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Culture and Commerce: The Value of Entrepreneurship in Creative Industries. By Mukti Khaire.
Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2017. Pp xvi+254

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The processes underpinning the production and circulation of culture have long been a source of fascination for sociologists. The somewhat mysterious ways in which art is made, valued and put to use in social relations encourage and resist the kind of empirical and theoretical questions about modernity that characterize the discipline. North American sociology has made its own contribution to exploring these questions, through scholars such as Paul DiMaggio, Lewis Coser, Vera Zolberg, Howard Becker and Richard Peterson whose work emphasizes the shifting social, economic and organizational contexts of cultural production, often de-mystifying the role of individual artistic creators.

Mukti Khaire's book is a contribution to this on-going scholarly conversation and it draws selectively on this tradition. Khaire is a management scholar, and the book is produced under the Business Books imprint of Stanford University Press. As we might expect, then, the language is mostly focused on *firms* operating in *markets* for cultural goods or *products*, and *entrepreneurs* servicing the needs or desires of *consumers* in doing so. Such phraseology might itself irritate some readers anxious, as intellectuals are prone to be, that these economic forces pollute some imagined, pure process of artistic creation. The book recognizes instead that the commercial cat is long out of the cultural bag and that the symbolic needs of the populations of the advanced societies of the global North are primarily met, for better or worse, through the actions of producers and creators who are, if not motivated by, then at least dependent on the pursuit of profit.

The book is organized into four parts. An introductory framing of the 'business of culture' is followed by two parts which deal with different actors within this business, first 'intermediaries' and then 'producers'. The book concludes with what is an ambitious but an inevitably constrained attempt to crystallize the challenges wrought for the contemporary commercial cultural industries by both digitalization and globalization. The strength of the book is in its careful de-lineation of different categories of intermediaries and producers. This allows an impressive array of illustrative examples from across the diversity of the creative industries (including from fashion, film, popular music, publishing and the restaurant industry). Particular productive attention is paid to the concept of the 'pioneer entrepreneur' who, whether as expert intermediary or producer is able to 'create' a market for a new variety of cultural product. Cited examples include the Sundance film festival and independent cinema, the Penguin paperback revolution and the market for literary fiction, *The Source* magazine and hip-hop and, drawing on Khaire's previous research, the role of expert academic commentary aligned with global technologies of display and circulation in creating a global market for Indian contemporary art. This is a valuable concept that might well point the way toward future research directions.

The range of examples, and the diversity of industries, also points to one of the book's weaknesses. Without more sustained empirical analysis dedicated to any of them, the claims made can feel

speculative and contentious. *The Source*'s emergence over a decade after the Sugar Hill Gang – themselves an exemplar of an already established scene in the early 1970s, which built on the African American musicians and entrepreneurs associated with older soul and funk traditions – might, for example, suggest a process of *exploitation* rather than *creation* of a market. Insight from a contemporary inheritor of the 'production of culture' perspective, Jennifer Lena (*Banding Together: How Communities Create Genres in Popular Music*. [Princeton University Press, 2012]) might infer that genres which appear to be new often emerge from contingent assemblages of producers, consumers, technologies and other social forces. The danger of singling out distinct actors in this process, without detailed examination of them, is of replacing the myth of the individual artist with a myth of the entrepreneur. Similarly, assertions about intermediaries and their functions to provide disinterested, objective information, instruction and judgements of quality seem based on an abstracted ideal-type rather than an actually existing one. The emphasis on distinctions across genres, based on assumptions about their complexity or accessibility to a popular audience (between, say opera and pop music) imagines the intermediary role as convincing people to like 'better' culture as reflected in what are still assumed to be settled cultural hierarchies. The existence of, either, complex forms of avant-garde commercial pop music or unchallenging, safe, middle of the road forms of operatic production aren't recognized here. The kind of research that has emerged exploring Pierre Bourdieu's own concept of the 'cultural intermediary', which is noticeably absent in this part of the account, might instead emphasize that such figures are decidedly invested in both legitimizing and delegitimizing cultural products as part of a struggle to establish and shore up their own position in the field of cultural production.

The film critic Roger Ebert narrates a story about how his critical review of Tony Scott's *The Last Boy Scout*, which he saw as pandering so effectively to the predilections of its assumed audience that it was bound to be a success, was translated as 'A surefire hit!' on the film's promotional posters. There is much to commend in this readable book, which is likely to be of use to students in applied social scientific, business-oriented forms of inquiry in outlining the persistent tensions between culture and commerce in artistic production. It also provides a useful reminder that the sociology of culture has some well-developed tools for, and an important role in, elaborating and deepening our understanding of these tensions.