

is central to one's cultural identity, and can sometimes be central to politicised practices that seek to contest or subvert the forms of cultural power identified in Chapter 2.

Chapters 2 and 3 should help you get to grips with important bodies of research about processes of cultural production and consumption respectively. But – and this is a big *but* – it is crucial to bear in mind that these processes are not neatly separated in real life. Although much classic research in this context *did* tend to focus on either cultural production or consumption, more recent work within cultural geography and cultural studies has begun to recognise that this was deeply problematic. In Section 3.5 we outline why this 'either/or' approach was so problematic, and argue that the processes discussed in this section should actually be understood as always already closely and complexly interconnected.

After reading Part 1, several later chapters of this book should help you to extend and develop your understanding of cultural processes and politics in three key ways.

- Part 1 provides a kind of general 'sketch' of how cultural objects and spaces are produced and encountered.

Several chapters in Part 2 provide a much more detailed and specific focus on particular kinds of cultural object. Now consider the complex geographies evident in the later chapters on **built spaces** (Chapter 4), images of **landscape** (Chapter 5), diverse cultural **texts** (Chapter 6) or forms of **performance** (Chapter 7).

- Follow up Chapter 3's discussion of identities and subcultures by exploring the extended discussion of concepts of **performativity** and **identity formation** in Chapters 7 and 8.

- In Part 3, we introduce notions of **everydayness** (Chapter 9), **materiality** (Chapter 10), **emotion** and **affect** (Chapter 11), and **embodiment** (Chapter 12), and discuss the inherent complexity of all human geographies. Consider how these concepts are relevant to the processes outlined in Chapters 2 and 3. It should become clear that *all* cultural production and consumption involves embodied, emotional, everyday practices in complex and material spaces. How does this realisation add to, or complicate, our understanding of cultural processes and politics?



Cultural production

2.1 Introduction: producing a cultural geography textbook

Think, for a moment, about this book. How much do you know about this object? Where, when and how *was* it made? As authors we can shed light on *some* aspects of this book's production: the many hours spent writing (or not writing) on computers in the English East Midlands; the many notepads, pens and printer cartridges used in the process; the many meetings and emails between the authors and commissioning editors; the contracts, drafts, proofs and other paperwork signed, sealed and delivered; the whole process commissioned by a publishing company based in Harlow, England; the book itself printed in Gosport, England. Many other aspects of this process are rather more difficult to map. (Where *were* the raw materials used in the book's paper, cover and inks sourced? How *did* the book get from the printers to wherever you picked it up? *Who* was responsible for typesetting, inking, maintaining the production line, or driving the delivery lorries? What are their working lives like? What exchanges of finance, and what behind-the-scenes goings-on in the publishing

Before you read this chapter . . .

Consider this book. Try to answer the following questions. (Note any gaps in your knowledge.)

- Where and how was it made?
- Who was involved in making it, and under what conditions did they work?
- Who decided its content?
- Who profits from the publication of the book?
- Think about the spaces in which this book can be found. How, and by whom, are these spaces produced?

Chapter Map

- Introduction: producing a cultural geography textbook
- Questioning cultural production
- Making meanings, discourses and taste: key concepts from cultural studies
- Geographies of cultural production: commodity chains and the cultural industries
- Producing and regulating cultural spaces

industry, enabled the book to be commissioned? Who, ultimately, benefits from the production of this book?) As we shall suggest, cultural objects, texts and media are typically created via complex processes of production, although these processes frequently pass unnoticed by consumers of these objects.

This chapter introduces some of the ways in which geographers have explored processes of cultural production. As we shall explain, questions of cultural production have been important for many cultural geographers. To help you understand this importance, this chapter outlines:

- why cultural production has been a major concern, one way or another, for many cultural geographers;
- some key concepts that have been useful to geographers exploring cultural production;
- some key work by economic, urban and industrial geographers that explored the making of cultural objects, texts and media;
- some geographical research about the creation and maintenance of different kinds of cultural spaces.

2.2 Questioning cultural production

In Chapter 1, we noted that the word 'culture' can be used to describe a number of things. It can refer to:

- texts, objects and spaces created by human beings: everything from small-scale, individually crafted artefacts through mass-produced commodities and globalised media to large-scale public spaces and architectures;
- practices, habits and lifestyles that relate to these cultural texts, objects and spaces;
- meanings, norms and value judgements that relate to all of the above;
- power relations, group identities and inequalities that relate to all of the above.

We also identified several lines of work by cultural geographers who have explored some spatial patterns, processes and consequences of all this. The question of 'cultural production' – how all these cultural

investigated how particular agricultural or manufacturing traditions shaped distinctive local and regional 'ways of life' as manifest in, for example, local artistic and folk cultures. Although these lines of geographical work have been criticised, and to some extent disowned, by later cultural geographers (see Section 1.4), their recognition that cultural artefacts, practices and lifestyles are closely linked to agricultural, manufacturing and landscape processes remains important. These early geographers were important in shaping expectations of what human geographers do; and their understandings of cultural production continued to shape and direct the work of cultural geographers for many decades.

- As noted in Section 1.4, a new cultural geography emerged from geographers' encounters with contemporary work from other disciplines, including cultural studies, during the 1980s and 1990s. Some of the most exciting and important work within cultural studies during the 1970s and 1980s had argued for research exploring the production – and producers – of popular cultural media such as newspapers, television programmes, movies and pop music. It was argued that such research would reveal the often-overlooked ideological content of such media, and the particular, exclusionary, inequitable processes and industries that produced them. This heady, politicised line of work inspired many geographers who encountered it during the 'new cultural geography'. See Section 2.3 for an outline of some key arguments about cultural production that originated in cultural studies and inspired many geographers at this time (but led others to critique an overwhelming focus upon cultural production – see Chapter 3).

- Cultural geographers were by no means the only or first geographers to explore processes of cultural production. Indeed, during the 1970s and 1980s, at least two major bodies of geographical work had focused upon these issues. First, many economic, urban and industrial geographers wrote extensively about cultural industries, means and chains of cultural production, the commodification of cultural goods, and linkages between cultural and

economic production in diverse contexts. Second, many urban geographers and planners theorised the production and regulation of cultural activities, spaces, events and identities within diverse built environment. See Sections 2.4 and 2.5 for discussion of these two lines of work. In effect, then, 'new cultural geographers' found themselves working in a context that had, in certain respects, already been theorised and researched extensively. Some cultural geographers extended and appropriated these existing lines of work, but – again – some critiqued an exclusive focus upon cultural production (see Chapter 3).

2.3 Making meanings, discourses and taste: key concepts from cultural studies

We have already noted that concepts and research from the disciplines of cultural and media studies were fundamentally important in the development of the new cultural geography during the 1980s and 1990s. There and then, some of the most important and exciting work within cultural studies focused upon questions of cultural production, such as:

- How are cultural texts, media and objects made?
- Who makes them?
- Does this 'who' affect the content and form of these texts, media and objects?

We should note, straight away, that this production-focused work was not the *only* exciting and important stuff going on within contemporary cultural studies; as we shall explore in the next chapter, another strand of cultural studies – which was especially influential for many cultural geographers – focused on the consumption of cultural products.

Let us consider why production-focused work was so important within cultural studies – and, then, so influential for cultural geographers. Cultural studies scholars set out to challenge some deep-seated, traditional assumptions about the making of cultural texts, objects and media. In particular, they argued that twentieth-century art critics and cultural commentators

Cultural production

had popularised and idealised a centuries-old 'myth' of cultural creativity whereby:

- poets, artists, composers, novelists and other cultural producers, were understood as gifted, autonomous, talented creators or geniuses;
- the activities of these individuals were viewed as special, rarefied, high-status, creative, more-or-less spontaneous practices;
- these practices were autonomous and creative, ideally occurring independently of social, economic or political contexts (indeed, it was considered vulgar for creators to be evidently commercial or ideological);
- poems, artworks, musical scores, novels, and so on, can be read and evaluated as objects in their own right – independent of the work involved in their production and, again, independent of their social, economic or political context;
- certain kinds of cultural production ('high culture' – see below) were seen as inherently more special and high-status than others.

This myth of cultural creativity was considered problematic and inaccurate, in three key senses. First, it was argued that, by romanticising the spontaneously gifted creativity of individuals, it overlooked the actual work involved in cultural production. This realisation led to a major line of work in cultural studies, investigating the practices and techniques through which meanings are actually made. Inspired by linguistic and semiotic theorists, cultural studies scholars developed new research methods to explore the content, form and meanings of all manner of cultural texts and media, and the practices through which meanings are communicated therein. Often, this led to detailed consideration of linguistic assumptions and techniques. Consider the following questioning, by leading cultural theorist Stuart Hall (1997: 21), of how combinations of letters convey particular meanings in particular cultural contexts.

