maria Scott comments that the mention of Bertrand is "highly suspect."⁶ In contrast, Ross Chambers asserts Baudelaire's "genuine debt to Aloysius Bertrand."⁷ Our article builds on Chambers's view by establishing a dynamic encounter between authors with much in common.

Twenty-first-century readers of nineteenth-century poets have a tendency to apply an evolutionist paradigm to nineteenth-century poetry: Baudelaire's *Le spleen de Paris*, more modern than Bertrand's *Gaspard de la nuit*, is less modern than Rimbaud's *Illuminations* (1886), in which we find the modernist idea of a split in the integrity of the *I* – "Je est un autre."⁸ Such a retrospective appreciation of Bertrand runs the risk of undervaluing him as a mere precursor of the form of prose poetry that developed in the second half of the nineteenth century. If we conjecture a non-linear framework of coexistent interlocutors, how different are the poetic practices of Baudelaire, Bertrand, and Rimbaud? Xiaofan Amy Li points to the fruitfulness of comparative recontextualizations based on "the connectibility of ideas – their interaction and mutual clarification – rather than the difference or proximity of their historical and cultural contexts."⁹ In this article, we put aside dates of birth and death to imagine a "comparative encounter"¹⁰ comprising Baudelaire-Bertrand-Rimbaud. Our interactions with the poets' texts and other critics add to this authorial "meshwork."¹¹ According to Robert St Clair, "reading invariably exposes us to others with whom we necessarily have a great deal in common, with whom we need to work in order to make sure that certain values, texts, messages, or narratives from the past are not forever lost to the void [...]. To read means working together, it implies a conversation."¹² We are two scholars conversing at a distance of ten thousand miles, with the aim of showing that Baudelaire, Bertrand, and Rimbaud share an aesthetic in which the integrity of the *I* is distinctly subverted. We propose to analyze the treatment of the self and the other in key works as evidence of split identities that undermine the Cartesian idea of unified subjectivity.

According to Descartes, the *I* is a unified entity: "l'esprit est entièrement indivisible; [...] lorsque je considère mon esprit, c'est-à-dire moi-même en tant que je suis seulement une chose qui pense, je n'y puis distinguer aucunes parties, mais je me conçois comme une chose seule et entière."¹³ We argue that depictions of others and the self in the poetry of Baudelaire-Bertrand-Rimbaud challenge this idea of indivisible being. Indeed, the three authors' depictions of self-other relations tend toward an understanding of the self as other. As Jacques Derrida puts it, "l'autre est pour moi un ego dont je sais qu'il a rapport à moi comme à un autre."¹⁴ This concept of a constellation involving the self and multiple others allows us to understand the subject as an unstable locus. We wish to explore the chain reaction of subverted unity evoked by Rimbaud's famous statement of oneself-as-other, whereby "Je est un autre" implies a split in the *I* that affects the self and the other, as well as the self-other relation – *Je est un autre, qui est un je, qui est un autre*. Our conjectural conversation begins with an assessment of the other as a locus of contrasts in verse by Baudelaire and Bertrand. We then distinguish manifestations of the other in Baudelaire's prose poems alongside Bertrand's *fantaisies*, before considering others as a heterogeneous collective in a prose poem by Rimbaud that displays several commonalities with the aforementioned works.

Contrasting others

Bertrand's verse, overshadowed by *Gaspard de la nuit*, is little known and rarely analyzed, even in studies devoted to the author. In Bertrand's modicum of versified works, we find tensions and contrasts that are perpetuated in his prose compositions. "Boutade bacchique"¹⁵ stages opposing tendencies in three quatrains of octosyllables:

- L'un qui se travaille et s'échine,
 S'en va visiter le Boa,
 Chercher un magot à la Chine,
 4. Un cornet de poivre à Goa.

- L'autre que tous soins importune
 Sous le duvet s'ensevelit,
 Espérant bien que la fortune
 8. Le viendra tirer de son lit.

- Mortels insensés que vous êtes,
 Riez, buvez durant vos jours,
 Consolez-vous d'être mazettes,
 12. Car mazettes serez toujours.

