

Spaces and Places

Henri Lefebvre, “Spaces are *produced*”

To compare different maps of a region or country...is to be struck by the remarkable diversity among them. Some, such as maps that show ‘beauty spots’ and historical sites and monuments to the accomplishment of an appropriate rhetoric, aim to mystify in fairly obvious ways. This kind of map designates places where a ravenous consumption picks over the last remains of nature and of the past in search of whatever nourishment may be obtained from the signs of anything historical or original. If the maps and guides are to be believed, a veritable feast of authenticity awaits the tourist. The conventional signs used in these documents constitute a code even more deceptive than the things themselves, for they are at one more remove from reality. Next, consider an ordinary map of roads and other communications... What such a map reveals, its meaning - not, perhaps, to the most ingenious inspection, but certainly to an intelligent perusal with even minimal preparation - is at once clear and hard to decipher ... These spaces are produced. The ‘raw material’ from which they are produced is nature. They are products of an activity which involves the economic and technical realms but which extends well beyond them, for these are also political products, and strategic spaces.

Peter Vujakovic, “All maps are propaganda”

All maps can be regarded as “propagandist” in the widest sense of the world ... [and] national atlases can be seen as important ideological devices, telling the story of a nation and locating the national identity in both time and space.

Judy Giles and Tim Middleton, the importance of cultural geography

In this chapter we tackle one of the central problems for cultural studies: how to describe and analyse what is often fleeting, ephemeral

and prosaic but none the less fundamental to the ways in which human subjects make sense of themselves and the world they inhabit. The importance of cultural geography to cultural studies is that it forcibly reminds us that a culture cannot be reduced to a set of discourses, but has to take account of the physical places in which those discourses operate.