Language and Culture is a quarterly electronic magazine of the School of Languages and Cultures in the Faculty of Arts at Sydney University. It explores current issues in the field of languages and cultures and provides updates on the activities of the School.

This issue

- Ang Lee's film Lust, Caution
- Memorialism, commemoration and cultural memory
- Françoise Grauby and authorship in France
As we begin this new academic year, all of us in the School of Languages and Cultures will be working hard in our teaching and research to ensure that our primary mission – introducing students to other cultures and societies through the medium of authentic ‘foreign-language’ materials – remains a vital and thriving part of an Arts education at the University of Sydney.

The importance and timeliness of teaching and research in languages other than English has recently been underscored by the United Nations’ proclamation of 2008 as The International Year of Languages; for further information, readers can visit www.unesco.org/en/languages. The stated aim of this and the year’s activities is to celebrate and preserve multilingualism. UNESCO has recently declared that:

“Languages, with their complex implications for identity, communication, social integration, education and development, are of strategic importance for people and the planet.” (www.unesco.org/en/languages)

Learning languages enables us to be responsible and engaged members of our so-called ‘globalised’ society. Ours is an age in which too many of us complacently rely on English, ignoring the reality of multilingualism and hence restricting our capacities to interact with others. The United Nations proclamation is a reminder to all of us that the recognition of linguistic diversity is what made an organization like the U.N. possible; in the words of the General Assembly’s proclamation last year:
“Multilingualism in the United Nations served to enrich the work of the Organization. Linguistic diversity was the foundation of cultural diversity. Without appropriate attention to the issue of preserving linguistic diversity, the harmonious integration of a growing number of countries in the practical work of the Organization would hardly be possible.”


As I reflect on my own scholarly career in Chinese studies, I am without question grateful that I possess enough ability in the Chinese language to do research on early Chinese culture, thought and literature. But what is most important to me is that my knowledge of the language has given me the capacity when I travel in China to interact broadly and freely with everyone I meet, from academics with whom I might share a forum at a professional conference, to the taxi driver who drives me from the airport to the meeting. How barren my life and thought would be if I did not have these opportunities.

In the School of Languages and Cultures we are fortunate that there are many individuals and organisations that support us in our mission, and I am extremely happy to share examples of this good fortune with our readers. In January we learned that the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation has awarded us a grant that will enable our School, in partnership with the School of Letters, Art, and Media (SLAM), to create a new lectureship in Chinese Media Studies. This new position, together with other developments in our department of Chinese Studies and in the SLAM department of Media and Communications, will help establish the University of Sydney as a major centre for the study of the Chinese media, from print and film to television and the internet, not only on the Chinese mainland but also in Hong Kong, Taiwan and the Chinese diaspora.

Only a week ago, I also learned that the University Buddhist Education Foundation has given our School an extremely generous gift that will allow us, over the next five years, to invite to the University of Sydney the most distinguished professors of Buddhist Studies from around the world. This initiative, in conjunction with the teaching and research already taking place in our School and in SLAM, will significantly raise the profile of Buddhist Studies at the University of Sydney and will be of enormous educational benefit to our students. We are deeply grateful for the generosity of the University Buddhist Education Foundation.

The appearance of this issue of our Magazine marks the beginning of a new academic year in the School of Languages and Cultures as well as the conclusion of my first full year as Head of School. 2007 was a year of accomplishment and change within the School – many instances and examples of which were chronicled in detail in earlier issues of the Magazine. 2008 promises also to be a year of challenges and opportunities. We look forward in future issues to providing you with an account of how we are doing.
Ang Lee is a director now widely acclaimed beyond just Chinese-speaking audiences. His latest film, Lust, Caution received five stars from Margaret Pomeranz and four and half from David Stratton on ABC TV’s At the Movies when they reviewed it in December last year. Both considered it a wonderful spy movie and one of the best in the genre, agreeing that Ang Lee had proved himself a director capable of producing great films in every genre while retaining his special strength in elucidating subtlety of emotions. But there’s a great deal more that lies below the spy story – at least for a viewer from a Chinese background.

The release of Lust, Caution was a major event in 2007 for Chinese all around the world, and a great box office success in China, Taiwan and Hong Kong. The film is based on an Eileen Chang (aka Zhang Ailing 1920 – 1995) short story, allowing Chinese viewers to revisit one of their favourite authors while taking them on a nostalgic tour through colonial Shanghai complete with music, fashion, the lifestyle of elite Chinese and the cosmopolitan ambience of the time. But the film’s central love story between a student spy and a Japanese-collaborator during World War II has also sparked heated debates in China.
From Fiction to Film

Eileen Chang established her literary fame in the 1940s and is regarded as one of the best, and most widely read, 20th century Chinese writers. Chang grew up in Shanghai in an aristocratic family in decline. She completed her tertiary education in Hong Kong before migrating to the United States in 1955 where she lived in seclusion in California until she died alone in 1995. Her works were not available in Maoist China, but her popularity has been on the rise since her rediscovery by Chinese readers in the mid 1980s. She is recognised primarily for her short stories set in Shanghai and Hong Kong often depicting family relationships and the struggle between men and women for control of their emotions, destiny and fortune. A central theme of Chang’s is the difference between how men and women experience love and emotional attachments. Most of her major characters are women and her stories are told from women’s perspectives. It is her depiction of emotional subtlety that makes Chang’s writing intriguing and delightful. Among her many short stories, the best known are Love in the Fallen City and The Golden Cangue. These stories often feature on university reading lists in China and abroad. Lust, Caution was not Chang’s best known work; that is, until the word spread about Ang Lee’s adaptation.

