

Department of Language and Culture Studies

SENIOR  
THESES  
2022

Trinity College  
HARTFORD CONNECTICUT

---

# Table of Contents

Page

## French

Voices of an Epidemic: The Literary Representation of the Ebola Virus throughout West Africa in Véronique Tadjo's Novel <i>In the Company of Men</i> <b>Suzanne N. Carpe Elías</b>	5
The Impact of Laïcité on Muslim Women in Contemporary France <b>Isabella Defilippo</b>	6
Understanding the HIV/AIDS Crisis in France through the Films <i>120 battements par minute</i> [BPM (Beats Per Minute)] and <i>Théo et Hugo dans le même bateau</i> [Paris 05:59: Théo & Hugo] <b>Timothy Johnson</b>	7
"Women as Exotic Perfume": A Feminist Reading of Michel Houellebecq's <i>Soumission</i> [Submission] <b>Julia Schiffmann</b>	8
Self-Representation in Claude Cahun's Visual and Narrative Texts <b>Ruby Schiller</b>	9
Spectacular Representations of the Salpêtrière in Nineteenth Century Theatrical Texts <b>Camille Valentincic</b>	10
Contemporary Literary Approaches to Challenging the Discriminatory Structure of the French Language <b>Alice Verdier</b>	11
Message from Saint-Exupéry of the Adult World Through Literary Analysis of <i>The Little Prince</i> <b>Ophélie (Yifan) Xu</b>	12

## German Studies

The Construction of Femininity in German Literature through the 'Beautiful Soul' <b>Amanda Cagar</b>	14
The Methods of Oppression of Women in 1800s Germany vs. Today <b>Amina Taher</b>	15

## Hispanic Studies

Homeland, Father, and Exile: The Epiphanic Aesthetic of James Joyce  
in 'Last Evenings on Earth' by Roberto Bolaño  
**Peter Finucane** 17

The Language of Power in the representation of Indigenous Women:  
La Malinche and Rigoberta Menchú  
**Noah Glantz** 18

Yucatán, the Journey of Life in a Chronicle of the Tropic  
**Sara Lopez** 19

The Literature of the Disappeared: The Role of Investigative Narrative  
Journalism in Argentina during the 20th Century  
**Jay Park** 20

*Devórame otra vez* by Luis Rafael Sánchez:  
Chronicling the Puerto Rican Social Voice  
**Claudia Soto-Canetti** 21

## Italian Studies

Social Media as a Theatrical Stage: *One, None and One Hundred Thousand*  
**Lauren Ianelli** 23

## Plan B – Chinese & Japanese

Live as Fireflies: The Narration of Traumas in Two Films  
**Tucker O'Brien** 25

## Plan B – Italian & Hispanic Studies

When Humor Becomes a Political Weapon: Comparative Analysis of  
*Miracolo a Milano* and *Bienvenido, Mr. Marshall*  
**Nadiia Usenko** 27

## Russian

Tolstoy's view of free will through Natasha Rostova and Anna Karenina.  
**Karina Smith** 29

# World Literature & Culture Studies

Reading Camus' *The Stranger* as a Response to  
Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*  
**Lila Purtell**

**31**

# French

# Voices of an Epidemic: The Literary Representation of the Ebola Virus throughout West Africa in Véronique Tadjo's Novel *In the Company of Men*

Suzanne N. Carpe Elías

Advisor: Karen Humphreys  
Major: French

Between 2014 and 2016, a devastating outbreak of the Ebola virus terrorized three countries in West Africa: Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. This epidemic has been widely depicted in various texts and films, including the novel *In the Company of Men* written by Ivorian poet, novelist, and artist Véronique Tadjo. Published in 2017—a year after the Ebola outbreak in West Africa ended—the novel considers the different voices that respond to this public health emergency. In her literary representation of the epidemic, Tadjo examines the experiences of people in different sectors, from healthcare and research professionals that selflessly gave their life to help others, to the candid tales of patients and family members of the victims that succumbed to the disease. At the same time, she also considers the perspectives of natural elements—specifically bats, trees, and the Ebola virus itself—and their opinion on the epidemic.

