**The example of the 4th chapter**

In my monograph’s 4th chapter, I analyze two Québécois novels, both of which were published in 2002 and scrutinize institutional issues in a Québécois context by drawing on Bernhard’s work, offering highly refined forms of imitative writing – by forms of cross-cultural parody or pastiche. Thus, Nicole Filion’s *Noces villageoises* renders an extremely developed satire of the Québécois judiciary system inspired by the one put forward in Bernhard’s novel *Correction* (*Korrektur*). In doing so, Filion establishes a relationship with Bernhard’s *Correction* that constitutes a parody, a parody that, however, have Bernhard’s novel as its main target, but instead relies on the latter to establish.a satire of the judicial world. In Catherine Mavrikakis’ *Ça va aller*, which I will look at more closely in the context of this talk, Thomas Bernhard’s figure and German-speaking cultures also occupy a key place. Indeed, the references to Bernhard’s work and person directly shed light on the ways in which the Quebec literary institution operates as a system (by “institution,” I mean here, publishing houses, the teaching of literature, means of recognition such as prizes and grants, including those that are provided by the province of Quebec, etc.) It should also be said that Quebec literature has a highly institutionalized character; according to critics like Gilles Marcotte, this even represents its most certain originality. More specifically, in Mavrikakis’ novel, we’re dealing with 3 types of pastiche of Bernhard: a pastiche of the Austrian genre of the *Anti-Heimatliteratur,* that is, a form of anti-patriotic literature; a pastiche of topic, that for that matter arises from the first type, concerning the question of the relationships between artists and the State; finally, a pastiche of style. To work on Filion and Mavrikakis’ novels, which transform or imitate texts of the German-language literary canon by detecting within them an issue of sociocultural type, also suggesting through fiction the prevalence of the same issue within the Québécoise culture of reception, I created the concept of “hypertextualité interculturelle” (intercultural hypertextuality), which organizes the entire 4th chapter, representing one of the 4 great ways in which Québécois writers have appropriated the German works that I present in the book. In concrete methodological terms, this chapter a review of the theories of parody and pastiche that have been most frequently utilized in the French-speaking world these past 30 years in order to determine their merits and weaknesses for the analysis of cross-cultural texts similar to the ones I study, that are driven by an *affiliative* process. First, I explain why I have ruled out the majority of therories; and, before entering into actual textual analysis, I identify why I have selected one theory of parody and one theory of pastiche that, for me, are the most suitable for a reflection on the *affiliative* tendency of contemporary Francophone literatures. I would now like to give a few insights on my analysis of Mavrikakis’ novel, which should allow for a better grasp of the aspects I am interested in.

Mavrikakis’s novel can be read as an immense critical and aggressive reflection about Quebec literature and culture. This reflection takes *L’avalée des avalés,* one of Quebec Literature’s most famous novels, and its author Réjean Ducharme (re-named Robert Laflamme in the novel) as point of departure: Mavrikakis’ narrator Sappho-Didon Apostasias especially condemns a withdrawal into passivity and into a unctuous universe of childhood, associated not only with Ducharme’s work and to that of his numerous epigones, but also, more broadly, to Quebec society. One also finds in this novel an obvious wish to exhibit the machinery and inner workings of the Québécois literary system by putting the latter in relation to other cultural environments. This is where German-language literatures come into play. As I said, references to Bernhard directly shed light on the function of the Quebec literary apparatus; furthermore, *Ça va aller* explicitly calls for – and twice in the novel – a writer like Bernhard for Quebec. Comparisons that can be drawn between *Ça va aller* and Bernhard’s works concern in particulier the Austrian’s writer so-called “Artists trilogy”, novels that were published in the 1980s in German, and who are known in their English translation under the *titles The Loser, Woodcutters*, and *Old Masters.* In Mavrikakis’ novel, it is during Sappho-Didon Apostasias’ stay in Paris that the most obvious manifestations of a form of anti-patriotic writing inspired by Bernhard appear. Interpreter by profession who studied German and German civilization in college, the narrator is in the City of Lights to work on the dubbing of pornographic films in German. The narrator is invited by a Québécois friend of hers to a reception at the General Delegation of Quebec in Paris celebrating the launch of Robert Laflamme’s last book. There, Sappho-Didon indulges in a long diatribe against the “small” Québécois literary milieu, in which, in her eyes, national chauvinism and self-congratulation prevail (*ÇVA*, p. 80): in other words, a celebration of what is perceived as “authentically from Quebec.” In particulier, Sappho-Didon lingers over the idea of an « institutional art,” stating loud and clear that “she does not want to spend the evening with academics and artists who are obsequious towards the Parti Québécois, precisely to, and I translate here the novel’s words, “become the intellectuals, the artists, the official writers of the beautiful country to build, according to the beautiful culture that resembles us.” *(ÇVA, 80-81)).* In the extract taking place at the Delegation of Quebec in Paris, the views on the « official artist » can easily be compared with those we find on institutional artists in Bernhard’s novels *The Loser*, and *Old Masters,* in particular. Bernhard, indeed, has suggested that Austria produces only institutional artists and intellectuals, except for the men of letters, musicians, and other thinkers who dared to go into exile. The most defined and celebrated artist figures in Bernhard’s work are constantly presented as exiled, misanthropic and/or having committed suicide. Mavrikakis takes up such characters – I quote, translating the novel:

That the writers of Quebec, that our literary fathers commit suicide, hide or go live elsewhere, like Anne Hébert, this serves us right. That the Parti Québécois, in its referendum campaign, relies on the least subversive writers, the least inspired, the most boring ones, this is completely as it should be. This is what belongs to us.

Mavrikakis, just like Bernhard, takes pleasure in evoking artists not first and foremost according to the intrinsic characteristics of their works, but rather according to their degree of integration in or participation to the artistic world and the institutions that define it. Just like Bernhard, she puts forward something like an institutional theory of art, on the basis of a typology of artists. In the case of Mavrikakis of Berhard, the choice to expose the importance of a certain network acting in the name of the State ensures that the fate of the exiled, suicided, or hidden Québécois artists appears as the consequence of a too big institutionalization of the artistic practice in Quebec or in Austria – which

can hardly leave room for anything different from “official” artists.

In *Ça va aller,* the denunciation of the hypocrisy of numerous contemporary Quebecois artists culminates in the call for a resolutely anti-institutional, aggressive, misanthropic and even – so to speak – terrorist.

The future of Quebec will be turbulent or will not be and I will show them, me, what pride is like. The Delegation of Quebec in Paris will not save Quebec, bunch of suckers. It is those who will invent ­detonating manifestos, bomb-books, films that will make all this beautiful pride, all this rotten establishment of good taste fly apart. He who will save Quebec is a pyrotechnist, a terror-maker.

This excerpt, in fact, is part of a much longer diatribe against Quebec in which the narrator explains that Quebec has hurt her so much he makes her sick. The language Mavrikakis chooses, as those of you who have a good reading knowledge of French will notice in the excerpt I deliberately left in French to highlight one its formal aspects, is informal, and even at times crude. This passage provides an example of how Mavrikakis borrows from Bernhard’s stylistic choices. In her novel, she borrows from the Austrian writer types of repetition that can be called “reformulating” as well as forms of repetition that testify to a refusal to reformulate. The passage includes one example of the last type, the referent “Quebec”, that I underlined by using italic characters, is never replaced by a pronoun; on the contrary, there is a nominal redenomination in successive sentences, or even within the same sentence. This technique is often applied to the referent « Quebec » is the book, in a way that has the effect of presenting Quebec as a tarnished, belittled and detested reality, exactly like this technique is used in Bernhard’s text with the word “Austria,” (among others).