While most film adaptations leave many details out, Ang Lee’s feature length film fills in the gaps that Chang deliberately leaves in her short story. Chang took more than thirty years to finish the story; presumably revising it many times. It was based on an event that took place in Shanghai in 1942 during Japanese occupation. A female student was sent to seduce a high-profile collaborator as part of an assassination plot, which failed at the last minute. In the film, believing that he loves her, the student warns the collaborator to leave the scene.
at the crucial moment; he escapes death but she is arrested and executed upon his order.

The story was widely reported in the Shanghai newspapers and the student’s tomb can still be found there. According to her friends, Chang became interested in the event and started drafting the short story in the late 1940s and in 1978 it appeared in a collection of Chang’s writing entitled Collection of Loss (Wangran ji). It is seen as highly autobiographical. Chang was, herself, mistress to a high-profile collaborator during the Japanese occupation. She fell for his literary flare, never judging him politically or ideologically, and they shared an intense three-year relationship.

Chang’s focus on emotional tension is underscored by the Chinese title, Se, Jie ( 色, 戒). The comma separating the two characters is unusual for a title and each character carries multiple meanings, even within the context of this story. Se can mean ‘colour’, ‘lust’, ‘temptress’ or ‘tempter’, ‘beauty’ (male or female). Jie, can refer to a type of ring, the Buddhist initiation, deliberate avoidance of temptations, or breaking a habit. When understood as a pun, it refers to the ring as a key-plotting device, for it is in the process of purchasing the ring that the woman senses true love and prevents the assassination plot. Jie also means ‘caution’ and it carries the story’s key message: men and women should be cautious of lust and passion! These ambiguities allow the Chinese title to be rendered in a number of ways: ‘Beauty and the Ring’; ‘Temptation and Avoidance’; ‘Lust and Prohibition’ – the English title, Lust, Caution, is, I’m afraid, as good as it gets.

In his adaptation of Chang’s story, Ang Lee consulted many of her closest friends and fans as well as academics, however the film is very much his own personal interpretation and he admits that many may be uncomfortable with his reading. Ang Lee introduces sex, violence and verbal exchanges not present in Chang’s work. He also restages the characters’ residences and the cityscape. In my opinion, Ang Lee understands everything Chang originally meant to convey; “ambiguities allow the Chinese title to be rendered in a number of ways ... the English title, Lust, Caution, is, I’m afraid, as good as it gets.”
everything that is except for Chang’s disillusionment with love. This is the fundamental difference in his film: the man’s affection for the woman. Ang Lee offers a more compassionate portrayal of the man’s emotional vulnerability and moral dilemma – so well brought to life by Hong Kong actor, Tony Leung.

From Film to Audience

It is here in this humane portrayal of the collaborator that Ang Lee has met with criticism from some extremely patriotic Chinese audiences and web discussions have called for a government ban. In their condemnation of Ang Lee’s creation of a Chinese national traitor with such inner depth of humanity and sexual prowess, they are also highly critical of Eileen Chang’s moral ambivalence in both her life and her creativity.

While the film, of course, cannot be banned, certain questions need to be raised, especially in the context of China’s rising international prominence and cultural relevance. Should one love a collaborator? Can a collaborator also have humane emotions? For radical patriots the answer is ‘no’. The Chinese word for collaborator, hanjian, is far more denigrating, literally meaning ‘traitor to the Han Chinese’. Given the recent exposure of the atrocities committed by the Japanese in the Nanjing massacre in 1937 and China’s state-sponsored commemoration of its victims, Lust, Caution’s stylish image of a collaborator makes it a primary target of China’s current cultural nationalism.

The Chinese government tries not to take the film too seriously. With the 2008 Beijing Olympics rapidly approaching, it does not want to be associated with its old hardline position against freedom of speech. The official policy about the film
Lust, Caution can be shown in cinemas in China but no promotion or advertisements is allowed. Discussions on the internet and in print media are permissible. At the same time, the authorities feel that the Chinese audience should be protected against the film’s explicit and prolonged scenes of sex and violence. The Chinese censorship institution insisted on eliminating those scenes before its release in mainland China and Ang Lee executed the censorship himself to maintain the film’s integrity. This censorship, although a usual practice, has surprisingly ignited protests from other groups expressing concerns for their rights as citizens and consumers. They argue that if they pay the full price for tickets, they should have access to the entire film and the authorities should establish a film rating system.

Since the film’s release in China last October, thousands have been to Hong Kong to see the full version. While they may visit Hong Kong for many reasons, it has been very popular for those members of the emerging Chinese middle class to tell their friends that they went to ‘the harbour of fragrance’ (the meaning of Hong Kong) to see Lust, Caution.

