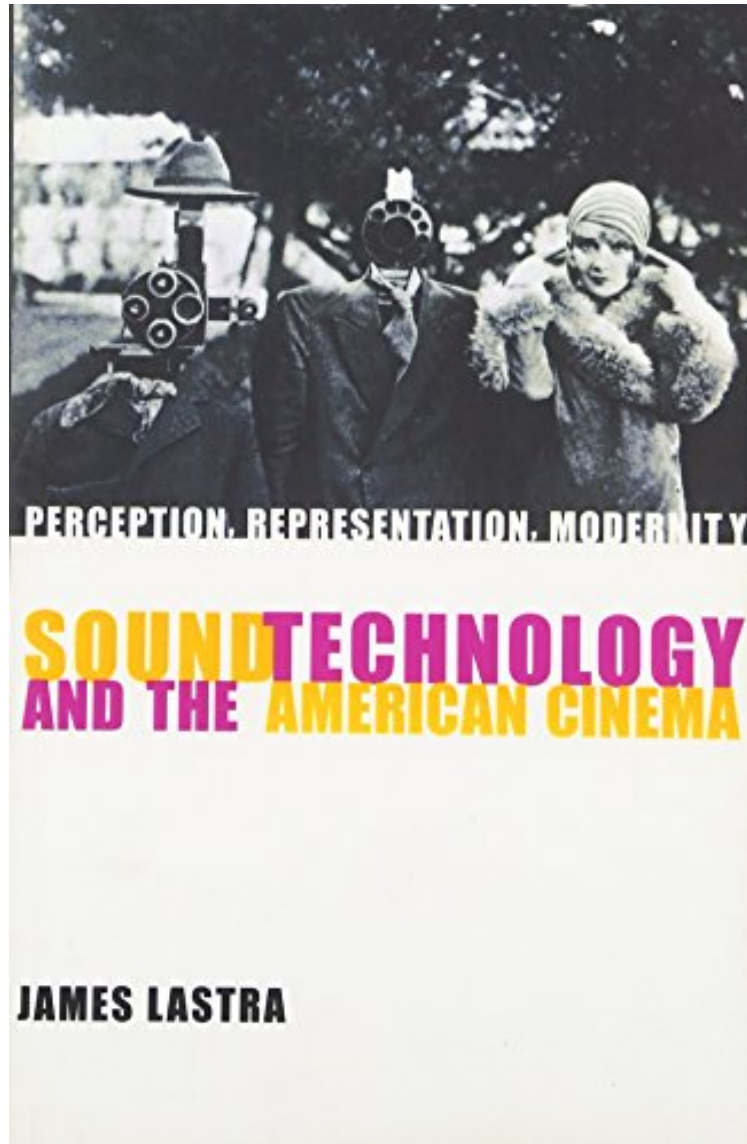


(Download free pdf) Sound Technology and the American Cinema

Sound Technology and the American Cinema

James Lastra

**Download PDF | ePub | DOC | audiobook | ebooks*



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#2137246 in Books James Lastra 2000-08-15 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.99 x .62 x 5.981, .80 #File Name: 0231115172288 pages Sound Technology and the American Cinema Perception Representation Modernity | File size: 49.Mb

James Lastra : Sound Technology and the American Cinema before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sound Technology and the American Cinema:

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Sound and representation By Sidereal This is a very well researched, well written, lucid account of how sound came to be born into cinema and how it evolved the way it did to modern sound practice. The timeline Lastra presents is crystal clear and it reveals why sound and picture had an acrimonious

relationship, and the manner in which sound practice evolved. Lastra tackles some very difficult notions of representation, including questions of 'truth', sound perspective, space and ambience and much more. Several scholars have dealt with this in one way or another, but Lastra does so with confidence and courage, cutting through to core issues of perceptual aesthetics. For example, from his introduction (regarding photography): "Nearly every contemporary newspaper image is digitized, and many are manipulated for purposes of clarity or rhetoric. We have not, however, consequently given up on the idea of photographic reliability since, in spite of our doubts about the medium, we still believe in the institution of journalism and the practice of journalists, which guarantee our faith far more than the simulacra produced by the computer. So, while it is all well and good to argue that every photograph is ideological to its core ... such arguments only go halfway. Indeed they lead to a kind of cynicism. No one today can be unaware that photography can be faked, yet that fact alone does not rule out the possibility that under some conditions a photograph might, indeed, tell the truth. And that is a possibility worth defending." I found this statement refreshing, when too much writing on aesthetics gets bogged down by unanswerable questions of hegemony, ideology and the like. Sometimes a cigar is just a cigar... or, a door slam is just a door slam. It also helped defend my thesis, for which I'm grateful. :)

2 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Beauty is not necessarily truth.... By A Customer

Lastra's book definitely makes for an interesting read but in the end is rather problematic. Of course the degree to which you choose to see this work as flawed depends mostly on whether or not you fall into the (post-)modern camp of Derrida, Blanchot, Barthes, etc... I often enjoy the works of such authors but in this particular case the majority of Lastra's arguments rest on similes and analogies that while making for beautiful text fall short of making a definitive point. Lastra also has the tendency to float the terms and ideologies of previous centuries down stream into a modern discourse and analysis where I don't believe they necessarily fit or at least he doesn't support such a move textually (Oops! There I go with one of my own similes that mean little or nothing). In part this belief may be due to Lastra's research which while thorough seems decidedly one sided and leans too heavily on certain critics. Another downside to his insistence on the taking (post-)modern perspective and interpretation is that he treats "sound" as some sort of reflexive, self-perpetuating Ouroboros. He does this to such an extent (and with too little support) that one almost feels that the whole world sat in the stomach of this Ouroboros and that meaning was therefore elusive and somehow beside the point. In which case one is right to ask: "What's the point of writing this book?" Also the author has a rather annoying style of re-stating or re-phrasing certain notions within the same paragraph to appear to be the next step in a logical continuity, which makes for both tedious and confusing reading at times. However, like I said in the beginning the work has its beautiful moments and the first and second chapters are absolutely fascinating.

Representational technologies including photography, phonography, and the cinema have helped define modernity itself. Since the nineteenth century, these technologies have challenged our trust of sensory perception, given the ephemeral unprecedented parity with the eternal, and created profound temporal and spatial displacements. But current approaches to representational and cultural history often neglect to examine these technologies. James Lastra seeks to remedy this neglect. Lastra argues that we are nowhere better able to track the relations between capital, science, and cultural practice than in photography, phonography, and the cinema. In particular, he maps the development of sound recording from its emergence to its confrontation with and integration into the Hollywood film. Reaching back into the late eighteenth century, to natural philosophy, stenography, automata, and human physiology, Lastra follows the shifting relationships between our senses, technology, and representation.

"An interesting scholarly account of the rise of early film sound technologies... fascinating in its discussion of how sound practice, particularly in the accounts of film sound engineers, complicates and grounds sound theory." -- " of Communication"

"An interesting scholarly account of the rise of early film sound technologies... fascinating in its discussion of how sound practice, particularly in the accounts of film sound engineers, complicates and grounds sound theory." -- of Communication"

"An interesting scholarly account of the rise of early film sound technologies... fascinating in its discussion of how sound practice, particularly in the accounts of film sound engineers, complicates and grounds sound theory." -- " of Communication"

Rigorous, detailed, and compelling. (Mary Anne Doane, Brown University)

About the Author James Lastra is associate professor of English at the University of Chicago.