By analyzing the form and structure of the book (sixteen chapters with ten human narrators), I show that Tadjo wants us to remember the devastating reality of the epidemic and honor the lives that were lost. Her approach considers a plurality of human voices and experiences, which I focus on in my analysis. In addition, by examining her use of symbolism—more specifically, anthropomorphism—I illustrate how Tadjo establishes a cause-and-effect dichotomy in her narrative and highlights the lessons we can learn from other non-human elements that are usually overlooked. Through this literary portrayal of the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, I further demonstrate that Tadjo seeks to encourage a global conversation, the aim of which is to create peace and harmony among all different inhabitants of the world, including humans, animals, plants, and even non-living infectious agents.

# The Impact of Laïcité on Muslim Women in Contemporary France

Isabella Defilippo

Advisor: Karen Humphreys

Major: French

Laws created in France concerning *laïcité* [secularism], specifically in 2004, have had a negative impact on Muslim women who wear the headscarf. This law bans the wearing of any religious symbols that are perceived to be “ostentatious” in public schools. As a result, Muslim girls who wear the headscarf are direct targets for criticism. Laws that uphold *laïcité* have also led to difficulties for Muslim women who wear the veil in public spaces in general. This has left them in a vulnerable position to choose whether to stop wearing the hijab and go against personal choices or to continue to wear the headscarf and violate the laws and principles of *laïcité*.

Specifically, this thesis aims to explore how these laws have affected the narratives of Muslim women in the French media and their direct impact on how they are perceived by others in France. Faïza Zerouala in her collection of interviews titled *Des Voix derrière le voile*, has suggested that these narratives are not in their control and have been crafted by the French media. Through the women’s testimonials, I study their perspectives of how these laws and their representation in the media impact their lives. By creating space for the expression of *their* voices, in both written and visual texts, I maintain that a broader cultural conversation will encourage that all French citizens have the opportunity to empathize and understand what should be a personal choice to wear the veil or not.

# Understanding the HIV/AIDS Crisis in France through the Films *120 battements par minute* [BPM (Beats Per Minute)] and *Théo et Hugo dans le même bateau* [Paris 05:59: Théo & Hugo]

Timothy Johnson

Advisor: Karen Humphreys  
Major: French

This thesis analyzes two films that focus on the impact of the HIV/AIDS crisis in France, specifically in Paris. *120 Battements Par Minute* [*BPM (battements par minute)*] directed by Robin Campillo and *Théo et Hugo dans le Même Bateau* [*Paris 05:59: Théo & Hugo*] by Olivier Ducastel and Jacques Martineau were released in 2017 and 2016 respectively. Through these films as well as other scholarly and literary sources, I show how each director represents the HIV/AIDS crisis for contemporary audiences. First, I illustrate the documentary aspect of both films. Second, I show through these films how the HIV/AIDS crisis, which began as a collective battle, has become more of an individual struggle in recent years with the adoption of the treatment PrEP. Finally, I analyze how and why these films are relevant to society today, specifically how gay men meet and interact with each other in 2022.

This research is significant because it responds to a recent wave of films and TV shows about the HIV/AIDS crisis in recent years in France as well as internationally. Moreover, it is important because it offers insight as to how these films can serve as references for navigating the realities of HIV/AIDS for gay men living today as well as for future generations.



# **“Women as Exotic Perfume”: A Feminist Reading of Michel Houellebecq’s *Soumission* [Submission]**

Julia Schiffmann

Advisor: Karen Humphreys

Major: French

French author, Michel Houellebecq, is well known for his provocative and satirical novels. In this thesis, I argue that although the representation of Islam is a central concern in the narrative, the portrayal of women in *Submission* is equally as important and merits further attention. First, I outline the narrator’s position in French society; François is a middle-aged man comfortably ensconced in an academic job, who suffers from acute loneliness and fear of death. His personal struggle is juxtaposed with a series of relationships with women and provokes the attention of female readers. This thesis investigates the complex ambiguities between the narrator’s inner conflict and his fraught, socially inept attempts to capture the attention and affection of the female characters in the novel. Through close readings of specific passages, I aim to show from a feminist perspective that François’s negative representation of women in the novel undermines his integrity as narrator. By the end of the novel, after his girlfriend Myriam moves to Israel, he succumbs to his fears of loneliness and becomes a cynical bystander. Through the narrator François, Houellebecq voices anxieties linked to the loss of white male privilege in France and in doing so, he reinforces its hegemony and perpetuates social and sexual stereotypes of women.