The opening word of the first quatrain, which is complemented by the first word of the second quatrain, introduces a principle of contrasts based on the *I*'s vision of the other in two guises. The first figure's industrious character is juxtaposed with the second figure's fretful indolence, before the final quatrain evokes the *I*'s distancing of the "mortels insensés" (9) as contemptible "mazettes" (11, 12). The five instances of third-person-singular constructions highlight lone others as antithetical figures, whereas the three instances of second-person-plural constructions highlight a collective other. The first quatrain presents a dynamic protagonist who pursues exotic artefacts in far-flung locales stretching from South America to western India. The rhyme in [ʃin] between "s'échine" (1) and "Chine" (3) emphasizes exertions in relation to an environment that is 5,500 miles from France, while the rhyme in [ɔ.a] between "Boa" (2) and "Goa" (4) underscores pursuits across a distance of 7,500 miles. In opposition to the magnitude of the first figure's undertakings, the second quatrain focusses on a timorous protagonist. The rhyme in [ɔʁ.tyn] between "importune" (5) and "fortune" (7) conveys worldly events as harassments, while the rhyme in [li] between "s'ensevelit" (6) and "lit" (8) shows up reclusive behavior. This broad spectrum of rhymes prepares the ground for the shift toward the relationship between the *I* and a collective other by emphasizing the dissimilarity of the second individual's lassitude and the first individual's vivacity. The third quatrain offers an expansive vision of a homogeneous group warranting a satirical admonition, with the exotic air of the rhyme in [zet] between "vous êtes" (9) and "mazettes" (11) accentuating the denigration of the collective. Bertrand's poem, with its transition from antithetical figures to a grand other, has much in common with Baudelaire's depiction of contrasting protagonists in "Alchimie de la douleur," added to the opening section of *Les fleurs du mal* in 1861.

Baudelaire's "Alchimie de la douleur" (OC 1:77) is a sonnet of octosyllables exemplifying a tendency toward antithetical distinctions in the "Spleen et idéal" section of *Les fleurs du mal*. Indeed, James Lawler describes the alchemically themed sonnet as encapsulating "the law of dialectical contrasts that *Les Fleurs du mal* illustrates from

beginning to end. For each action there is an equal and opposite reaction, for each death a life, for each darkness an illumination.”¹⁶ As with Bertrand’s “Boutade bacchique,” the poem is structured around differentiated others:

- L’un t’éclaire avec son ardeur,
L’autre en toi met son deuil, Nature!
Ce qui dit à l’un: Sépulture!
4. Dit à l’autre: Vie et splendeur!

- Hermès inconnu qui m’assistes
Et qui toujours m’intimidas,
Tu me rends l’égal de Midas,
8. Le plus triste des alchimistes;

- Par toi je change l’or en fer
Et le paradis en enfer;
11. Dans le suaire des nuages

- Je découvre un cadavre cher,
Et sur les célestes rivages
14. Je bâtis de grands sarcophages.

The opening word of the first quatrain – replicating the beginning of Bertrand’s “Boutade bacchique” – prepares the ground for a bipartite vision of others that is emphasized by the stress on the falling *e* (a *coupe lyrique*) at the midpoint of the fourth line. The dichotomous quatrain, which revolves around three sets of repetition regarding antithetical attitudes to Nature and fate, envelops the pessimistic perspective of the second and third lines in the optimistic perspective of the first and fourth lines: “L’un” (1) pairs with “l’autre” (4); “L’autre” (2) pairs with “l’un” (3). The enclosed-rhyme structure (ABBA) amplifies the narrative of binaries, since the rhyme in [dœʀ] between “ardeur” (1) and “splendeur” (4) draws attention to a passionate pursuit of glory, while the rhyme in [tyʀ] between “Nature” (2) and “Sépulture” (3) emphasizes a negation of organic vibrancy.

The second quatrain supplements the initial round of oppositional outlooks with the transcendental figure of Hermes Trismegistus, whose otherness is an inspiration for the *I*’s transformative undertaking, though complications surround the source of the protoscience of alchemy. The rhyme in [ist] between “m’assistes” (5) and “alchimistes” (8) points to the other’s alchemical stimulus, while the rhyme in [mi.da] between “m’intimidas” (6) and “Midas” (7) highlights the *I*’s unease in the face of the masterful other, with the golden touch evoked as a mixed blessing. This avowal of difficulties in shadowing a forebear on the road to transmutation is analogous to Bertrand’s “L’alchimiste,” in which a rapport with an arcane

other is caustically depicted: “vainement ai-je feuilleté pendant trois jours et trois nuits, aux blafardes lueurs de la lampe, les livres hermétiques de Raymond-Lulle!” (Bertrand 129).

