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Quest for Intelligent Life on Earth -- from a Future Perspective

Self-reflexive redirection of the SETI initiative from its extraterrestrial focus?

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Introduction

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Introduction

Justification for the major investments in exploration of space beyond the solar system is now frequently presented and promoted in terms of the quest for "sentient life" or for "extraterrestrial intelligence". There is however confusion regarding the manner of the engagement with any such encounter, its outcomes, and the skills appropriate to the unforeseeable dynamics of such an encounter (*Designing a Team for Alien Encounter*, 2000).

By contrast, science fiction has tended to focus on the role of the military -- given the default preference for framing any such elusive challenge as a threat. Academia has speculated enthusiastically on the challenges of communication, and despairingly on the seeming lack of such contacts (framed in terms of the [Fermi paradox](#)).

Other perspectives are of course possible. One widely cultivated speculation is that such contact has been a feature of the distant past. Another is that proof of such contact is evident in the incidence of UFO reports, and official cover-ups in that regard. It is even possible to speculate on the extent to which "extraterrestrials" have long been embedded in human society in some manner (*Sensing Epiterrestrial Intelligence (SETI): embedding of "extraterrestrials" in episystemic dynamics?* 2013). Whether "extra-terrestrial" or "epi-terrestrial", there is of course the possibility that humans would be unable to recognize such lifeforms, given the camouflage they might adopt from a human perspective -- deliberately or inadvertently.

Given the pattern of current crises of global civilization, another possibility merits exploration. From a future perspective, especially from a far distant future, it might indeed be provocatively asked whether "sentient life" or "intelligence" is detectable on Earth at this time. Such an exploration could only be meaningful through consideration of what "sentient life" or "intelligence" might be understood to signify in that distant era. Ironically the temporal separation from Earth of such a perspective could be compared to that of the celestial bodies millions of light years away -- from which signs of intelligence are now sought in human terms.

Humans naturally assert vigorously the degree to which they themselves are characterized by intelligence and self-consciousness, however the degrees of intelligence of others are distinguished or deprecated. Humans are especially diffident in according intelligence to non-human life, irrespective of recognition of sentience. The unquestionable arrogance of such distinctions, as potentially perceived by the future, suggests the possibility that the future may frame "sentience" and "intelligence" quite otherwise. The issue is already evident to a degree with regard to artificial intelligence. It is evident otherwise through the exceptional attribution of personhood to corporations, to mountains, and to animals -- and instances of the failure to accord it to "women" and "sub-humans", potentially inviting the term "terrestrial extras" in the human drama.

Given the crises of the times however, and the manner in which it is sought to resolve them, will the future infer a tragic absence of intelligence in the current human population -- especially of collective intelligence? In contrast to humanity's widely acclaimed self-perception as consciously intelligent -- even held to be unique in that respect -- will the future deem the catastrophic dynamics of human society to exemplify a form of proto-intelligence? The possibility has been recognized as one explanation for the lack of contact by extraterrestrials for whom humans may simply be "boring". Just as humans have been attentive to distinguishing "non-human" sentience (irrespective of the controversial "sub-human" distinction), has the nature of current human intelligence effectively positioned humanity

as incapable of communication according to minimal universal criteria?

The questions posed by the quest for distant life and sentience are ironically pertinent in the light of the recently acknowledged extent to which humanity has been a primary factor in ensuring the progressive **extinction of life on Earth** -- whether human life or that of other species (*Species Extinction, Science Direct; IUCN Red List of extinct species*). This could be understood by the extent to which many segments of the population are perceived to be "alien" by others -- if not "subhuman" to the point of meriting eradication. This is exemplified by their categorisation by a recent candidate for the US Presidency as a "**basket of deplorables**" or by another as living in "**shithole countries**". Such views by world leadership have been separately explored as a mean of understanding why there are no extraterrestrial visitors (*Earth as a Shithole Planet -- from a Universal Perspective?* 2018).

