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# FRENCH

# Addressing the *Condamné*: Archiving Emotional Truth in Victor Hugo's *Le Dernier jour d'un condamné*

Olivia Brado

Advisor: Doyle Calhoun

Major: French

Despite its associations with revolutionary France, the guillotine remains a fixture of our present. It took its last victim only recently, in 1977—a day before the release of the first *Star Wars* movie. Throughout its rich and bloody history, the guillotine has been represented from a variety of perspectives: courtroom proceedings, accounts of public execution, and historical fiction. One of the most notable of these representations is Victor Hugo's novel *Le Dernier jour d'un condamné* (1829), which the author wrote after witnessing yet another public execution in Paris. Although a fiction, Hugo's novel gave the public unique insight into the emotional turmoil of those condemned to death. In a brutal retelling of what can only be described as psychological torture, Hugo sheds light on an aspect of the guillotine's history that often gets glanced over: the story of the *condamné*. This thesis explores the impact of Hugo's literary representation of capital punishment through an analysis of the novel, especially its form and historical context. Beginning with the third edition, Hugo included a short "play" at the beginning of the work to comment sarcastically, but directly, on the negative political reception of his writing by the upper classes. However, he commits wholeheartedly to a discombobulated, but genuine, way of describing the physically and emotionally convoluted journey of the condemned man. Additionally, he makes an effort to preserve the slang used in prisons, giving it value in a way that is often not prescribed to prison scenes. From a close reading of the novel, I then move on to consider the novel's role in the larger telling of history itself, while archival documents give us insight into societal norms and the statistics of crimes, stories like Hugo's give us an insight to the feelings, struggles, and stories of the individual. I include some examples of court scenes and journalistic retellings of executions to determine what is present in more "factual" versions of executions, thus drawing out the importance of Hugo's fictional work in relation to historical memory and witnessing.

# Evaluating the Use of Fiction as a Means of Rewriting History for Restorative Justice in Claire de Duras's *Ourika* and David Diop's *La Porte du voyage sans retour*

Shae Burns

Advisor: Doyle Calhoun  
Major: French

From a French perspective, literature concerning slavery and Black experiences lacks sufficient authorship and resources to effectively depict the horrors and violence of slavery and colonization. It was rare that any victims of the slave trade or oppression had the privilege or the means to tell their story, and the French Republic struggled to properly address their role in systemic violence as part of their national identity, only officially condemning it as a crime against humanity at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Additionally, there exist limited media that even represent the contemporary Black experiences in France and other Francophone nations, which both results from and legitimizes racialized prejudices and anti-Black violence. Throughout history, and most prominently today, authors and creators have attempted to give voices to these stories and rewrite narratives through fiction, a necessary measure being used to expose the true extent of repeated systemic violence by the French towards marginalized populations both domestically and in their previously colonized nations. The incorporation of fiction in narratives, especially with such high stakes, poses a risk in that it could improperly assert ideas pertaining to race, violence, or emotions, but also presents significant potential benefits by presenting stories that advocate for populations that have otherwise been silenced. By examining two novels that fictionalize the experiences of Black and enslaved subjects in the French empire—namely, *Ourika* by Claire de Duras (1823) and David Diop's *La Porte du voyage sans retour* (2021)—this thesis highlights how representations of slavery and Black experiences have been both skewed and well-developed in literary works over time. Although published almost 200 years apart, both works highlight deep-rooted racism and oppression through unique perspectives. However, sometimes the benefits of fictional expository writing can be undermined by misinterpretation or appropriation. This thesis will provide an understanding of how fiction can be perceived as an important vessel for ameliorating our comprehension of crucial subjects. By examining key strengths and weaknesses of fictional writing, this thesis will demonstrate how fabricated narratives can enrich global understandings of identities and experiences that are different from our own.