# Self-Representation in Claude Cahun's Visual and Narrative Texts

Ruby Schiller

Advisor: Karen Humphreys

Major: French

Claude Cahun, born Lucy Schwob (1894-1954), was a French photographer, sculptor, writer, and activist. In this thesis, I explore the ways in which Cahun uses a variety of creative mediums to express different roles for women in the early twentieth century through her personal experimental processes. A gender-bending woman artist in a man's world, Cahun's life and work were in part a reaction to the sociological divide regarding women's roles during the interwar period. She embodies this cultural change by challenging the norms of her time and making use of the surrealists' fascination with the unconscious to uncover new ideas. Cahun, through her personal life and in her work, represents this shift in both her photographic and literary texts. Works that I discuss include photographs *Auto portrait en tant que jeune fille*, c. 1914 and *I am in training, don't kiss me* c. 1927, and an adaptation of a *conte de fée*, titled *Cendrillon, l'enfant humble et hautaine*. My thesis is divided into three sections that distinguish the different phases of her work through specific motifs. These include her use of masks, mirrors, and disguises to forge numerous representations of herself. In doing so, she invites the reader and viewer to question their own perceptions of her self-expression and to question gender roles as they are both consciously and unconsciously performed in society.

# Spectacular Representations of the Salpêtrière in Nineteenth Century Theatrical Texts

## (Les représentations spectaculaires de la Salpêtrière dans les textes théâtraux du XIXe siècle)

Camille Valentincic

Advisor: Karen Humphreys  
Major: French

The notorious Salpêtrière prison-turned-asylum that housed Paris' impoverished, mentally ill, disabled, and "undesirable" women, has captivated the public's attention since its inception in the seventeenth century. This attention was further heightened in the mid-1800s when the celebrated neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot opened a clinic at the institution to study the centuries-old behaviors associated with the "disease" hysteria. Although his work significantly contributed to the medical field and legitimized the hysteric condition as medically diagnosable, much of his research came at the expense of mentally ill patients at the Salpêtrière. Charcot employed various theatrical techniques to carry out dramatic public demonstrations of hysterical patients and present his "cures" for the disease. Outside the medical domain, the demonstrations proved to be influential on popular *fin-de-siècle* artistic works, including novels, operas, dances, and theatrical plays.

Despite considerable scholarly research on Charcot's influence on late nineteenth century writers, there is little critical discourse surrounding his influence on other artistic expressions. Given the spectacular nature of the hysteric demonstrations, an interesting connection arises between Charcot's work and the theatrical plays that represent the Salpêtrière. In particular, two nineteenth century plays, *La Salpêtrière: drame en cinq actes* and *Une leçon à la Salpêtrière*, published in 1842 and 1908, respectively, shed light on how the representations of the Salpêtrière and its patients changed before and after Charcot's tenure. This analysis reveals that while ideas and criticisms surrounding the Salpêtrière as an institution changed during the nineteenth century, the way in which "madwoman" are portrayed remains strikingly consistent, suggesting that societal views toward "hysteric" women did not significantly change in the wake of Charcot's demonstrations and analyses.

# Contemporary Literary Approaches to Challenging the Discriminatory Structure of the French Language

Alice Verdier

Advisor: Karen Humphreys

Major: French

The French language has encountered much controversy as early as the Renaissance. The most recent debates concern the representation of gender and/or lack thereof. As a gender-based language, French is grammatically constructed through the rigid boundaries of male and female genders. As such, it does not allow for the self-expression or representation of anyone identifying outside of these categories. Consequently, gender neutrality is currently a topic of public dispute, demonstrating the controversial nature of the French language. There have, however, been attempts to work around the language as well as to alter the language in response to this controversy and to promote inclusivity while challenging both the discrimination and misogyny it perpetuates.

