Changing digital geographies: technologies, environments and people, by Jessica McLean, Switzerland, Palgrave MacMillan, 2020, 267 pp., €84.99 (hardback), ISBN 978-3-030-28306-3

Now is the time of more-than-real monsters, as Jess McLean argues in her first sole-authored book. This is a time when new and changing assemblages of the human, more-than-human and digital-technological are forming and reforming, reinforcing, challenging, subverting, mirroring, de- and re-materialising existing socio-spatial and ecological injustices, political structures, and modes of inhabitation. McLean invokes (and troubles) the 'Anthropocene' to describe this time, and sets about weaving together seemingly disparate strands of thought and theory to better understand the shifting shapes of these more-than-real monsters, and to offer a mode of thinking critically and environmentally with changing digital geographies.

Central to this project is the articulation of the 'more-than-real' as a conceptual framing for understanding digital realms and relationalities. McLean's uses of the 'more-than-real' draws heavily on the work of Brian Massumi, Sarah Whatmore and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick; it describes an assembled realm beside what might be termed the realm of the 'real', with an emphasis on entanglements, contradictions, ecologies and unevenly distributed, unruly agencies. This framing reminds us that the digital is material, that 'the cloud' is a server bank in a desert, that our engagement with digital technology is always-already embodied and emplaced, and that none of this sits apart or abstracted from the political, material, ecological, social conditions or positionalities of our lives.

McLean's book takes on some of the tropes and received wisdoms about the more-than-real realm, including the relationship between online and offline activism and the purported sustainability and universality of digital technologies. Underpinned by her grounding in feminist theories and geographies, this work firmly, consistently and reflexively resists the binaries that so often structure our thinking about a world composed of ones and zeroes – digital/nondigital, unreal/real, connection disconnection, techno-utopianism/cynicism. McLean does not allow us to retreat into the comfort of an either/or; indeed, she reflects on the ways in which her earlier work bought into the pervasive real/unreal binary, and the other complicities and complexities of doing emancipatory work from a relatively privileged positionality.

McLean explores a range of angles on digital geographies, including human rights, digital justice, human-technological relations, decolonisation, digital colonialism, feminism, activism and social movements, climate change and sustainability, emotion and affect. The initial 'more-than-real' framing is carried throughout, as is a general concern about sustainability and social justice, but most chapters can stand alone, often drawing on distinct datasets, case studies or examples.

McLean is able to weave together, or put in useful conversational tension, concepts and issues that might, at initial glance, seem only loosely connected. Certainly, drawing together in a single chapter topics like digital justice, human rights and environmental justice and sustainability is ambitious. As a result of this broad reach, occasionally I found I was wanting more depth, more examples and more exploration – the book is not deficient in any of those things, but the primary work it does is in weaving together sets of ideas and issues that have not often been connected by geographers, and arguing for the importance of recognising those relations. The book is clearly underpinned by rich empirical work, but because of the commitment to ambitious and rich conceptualisation, I did at times wish more time could've been spent with some of that data – it's easy to imagine many of these chapters being fleshed out into whole books. That said, this book is not a conclusion; it's doing the thinking that makes further work possible. McLean weaves a rich and complex conceptual framework, developed through her empirical work, and offers it to us to think with and take forward.

In an era of technocratic fetishism and/or tinfoil abstention, this book is measured and qualified. McLean writes critically, carefully and precisely. She does not let the emphasis on 'entanglement' serve as a substitute for rigour; she does not use it to flatten out relations, geographies or power, or to universalise experiences of digital geographies. She is attentive to the particular throughout – to sites of unevenness, to agency on the margins, and she resists telling a homogenising narrative about digital hegemonies. *Changing Digital Geographies* is always attentive to the workings of power, and to histories and identities and material conditions in place, to emotion and affect. In McLean's own words, 'we are patently not all using digital technologies in the same ways, in the same spaces, at the same times' (59). McLean is measured, but we can see from the occasional bold, unequivocal, unflinching statements (e.g. 'The consumption of digital technologies, especially in the Global North, is fundamentally environmentally unsustainable', 113) punctuating the work that McLean's tendency towards more measured prose is not out of an over-abundance of caution or a lack of conviction.

Rather, it reflects how her commitment to honouring complexity and entanglements forms her style. McLean refuses both cynicism and optimism, and positions tech as clearly, firmly and irrevocably bound up in existing political, economic, social, spatial and ecological relations. This is what makes her insistence on the 'more-than-real' framing so convincing; the digital is not a thing apart, it is not immaterial, it is not discrete. It is a diverse and shifting assemblage, bound up with tangled mycelium and optical fibres.

In terms of the audience for this book, those interested in the affordances and challenges of digital technology in various social movements and political struggles would enjoy this book, as would those interested in a more critical and thoughtful engagement with the claims often made about the sustainability of digital technology and smart cities. While there are some international case studies and examples used (e.g. #metoo), most of

McLean's cases have a strong Australian focus, e.g. the My Health Record and Robodebt scandals, IndigenousX and #Indigenousdads. And if I could, I'd be adding this to the 'required reading' list of techno-optimists and eco-modernists from across the political spectrum, but particularly those on the left. The book clearly, carefully and convincingly troubles popular claims about digital innovation and the possibility of a post-scarcity future (and the neon-lit fever dream of fully automated luxury communism). Instead, this book invites us to engage with digital technologies in more firmly material, response-able ways, with toes in the earth and an awareness of our positionality in relation to the more-than-real and the possibilities it presents.

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