

objects of analysis, ABC's *a.k.a. Pablo* (1984) and the WB's *First Time Out* (1995), did not even last long enough to complete their first seasons. By discounting Latina/o creatives and consultants and hiring only non-Latina/o/x writers and producers, Beltrán argues, these shows missed the opportunity to capture the loyalties of Latina/o/x audiences and hold the attention of non-Latina/o viewers.

In the fifth chapter, Latino-led television fully enters the scene with shows like *Resurrection Blvd.* (2000–2002), *George Lopez* (2002–7), and the very popular *Ugly Betty* (2006–10). By allowing Latino creatives to draw heavily from their personal experiences, Beltrán suggests, these series gained popularity and longevity. However, producers Dennis Leoni (*Resurrection Blvd.*), George Lopez (*George Lopez*), and Silvio Horta (*Ugly Betty*) were forced to navigate industrial pressures to accommodate white audiences in order to garner the attention of the ever-elusive “mainstream.”

The final chapter of *Latino TV* enters an era regarded by the industry and critics as “Peak TV” and focuses on culturally specific, Latina-led shows. Beltrán looks at Gloria Calderón Kellett's *One Day at a Time* (2017–20), Cristela Alonzo's *Cristela* (2014), and Tanya Saracho's *Vida* (2018–20). Although not framed as such, these programs center intersectionally marginalized Latinas/os/xs. Not only are they there as expressions of Latina subjectivity, but they give visibility to the perspectives of working-class, queer, undocumented, and Black Latinas/os/xs. Beltrán argues that Latina creatives are leading the way with culturally specific (rather than universalizing) programming and “empowered characters” (18). This stands in the face of years of panethnic universalizing by English-language and Spanish-language media, US institutions, and Latina/o/x activism.

Beltrán concludes her study by reflecting on the precariousness of Latinas/os/xs in the television industry. As others have shown, despite years of their struggling for inclusion, the media industry perpetually ignores Latina/o/x creatives while harboring an infatuation for a *commodified Latinidad*. In fact, Latina/o/x creatives, critics, and scholars have criticized that commodification; Yessika (Julissa Calderon), a character in *Gentefied* (2020–21), launches the critique with a pointed remark: “They may love all our shit, but they don't love us.”

Beltrán highlights her frustrations with the past and present but expresses optimism for the future, finding hope in the recent arrival of Latina “creatives” that nonetheless points to a drawback of such a study: prioritizing contemporary concerns of Latina/o/x visibility over

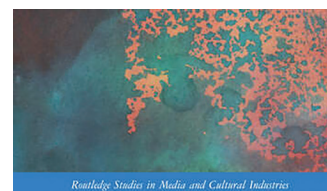
historicity. Certainly, denigrating images and control of production were and continue to be an issue for Latina/o/x communities and activists, but what was deemed “negative” and “positive” has changed over time. Such critical assessments were often contingent on the specificity of the Latina/o/x subgroup and the US region, among other factors, as well as the co-constitutive legacies of English- and Spanish-language media as discursively fueled by the misconception that Latinas/os/xs are foreigners who only consume media in Spanish and that Latin America is the sole arbiter of *Latinidad*. Beltrán's *Latino TV* is an essential contribution to the expanding scholarship on Latina/o/x media and is particularly important for the training of its future scholars.

BOOK DATA Mary Beltrán, *Latino TV: A History*. New York: New York University Press, 2021. \$89.00 cloth, \$30.00 paper. 251 pages.

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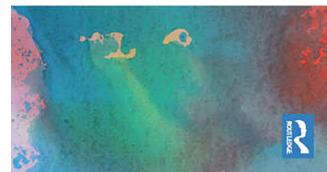
## DANA ALSTON

### *Television's Spatial Capital: Location, Relocation, Dislocation* by Myles McNutt



TELEVISION'S SPATIAL  
CAPITAL  
LOCATION, RELOCATION, DISLOCATION

Myles McNutt



AMC's *Breaking Bad* (2008–13), one of the most critically lauded TV shows of the last decade, built much of its neo-Western aesthetic and political relevance upon its Albuquerque setting. The orange blood-soaked deserts and the proximity to cartel wars gave its viewers a heightened sense of the American Southwest. But behind the scenes, the show came

close to looking, sounding, and feeling different: the original plan was for the series to take place in Riverside, California, before it moved to Albuquerque for tax purposes. To consider the choice *Breaking Bad*'s producers made (and its result) is to consider the economic and political pressures within a changing American media-production landscape in which modes of production, distribution, and consumption are in constant flux. The adage “location, location, location”

matters more than ever to the people who make, watch, and talk about television.