The English translation of the original story Lust, Caution has just been released by Random House and is available at:

http://www.randomhouse.com/anchor/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780307387448
Memorialism, commemoration and cultural memory

Dr Liz Rechniewski has, over the last ten years, been exploring the location of identity, and particularly national identity, in places, symbols and icons, focusing on 18th to 20th century France. More recently she has turned her attention to the symbols and location of Australian national identity.

By Andrew McGarrity and Dr Liz Rechniewski

Liz Rechniewski’s early work on national identity included an article in 1996 on the role of the Vendée in the French political imagination and its exploitation by the right as the symbol of resistance to the centralising Republican tradition. This interest continued through explorations of the texts, events and iconic figures associated with the development of national identity and the concept of the nation and citizenship in 18th and 19th century France as part of a wider ARC Discovery Project entitled “Communications and National Identity in Early Modern France” (articles resulting from which were collected in the Australian Journal of French Studies 44 (3), 2007). Her more recent research explores the significance of commemoration in contemporary national life, starting with a theoretical article “The Construction of National Memory in the ‘Era of Commemoration’” (in Culture and Memory: Special Issue of Modern Greek Studies, 2006).

In 2006, Liz exchanged her position in the Department of French Studies with that of Dr Matthew Graves from the University of Aix-Provence who has similar teaching and research interests – Dr Graves’ focus is on memory, place and identity while his geographical area of interest is the British Commonwealth. An unexpected outcome of this was that she was invited to present a paper on the Australian national imaginary. While Gallipoli stood out as an obvious choice of subject, Liz found that she needed to reconstruct it through the lens of a French audience, thus enabling her to reconsider the broader issue of Australian identity and how it has become located in war memorialisation. Liz recalls that “the more I worked on this commemoration, the more I realised the strangeness of what has become our national day and the source of crucial representations of Australia (the figure of the digger, the values of...
mateship etc). After all there were French troops at Gallipoli, and it is remembered, if it is remembered at all, in quite a different, and a very sombre way by the French”.

The topic of Gallipoli also raises other paradoxes. ‘Australia’ Liz explains ‘is possibly the only country in the world where the national site, the origins, the roots of national identity are not only outside the boundaries of the nation but are indeed many thousands of kilometres from the nation itself’. The issue of Australia’s lack of control over the site of Gallipoli surfaces in various controversies like the new road at Anzac Cove. Recent criticism of the behaviour of backpackers also indicates the ambiguity of Gallipoli: is it a site of commemoration or a site of celebration?

Liz has published three articles on the significance of commemoration utilising the theoretical framework first developed by Terence Ranger and Eric Hobsbawm in their groundbreaking *The Invention of Tradition* (1983), as well as Pierre Nora’s notion of the “the era of commemoration” which he sets out in his seven volume *Les lieux de memoire* (‘Sites of Memory’) (1984-1992). Hobsbawm’s focus is upon the late 19th and early 20th century. He argues that, during this period of rapid social change and uncertainty, traditions come to be ‘invented’ as a politically unifying factor: the state latches onto particular events and anniversaries as symbolising some form of national unity, giving nations a sense of purpose and identity. Focusing on sites of the French imaginary, Nora builds upon Hobsbawm’s analysis to argue that since the 1970s we have entered into the ‘era of commemoration’, which has seen a frenzy of commemorations at many levels of society, but crucially at the state and national level. Liz incorporates these theoretical insights into an examination of Gallipoli and as she points out, these issues are “centrally involved in national and political debate as to what and how to commemorate the past. What to remember – and what to forget - is a highly problematic and contested area in national life today, whether in France or Australia”.

While Liz describes Gallipoli as a legend in search of a site that quickly acquired a special place in the national imagination, she also points out there have been declines

“the more I worked on this commemoration, the more I realised the strangeness of what has become our national day and the source of crucial representations of Australia”

Pictured: Normandy Cemetery, Colleville-sur-Mer, France
in the popularity of Anzac day and argues that the revival of the Gallipoli legend over the last 15 years or so coincides with a period of significant economic and social change, as well as a period of changing global alliances for Australia. Liz further develops these themes in her articles and argues that Gallipoli as well as the Kokoda track, Long Tan and the Korean war have been used by Prime Ministers coming from different political positions, in different ways – exploring, for example, how first Bob Hawke, then Paul Keating then John Howard re-interpreted Gallipoli (or in Keating’s case downplayed Gallipoli in favour of the Kokoda track). ‘Such war memorialism’, Liz says, ‘is not innocent or coincidental but ties in with a particular narrative of how the nation should understand its past that has immediate implications for its present, its national priorities, its role in the world’.

