School of History Seminar Series

Wednesday 23 March 2011, 4.15-5.30pm, Seminar Room A, Coombs Building, ANU

The four fathers of Australia: Baz Luhrmann’s depiction of Aboriginal history and paternity in the Northern Territory

Dr Shino Konishi, Australian Centre for Indigenous History, ANU

Baz Luhrmann’s epic film Australia was widely criticised for its depiction of the past when it was released in late 2008. This article suggests that such criticisms myopically centred on historical details, exaggerating the film’s purportedly inauthentic representation of the past. By analysing its portrayal of the four father figures in the film I will examine how Australia engages with the histories of inter-racial sexual relations and the governmental aims of segregation and assimilation during the interwar period.

Dr Shino Konishi is a Research Fellow in the Australian Centre for Indigenous History at ANU. She is currently writing a book based on her doctoral research into eighteenth-century cross-cultural encounters in Australia. She is also researching a new ARC-funded project, Through Travellers’ Eyes: Foreign Observations of Aboriginal People and British Colonisation, 1800-1850.