

Smaill, Belinda, Monash University, Australia

Asia/Australia Intimacy: The Interracial Couple in Australian Cinema

The romantic couple stands as an index of cultural orthodoxy in cinema. This paper investigates the representation of interracial heterosexual relations in Australian cinema between white Australian and East Asian characters. It not only performs racialised and gendered conventions and transgressions, but the couple also provides a way to focus, through textual conventions, a transnational imaginary and globalizing production regimes. From *The Man from Hong Kong* or *Turtle Beach*, through to *The Home Song Stories* and *Mao's Last Dancer*, interracial intimacy, either as a major or minor narrative thread, is fleeting and unsustainable in Australian cinema. The Asian object of love stands for and is constituted by their connection to an "elsewhere," regardless of whether the action takes place in Asia or Australia. These couples foreground a transnational provisionality in a way that projects Australian experiences of multiculturalism into a realm beyond the nation and the everyday. This is a projection that makes Asia/Australia intimacy both compelling and manageable.