Sandro Carnicelli, David McGillivray, & Gale McPherson (2017). *Digital Leisure Cultures: Critical perspectives*, Routledge Tylor Francis Group. $61.99/£34.85 (paperback). ISBN 9781138494169.

Gervais Deschênes
Université d'Ottawa
gdesche2@uottawa.ca

The fruit of discussions following on the Leisure Studies Conference at the University of the West of Scotland in 2014, this 17-chapter textbook was published in 2017, before the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors provide sociological and classical points of views on critical digital leisure culture issues. They "show the complex struggles for power over digital leisure cultures, the struggles for and against commercialisation and state control. They also show a strong awareness of the interdisciplinarity nature of studying digital leisure cultures" (Spracklen, 2017, p. xii). This debate is an unending and openly verbal exchange and negotiation on notions of the survival of humanity, as it is today. It proposes some knowledge, in a wide range of academic disciplines such as cultural studies, geography, history, literature, philosophy, science and technology, sociology, and why not, linguistic sciences, ethnology, anthropology, museology, geology, biogenetics, health and cognitive sciences, sexology, tourism, and theology, to name a few. Presenting its contributors' reflections, this collective textbook explores three main topics: reconceptualising leisure, digital tribulations, and creative resistance (Carnicelli, McGilliway & McPherson, 2017).

The textbook is structured in 17 chapters grouped in the following sections and topic areas: Figures, tables, contributors' notes, a foreword by Karl Spracklen and index; Chapters 1 and 17 are the introduction and conclusion; Chaps. 2, 9 and 11 deal with non-postmodern, postmodern and late modern conceptions; Chaps 3, 4 and 16 present the portrayal of sexuality; Chaps 5, 6 and 7 discuss with sports in leisure and recreation; Chaps 8, 13, 14 and 15 showcase life course mediatisation in digital leisure through storytelling and literature; Chaps 10 and 12 shed light on

abusive practices in digital leisure. Some figures, such as 3D self-replicas, typology of virtual maltreatment in sports, network news pictures, design, movie poster, photos and tables round out the work.

Redhead (2017) posits non-postmodernity, which came to a head before COVID-19 with Baudrillard inherently proclaiming, without so much as saying, the shift to "the ludic paradigm" (Livengood, 2009; Deschênes, 2016; 2022), declaring that it is not "possible to find a politics of virtuality, a code of ethics of virtuality, because virtuality virtualises politics as well; there will be no politics of virtuality because politics has become virtual" (Smith & Clarke, as cited in Redhead, 2017, p. 17). People in the post-secular era should learn to comply every now and then and not behave *as if God does not exist* (Livengood, 2009; Deschênes, 2016, 2022). Theorisation on non-postmodernity might, subsequently, be explained as legitimatising the clarification of values as "something like this" (Kelly, 1987, p. 3), an approach that, to say the least, helps Christians in their spiritual growth and in codeveloping and solidifying their life meaning.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, during the now-bygone eras of postmodernity and late modernity, everything was permissible. Ragneda and Mutsvairo (2017) adhered to postmodernity, which is defined "by [its] increasing unpredictability, insecurity, and precariousness affecting perceptions of life that were once predictable and well structured" (Ragneda & Mutsvairo, 2017, p. 108). To some extent, every period of history has been uncertain, unpredictable, insecure, and precarious, and has included episodic unstructured phases. For example, from antiquity, the middle ages, the renaissance and the enlightenment, modernity, advanced modernity, second modernity all the way through the postmodernity, late modern period, humanity has been caught in the perverse effects of perpetual revolution and the discomfort of the fragmented self.

In regard to leisure, Lipovetski (1983, 1987) fiercely criticizes postmodernity, its inherent individualism, and the selfishness of wasteful institutions that encompass a high level of artificial needs and normalise the hypercontrol of private life. Wearing (2017) takes an interest in the value of authenticity in the late modernity period. Referring to the virtual world of bedroom culture among young gamers, he puts forth: "I am particularly concerned with youths' quest for authentic leisure through the means of video gaming. Is it possible to find authenticity, and secure and stable identities in such imaginary play?" (Wearing, 2017, p. 135). Over time and caused by the public opinion that leads to inauthenticity, the polemic around authenticity has taken on disparate meanings. Public opinion is reflected throughout the permanent quest for personal and social identity and has affect the creation of leisure and recreation communities overtime. Thus, the issue of foreign cyberbullying toward Western digital cultures is a probing example of digital adversity with a sensitive approach. Yu and Xu (2017) show brilliantly this worldwide social reality of *E'gao* as a wicked networked digital leisure activity within China and the Chinese diaspora which indirectly and subtly express the communist ideology of *e'gao,* meaning "evil *(e)* doing (*gao*)" and evoking irony, humour, satire, and wicked fun. Mocking Western ideologies, this propaganda can be seen daily on Chinese internet and digital leisure networks. Chinese social media directly affects users. For instance, Hebblethwaite (2017) exposes certain ageist behaviours, attitudes that determine these digital media technologies as psychosocial prejudices that have a social and cultural effect on youth throughout their life course.

