

THE GOONZETTE

Digital Culture • Commentary • Analysis

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Le Bruit et la Fureur: On the Digital Babel of Our Perpetual Present

We inhabit, mes amis, a curious epoch where the ancient dream of universal communication has been realized not through some utopian linguistic convergence but rather through the cacophonous multiplication of voices that speak simultaneously into the void, each tweet and post and comment forming part of an endless scroll that mimics the very structure of anxiety itself—this restless, compulsive need to refresh, to update, to respond before the moment passes into digital oblivion, where thoughts expire with the half-life of radioactive isotopes.

The online discourse, this grand spectacle of democratic participation that Silicon Valley promised would liberate us from the gatekeepers of traditional media, has instead created new forms of surveillance and self-censorship that would make Bentham weep with admiration for his panopticon's crude simplicity; we have built platforms where every utterance is archived, algorithmized, weaponized, where context collapses under the weight of infinite interpretability and where the nuance that once distinguished civilized conversation from mob justice dissolves like sugar in bitter coffee.

What strikes me most profoundly about our digital agora is how it reproduces, with almost mathematical precision, the very colonial structures it claims to dismantle—the way English dominates not through imperial decree but through the subtle violence of network effects, how certain voices amplify while others remain perpetually marginalized in the algorithmic shadowlands, how the Global South provides the raw materials (the lithium for our phones, the labor for our platforms, the data for our models) while the profits flow inexorably toward the same technological metropoles that once extracted gold and spices and human beings themselves.

Consider the phenomenon of "going viral"—this beautiful metaphor that reveals more than its users perhaps intend, for like a pathogen, viral content spreads not because of its intrinsic value but because of its capacity to trigger involuntary responses, to bypass our critical faculties and lodge itself in the limbic system where anger and fear and tribal belonging reside, transforming us all into unwitting vectors of transmission

for ideas we might not even endorse if we encountered them in calmer circumstances, in the kind of thoughtful solitude that genuine reflection requires.

The temporality of online discourse deserves particular attention—this flattening of time where yesterday's scandal competes for attention with breaking news and decade-old tweets resurface like archaeological artifacts to destroy careers, where the rhythm of human conversation, with its natural pauses and hesitations and graceful transitions, gives way to the machine tempo of notifications and trending topics and the artificial urgency of platforms designed to monetize our attention by keeping us perpetually agitated, perpetually scrolling, perpetually reactive rather than reflective.

Yet I find myself reluctant to embrace the familiar jeremiads about digital degradation, partly because such critiques often emanate from precisely the cultural institutions that the internet has democratized—universities, newspapers, publishing houses—and partly because I witness daily the extraordinary capacity of these platforms to amplify voices that were previously silenced, to create communities of care and resistance that transcend geographical boundaries, to enable forms of solidarity and mutual aid that would have been impossible in the analog age.

The tragedy, if we can call it that, lies not in the technology itself but in how thoroughly it has been captured by surveillance capitalism, how our most intimate communications have become raw material for advertising algorithms, how our desire for connection has been channeled into engagement metrics that reward not understanding but reaction, not dialogue but performance, not community but audience.

Perhaps what we mourn when we lament the state of online discourse is not the loss of some golden age of civil conversation—which, let us be honest, never existed for most of humanity—but rather the unrealized potential of these magnificent tools, the possibility that we might use them to create something approaching genuine democratic participation rather than this simulacrum of democracy that generates infinite heat while shedding precious little light.

The question that haunts me, as I compose these words knowing they will likely be consumed in the same distracted manner as everything else in our attention economy, is whether we can still imagine alternative futures for digital communication, whether we can build platforms organized around different values—patience rather than urgency, depth rather than virality, care rather than engagement—or whether we are condemned to inhabit forever this digital Babel, speaking past each other in languages that sound like

dialogue but function as parallel monologues broadcast into an echo chamber that amplifies only what we already believe.

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Week's Over, Chiefs Still Unbeaten, and the Lions Actually Look Legit (No Cap)

Kia ora, whānau! Your boy Tommy back with the weekly NFL tea ☕

Aye, what a week in the shield, eh? Just finished watching the Sunday night game and bro, my old bones are feeling every hit through the TV screen. But let me break down this weekend's chaos for you fullas because some of these games were absolutely sending me.

Chiefs Stay Perfect (But It's Getting Sus)

Look, Kansas City went 8-0 but kare, they're playing with fire more than my kuia making hangi. That Raiders game? Bruh, Vegas nearly sent Mahomes and the boys to the shadow realm on Friday night. The Chiefs won 27-20 but it was closer than your drunk uncle at a tangi - uncomfortable and way too close for comfort.

Here's the thing though - "He tangata, he tangata, he tangata" (it's the people, the people, the people). The Chiefs have that championship whakapapa flowing through their veins, and when you've got rings, you find ways to win ugly games. But this defense looking mid as hell right now, not gonna lie. They're giving up yards like I give up on my diet during Christmas holidays.

Lions Actually Built Different This Year

Yo, Detroit is 7-1 and I'm not even surprised anymore. Dan Campbell got these cats playing like they've got mana running through the whole organization. That Packers game on Sunday? *Chef's kiss* - absolutely cooked Green Bay like a Sunday roast.

Jared Goff out here looking like he found his wairua again after that Rams divorce. My man's slinging it with confidence, and that offensive line? Sheesh, they're moving bodies like a proper haka. "Kia kaha, kia māia, kia manawanui" - be strong, be brave, be steadfast. That's exactly what Detroit's doing right now.

****Bills Mafia Still Eating Good****

Buffalo went into Seattle and handled business. Josh Allen is that dude, straight up. Watching him scramble out of the pocket reminds me of my playing days when the protection broke down - pure instinct and athlete mode activated. Dude's got that clutch gene that you can't teach in the film room.

But real talk, that Seahawks defense looked absolutely cooked. Like, retirement home levels of slow out there. Geno Smith trying his best but when your D can't stop a nosebleed, you're gonna struggle against elite teams.

****Cowboys Drama Better Than Any Reality Show****

Dallas got washed by the Eagles and the memes were FLYING. Jerry Jones probably somewhere counting his money while his team looks like they're playing with lag. Dak Prescott injured, Cooper Rush looking lost, and their defense softer than overcooked kumara.

Philly's looking dangerous though. Jalen Hurts running like he's late for karakia, and that receiving corps? They're making plays that got me thinking about my old routes (even though I was strictly practice squad energy, don't @ me).

****Random Observations That Got Me Thinking:****

The Steelers defense still hits different - they're playing football like it's still 2005 and honestly? Respect. Sometimes you gotta embrace that old school energy.

Miami's season is basically over and it's not even November. Tua's health situation got me worried, and without him, they're more lost than tourists without Google Maps.

The 49ers are injured worse than my knees after leg day. Christian McCaffrey still out, their offensive line looking like swiss cheese, and Brock Purdy doing his best with practice squad receivers.

****Bottom Line:****

This season hitting different, whānau. We got legitimate contenders emerging while some "dynasty" teams looking shaky. The Lions might actually be for real this time (I know, I know, we've said this before). The Chiefs are still the final boss until someone proves otherwise, but they're definitely beatable.

"Whāia te iti kahurangi ki te tūohu koe me he maunga teitei" - seek the treasure you value most dearly; if you bow your head, let it be to a lofty mountain. These teams chasing that Lombardi better bring everything they got because this playoff race about to be absolutely unhinged.

Catch y'all next week for more takes that your fantasy group chat didn't ask for but definitely needs.

****K**a kite anō,**

****T**ommy** 

***P.S.** - If you started the Raiders defense in fantasy, that's on you, cuz. Do better.*