The question, then, is how do people who belong to the same culture . . . know that the arbitrary combination of letters and sounds that makes up the word TREE will . . . represent the concept 'a large plant . . .'? One possibility would be that the objects in the world themselves embody and fix in some way their 'true' meaning. But it is not at all clear that real trees know that they are trees, and

Making meanings, discourses and taste: key concepts from cultural studies

political contexts. In particular, it conceals how these wider contexts are important in determining who produces culture (and who does not), and how this affects the content and form of cultural texts and media. In the previous paragraph we introduced the idea that cultural texts, media and meanings are socially constructed. This concept led many cultural studies researchers to consider who is involved in this process: that is, who, exactly, is involved in the social construction of cultural texts, media and meanings? It was noted that not everyone participates in cultural production; more importantly, it was argued that not everybody is able to participate in the kinds of cultural practice celebrated by the myth of cultural creativity. In order to devote one's life to creative cultural practices, it is distinctly advantageous to have economic capital (money, economic security, or a financial backer) and what cultural theorists call 'cultural capital' (particular skills, knowledge, opinions, habits, or access to networks of power and influence). Cultural studies researchers critiqued the evidently exclusionary nature of cultural production. Historically, it was noted that prestigious cultural creators had overwhelmingly been white, educated, metropolitan, upper-class European or North American men, rich in economic and/or cultural capital. Likewise, it was argued that many social groups (notably women, ethnic and religious minorities, disabled people, and indeed those lacking in economic and cultural capital) were systematically underrepresented within the cultural industries (e.g. the worlds of publishing, media, art – see the next section), past and present. Or, more precisely, it was noted that particular aspects of cultural production (decision-making, commissioning work, creative practices themselves) were considered high status, and tended to be done by a narrowly elitist and exclusionary section of society. Meanwhile, many other forms of labour integral to cultural production (the printing of novels, the assembly of paintbrushes, the making of paints, the maintenance of performance spaces, for example) had tended to be overlooked as lower status than, and somewhat separate from, the mythologised practices of cultural creativity. See Chapter 10 for examples of geographical work that has taken up this task of mapping the hidden labour behind geographies of cultural production.

A key achievement of cultural studies during the 1970s and 1980s was therefore to reveal how different

ential participation in cultural production could be mapped directly onto broader contemporary socioeconomic inequalities: it generally remains true that, across most domains of cultural production, high-status roles tend to be occupied by those who are relatively privileged within society, whereas those who belong to socially excluded groups are overwhelmingly underrepresented. A related achievement of cultural studies was to explain how these inequalities in cultural production affected the form and content of cultural products. Cultural studies researchers argued that, in effect, all cultural texts and media can be read as ideological: implicitly reflecting, serving and promoting the interests of those who produce them (and, therefore, mostly serving the interests of particular social groups who are most often involved in cultural production). The term 'hegemony' was widely used in this body of work, and in subsequent work by cultural geographers. The Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci is usually credited with coining this term, to describe the processes through which "consent is sought and won" by powerful groups within society (Hartley 1994: 59). Within cultural studies, this concept was applied to the study of cultural texts and media. It was argued that all manner of cultural products (including news media – see Box 2.1) should be understood as 'hegemonic' in that:

- they promote or serve the interests of those who produce them;
- they present the worldview of these cultural producers as commonsense, ideal and normal;
- in so doing, they actively disseminate and reproduce the norms and prejudices of cultural producers as natural and universal;
- despite this partial and narrow worldview, cultural products are presented as neutral or natural;
- they thus represent "existing social, political and economic arrangements as being natural and inevitable" (Crane 1992: 87);
- that is, they conceal inequalities in society, and cultural production, or present them as unproblematic and inevitable;
- they neutralise, or provide no room for, dissenting voices and worldviews.

"Normal process"
conclusion

Much cultural studies research during this period involved the unveiling of hegemonic norms and propagandist methods in seemingly apolitical cultural texts and media such as television dramas, popular music, cinema, advertisements and, again, news media (see Box 2.1).

This concern with hegemony prompted many researchers in cultural studies and other disciplines (including cultural geography) to consider connections between cultural production and social, economic and political power. Two twentieth-century philosophers – Michel Foucault and Edward Said – have been deeply influential for those seeking to understand these

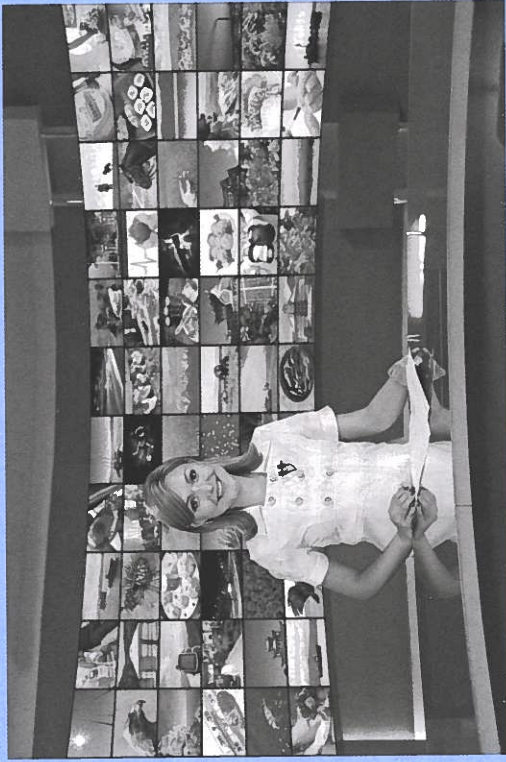
connections. The work of both of these key thinkers was wide-ranging, and Boxes 2.2 and 2.3 provide only brief introductions to their importance in the context of cultural production: see Chapter 6 for some extended discussion of these ideas.

Foucault's work on 'discourse' (see Box 2.2) prompted many social scientists to develop methods of discourse analysis that have been applied to a diverse range of cultural texts, objects and media. Within cultural geography, for example, one can find a very varied range of work interrogating discourses in all sorts of settings: in policy documents (Evans and Honeyford 2012), economic forecasts (Peet 2007), school buildings



Box 2.1

'Putting reality together': producing news media



Photograph 2.1 How does television news 'put reality together'?

Source: Shutterstock.com/Witthgod.

Within cultural studies, much pioneering work on cultural production has focused on news media, whether in print, on television or online.

News media are interesting cultural products because: (i) they are typically presented, and often uncritically digested, as a factual, neutral record of current affairs; (ii) for many people, they are one of the most important sources of representations of the wider world in general, including political

and controversial issues. Consider the following quotation by a researcher whose work was important in exploring how news media 'put reality together' for our consumption.

The issue for us was this: if television puts 'reality' together, what is the nature of the product? The naturalistic quality of news presentation . . . grounded in professional claims to objectivity and impartiality, led us to ask what kind of cultural artefact it is. One way of breaking into this . . . is to look

at matters that are controversial . . . and examine how they are treated on television news. We can proceed to look at the news story as narrative: at the verbal and visual grammar in which it is expressed; at the use of graphics and other symbolic expressions; at the use of headlines; at who is interviewed, and the form and content of these interviews . . . in short, at the way information is organised and at the implicit and explanations that are put before us.

(Eldridge 1993: 4–5)

This kind of approach should prompt us to ask questions about the newspapers, headlines news broadcasts and online news feeds we encounter every day. You might like to look at one example of today's news media and consider the following questions.

- What techniques are used to 'put reality together'? (See Hartley 1994; Matheson 2005.)
- How do headlines, sequencing and running order structure the news and attach significance to particular events?
- How are language, phrases or scripting used to describe incidents in a particular way?

- How are images and iconography used in the presentation of the news?
- Are any clichés or conventions used?
- Whose perspectives are represented? (And whose are not?)
- What techniques are used to present this news medium as neutral, authoritative and factual?
- How is the same news story represented in two different news sources? What is learnt from this kind of comparison?
- How are news media shaped by the way in which they are produced? (See Herman and Chomsky 1988.)
- Who makes decisions about how this news medium is produced?
- How much do you know about how, where, and under what conditions this news medium was produced?
- Who profits from this news medium: economically, politically or in other ways?
- How might the answers to these questions shape the content of this news medium?

(Pike 2008), urban landscapes (Hastings 1999) and medical practices (Evans 2006), for example.

Said's notion of 'orientalism' (see Box 2.3) has fostered discussion on the potentially political, oppressive and violent nature of certain discourses, and the ways in which cultural production can be directly linked to broader geographical processes (such as the exercise of colonialist power). While Said's work centred on specific historical and geopolitical contexts, his illustration of the power of socially constructed discourses has provided a vocabulary with which to critically evaluate the role of representations and discourses in diverse contexts. Among cultural geographers, for example, his work has led many geographers to investigate representations of people and places in sources such as travel writing, film and television, news reporting, and art/literature.

A third objection to the myth of cultural creativity is that it overlooks the ways in which certain forms of creativity, and certain cultural products, come to have a high status. We have already noted that certain sorts of cultural practice – such as the composition of classical music, literature, poetry, art – are often valued as special,

emerging from the exceptional activities of talented and highly esteemed creators. A key achievement of cultural studies was to critically question the entire, taken-for-granted value system upon which these assumptions are based. The work of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu on notions of 'distinction' and 'taste' was influential here, and has been so for many subsequent cultural geographers. In *Distinction* (1984: 466), Bourdieu defines 'taste' in the following way.

Taste is an acquired disposition to 'differentiate' and 'appreciate' . . . – in other words, to establish and mark differences by a process of distinction which is not (or not necessarily) a distinct knowledge . . . since it ensures recognition (in the ordinary sense) of the object without implying knowledge of the distinctive features which define it. The . . . primary forms of classification owe their specific efficacy to the fact that they function below the level of consciousness and language, beyond the reach of introspective scrutiny or control by the will.

We shall return to this definition in a moment; but before reading on, you may find the following questions helpful in getting to grips with Bourdieu's (initially rather difficult) definition.



Box 2.2

Michel Foucault on discourse

The work of the French poststructuralist philosopher Michel Foucault (1926–84) has been influential for many researchers working on issues of cultural production. Foucault uses the term 'discourse' to consider how the making of texts, images and meanings is always – at some level – a political act, and how cultural production is specifically used by those exercising political power. Foucault (1972: 80) defines discourse by suggesting that the term is used

sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements.

