



An observation of societies at a distance;
do they produce a pattern of noise footprints?

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ABSTRACT

This research paper is an inquiry into the concept of noise as chaos, in societies from a distant perspective. A result of the Simulation Argument could be considered as the existence of societies, us and all our miscellanea—and furthermore a result of these entities could be understood as the idea of chaos from the point of view of a simulator (who may be simulating our world). From our simulator’s viewpoint, if we were to consider that we are indeed a result of a simulation, he/she/it would perceive our societies at a distance... Perhaps we could be viewed with the lens of Gestalt Theory in mind; where the individual components of our simulation are entirely different from the whole itself; which could, at a distance afar, appear as visual as well as audio noise. This would appear similar to the commonly viewed imagery of one sitting in a security room, with eyes all over multiple vantage points that are to be monitored.

The research for this study initially began with Nick Bostrom, who asked the question ‘*Are you living in a computer simulation?*’ — which lead to a multitude of queries and concerns. A specific aspect of concern that resulted from an inquiry into the question is that *if* the Simulation Argument is sought to be hypothetically true, what is the chaos that is prevalent in societies at a distance? Noise is a pattern of static that occurs when no transmission signal is received. If we consider our current reality, that is now crossing over into the digital world, it can be said that the universe is experiencing a lack of transmission from what has always been considered natural —i.e. the human sense of touch, physical presences, the bombardment of the media and the resulting notion of fake news, etc. A result of all the occurrences that are prevalent in a digital age such as ours, where the aspects of daily activities are rapidly digressing into screen-based digital media. The global pandemic, Covid-19, can serve multiple examples of how rapidly technology has infiltrated into a society (such as ours) that was not so technologically advanced, it perhaps still isn’t. However, the fact remains that almost everything has been remotely been operating since the emergence of the virus. This might become what is known to the world as the *new normal*. The term suggests the acceptance of what might become the societal norms, in methods that had already been implemented, but were not saturated in their occurrences, for example the idea of video chatting or calling another party was a common activity, but it was not the *only* method of communicating, physical presence was more so, however. Many still prefer the physical experience of interaction outside their homes, but it can be understood that the current circumstances might possibly lead us to become desensitised to what was once normal, and adapt to changes that will become an inherent digitised part of our lives. If we

could view our world from a distance, where the noise we produce—in all forms, digital, non-digital, audio, visual, all the mundane activities— would appear to be rather beautiful, or maybe even harmonious in the sense that the noise *footprint* would seem uniform in its gentle movements that is an amalgamation of what is happening underneath, on the ground level of our planet. This is what could be defined as a noise footprint, similarly to a carbon footprint for example, where we can infer the emissions of activities caused and expressed as the carbon dioxide equivalent. In the case of this paper, a noise footprint is defined as a representation of all the emissions caused by the chaos that is occurring in a specific area, emissions like signals of transmission devices, the spread of false news, mundane activities and their resulting sounds and clutter etc.

For the purpose of this conducted research, the argument stems from the question of how our understanding of reality can be altered by the presentation of it as a result of all kinds of media. *The Yellow Wallpaper* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman explores how the human mind can be manipulated to believe that what is presented to it can be considered as a reality after the repetitive bombardment of images. The depiction of the wallpaper in the novella is that it appears to physically warp and distort throughout the plot, a symbol for the warping and the distortion of the truth of reality. From the narrator's lens, the description of the wallpaper keeps changing simultaneously to her mental transformations throughout the novella. The narrator initially finds the wallpaper as alien and unfamiliar, even ugly. Though the readers later discover that she may have become a part of the wallpaper through her physical and mental interaction with it, to the point of dominion;

“I suppose I shall have to get back behind the pattern when it comes night, and that is hard! It is so pleasant to be out in this great room and creep around as I please! I don't want to go outside. I won't even if Jennie asks me to. For outside you have to creep on the ground, and everything is green instead of yellow. But here I can creep smoothly on the floor, and my shoulder just fits in that long smooch around the wall, so I cannot loose my way.” (Gilman, 1892)

Such dominion is reflected in current day life through the representation of our social media “walls”, like Facebook or Instagram — where images and information are posted constantly for everyone to read and perceive all over the world. Smartphones have been argued to be considered almost as an extension of our hands, literally proving that information lies on our fingertips, and what can hold more magnificent power than that? With such immediate as well as such vast access to information, how can one be aware that the information that is being received is a fallacy or not? Furthermore, it is not only the topic of uncertainty that can be found pestilent, but also the rate of immediacy that we undertake this information to be true. If such is the case, how can we be so unshakeably sure that we are not a part of a simulation? The notion that the narrator is constantly in the presence of the wallpaper leads her to believe that she is a part of it, with that, the representation of it translates into her immediate reality. How is the current situation of the digital age much different, when we too start believing the information we receive from social media when a single topic of information is constantly repeated like bombardment all over the social world. For example, like the bandwagon effect, the origin of internet trends, how if everyone is doing something, then it must be true; i.e. a simulation of life events. This is an intriguing take on Descartes’ “*Cogito, ergo sum*”, defined as ‘I think, therefore I am’; only in the case of

our digital age the famous philosophical statement can be altered to fit our norms. In today's day, the statement can be changed to mean '*I post, therefore I am*'. In the new normal it is *not* normal if an individual lacks social media presence (let alone getting by without a simple email account has become impossible), and those who are not present on such platforms, are often doubted if the personalities even exist, if not found online. Using this as an aid, it is very easy to create a hypothetical online presence, and intriguingly as well as ironically, enough, gain a substantial following from other social media users, who might not even be aware of the fallacy that this may cause...however, it does lead one to question if it even matters or not that social media is saturated with such fake accounts, some who are even bots among us.