One of Liz’s articles is about to be published in Vingtième siècle, another in Géographies identitaires. A third co-written with Matthew Graves on ‘Australian war memorialism from Gallipoli to Long Tan’ has just appeared in Cultures of the Commonwealth, 14 (Winter 2007-8). Liz’s current project, in collaboration with Dr Graves, examines comparative perspectives on the Korean war in France and Australia. Dr Graves will be returning to Australia in July for six months as an Honorary Visiting Fellow at the University of Technology Sydney and will be conducting seminars at Sydney University. During this time Liz will be organising a one-day workshop, currently scheduled for October, on the topic of ‘Commemoration and Cultural Identity’.

Conducting the workshop through the School of Languages and Cultures will, Liz believes, provide an excellent forum for collaboration perhaps bringing together a much broader comparison of the issue of commemoration. It is anticipated that the workshop will lead to a collection of English language publications across the School. Liz has just been invited to undertake a project coordinated by Professor Olivier Wieviorka on Australian Memorialism of the Great War.

Dr Liz Rechniewski
Dr Liz Rechniewski is a Senior Lecturer in the department of French Studies at the University of Sydney.

Contact
Email: elizabeth.rechniewski@usyd.edu
Paradoxically, given it was a French theorist who proclaimed the death of the author decades ago, in France the cult of the writer is alive and well. The figure of the author is shrouded in mystery, as the French literary world remains attached to the mythology of the artist seen to be a genius blessed with inexplicable gifts. Pierre Jourde has argued that the publishing world in France focusses on persona rather than talent, and is concerned only with that which fascinates an audience: the mystery that surrounds the creative process, and the artist as a romantic creation – a gifted individual unable to explain his or her art and craft, divinely inspired. As a result, talented but less prestigious writers remain unrecognised.

Dr Françoise Grauby argues that now is the time to challenge this cult of the author which has prevailed in France for several decades, even centuries. She contends that what is required is a radical revision of the representation of the artist. And this is precisely what she intends to do.

Concerned by the prevalence and persistence of stereotypes of the writer within the literary culture of France, Françoise Grauby aims to develop new ways of understanding the role and definition of the artist. She will do this by analysing the development of literature as a craft in twenty-first century France and will involve exploring the material aspect of creativity by posing the question: how do body and mind take part in the creative process? This will involve interviewing contemporary writers to discover their views about the creative process and the act of writing as they experience it.

The traditional representation of the artist, dating from the Romantic period, sees the writer as an elite, almost divine figure who is isolated from the base demands of society. However, rather than...
focus upon the writer as an inheritor of a long tradition from which he or she cannot escape, Dr Grauby will investigate the complex interactions between the author and his/her work, the author and his/her readers, and the author and students of his/her work. Such a focus will enable her to re-interpret the paradigm of the artist by considering both dynamics within the literary field and authorial self-reflectivity – the ways in which the writers define and represent themselves. This will provide an alternative to the more stereotypical view of artists as removed from the conditions of production and dissemination of their work. Dr Grauby will analyse the ways in which writers are actively engaged in the creation and interpretation of their art. She will explore how contemporary writers are reconstructing their literary world to challenge stereotypes of authorship and express a changing literary cultural identity. She plans to study the collaborations and declarations of authors such as Pierre Jourde, Eric Chevillard, Jean Rouaud, François Bon, Pierre Michon, Pierre Bergougnioux and Sylvie Germain, who contribute in distinctive ways to the development of a new definition of the artist in France.

‘Dr Grauby will analyse the ways in which writers are actively engaged in the creation and interpretation of their art.’

As a Senior Lecturer in the Department of French Studies, Dr Françoise Grauby is perfectly placed to undertake this work, being both a literary scholar and a novelist. Through her scholarship she explores the role of the artist in society, the body in the creative processes, and the mythology of creation in masculine and feminine artistic representation. In particular, her research has established the role of mythologies, medical discourses and cultural representations in constructing the body of male and female writers and artists at work. She has made a unique contribution to the scholarly discussion of creativity by delineating the importance of physical and physiological beliefs and representations about the body.

Dr Grauby has proposed a radical interpretation of two major French contemporary writers, Hervé Guibert and Catherine Millet, by showing that their literary work should be understood as a bodily experiment comparable to those of the Body Artists. She has also contributed to debates about the representation of the artist in society...
by providing an insight on the influence of medical discourses on nineteenth-century realist writers. Her findings were published as a book in 2001, *The Body of the Artist*, in which she records how nineteenth-century male artists included their body in their novels either by depicting characters with whom they could identify or by describing the importance of physiology in the creative process. The book was extremely well received, as the words of Associate-Professor Jean Fornasiero attest: “The minute textual analysis is impeccably informed by a depth and a width of reading on both medical and literary history that lend weight and authority to the writer’s analyses”.

Françoise Grauby will continue to study the corporeal aspect of creation. Her research has already demonstrated that writers signal the importance of a creative routine that teaches the body and the mind when and how to create. She will now focus upon the rituals of writing and strategies of inspiration (taking up a particular pen, for example, or finding a special place) that impact upon the writing practices of contemporary authors. In this way she will further explore the interaction of the physical, the creative and the textual. By considering both the material dimension of writing and the exchanges taking place in the contemporary literary world, Dr Grauby’s work will move beyond the notion of ‘the author’ as an abstract concept and the idea of the literary process as ineffable and inexplicable, toward a much more complex history of the artist and understanding of creativity.