# Literary Prize Culture in France and African Literary Resistance

Lizzy Hall

Advisor: Doyle Calhoun

Major: French

The Prix Goncourt, first awarded in 1903, remains the most prestigious symbol of literary distinction in France. Past laureates of the prize, though only given 10 euros in prize money, have moved on to become internationally acclaimed authors, their works becoming bestsellers in several languages. While the Goncourt committee accepts contenders from all varieties of French, the literary prize culture established in Paris' most elite publishing houses historically has put the broader francophone sphere at a disadvantage. For years, writers from across the francophone world have had to conform to the aesthetics and identity politics of the major French literary prizes to be considered legitimate contestants. This thesis uses the works of specific African Goncourt laureates, such as René Maran and Marie NDiaye, to explore this cultural and literary-historical dynamic by examining the relationship between Paris' literary institutions and francophone African literature. Considering literary prize culture in France through case studies of Black and/or African Goncourt laureates sheds light on France's market for "exotic literature" and provides insight into how Parisian literary institutions support a nationalist and purist ideology of French literature that "others" and marginalizes literature in French produced outside of France. In this thesis, I identify two kinds of "resistance" at work in both France's literary establishments and francophone literature in Africa: on the one hand, elite Parisian literary establishments resist opening up or globalizing literature in French, upholding the aesthetics of purely "French" literature; on the other hand, the world of African literature has resisted, retaliated, and responded by establishing their own competitive literary status in many ways, but specifically through the creation of its own francophone African prize culture, rather than trying to conform to French standards.



# Beyond Opulence: Voltaire's Evolving Perspectives on Luxury

Tyler Tishman

Advisor: Doyle Calhoun

Major: French

In 18th-century France, and Enlightenment Europe more broadly, a significant debate emerged regarding luxury (*le luxe*), its societal implications, and its moral and economic ramifications. Philosophes such as François Fénelon and Bernard Mandeville debated the merits and drawbacks of luxury and are frequently cited for their contributions to the discourse on the subject. Voltaire also engaged significantly in the luxury debate. While his perspective varied over time, he generally adopted a pragmatic viewpoint. While he acknowledged the allure and potential benefits of luxury, advocating for its role in stimulating commerce and cultural refinement, for instance, Voltaire also cautioned against its excesses and its negative potential to fuel societal inequality and corruption. Existing studies on Voltaire's role in Enlightenment debates about luxury often overlook or simplify his views; this thesis delves more deeply into Voltaire's philosophy on luxury, which he developed and articulated until his death at the age of eighty-three. Specifically, this thesis examines the evolution of Voltaire's philosophy on luxury across two texts from different stages of his career: namely, his poem, *Le Mondain*, published in 1736, and his masterpiece, *Candide*, published in 1759. To what extent did Voltaire's representation and critique of luxury evolve across these periods and literary genres? Chapter One pursues a close reading of *Le Mondain*, while Chapter Two focuses on *Candide*. Contrary to the notion that Voltaire's perspective on luxury was simplistic or superficial, or that he supported an unbridled pursuit of *le luxe*, I argue that Voltaire's position on luxury was carefully considered, from his very first forays into the subject, as evidenced by his comprehensive support for commercial corporations in his early works, *Les Lettres philosophiques* (1733), *Le Mondain* (1736), and *Défense du Mondain* (1738). Put another way, this thesis aims to explore the subtleties of thought that shaped Voltaire's most significant work, *Candide*, suggesting a distinct shift in vision and offering insights into his evolving views on luxury's role in society. Ultimately, the depiction of luxury in *Le Mondain* and *Candide* is especially significant when considered within a historical context, against the backdrop of bourgeois societies characterized by comfort, abundance, and a preference for private pleasure over public display. Voltaire morally justifies this form of luxury, rooted in commerce, as it rewards labor rather than inherited social status, contributing to wealth distribution, comfort, and refined manners, aligning with notions of progress, moderate governance, and increased equality.

FRENCH  
&  
GERMAN

# **From Maiden to Malevolence: Marriage, Motherhood, and the Descent into Evil**

Emma Viens

Advisor: Doyle Calhoun

Major: French

In the realm of folklore and storytelling, fairy tales have long captivated audiences with their enchanting tales and timeless themes. Originating from oral tradition and passed down from generation to generation, these short stories have evolved into a cornerstone of literature and culture, nurturing the imaginations of both children and adults. However, fairy tales are more than mere bedtime stories; they have served as powerful tools for exerting control over women and perpetuating gender inequality. Beneath the surface of seemingly innocent narratives lie carefully crafted and deeply rooted misconceptions about sex and gender, shaping readers' perceptions from childhood into adulthood. Particularly, the portrayal of women and their roles within these narratives as either good or evil reinforces a binary gender system, restricting the agency and autonomy of female characters and villainizing those who deviate from societal norms. This thesis aims to unravel the complex layers of female characterizations in some of the most famous and enduring fairy tales in French and German, examining the subtler forms of social manipulation they employ. Through an examination of the classic tale Snow White and close readings of various iterations—from Paul Sébillot's "Les Bas enchantés" to the Grimm Brothers' "Schneewitchen"—I seek to understand the evolving relationship between Snow White and the "Evil" Queen. The latter's evolution, from biological mother to stepmother, reflects broader societal movements aimed at protecting the sanctity of motherhood and stigmatizing childless women. Additionally, I aim to illuminate how these fairy tales contribute to a mercantile reward system that elevates marriage as the pinnacle of a woman's achievement, fostering competition and discord among women. By delving into the underlying themes of female rivalry and the emphasis on marriage as the defining moment of a woman's life, I challenge the traditional narrative presented by these tales, suggesting that marriage marks the transition of women from young, well-mannered heroines to old, wicked antagonists.

