

“I is another”

Literally and in Every Language

Uses of Rimbaud in Contemporary Literature

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Edited by

Tatiana Victoroff (University of Strasbourg)

Odile Hamot (University of the West Indies)

Call for papers

For its 37th issue, to be published in October 2028, Rivista Costellazioni is calling for contributions on the topic “‘I is another’ ... literally and in all languages. Uses of Rimbaud in Contemporary Literature”.

In 1979, in his “Foreword” to *Études sur la poésie de Rimbaud (Studies on Rimbaud’s poetry)*, Marc Eigeldinger observed the fundamental plurality of Rimbaudian language and the resulting polysemy of reading, with “the closure of the text implying an opening up of meaning”: “the purpose of Rimbaudian work is to refuse any reductive closure. Such is the fate of the amplest and most profoundly rich works, whose meaning is never truly exhausted” (p. 8). This “productive circulation between the poet’s work and his various readers” has not failed to prompt numerous critical reflections. Thus, the symposium entitled “*Le Rimbaudisme ‘aux confins du monde’: approche de la réception mondiale de Rimbaud*”, held at the University of Grenoble in May 2023 under the supervision of Adrien Cavallaro and Delphine Rumeau, aimed to “promote the examination of this global extension of the reception of a poet himself particularly sensitive to changes on a ‘worldwide’ scale”. It is this remarkable openness of Rimbaud’s work that the present issue intends to explore in turn, not, however, from the angle of its exceptional hermeneutic fecundity, or even the diversity of its international reception, but rather from that of the reinterpretation offered by those who were fruitfully shaken by it.

Indeed, no one more than Arthur Rimbaud calls upon the reader “with so much intensity, immediacy, proximity in his voice” (Yves Bonnefoy, *Notre Besoin de Rimbaud*, p. 11.); perhaps no one more than he is the Poet par excellence, in the often conflicting relationship that such a figure has established since modern times with social and political values deemed sclerotic or even oppressive. The poet from Charleville, in his absolute radicalism, thus readily appears as the eminent incarnation of resistance to all forms, brutal or insidious, of

social and political oppression. There is no doubt that his work has served as a guarantee or model for vehement assertions of literary as well as political freedom in many places and on several occasions. As if to ward off the disappointing powerlessness of words, that well-known fatality of failure by which, “in the ocean of words, printed or spoken, the words of the poet or the writer are lost” (Italo Calvino), his work and his figure as an eternal rebel are brandished like standards, and the “I”, whose fundamental otherness he had probed in every direction, is projected beyond national borders to lend itself to every use and misuse.

The question, in its generality, interested Italo Calvino who, in a lecture given in 1976, “On the Good and Bad Political Uses of Literature”, opposed the temptation to reduce the literary text to the easy illustration of a given political credo or to the all-too-convenient “assortment of eternal human sentiment”, which he considered to be the right use of literature, where it goes beyond the author’s own project, gives voice to the voiceless, and becomes a model of language, worldview and imagination. From this perspective, Rimbaud is the one who “suddenly makes us realise that existence could be a much more intense, interesting and true experience than the distracted routine in which our minds have become rigid” (Italo Calvino, *Why Read the Classics?*).

This special issue, devoted to the reception of Arthur Rimbaud in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, follows in the wake of such a reflection. What has become of Rimbaud’s reading in the different regions of the world where his influence is felt? What literary, political, moral or existential uses are made of him by all those “others” who recognize themselves in his paradoxical “I”, so irreducibly one and yet so fundamentally open? The testimonies that we receive from the Far East, Eastern Europe, Africa and the Americas are often surprising, and illustrate in their own way the genius poet’s famous affirmation of otherness, holding up the mirror of this “I [who] is another” to the unknown other who has yet to come.

We invite poets, translators and specialists in Arthur Rimbaud’s work, regardless of geographical or linguistic zone, to share their thoughts in this issue, as did the Belarusian poets and translators, Dmitiri Strotsev and Andrei Khadanovich, at an international colloquium held in Strasbourg in October 2024. For them, Rimbaud’s poetry, beyond its relationship to the most violent of political events, can be seen as the very heart of literary creation, without which it would simply be impossible.

Proposals for articles, including a title, a 500-word summary and a brief bio-bibliography, should be sent in Word format by August 1, 2025, to Tatiana VICTOROFF (tatianavictoroff@gmail.com) and Odile HAMOT (odilehamot@yahoo.fr).

Authors will be informed on **January 30, 2026**, whether their contribution has been accepted and of the subsequent editorial stages. Articles must be submitted by August 1, 2027 at the latest, for publication on October 1, 2028.

Articles must be no less than 25,000 characters long and no more than 40,000 characters including spaces (including the title, the English abstract, keywords, notes and the bibliography). They may be written in French, English or Italian, and must comply with the journal’s editorial rules, which can be consulted at:

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