

AHSN - October 2012 E-Newsletter

AHSN WEB-SITE: <http://www.sydney.edu.au/humourstudies>

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**XIX AHSN COLLOQUIUM, UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE  
CITY CAMPUS, 7-9 FEBRUARY 201 -- PROVISIONAL DRAFT  
PROGRAM NOW POSTED!**

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There will be 38 presenters at the Newcastle Colloquium, with four keynote speakers and one invited guest speaker. The keynotes will be presented by Assoc. Prof. Susan Seizer (Indiana University), Dr Phillip MacIntyre (University of Newcastle, Australia), Mr Mahmoud Farjami (USM, Penang, Malaysia) and Adjunct Prof. Hugh Moore (independent scholar, Anaheim). In addition, Emeritus Professor Kenneth Dutton (University of Newcastle) is giving an invited paper on Limericks.

The Co-Convenors are pleased that presenters include many faces familiar from past AHSN Colloquia but also many scholars new to AHSN. There is a strong contingent of postgraduate scholars that augurs well for the future of the Network.

The first draft or provisional program for the 2 1/2 day program is now available at the AHSN website (thanks to Will Noonan, our webmaster from the University of Dijon!). Updated versions will be posted shortly.

***Please REMEMBER TO REGISTER to attend the Colloquium, whether you are a presenter or not. The Registration form is available for downloading at the main AHSN website on the Events>Registration page.***

Do not hesitate to contact the Colloquium Co-Convenors for further information or advice:

Conjoint Prof. Michael Ewans: [Michael.Ewans@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:Michael.Ewans@newcastle.edu.au)

Mr Michael Meaney: [Michael.Meany@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:Michael.Meany@newcastle.edu.au)

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**AHSN XIX NEWCASTLE 7-9 FEBRUARY 201:  
TRANSPORT TO NEWCASTLE (*repeated FYI*)**

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*By rail:* Take through train from Sydney to Newcastle, and alight at Civic Station. If coming from Brisbane or other points north, alight from your Countrylink service at Broadmeadow and take a local electric train back in to Civic. The Quest apartments are less than ten minutes' walk west from Civic Station.

*By air:* Newcastle Airport, Williamtown, is 27k from the CBD. You will need to take a shuttle bus or a taxi (expensive) to your accommodation.

*By road from Sydney and points south;* take the F3 north from Wahroonga, exit to the Newcastle link road, follow it east into the city until it becomes King St and brings you to the area shown on the map.

*Reminder:* This Colloquium starts with the welcome to delegates and first keynote at 2 pm Thursday 7 February. If you can't get to the conference venue by then in one half-day from where you live, we respectfully suggest that you travel to Newcastle on Wednesday and book in to Quest for the Wednesday night as well, so you do not miss the opening half-day.

If you have any transport problems please contact

Michael Ewans on 0434 902 350 or 02 4948 2747 who will help if he can.

Michael Ewans and Michael Meany  
*Colloquium Co-Convenors,*  
*AHSN XIX Newcastle 'Humour and Creativity'*

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**AHSN XIX NEWCASTLE 7-9 FEBRUARY 2011:  
EQUIPMENT INFORMATION AND ADVICE (repeated FYI)**

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The Newcastle conference differs from venues for the some recent Colloquia in that the two adjacent spaces for presentation of papers are both fully equipped lecture theatres. Facilities are listed below. If you need something not included, please email [Michael.Meany@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:Michael.Meany@newcastle.edu.au) to discuss your needs.

EQUIPMENT for 'LECTURE THEATRE' (60 seats)

AND for 'SEMINAR ROOM' (30 seats):

- \* Benchtop computer, internet access (+ Powerpoint display)
- \* Overhead projector
- \* DVD/VHS player
- \* High quality audio reproduction (ceiling loudspeakers)
- \* Visualizers (**please note!** Sheets of information may be displayed from paper documents, not acetate transparencies)
- \* Your own laptop can be plugged into the system (Michael Meany will be on hand before all sessions to assist)

While printing facilities (fee payable) are available on the ground floor of University House, we suggest you prepare and bring your own 40 copies of handouts for a plenary session (fewer for a parallel). The timetable to be posted later will show whether a paper is scheduled for plenary or parallel.

**NOTE: The whole second floor of University House (where the conference is being held) has wi-fi.**

Michael Ewans/Michael Meany

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**LECTURE ON "A JOKE HISTORY OF MODERN CHINA"  
BY DR CHRISTOPHER G. REA, POSTDOCTORAL  
FELLOW, ANU, AT UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY,  
22 OCTOBER 2012**

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Dr Christopher Rea will give a lecture at University of Sydney, for the Dept of Chinese Studies, entitled "Selling Smiles: A Joke History of Modern China".

When: 4:30 - 6:00pm, Monday 22 October 2012

Where: Latin I Room S224, Main Quadrangle Building A14  
RSVP

Please register your interest in attending with the Chair of the Dept, Dr Linda Tsung: [linda.tsung@sydney.edu.au](mailto:linda.tsung@sydney.edu.au)

**Abstract**

In the waning years of China's last dynasty, the writer Wu Jianren began serializing a joke column he entitled 'A New History of Laughter' (*xin xiaoshi*). Incongruous though it might

seem today, as the Qing empire teetered, one of its preeminent authors was busying himself advocating that jokes (*xiaohua*) be reformed for the betterment of society. Over the next three decades the joke gained new prominence thanks to a boom in mass media and during the Mao period jokes became a staple of official state media outlets like People's Daily. While jokes have found a ready audience from Wu Jianren's time up till now, China's jokers have routinely encountered criticism, with would-be humorists of the 1930s once memorably being accused of 'selling smiles' (*maixiao*) like courtesans plying their trade.