FRENCH  
&  
HISPANIC  
STUDIES

# Paris's Iconic 'La Samaritaine' from Past to Present

Elizabeth Tevis

Advisor: Doyle Calhoun

Major: French

La Samaritaine, built in 1870, is one of Paris's most famous department stores. Representing early forms of consumerism and femininity in the late 19th and early 20th century, as well as architectural modernity, La Samaritaine was more than what meets the eye. Its founder, Ernest Cognacq, shaped La Samaritaine into a home for leisure regardless of socio-economic class, straying from the norms of other notable department stores of its time such as Le Bon Marché and Au Printemps. The 21st century has since changed La Samaritaine's portrayal within Parisian society. Upon its redevelopment by one of the world's most powerful luxury goods companies, LVMH, La Samaritaine has been portrayed by the press as a pinnacle of Parisian elegance and luxury. However, the influence on La Samaritaine's surrounding residents and daily visitors has completely changed. By analyzing La Samaritaine through the ages, this thesis aims to characterize the impact of urban redevelopment and how cultural heritage can be either preserved or destroyed. The first chapter highlights the history of department stores and La Samaritaine as an early establishment, with a particular emphasis on the introduction of women in Émile Zola's *Au Bonheur des dames* as well as a more inclusive socio-economic customer base. This had a profound effect on La Samaritaine's role as a cultural heritage site; beyond the beauty of the actual building, it came to embody both women and working-class Parisians who finally found a home for leisure. In the late 20th century, La Samaritaine became so poorly maintained that it was completely sold to LVMH in 2001. The second chapter depicts the 'new' Samaritaine. After a 16-year, 800-million-euro redevelopment, La Samaritaine had changed. Two interviews conducted with a restaurant server just beyond La Samaritaine and a business owner down the street reveal in-depth interpersonal experiences that bring to life how LVMH's redevelopment has consequentially reshaped a beloved Parisian cultural heritage site. The comparison of La Samaritaine's past with its present shows how urban redevelopment and cultural heritage not only shape our surroundings but also significantly affect the people who have been there all along.

# GERMAN STUDIES

# The Lineage of Language: The Minds of Hamann, Benjamin, and Heidegger

Molly Hornick

Advisor: Julia Assaiante  
Major: German Studies

Language, an essential part of human existence, is in its ubiquity almost impossible to define. This aspect of life, nearly absurd to confine into a simple definition, is crucial to the human understanding of being itself. The question of the origin of language began in the late 18th century with the German-language philosopher, Johann Georg Hamann, who criticized the Enlightenment for its reliance on reason alone. The notion that human existence, and therefore language can be grasped into a mere rational approach was similarly rejected by language philosopher Walter Benjamin. The philosophical lineage of the understanding of language continues with philosopher Martin Heidegger who, in his work, recognized the ambiguities and role of language within human existence. In this thesis, I will look to the work of three important German language philosophers, whose work on language attempts to understand it not as a simple “tool,” but as the possibility of being itself.

Within the writing of J.G. Hamann, *Aesthetica in Nuce: A Rhapsody in Cabbalistic Prose*, and Julia G. Assaiante’s work, *Body Language: Corporeality, Subjectivity, and Language in Johann Georg Hamann*, I will review Hamann’s understanding of language as a translation from a divine language of creation to human language. The view of language as a divine translation paves the path for Walter Benjamin. In his work, *The Task of the Translator, On Language as Such and on the Language of Man*, and *Lament and Pure Language: Scholem, Benjamin and Kant*, Benjamin’s understanding of a divine, or rather ‘pure’ language is delineated. Martin Heidegger throughout his work, *Language, Poetry, Thought*, depicts language as a mode through which beings are revealed to the world. Language, therefore, similarly to the insights of Hamann and Benjamin, cannot be restricted to a rational understanding.