Consider each of these meanings in turn (see also Kraftl *et al.* 2012, and Chapter 6 on **texts**). First, Foucault suggests that 'discourse' is often used, particularly in everyday language, as a kind of general, catch-all term for 'all statements'. Second, Foucault argues that we can identify particular, interconnected 'groups of statements' in any given time and place: of particular importance are influential norms and knowledges that are (re)produced and circulated by powerful contemporary institutions and organisations, and which can effectively govern the way in which particular topics, issues or questions are addressed within contemporary society. For Foucault

(1991[1975]: 22), discourses are always already central to the pursuit and maintenance of power, because power and knowledge directly imply one another... There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute... power relations.

Third, Foucault directs our attention to the practices that produce discourses, challenging us to explore how discourses – and forms of power predicated upon them – are produced and actually done. Social scientists have taken diverse approaches to this challenge, developing diverse methods of discourse analysis that variously focus on:

- verbal and textual techniques of discourse production (e.g. rhetoric, metaphors, grammar, imagery);
- non-verbal and performative tactics that produce powerful discourses (e.g. gestures, staging, presentational skills);
- the materials, tools, texts and technologies that constitute discourses in practice;
- the organisations, institutions and networks that work to produce, disseminate and control discourses; and the emotional/affective components of, and responses to, discourses.

• Think of something that is 'tasteful', or someone who has 'good taste' in some way. Try to pin down exactly what these words mean.

• Conversely, think of something that is rather 'tasteless', or someone who has 'bad taste' in some way. Again, what do these words mean? *Spice*

• Where do these ideas of 'good taste' and 'bad taste' come from? Where and how do we learn them?

We may find it pretty easy to identify examples of good or bad taste. We find ourselves making value judgements – what we like and do not like, what we value and do not value, what impresses us, what dismays us – every day, in all kinds of ways and contexts. In Bourdieu's terms, we seem to have an 'acquired disposition to differentiate and appreciate':

making distinctions between those things we like/love/value/care about and those things we dislike/hate/do not value/couldn't care less about comes easily to us, and seems like a natural characteristic of human social lives. However, Bourdieu questions this taken-for-granted 'disposition to differentiate'. Drawing examples from a study of consumption practices in France during the twentieth century, he demonstrates that 'commonsense' divisions between good/bad-taste typically map onto inequalities and divisions within contemporary society. It is no coincidence, he argues, that norms, ideals, practices and preferences of powerful and comfortable social groups have overwhelmingly been understood as 'good taste' – and thus legitimately, normal, superior – within their social-historical context. Likewise, he argues that it is no coincidence



Box 2.3

Edward Said on orientalism

The Palestinian-American postcolonial literary theorist Edward Said (1935–2003) has been important for many researchers exploring the production of images and stereotypes of people and places. Said's most famous work, *Orientalism* (1978), is about how places and people are represented, and the politicised effects of those representations. The book examines how the 'East/Orient' has been represented by Europeans since the eighteenth century. Essentially, Said identifies a recurring set of discourses and representations – what he calls 'imaginative geographies' – through which 'the East' has been repeatedly portrayed in Western art, literature and popular culture as 'other', exotic, strange, dangerous, frightening, unstable, and so forth. Some examples that Said explored in his work were as follows.

- Representations of Arabs as combatants or terrorists in Western news media. Said analyses discourses within US news media during Arab/Israeli wars during the 1960s and 1970s to demonstrate how Arab soldiers were repeatedly represented as fanatical, treacherous, dishonourable, villainous 'baddies', and reflected upon the ease with which Arab soldiers and terrorists were vanquished by lone Western heroes in Hollywood action movies. Towards the end of his life, Said also reflected upon how these kinds of images of Arabs as villainous, fanatical 'foreign devils' threatening 'us' in the West continued in the wake of 9/11 and via media representations of suicide bombers, Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden.

- Representations of 'the East' in classical French painting. Said explores the work of celebrated painters such as Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863), Jean-Auguste Ingres (1780–1867) and Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824–1904), whose scenes of the Middle East and North Africa were popular in the European art market of the early nineteenth century. He demonstrates that these artists drew upon an iconography of exotic, heady, volatile, mysterious, dangerous/exciting scenes, inhabited by sleazy, suspicious Arab men, and exotic, seductive, mysterious, uninhibited (i.e. scantily clad) Arab women.

- Travelogues of visits to the East by European authors. Said explores the writings of nineteenth-century European travel writers such as Benjamin Disraeli, Gerard de Nerval and Gustave Flaubert, whose travelogues demonstrated, and fed, a fascination with religious fanatics, slave trading, volatile situations, opium dens, sleazy situations and the exotic, 'other' inhabitants of the Middle East and North Africa.

Said argues that this repertoire of 'orientalist' images constitute a 'distorted lens' through which Europeans habitually imagine 'the East': a whole set of ways in which the East, and people living there, are imagined as 'other' and opposite to 'us'. In short, 'they' are represented as 'exotic', primitive, unstable, fanatical, potentially villainous (compared with 'us', who are 'normal', civilised, rational, decent people).

social inequalities and divisions. In *Distinction* (1984), Bourdieu identifies some of the processes and institutions through which the production of taste happens in practice. He highlights the importance of:

- critics, journalists, scholars and other 'cultural intermediaries' within the **cultural industries** (see Section 2.4), who effectively form contemporary tastes by reviewing cultural texts, classifying them (as good or bad, classic or turkey, must-see or miss-able), developing discourses of "what is worthy of being seen and the right way to see it" (Bourdieu 1984: 25);

- family practices, which foster habitual behaviours, shape cultural norms and preferences, and provide spaces/opportunities for certain cultural activities (all depending, of course, on the existing norms and economic and social capital of the family in question);
- educational institutions, which teach particular ways of reading a particular canon of texts, and formally reward particular forms of behaviour (e.g. through the award of qualifications – one form of cultural capital) to those who demonstrate these behaviours and ways of reading (implicitly rewarding those who are prepared and supported for education by family practices).

Through these processes, norms about 'good taste' are deeply embedded and taken for granted. Indeed, returning to the questions at the beginning of this paragraph, it is likely that we shall find it difficult to put our finger on exactly what makes something good/bad taste, or how we acquire our norms and assumptions about taste. This is what Bourdieu means, in a previous quotation, where he describes our ideas about taste as 'not (or not necessarily) a distinct knowledge': we may know 'good/bad' taste when we encounter it, but we are not necessarily able to know or explain exactly why we think in this way. Indeed, Bourdieu goes on to describe taste as functioning 'below the level of consciousness and language, beyond the reach of introspective scrutiny or control by the will'. So, for example, a cultural object, text or practice might affect us powerfully – we may be entraptured by a great artwork, disgusted by a tasteless film, dismayed at the bad taste of a colleague – and we may not be able to fully explain or disguise these reactions.

The concepts of hegemony, discourse, taste and cultural capital explored in this section were developed by disparate thinkers, writing about diverse (and often historical) contexts. However, many cultural studies scholars pieced them together, and applied them to current contexts, to develop new understandings and critiques of the politics of cultural production. Through their engagements with these concepts, cultural studies researchers demanded that all cultural texts, objects and practices should be open to critical examination, to explore how contemporary cultural

tastes relate to inequalities of economic and cultural capital (as per Bourdieu), and to unveil the presence of powerful and tactical discourses (as per Foucault) supporting the interests of hegemonic social groups (as per Gramsci). This work provided a set of concepts, methods and vocabularies that many geographers applied, adapted and extended in the new cultural geography: see, for example, our later chapters on **landscapes, buildings and texts**. Moreover, there was a realisation that academic researchers had often been complicit in the inequitable processes outlined in this section. In particular, it was noted that scholars in the arts, humanities and social sciences had, more or less systematically, tended to focus on what could be called 'high culture': the kinds of cultural texts, objects and activities that have highly valued status within contemporary societies, which are exclusively the preserve of the socially and economically powerful, and which were valorised by the myth of cultural production outlined at the start of this section. Against the grain of most previous work, many cultural studies researchers turned to investigate all manner of more diverse and popular (previously dismissed as 'low') cultural texts, objects and activities. Again, this turn proved hugely influential for many cultural geographers: see, for example, our later chapters on **consumption** (Chapter 3), **identities** (Chapter 8) and **material objects** (Chapter 10).

2.4 Geographies of cultural production: commodity chains and the cultural industries

As we noted in Section 2.2, cultural geographers were by no means the only or the first geographers to explore cultural production. In this section we introduce two key, related lines of geographical research that were ongoing during the early stages of the new cultural geography. As we shall show, these lines of work were chiefly instigated by researchers who did not define themselves as cultural geographers, but they did explore issues of cultural production, and indeed they did effectively position cultural production as a foundational concern – one way or

another – for cultural geographers. First, we introduce economic and industrial geographers' work on commodity chains, and the complex geographical networks through which commodities and cultural texts, objects and media get made in practice. Second, we highlight the work of urban, economic and industrial geographers on the 'cultural industries', and the industrialisation and commodification of processes of cultural production. In each case, we introduce some early, key concepts that proved influential for cultural geographers, before outlining some ways in which cultural geographers extended and developed these concepts.

To understand why a number of economic, industrial and urban geographers had begun to explore processes of cultural production, you may find it useful to know a little about the cultural turn in economic geography. In Chapter 1, we introduced the **cultural turn** in human geography (see Box 1.3), and mentioned that this 'turn' in research interests, methods and conceptual orientation had been evident in practically every area of human geography. Box 2.4 includes some details about the cultural turn in economic geography. You may find these details useful in contextualising the following discussions of commodity chains, cultural industries, and the production of cultural spaces. Essentially, the short version of Box 2.4 is that during the 1980s many economic, industrial and urban geographers began to explore:

- how and where, and under what conditions, commodities are made in practice via increasingly complex and global networks of production;
- the importance of so-called 'cultural industries' within contemporary local, regional, national and global economies.