Of some relevance to the following argument, the question as to whether there is intelligent life on Earth has been variously asked in the past:

- Dorion Sagan: *Of Whales and Aliens: The Search for Intelligent Life on Earth* (Minnesota Scholarship Online, April 2013)
- Douglas Underhill: *Are humans the only form of intelligent life on Earth?* (Quora)
- Imran Jan: *Intelligent life on Earth?* (The Express Tribune, 30 January 2022)
- Harry Rakowski: *Is there intelligent life on Earth?* (The Hub, 13 July 2021)
- George Monbiot: *There may be flowing water on Mars. But is there intelligent life on Earth?* (The Guardian, 29 September 2015)
- Jeffrey Bennett: *Is There Intelligent Life on Earth?* (The Free Lance-Star, 31 August 2008)
- Himalayan Academy: *Is There Intelligent Life on Earth?* (Hinduism Today, 1 December 1988)
- Jack Catran: *Is There Intelligent Life on Earth?* (Lidiraven Books, 1980)
- Paul Ehrlich: *Is there intelligent life on earth?* (The Population Bomb, 1968)

As an indication of lack of intelligence, the degree to which humankind invests in the destruction of life of any form -- even to the point of destroying ecosystems on which it is dependent -- renders relevant the recognition of the stupidity and insanity of humanity from various perspectives:

- Stupidity/Idiocy:
 - Lance Morrow: *You Are Living in the Golden Age of Stupidity* (Wall Street Journal, 29 August 2021)
 - Nitin Pai: *The Ukraine War has triggered a Global Surge in Human Stupidity* (LiveMint, 28 March 2022)
 - John Feffer: *The Delta Variant of Global Stupidity* (Institute for Policy Studies, 11 August 2021)
 - Otto English: *Have we reached peak stupidity?* (Politico, 29 September 2021)
 - *Global Idiocy* (The Ledger, 6 July 2001)
- Irrationality:
 - Ratelia Syahla Yudawisastra: *Global Irrationality in Global Security* (2013_)
 - Danny Schechter: *Economic Irrationality and Systems Collapse: when the irrational is considered rational* (Global Research, 11 August 2011)
 - Dmitry Yevstafiev: *Challenges for Eurasia: the irrationality of global politics or the "New Rationality"?* (South Front, 12 July 2017)
 - David Berreby: *Human Irrationality is a Fact, not a Fad* (Big Think, 15 June 2012).
- Madness/Insanity:
 - Marcelo Gleiser: *The Madness Of Humanity* (NPR, 13 July 2016)
 - Donald C. Mikulecky and James A. Coffman: *Global Insanity: how homo sapiens lost touch with reality while transforming the world* (Cosmos and History: the Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy, 11, 2015, 1).

Irrespective of any recognition of the "global insanity" of a population of 8 billion, the World Health Organization reports that nearly 1 billion individuals -- including 14% of the world's adolescents -- were living with a mental disorder in 2019 (*WHO highlights urgent need to transform mental health and mental health care*, 17 June 2022). In an aging population, with aging leadership, global dementia is itself a concern -- as tracked by the *Global Dementia Observatory* (*Global Dementia Cases Forecasted to Triple by 2050*, 27 July 2021).

What may those of the far distant future have to say of the quality of human intelligence manifest in the present period? As with extraterrestrials, the future might well employ other criteria extending the determination of limited human collective intelligence.

Whether such insanity can be intelligently transcended is another matter (Steve Taylor, *Transcending Human Madness, Green Spirit*, Winter 2007; Geoff Haselhurst, *The Insanity of Humanity and the Collapse of Human Civilization, Truth and Reality*). How does any sense of "intelligence failure" relate to the question of Rodrigue Tremblay (*Why Does Humanity Still Tolerate the Tragedy of Wars in the 21st Century?* *Global Research*, 12 January 2023)

Sustainable definitions of sentient life and intelligence?

Criteria of intelligence: With respect to sentient life, it is biologists who would be expected to provide a set of criteria for its detection by humans in distant parts of the universe. Stronger distinctions would be made by other disciplines in distinguishing species held to exhibit a degree of consciousness -- with much debate on whether particular species exhibit any degree of self-consciousness, namely a higher order of sentience. The challenge is evident when those criteria are applied on Earth with regard to "aliens" and those of "lower classes". The case of dolphins, primates, and elephants have offered examples. Could humans now be usefully compared to dolphins -- from an extraterrestrial perspective, or from that of the future?