Through the complex lineage of language which was traced by the three German language philosophers, Hamann, Benjamin, and Heidegger, one will understand language, in its true essence, as ambiguously entangled within being itself.

# **The Development of Computers and Video Games in Germany - How a Divided Nation Influenced an Industry**

Samantha Musante

Advisor: Julia Assaiante

Major: German Studies

Technology plays an important role in the history of any country. It has the power to change entire political landscapes and be the deciding factor in winning a war. The industry has remained at the forefront of societal development. Better technology means better quality of life, and more advancements in other industries, such as medicine, environmental science, and urban development. A subsection of this massive industry are those who produce video games and other forms of online entertainment. Video games were one of the earliest uses for computers outside of mathematical computation. They were a way for programmers to express their creativity, devising new and exciting forms of entertainment. Games were also a useful way in getting the general populace to be interested in computers. Before video games, computers were almost exclusively used for research in the science and engineering fields. But video games made this technology accessible to all, and computers started appearing in every household. Today, the video game industry is worth about \$365 billion dollars, and that number continues to grow. Germany in particular has an interesting history with technology. Before World War II it was at the forefront of technological development, creating some of the earliest computing machines. Unfortunately, the war had a mostly negative impact on this progress, as many engineers and scientists were drafted and were either sent to fight in the trenches, or develop new weaponry. Even after the war Germany was facing problems. It was divided into the East and the West, with the East being cut off from western technology while under the control of the Soviet Union. This means that computer and video game development were very different in these two regions. The hardware in the East was typically slower, with less computing power, and the code needed to run these computers was not used by the rest of the world. Still, people in the East worked with what they had and produced many games of their own. Under the rule of the Soviet Union however, video games were closely monitored by the Stasi, who viewed many of them as anti-Soviet. When Germany was eventually unified, eastern technology was rendered obsolete. Those in the East had no experience with western technology, which made it difficult for the two sides to integrate. There were many years of struggle, as the people of the East had to adapt quickly, and problems still persist to this day. In this thesis I will detail the history of computers and video games in Germany and how the industry changed before, during, and after WWII. I will also discuss the role this technology played in shaping the cultural and political landscape of the country, and finally, what the German video games industry looks like today.



# **Identity in Black and White: Translation of the Afro-German Identity in the Poems of May Ayim**

Mia Ver Pault

Advisor: Julia Assaiante

Major: German Studies

Many parts of our being are attached to how we identify and with whom we identify. Theoretically, how we identify is based largely on one's own choices, but such freedom is not always the case. Unfortunately, identity is often imposed upon one by the surrounding racial and ethnic majority. Like many non-white people in a white environment, this was the case for the German poet and activist, May Ayim. May Ayim (1960-1996) was born to a white German mother and a black Ghanian father. Although Ayim spoke German, grew up in Germany, and was fully acculturated into German society, she moved through German society as a foreigner. Ayim's racial and cultural identity were incompatible with one another. In order to combat the German socially defined concept of "German-ness," Ayim and a group of black German women began the Afro-German movement.

This thesis discusses the concept of Black racial and cultural identity within a German context. Through an understanding of German colonial history and the German politics of identity, this thesis will make clear the catalyst for the Afro-German Movement. The Afro-German Movement was created and led by black German women, and it was sustained by their will for self-identification, self-determination, and sense of belonging in their own homeland. This movement broke down walls through creative mediums, such as music and literature. May Ayim, one of the leaders of the Afro-German Movement, used poetry to voice her experiences and identity as a black woman in Germany. In this thesis, I examine the Afro-German identity in Ayim's poems, and how it has been translated into English. More specifically, I examine the intricacies of the Afro-German Movement through the analysis of language in Ayim's poems. Language and translation act as the bridge between cultures, a main goal of the Afro-German movement. Therefore, through the examination of translation and language, I can fully uncover the impact of the Afro-German Movement. Finally, I present my own English translations of five poems written by May Ayim.