In this context, geographers used a variety of methods and concepts to explore the processes through which commodities – including cultural objects, texts and media – are produced. Three key, related concepts were as follows (see Leslie and Reimer 1999).

- *Commodity chains* – tracing "the trajectory of a product from its conception and design, through production, retailing and final consumption" (Leslie and Reimer 1999: 404), sequentially join-

ing the dots between the "network of labour and production processes whose end result is a finished commodity" (Hopkins and Wallerstein 1986: 159).

- *Commodity systems* – rather than focusing on isolated case studies of individual commodity types, this concept attempts to map the diverse, inter-related industries, factors and actors that constitute broader systems of, and trends in, commodity production (see Fine and Leopold 1993). That is, individual chains of commodity production are part of much broader, much more complex, systems of cultural production.

- *Commodity circuits* – here, it is argued that commodity chains/systems are not neatly bounded, linear nor unidirectional; rather, they are constantly ongoing and shifting, and there is always potential for the system, commodity and associated meanings to be transformed at any point in the circuit. That is, cultural production processes are part and parcel of much broader, much more complex, and always on going circuits of cultural practices.

These concepts originated largely in analyses of world food systems (Jackson *et al.* 2004), but have subsequently been used to map production processes in every conceivable industrial sector, including systems of cultural production. As we shall detail in Chapter 10, research by geographers – and kindred research by NGOs and charities – has begun to reveal 'hidden' geographies of production behind common commodities, including popular cultural objects, texts and media.

Research on cultural production processes has revealed the agency and economic importance of the 'culture industries': those sectors of the economy that specialise in the creation, distribution and marketing of cultural texts, objects and media. The term 'culture industries' was popularised by the German sociologists Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer in a series of publications during the 1940s. Adorno and Horkheimer (1979[1944]) argue that the way in which cultural objects, texts and media were produced changed fundamentally during the twentieth century in Europe and North America. They suggest that cultural objects, texts and media were increasingly



Box 2.4

The cultural turn in economic geography

During the **cultural turn** (see Box 1.3), a number of economic geographers began to critically question two major approaches that underpinned much work in their subdiscipline. These critiques related largely to the limited attention paid to culture within these approaches.

- *Neoclassical approaches in economic geography* – i.e. drawing upon the long-standing traditions, methods, laws and theories developed by economists since the eighteenth century. This approach essentially understands economies as consisting of rational individual actors responding to economic stimuli such as supply, demand, prices, profit margins and market conditions. As Barnes (2005) argues, culture is typically overlooked in this approach, because: (i) theorising economies as reducible to individual actions and responses gives little space for discussion of collective actions and cultural factors; and (ii) the approach's traditional focus on complex mathematical modelling and forecasting, and its aversion to 'soft', 'unscientific' qualitative research methods, preclude rich and effective understandings of cultural processes and factors. We might note, for example, that a number of prominent economic geographers have been quite vehemently dismissive of work by cultural geographers.
- *Marxian approaches in economic geography* – i.e. critiques of neoclassical economics that draw upon Karl Marx's writings on political economy. Marxian approaches often understand economic factors and relations as *determining* social-cultural patterns and inequalities. Here, there is some acknowledgement that cultural forms and processes are worthy of investigation, but typically only as outcomes and indicators of underlying economic issues. Consequently, culture tends to be relatively absent and under-theorised within Marxian approaches: treated as somehow separate from, and of secondary importance to, the really important business of economics. For example, Barnes (2005) notes that culture went almost entirely unmentioned in many large tomes written by leading Marxian economic geographers.

These critiques were sometimes based on caricatures of these approaches, which did a disservice to rich,

mass-produced, on a vast, industrial scale, in this context, via processes that were increasingly rationalised, upscaled and governed by the imperative to maximise profits. It is fair to say that Adorno and Horkheimer

out . . . products" (1979[1944]: 163). They argue that cheap, shoddy, unchallenging, populist, 'lowest common denominator' cultural products had increasingly proliferated, and that new technologies of marketing and media 'propaganda' were making cultural consumers increasingly passive, obedient and uniformly uncritical in their 'false desires' for mass-produced cultural products. Just one quotation gives a flavour of the angry pessimism that pervades their work: pause for a moment to consider whether any parts of the following continue to ring true.

Culture now impresses the same stamp on everything . . . Films, radio and magazines make up a system which is uniform as a whole and in every part . . . As soon as the film begins, it is quite clear how it will end, and who will be rewarded, punished or forgotten. In light music once the trained ear has heard the first few notes of the hit song, it can guess what is coming and feel flattered when it does come. The average length of the short story has to be adhered to. Even gags, effects and jokes are calculated like the setting in which they are placed.

(Adorno and Horkheimer 1979[1944]: 124–125)

Adorno and Horkheimer thus identified:

- a series of historical and technological shifts through which cultural production had become industrialised (and see Negus 1997 on the historical context for these shifts, and for Adorno and Horkheimer's deeply pessimistic outlook in this context);
- a range of new, emerging and increasingly lucrative industries that specialised in the mass production of cultural texts, objects and media.

Later work by economic, industrial and urban geographers has focused on this latter nexus of industrial and economic activities. Whereas Adorno and Horkheimer tended to discuss the 'cultural industries' as a somewhat monolithic and thoroughly problematic entity, more recent work by geographers has explored the complexly interconnected constituents of the cultural industries, and their multiple geographical impacts for local, regional and national economies. Indeed, a key contribution of this recent geographical research has been to highlight the vast, complex range of cultural production processes that are subsumed under the umbrella term 'the cultural industries'.

There have been countless attempts to classify and subdivide these processes. Four methods of classification tend to be widely used in discussions of the cultural industries. First, many classifications subdivide the cultural industries according to the nature of their outputs: so, for example, they can be broken down into sectors such as the television industry, the movie industry, the music industry, the video game industry, the tourism and leisure industries, publishing, the arts, and so on. While this approach can provide a fairly neat and intuitive breakdown of different sectors of the cultural industries, it is also a little problematic, given the increasing prevalence of corporations, activities and cultural products that cut across multiple sectors (see previous discussion of commodity chains).

Second, a number of researchers have attempted to develop classifications of individual occupations: drawing, for example, on census data to count the number, characteristics and whereabouts of individuals working in professions that are classified as constituents of the cultural industries. Note that this kind of classification entails making a judgement about which professions are 'cultural', and includes only those who are in formal paid employment in roles with 'cultural' job titles (perhaps overlooking the role of unpaid practitioners, interns, or those with less obviously 'cultural' job titles working within the cultural industries). Often, there is also an attempt to classify occupations into 'core' cultural activities (typically those directly involved in the making of cultural objects) and 'supporting', 'associated' professions (typically those involved in the distribution, marketing or technical support of production practices).

Third, there are a range of classifications that attempt to identify different processes or moments ongoing within the cultural industries at any given moment. For example, Pratt (2004) recognises that the cultural industries consist of a diverse range of activities, relating to six sets of processes:

- *content origination* – the work of authors, designers, composers or others involved in, or commissioning or supporting, the generation of new ideas, products and intellectual property;
- *exchange* – the work involved in bringing cultural texts, objects and media to audiences and markets,

for example via physical and virtual retail, wholesalers and distributors, and in spaces such as theatres, museums, libraries, galleries;

- *reproduction* – the processes involved in mass production through activities and technologies such as printing, music, broadcasting, production of designed materials and products;
- *manufacturing inputs* – the production and supply of tools and materials used in cultural production (e.g. musical instruments, film equipment, paint, to give just three examples);
- *education and critique* – the work involved in training, fostering and disseminating critical ideas in relation to cultural products;
- *archiving* – including the work of librarians, curators and others engaged in preserving the ‘memory of cultural forms’.

Again, in classifications of this kind, there is often an attempt to identify ‘core’ and ‘associated’ cultural production activities (see the distinction between cultural goods and cultural services in Box 2.5). Predictably, processes and groupings within the cultural industries are frequently more complex than this kind of neat classification suggests: whenever any classification of this kind is proposed, disputes over which categories are most appropriate, or which occupations fit in which category, tend to follow.

A fourth, and related, way in which cultural industries are often classified involves understanding cultural production processes within the wider context of a ‘circuit of culture’ whereby

[c]ultural actors that participate in the cultural production system can be grouped into three categories . . . The first category consists of producers of cultural products and includes designers, artists, architects, and the like, who are involved in the production of the cultural product, which can be a physical good or something more intangible in nature . . . The second category of participants consists of cultural intermediaries – individuals and organizations that are concerned with the communication and distribution (i.e. meaning transfer) of the cultural product to consumers. The final category of cultural actors is the consumers themselves, who transform the cultural products into objects of meaningful consumption experiences. . . . The consumer takes the meanings that are transferred from the cultural product as produced and circulated and uses,

or transforms, those meanings in the pursuit of consumption and identity construction.

(Venkatesh and Meamber 2006: 13)

Two important characteristics of a ‘circuit of culture’ approach are: (i) the acknowledgement that cultural production processes are interrelated, and part of a continuously ongoing process; and (ii) the acknowledgement that **consumers** of cultural texts, objects and media have some measure of agency in producing meanings and values related to cultural products (see Chapter 3). As you read round the subject of cultural production, you are likely to see examples of all four of these approaches to classifying cultural industries. All have their merits and drawbacks; however, as we note in Section 3.5, it is always important to acknowledge that cultural production and consumption are complex, and complexly interconnected.