**Françoise Grauby “is to be congratulated for her meticulous research work, the interesting manner in which she conveys her ideas, for the fluency and comprehensibility of her prose style”**.

Professor Bettina L. Knapp (Hunter College and CUNY) has said that Françoise Grauby “is to be congratulated for her meticulous research work, the interesting manner in which she conveys her ideas, for the fluency and comprehensibility of her prose style”. That Dr Grauby’s work exhibits depth in terms of both meaning and style should perhaps be no surprise given her success as a creative writer. In fact, her most recent novel has only just been published.

The novel *Les Îles* ‘The Islands’ follows the personal and artistic journey of a young painter who travels to Tahiti and New Caledonia in search of inspiration in a new world. She encounters several situations which fuel her artistic temperament and imagination, one of them being the conflict between the Melanesian population and the New Caledonian Whites. The unrest of the islands trying to claim their independence functions as a background for this artistic enlightenment. The novel aims to create a collage effect to render the texture of both the artist’s experiences and her paintings.

Both this and Dr Grauby’s earlier novel, *Un cheval piaffe en moi*, (2004) were published by the leading French publisher, Maurice Nadeau (based in Paris). Her first novel received glowing
François Bon reviews in *Le Figaro littéraire* (by eminent literary critic, Angelo Rinaldi) and *Le Nouvel Observateur* (by the reviewer-in-chief, Bruno Garcin). A launch of her new novel in Sydney late last year, at the Alliance Française, drew an audience from the literary and scholarly worlds alike, together with enthusiasts of French culture.

Françoise Grauby’s involvement in the literary world as a novelist publishing in France today places her in a unique position to undertake her scholarly research. This is particularly so since she plans to take a new direction and explore the role and definition of the writer by focussing on the phenomenon of the creative writing class. How do writers engage with students of creative writing? What effect does the teaching of creative writing have upon an author’s productivity? These are just some of the questions Dr Grauby will be investigating through her innovative focus on the creation of literature as articulated through the teacher-student exchange.

Dr Grauby intends to undertake case studies of interactions between key writers and students of creative writing at French universities. She will also look comparatively at creative writing classes as they are held in Australia. This new aspect of her work is motivated by the increasing popularity of creative writing programs in France, inspired by Anglo-Saxon models. This in turn makes the contemporary period a particularly vibrant one for the development of a new definition of the artist in France, as young French writers try to define a new identity as teachers of the literary craft.

The nexus between creative writing and scholarship is a fascinating one. It is surely a conjunction that is particularly productive for a School engaged in the study of language and culture. The connection between creativity and the use of language is fertile ground. So too are the relations between linguistic and textual creativity and pedagogy. There can be no doubt that students at the University of Sydney have the opportunity to benefit from insights into French language and contemporary literary culture through Françoise Grauby’s unique position within the academic and literary world.
Could you explain your honours research on NGOs in Indonesia?

In my honours thesis, 'Political Space, Transnationalism and NGO Activism', I explored local NGO responses to the changing context of political and social activism in post-Suharto Indonesia. I also looked at NGOs' changing modes of engagement and the influence of international agendas on their activities. I found that the advocacy position of NGOs within Indonesian civil society and the broader political opposition has changed significantly since the fall of Suharto in 1998. This means that while advocacy NGOs were very prominent in the broader pro-democracy movement during the latter part of Suharto’s New Order, they now face a new set of challenges from heightened competition with other domestic and transnational organisations.

How important was fieldwork and living and working ‘inside’ Indonesian language and culture to your research?

Working in Indonesia alongside local advocacy NGOs was the backbone of my research. For starters, it enabled me to connect with a network of useful informants I wouldn’t otherwise have been able to access. I ended up interviewing nineteen activists in my two months in Jakarta. From interviews, primary data and personal experiences in Jakarta, I gained first-hand knowledge of the way that Indonesian NGOs/activists themselves viewed the New Order and the post-Suharto political situation. Certainly, living in Indonesia opened doors that would have otherwise remained closed; I hadn’t even previously considered issues that came up in interviews, and these issues then became especially important in my thesis. Certainly there were also a lot more opportunities open to me because of my Indonesian language study, especially in conducting interviews and accessing primary and secondary sources. Working in the language gave me a more nuanced cultural understanding of the decisions that NGO activists make and the cultural context in which they operate. On the most part, Indonesian NGOs write in Bahasa Indonesia; you would miss a lot of handy, and often...
Quite vital, information out there if you weren’t working in the language!

**Could you explain what the AIGRP Young Scholars Workshop in December involved?**

The Workshop took place over a weekend in Jakarta at the Four Seasons Hotel and was set up to encourage and nurture a new generation of scholars with an interest in Indonesia. We younger scholars were given a taste of academia and an introduction to the sorts of opportunities that were available and obstacles we might face. The official AIGRP policy forum was being held at the same time and so it was also a great opportunity to connect with established scholars. While the policy forum itself specifically targeted the issue of governance, the program as a whole catered to a wide range of scholars interested in areas ranging from economics to agriculture. As part of the Workshop, we each gave a presentation and fielded questions from the floor and were given strategies on how to improve our speech styles, speech structure, Powerpoint presentations and even given tips on what to wear! We were able to showcase our research findings to a more established group of Indonesianists, in a highly professional and academic environment. Yet at the same time, debates didn’t stop at the conference but also extended to outside events and informal gatherings. These really made a difference to me; I was also able to discuss ideas for future research collaboration with Australian and Indonesian scholars, and this certainly showed me the sort of direction I could follow in the future.