Myles McNutt's *Television's Spatial Capital* uses Pierre Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital to examine the practical and representational implications of the rapidly shifting "geography of television." McNutt argues that television's former traditions of "place-making" have been fundamentally disrupted in the modern era, and the resulting new strategies constantly locate, relocate, and dislocate audiences' sense of space. Gone are the days when Los Angeles and New York were the production hubs for American networks and studios. The subsequent dispersal across the country has had widespread effects that maintain hierarchies of taste, class, and culture.

The phenomena facilitating this shift and the "industry stakeholders" overseeing them have collectively created "spatial capital," a term McNutt uses to encapsulate the value associated with spaces where television is staged and consumed. In digging into the expansion of television production and defining it in these terms, McNutt's study adds to the growing scholarly attention paid to space and media production, which crosses both television and film. His focus on spatial capital intersects with more-granular case studies about audiences and labor across five chapters.

From a bird's-eye view, this approach sits at the crossroads of industry studies, television studies, and cultural geography, and McNutt's approachable style (honed by his time as a critic at sites like *The A.V. Club* and his ongoing blog *Cultural Learnings*) helps meld these into a comprehensive endeavor. *Television's Spatial Capital* establishes a useful tapestry of established scholarly threads at the intersection of production, distribution, and reception, as well as illustrative examples of their possible applications to the contemporary media environment. Each of its five chapters zeroes in on a particular level of the industry and its capacity to create, control, and regulate the flow of spatial capital.

The introduction exemplifies the many threads at work here, with McNutt demonstrating the television medium's "incredible capacity for place-making" with a pair of "television maps" of the continental United States (2). These cartoon maps, published online in 2014, superimpose television titles over the states where the shows are set and call attention to the lack of spatial capital the unlabeled states have. These forgotten Middle American states are ignored because of a lack of cultural capital; the industry does not believe that audiences have any interest in these places, and they are therefore excluded from the creation of spatial

capital. Confronting the background of such assumptions and decisions and identifying the stakeholders behind them is the backbone of McNutt's study.

The first chapter takes a labor-focused approach to spatial capital, and more clearly delineates the stakeholders. McNutt begins at the top of the hierarchy, with politicians who incentivize production in specific locations via tax credits, then ends with below-the-line laborers. He also outlines a contemporary culture of "mobile production" in which production is inherently unmoored from any one place, resulting in a location marketplace for practically all modern television productions. The central case study in this chapter concerns location scouts and managers, who play an integral role in this marketplace. McNutt highlights the dilemma of authenticity facing these workers. Their ability to find spaces that look authentic for a show's setting within a shooting location that is inauthentic (Atlanta becoming LA, for instance) makes them the "key managers" of spatial capital. McNutt's granular research, taken primarily from trade articles and press interviews, offers concrete examples of the big ideas established in the introduction.

"City-for-city doubling" is just one of the strategies for creating spatial capital that make up the focus of McNutt's second chapter. This chapter moves away from his exclusively labor-centric focus on preproduction in chapter 1 into the shooting and editing of a series. At this stage, stakeholders usually either obscure that the series was produced in an inauthentic location, amplify that it was filmed in the actual location, or generate an entirely fictional location from scratch. McNutt examines opening title sequences, and his original contributions in this regard stem from his interest in labor. His examination of second-unit film crews and editors and the generation of "new tools to meet the existing burdens of spatial capital" (87) are the highlights of this chapter.