Potentially more intriguing is the case of some plant species -- if not many (Marc-Williams Debono, *L'intelligence des plantes en question*, 2020). The manner of their functioning in ecosystems can be readily understood as exhibiting a form of sentience. Gardeners may well be prepared to attribute a form of sentience to carefully cultivated plants -- as in the case of orchids. Particular trees may be

held to exhibit a form of sentience, especially in traditional cultures. Again, could the sentience of humans be usefully compared to that of such plants or of fungal networks -- from an extraterrestrial perspective, or from that of the future (Luke Heaton et al, *Analysis of Fungal Networks*, *Fungal Biology Reviews*, 26, 2012, 1; Gerardo Bandera, *Protect the Fungal Networks that Support Life on Earth*, *Fair Planet*, 13 December 2021)?

Especially controversial is the attribution of a form of sentience to features of the natural environment -- particularly when this is enshrined in some official decision or legislation. Striking examples are offered by particular rock formations carefully bypassed by roads (most notably in Nordic countries) and by mountains, as in New Zealand (Eleanor Ainge Roy, *New Zealand gives Mount Taranaki same legal rights as a person*, *The Guardian*, 22 December 2017). Would the effort by humans to detect sentient life elsewhere fail to detect such forms, as highlighted in the movie *Avatar* (2009)? What of the existence of elves and fairies to which sentience is variously attributed by traditional cultures?

Relative intelligence: With the focus on intelligence, controversies are obvious in the case of those deemed to be of lesser intelligence or developing into a condition of dementia. Both extremes are deprecated by those holding **high IQ** in the greatest esteem -- ironically exemplified by the 84 associations of those of ever higher percentiles, as distinguished by the [World Intelligence Network](#).

The challenge is all the greater when contrasted with appreciation of **emotional intelligence** (EQ). The matter is further complicated by recognition of a set of **multiple intelligences**. Again which forms of intelligence might be especially appreciated from an extraterrestrial or future perspective -- and of which forms might humanity be held to be notably deficient at the present time?

Collective intelligence: Another dimension is introduced by consideration of **collective intelligence** or **community intelligence**, whether in the form of crowd psychology, team operation, or the functioning of a larger group. Rather than individual intelligence, the future may hold collective intelligence to be of primary significance (*Enabling Collective Intelligence in Response to Emergencies*, 2010). There appears to be little ability to distinguish levels of collective intelligence, as is done with assessments of IQ -- other than as **cultural intelligence** (CQ). As noted by Brian Pickerd in proposing an extension to CQ:

For over a century, education has staged three important quotients related to learning: IQ (intelligence quotient), EQ (emotional intelligence) and CQ (cultural intelligence), and each has held its place on the stage. IQ testing has been with us since Binet and Simon developed their evaluation in the first part of the last century. EQ came about with Daniel Goleman's work in the 1990s. CQ came about nearly a decade later as a result of the collaboration of Earley and Ang -- being further developed today by David Livermore. (*A New CQ: the Community Quotient*, *Cornerstone University*, 30 October 2018)

Little is heard of the proposal of [Doug Engelbart](#) regarding a measure of collective intelligence (*About Collective IQ; Augmenting Society's Collective IQ*, *Doug Engelbart Institute*, 2004), although reference is made to the possible **mathematical techniques for its determination** -- with one variant named as IQS (IQ Social) in a quest for **social intelligence**. A major difficulty lies in the emphasis on intelligent sociability and cooperative intelligence, neglecting what is otherwise understood as intelligence in individuals.

The future may however be primarily attentive to both the cultural and collective variants of IQ -- as may be any extraterrestrials cultivating a "hive mind" modality. Why is there no case for assessing the "CIQ" of the individual Specialized Agencies of the United Nations, for example, or of government departments and ministries? The argument frames the highly provocative question as to how intelligent is the Central Intelligence Agency -- given the variety of meanings of "intelligence" and the many working there deemed to be highly intelligent?

How might CIQ be distinguished from the problematic levels of intelligence evident in **groupthink**, as variously considered by the following:

- Jennifer Mueller, et al: *How to Steer Clear of Groupthink* (*Harvard Business Review*, 7 March 2022)
- Jim Guszcza: *From groupthink to collective intelligence* (*Deloitte Review*, 17)
- Daisuke Asaoka: *Collective intelligence or groupthink?* (*Corporate Board: Role* 14, 2018, 2)
- *Critical Difference Between Groupthink and Collective Intelligence* (*Success Story*)
- *Possibility of other shocking challenges to groupthink?* (2016).

