Why People are so Crazy for Pokémon Go

Like a lot of America, I've just become aware of the Pokémon Go craze.

Apparently, the free app was just released on July 6, and its popularity has already led to servers crashing.

For those who are still in the dark about Pokémon Go, here's the gist of it: It terms itself a "location-based augmented reality mobile game." Basically, it uses your phone's GPS and creates a cartoon map of where you are. You have to travel around to capture other Pokémon, and you can go to particular locations designated as "gyms" to battle against other users.

As you might suspect, in a world where the average gamer is 31 years old, it's not just kids who are using it. A [piece](#) yesterday on Tech.Co reported that "the streets are littered with adult Pokémon Go players."

Thus far, there have been a few negative side effects: people using it to conduct armed robberies, some minor injuries from tumbles, and one person who stumbled upon a body in Wyoming.

But for the most part people are hot on its benefits, namely, that it's "fun", and that it's actually been a means of getting people outside. Several adults and children are reporting that they've gotten more exercise from a day of playing Pokémon Go than in the past year combined.

In the few years that I've been engaging with audiences on Intellectual Takeout, I've discovered there are certain things it's best not to criticize (yet I sometimes do it anyways). One of these things is people's entertainment. Seriously, a

lot of the public takes it very personally if you criticize what they do for fun, and they vigorously defend what other people choose to do for fun.

Why is that?

Well, what one does for leisure *should* be a very personal thing. In the classic understanding [articulated by Aristotle](#), the very purpose of human life is leisure, understood as contemplation and the activities that promote it.

But in modern life, "entertainment" has largely come to take the place of leisure. The word "entertainment" is from the Latin words "inter" and "teneo", which means to "hold together." It came to mean something that merely kept or engaged someone's attention.

And in a culture where we live for the sake of work—where we are told that our jobs are what gives us meaning and identity—that is unfortunately what leisure has become. It's what we do to merely [kill time](#) when we have some spare moments between shifts. It consists of things that offer a way to escape the unbearable monotony of modern life and quell both our physical and existential exhaustion.

Over time, we demand newer and more exciting forms of entertainment, since we eventually get bored of that which doesn't align with our ultimate goals. And inevitably, these entertainment activities become less and less human as we get further and further away from our cultural memory of the character of true leisure.

Ergo, we now have a popular game that gets people to go outside only to stare at a screen, that implies that the real world needs to be "augmented" to be interesting.

Ergo, we now have Pokémon Go.

I'm not going to judge people who play Pokémon Go. There are

plenty of things I do merely for entertainment when I'm tired that do not contribute to making me a better person or fulfilling any grand purpose in life.

But it's too bad that we're now chasing imaginary creatures around the streets.