I examine the numerous movements and attempts that have been made as well as the linguistic approaches to gender throughout Anne Garréta's *Sphinx*, Monique Wittig's *Les Guérillères*, and Adel Tincelin's *On n'a que deux vies*. Garréta remains within the gendered confines of the French language, yet she never indicates the gender of the two main characters. Wittig utilizes a form of écriture inclusive through eliminating the masculine pronoun "il(s)" and substituting it with the feminine pronoun "elle(s)". Tincelin tells of their transitional experience with nonbinary language and specifically the nonbinary relationship with words. These contemporary texts all serve as a response to the recent controversies regarding French as a gender-based language. By analyzing these literary works, I demonstrate the literary transformations of discriminatory linguistic structures towards gender inclusivity in French language.

# Message from Saint-Exupéry of the Adult World Through Literary Analysis of *The Little Prince*

Ophélie (Yifan) Xu

Advisor: Karen Humphreys  
Major: French

In his 1948 novel *Le petit prince*, Saint-Exupéry through a variety of rhetorical devices, highlights the concept of looking beneath surfaces to discern the meaning of human experiences. This thesis examines the effects of specific rhetorical devices and literary forms and attributes these effects to the enduring, wide-ranging appeal of the novel. The author claims in the preface that the book is meant to be an adult fable yet narrated in a way that appeals to the point of view of a child. He disparages “grownups” lack of compassion and creativity and presents a social critique of the pragmatic banality of the adult world. Some critics investigate whether the readership of *Le petit prince* should be composed of children or adults. This particular body of criticism effectively establishes a relationship among the fields of pedagogy, early childhood development, and literature. At the same time, the effects of roleplay between and among the characters invite both publics. The universal fascination of this tale can be largely attributed to Saint-Exupéry’s allegorical writing-style and his rhetorical strategies that reinforce the complex relationships among human beings, their environment, and their social constructs as they are represented in the novel.

# German Studies

# **The Construction of Femininity in German Literature through the 'Beautiful Soul'**

Amanda Cagar

Advisor: German Studies

Major: Julia Assaiante

This thesis will examine the construction of femininity in German literature based off the concept of the 'beautiful soul', established by Friedrich Schiller in the late eighteenth century. The thesis will begin by providing historical and philosophical context regarding the prominent literary figures and their philosophy regarding Schillers 'beautiful soul.' The thesis will then examine case studies in which the 'beautiful soul' is exemplified in female characters throughout Enlightenment, Storm and Stress, and Romantic literature, and how this concept of the 'beautiful soul' in these stories negatively impacted the constructions of femininity. In addition, women who run counter to the standard of the 'beautiful soul,' and the ways in which they transcended societal barriers during this era will be discussed. Finally, the thesis will conclude by analyzing modern-day examples of women who overcame obstacles in literary and societal settings.

# **The Methods of Oppression of Women in 1800s Germany vs. Today**

Amina Taher

Advisor: German Studies

Major: Julia Assaiante

Women have faced many injustices, pain, and struggles over time. This thesis focuses on the methods by which women were oppressed in 1800s Germany vs. today. At first, I use a number of popular fairytales, novels, and scholarly articles/books to discuss the role of women in German society in the 1800s. Furthermore, I talk about the different methods used to oppress and abuse women in modern times, mainly focusing on the role of social media as a tool of oppression. Finally, I emphasize and debate the similarities and differences between the different oppression forms over time.



# Hispanic Studies

# **Homeland, Father, and Exile: The Epiphanic Aesthetic of James Joyce in “Last Evenings on Earth” by Roberto Bolaño**

**(Patria, padre y exilio: La estética epifánica de James Joyce en “Últimos atardeceres en la tierra” de Roberto Bolaño)**