From here, the book moves away from TV production toward its distribution and consumption. Chapter 3 looks at the negotiation of spatial capital in localized programs, such as region-specific versions of house-hunting shows, and identifies the strategies of dislocation employed to ensure a broad appeal. To that end, McNutt studies Netflix and its approach to global content distribution. Netflix limits and restricts the importance of space and place in its programming to make texts legible for broadly international audiences. *Orphan Black* (2013–17), for example, was shot in Canada but conspicuously omits any landmarks that might confirm this. McNutt moves from this example to note the marked tendency in modern TV toward universality over

specificity, which requires shrewd navigation and manipulation of spatial capital rather than its creation via location-conscious textuality.

For the final two chapters, McNutt switches almost entirely to discourse analysis as another site where spatial capital accumulates. In chapter 4, critics and their legitimizing effect on spatial capital take center stage. To McNutt, the praise that critics tend to heap on prestige programs for authenticity in location work and making a location “feel like a character in the show” (120) creates and maintains hierarchies of taste and perceptions of quality. This critique builds on established legitimation media scholarship, particularly by Elana Levine and Michael Newman.

The fifth chapter, analyzing localized reception on social-media platforms, is essentially an online ethnography of Twitter responses. It emphasizes the visibility that social media lends to local audiences, arguing that through their labor these audiences “either serve as spatial amplifiers in praise of a series’ sense of place or critique the series in question as spatial arbiters” (152). If Canadian viewers of *Orphan Black* decry the show’s mismanaged depiction of Ontario online, that exchange leaves the show’s spatial capital far more open to disruption, affecting whether audiences will accept or reject the show and whether it will be continued.

The conclusion, which adds urgency by directly addressing COVID-19’s effect on spatial capital, exemplifies McNutt’s lucidity as a writer while opening the door to more-concrete studies on the subject in the future. McNutt’s takeaway—that “the answer to the question of ‘where television takes place’ is a shifting target”—is a helpful final note. The book’s emphasis on labor, especially McNutt’s granular examination of below-the-line workers who are too often uncelebrated, is worth expansion. His methodology in the later chapters is timely, since social media will no doubt play an increasingly larger role in place-making going forward. The most inventive findings in *Television’s Spatial Capital* emerge when McNutt wields his interest in the representation of space to dig more deeply into ever-growing expectations of authenticity. What emerges is an enlightening view of an industry straining to meet those demands under the weight of tradition.

BOOK DATA Myles McNutt, *Television’s Spatial Capital: Location, Relocation, Dislocation*. New York: Routledge, 2021. \$160.00 cloth. 200 pages.

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## NORA STONE

### *Documentary’s Expanded Fields: New Media and the Twenty-First-Century Documentary* by Jihoon Kim



What is a documentary? Film theorists have mulled this question for decades, but Jihoon Kim takes a capacious view in an effort to draw together the various kinds of media labeled “documentary.” In his new book, *Documentary’s Expanded Fields: New Media and the Twenty-First-Century Documentary*, Kim decenters traditional documentary film, focusing

instead on gallery installations, activist videos, interactive projects, virtual-reality environments, and experimental cinema. All combine the aims of documentary film with novel uses of digital technology and the affordances of networked communication. While his jumps from i-doc to multiscreen art installation to protest witness video can be dizzying—and lead to questions about milieu and intended audience—*Documentary’s Expanded Fields* is an ambitious and worthwhile attempt to map the wide array of documentary projects in the twenty-first century.

In the introduction, Kim explains the idea of “documentary’s expanded fields” by invoking theorists of avant-garde motion pictures and contemporary art. His touchstone is Gene Youngblood’s 1970 study, *Expanded Cinema*, which derides traditional narrative film and its supposed “passive” viewing, and celebrates artists using then-new technologies like video cameras, synthesizers, and computers. Other thinkers have carried this ethos forward, including Lev Manovich, with his argument for a postmedia aesthetics that adopts the operations of a computer era, and Alexandra Juhasz and Alisa Lebow, with their demand that documentary film decouple from traditional narrative in favor of interactive forms. His other touchstone is Rosalind Krauss’s idea of the expanded field in contemporary art, her explanation for postmodern art practices that transcend a given medium. For example, postmodernism embraces sculpture as not only a three-dimensional object in a gallery but also as architecture, landscape, photographic documentation, and performance. A similar collapse of boundaries explains how such a diverse range of projects came to be