The fearsome intermediary in the *I*'s movement toward alchemy prompts a focus on tensions in the self in the tercets. The *I*'s turn to the dark side recalls the melancholic other's outlook in the opening quatrain, with the rhyme in [ã.fɛʁ] between “en fer” (9) and “enfer” (10) foregrounding ghastly creativity negating a constructive ethos. The earlier contrasts (between the figures with divergent outlooks; between Hermes and the *I*) are brought to an end by the *I* opting for deathly otherness in a negation of positive being. The acoustic associations in the tercets emphasize this internal schism: the rhyme in [ɛʁ] between “enfer” (10) and “cher” (12) conveys a splenetic attitude; the concluding rhyme in [aʒ] between “rivages” (13) and “sarcophages” (14) shows up a grisly perception of the world. In line with the negative impulse in the final quatrain of Bertrand's “Boutade bacchique,” Baudelaire's sonnet concludes with the demise of the affirmative qualities of being. This dissection of contrasting polarities in the other and the self provides a basis for comparable manifestations of disunity in *Le spleen de Paris* and *Gaspard de la nuit*.

Challenging the unity of the other

In the first preface of *Gaspard de la nuit*, poet-protagonist Louis Bertrand's relentless search for art is set against the blurring of the *I*. The attribution of the text to M. Gaspard de la Nuit – the alleged writer of the *fantaisies*, who might be “le diable” (Bertrand 104) – compounds the doubling of Bertrand as Louis, instead of Aloysius. In the presentation of the prose collection as worthy of publication, M. Gaspard's status as an authorial doppelgänger is tinged with irony: “‘si Gaspard de la Nuit est en enfer, qu'il y rôtisse. J'imprime son livre.’ Louis Bertrand” (Bertrand 104). Textual hybridity is starkly conveyed through the split figure of Louis/Aloysius displacing the fabricated other. Bertrand's first preface, by heralding a blurring of the boundaries between unitary natures in art and being, establishes a multivocal style that develops in the second preface – attributed to M. Gaspard – through the contrasting figures of Rembrandt and Callot.

Art is personified in the second preface – described by Helen Poggenburg as “un cadre à l'intérieur d'un cadre” (Bertrand 293n1) – as a split other with antithetical faces that represent the aesthetic differences of painter Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-69) and printmaker Jacques Callot (1592-1635): “l'art a toujours deux faces antithétiques, médaille dont, par exemple, un côté accuserait la ressemblance de Paul Rembrandt, et le revers, celle de Jacques Callot. [...] Or, l'auteur de ce livre a envisagé l'art sous cette double personnification” (Bertrand 105). Rembrandt is a “philosophe à barbe blanche qui s'encolimaçonne en son réduit,” who is absorbed “dans la méditation et dans la prière,” who “s'entretient avec des esprits de beauté, de science, de sagesse et d'amour,” and who “se consume à pénétrer les mystérieux symboles de la nature” (Bertrand 105). Callot, in an emphatic contrast, is a “lansquenet fanfaron et grivois qui se pavane sur la place,” who “fait du bruit dans la taverne,” and who “n'a d'autre inquiétude que de cirer sa moustache” (Bertrand 105). These antithetical characters, whose natures are akin to the protagonists of Bertrand's “Boutade bacchique” and Baudelaire's “Alchimie de la douleur,” symbolize the aesthetic core of *Gaspard de la nuit*. The second preface, which David Scott interprets as a “synthesis of the polar opposites [that Bertrand] sets up,”¹⁷ indicates that differences are key to the *fantaisies* conceived by an author who “n'a point été trop exclusif” (Bertrand 105) in constructing his multivocal text.

