

Tearing and Restoring the Moral Fabric of Society in Asian Romance Movies

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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:

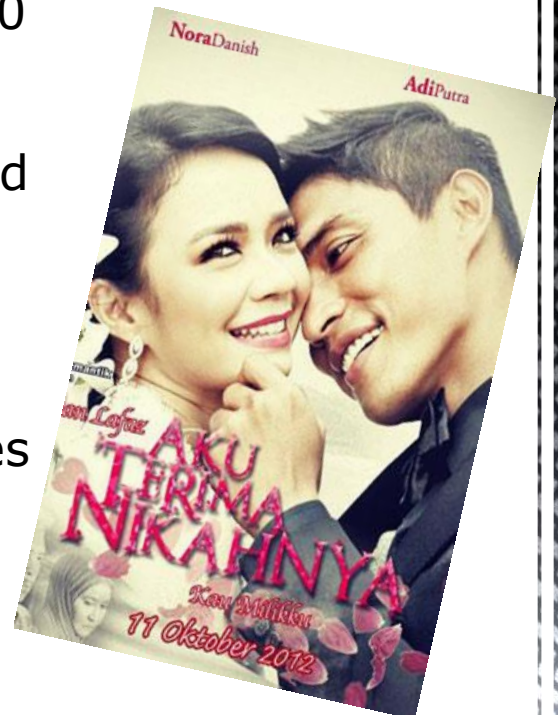
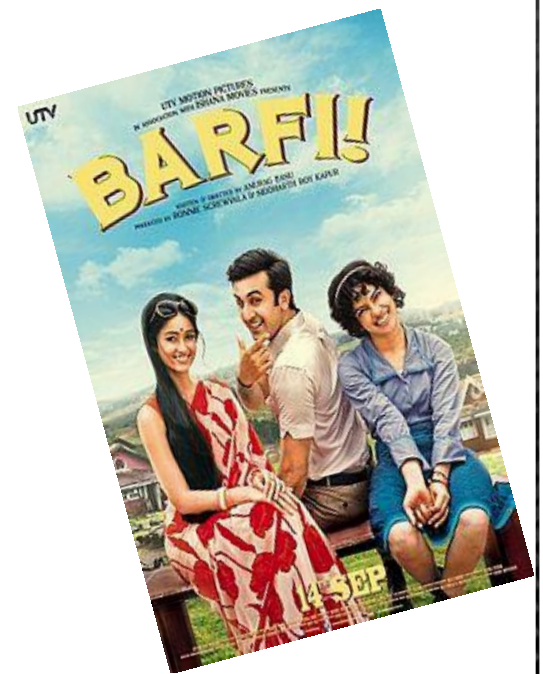
- Collective Representation
- Conscience Collective
- Collective Effervescence
- Cultural Rebellion?

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

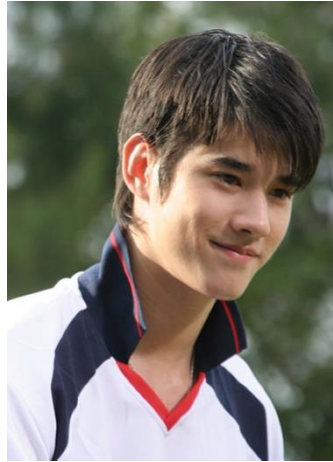
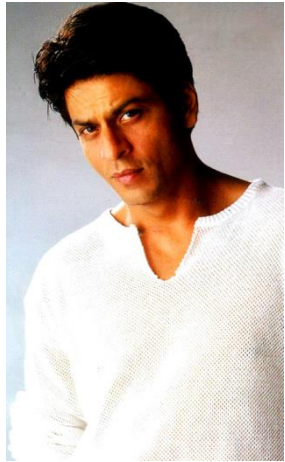
Men – good-looking and charismatic

Women – fair, slim, clear complexion, long hair or mid-length with luscious locks



Asian Romance Movies

The Heroes:



The Heroines:



Theme:

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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).

