**Research Statement**

My special interest is in intercultural approaches to modern and contemporary Québec literature and culture. A main area of my research in this context is perceptions of German-language cultures in contemporary Québec literature and culture, an area that, until recently, had not received significant scholarly attention. Following long-term archival work at the *Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec*, where I had access to significant eye-witness accounts and diaries of French Canadian civilians who lived in Europe during the Second World War which express a range of perceptions of Nazi Germany, I published one of my first book chapters (2013). I gave a talk on this research at an international conference at the Universität des Saarlandes, where I had the opportunity to develop professional relationships with a number of colleagues working there. These research collaborations led to the co-organization of an international workshop in September 2017 at the Canadian Centre for German and European Studies at the Université de Montréal (“Les représentations fictionnelles de l’Allemagne post-1945 au Québec: formes littéraires et enjeux sociaux”) and of an international conference at the Universität des Saarlandes in June 2018 (“Les fictions de l’histoire”). Most contributions to these workshops were published in 2019 in an issue of the peer-reviewed trilingual journal *Eurostudia. Transatlantic Journal for European Studies* edited by Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, Robert Dion and myself: https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/euro/2011-v7-n1-2-euro04209/1067279ar/. My work on the perceptions of German-language cultures in Quebec has also led to a fruitful and still ongoing collaboration with French Studies colleagues in Nova Scotia.

Working in the broad field of intercultural studies, one of my main goals is to develop models that can prevent making essentialist distinctions between cultures, which still occur surprisingly frequently in intercultural literary criticism. To this end, I refrain from strictly thematic approaches, preferring the study of phenomenathat are found in interdiscursive, intergeneric or intermedial networks. Cross-cultural intertextuality is also at the core of my research, especially in relation to French-German cultural and literary contacts. I have always been interested in the ways intertextuality replicates both positive and conflictual relations between cultures. This is evident from my very first peer-reviewed article on the appropriation of German Romantic authors in a 1995 Quebec novel to one I published in 2019 in which I examine the appropriation of Balzac’s *Illusions Perdues* in the recent graphic novel *Verlorene Illusionen*,a rewriting of the history of the media in West and East Germany inspired by Balzac’s satire of nineteenth-century Parisian literary and journalistic circles.

I believe that the study of authentic forms of cross-cultural intertextuality should be linked to a methodological and theoretical viewpoint that deliberately takes their cross-cultural nature into account. In fact, even today, many comparatists still use the same theoretical tools for analyzing a parody of *King Lear* by an English contemporary author and for studying the appropriation of the same play by a Russian or Vietnamese contemporary author. In my first book, I deliberately take a contrary, more novel approach, proposing in its fourth chapter a systematic review of some of the fundamental contemporary Anglophone and Francophone theories of parody and pastiche to measure their individual merits and weaknesses for the study of cross-cultural appropriations. On the basis of a corpus encompassing seven Québec writers (novelists, poets, and short-story writers) who have appropriated the works of the major German-language authors Thomas Bernhard and Peter Handke, my book recommends the concept of “affiliation” as an essential tool to describe the experience of Francophone contemporary writers who move away from their own literary tradition and long-established influences to turn to distantliterary traditions.

As a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Michigan, I have expanded my interests to the representation of situations of cross-cultural communication and the uses of ethnic and national stereotypes in recent graphic novels and comics published in Québec, France and Germany. Focusing on cartoonists such as Guy Delisle, Yasmine and Djibril Phan-Morissette, Nacha Vollenweider, and Paula Bulling, I pay special attention to the relation between stereotypes and the organization of dialogues, or the conventions defining how dialogue progresses. I am especially interested in works that seek to empower immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers by illuminating their cross-cultural competence (often in daily conversations with characters presented as citizens of Canada or Germany). Employing theories of cross-cultural communication (Volker Hinnenkamp, Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, Bernd Müller-Jacquier), I examine how the authors organize and develop conversations between those characters who are citizens of Canada or Germany and those who are not. Within the field of cross-cultural communication theories, I apply interactional approaches that often rely on linguistic analysis methods. At St. Francis Xavier, I would be eager to integrate data science tool techniques into my research on Quebecois comics and graphic novels, something that would allow me to establish a quantitatively as well as qualitatively accurate picture of diversity and cross-cultural relations portrayal within them.

While Quebec Studies remains my primary specialization at the University of Michigan, I am affiliated with the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures and am conducting research on the Volkswagen Beetle’s representation in German- and French-language literature and culture since 1949. In Michigan, my work on car culture has led to several collaborations beyond the academic community that are expressly designed to address and promote issues of diversity and interculturality. In 2020, I reached out to the MotorCities National Heritage Area Partnership*,* a nonprofit corporation affiliated with the National Park Service and dedicated to explaining, preserving, and disseminating the important history of the role southeast and central Michigan, and especially its residents, played in the development of the automotive industry. My partnership with MotorCities involves helping the organization reach out to a wide range of communities whose essential contribution to the history of the automotive industry has not yet been properly recognized.

As a full member of the MotorCities Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, which includes members of the organization’s board of directors, I led the MotorCities’ liaison with French-language communities in the region that aims to initiate dialogue with key contacts within these groups to better understand how we can showcase their contribution to automotive history. Apart from the oral histories of Haitian Americans mentioned in my cover letter, the interview I conducted with Mary-France Oudin, a French American senior program manager at MAHLE-Behr USA whom I was able to contact with the help of a board member of the Alliance Française de Détroit, was uploaded to MotorCities’ YouTube page in July 2021 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ovrasmb6DNU). I have recently begun negotiating with French-Canadian Heritage Society of Michigan board members the recording of oral histories that would highlight French-Canadian contribution’s to the regional development of the automotive industry.

I am also involved in the creation and conceptualization of the “Making Tracks II” website, a follow-up to the already existing *Making Tracks: The African American Experience in the Auto Industry*.Making Tracks was founded approximately 10 years ago in a partnership between MotorCities, the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit, and the Ford Motor Company. This site presents a series of audio clips profiling African Americans who became leaders in the automotive industry, tracing their migration journeys north to settle in Detroit, and describing the many hurdles they had to overcome, as black people, to establish themselves in an industry in which they had played a seminal part. The Making Tracks I website deals with material up to the end of the 1940s but, in the summer of 2020, with the Black Lives Matter movement having gained considerable momentum, MotorCities decided to develop a new website to cover the period from 1948 to the present. Since the end of April 2021, I have been the primary researcher responsible for selecting the content for the period 1948–1980. We launched Making Tracks II in February 2022 in the context of Black History Month (https://www.motorcities.org/making-tracks) and we will add more content to the website in the next few months.

Finally, I am involved with close collaborators of MotorCities in the Southwest Detroit Auto Heritage Guide project (https://www.motorcities.org/southwest-main). Just published on the MotorCities website, it traces a century of contributions to the automotive industry by workers, businesses, and unions in the Southwest Detroit neighborhood. More content needs adding on the particular contribution of Mexican, Polish, Irish, Maltese, and Arab Americans to the automotive industry. I collaborate very closely with Ron Alpern, one of the main authors of the guide and an expert in the history of labor movements in Detroit and we are aiming to complete the sections relating to the contribution of Mexican Americans in the form of short essays. The research and writing will be conducted in a series of well-defined stages collaboratively with the Mexican community and a number of Michigan universities. This approach will encourage members of this community, mostly young activists and seniors, to take up archival and historical research and enable this community to direct the choice of materials that will appear in the guide.

All these activities reflect my wide range of academic pursuits and my collaborative project management skills in developing high-quality research that contributes to the field and benefits the wider community.