

**Call for Papers**  
***Intimations of Incomparability: Tending to the End/s of Comparison***  
**Comparative Literature Students' Tribune**  
**22-23 November, 2024, Université de Montréal**

A comparative approach often foregrounds the wish to expand the conversation on the way of reading-interpreting-seeing boundaries: boundaries of languages, disciplines, cultural forms, species, ecosystems, etc. In this vision, one set of concerns that could be of interest for comparativists can be described as “incomparability” – conceived as both the objectives and the limits of comparative projects.

Comparative studies challenge intellectual and political boundaries, connect disciplines, and contest specialization. Yet, neoliberal capitalism appropriates once-admirable rhetorical gestures of “progress,” “fluidity” and “diversity,” among others, resulting in displacement, deterritorialization, and a disregard for the dignity of life, both human and otherwise. While comparativists endeavour to dismantle boundaries through interdisciplinary hermeneutics and (dis)connections, the neoliberal imaginary continues to wreck lives and create vast sums of dispossessed and marginalized. In a sense, literature and arts provide a means to explore histories of displacement and to delve into implications of broader notions such as identity, belonging, and subjectivity. For instance, one might think of Theresa Hak Hyung Cha’s *Dictee* (1982) in which Cha describes the lingering effects of the Korean War by weaving together narratives, genres, and linguistic identities. Carlos Manuel Alvarez’s *The Fallen* (2019) serves as a metonym for contemporary Cuban society and sheds light on tensions associated with forging a coherent and meaningful identity within a changing and unstable cultural and political milieu. Aimé Césaire’s *Cahier d’un retour au pays natal* (1939) exemplifies projects that challenge imperialistic fantasies by navigating and opposing colonial systems and borders of subjectivity. Gayatri Spivak’s introduction in *Death of the Discipline* (2003) revisits the Eurocentric roots of comparative studies, while Édouard Glissant’s concepts of “Tout-Monde” and “Chaos-Monde” in *Philosophie de la Relation* (2009) offer perspectives on global connectivity beyond neoliberal frameworks.

In this context, it would be worth asking: To what extent does comparison, with its often hospitable intention of creating polyphony or plurality, also feed the very machinery that co-opts this plurality while creating more wretched of the planet? What kind of language and comparative approach can avoid reinforcement of dichotomy, cultural imperialism and translation anachronism that comparativists are often supposedly meant to dismantle?

We invite responses from a broad range of intellectual backgrounds, and disciplines such as literature, philosophy, history, sociology, visual arts, religion studies and social sciences. Additionally, we also encourage submissions from artists across various fields, such as creative writing, theatre, performance, digital arts, and music. We believe that diverse forms are integral to comparative studies and should not be limited by conventional academic presentation norms. Our objective is to create a conducive environment for experimental approaches to critical inquiry. We welcome submissions exploring different forms of ends, limits, and objectives of comparison in various traditions/backgrounds/regions across the globe:

- Geopolitics
- Fragmented and hybrid identities
- Precarity
- Trope of “the other”
- The interdimensional, the digital
- Borders, border crossings, mobility, transgression (aesthetics, politics)
- Incommunicability (l’indicible)
- ...

Prospective participants are required to submit an abstract of no more than 250 words, or a 3-minute video of performance, accompanied by a brief bio. Please send your abstracts (in English or French) as attachments to [tribune.montreal24@gmail.com](mailto:tribune.montreal24@gmail.com) by **September 10, 2024**. The email should include the author’s name, institutional affiliation (if applicable), and contact information. Presentations should be limited to 20 minutes. While remote participation is possible, preference will be given to those who can attend in person. Refreshments and lunch will be provided during the conference. Limited funds will be available for participants who need to travel to Montreal. For any inquiries, please contact [tribune.montreal24@gmail.com](mailto:tribune.montreal24@gmail.com).

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**About the Tribune:** The Tribune is a bilingual conference organized by graduate students in Comparative Literature and the Humanities from various Canadian universities. Since 2015, this student-led conference has been hosted by both French-speaking and English-speaking institutions across Canada, with the support of various academic entities.

**2024 Tribune Organizing Committee:**

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