FLM003 WHAT IS CINEMA? CRITICAL APPROACHES

Thursday 11 May; 2:30pm

Duration: 3 hours

YOU ARE NOT PERMITTED TO READ THE CONTENTS OF THIS QUESTION PAPER UNTIL INSTRUCTED TO DO SO BY AN INVIGILATOR.

Answer TWO questions as indicated. All questions are equally weighted

Please avoid duplication between exam answers and between exam answers and assessed coursework.

If you answer more questions than specified, only the first answers (up to the specified number) will be marked. Cross out any answers that you do not wish to be marked.

Calculators are not permitted in this examination

Complete all rough workings in the answer book and cross through any work that is not to be assessed.

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Examiner(s): Dr Alasdair King
Dr Libby Saxton

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Question 1

Assess the ways in which Balazs and/or Eisenstein have attempted to argue that the cinema presents us with a specific and distinct art form.

Question 2

How effectively do Bazin and/or Kracauer argue that the relationship between film and reality should be at the heart of any definition of what cinema is?

Question 3

How successful were attempts in the 1960s and 1970s to import tools from other disciplines, such as linguistics and psychoanalysis, into the study of cinema? Your answer should consider in detail writing by Wollen and/or Mulvey and may refer to other relevant film theorists.

Question 4

‘Which characters are afforded close-ups and which are relegated to the background? Does a character look and act, or merely appear, to be looked at and acted upon? With whom is the audience permitted intimacy? Is there off-screen commentary or dialogue, what is its relation to the image?’ (Stam and Spence, 1983)

With reference to this quotation, critically examine the value of arguments by Mulvey and/or Silverman and/or Stam and Spence that mainstream western film conventions perpetuate inequalities by privileging some groups of people over others.

Question 5

How useful is Tobing Rony’s concept of the ‘third eye’ and/or Butler’s analysis of gender and drag for understanding how cinema constructs up to three of the following: race, ethnicity, sexuality. You may also refer to other contributions to postcolonial and queer film theory.

Question 6

How useful are cognitive accounts of how we understand narration in film and how we engage with film characters?
Question 7

‘The advent of the digital marks the end of cinema as a specific sphere. It returns to being what it often seemed to be: a simple region within the wide field of figurative arts. Its task among the figurative arts is to represent all of reality – internal and external – through the eyes of the artist, not to ensure a close connection with the world’ (Casetti, 2015).

Casetti suggests here that with the emergence of digital cinema, for some film historians, cinema as we knew it for much of the twentieth century has ended. Assess the merits of this claim.

Question 8

To what extent do the concerns of theorists of postmodernism writing in the 1980s and 1990s persist in critical approaches to what has been called the ‘post-cinema’ of the twenty-first century?

End of Paper