Economic, industrial and urban geographers have explored the importance of cultural industries at different geographical scales. The next three paragraphs present some data from research that has mapped the significance of cultural industries at global, regional and city scales in different contexts.

Since 2008 the United Nations *Creative Economy Report* (UN 2008, 2011) has attempted to map global trends in the economic significance of cultural products. Box 2.5 includes some export data from the 2011 report, providing an indicator of the economic value of cultural goods and services in developed, developing and transitional economies.

Three key geographical trends have been evident in each United Nations *Creative Economy Report*, and in related work by human geographers:

- The cultural industries constitute a significant proportion of most nations’ economic productivity, as evident, for example, in import/export and GDP data.
- In most countries, the economic significance of most parts of the cultural industries increased year on year in absolute and proportional terms, even in countries experiencing economic decline or crisis. In developed nations, stimulating growth in cultural industries has often been a key strategy in national policies for urban regeneration and economic growth; it has also been a key component



Box 2.5 Global exports of cultural products and services

Tables 2.1 and 2.2 show the net economic value of cultural products and services in different parts of the world. Note that the data subdivide cultural products into:

- *cultural goods* – relating to the import and export of cultural products including texts, media, artworks, music, design, film, photographs;
- *cultural services* – relating to the import and export of services and expertise that support cultural production, including finance and expertise in intellectual property, telecommunications, information services, business services, advertising, licensing, and technical and audio-visual support.

Take some time to explore some of the key patterns and trends in the data. Notice: (i) how exports of cultural goods and services have changed over time; (ii) any differences between the figures for developed, developing and transitional economies.

Table 2.1 Exports of cultural goods, 2002–08 (in millions of \$US)

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Developed economies	127,903	140,884	158,144	171,023	185,895	211,515	227,103
Developing economies	75,835	91,124	109,267	125,321	136,100	156,043	176,211
Transition economies	1,210	1,392	1,920	2,206	2,413	2,741	3,678

Source: from *Creative Economy Report* (UN 2008, 2011), United Nations, pp. 302–303.

Table 2.2 Exports of cultural services, 2002–08 (in millions of \$US)

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Developed economies	52,457	61,320	73,185	81,998	125,218	138,045	153,414
Developing economies	7,860	8,185	9,363	12,771	17,133	18,835	21,182
Transition economies	1,910	2,803	3,483	4,467	5,385	7,279	10,491

Source: from *Creative Economy Report* (UN 2008, 2011), United Nations, pp. 319–320.

of many national governments’ responses to global economic recessions. In developing nations, investment in cultural and creative industries has increasingly been adopted as a strategy to drive economic development (as evident in some of the rapid sectoral growth rates for developing transitional nations in Box 2.5).

- There are substantial global disparities in the ownership and control of cultural production processes. Cultural goods can be produced anywhere, but profits arising from cultural products overwhelmingly flow towards developed nations, where corporations providing finance, infrastructure and business services for cultural production are typically based. This is reflected in the major disparity in the value of cultural services exports in Box 2.5. As we noted in Section 2.3, the tendency for cul-

tural production processes to ultimately benefit, and be controlled by, a geographically and socially narrow and exclusionary elite was widely critiqued within cultural studies. Research by human geographers has evidenced how, in diverse global contexts, the economic value of cultural creativity is ultimately realised by corporations located in the global North.

Research on the importance of cultural industries to particular national economies has typically revealed the uneven geographical spread of cultural industries, and significant regional disparities in participation in cultural production. Box 2.6, for example, reproduces some data about employment in cultural industries in different regions of the UK: again, spend a few moments exploring some of the key patterns in the data.



Box 2.6
Clustering of creative industries in Great Britain

Table 2.3 shows the degree of clustering evident in different sectors of the cultural and creative industries in regions of Great Britain. The data are presented as location quotients: a calculation of the degree of clustering of each industry, in each region, compared with the national average. A value greater than 1 indicates that clustering in this sector is greater than the national average; a value less than 1 indicates that clustering in this sector is less than the national average. Take some time to explore the geographical patterns evident in the data. Notice where cultural and creative industries tend to be clustered.

Table 2.3 Location quotients of some cultural industries in regions of Great Britain

	North-East	North-West	Yorks/Humber	East Midlands	West Midlands	East	London	South-East	South-West	Wales	Scotland
Advertising	0.69	1.18	0.74	0.72	0.76	0.91	1.77	1.06	0.80	0.42	0.55
Architecture	1.39	1.07	0.86	0.93	0.97	1.04	0.81	1.06	0.96	0.75	1.42
Arts/antiques	1.09	1.05	1.09	0.98	1.03	0.97	0.82	0.95	1.15	1.10	1.08
Designer fashion	0.64	1.15	0.77	2.73	0.98	0.55	1.73	0.39	0.55	0.48	0.76
Video/film/photography	0.55	0.57	0.56	0.49	0.50	0.71	2.68	0.94	0.77	0.55	0.69
Music/Visual/performing arts	0.55	0.62	0.59	0.59	0.55	0.82	2.36	1.00	0.88	0.73	0.60
Publishing	0.51	0.62	0.65	0.70	0.66	1.06	1.82	1.13	1.07	0.64	0.75
Software/computer games/electronic publishing	0.71	0.97	0.64	0.73	0.81	1.09	1.31	1.41	0.87	0.52	0.75
Radio and TV	0.38	0.53	0.36	0.30	0.43	0.56	3.05	0.90	0.74	0.96	0.56

Source: from de Propris, L., Chapain, C., Cooke, P., MacNeill, S. and Malteos-Garcia, J. (2009) *The Geography of Creativity*, NESTA, London, p. 19., JCIS/ABI and ONS (2007).

In Box 2.6, as in most national surveys of cultural production, it is evident that the cultural industries are unevenly distributed, and disproportionately clustered in a small number of (typically metropolitan) locations. In the UK, for example, it is clear that practically every element of the cultural industries has a major cluster in London and the South-East of England. This disproportionate London-centric clustering of employment in cultural industries reflects the following factors.

- For historical reasons, many major media corporations, and organisations providing finance, infrastructure and business services for cultural production, have headquarters in the city.
- A series of national policy interventions have sought to incentivise location and expansion of cultural industries in this region; simultaneously, the region has been actively promoted as a hub for multiple forms of cultural production.
- Clustering is encouraged by a trend towards agglomeration within cultural industries, whereby increasingly diverse aspects of cultural production are bought out, and come under the control of,

globalised organisations with headquarters in the capital.

- Within many sectors of the cultural industries, this region has come to have a special status as ‘the place to be’ to get ahead; consequently there are dense localised networks of cultural producers, decision-makers, intermediaries and critics located in particular districts or cultural quarters.
- Clustering and co-location of cultural industries afford economic and practical benefits for organisations and individuals: for example, in the UK, particular groupings of cultural industries (e.g. advertising/design/fashion/electronic publishing, and music/performing arts/publishing/broadcasting) tend to co-locate, producing all manner of mutual benefits, efficiencies, collaborations and spin-offs.

It is also evident from Box 2.6 that, away from the South-East of England, there are a number of regional clusters of more specialised activity: for example, note the clusters of television, photography and film professionals in the South-West, advertising and media in the North-West, and computer games and technological support in the East of England. Geographical research has revealed how these clusters can reflect:

- specific locational and historical factors, such as the location of BBC studios in Bristol in the SW region, and the clustering of technology firms around Cambridge University (in the East region);
 - regional economic, regeneration and urban renewal policies that have actively sought to construct spaces for, and regional specialisms in, cultural production;
 - place promotion and urban renewal strategies that have sought to market a ‘buzz’ around the cultural industries in particular locations in order to attract investment and inward migration (O’Connor and Wynne 1992);
 - the activities and networks of a relatively small number of cultural producers in the region (see below).
- Geographical research focusing on individual cities has revealed how, even at very local levels, there is a significant degree of clustering and disparity in the location and importance of cultural industries.

Analysis of these geographies reveals how such clusters exist and function in practice via networks of relationships between individuals – encountering one another as professionals, practitioners and/or friends – within a small number of events and everyday spaces located in particular urban districts. It is through the existence and snowballing of such networks that clustering in the cultural industries proceeds in practice, and regional ‘hot spots’ of cultural production can come into being (Granger and Hamilton 2011). These kinds of interpersonal networks can, of course, also be rather exclusionary and inaccessible to those who do not have knowledge of, access to, or the inclination to participate in particular networks, spaces and events that are key to the cultural industries in a particular locale.

2.5
Producing and regulating cultural spaces

As we shall explore in Chapter 13, all places and spaces are *produced* through, for example: processes of planning, design and **architecture** (see also Chapter 4); regulations and rules (both formal and unspoken); infrastructural and material construction and maintenance; practices, routines and systems; social interactions and relationships; meanings, norms, representations and habits. In this section, we focus on the extensive work of urban geographers on the production and control of cultural spaces. In this context, cultural spaces can be defined (after Cloke *et al.* 2004: 139–141) as spaces in and through which:

- there is some purposeful attempt to plan for, control, direct or educate people towards certain (shared) ways of life (which may vary from global consumer cultures to nationalistic rituals and traditions);
- there is some attempt to cultivate human minds – this can occur via different media whose meaning is meant to guide certain ways of life (these meanings can be represented in diverse ways, including maps, landscape design, spectacular public gatherings, paintings, advertisements and more);
- seemingly non-productive activities, outside the realm of work, may be co-opted by experts (in general terms, ‘non-productive’ means the kinds of activity

that centre around 'leisure', 'fun', 'relaxation' and learning outside formal, directed educational curricula);

- there is some attempt to plan or direct people's identities. By this, we mean not only the names or types that allow us to classify different groups. In addition, identities may refer to the broader realm of bodily performances and emotions that tend to make cultural spaces somehow 'special' or 'meaningful' to the ways in which people understand themselves (see also Chapters 7, 8, 11 and 12 on **performances, identities, emotions and bodies**).