This talk will discuss the importance of the joke in modern Chinese media culture since the late 19th century from both historical and theoretical perspectives, focusing on questions such as: What makes a joke 'modern' in the Chinese context? How have technological innovations in publishing and other media changed Chinese joking practices? Why has joking mattered to prominent Chinese cultural and political figures from Wu Jianren to Mao Zedong, or to the general public? And how does a *xiaohua* differ from a "joke"?

### **About the Speaker**

Christopher G. Rea (Ph.D., Columbia) is Assistant Professor of Modern Chinese Literature at the University of British Columbia. His research interests include the literary, print, and cinematic cultures of the Chinese-speaking world from the late nineteenth century to the present, with a particular focus on late Qing and Republican China. In 2012 he is at ANU as a Postdoctoral Fellow of the Australian Centre on China in the World, completing a book on the cultural history of laughter in modern China.

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### **MEMBER NEWS: JUDY SPITZER, AUTHOR, BOWRAL**

AHSN member Judy Spitzer published some personal stories she had written in a book, *Visiting Poppi* (2011). The book recounts three stories told by a young girl, Rosie, who is taken by her mother to visit her grandfather, Poppi, in a dementia unit, describing their days together, the people they meet and the things they do together. The changes in Poppi over time are accepted by Rosie and her mother and the family finds ways to enjoy their time together. There was a very positive response from all age groups to the book, so Judy generously offered the e-book as a free download during the recent Dementia Awareness Week. She reports, "The response has been lovely and I hope more people will visit the elderly". [www.visitingpoppi.com](http://www.visitingpoppi.com)

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### **MEMBER NEWS: SUNDAR RAMANATHAIYER, CARTOON RESEARCHER, SYDNEY**

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AHSN member Sundar Ramanathaiyer reports from Kerala, India, on the visit by Australian cartoonist, Bruce Petty, to the Centre for Comic Arts (CCA):

"Bruce Petty was in Kerala from 20th September for a week-long programme organized by the CCA. He was loved by all and he loved everyone. There was a kind of Bruce magic—the combination of calmness and complex intellectual processes was something Kerala has never experienced before. Bruce drew and lectured at the same time at several venues using an overhead projector. He gave Achutha Menon Foundation Lecture to honour the memory of the gentleman communist and institution builder. Bruce gave a Master Lecture to IT@School students, where he met hundreds of high school students, and drew caricatures for around 120 girls and boys. He also visited the National Institute of Speech & Hearing, the Institution for the Visually Challenged and the State Mental Health Centre. Wherever he went, he had to draw caricatures. He came to town as Cartoonist Petty and left as Bruce."

Sundar will be back home in Sydney shortly. If you would like more information about activities at the Kerala Comic Arts Centre on cartooning that he helped establish, email him at:

[cartoonresearch@gmail.com](mailto:cartoonresearch@gmail.com)

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## **TWO NEW SERIES OF SILENT COMEDIES AND CLASSICS FROM AUSTRALIA'S SILENT FILM FESTIVAL, NEWCASTLE AND ROSEVILLE, SYDNEY**

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### **A. The Greater Union, 183-185 King Street, Newcastle**

**Saturday, November 10, 2pm:** *Steamboat Bill, Jr* (Buster Keaton, 1928)

Considered one of Buster Keaton best films, this action-packed comedy has breathtaking stunts and special effects that are still impressive in our day.

**Saturday, November 10, 4pm:** *The Lodger* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1927)

Considered the first true Hitchcockian film, *The Lodger* is a visually stunning story of Jack-the-Ripper-style murders in the London fog.

Live musical accompaniment at each session by Lambton's Greg Smith. Through the generosity of Craig Robson and his Fairground Follies, a 130 yr-old Tournaphone will also be presented at both sessions. This small portable reed organ plays by paper roll music being hand-cranked over the reeds; it was used in central Tasmania in late 19th century for home and community entertainment.

Ticket prices: \$15/\$10 Concession. Festival passes available: \$28/\$18.

Bookings and info at the website (see below).

### **B. Roseville Cinemas, 112 Pacific Highway, Roseville, Sydney**

**Saturday, October 27, 10:30am to 12:15pm:** *Blackmail* (1929). A quintessential Hitchcock psychological thriller about murder and blackmail. Musical accompaniment by Mauro Colombis.

**Friday, November 9, 10:30am to 12 noon:** Laughter and Thrills for the Young at Heart. Charlie Chaplin is on the run from cops in *The Adventurer*;

Charley Chase is hilarious in his own unique way in *Mighty Like a Moose*; and Buster Keaton in *Cops*. Musical accompaniment by Greg Smith.

**Friday, November 16, 10:30am to 12 noon:** *The Clinging Vine*. Cecil B. DeMille's fine production of a delightful romantic comedy. Musical accompaniment by Sharolyn Kimmorley AM.

**Friday, November 23, 10:30am to 12 noon:** Silent Comedies? Priceless! Charlie Chaplin's adventure as *The Immigrant*, Arbuckle and Keaton in *The Cook*, and Hairbreadth Harry in the great slapstick comedy, *Danger Ahead*. Musical accompaniment by John D'Arcy.

**Friday, November 30, 10:30am to 12 noon:** *Steamboat Bill, Jr* (1928) One of Keaton's greatest feature films with breathtaking stunts and action. Musical accompaniment by Greg Smith.

**For further program information and prices, please visit the website:** <http://www.ozsilentfilmfestival.com.au>  
**Or email:** [info@ozsilentfilmfestival.com.au](mailto:info@ozsilentfilmfestival.com.au)

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*Greetings to all from Universita di Bologna (chartered 1088)!*

Dr Jessica Milner Davis  
AHSN Co-ordinator  
[jessica.davis@sydney.edu.au](mailto:jessica.davis@sydney.edu.au)