**How were you able to bring your honours research to the Workshop?**

It was a good experience having to tailor my honours research to the theme of ‘governance’; I decided to focus on the impact of the good governance agenda for advocacy NGOs post-Suharto. I particularly focused on the challenge of shedding light on NGOs’ private accountability structures, which is something yet to be fully researched in Indonesia. This meant I was able to suggest some areas which policy makers hadn’t paid sufficient attention to in their engagement with NGOs.

**How did the Workshop enrich your own research and help you to see it in a new light?**

Having the Workshop run concurrently with the AIGRP policy forum provided a greater perspective of where my research might fit into the bigger scheme of things. The atmosphere of the Workshop was both encouraging and challenging, I heard others’ suggestions and constructive criticism, and was challenged to adopt new approaches and styles of presenting. In some cases, Indonesian scholars pointed out research areas that Australians had not really considered. The Workshop really instilled in me a passion for academic research; I was able to discuss the nitty gritty of Indonesian politics and also get a sense of some of the challenges faced by researchers working in this field.

**What differences did you find between the Australian and Indonesian academic environment?**
I had studied previously in Padang and Yogyakarta on University exchanges, so there was no major academic culture shock! The most obvious differences I’ve noticed are in presentation styles; in Australia, we tend to adopt a very structured approach, whereas Indonesian scholars tend to be less structured. There was also some difference in the sorts of topics that scholars pursued. I found that the practical skills I’d developed during my undergraduate Indonesian studies at Sydney Uni certainly helped me to adapt to the different academic environment and the differing presentation styles and ways of interacting that I encountered at the Workshop. Actually it’s interesting: coming to appreciate the differing approaches of Indonesian and Australian academics has definitely given me new perspectives on how I view NGOs and their role and also the study of Indonesian politics more broadly.

How do you think academia can contribute to the work of NGOs?

I think academic research can be highly advantageous for NGOs. Scholars can gain a deep understanding of the NGO sector but at the same time provide a realistic and objective assessment of NGOs’ weaknesses and advantages in a broader context that can be overlooked by NGO workers themselves. Research can pinpoint specific areas of policy improvement for donors, whilst directly highlighting alternative ways that local NGOs can operate. In my experience, academic research can map-out the many possible strategies for NGO engagement and their effectiveness in differing social and cultural contexts, especially by providing a realistic assessment of the benefits of different forms of political opposition in highly diverse political settings. Ideally, those within the NGO sector could participate in a free-flowing dialogue exchange with scholars; scholars can suggest different areas of improvement for NGOs, while activists can provide their own assessments of the industry. There was actually emphasis at the Workshop on just how rewarding this sort of collaboration can be, especially between those engaged in policy formation and those responsible for its implementation.

What do you see as your future involvement with Indonesia?

After completing honours, I held a temporary research position and since then I’ve been teaching Indonesian to years 7-10 high school students. I’m very interested in pursuing an academic career, but I feel it’s important to get some solid research experience and so I hope to undertake PhD studies soon, so hopefully I’ll have many more years of in-country research, reading and writing ahead of me!
### Japanese for Foreigners
**10 – 19 March**

From March 10 to March 19, the Japanese Studies Department will host a group of ten ‘Japanese for Foreigners’ students from Bunkyo University in Japan. Students will be attending classes, receiving guidance from the staff and will be able to take some supervised teaching.

### American Jews and the Holocaust
**13 March**

On Thursday 13 March, the Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies invite you to a lecture on ‘American Jews and the Holocaust’ by Dr Jack Wertheimer, Provost and Professor of Jewish History at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. The lecture will take place from 5pm - 7pm at Mandelbaum House, the University of Sydney, Eastern Avenue Seminar 312.

For more information contact Professor Konrad Kwiet at konrad.kwiet@usyd.edu.au or Associate Professor Suzanne Rutland at suzanne.rutland@usyd.edu.au.

### Uwe Timm
**18 March**

On Tuesday, March 18 at 3pm, the Department of Germanic Studies will be hosting one of Germany’s most successful contemporary authors, Uwe Timm. Timm is best known in the English-speaking world for his semi-autobiographical novel, *In My Brother’s Shadow: A Life and Death in the SS* which has recently appeared in translation. He will read from his works and will be holding a discussion forum with students. For further details, please contact Dr Andrea Bandhauer on 9351 3146 or Dr Andreas Jäger on 9351 3116.

### Freud and Oedipus: A Family Romance
**18 March**

On Tuesday, March 18 at 6pm, Associate Professor Vrasidas Karalis, of Modern Greek Studies, will be giving a public lecture entitled ‘Freud and Oedipus: A Family Romance’ at the Nicholson Museum as part of the Sigmund Freud’s Collection: An Archaeology of the Mind exhibition.