Assumptions regarding relative intelligence are cultivated with respect to intelligence agencies and the rankings of universities and think tanks -- and their "impact" (*Tank Warfare Challenges for Global Governance*, 2019). Even less evident, however, is the relative intelligence of major institutions of governance, given criteria recognizing that NATO is "brain dead" (*Are the UN and the International Community both Brain Dead?* 2019). The point has been variously made that collective human dynamics suggest a form of dementia.

The matter is further complicated by the attribution of a degree of personhood to corporations -- with little sense of their relative intelligence, however that might be understood. Interesting contrasts are offered by the intelligence associated with the elegant swarming capacities of some species. On the other hand the spectrum of communication modalities within human collectives may well be comparable to that of howler monkeys, as is only too readily evident in many parliamentary debates.

If it is possible that extraterrestrials -- and the future -- might assess the intelligence of humanity primarily from a collective perspective, how intelligent would individual nations or the United Nations then be deemed to be? How would human evaluations of the **IQ of nations** be called into question, especially through their conflation with "cleverness" and racism (Duncan Madden, *Ranked: The 25 Smartest Countries in the World*, *Forbes*, 11 January 2019; Susan M. Barnett, et al, *National Intelligence and the Emperor's New Clothes*, *Contemporary Psychology: APA Review of Books*, 49, 2004, 4; *The Intelligence of Nations*, *Association for Psychological Science*, 27 May 27, 2011). Potentially even more provocative is any assumptions regarding the relative IQ of disciplines, especially given the common recognition of a "pecking order" between disciplines and their university faculties.

The nature and extent of [artificial intelligence](#) is now evoking intense debate on how human intelligence is then to be meaningfully distinguished -- if that is indeed appropriate (Rod Castor, *The Future of AI is Artificial Sentience, Towards Data Science*, 4 November 2020). The implication for global governance in the face of crises can of course be variously explored (*Governance of Pandemic Response by Artificial Intelligence*, 2021). It has of course been speculated that extraterrestrials may take cyborg form -- and that the future may assess the humanity of today in that light, especially given the increasing dependence on devices enabling electronic connectivity and memorability.

Spiritual intelligence: Further complicating the discussion is any distinction between intelligence and [wisdom](#) -- if not [spiritual intelligence](#). This has given rise to folk tales regarding the capacity of those deemed intelligent to recognize those held to be wise. In contrast with IQ, notions of spiritual intelligence in relation to the survival of humanity are even more varied and controversial (*Varieties of Rebirth: distinguishing ways of being "born again"*, 2004; *Post-Apocalyptic Renaissance of Global Civilization: Engaging with otherness otherwise?* 2018). There is then every possibility that extraterrestrials -- and the future -- may hold some elusive form of spiritual intelligence to be of greater relevance to the distinction of those in the universe with whom it is possible to communicate meaningfully with regard to their governance (*Self-reflective Embodiment of Transdisciplinary Integration (SETI): the universal criterion of species maturity?* 2008).

Less evident with respect to the varieties of intelligence identified above is how these relate to relative comprehension of degrees of complexity -- and of communicability in a collective environment. Much is made by physics of the "[extra dimensions](#)" -- current totalling from 10 to 26 -- enabling adequate description of reality. A greater challenge is the description by the mathematics of group symmetry of a [Monster Group](#) held to be approximately of order 8×10^{53} . How human comprehension of such complexity might relate to the perspective of the future, or of extraterrestrials, is another matter (*Potential Psychosocial Significance of Monstrous Moonshine*, 2007; *Dynamics of Symmetry Group Theorizing: comprehension of psycho-social implication*, 2008).

Sources of human intelligence and their collective expression

The argument frames the question as to where humanity should be seeking the intelligence which would enable it to respond more successfully to the crises of the times and the apparent ungovernability of global civilization (*Ungovernability of Sustainable Global Democracy?* 2011). The question may itself be reframed through collective appreciation of ungovernability as by the [Ungovernable Community](#).