French writer, Saint-Exupéry, explores in his *The Little Prince*, how the presented is not necessarily a direct representation of reality; "*What matters is invisible to the eye*", such is the case of our social media in which we portray alternate realities to our viewers, misleading or leading them to construct their own ideas about one's life, or in broader scales, ideas that drive minorities or masses, for example trending memes, true or false opinions of a certain culture or race - which inevitably leads to the social construction of stereotypes etc. The novella conducts an underlying suggestion that the awareness of the manipulation that is simulated by reality is spreading, which is also reflected in our waking reality, where many users are, in fact, aware of being scammed or misled, as well as being at the receiving end of false information. Similar to this suggestion, *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*, a set of three essays, explores the nature of a virtual war. The essays explore how fear is induced in people's minds using only the simulators of a war; such as the media.

“technological wastes nourish the hell of war. Wastes which incarnate the secret violence of this society, un-coerced and non-degradable defecation.” (Baudrillard, 1995)

Media can be considered as the strongest tool in spreading a wide spectrum of information, be it true or false. Throughout many events in history, on macro and micro levels, times of conflict arouse feelings of vulnerability which is when individuals are most sensitive to the receiving of information — being easiest to manipulate with the infiltration of news and occurrences of simulation. The bombardment of imagery and its repetition renders the viewer or the receiver of information as either desensitised or hyper-aware of the data that they are subconsciously or consciously provided with. This can lead to rather dangerous consequences, a common local example being how previously occurred terror attacks in Pakistan have led to the desensitisation of such events and a very trivial attitude towards devastation, the blame of the occurrence of such incidents towards a higher power, or the concept of the *other*. The bending and distorting of reality is profound in local news in Pakistani culture, however what is further evident is the immediacy of those receiving such information to readily accept such fallacies. This leads us to question if anything at all around us is really true. This is similar to a string theory that suggests that all the world around is simply a hologram, and we are too. This is the holographic principle. Adam Gopnik, a writer for *The New Yorker* said that current world events *“are not just weird, they point to a glitch in the “Matrix”, the program that runs us all”*. On this topic, Nick Bostrom, an Oxford philosopher, argues that one of the following must be true;

“(1) the human species is very likely to go extinct before reaching a “posthuman” stage; (2) any posthuman civilization is extremely unlikely to run a significant number of simulations of their evolutionary history (or variations thereof); (3) we are almost certainly living in a computer simulation.” (Bostrom, 2001)

It can be considered highly unlikely of our simulators to run simulations of their history (i.e. us), when they would have enough knowledge as well as the technological means to simulate many other computational notions (perhaps probable predictions of what could occur in the future). In Bostrom’s view, *“if our species moves on to a new posthuman phase, our ‘new us’ will have unimaginable computation powers, and running realistic simulations will be a given. If this is the case, we would be like characters in a super-advanced Sims game, believing we have autonomy when, in face, we are puppets in the hands of the game-players”*. (Bostrom, 2001). This reality suggests that many of our socially constructed circumstances will be rendered as false - for example the question of religion and a higher power, or God, would be substituted by super-advanced game players or entities that are unknown to us.

We can assume that we could be a part of the Indian philosophy of turtles all the way down. It can be questioned that we do not know where the line of simulators will possibly end - we may be a product of a simulation, however, how are we to know that our simulators are not a product of another simulation and so on, ad infinitum. If this is the case, is there such a luxury such as free will? Science fiction, technologists and futurologists predict that there will enormous amounts of computing power available in the future. Theoretically looking at this however, this may be just our computational brains that may be thinking of such possibilities, as we are not aware that our supposed simulators may have

already acquired this kind of computational skill and power. This brings us to question if our minds are either the original biological minds or the simulated; and if not simulated, we might be close to discovering such technological advancements needed to run said simulations. Simulating the human mind may not be considered so far fetched in a posthuman stage, where a computer running a suitable program can be conscious, not necessarily being programmed to behave like a human in all situations, but rather only being programmed enough so that the computational processes of a biological brain can be replicated in fine-grain detail. This experiment can even be conducted through the Turing test which would result with not being able to tell apart the difference between a computed human versus a biological human.