# HISPANIC STUDIES

# The Female Figure in Argentine Coup d'etat Politics: The Role of Gender in the Resistance Movement of Teatro Abierto in 1981

Maggie Amaral

Advisor: Priscilla Meléndez

Major: Hispanic Studies

This essay focuses on the study of two plays produced in Argentina in 1981 for the resistance movement Teatro Abierto (Open Theater). This movement emerged amidst a political crisis in Argentina where the artistic sector made an open submission call for artists, directors, and playwrights to produce one-act plays as an open defiance against the state of violence that was taking place. The plays produced during this movement were acts of resistance to the censorship and oppression that plagued Argentina after the 1976 coup d'état and the then emerging dictatorship of Jorge Rafael Videla. One of the areas most affected by censorship under the Videla dictatorship was the arts, specifically the work of any artist who dared to challenge the dictatorship. Griselda Gambaro's *Decir sí* (1981) and Diana Raznovich's *El desconcierto* (1981) will ground this analysis, to examine both the broader theatrical movement of Open Theater and the political and social state of Argentina in 1981, as a result of the 1976 coup d'état (Boron). The role of gender will be explored in a three-part analysis. The first through an understanding of how the spaces for which these plays were created, the Picadero theater and later the Tabarís theater, both in Buenos Aires profited off of and continued "protecting political content behind or within the context of female sexual exploitation," as asserted by Diana Taylor (28). The second phase of analysis will examine how the portrayal of women in both *El desconcierto* (1981) and *Decir sí* (1981) are broader reflections of the treatment, abuse, and silencing of Argentine women living under oppressive military regimes. The final stage of analysis will communicate how these two brilliant Open Theater movement pieces, and their creators, resisted Argentine coup d'etat politics by centering the female figure in a male-dominated space.

# **Psychoanalysis and Political Changes in Argentinian Theater of the Second Half of the 20th Century: Griselda Gambaro and Eduardo Pavlovsky**

Gillianne Nugent

Advisor: Priscilla Meléndez

Major: Hispanic Studies

This paper explores the use of psychodrama as a technique in Argentinian theater by Griselda Gambaro and Eduardo Pavlovsky as well as interpretations of the following plays through a psychoanalytical lens: *El campo* (1967) and *La malasangre* (1982) by Gambaro and *El señor Galíndez* (1972) and *Telarañas* (1976) by Pavlovsky. Each of these plays was written in a dark period of Argentine history between the years 1966-1983 during which a series of military regimes took power of the country creating an environment of instability, persecution, fear, and death where extreme acts of torture were practiced. The psychological consequences of these dehumanizing acts are represented in the personal and collective behavior of the characters of these four plays who are part of a power structure and struggle that categorizes them as victims or perpetrators of violence. This violence penetrates daily life creating a society incapable of recognizing good from evil, the conscious from the unconscious, past from present, reality from simulation, the countryside from a prison, among other dichotomies. This project explores how Freudian theories shed light of the behavior of many characters in these four plays as a mechanism to disentangle the emotional fallout of this period, especially due to instability, displacement, and death that surrounds the characters.

# Exile and Return: The Search for National Identity in *La otra orilla* by Jorge Díaz

Priscilla Rubio

Advisor: Priscilla Meléndez  
Major: Hispanic Studies

Defining one's national identity proves intricate as its essence transcends mere birthplace association. In this essay, I delve into the internal conflicts stemming from exile and the possibility of return, as depicted in the works displaced writers themselves. Specifically, I analyze the Chilean playwright Jorge Díaz (1930- 2007) and his 1987 *La otra orilla*, which portrays a multi-generational family struggling with exile during Augusto Pinochet's military dictatorship in Chile (1973-1990), the audience witnesses the ways in which each character grapples with their own interpretation of national identity in the light of the possibility of returning to their homeland. Furthermore, I will briefly examine the Argentine writer Roberto Cossa's *Gris de ausencia* (1981), illustrating exile's impact on identity formation in a family seeking to redefine themselves after being uprooted back to Europe due to lack of opportunities and a stable life in Argentina. Additionally, I briefly explore the Chilean playwright Ariel Dorfman's *La muerte y la doncella* (1990), delving into post-dictatorship struggles for a democratic "return" and how Díaz and Dorfman's plays portray the "during and after" of dictatorship and political repression. These authors show that exile creates an internal crisis that calls into question the definition of one's national identity as a result of being forcibly displaced. Through these works, I examine the catalysts and manifestations of exile, and its profound influence on one's relationship with their homeland and self-identity portrayed through the characters and family dynamics in each play.