At the end of the second preface, Gaspard's voice emphasizes a break from the traditional function of a preface as a fount of illustration and clarification:

Si on demande à l'auteur pourquoi il ne parangonne point en tête de son livre quelque belle théorie littéraire, il sera forcé de répondre que M. Séraphin ne lui a pas expliqué le mécanisme de ses ombres Chinoises, et que Polichinelle cache à la foule curieuse le fil conducteur de son bras.—Il se contente de signer son œuvre
Gaspard de la Nuit. (Bertrand 105)

Pulcinella and Séraphin, another two characters in the *I*'s ludic repertoire of identities, multiply the complexity of the other. Such vertiginous shifts in referents, which frequently occur in the poetry of Baudelaire and Rimbaud, are part of the game of oppositions and reversals at the heart of Bertrand's compositions. Elisabetta Sibilio summarizes the coexistence of antithetical motifs in the *fantaisies*: "Gaspard a [...] essayé, par des 'procédés nouveaux' et magiques peut-être, de concilier Rembrandt et Callot, le noir et le blanc, Dieu et le diable, le sentiment et l'idée, la poésie et la peinture en faisant naître le 'clair-obscur' d'un nouveau genre."¹⁸ This innovative merging of supposedly contradictory elements corresponds to Bertrand's "Boutade bacchique" and Baudelaire's "Alchimie de la douleur," as well as to key aspects of both authors' prose compositions.

In *Le spleen de Paris*, Baudelaire's dedicatory remarks signal duality as inherent in the poems: "tout [...] est à la fois tête et queue" (OC 1:275). This evocation of the opposite ends of an animal's body points to binaries as a foundational principle for Baudelaire. Sonya Stephens notes the radical hybridity of the assorted vignettes that "disrupt the reader's expectations" due to "prose poetry's alterity:" "Baudelaire can [...] be said to be operating within constructed categories and against the limits of those categories to produce a poetic hybrid which sits squarely within his aesthetic doctrine of surprise;" he "presents the reader with a dialogical challenge [...] which sets different modes of discourse in a union which the nineteenth-century reader might consider antagonistic."¹⁹ This emphasis on structural and thematic dialogism, which chimes with the idea of the "duality of Baudelaire's prose poetry" (Maria Scott 55), opens the way for considering dual incarnations of the other in *Le spleen de Paris* that have parallels in *Gaspard de la nuit*.

In Baudelaire's "Le mauvais vitrier," oppositional natures are enacted by the pair of characters whose identities are destabilized through impulsive behavior:

Un de mes amis, le plus inoffensif rêveur qui ait existé, a mis une fois le feu à une forêt pour voir, disait-il, si le feu prenait avec autant de facilité qu'on l'affirme généralement. Dix fois de suite, l'expérience manqua; mais, à la onzième, elle réussit beaucoup trop bien.

Un autre allumera un cigare à côté d'un tonneau de poudre, *pour voir, pour savoir, pour tenter la destinée*, pour se contraindre lui-même à faire preuve d'énergie, pour faire le joueur, pour connaître les plaisirs de l'anxiété, pour rien, par caprice, par désœuvrement. (OC 1:285)

This differentiation of personalities undermines the apparent unity of being: the first friend transforms from a placid dreamer into a pyromaniac; the second friend is set to transform

from an anodyne character into a thrill-seeker. In “Le crépuscule du soir,” the account of two friends altered by atmospheric and temporal circumstances raises the stakes of unstable identities in the other:

J’ai eu deux amis que le crépuscule rendait tout malades. L’un méconnaissait alors tous les rapports d’amitié et de politesse, et maltraitait, comme un sauvage, le premier venu. [...] L’autre, un ambitieux blessé, devenait, à mesure que le jour baissait, plus aigre, plus sombre, plus taquin. Indulgent et sociable encore pendant la journée, il était impitoyable le soir; et ce n’était pas seulement sur autrui, mais aussi sur lui-même, que s’exerçait rageusement sa manie crépusculaire. (OC 1:311-12)

Binaries of day/night and normality/abnormality are at the heart of this evocation of behavioral divergences linked to the intermediary temporality of dusk. Baudelaire’s vision of differentiated others, redolent of Bertrand’s nocturnal vignettes such as “Ondine,” subverts the concept of a coherent nature, since a publicly acceptable face is supplanted by nefarious impulses.

