Theme:
Freedom of expression in transition societies

Assumptions:
- Asian movies would reflect the transitional state of the Asian diaspora cultures.
- Across Asian cultures, there are shared perspectives, borne from ASEAN’s concerted effort to develop and safeguard socio-economic and political interests of the Asian region.

Research questions:
- What messages, if any, are there in Asian Romance movies?
- How are their messages similar?
- What do they tell us about such movies, the creators and audience?
- How is this significant?
The Asian Romance Movies as a vehicle for social cognition:
- Collective Representation
- Conscience Collective
- Collective Effervescence
- Cultural Rebellion?

9 Asian Movies from 3 cultural-linguistic groups:
- Hindi, Thai and Malay
- All movies screened between 2010 and 2012
- Different creative talents
- Logical subtitles that corresponded with dialogue

Analysis
- Cultural themes
- Socio-cultural and moral messages
‘Cultural Rebellion’

- Individual struggles against the collective e.g. defying God in *Jaab Tak Hai Jaan*, disagreement with cultural-religious view in *Istanbul Aku Datang*, challenging the institution of marriage in *Hello Stranger*.

- **Challenging Stereotypes: some examples**
  - *Barfi* – the love between two “imperfect” (deaf-mute boy and autistic girl) people is shown to be more fulfilling than the love of people who are considered normal and successful.
  - *Cun!* – The farmer who toils the land is concerned about civic-minded responsibilities, growing organic produce and working to protect the environment.
  - *First Love* – An unattractive girl with a gentle character was the love interest of a boy who was a high school heartthrob.
  - *Seven Something* – A middle-aged woman finds comfort and happiness in her friendship with a young man, despite social objections.

**Visual Representation of Heroes and Heroines**

Men – good-looking and charismatic
Women – fair, slim, clear complexion, long hair or mid-length with luscious locks
Asian Romance Movies

The Heroes:

The Heroines:

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Findings and Conclusion

- Cultural and national identity and the Eastern-Western or local-foreign influences
- The role of family and the collectivist society
- The role of social media and youth culture
- Interpreting religious concepts
- Contemporary issues and concerns
- Perceptual cultural differences and stereotypes

The movies show a “conscience collective” at work, indicating a conscious effort by the creators to determine what is right (Alex, 2011) and define the Asian worldview through “cultural determinism”, making meaningful representations for the consideration of a collective group. It has the real potential to influence as it uses the media genre of the romance movies to create a “collective effervescence”, that unconscious process of a heightened sense of the shared group experience (Durkheim, 1912/1995).