However, as you read this chapter it is important to recognise that cultural spaces are always *contested* – both between experts and 'non-expert' publics, and between the diverse groups that seek to lay claim to spaces both within and beyond the direct control of experts. We look specifically at the issues of contestation, **subcultures** and **resistance** in Chapters 3 and 8.

To explore the planning and regulation of cultural spaces, we shall focus on two distinct forms of spatial production from particular historical moments: early twentieth-century urban planning in the UK, and the making of 'public' spaces in twenty-first-century cities. We then explore the ways in which cultural identities are also regulated and controlled in and through such spatial processes.

When we talk of 'planning' cultural spaces, it is hard to ignore professional disciplines such as urban planning and urban design. The work of urban planners has provoked a diverse field of study for geographers and planning historians alike (Pinder 2005a). We begin with a number of scholars – whom we call 'urban experts' as shorthand – who were becoming increasingly concerned with the condition of Britain's cities after the aggressive industrialisation of the Victorian era. Urban experts fought for greater and more orderly planning of urban spaces on two fronts:

- first, in order to overcome the squalor, poverty, dirt and disorder of the slum-like communities inhabited by poor factory labourers;
- second, in order to counter the increasingly unregulated growth of Britain's suburbs along first rail and then later road arteries.

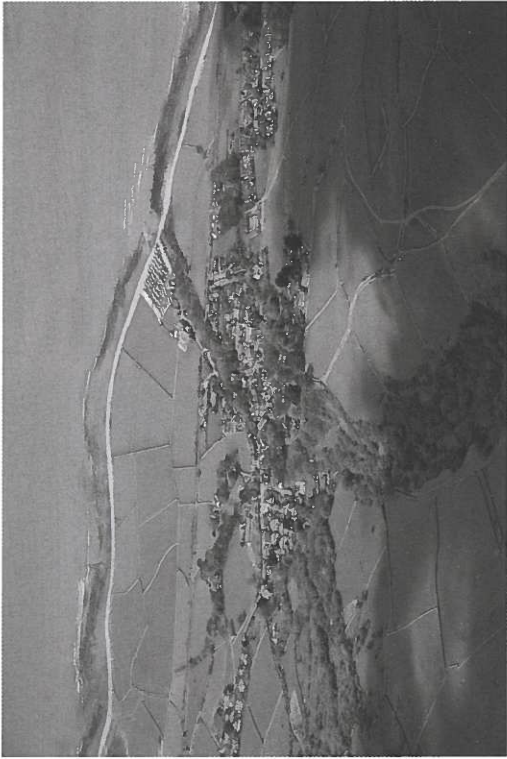
Consider the first, highly judgemental statement above about the 'slum-like' conditions prevailing in

Victorian and post-Victorian cities. It is precisely such assumptions about what had to be planned *out* of such cities that cultural geographers have sought to unpick. In an excellent study, Stallybrass and White (1986: 125) show how the impoverished spaces of the Victorian city were cast by contemporary parliamentarians and social reformers as "the locus of fear, disgust and fascination". Rather than produce objective, rational, 'scientific' knowledge about those places, they created loaded representations of urban landscapes, replete with sewers and street urchins. Once these landscape images had been produced, elite experts could justify their intervention on a number of fronts: from the planning of housing built by philanthropists (Dennis 1989) to the introduction of sanitary measures designed to clean up city sewers, rivers and open spaces (Allen 2008). Hence cultural geographers have shown how moral and subjective images of **landscape** (Chapter 5) are central to the planned interventions made by experts in 'problematic' urban places.

This work has been furthered by a number of historical and cultural geographers who have explored the ways in which experts made moral judgements about the fabric and social lives of cities in the past. In other words, they have explored what we often term the 'moral geographies' of life in those cities (Smith 2000). Those moral geographies often led to overt forms of social and spatial *control* as well as planning.

Let us take one example. Howell (2009) has explored the moral geographies surrounding the policing and regulation of prostitution in nineteenth-century cities. He argues that the depth and extent of British regulation of commercial sex practices were much greater than is traditionally imagined. Significantly, Howell also explores congruencies between Victorian Britain and contemporary British laws regarding prostitution (Howell *et al.* 2008), and the transferral of racialised and sexualised ideas about prostitution to Britain's colonies in Gibraltar and Hong Kong (Howell 2004a, 2004b). However, he emphasises that modes of control and regulation were not simply 'exported' from Britain to its colonies. Rather, precise forms of control were formulated at each location, and often informed the regulation of sex work 'at home'.

Look back at the second front on which British urban experts fought their early 'battles': the increasingly



Photograph 2.2 The 'octopus' of urban development in Llywngwril, Wales.

Source: Gwynedd Archaeological Trust.

'unregulated' growth of Britain's suburbs. The most famous attack on this unfettered development came in the form of Clough Williams-Ellis's (1928) *England and the Octopus*. Williams-Ellis likened the ribbon developments extending alongside major traffic arteries to the flailing, uncontrolled tentacles of an octopus (Photograph 2.2). At the time, the octopus was an attractive and popular image among urban experts: it represented the rapid colonisation of previously rural landscapes by a monstrous beast that was blurring the boundaries between city and country. For Williams-Ellis and others, these hybrid developments – neither city nor country – were vulgar, tasteless and, above all else, *disordered*.

Although we have considered them separately, it is important to note that early urban experts tended in practice to combine their criticisms of nineteenth-century urban squalor and twentieth-century disorder. As Pinder (2005a: 31–32) puts it: "numerous critics . . . opposed the disorder associated with urban expansion and industrialisation." Hence, as Matless (1998) argues, it is the distinction between spatial order and disorder – in the contexts of expansion and industrialisation – that is key to understanding the geographies of early

urban planning. Cultural geographers have therefore sought to understand how planners developed languages, tools and designs that would create more

orderly landscapes and, crucially, preserve the distinction between 'urban' and 'rural' places. Matless (1993) shows how early planners in the UK and Belgium drew on the image of the octopus to argue for a vigorous, authoritative antidote. They called "on planning to be itself energetic and visionary, not prodigiously piecemeal or clogingly bureaucratic" (Matless 1993: 172). This was nothing less than a call to arms – to create a unified, systematic and integrated approach to planning at a scale – a national scale – that had never been seen before. Matless (1993) also shows how planners drew upon new techniques for visualising the landscape, such as aerial photography, to express both the expert *mapping* of the problem (the octopus) and the objective, detached manner in which solutions could be planned. Hence the importance of the top-down 'masterplan' to contemporary planning!

Debates about urban planning were not confined to Britain, however. As Pinder (2005a) shows, a turn to modernism in both philosophy and design affected urban planning in many contexts: from the Italian Futurists, who designed cities around light and speed, to the French architect Le Corbusier, who was similarly critical of the squalor and disorder of industrial cities. In many contexts, new cities were meant to both represent and literally embody (in concrete form) the aspirations of a new age based around factory production,

machines, and a rational approach to the organisation of society. Where better to start than with orderly, well-laid-out cities connected by efficient public transport and providing healthy high-rise living for the masses – all planned by a new generation of planners?

In its early days, urban planning held at its core a strong sense of hope (for a modern future) and of social-moral duty – utopian ideals to do no less than reconstruct the city in a more modern image. The utopian ideals of the early planners were certainly contested and problematic – not least if we consider the reputation of high-rise social housing in many countries today (Jacobs 2006). But if we move forward to the more recent past, we see that certain aspects of contemporary urban planning bring with them a set of different debates. We focus here on the diverse buildings, streets and urban forms that constitute public spaces. Geographers and other urban scholars have had a long-standing interest in what we call ‘public spaces’ (Madanipour 2003; Iveson 2007). Iveson (2007: 3) defines public spaces as:

Spaces where people can (re)present themselves before an audience of strangers The term ‘public space’ is often used to denote a particular kind of place in the city, such that one could colour public spaces on a map – this is a *topographical approach*. By contrast, however, the term public space is [also] sometimes used to refer to any space which is put to use at a given time for collective action and debate – this is a *procedural approach*.

Public space, then, refers to those streets, parks and other open spaces that – in both commonsense and ideal terms – any member of the public may use. Public open spaces have been a key part of the city throughout history – from the Ancient Greek public square or *agora*, to the medieval English market square, and from the boulevards of nineteenth-century Paris to the vast open spaces and efficient thoroughfares of modernist planning (Madanipour 2003). Arguably, many of these types of public space entailed a different form of *planning*, because each expressed the ways in which dominant members of society sought to define and control social interactions between members of the public.

In the last decade or so, geographers have become increasingly concerned with public spaces. Their interest has been spawned by two related processes that are taking place in many different global contexts. On

the one hand, they have suggested that public spaces increasingly reflect the imperatives of consumer capitalism, neoliberalism and postmodern notions of ‘heritage’ (Zukin 1995). On the other hand – and as a result – geographers have criticised how contemporary urban spaces are becoming increasingly mono-functional, and hence subject to greater forms of control and exclusion than ever before (Sorkin 1992).