Throughout Baudelaire’s prose poems and Bertrand’s *fantaisies*, mistaken and hidden identities blur the unity of the other. Baudelaire’s “Laquelle est la vraie?” revolves around a dead lover and her infernal double:

Comme mes yeux restaient fichés sur le lieu où était enfoui mon trésor, je vis subitement une petite personne qui ressemblait singulièrement à la défunte, et qui, piétinant sur la terre fraîche avec une violence hystérique et bizarre, disait en éclatant de rire: “C’est moi, la vraie Bénédicte! C’est moi, une fameuse canaille! Et pour la punition de ta folie et de ton aveuglement, tu m’aimeras telle que je suis!” (OC 1:342)

This second – previously concealed – version of Bénédicte ridicules the *I*’s blind devotion to the defunct figure. In a parody of the lover’s idealization of the female character, another identity is revealed that could be more authentic than the cherished presence. This confessional act of unmasking overturns the *I*’s stable concept of the other. We are left to wonder whether two discrete others are present, or whether two faces of the same coin are being contemplated. Bertrand’s “Ondine,” in which the eponymous sprite seeks to seduce a mortal man, evinces similar dualities, with Ondine making a first-person irruption in the manner of Bénédicte: “‘c’est moi, c’est Ondine [...]; et voici, en robe de moire, la dame châtelaine qui contemple à son balcon la belle nuit étoilée et le beau lac endormi” (Bertrand 181). The mysterious figure of the *dame châtelaine* could be Ondine’s double, rather than a character in addition to the elemental sprite. With Ondine, as with Bénédicte, the unity of the other is blurred by doppelgängers that unsettle the uniqueness of the *I*’s object of affection.

The doubling in the narratives of Bénédicte and Ondine sows doubt about the other as unitary. Are discrete characters at play, or is the other gripped by different identities? Baudelaire’s bifurcated depiction of a feminine other in “Un cheval de race” foregrounds the concept of a split nature: “elle est bien laide. Elle est délicieuse pourtant! [...] Elle est vraiment laide; elle est fourmi, araignée, si vous voulez, squelette même; mais aussi elle est breuvage, magistère, sorcellerie! en somme, elle est exquise” (OC 1:343). These patterns of contrastive conjunctions and antithetical imagery emphasize the various types of being that coexist in the decrepit body. Whereas Bertrand’s “Ondine” and Baudelaire’s “Laquelle est la

vraie?” involve each female protagonist’s announcement of a hidden identity in the first person, the female other of “Un cheval de race” encompasses several qualities *and* their opposites that represent enduring tensions in her being. Bertrand similarly depicts the other as split between competing identities on several occasions. In “La cellule,” a monk revisits his life as a bandit: “il n’a pas oublié, le jeune reclus, [...] qu’il a dansé le boléro sous les rochers de la Sierra de Grenade avec une brune aux boucles d’oreilles d’argent, aux castagnettes d’ivoire; et il aimerait mieux faire l’amour dans le camp des bohémiens que prier Dieu dans le couvent!” (Bertrand 217-18). In “Le raffiné,” a sharply dressed flâneur confesses crippling hunger amid a masquerade of rakishness: “la faim, logée dans mon ventre, y tire – la bourrèle! – une corde qui m’étrangle comme un pendu!” [...] [L]e raffiné [...] n’avait pas de quoi dîner; il acheta un bouquet de violettes” (Bertrand 147-48). The premise of unitary being is thus disrupted by a heterogeneous other at the core of key *fantaisies*. This preponderance of blurred identities and unexpected transformations in works by Bertrand and Baudelaire entails multiplicities and antithetical constructions that have striking correspondences in Rimbaud’s poetry.

Others as a heterogeneous collective

As we can see, several compositions by Baudelaire and Bertrand call into question the integrity of the self and the other through similar constructions. Rimbaud, whose assertion that “je est un autre” constituted the introduction to our reflections, shares in this practice of differentiation throughout the assortment of prose and verse in *Illuminations*. “Parade,” which recalls the picturesque style of Baudelaire’s dedicatory remarks in *Le spleen de Paris*, graphically evokes the *I* overseeing multifarious others:

Des drôles très solides. Plusieurs ont exploité vos mondes. [...] Quels hommes mûrs! Des yeux hébétés à la façon de la nuit d’été, rouges et noirs, tricolores [...]; des facies déformés, plombés, blêmés, incendiés [...].—Il y a quelques jeunes, [...] pourvus de voix effrayantes et de quelques ressources dangereuses. On les envoie prendre du dos en ville [...].

