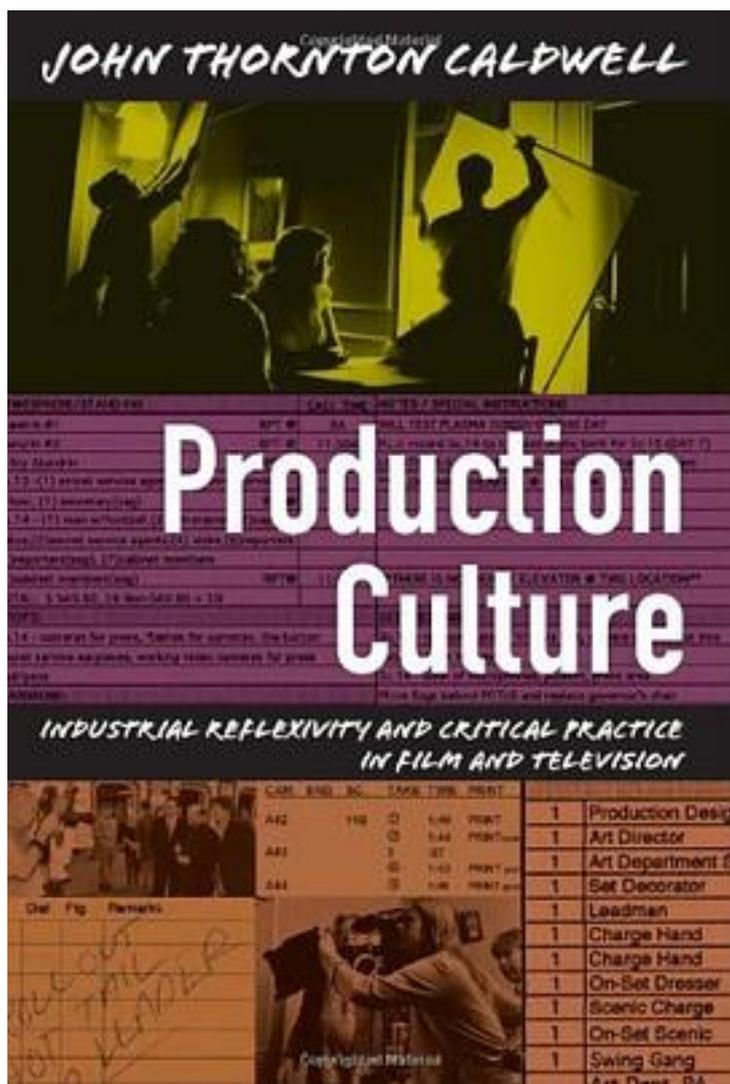


Production Culture



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In "Production Culture", John Thornton Caldwell investigates the cultural practices and belief systems of Los Angeles-based film and video production workers: not only those in prestigious positions such as producer and director but also many others, including gaffers, editors, and camera operators. Borrowing insights from cultural anthropology, Caldwell analyzes the stories workers tell and the rituals they enact to make sense of their labour and to critique the film and TV industry and the culture writ large. Far from being guarded, Hollywood executives and craftspeople work within an industry that obsessively reflects on itself and constantly exposes itself to the public. Caldwell suggests ways that scholarship might benefit by acknowledging the extent to which the industry first theorizes and critiques itself as part of economic and industrial habit. Caldwell's fieldwork combines interviews with industry workers; observations of sets and workplaces; and analyses of TV shows, industry documents, economic data, and promotional materials to show how film and video workers function in a radically transformed and unstable post-network industry. He chronicles how industry workers have responded to volatile changes including the convergence of "old" and "new" media; labour outsourcing; increasingly unruly labour and business relations; new production technologies; and multinational corporate conglomeration. He also explores new struggles over "authorship" within collective creative endeavours; the way that branding and syndication have become central business strategies for networks; and the "viral" use of industrial self-reflexivity to motivate consumers through DVD bonus tracks, behind-the-scenes documentaries, and "making-ofs." A significant, on-the-ground analysis of an industry in flux, "Production Culture" offers scholars new, more precise and holistic ways of thinking about media production as a cultural activity.

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