Presented otherwise, there is the question of how the experts typically consulted for their insights are identified -- and how this process might be perceived from a future perspective.

Intelligence-focused contexts: Some indication of the confusion regarding the meanings of "intelligence" is offered by the following:

- **World Intelligence Network:** As mentioned above, this should be an obvious nexus of high orders of intelligence, grouping as it does the many associations appreciating ever higher IQ, best exemplified by [Mensa](#) as the the largest and oldest high-IQ society. The difficulty, as with any focus on individual IQ, is the identification of examples of cases in which higher orders of IQ are appreciated by those held to be responsible for global governance. Conversely there is the question of how those possessing such high orders of intelligence endeavour to apply their insights to that end -- and to the apparent failure to coordinate the efforts of their peers to that end. It is unclear whether the United Nations, or similar bodies, seek any relationship with that network, or with any others of that kind. A valuable summary of the challenges of the quest from a Mensa perspective is provided by Bernard Mulholland (*STI - Search for Terrestrial Intelligence: higher education and IQ research, Polyphony*, 365, 10 October 2022).
- **United Sigma Intelligence Association (USIA):** This is a nonprofit nongovernmental think tank dedicated to providing intellectual inspiration to the world. It supports intellectual individuals and organizations to engage in rigorous scientific discourse. The organization aims to encourage the exploration of academic, artistic, ethical, literary, logical, philosophical, and scientific ideas, while serving humanity in a productive and respectful manner. Use of "sigma" invites a degree of confusion with the [Six Sigma](#) methodology. Of some relevance are the reviews by Scott Douglas Jacobsen (*A Review of the World Intelligence Network Sigma 1.33-3.07 Societies, In-Sight Publishing*, 28 July 2022; *An Interview with Dr. Ronald K. Hoeflin on High-IQ Societies' Titles, Rarities, and Purposes, and Personal Judgment and Evaluations of Them, In-Sight Publishing*, 28 February 2022). Again there is no indication that USIA has any relation with the UN or its agencies.
- **Intelligence agencies:** These are understood as government agencies responsible for the collection, analysis, and exploitation of information in support of law enforcement, national security, military, public safety, and foreign policy objectives (*List of intelligence agencies, Wikipedia*). There are various indications that the relations between these bodies, whether internationally or nationally, are characterized by dynamics which are not necessarily conducive to coherent insight of relevance to global challenges. The [U.S. Intelligence Community](#), for example, is composed of 18 organizations (Paul Szoldra, *These 17 Agencies Make Up The Most Sophisticated Spy Network In The World, Business Insider*, 11 May 2013; Nina Agrawal, *There's more than the CIA and FBI: the 17 agencies that make up the U.S. intelligence community, Los Angeles Times*. 12 January 2017). The [National Intelligence Council \(NIC\)](#), bridges that community with policy makers in the United States, notably with periodic reports on *Global Trends*. It is questionable whether there is any European or global equivalent.
- **Intelligence gathering disciplines:** These are understood by intelligence agencies to include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HUMINT: Human intelligence• GEOINT: Geospatial intelligence• MASINT: Measurement and signature intelligence

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SIGINT: Signals intelligence• TECHINT: Technical intelligence• CYBINT/DNINT: Cyber or digital network

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSINT: Open-source intelligence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> intelligence • FININT: Financial intelligence
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It is unclear with what interdisciplinary methodology the insights of these disciplines are coherently integrated in relation to global challenges. "Intelligence failure" is understood as [failure in the intelligence cycle](#), namely as the outcome of the inadequacies within the [intelligence cycle](#). That cycle consists of six steps that are constantly in motion: requirements, collection, processing and exploitation, analysis and production, dissemination and consumption, and feedback.

Given its importance to strategic endeavours, it is unclear why [military intelligence](#) is not included in the above array of disciplines. That discipline uses information collection and analysis approaches to provide guidance and direction to assist commanders in their decisions (see *Wikipedia* list of [Military intelligence organizations](#)). It is intimately related to the process of [information warfare](#) and [memetic warfare](#) (William V. Kennedy, et al, *Intelligence Warfare*, 1983). Scenarios of contact with extraterrestrials typically emphasize the role of military intelligence.

