

ASIAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES TRIPOS, PART IB

East Asian Studies

Thursday 7 June 2012 09.00-12.00

AMES 1 CINEMA EAST

*Candidates should answer **three** questions, **one** from Section A and **two** from Section B*

*All questions are of **equal** value.*

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

STATIONERY REQUIREMENTS

20 page Answer Book x 1

Rough Work Pad

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

SECTION A**Answer ONE question.**

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

1. Bordwell and Thompson assert that a film-maker shapes three features of cinematography: '(1) the photographic qualities of the shot; (2) the framing of the shot; and (3) the duration of the shot (*Film Art* 1st ed., p. 99)'. Apply any or all of these categories to TWO films studied this year.
2. 'The very notion of nation appears to depend on constant (but not necessarily visible) conflict among multiple competing but related notions' (Rick Altman). Discuss with reference to films from any ONE East Asian nation.
3. 'When we speak of a filmmaker's style, we are referring to the particular techniques that person typically employs and the unique way these techniques relate to one another' (*Film Art* 1st ed., p. 221). Apply this basic formulation of 'style' to two directors studied this year.
4. Give a careful personal assessment, backed up by cinematic and/or cultural analyses, of what you take to be (1) the most interesting film and (2) least interesting film studied in Cinema East this year.
5. Analyse the portrayal of crime and punishment in films from TWO national film traditions from East Asia.
6. Is there such a thing as East Asian melodrama, or are East Asian melodramatic films tied to particular aspects of culture and nation?

SECTION B

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

7. China/Taiwan Answer ONE of the following:

- a) To what extent can *The Goddess* be described as an ideological film? How do technical aspects of the film contribute to the overall effect?
- b) Discuss how staging and cinematography function together with the mise-en-scene of Jia Zhangke's *The World*.

- c) Discuss Chen Kaige's *Farewell, My Concubine* in the context of pan-Chinese cinema and explain how this context may have shaped the production, distribution and exhibition of the film.
- d) Describe the moral universe underlying *A Touch of Zen* and comment on the cinematographic means by which it is manifested.
- e) Hou Hsiao-hsien's *A Time to Live and a Time to Die* is regarded as a work in which his style reached its full aesthetic maturity. Discuss his style.
- f) Chinese operatic performance played a big role in early Chinese film. Discuss how this legacy is reworked in two films from this section.
- g) Discuss the use of editing and mise-en-scene in Ang Lee's *Lust/Caution*.
- h) Discuss the way patriotism is explored in two films from this section.

8. Japan Answer ONE of the following:

- a) Donald Richie claims that '*Yojimbo* . . . is comic Kurosawa', yet he also argues that the protagonist, played by Mifune, 'is as monstrous as any of the monsters' who end up dead by the end of the film. How does Kurosawa generate humour from the monstrous and evil?
- b) Is *Yojimbo* an eastern Western, a western Eastern, or some kind of hybrid?
- c) In Ozu's *The End of Summer*, how does the director's characteristic style serve to illustrate similarities and differences between the key characters?
- d) 'Imamura's oeuvre can be read as an alternative social history, focusing on those excluded from the official postwar narrative' (Alexander Jacoby). Apply this argument to *Vengeance is Mine*.
- e) The families presented in *The End of Summer* and *Vengeance is Mine* are both relatively large and complicated Japanese families of the postwar era. How does cinematic style contribute to their contrasting portrayal?

9. South Korea Answer ONE of the following:

- a) Kim Ki-young said that 'the background and mood of a period are what determine a movie'. Discuss with regard to *The Housemaid*.
- b) Han Ju Kwak claims that 'the past that *Sopyonje* portrays is social and historical rather than personal', yet the film depends upon strongly drawn individual characters. How should we interpret such a seeming contradiction?

- c) Discuss the concept of *han*, and illustrate with reference to at least TWO South Korean films.
- d) 'By foregrounding mise-en-scene, the Korean film industry seeks an alternative aesthetic to replace the spectacle-driven blockbuster style' (Jinhee Choi). Discuss with regard to *Memories of Murder* and, if possible, any Korean or other 'blockbuster'.
- e) How is masculinity depicted in South Korean cinema?

END OF PAPER