Female Leadership in Popular Culture: The Case of *Borgen*

**Humanities Research Centre Seminar**

Tuesday 29 March 2016, 4.15 – 5.30pm

**Speaker**

**Professor Patricia Plummer, University of Duisburg-Essen**

HRC Conference Rm 128, A.D. Hope Bldg 14, ANU

The award-winning Scandinavian TV series *Borgen* (2010-2013) portrays the rise and fall of fictitious Danish prime minister Birgitte Nyborg, who was clearly modelled on Danish politician Helle Thorning-Schmidt. What makes for the global success of a series that focuses on Danish party politics as well as on various private entanglements behind the scenes of Christiansborg, Denmark’s ‘island of power’? This paper will discuss *Borgen* in the context of the ongoing debate on female leadership, in Europe, in Australia and the United States. It will also explore links between *Borgen* and the portrayal of female characters in the crime genre that extend well beyond the current popularity of Nordic Noir. *Borgen*, then, as this paper will argue, has more to offer than merely another flavour from *The Killing*.

**Patricia Plummer** was appointed as chair of Postcolonial Studies at Duisburg-Essen University in 2011. Before that she was senior lecturer at Mainz University, where she earned her Ph.D. in 2000. Patricia Plummer has held temporary posts at the University of Koblenz-Landau, where she was also Visiting Professor in Interdisciplinary Gender Studies in 2005. She specialises in English literature of the long eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, on travel writing and Orientalism, as well as on gender and postcolonial studies, and on popular culture. Patricia Plummer is the author of a monograph on style in Charles Dickens, and of a forthcoming critical study of depictions of the Ottoman Empire in c18 English literature and art. She has co-edited several books on gender studies, including a comparative study of women’s crime fiction in Britain, the USA and Germany, and is currently writing the biography of ‘forgotten’ Anglo-Australian artist and Theosophist Louisa Le Freimann.

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