As a process of socialisation, *mediatisation* (i.e., the influence of mass media) "shapes society and culture. Communication is an important element of the set of practices whereby we construct our environment and ourselves, developing our identities and making sense of our lives" (Hebblethwaite, 2019, p. 95). Social media platforms play a role of varying importance in

improving intergenerational fluidity by transmitting hopeful and shared values through interactions between age groups. Wearing rightly and wisely highlights how youths immersed in virtual realities discover the Other and Otherness as alterity. Yet, since the advent of the virtual world in which we live, many young people do not have the parental guidance that would provide them with adequate protection from illusory worlds, the disenchantment of virtual emotions, and psychological harms. Hebblethwaite faithfully states that it is media organisations and technologies that constantly structure the various facets of life (health, family, leisure and work, politics, culture, learning, and so forth). For example, TV news channels shape the mentalities of adults and aged persons who are influenced by the sharing values intergenerationally mainly caused by mediation by peers in health institutions.

Exploring authenticity and the omnipresence of digital technologies, Dinhopl and Gretzel (2017) affirm that being recorded or not is paramount in lifestyle sports experiences, like snowboarding. They show how snowboarders are fully conscious of the mixed utility of cameras and panoptic tools, and how these have a dissuasive impact on those being filmed, who, accordingly, behave as expected. The authors state that "The participation in snowboarding is then both a quest to be authentic and a quest to portray authenticity. In addition, the visual documentation of lifestyle sports is closely tied to the experience of participating in them" (Dinhopl & Gretzel, 2017, p. 69). The authors find that snowboarders are automatically ashamed when they make mistakes, whether filmed or not. The ubiquitous surveillance of the camera exerts pressure to perform and, in doing so, allows this dynamic by concretising authenticity in snowboarding.

Jordan (2017, p. 179) asserts that stories belong to "consciousness itself" and that they "are the heart of how we understand the world. They allow us to pass on knowledge in a way that is at

once personal and subjective while at the same time rooted in the wider world." The author goes on to say that our collective praxis strengthens one of our ultimate abilities by using storytelling with digital media to reconnect two phenomena: "to re-attach memory to the lost physical places of our cityscapes" (Jordan, 2017, p. 190). Jordan believes in the mediation between past and present, and places. These latter are, he explains, created by the influence of verbal relics; superstition, legend, myth, fable, allegory, metaphor, parable, etc. propound that after Creation and the advent of supernatural beings, people became what they are today: mortal, sexual, and cultural (Eliade, 1963). In other words, verbal relics authorise us to live in haunted places, as if they were our homes which mean metaphorically our house (Volant, 2003). More explicitly, "the past is never truly expunged from the high street but lurks ghost-like in its shadows. In this sense, we are always among the ruins of what has gone before, both in physical space but also in human memory" (Jordan, 2017, p. 190).

Jordan (2017) presents two empirical digital projects exploring leisure-related tribulations and creative resistance through digital storytelling on Twitter and audio, in video and various still images produced by smartphone, digital watch, camera, tablet, etc. Through its cathartic flow of linear time, the mediation of cathodic images carry people between past and present. Mediation even improves their sense of personal and social realism by codeveloping and solidifying their life meaning, allowing them to be surrounded by the sacred every day. Examining the outdoor recreation field from this point of view, Dépatie et al. (2017) refer, for example, to Louv (2009), Plummer (2009), and Manning (2011) who suggest that people experienced positive outcomes and physical, social, mental, and spiritual well-being through opportunities to disconnect from their day-to-day existence and experience optimistic interactions with each other and the material environment. Digital leisure cultures broaden users' sense of humanity by fully connecting them

with others in each instant and enabling them to experience a sort of individualised control over media spaces through shared values.

Pieper (1952) is cited in Purcell (2017) as positing leisure as the cornerstone of culture. Leisure is basically the contemplative art of living and working; it is "[t]o be unleisurely." (Pieper 1952, p. 21). Leisure "appears as something wholly fortuitous and strange, without rhyme or reason." (Pieper 1952, p. 38). It is "an attitude of mind, a condition of soul, and as such utterly contrary to the ideal of 'worker'" (Pieper, 1952, p. 40); "it means not being 'busy,' but letting things happen." (Pieper 1952, p. 41). Within the digital leisure culture, Pieper's point of view contributes to a movement as more and more people react in forums and social media, consult websites and Wikipedia, etc. especially initiated by amateur literature as the transmitter as well as the reader as the receiver so that they acquiesce to the communication process. Thus, Piorecký (2017) recognises leisure activity by analysing the literature "in connection with the growing position of literary amateurs, which is changing from a prestige discourse to a free-time activity. This primarily involves the systemic nature of the change which amateur literature, disseminated by digital media, brings about" (Piorecký, 2017, p. 204). Sport, too, has become a passive leisure activity, and Norman (2017) joins in the intellectual conversation around the proliferation of blogging in many professional sports, most specifically in ice hockey.