# Migration and Cross-Border Exile: The Representation of the Immigrant in Contemporary Mexican Theater

Sergio Zaldivar

Advisor: Priscilla Meléndez  
Major: Hispanic Studies

This study delves into the representation of social and political issues, alongside the human experiences of migrants in the border region between the United States and Mexico, through theatrical works spanning from the 1980s until to 2001. The main objective of this analysis is to examine three Mexican plays: *Los ilegales* (1980) by Víctor Hugo Rascón Banda, *El viaje de los cantores* (1989) by Hugo Salcedo, and *Border Santo* (2001) by Virginia Hernández. By delving into these plays, we aim to uncover the intricate themes of migration and exile that are interwoven within their theatrical discourse. Each play is analyzed to identify the underlying social and political motifs, shedding light on the motivations and aspirations of migrant characters while illuminating their lived experiences. The examination extends to the theatrical techniques employed, including dialogue and scenic construction, which serve to engage audiences who are “witnessing” these personal and collective stories. Through the apparently simple, unfiltered day-to-day language of *Los ilegales*, the poetic lyricism of *El viaje de los cantores*, and the innovative staging of *Border Santo*, the emotional and psychological landscapes of migration are vividly portrayed. This analysis explores the historical background of people crossing borders and being forced to leave their homes frequently for economic reasons. In the play *Los Ilegales*, Jesus has a conversation with his wife Lucha about their plans already in the United States. Jesus explains to his wife that he will work only for a while while saving money to bring them over. In the play *El Viaje de los Cantores*, we see this through the dialogue of the brothers. Jesus asks his brother Jose why he won't cross over, to which Jose replies with a firm no, stating that he is already accustomed to the hard life and that there is no other way of living, while Jesus seeks work in the United States because the pay is better. In the play *Border Santo*, in scene XXII, "Soledad" tries to convince "Asuncion" to go back home, but Asuncion tells her to let her go, insisting that she will earn a lot of money, the so-called "Yankee Bills," and that she can't go back empty-handed. These examples illustrate how economic factors drive characters to cross borders, seeking better opportunities and better financial future. It focuses on how these events are connected to the larger socio-political climate of the time. This study sheds light on how these plays not only amplify migrant voices but also promote empathy and understanding among audiences, challenging stereotypes and cultivating a deeper appreciation of the human aspects of migration. Ultimately, this research underscores the profound impact of theater as a medium for social commentary and empathy-building, particularly in the realm of migration narratives.

# ITALIAN STUDIES

# **Resilience in Resistance: The Meloni Government's Influence on Roman Social Centers**

Teodora Brnovic

Advisor: Martina Di Florio

Major: Italian Studies

This research delves into the evolving landscape of four prominent social centers in Rome (Brancaleone, La Strada, Spartaco, and Spin Time Labs) against the backdrop of Italy's current right-wing populist government led by Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. Drawing from the legacy of the squatting movement in Europe, these modern social centers in Rome have served as vital hubs for social, cultural, and political activism, and have provided important space and resources to marginalized groups such as low-income individuals, immigrants, and the LGBTQ+ community. However, the rise of right-wing politics with the Meloni government has brought forth policies targeting these very communities and has simultaneously led to attempts to shut down and evict occupants of social centers at national, regional, and local levels.

Employing a mixed-methods approach, this study combines interviews with activists and occupants of social centers with an analysis of media coverage from both left-leaning and right-leaning newspapers. Findings reveal stark differences in how social centers are portrayed, with left-leaning papers emphasizing their societal value and the human stories of those involved, and right-leaning papers tending to demonize occupants and portray them as problematic entities.

Despite facing challenges such as political polarization and the risk of eviction, social centers in Rome exhibit resilience through their radical openness and commitment to community welfare. The study concludes that while repressive policies predate the current government, the struggle for housing equity, social justice, and urban regeneration remains ongoing. Ultimately, Roman social centers represent a potent force operating outside established political frameworks, posing a challenge to established sociopolitical norms and advocating for a more inclusive society.