Peter Finucane

Advisor: Priscilla Meléndez

Major: Hispanic Studies

Although Roberto Bolaño’s outwardly irreverent, stridently innovative fictions might not show it, the Chilean author read widely. Beyond the primary, ample influence of Jorge Luis Borges in Bolaño’s literary production, I believe James Joyce to be a clear second. This thesis uncovers the Joycean aesthetic specifically in Bolaño’s short story “Últimos atardeceres en la tierra,” (2001) where I contend that the author succeeds in joining the violence of Latin American fiction with the generative epiphany of the European Joyce, particularly from *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916). I suggest that Bolaño does so in order to reflect upon, and to some extent, justify his life as an artist in various transnational self-exiles. The paternal character in both Joyce and Bolaño’s work becomes a central figure as a point of biographical reflection for the authors, a representative of homeland and, ultimately, of lifelong national disillusion

# The Language of Power in the Representation of Indigenous Women: La Malinche and Rigoberta Menchú

Noah Glantz

Advisor: Priscilla Meléndez  
Major: Hispanic Studies

La Malinche (Malintzin in Nahuatl) and the Guatemalan Rigoberta Menchú are two indigenous women from distinct historical periods (sixteenth and twentieth century). The reputations of La Malinche and Rigoberta Menchú have been developed in large part due to the work of conquistador and chronicler Bernal Díaz del Castillo and anthropologist Elizabeth Burgos-Debray, respectively. Díaz del Castillo's chronicle *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España (1632)* recounts the stories of the conquest of the Aztec empire through the eyes of Spanish soldiers yet scarcely mentions La Malinche. Nevertheless, this text has solidified La Malinche's identity in history. In *I, Rigoberta Menchu*, the protagonist sheds light on the hardships she and the rest of the indigenous community have experienced in Guatemala. This book was constructed by Burgos-Debray through interviews conducted between her and Menchu in Paris in 1982. Due to the nature by which Bernal presents La Malinche and Burgos-Debray mediates the world and words of Menchú, their identities come with complex images and a sense of ambiguity. Through the figures of La Malinche and Rigoberta Menchú, we are able to better understand the diverse angles of these figures and how they navigate political and gender power. I will investigate how La Malinche and Rigoberta Menchú are portrayed in literature and the effect it has had on the development of their political, social, and cultural identities.

# Yucatán, the Journey of Life in a Chronicle of the Tropic

Sara López

Advisor: Priscilla Meléndez  
Major: Hispanic Studies

My research project focuses on travel chronicles in Mexico, in particular that of the Mexican writer Juan Villoro (1956) and his autobiographical text *Palmeras de la brisa rápida* (1989) where he engages in revisiting his past by undertaking a trip to the Yucatan peninsula. Touring the richness of his Yucatecan land, Villoro describes and retells memories of his most recent return to the Mayan world. Villoro asserts that the chronicle is like a platypus, it looks like many animals but it turns out to be a different and very distinct animal all together. As a hybrid written form, the chronicle merges from many literary genres, it has historical accounts, a report, and even at times a memoir. Chronicle resembles many genres, but in many ways Villoro seems to render a genre of his own.

This combination of the chronicle with the discourse of the journey guided by the gaze and the writing of Villoro as the traveler creates a socio-cultural mechanism of recounting a trip and describing the space where the explorer ventures. Moreover, the style of narration which adopts a first-person perspective has the effect of bringing the reader closer to Villoro as the writer, in a real and at times mystical way. Wandering through the Yucatan's landscape, from a privileged position describes in detail the quotidian life as it unravels in one of Mexico's most enchanting corners. Villoro aims to unmask the essence of being Mexican, the culture, the places, the stories and the country's people who form part of and shape his own experience. One of the main themes of this chronicle is the concept of racial as a backdrop to Mexican society, and as for exclusion and marginalization of different groups. Racial discrimination by social class and skin color continues to be a phenomenon within Mexican society today, with the indigenous populations occupying the lowest echelons along with Afro-Mexicans. A legacy left behind by of the Spanish conquest and a colonial history of social injustices, racial discriminatory and the construction of a hierarchical system limiting social mobility.