There is a questionable confusion between this framing of intelligence and the processes of espionage and surveillance (Ted Galpin, *The Difference Between Intelligence and Espionage*, *Strategic Science*, 31 July 2010; *What to read to understand intelligence and espionage*, *The Economist*, 21 December 2022; K. Lee Lerner et al, *Encyclopedia of Espionage, Intelligence and Security*, 2005). Arguably such agencies are primarily concerned to detect the intelligence possessed by their peers -- whilst conscripting those of high intelligence to that end. How their own intelligence might be assessed is another matter -- on which the future may focus.

Especially in the light of current trends, the traditional reference to intelligence as a characteristic of a "[great game](#)" may be usefully adapted to other concerns, as argued separately (*Playing the Great Game with Intelligence: Authority versus the People*, 2013).

Think tanks and centres of excellence: A [think tank](#), or policy institute, is a research institute that performs research and advocacy concerning topics such as social policy, political strategy, economics, military, technology, and culture. Most think tanks are non-governmental organizations, but some are semi-autonomous agencies within government or are associated with particular political parties, businesses or the military. Think tanks vary by ideological perspectives, sources of funding, topical emphasis and prospective consumers. They may include bodies identified as "institutes of advanced studies"

The *2020 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report* (University of Pennsylvania, 2021) indicates the existence of 11,175 think tanks purportedly addressing the strategic issues which humanity faces. From the report it becomes clear that their ranking is achieved by feedback from peer institutions and experts from the print and electronic media, academia, public and private donor institutions, and governments around the world. Such ranking could be understood, questionably, as indicative of the relative degree of intelligence they are held to exemplify. As such it lends itself to recognition as a kind of modern *Almanach de Gotha* -- a ranking of new thinking of the highest order in this period of civilization.

Clearly it will be for the future to assess the extent to which the vast intellectual resources represented by such think tanks were intelligently applied to the challenges faced by society in this period. In the light of such rankings, it is especially intriguing to note the seeming absence of indications of the insights emerging from such resources as being especially noteworthy in the face of global challenges. The insights they engender are not themselves collected and ranked to that end.

A major challenge in this respect (as with intelligence agencies) is the extent to which many think tanks can be considered metaphorically to be engaged in "tank warfare" with others of their kind (*Tank Warfare Challenges for Global Governance*, 2019). As discussed there under the following headings, use of the tank metaphor suggests that it may be extended by the future (or from a more "universal" perspective) to include other cognitive modalities.

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varieties of cognitive "tank" beyond the conventional "think tank" Thinking "inside-the-box" as reinforced by think tanks Cognitive boundaries of cognitive process containers Recognizing the ecosystem of cognitive tanks Information warfare as predominant feature of future civilization Memetic tank warfare "under the radar" of think tanks? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clustering and interrelating strategic insights Indicative simulations of memetic "tank warfare"? Systemic configuration of highly disparate cognitive modalities ? Dynamics of tank comprehension and enclosure In quest of new questions of strategic relevance |
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Centres of excellence: Such centres may be established within countries as "think tanks" of a kind. Some may be associated with intergovernmental bodies ([NATO Centres of Excellence](#); [European Union Centres of Excellence](#); [ELISE: European Network of AI Excellence Centres](#)).

Universities and institutes of advanced studies: As institutions of higher (or tertiary) education and research, [universities](#) award degrees in an extensive range of academic disciplines. Think tanks may well be associated with them. Some are explicitly framed by their relevance to world or global affairs -- although critical appreciation of their relative success is less evident. Periodic [rankings of universities](#) are however assiduously prepared -- potentially held to be indicative of the relative intelligence they represent and cultivate.

Wikipedia distinguishes between "major international rankings" ([QS World University Rankings](#); [Times Higher Education World University Rankings](#); and [Academic Ranking of World Universities](#)), and 13 "other global rankings". As a potential source of insight, universities (and academia more generally) are currently a focus of critical debate, most notably with respect to [university rankings in](#)

[North America](#) -- although it is unclear how this relates to their cultivation of intelligence as a resource.

Corporate high-tech laboratories and technology centres: The term is generally applied to environments in which technological innovation is emphasized and from which patents are generated (*List of technology centers*). That *Wikipedia* checklist distinguishes *Globally prominent clusters*, frequently recognized as [technopoles](#).