# Giorgia Meloni's Italy: A Return to Fascism?

Ben Lee

Advisor: Martina Di Florio

Major: Italian Studies

On October 20, 2022, following her victory in the recent parliamentary election, Giorgia Meloni was summoned to the Quirinal Palace in Rome and asked by President of Italy Sergio Mattarella to form a government. This marked the beginning of her tenure as the first female Prime Minister in Italian history, and the beginning of a government led by far-right political party Fratelli d'Italia. Fratelli d'Italia was founded by Meloni and others in 2012 and was created as the third party in a series of right-wing groups growing out of the Italian Social Movement, the successor to the National Fascist Party. Due to the history and political goals of the party, along with Meloni's personal record of admiration for the fascist regime, there were fears in both Italy and abroad that the ascension of the Meloni government represented the return of fascism to Italy. Is this a valid claim, or is the term 'fascist' simply used as a means to insult or denigrate Fratelli d'Italia by its political opponents? In other words, to what extent do the policies and political goals of the party reflect those taken by the fascist regime? In order to answer this question, my research will first analyze five key areas of policy for the National Fascist Party: sport, family/women, autarky, tourism, and security. The goal of this analysis is to determine what these areas of policy meant for the fascists and how they turned these ideas into tangible political action. Secondly, I will view these same five policy areas in the context of Fratelli d'Italia, seeking what these policy zones mean to them and how they turn these desires into policy choices. From this, I will be able to make comparisons between the two political groups and draw conclusions as to whether policy choices made by Fratelli d'Italia in these areas represent a return of the fascist choices or represent something different entirely. Through exploring the parallels between Fratelli d'Italia and its historical predecessor, this research aims to uncover whether history is in the process of repeating itself within Italy's current political landscape.

JAPANESE  
&  
ARABIC

# 妻 (tsuma) is not 奥さん (okusan) Hidden Figures in Japan: Japanese Housewives

Xingyuan Zhang

Advisor: Katsuya Izumi  
Major: Japanese & Arabic

In spoken Japanese, a husband will use 妻 (tsuma) to refer to his own wife and use 奥さん (okusan) to refer to the wife of another. The kanji for 奥 (oku) means “deep inside” with 奥さん (okusan) carrying the literal meaning of “someone who is deeply hiding inside of the house”. Thus, this term illustrates the expectations for the wife to remain hidden deeply inside of the house, revealing how Japanese housewives are hidden figures in Japan.

The thesis shows the social situations of Japanese women and analyzes the pressures that lead Japanese women to become housewives. The popular Japanese TV show *The Full-Time Escapist* will be analyzed using the work of feminist political theorists, such as revealing the cultural reasons and social impressions of women staying at home. The thesis uses the TV show to analyze their role in taking care of the family members and the expectation of being 良妻賢母, “good wife and wise mother”. Additionally, Japanese legislation is interpreted alongside the social issues presented in this drama to show the structural factors compelling Japanese women to become housewives.

Japanese women have been forced to become housewives under social concepts and systems. The oppression of women is often ignored by the public. This thesis will criticize the oppression of women in Japanese society by discussing whether Japanese women voluntarily become housewives or not and will provide a detailed understanding of current political and social climate of being women in Japan.

JAPANESE

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CHINESE

# 美学、文学、白花文、和製漢語: The Allure of Japanese loanwords and Its Effects on Modernization in China and Japan

Justice Tyner

Advisor: Katsuya Izumi  
Major: Japanese and Chinese

For both China and Japan, the late 19th century and early 20th century can be characterized as a chaotic period of death and rebirth. Faced with the choices of “modernize or go bust,” the Meiji oligarchs and Qing empire scrambled to solidify a unique national identity amidst the waves of Western influence. However, both nations faced one major problem. As intellectuals rushed to adapt to Western political systems, educational systems, and philosophies, they realized both languages lacked the words to discuss the Western concepts they yearned to put into practice. Therefore, the distinguished Genro of the Meiji restoration pondered: “How can we possibly modernize with such an archaic writing system still in practice?”; Chinese intellectuals wondered: “How can we modernize if we cannot even communicate within our borders?” With these questions in mind, they reconsidered the relevancy of classical Chinese characters, in a world now driven by modern, western influence, and with this consideration came the birth of Wasei-Kango, or “Japanese-made Chinese words.” Wasei-Kango (和製漢語) is the phenomenon of repurposing words derived from classical Chinese to convey western, contemporary concepts. These novel words that were created by Japanese literati would cover anything from “literature” (文学) and “economics” (经济) to the very concept of western love itself (恋爱). As these words were imported back into China through translation, they carried with them the allure of Western philosophies while maintaining “Eastern aesthetics.” Additionally, this essay will discuss the contradictory phenomenon of the Japanese “loaning” Chinese words to China and the ways in which these words became a vehicle to drive forward Chinese modernization. I will touch on the critical influence English had over the venularization of both languages and conclude with how these ever-convenient loanwords came to define the aesthetics of modern Japanese and Chinese literature.

