

## NYU DEPARTMENT OF CINEMA STUDIES

### Theory of Image and Sound (updated 2/14/2013)

This bibliography is comprised of five sections: cinematic representation; visual theory; sound theory; music; theory and practice (sound and image). Question on the exam will be drawn from all areas of the bibliography. Students will be expected to be familiar with the starred texts and to develop an expertise in one or more areas of their choosing.

#### Cinematic Representation

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## Theory of Image and Sound

### Fall 2009

1. Evaluate Siegfried Kracauer's theorization of the filmic image in his book *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality*. (You may use any of the three editions -- 1960, 1965, 1997 -- of this work.)
2. Are there specific theories of film, or of cultural production generally, that can grasp both image and sound as signifying elements of film? If so, which, and how do they work? (If not, why not?) Is a unified theory of image and sound possible?
3. Rick Altman makes the radical suggestion that cinema is primarily a sonic art form, and that its images are subservient to the accompanying sounds. What implications does this have for film theory?
4. Nearly all DVD re-releases of pre-1930 "silent" films are accompanied by newly-recorded soundtracks. When projected in contemporary theatrical screenings, these same silent films are usually presented with live musical accompaniment. How might the reception of these two forms of exhibition compare to the original reception of silent-era films? How might they affect the historiography of silent-era film generally?
5. Do theories of sound in moving image media need to change when considering the home viewing context? Are existing theories geared primarily to explain films shown theatrically, or do they work as well for the home consumption of film and video? Which theories of sound best address twenty-first century means of viewing film and video -- at home, on computer screens, cellular telephones, portable video players, and so on?
6. In the English-language edition of his book *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen* (1994), Michel Chion formulates the function of sound in film through the concept "added value" (page 5). Summarize his use of this concept and evaluate the validity and usefulness of this formulation (including, if you wish, in relation to other theories of screen sound). You should refer to the use of sound in specific films.