[...] [I]ls jouent des plaintes, des tragédies de malandrins et de demi-dieux spirituels comme l’histoire ou les religions ne l’ont jamais été. Chinois, Hottentots, bohémiens, niais, hyènes, Molochs, vieilles démences, démons sinistres, ils mêlent les tours populaires, maternels, avec les poses et les tendresses bestiales. Ils interpréteraient des pièces nouvelles et des chansons “bonnes filles.” Maîtres jongleurs, ils transforment le lieu et les personnes [...].

J’ai seul la clef de cette parade sauvage. (Rimbaud 126)

The parade of others, which represents an explosion of being with remarkable immediacy, expresses multifarious modes of intermingled identities in a manner that is reminiscent of Baudelaire’s “Un cheval de race” and Bertrand’s “Ondine,” as well as the two prefaces to *Gaspard de la nuit*. Rimbaud’s logic of the here-and-now supersedes the commonplace of non-contradictory elements. In the first stanza, the differentiation of the old and the young highlights a transgenerational evolution that is emphasized by the dash preceding the impersonal construction: “—Il y a quelques jeunes.” In the second stanza, the culturally and geographically varied young bring to mind the extravagant figures in Baudelaire’s “Le mauvais vitrier” and Bertrand’s “La cellule.” Gerald Macklin observes that “‘Parade’ presents itself as an evocation of bizarre characters whose [...] very heterogeneity reminds

the reader of Rimbaud's predilection for [...] draw[ing] together elements from very diverse locations and historical periods."²⁰ The young protagonists' reterritorializing nature generates diversity: "ils transforment le lieu et les personnes." This active role echoes the dynamic protagonists at the beginning of Baudelaire's "Alchimie de la douleur" and Bertrand's "Boutade bacchique." The *I*'s lofty pose in Baudelaire's "Le crépuscule du soir" and Bertrand's "Le raffiné" finds expression in the concluding distancing of the heterogeneous collective: "J'ai seul la clef de cette parade sauvage." Rimbaud thus shares in a practice of articulating differences in other people as much as within the self.

Je est un autre, qui est un je, qui est un autre

This comparative encounter involving Baudelaire-Bertrand-Rimbaud aimed to show that encounters with diverse others highlight divisions in the self that undermine the Cartesian idea of unified subjectivity. The initial stages of our article examined contrasting others in the verse of Bertrand's "Boutade bacchique" and Baudelaire's "Alchimie de la douleur" from *Les fleurs du mal*. The central part of our article highlighted a similarly dualistic vision in the prose of *Gaspard de la nuit* and *Le spleen de Paris*. We explored instances of antithesis in Bertrand's prefaces and Baudelaire's dedicatory remarks as a basis for constructions of competing identities in Baudelaire's "Le mauvais vitrier," "Le crépuscule du soir," and "Laquelle est la vraie?" alongside Bertrand's "Ondine," before considering figures with split natures in Baudelaire's "Un cheval de race" as a companion to Bertrand's "La cellule" and "Le raffiné." Our culminating discussion of Rimbaud's prose in "Parade" from *Illuminations* determined points of contact with Baudelaire and Bertrand in terms of the other becoming a heterogeneous collective. Throughout this comparative encounter based on a dynamic concept of the history of ideas, we disputed commonplaces in a literary canon determined by linearity. Our ultimate argument is that representative pieces of verse and prose by Baudelaire and Bertrand are as much about split identity as Rimbaud's acclaimed compositions based on the demise of the unity of the *I*.

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Notes

¹ Steve Murphy, *Logiques du dernier Baudelaire: Lectures du "Spleen de Paris"* (Paris: Champion, 2003), 38.

² Charles Baudelaire, *Correspondance*, vol. 2, Claude Pichois and Jean Ziegler, eds (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), 208.

³ Théophile Gautier, "Charles Baudelaire," in Charles Baudelaire, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. 1, Michel Lévy, ed. (Paris: Lévy, 1868), 72.

⁴ James A. Hiddleston, *Baudelaire and "Le Spleen de Paris"* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 82.

⁵ Sonya Stephens, *Baudelaire's Prose Poems: The Practice and Politics of Irony* (Oxford: Oxford U P, 1999), 10.

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