---

### The Inoue Yasushi Award

The Inoue Yasushi Award for Outstanding Research in Japanese Literature in Australia was established by the Department of Japanese Studies and was first awarded in 2007. It is awarded annually for the best refereed journal article or book chapter on Japanese literature published in English during the previous year by a researcher based in Australia. The recipient will receive $1000 as well as a certificate of the award’s conferral. Applicants for the 2008 award should submit a statement of the significance of their work, a 200-word abstract and three hard copies of their journal article or book chapter, published in 2007, or preferably, one electronic copy and one hard copy by Friday, 28 March 2008.

Submissions should be sent to the chair of the award selection committee, Dr Mats Karlsson, Japanese Studies, School of Languages and Cultures A18, University of Sydney, NSW 2006 and mats.karlsson@usyd.edu.au. The committee will endeavor to make its selection by 1 May 2008, or as soon after that as practicable.
Associate Professor Vrasidas Karalis, of Modern Greek Studies recently hosted the highly renowned Greek-American journalist and writer Nicholas Gage (pictured).

A popular writer whose two volumes of memoirs *Eleni* (1984) and *A Place for Us* (1990) greatly impacted upon the politics of 1980s America, Gage’s uncompromising love of freedom brought him to the fore of major journalist projects that deeply influenced the life and the political conscience of the late 20th century. Gage covered controversial issues such as the Mafia, drug trafficking and the notorious Nixon years.

Gage’s recent lecture in the McLaurin Hall was introduced by the Head of School, Professor Jeffrey Riegel and was attended by the NSW Attorney General and President of the Panepirotan Association, the Honourable John Hatzistergos MLC. An enthusiastic audience was treated to a thought-provoking account of Gage’s life as a reporter with The New York Times and several other American newspapers.

**Degree in a Day Program**

27 March

On March 27, the School of Languages and Cultures will be participating in the University of Sydney’s ‘Degree in a Day’ program for Year 12 High Achievers. Languages and Cultures will be running a school wide interactive workshop with Year 12 students in an activity designed to encourage them to consider different cultural perspective and viewpoints in addressing Global issues.

**Mario Perniola**

May

In May, the Italian Studies Department will be hosting the philosopher Mario Perniola who will be a Visiting Professor in the School, delivering lectures and a Master Class to postgraduates. For further details, please contact Dr Paolo Bartoloni on 9351 6894.

**Lingfest 2008**

30 June – 11 July

Lingfest 2008, comprising the Applied Linguistics Association of Australia (ALAA) Conference will be taking place between 30 June - 11 July 2008 at the University of Sydney. This series of six linguistics events is co-organised by members of the School of Languages and Cultures and the Linguistics Department. Dr Nerida Jarkey of Japanese Studies, Dr Caroline Lipovsky of French Studies, Dr Antonia Rubino of Italian Studies and Dr Frederika Van Der Lubbe of Germanic Studies are members of the organising committee. As part of this, Dr Jarkey will be organising a workshop from July 7-11 on Japanese Linguistics for linguists, graduate students, and teachers of Japanese. Details may be found at [http://www.lingfest.arts.usyd.edu.au](http://www.lingfest.arts.usyd.edu.au).
From the department of French Studies

Margaux Harris, an Honours student in French Studies working under the supervision of Dr Michelle Royer, interviewed French film star Catherine Deneuve and filmmaker André Téchiné as part of her thesis research which she completed at the end of last year.

Michelle Rayner, also undertaking Honours in French Studies under Dr Elizabeth Rechniewski, interviewed Henri Alleg, whose book on torture during the Algerian War, La question, was banned by the French government on its publication in 1958.


Dr Bronwyn Winter of French Studies has just published an article on France in the ‘Global Perspectives 2008’ dossier of International Affairs Forum, the online publication of the Center for International Relations. This article is available at www.ia-forum.org.

From the department of Germanic Studies


Dr Birte Giesler of Germanic Studies has recently published ‘Once upon a time… Telling the Past and Mediating Cultural Identity in Parodistic Fairy tales of the French and German Enlightenment’ Journal of the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association (AUMLA) December 2007, pp13-21. Dr Giesler also participated in the peer-reviewed Australasian Humour Scholars Network 2008 Invitational Colloquium on ‘Boundaries and Borders of Humour’ held at the Women’s College, University of Sydney on 16-17 February 2008 where she delivered a paper on ‘Testing the Boundaries of Humour by Transgressing Cultural Borders: The European-Australian ‘Culture Clash’ in Urs Widmer’s Liebesbrief für Mary (Love letter for Mary).’
Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM)

Congratulations to Associate Professor Suzanne Rutland of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies who has been awarded an OAM (Medal of the Order of Australia) in the Australia Day Honours for 2008 for service to Jewish education and history through a range of higher education development roles and as an author and academic, and for her promotion of interfaith relations.