The human experience is an important factor that is part of the simulation argument, and in turn, is important to the ‘noise’ that is ongoing in our world. If our environment is included in our simulation, it will require additional computation depending on the “*scope and granularity*” of the simulation. Developing a simulation of our apparent surroundings to the accuracy of a quantum level can be understood as a rather far-fetched notion — unless there is significant discovery in the physics world. However, in order to create a realistic simulation, much less is needed to replicate an environment such as ours — the way in which humans interact with their surroundings, and whatever results with such actions remain the same, by omitting the design of nature on a microscopic level; imitated in such a manner that the simulated environment would not emit any irregularities or *glitches*. This could mean that a simulated environment can safely and neatly be packed into reduced and compressed representations, like hollow objects with surface materials replicating the physical world. In

this way, the microscopic details of a simulated world can be created in ad hoc, where as the macroscopic would need to constantly be simulated as a human moved around the space.

It can be very simple for a simulator in the posthuman stage to manipulate the truth for humans who might be in the field of physical researches. A posthuman simulator would possibly have enough means to keep details of the belief states of human minds. Therefore, whenever the posthuman would detect a human about to make an enquiry of their '*physical*' world, the posthuman would simulate enough microscopic evidence to maintain the flow of the simulation, keeping the human unaware of the observations that could have been made - which would have resulted with the absence of significant scientific material. If the human in the simulation were to become conscious, it may be possible that errors or glitches may occur in such event. This could be the effect in which our psychologies may dominate our physical and biological functions in the events of things. Again, as an example of violence, the horrific shooting incident at the Christchurch mosques in New Zealand on March 15th, 2019. The nature of the video footage of the incident presents us with such striking similarities between our reality as well as the games we play on consoles like the PlayStation or the Xbox etc., where our perspective is the same as the game character's on a mission. Another hypothetical way a posthuman simulator could avoid such encounters or confrontations of the human compromising the risk of discovering the simulation is that they can rewind into the past, be it a few seconds even, each time the simulation resulting with different results to avoid the human interacting with the microscopic world. This is suggestive of a highly complex system of a simulated environment which can only be created if there is the existence of the Posthuman.

Such incidents become very crucial in the representation of the concept of noise that is prevalent in our societies. If we were to see our world from the perspective of our simulator we would see a macro view with everything happening in different regions of the world, all at once. This is an interesting image to picture, almost as if conjuring up an image of everything that is happening all at once, it would appear similar to the visual of static noise that appears on our TV screens when there is a loss of transmission signals. When we view an image like this, with static all over, we refer to it as the absence of signals, which is a result of *becoming* nothing, which can be considered as a reflection of sayings that revolve around the notion of uniqueness, that when everyone is special, no one actually is, since there is no differentiating factors separating what stands out when literally *everything* is standing out. It is interesting to contemplate how the gestalt theory plays a part in this concept, where all the individual components of a whole are entirely different from the whole itself — such is the case in our (hypothetical) simulation, where, at once, if everything is happening, nothing really is. In this hypothetical image of noise, we cannot exactly pick and choose where our focus would reside in when viewing such an image, where the noise '*footprint*' would be greater where there is more activity occurring in whichever area the world, similar to global road maps, where there is a higher concentration in those areas where commute is denser via road infrastructures.

It could be considered to be comparative to a security tapes room, where one can view everything happening everywhere, all at once—except in our case it would occur on a blinding scale where no detail can be understood as to what is happening, until the simulator 'zooms' into a specific region or area, to see what is really happening at our ground level. It can possibly be considered a universal truth that we all know that on some level we are all being observed; The fear that governments can tap into our phones, CCTV is always

recording incidents, the difficulty of a webcam being hacked is very minimal, internet algorithms showing us our interests in adverts on social media and so much more. How are we sure that we are definitely not in a simulation when there is so much of electronic technology fused within our lives; concepts of smart homes, where almost everything is controlled with digitised commands on a main control panel - even simple tasks such as pulling blinds on a window, or self moving vacuum cleaners, smart devices made to turn off lights when one walks out of a room, just like in the Sims game.

These futuristic concepts can be considered either frightening or breathtaking in the essence that the future *is* already here, and perhaps what we consider impossible is the new normal. With so much happening, and so many enriched and informed theories, how are we to hone in on specific beliefs, or concepts related to our personalities. Fortunately, we are slowly digressing from the previous norms, into an age where freethinking is considered positive, to illicit interesting responses to the idea of our origins and new beliefs in technology and whatnot. Along with this progressive thought process, we do create a rather alarming amount of noise that exists on all platforms — mental, intellectual, vocal, visual, media etc.. The noise that exists on our planet is simply infinite, and cannot be finite until we humans are stop existing, and even if that happens, the clutter we have already left will still exist. It is a fascinating concept that we, our emissions, mess, chaos and clutter can possibly form a footprint of noise that, perhaps, simulators can hear, or see in vibrations that reverberate through echoes or waves.

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Self-conducted Survey : [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1jGKdlcZ_BEFiCNdyZfPVd4LamPPfcUtX0rp4v-fHYVQ/edit#responses)

[1jGKdlcZ_BEFiCNdyZfPVd4LamPPfcUtX0rp4v-fHYVQ/edit#responses](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1jGKdlcZ_BEFiCNdyZfPVd4LamPPfcUtX0rp4v-fHYVQ/edit#responses)