In *Ça va aller*, Bernhard is not only explicitly mentioned by the narrator at the beginning of the novel in a sequence in which the narrator praises his rage against his country, he is once again explicated evoked at the end of the book in a passage in which Sappho-Didon reflects on how she intends to raise her daughter, from which she is still pregnant:

I am not the receptacle of evolution, I am not 2000 years of civilization and programming for maternal gentleness. I am Sappho-Didon-Antigone-the-harsh. One can only think with punches, with stabs. One can only think against everything or far from everything. It is while ruminating alone in his hole in Austria that Thomas Bernhard can allow himself to really think about this Austria, to see its abomination and pettiness. (…) It is not by groveling to all the stupid critics of Austria (…). To think, to exist, it is important to be able to speak ill of all (…). It is important to be able to crush one’s heart, to criticize one’s close relations, the buddies who will always have attenuating circumstances, the lovers, the brothers, the sisters, and above all oneself. It is important to make the acquoitance of one’s own mediocrity and not to make a friend out of it.

In French, the excerpt proposes a shift in the use of pronouns, from the “je”, to the “on” and then the impersonal “il”, which I have rendered in English, by transitioning from “I” to “one” to “It”. This transition definitely places the narrator Sappho-Didon Apostasias in a tradition of invective, Bernhard being represented as an exemplary representative of this tradition. Abandoning the “je”, the “I” emphasizes the impression of a proximity between the positions of the narrator and Bernhard; far from being presented as a character who would come *after* Bernhard vis-à-vis which she would be a mere follower in a secondary position, Sappho-Didon is presented in a way that accentuates a proximity between two pamphleteers; thus, the idea of an association, of an *affiliation* rather than *filiation.* Furthermore, Sappho-Didon may be considered as a fictional “double” of Mavrikakis, because critics have emphasized the autobiographical aspects of this novel. The fact that the excerpt I studied begins with a “Je”, an “I” that is very strong on the enunciative plan also encouraged me to study it in accordance with the concept of “signature d’auteur”, of the author’s signature, of which we have seen the definition earlier by Gérard Leclerc. In this sense, the knowledge transmitted about Bernhard’s work is done in a way that emphasizes the “responsibility/propriety” of the author vis-à-vis this transmitted knowledge. But Mavrikakis’s approach does not stop there: contrary to various other literary legacies presented in the novel, that of Bernhard’s work is firmly placed under the banner of a memory to preserve. In the lines that follow the last excerpt I quoted, Sappho-Didon evokes her daughter to be born, Savannah-Lou, and reflects on her future education, stating that she wishes to pass down to her the ideal of systematic denigration to which she associated Bernhard’s work. From Savannah-Lou, who is in fact the product of a one-time sexual encounter with the famous Québécois writer Robert Laflamme alias Réjean Ducharme, her mother says explicitly that she is called to be the great outraged writer that Quebec lacks so utterly. This illustrates that, in this novel, the literary future of Quebec is thought starting from Thomas Bernhard, thus the hypothesis evoked at the beginning of my presentation, and according to which, in post-1990 literature in Québec, German-language cultures are rather referred to in such a way that brings close to the Québécois context of reception., that suggests forms of proximity, which is all the more evident if we take into consideration that, here, the literary heritage is linked to a certain family heritage of Sappho-Didon Apostasias. I would finally like to note that the vocabulary and tone used by Mavrikakis to discuss Bernhard are very informal and, in this sense, very different than those, much more ceremonious, taken by André Belleau when he evokes the German Romantics and his learning of the German language.

**Conclusion of the talk**

Why should one be interested, today, in studying the representations of German-language cultures in Quebec Literature? For my part, I was both interested in addressing an aspect neglected by literary scholars in Quebec, that of the question of how foreign literatures are received, and in answeringquestions that my readings of the contemporary literary production had raised, as the germanophile in me noticed German traces in texts emanating from authors from various backgrounds, both university professors who write fiction and by writers who are nearly unknown within academic and artistic circles similar to that which Mavrikakis depicts in her novel. Most recently, I have turned to the works of a writer who has immigrated to Québec, Hans-Jürgen Greif, who became both a professor of German and French Literature at the Université Laval and a prolific writer of fiction; I also intend to undertake research on writers of German origin whose work is associated with other Francophone Literatures of Canada, such as, for example, the very well know Franco-Ontarian novelist Marguerite Andersen. Alongside my work on the imaginary “Germanies” of Québec, I am broadly interested in texts that emphasize cross-cultural issues and encounters,