# **The Literature of the Disappeared: The Role of Investigative Narrative Journalism in Argentina during the 20th Century**

**(La literatura de los desaparecidos: El papel del periodismo narrativo de investigación en la Argentina del siglo XX)**

Jay Park

Advisor: Priscilla Meléndez  
Major: Hispanic Studies

This project attempts to conceptualize the linkage between political oppression and literature through the works of Argentine writer Rodolfo Jorge Walsh. Born in 1927 in the Rio Negro province just north of Patagonia, Walsh's career was coincident with multiple coups d'état, a myriad of presidents, and the rise in power of the most renowned political figure in the history of Argentina: General-turned-President Juan Domingo Perón. In this regard, the totality of Walsh's works underscores his vitriolic sentiments towards the repressive and authoritarian leadership experienced by Argentina (however disjointed) during the latter half of the twentieth century. To that end, this essay will focus mainly on three of Walsh's most influential works: *Operación Masacre* (1957), *Quién mató a Rosendo?* (1969), and *Carta abierta de un escritor a la Junta Militar* (1977). This paper argues that literature and more specifically, the genre of investigative narrative journalism, highlights the critical role of literature as a mechanism to address both political and social oppression in societies dominated by authoritarian regimes.

# ***Devórame otra vez* by Luis Rafael Sánchez: Chronicling the Puerto Rican Social Voice**

Claudia Soto-Canetti

Advisor: Priscilla Meléndez  
Major: Hispanic Studies

Since the arrival of the Europeans to the so-called New World, the chronicle has been considered the first literary expression of the American continent. From its beginnings, the chronicle was used to communicate historical stories characterized by its narrative from the first-person point of view and the fact that the chronicler was generally a witness to the action. The chronicle is a hybrid genre that mixes an aspect of journalism and literature leading to distant vocal expressions. Throughout my research, I will focus on the Puerto Rican novelist, playwright, essayist, and short-story author Luis Rafael Sánchez's compilation of chronicles titled *Devórame otra vez* (2004). I will analyze this text in light of its complex identity as a collection of forty chronicles published in newspapers around the Spanish-speaking world exploring the subjective identity of some of these narratives. Luis Rafael Sánchez compiles these chronicles as he takes his reader through a series of travels from Latin America, Europe, and Puerto Rico. In this hybrid text, Sánchez underscores the island's complex social, racial, and political issues beginning in 1898 when Puerto Rico was first acquired by the United States. Through my analysis, I will unmask how the text represents a critique of the ambiguous and indeterminate political status of Puerto Rico through an ironic writing style.

# Italian Studies

**Social Media as a Theatrical Stage:  
*One, None and One Hundred Thousand***

Lauren Ianelli

Advisor: Martina Di Florio

Major: Italian Studies

As a society, we oftentimes cannot recognize the impact that outside influences have on us. This thesis explores the ways in which social media affects an individual's sense of self, while taking into consideration Luigi Pirandello's theory of masks portrayed in his novel *One, None and One Hundred Thousand* (1926). The effects of social media on contemporary society, especially young individuals who have grown up as users of various digital platforms, are extremely evident, but what is more striking here is how these platforms influence the ways individuals perceive themselves. Pirandello stated that all individuals, consciously or unconsciously, wear different masks, different versions of themselves when surrounded by certain people or social environments. Therefore, the author concluded that because of their masks, individuals do not know themselves without them, and we are all actors on a theatrical stage. Furthering this theory and connecting it to modern day Italian society, I argue that these theatrical stages are now represented by social media platforms, where everyone is a character, wearing a mask, playing a role, taking a selfie, and making a performance for everyone to see.



# Plan B - Chinese & Japanese

# Live as Fireflies: The Narration of Traumas in Two Films

Tucker O'Brien

Advisor: Yipeng Shen

Major: Plan B: Chinese & Japanese

The films *To Live*, directed by Zhang Yimou 1994 in China, and *Grave of the Fireflies*, directed by Isao Takahata in Japan, tell the stories of two families' daily life as they endure the aftermath of historical tragedies in the 20th century. Affected by the histories of China and Japan in the twentieth century, the actions and thoughts of the characters embody different forms of their traumas. I argue that these two films depict traumatic expressions of the Chinese and Japanese people to their respective historical tragedies, through the abnormal behaviors and uncanny psychologies of the characters. The visualized expressions of trauma contribute to the making of twentieth century Chinese and Japanese histories.