So how *do* planners reflect the imperatives of consumer capitalism, neoliberalism and ‘heritage’ in public spaces? A central argument sits at the confluence of economic and cultural geography (see also Boxes 2.4 and 2.7). It is argued that previously inclusive, multi-functional public spaces in cities are being increasingly financed and planned – at least in part – by private businesses (Harvey 2000). To generalise, this means that many public spaces are now no longer designed, owned or controlled by democratically elected governments who should cater for all members of the public. Rather, public spaces are becoming privatised – their use by ordinary members of the public feeds into the profit-making activities of the corporations that own them. This means that public spaces are increasingly being designed with a narrow, ‘ideal’ public in mind – the middle-class, often white, adult who will literally buy in to the activities offered and commoditised in these new public spaces. Let us look at some examples.

To give one example of the above trends, many global cities have witnessed the erection of high-profile buildings, often built by ‘superstar’ architects such as Richard Rogers, Norman Foster or Daniel Libeskind. Indeed, as we wrote this chapter, the tallest building in the world – the 800-metre-tall Burj Khalifa – had just been opened in Dubai, accompanied by massive press attention (Photograph 2.3). Its opening came at a time when Dubai was beleaguered by problems associated with the world financial crisis that began in 2008, and was figured in many press reports as a new sign of hope for Dubai.

Buildings like the Burj Khalifa have been subject to several debates in cultural geography. For some commentators, they represent the pinnacle of competition between cities. As ‘entrepreneurial cities’ (Hall and Hubbard 1998) seek to press home their status as loci for investment, tourist visits or cultural importance, they increasingly turn to high-profile building

covered, climate-controlled shopping centre containing major, globalised retail chains. Such environments are deemed to be safer and more conducive to the main (cultural) business of a town centre – shopping and, increasingly, associated ‘café cultures’ (see discussion of **consumption spaces** in Chapter 3).

Certainly, in the era of the ‘entrepreneurial city’, these shopping malls are supported and often planned by public authorities and city planners, as a key way to revitalise urban centres. Indeed, Zukin (2003) shows how in the United States a breed of waterfront shopping centres were, in the 1990s, supported by federal tax laws that attracted investors and paved the way for the commercial redevelopment of ‘tired’ downtown areas in the guise of ‘historic preservation’. Built on disused piers or port areas, projects such as Boston’s Faneuil Hall and New York’s South Street Seaport sought to retain elements of the architectural past – such as cobbled pavements, old boats and original dockside buildings. Yet these are places based on “visual consumption”, which “present shopping as a means of enjoying urban culture” (Zukin 2003: 183). The ‘past’ is arguably stripped of all but simplistic, visual cues that can be reinserted into a landscape fit for consumption by the (middle-class) public (see Box 2.7).

For cultural geographers, the most worrying feature of all of the above examples is the *façade* of publicness that operates in the service of private profit – in other words, the increased blurring between public and private in spaces designated for ‘public’ use. Zukin (2003: 183) suggests that “[s]hopping centres have replaced political meetings and civic gatherings as arenas of public life”. Similar arguments have been made for a range of other urban forms planned by experts. For instance, Davis’s (1990) rather apocalyptic depiction of shopping malls, hotels and gated communities in Los Angeles sees them as preserves of the rich, built and controlled by private development corporations. While presenting often ideal images of ‘community’ and urban life (Till 1993), they exclude both any notion of ‘real’ public space *and* anyone who does not conform to the desired ‘norm’ for clientele in those places. Hence processes of exclusion – which rely on surveillance via closed-circuit television and increasingly militarised forms of control – are involved in the production of cosy, safe spaces where middle-class

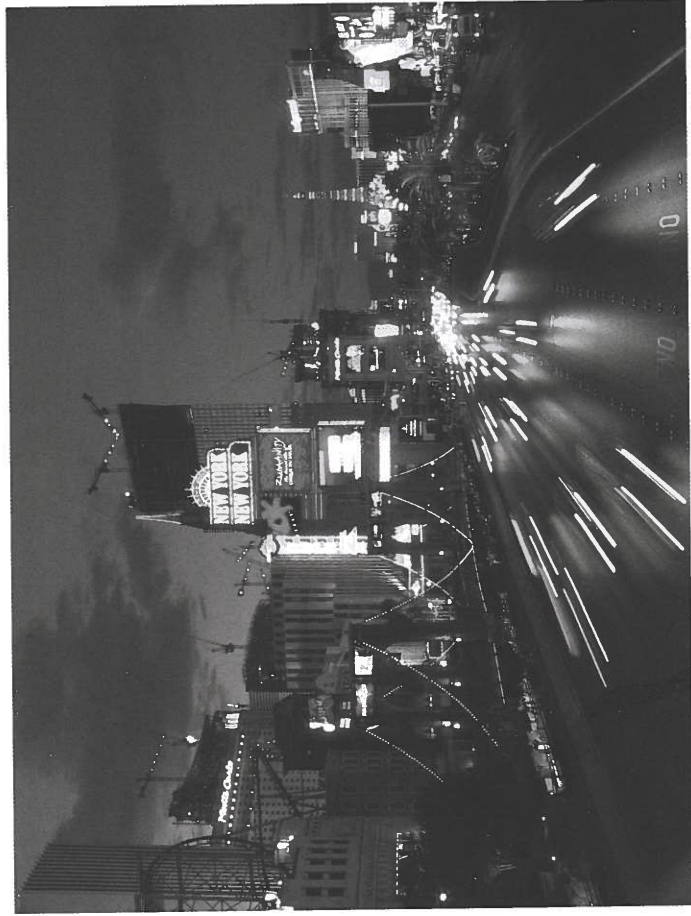


Photograph 2.3 Burj Khalifa building, Dubai.

Source: Shutterstock.com/Kjersti Joergensen.

projects that act almost as advertisements for them. Other commentators show how in some cities – most notably Las Vegas – buildings obtain a high profile because they overtly symbolise what Hannigan (1998) calls the ‘fantasy city’ (Photograph 2.4). In Las Vegas and elsewhere, urban environments are being planned and sold as playgrounds for leisure, dining, shopping and gambling, where consumption buys temporary escapism and a fantasy lifestyle.

At a perhaps more mundane (and certainly less spectacular) scale, notions of escapism, fantasy and play are built into the shopping malls that have appeared both in city centres and in suburban locations around the world (Goss 1993; see Photograph 2.5). In Britain, the traditional ‘high street’ – a public thoroughfare in the centre of a town containing the principal shops and public buildings – has in many towns been replaced or accompanied by a



Photograph 2.4 The Strip, Las Vegas, Nevada.

Source: Peter Kraftl.



Photograph 2.5 Shopping mall inside the Sands Marina Bay hotel complex, Singapore.

Source: Peter Kraftl.



Box 2.7

Revitalisation of public space in Perth, Australia

Using the example of Perth, Australia, Iveson (2007) shows how a diverse coalition of experts – planners, academics and architects – came together in the early 1990s to revitalise Perth's Central Area. They had three aims: to promote Perth as a 'capital city' for the State of Western Australia; to increase desire for inner city living; and to improve law and order in the city centre. Each of these linked agendas called for the reinvention of public space in the city – ostensibly making the central core more diverse, more attractive to live in and visit, safer, accessible and truer to the city's herit-

age. In physical terms, a variety of 'public space enhancement' projects took place. These included flagship refurbishment of major public squares, widening of footpaths, new seating and shading in shopping malls, conversion of older buildings into housing, and investment in transport infrastructures. Yet the imperatives of these projects echo many of the processes listed above – from a focus on middle- and high-income housing to marketing campaigns that were "primarily designed to attract shoppers and potential residents from the suburbs" (Iveson 2007: 162).

the production of identity by 'experts' – in many cases ostensibly national and even international identities – before making a couple of concluding points. We focus first on public 'events', and then on education and schooling.

As already discussed, the planning of public spaces involves diverse cultural processes. But the story does not end there. Planned public events, such as festivals and parades, are also crucial cultural elements in the making of public space. Simply put, they provide some of the vitality that makes those spaces 'public' (Watson 2006). In this way, the performative element of planning culture comes to the fore (see also Chapters 7 and 12 on **performance and bodies**). Experts do not simply plan public spaces; they also plan – to a certain extent – what goes on in them too. You can probably think of numerous examples – from street entertainers outside shopping malls to bus parades by successful national sports teams. Importantly, those kinds of public event often serve to define, produce and reinforce cultural identities. Although public spectacles are temporary – and often viewed as apolitical and inclusive – cultural geographers have shown how they "convey and perform . . . statements of identity, power and authority" (Hagen 2008: 350). Cultural geographers have focused on a variety of public events, linking these in particular with particular national identities. Hagen (2008) shows how public celebrations and parades in German cities such as Munich were hugely symbolic and powerful expressions of national identity in Nazi Germany

consumers are cocooned. For further discussion of exclusion, see Chapters 7 and 8 on **performances and identities**. Similar arguments have been made regarding the 'end' of public space in fantasy spaces such as theme parks and debates over the intended audiences for public art, statues and memorials.

In sum, then, the planning and control of cultural spaces have *always* entailed a measure of controversy. While experts may be in charge of these processes (at least officially), their work is rarely objective or value-free, often entailing moral judgement. Indeed, if we look back at the history of urban planning from the nineteenth century to the present day, we see a continuing trend whereby processes of planning and control quickly become processes of surveillance, marginalisation and exclusion. Very often, cultural spaces are planned and controlled in the service of both dominant social norms and monetary profit. Hence they fulfil the relatively narrow demands of hegemonic (male, white, middle-class) social groups. In the remainder of the chapter – and with this in mind – we begin to explore how cultural experts have attempted to appeal to wider segments of society by planning and controlling cultural **identities** (see also Chapters 3 and 8).