Lupton (2017) mentions the positive and negative affect of 3D printed self-replicas. In and of themselves, printed 3D self-replicas have no inherent value: their use determines their outcome. In other words, digital scans and printed 3D models aid physicians and surgeons in decision-making through the use of objects from digital and medical scans. Physicians utilise "these replicas, which are unique to each patient, to diagnose a medical condition, to plan treatment, to refer to during

surgery and as a means of informing the patient what the problem is and how it will be treated" (Lupton, 2017, p. 30). In this sense, 3D self-replicas can indeed be significant tools for enhancing health. However, other usages of 3D self-replicas are inherently narcissistic or dissimulate evil intentions (perhaps even against the will of those portrayed) through excessive troublemaking and purposeless cults of objects. Kavanagh and Jones (2017) report another negative use of social media: examining the case of the English professional footballer Stan Collymore, who suffered abuse on Twitter, the authors perspicaciously highlight content that negatively targets celebrity athletes on social media. This is an impasse given its inevitability, and therefore, must be managed with prudence and diplomacy.

In continuity with abusive images on digital and social media, Winch and Hakim (2017) describe 'sportnosexuality' and brings the point of view that male and female non-heterosexuality culture induces controversy, unresolved because of the social disorder it provokes. These authors accurately indicate that this dead-end discourse, and its negative and ambivalent "portrayals of 'sportnosexuals' in the mainstream media, [reveal] behaviours are not easily considered to be normative. That is, masculinity does not easily or neatly denote extensive body monitoring and display in the same way that femininity does" (Winch & Hakin, 2017, p. 51). The fetishised body is, so to speak, reified against this exaggerated backdrop of digital leisure cultures which seeks the perfection of the body at all costs—an achievement made impossible by biological finitude. Brohm (e.g. trans. 1968, p. 64) attests that it is "the ideology of the consumption of the body, by the body, for the body, the ideology of physical happiness and bodily well-being. This lust—this massive social striptease—is the spectacle of the body-as-commodity widely displayed." Thus emerges an ideology of bodily luxury and even unbridled desire. To a certain extent, as Kelly says (e.g. 1987,

p. 187), "[t]he alienation of commodity fetishism turns persons away from their own sensual and expressive natures to the single theme of possession."

With a similar point of view on the misuse of sexuality, Parry and Penny Light's work (2017) testifies to the mysterious female consumption of sexuality: "Sexual desire in the digital sphere is complicated for women. Technology has opened up a new leisure culture for female consumers of sexually explicit material (SEM) – such as pornography and erotica" (p. 207). The authors argue that cyberfeminism may foster worldwide networking and dialogue on the internet. The production of visual images in pornography is impressive and hides subliminal means. Therefore, it "did serve to make some of the women feel badly about their bodies, sexual capabilities and/or support harmful behaviour [and brings] the lack of representation of the type of sex they themselves were having in real life" (Parry & Penny Light 2017, p. 210). Harm resulting from over exposure to the body in digital leisure cultures, especially obscenity in pornography, can even lead as far as the painful act of suicide. Representation of the body, possibly associated with intimate sexual pleasure, should be viewed as normal and confirm male and female sexual identities associated with procreation and pleasure.

The authors' contributions to this textbook on digital leisure cultures inevitably raise questions of freedom of speech: 1) How can the expression of billions of people be regulated? 2) Does the legitimisation of freedom of speech fit with the volatility and diversification of public opinion? 3) If normal representation of the body is acceptable to some, is it to others? 4) What values-based limits do we ascribe to freedoms and the rules of conduct between individuals? 5) In the cybernetic world, where everything is controlled and automatized, does a man have the freedom of speech, to compliment and seduce a woman, to talk frankly to her of love and friendship? 6)

What should be done with the advocates of freedom of speech who are unable to follow the simple rules of decorum? 7) Does freedom of speech justify those who mock people experiencing handicap? 8) Does the regulation of freedom of speech allow for codeveloping and solidifying life meaning?

In conclusion, digital leisure cultures have the potential to positively reconceptualise leisure by reinforcing and codifying Christian personal growth inspired by religious and spiritual beliefs people may perceive at first glance as the superficiality of human nature. Everyone has their own leisure fantasy. Yet, the cruel reality outdoes fiction; or, in other words, the virtual mode of being since the COVID-19 pandemic reminds us of the fragility of people in our own respective surroundings. Furthermore, it would seem the control the cybernetic world suppresses the spiritual well-being of many who are trapped in mental health challenges that minimise self-expression and the revitalisation of the body, mind and spirit as well as the heart and soul. Moral behaviour must be straightened up by adhering in our lives to notions that ensure the survival of humanity. Reflecting on digital leisure cultures will be a necessary step to codeveloping and solidifying life meaning, and, above all, to improving the overall health of people who, virtually, are the actors of their own life by being connected spiritually with each other.

Acknowledgements

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