From the department of Chinese Studies

The Chinese Department held a full-day retreat on 13th February. A range of issues were discussed in relation to future directions in the Department’s teaching and research activities. One of the key outcomes was the decision to establish a ‘major initiative’ in eLearning; specifically to investigate the integration of appropriate multi-media, online and other digital resources into the language program. Ms Irene An will lead this initiative with the support of the Department’s newly established sub-committee for eLearning.

From the部门 of Indonesian Studies

Dr Michele Ford, Chair of the Department of Indonesian Studies has recently returned from Toronto where she and her research partner, Associate Professor Lenore Lyons, met with leading scholars from Canada and the US as part of an ARC Linkage International grant. The meeting marked the beginning of a three-year collaborative project.

Elena Williams, who completed a first class Honours degree in the Department of Indonesian Studies last year, has been selected to participate in the Indonesia-Australia Youth Exchange Program in Lombok, Indonesia.

From the department of Japanese Studies

Dr Matthew Stavros, of Japanese Studies, was recently recently became the administrator and editor of Premodern Japanese Studies (PMJS), an interdisciplinary online forum with nearly 800 members worldwide who do research on earlier periods of Japanese art, culture, history, religion, language and literature. Since its founding in 1999, PMJS has grown to become a powerful tool for the exchange of ideas and dissemination of information on early Japanese Studies.
### Seminar program for Semester 1, 2008

All seminars will take place from 5.15 to 6.45pm in Mungo McCallum Room 524 (School of Languages and Cultures Common Room).

**March 13**
Will Noonan: Il ‘Humour anglais est-il un faux ami?’

**April 3**
Stephanie Hathaway: Pour ses braies se porra courecier (The Preservation of Guillaume’s Underpants in Moniage)

**April 17**
Michelle Royer: Déraillement: les femmes cinéastes et le road movie

**1 May**
Bronwyn Winter: à l’occasion de la fête des travailleurs en France: La ‘pipolisation’ contre le ‘people’? La réalité derrière le feuilleton Sarkozy

**May 8**

**May 15**
Lacina Yeo: visiting scholar in International and Comparative Literary Studies, on Leopold Sedar Senghor (title TBC)

**May 22**
Michelle Rayner, Honours Student: ‘Henri Alleg’s La Question and Torture in the Algerian War’

**May 29**
Elise Gorremans, Assistante (Univ. de Paris VII): Subject TBC

**June 5**
Françoise Grauby: ‘Le renouveau du pamphlet littéraire: La littérature sans estomac de Pierre Jourde’

---

**Dr Bronwyn Winter**

Dr Bronwyn Winter of French Studies will be discussing the state of French politics under the presidency of Nicolas Sarkozy on SBS French radio in the upcoming weeks.

In early March, Dr Winter will join the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International) Prof. John Hearn and other members of the University of Sydney community at a meeting with Australia’s new ambassador to the Philippines, Mr Rod Smith PSM.
New staff members...

Dr Rebecca Suter (Department of Japanese Studies)

Dr Rebecca Suter joins the Department of Japanese Studies at the beginning of 2008. She completed her PhD at the Università degli Studi di Napoli "l’Oriental" in 2004 and her main research interest is in modern Japanese literature and comparative literature. Her first book, The Japanization of Modernity, focuses on the writer Murakami Haruki and his role as a cultural mediator between Japan and the United States. She is currently working on issues of translation and cross-cultural representation between Asia and the West, concentrating on the phenomenon of the ‘Japanization’ of Western culture and the way it challenges current views of colonialism, postcolonialism and globalization. Before coming to Sydney, Dr Suter taught Japanese modern literature at Harvard University and at Brown University.

Dr Elisabeth Jackson (Department of Indonesian Studies)

Dr Elisabeth Jackson joins the Department of Indonesian Studies at the beginning of 2008. She completed a PhD in 2005 at the Australian National University on the politics of student identity under Suharto’s New Order. She has taught Indonesian language at the Australian National University and the University of NSW as well as participating in the Southeast Asian Studies program at the University of Sydney. Dr Jackson has recently returned from several years in Jakarta, where she managed education development programs for The Asia Foundation. Her research interests include Indonesian political discourse and culture, especially opposition, Indonesian history and historiography and, more recently, Islamic education. She is passionate about educating Australians about Indonesia and Asia in general, and believes language learning is crucial in developing Asia literacy.
DEPARTMENTS & PROGRAMS

The following departments and programs are located in the School of Languages and Cultures:

- Arabic & Islamic Studies
- Asian Studies Program
- Buddhist Studies (offered in conjunction with the department of Studies in Religion)
- Chinese Studies
- European Studies Program
- French Studies
- Germanic Studies
- Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies
- Indian Subcontinental Studies
- Indonesian Studies
- International and Comparative Literary Studies Program
- Italian Studies
- Japanese Studies
- Koran Studies
- Modern Greek Studies
- Spanish & Latin American Studies

MORE INFO

If you would like more information about the School of Languages and Cultures or would like to make an editorial enquiry please contact us on +61 2 9351 4505.

For further information on any of the articles in this issue, please contact us on:

T: +61 2 9351 2869
E: slc@usyd.edu.au