Cultural geographers have had a long-standing interest in identity. A particular, but key aspect of this study – and perhaps the most overtly geographical – has been an interest in national identity. In the following paragraphs, we shall look at two examples of

before the Second World War. Whereas the Nazi party tried to communicate nationalist conceptions of art, culture and history through exhibitions and built form (for instance in Nuremberg), Hagen (2008: 349) argues that “the parades offered a more participatory, populist format that projected the regime’s message on to Munich’s public spaces” (see also Hagen and Ostergren 2006). The parades drew on various symbolic resources – from their sheer scale, encompassing tens of thousands of parading participants, to the route through Munich itself, which “intended to depict Nazism as the climatic finale and culmination of German history” (Hagen 2008: 361).

Elsewhere, a number of cultural geographers have assessed the narratives of national and imperial identity involved in exhibitions and expositions aimed at an international audience (Pred 1991; Strohmayr 1996). Domosh (2002) examines the Chicago World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893. She suggests that the Expo displayed two types of exhibit: first, depictions of Native Americans that emphasised the superior civilisation of European-Americans and their domination over both ‘nature’ and the Native Americans who were deemed part of nature; second, commercial displays of American products sold overseas, which were meant to be a showcase for American progress and global economic dominance – a showcase available to the masses. While the Expo was actually designed to market and sell American agricultural technologies, the imagery used there showed farm equipment as the highpoint of American civilisation, even depicting (strong, white) men “as Roman warriors, using harvesting machines to conquer the world” (Domosh 2002: 182). Although the economic and political bases could not be more different in both these examples, we see how public spectacles are used not only to promote a particular kind of national identity but, more forcefully, to symbolise the ‘pinnacle’ of a civilisation.

The previous examples all have in common a spectacular occupation of public, urban space. They often took place in spectacular settings as a way to reinforce their importance. But cultural geographers have also looked at a range of festivals that – although taking place in less spectacular settings – are no less important to the production of local, regional or national

identity. For instance, Mathewson (2000) explores some of the festivals and celebrations that are associated with modern farming practices. These festivals include harvest festivals, local food celebrations, and events that mark, for instance, the maturation of a new season’s wine. In common with some of the trends to consumerism noted earlier in this chapter, though, Mathewson (2000: 466) argues that “increasingly, these events are staged promotions of local, regional or ethnic identity” – and not directed solely to a celebration of food or community (Photograph 2.6).

Other work on local festivals has drawn out further fields of contestation along different axes of identity. Waterman (1998) explores the Kfar Blum festival in Israel, an annual chamber music festival held at a kibbutz and organised by three public authorities. The festival was initially attended by elite groups interested largely in the music itself. That elite group saw clear links between the festival and their sense of Israeli national identity. But, following demands to increase participation to a wider range of people, the festival has changed, and become more commercialised. This change is a controversial one in terms of the relationship between the festival and Israeli national identity. On the one hand, it questions the role of public authorities in supporting music festivals and using them to educate the populace about ‘appropriate’ forms of national identity. On the other hand, these changes are indicative of wider struggles in Israel about who has cultural ‘power’ and what is the perceived value of ‘authentic’ (elite) versus commodified versions of culture.

Elsewhere, Greene (2005) shows how, between 1840 and 1940, civic leaders in Milwaukee, USA, held ‘multiethnic’ festivals. Like other Midwest cities, Milwaukee was – according to the statements of civic leaders – appreciative of its diverse immigrant population and differences in dress, music and dance. Yet Greene argues that they did so in a paradoxical way that allowed immigrants to celebrate and express their ethnic cultures while ‘teaching’ them English language and American democratic principles in school social centres.

The final two examples cited above highlight the importance of *education* to the planning of cultural spaces. In both cases – indeed, perhaps, in all of the



Photograph 2.6 Union Square farmers’ market, New York City.

Source: Peter Kraftl.

events mentioned above – cultural festivals do not only symbolise national or regional identities but also have some kind of educative function. Historical work in cultural geography has made this point most fully. Much of this work makes a direct connection between planned educational spaces and curricula, and forms of national identity. Indeed, one of the key ways in which national cultures *can* be planned is through education – and especially the schooling of young people.

Gagen (2004) argues that these kinds of educational process were explicit in the design and use of playgrounds in early twentieth-century New York. There, new advances in educational theory suggested that physical education (and especially of immigrant populations) would allow children to directly assimilate the more ‘desirable’ character traits – and especially a sense of national identity and belonging to the American nation. Indeed, echoing examples above, a key part of their education was a series of exhibitions – field days and parades that encouraged children to learn nationalistic rituals. Ploszajka (1994) makes a similar point about embodiment. She shows how in English schools between 1870 and 1944 children were encouraged to learn about the world by making mod-

els of volcanoes, mountains and other geographical phenomena. But these models were not simply meant to improve children’s learning; rather, they encouraged English children to think about “their individual and collective place as local, national, Imperial or global subjects in the world” (Ploszajka 1994: 389). In particular, the model-making asked children to be more sympathetic to geographical and ethnic differences while simultaneously using this awareness to gain a better appreciation of the value of their own locality and sense of local belonging.

A number of geographers have also made connections between education, national identity and landscape (see also Chapter 5 on **landscape**). Gruffudd (1996) shows, for instance, how the Welsh educational system reflected debates about the ‘rebirth’ of the Welsh nation between the First and Second World Wars. The system educated children about a new kind of ‘patriotic pleasure’ – it called upon them to celebrate their Welsh heritage. But it also fostered a sense of national revival – of a nation bouncing back. Gruffudd (1996) shows that a key part of this education involved an appreciation of the natural beauty of Welsh landscapes. Activities included processions around the local area, speeches on ‘scenery and why

all good citizens should protect it', and the recital of patriotic poems about the Welsh landscape.

This section has shown that the planning of cultural spaces does not simply involve the design of physical spaces. Rather, such processes may mobilise different kinds of cultural practice and place in order to produce specific versions of national identity. Those spaces may range from the classroom and the playground to the spectacular sites of public parades and international exhibitions. But they all have two things in common. First, events and performances are used

to enliven cultural spaces and lend them a sense of liveliness, fun, and public togetherness that can rarely be fostered by design or town planning alone. And second, there have been – and continue to be – a range of creative techniques for communicating, educating and in some cases forcing senses of national identity onto citizens. Crucially, these techniques rely on diverse *cultural* practices and spaces – art, dance, sport, poetry and more. These are cultural practices and spaces that lie at the very heart of the study of cultural geography.

Summary

- Cultural production has been a foundational concern for many cultural geographers, one way or another. Much key work in cultural geography has tracked the ways in which cultural texts, media, objects and spaces are made. Conversely, many cultural geographers have begun from a conviction that *too much* geographical work has focused on cultural production (see Chapter 3).
- Some key concepts from cultural studies have been useful to geographers studying cultural production. Notions of discourse, hegemony and distinction recur in the work of many cultural geographers.
- Cultural geographers are by no means the only geographers interested in questions of cultural production. For example, there is a great deal of work by economic, urban and industrial geographers about commodity chains and the cultural industries. Elsewhere, urban geographers and planners have made important contributions to our understanding of the creation, regulation and maintenance of different kinds of cultural spaces and identities in diverse contexts.
- Although many researchers have focused on cultural production, it is important to understand that production is not separate from other processes: see Section 3.5 for a discussion of this point.

Some key readings

Crane, D. (1992) *The Production of Culture: Media and the urban arts*, Sage, London.

A useful resource for anyone interested in how cultural production processes, creative industries and urban spaces are interrelated.

du Gay, P. (ed.) (1997) *Production of Culture/Cultures of Production*, Sage, London.

Many students find this a really accessible and helpful introduction to questions of cultural production. The book is particularly useful in the way it grounds concepts of discourse, hegemony, distinction and circuits of production in real-life case studies.

Eldridge, J. (ed.) (1993) *Getting the Message: News, truth and power*, Routledge, London.

A fascinating collection of essays considering the processes through which news media are produced. It provides numerous examples illustrating how hegemonic discourses are produced in practice, and circulated in everyday news media.

Gertler, M. (2003) A cultural economic geography of production. In Anderson, K., Domosh, M., Pile, S. and Thrift, N. (eds) *Handbook of Cultural Geography*, Sage, London, 131–146.

A thoughtful consideration of the cultural turn in economic geography, which outlines how questions of cultural production should be important for human geographers.

Granger, R. and Hamilton, C. (2011) *Breaking New Ground: Spatial mapping of the creative economy*, Institute for Creative Enterprise, Coventry.

An interesting study of local and regional clustering in the cultural and creative industries, and the causes and consequences of this clustering. Think about how the patterns observed in this case study might apply to your home town.

Massey, D. (1984) *Spatial Divisions of Labour: Social structures and the geography of production*, Macmillan, London.

A classic text, which argues that geographers should consider connections between economic factors, urban spaces and cultural processes – for example, as evident in the location of production processes and cultural industries.

UN (2008, 2011) *Creative Economy Report*, United Nations, New York.

A fascinating overview of recent data about cultural and creative economies, and geographies of cultural goods and services. Check the most recent edition for global background information to the issues discussed in this chapter.

The key readings suggested at the end of Chapter 10, on the **production of material things**, are also relevant to this chapter. In particular, we strongly recommend the work of the geographer Ian Cook to anyone interested in exploring the complex practices through which commodities and cultural products are produced in practice.