**Plan B**  
**Italian**  
**&**  
**Hispanic**  
**Studies**

# **When Humor Becomes a Political Weapon: Comparative Analysis of *Miracolo a Milano* and *Bienvenido, Mr. Marshall***

Nadiia Usenko

Advisor: Martina Di Florio  
Major: Plan B: Italian & Hispanic Studies

There is no doubt that Italian neorealism has influenced Spanish film directors: the objectives of Italian neorealism were used in the Spanish film movement to lay the groundwork for the fight against Franco's dictatorship. This thesis concentrates on a particular phase when neorealist cinema started to deploy the elements of humor as a tool for social protest. *Miracolo a Milano* by Vittorio De Sica (Italy, 1951) and *Bienvenido, Mr. Marshall* by Luis García-Berlanga (Spain, 1953) represent a clear example of a powerful blend between comic and dramatic elements. Beyond dispute, humor helped the two directors to maneuver around social norms, public criticism, and the country's censorship to continue a battle for justice.

Through the close analysis and comparison of the two masterpieces, I argue that comedy enabled the directors to highlight problems in their countries and, furthermore, that humor successfully assisted them in criticizing important issues, sometimes even more brutally and effectively than the direct approach of classic neorealism.

# Russian

# **Tolstoy's view of free will through Natasha Rostova and Anna Karenina**

Karina Smith

Advisor: Carol Any

Major: Russian

Tolstoy, in the eighteen hundred, analyzed human beings as part of a simple psychology, he believed human beings to be made up of “four parts: ‘the body’, ‘feeling’, ‘mind’, and ‘will’” (Tussing 33). He understood that the man’s true goal is freedom, and his basis is the “unlimited will” that is free. (Tussing 33). Everything else does not matter to the man. That was the basis of his writings. In his masterpiece, War and Peace, Tolstoy’s view of complete freedom of action began to change and he used his surroundings to test his theories about humans and free will and their ability to choose for themselves or go along with what society instructs one to do. His other novel, Anna Karenina, also battles the same issues. The two heroines in their own way find a way to rebel against their societies, families, friends, and lovers.

The goal of the two novels is to discover how much freedom can one have, according to Tolstoy. He uses unlikely characters to rebel against what is believed to be the appropriate behavior. The result of these rebellions is very different and show the reader two different paths, which lets the reader find out the truth about free will for himself. Natasha takes the path of minor rebellion which allows her to gain understanding about herself and her true desires and leads her to find happiness, romance, and family she was always seeking. Natasha throughout the novel chose to make her own decisions and achieved maturity she always wanted. She became an adult by learning from her own mistakes and making changes to her perception of the world. Her path ended up teaching her what every adult must learn about life. On the other hand, Anna Karenina made many dangerous and rebellious decisions which led to her unhappiness and sadly untimely death. Her path shows the dangers of romanticized thinking and constant living in the dream world. Throughout the novel, Anna gives in to every desire she has and her acceptance of the events that followed was her own choice.

# World Literature & Culture Studies

# Reading Camus' *The Stranger* as a Response to Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*

Lila Purtell

Advisor: Karen Humphreys

Major: World Literature & Culture Studies

Despite an abundance of literary criticism that discusses Dostoevsky as an influence on Camus' work, there appears to be little sustained analysis of the many parallels between Camus' *The Stranger* and Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. With strikingly similar plots and motifs – namely, narratives of murder and its consequences – both authors explore questions about life and its meaning, but come to different conclusions. While Dostoevsky points towards religion, Camus seems to reject God in the face of the absurd, a concept which Camus outlines in his essay *The Myth of Sisyphus*. I investigate the parallels between these two novels to show that *The Stranger* can be viewed as a direct response to *Crime and Punishment*; and further, how *The Stranger* is ultimately a critique of Dostoevsky's 'answer' to the seemingly existential questions that his narrative proposes. In reading Camus as a response to Dostoevsky, I also intend to examine how Camus' concept of the absurd influences our perception of *Crime and Punishment* today, and investigate why it has become categorized amongst other prominent existential works in the literary world