

AET1
Asian and Middle Eastern Studies Tripos, Part IB

Friday 1 June 2018 9 to 12.00 pm

Paper AMES1

Cinema East

*Candidates should answer **three** questions, **one** from section A and **two** from section B. All questions carry **equal** marks.*

*Write your number **not** your name on the cover sheet of **each** answer booklet.*

STATIONERY REQUIREMENTS

*20 page answer booklet
Rough Work Pad*

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS TO BE SUPPLIED FOR THIS EXAMINATION

None

You may not start to read the questions printed on the subsequent pages of this question paper until instructed to do so.

SECTION A

Answer ONE question.

All answers to questions in SECTION A should refer MAINLY (75%) to East Asian and Israeli films studied during this year's course, although some use may be made of other films that offer important comparisons or contrasts or that were made by directors included in the syllabus.

1. Laura Mulvey once wrote that cinema is structured by the male gaze, with women appearing only as the passive object of looking. Discuss this hypothesis with reference to at least TWO female portrayals from films studied this year.
2. Pick TWO films from different regions studied in class that place importance on the aural dimensions of cinema, and describe the overall impact of these techniques on the films.
3. To what extent has the cinema you have studied of Israel, Japan and Greater China been shaped by ideological debates at the time of production?
4. Is it possible to have a genre-less cinema? Use THREE films from different national traditions to illustrate your answer.
5. "Editing is the most underrated and easily overlooked aspect of filmmaking." Discuss, with reference to any of the films you watched for class.
6. Can the growing distribution of films via internet platforms undermine the tendency to identify cinema politically and why/why not?

SECTION B

The questions below are grouped in three sub-sections matching the main national traditions studied in the course: Israel, Japan and China/Taiwan/Hong Kong. Answer TWO questions which must be from different subsections.

7. **Israel**

- a) Film is frequently identified politically rather than artistically (we often speak of national cinemas). What are some of the reasons for this?
- b) Describe the relationship between theology and cinema historically as well as generically.

- c) Describe the different kinds of religious expressions in the films *Sallah Shabbati*, *Ushpizin*, and *God's Neighbors* and assess them as a feature of Israeli national cinema.
- d) Religious expressions in Israeli films are often associated with Mizrahim (Jews from Muslim countries). Explain this phenomenon and give examples from some of the films you watched.
- e) Discuss some of the ways cinema can visualise transcendence, which is usually associated with religious spirituality, either ritualistic or experiential. Choose a scene from one of the films you watched as example of it and analyse that scene from these perspectives using some of the technical vocabulary you have acquired in the course for analysing films.
- f) What are some of the inherent qualities of the cinematic medium that lend themselves to religious expressions?

8. **Japan**

- a) "Akira Kurosawa was the most Western of all Japanese directors." Discuss.
- b) How does the use of editing in *Rashōmon* interact with the narrative conceit of Akutagawa Ryūnosuke's original short stories on which the film is based?
- c) Is Japanese film obsessed with the theme of death?
- d) Discuss the visual motif of the stairs within Naruse Mikio's *When a Woman Ascends the Stairs*.
- e) Discuss the relationship between film and memory as presented in Koreeda Hirokazu's *After Life*. You should pay particular attention to technical aspects of the film.
- f) Itami Jūzō's *The Funeral* and Koreeda Hirokazu's *After Life* both deploy cinematic techniques more usually associated with documentary rather than narrative cinema. Describe the use of such techniques in either film and analyse their meaning and effect within the film's narrative context.

(TURN OVER)

9. **China/Taiwan/Hong Kong**

- a) Can Wu Yonggang's *The Goddess* be considered a feminist film? Discuss.
- b) To what extent has the search for national identity shaped the development of Chinese-language cinema from the 1930s to the present day?
- c) Is the distinction between "arthouse" and "commercial" cinema justified in the context of twenty-first century Chinese-language cinema?
- d) Compare and contrast cinematic representations of history in two Chinese-language films of the twentieth and/or twenty-first century.
- e) Do you think the Communist Party's ban on the exhibition of Xie Jin's 1964 film *Stage Sisters* made political sense at the time? Why/why not?
- f) Explore the different uses of camera angles and positioning in any TWO Chinese-language films that we watched for class.

END OF PAPER