### Research Questions
Are network films a genre? If so, then how do their narrative politics reframe notions of world cinema?

### Argument
Network films are a global genre that has arisen simultaneously without one definitive originating country. While cultural contexts and cinema traditions influence the films, their narratives, production contexts, and distribution practices mean that they reframe traditional ideas of world cinema.

#### Introduction
**Opening hook:** Reflection on films with themes of characters whose lives randomly or fatefully interconnected.

**Context:** Popularity of films like *Love Actually, Valentine’s Day, Crash, Babel*

**Debate in the literature:**
- Re genre: How to classify these films – a genre? A passing fad?
- Re world and art cinema: Genre studies is Hollywood-centric and emphasise national divisions.

**Research gap:** No genre analysis of network films exist, and there are few comparative studies that discuss the implications for notions of world cinema.

**Research questions/hypotheses/aims:** Are network films a genre? If so, then how do their narrative politics reframe notions of world cinema?

**Methodology/approach:** Comparative genre analysis of seven films (*Babel, The Edge of Heaven, Berbagi Suami, Lantana, Crash, Code Unknown, Mumbai Meri Jan*). Applying Altman’s genre theory and discourse analysis.

**Argument and its significance:** Network films are a global genre. The complexities of their narrative attributes, production contexts, and distribution practices mean that they reframe traditional notions of world cinema and art cinema.

#### Signposting/outline of the thesis

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<td>Broad purpose: To introduce the seven case study films, and to argue that they fit Altman’s genre theory of semantic and syntactic factors because they share common topics.</td>
<td>Broad purpose: To compare the films’ representation of characters. Argument: The films share specific character types and fit Altman’s theory of semantic factors.</td>
<td>Broad purpose: To argue that the narrative and stylistic themes of network community are semantic and syntactic genre markers.</td>
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**Chapter 1: Situating Network Films**

*Broad purpose:* Literature review. Argument: No genre analysis of network films exist; few comparative studies of them discuss the implications for notions of world cinema.

**Section: Proliferation of Complex Narratives**

**Section: The Differences Between Puzzle, Ensemble, and Network Films**

**Section: Why Call Them “Network” Films?**

**Section On the Way to “Network Community”**

**Section: Existing Definitions of Network Films**

**Section: The Question of Genre**

**Section: Genre Theory**

**Section: A Global Genre?**

**Section: Network Films and World Cinema**

**Chapter Conclusion**

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**Chapter 2: Common Topics**

*Broad purpose:* To introduce the seven case study films, and to argue that they fit Altman’s genre theory of semantic and syntactic factors because they share common topics.

**Section: The Concept of Network Community**

**Section: The Seven Films’ Common Topics and Themes**

**Section: A Genre, Possibly?**

**Section: Pluralism and Polyphony**

**Section: Men in Crisis**

**Chapter Conclusion**

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**Chapter 3: Character Types**

*Broad purpose:* To compare the films’ representation of characters. Argument: The films share specific character types and fit Altman’s theory of semantic factors.

**Section: Social Cross Sections**

**Section: Representing Pluralism**

**Section: Cultural Others**

**Section: Creating Network Community Through Chance Encounters**

**Chapter Conclusion**

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**Chapter 4: Semantics and Syntax of Character Parallels**

*Broad purpose:* To argue that the narrative and stylistic themes of network community are semantic and syntactic genre markers.

**Section: Visual and Aural Devices That Convey Parallelism**

**Chapter Conclusion**
**Research Question:** Are network films a genre? If so, then how do their narrative politics reframe notions of world cinema?

**Argument:** Network films are a global genre that has emerged simultaneously without one definitive originating country. While cultural contexts and cinema traditions influence the films, their narratives, production contexts, and distribution practices mean that they reframe traditional ideas of world cinema.

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<td>Broad purpose: To show that while the films use different stories, their plots consistently emphasise simultaneity and polyphony, which fits Altman's genre theory.</td>
<td>Broad purpose: To argue that the films' use of public and private spaces fits Altman's theory.</td>
<td>Broad purpose: To argue that the films' production and distribution patterns mark them as a global genre.</td>
<td>Broad purpose: Argue that as a global genre, the films challenge existing conceptions of art cinema and world cinema.</td>
<td>Despite having emerged out of an array of countries and film industries, this thesis has shown that network films can be considered a global genre that has distinct qualities and helps to reframe categorical concepts of world cinema.</td>
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**Chapter Conclusion**

Looking at these films comparatively does not imply a utopian smoothing out of the industries’ differences, but instead has offered a method of recognising their differences and likenesses without lumping them into exclusively or essentially nationalistic categories.

This thesis points to a number of future directions for both comparative analysis and genre studies.