It is from such environments that technical solutions to the challenges of global civilization are currently expected -- most obviously (and controversially) in the form of geoengineering options in response to climate change (*Geo-engineering Oversight Agency for Thermal Stabilization*, 2008). They also constitute a focus of aspirations to escape from the intractable challenges of the Earth to extraterrestrial environments.

Simulation and global modelling: From the insights offered for *The Limits to Growth* (1972) using the [World3](#) computer model to simulate the consequence of interactions between the earth and human systems, many similar initiatives have been variously envisaged and implemented, notably:

- the [Sentient World Simulation](#) (SWS), intended as a "synthetic mirror of the real world with automated continuous calibration with respect to current real-world information" with a node representing "every man, woman and child"
- the [FuturICT Knowledge Accelerator](#), a multidisciplinary international scientific endeavour with focus on techno-socio-economic-environmental systems.
- a "Global Knowledge Grid", envisaged by Princeton Global Studies Center (2004), and otherwise (Koji Zettsu, et al, *Future Directions of Knowledge Systems Environments for Web 3.0*, 2016)
- *Simulating a Global Brain: using networks of international organizations, world problems, strategies, and values* (2001)

Related initiatives include such as the [Global Futures Intelligence System](#) (of the [Millennium Project](#)), the [Global Brain Institute](#), the [Global Consciousness Project](#), or the [Global Sensemaking](#) network.

Organizations, fora and communities of elites: Many international organizations, whether governmental or nongovernmental would be held to be a source of intelligence with regard to the crises of the times, especially by their members. A compilation is provided periodically by the online *Yearbook of International Organizations*. Notably acclaimed as a primary focus of influential intelligence with respect to global affairs are the [Group of Seven](#) and the [Group of 20](#). These evoke various appreciations of inadequacy (*Group of 7 Dwarfs: Future-blind and Warning-deaf*, 2018).

A typically recognized set of elites deemed influential in global governance by themselves and by the "international community" (or "global community") variously includes the:

- [Bilderberg Group](#): Partly because of its working methods to ensure strict privacy and secrecy, it has been criticised for its lack of transparency and accountability. The undisclosed nature of the proceedings has given rise to several conspiracy theories, which have acquired credence at both extremes of the political spectrum, although there is disagreement about the exact nature of the group's intentions (Annie Gowen, *Is Bilderberg a conference on world affairs or a powerful global cabal? Depends on who you ask*. *The Washington Post*; Ian Richardson, et al, *Bilderberg People: Elite power and consensus in world affairs*, 2011)
- [Club of Rome](#): This has proved influential with respect to global affairs since its original sponsorship of *The Limits to Growth* (1972). The insights and influence of the group has been variously reviewed (Graham Turner, *A comparison of The Limits to Growth with 30 years of reality*, *Global Environmental Change*. 18, 2008, 3); *Club of Rome Reports and Bifurcations, a 50-year overview*, 17 March 2010)
- [Council on Foreign Relations](#): This is an American think tank specializing in US foreign policy and international relations. It is a major focus of conspiracy theories (*Council on Foreign Relations: a shadow government? Maier Files*; Robert J. McMahon, *Review: A Question of Influence: The Council on Foreign Relations and American Foreign Policy*, *Reviews in American History*, 13, 1985, 3)
- [Trilateral Commission](#): This is a nongovernmental international organization aimed at fostering closer cooperation between Japan, Western Europe and North America. It has been criticized as promoting a global consensus among the international ruling classes in order to manage international affairs in the interest of the financial and industrial elites.
- [World Economic Forum](#): As an international non-governmental and lobbying organisation with a mission to improving the state of the world by engaging business, political, academic, and other leaders of society to shape global, regional, and industry agendas. It is a focus of considerable controversy in relation to its promotion of a global [Great Reset](#). It is alleged that the heads of major national intelligence agencies are among the participants at the [2023 WEF Davos Forum](#) -- thereby justifying any claim to be a primary source of global intelligence.
- [Club of Madrid](#): This is an independent non-profit organization created to promote democracy and change in the international community.
- [Club of Vienna](#): This is an international association interested in social, scientific, economic and ecological issues.
- [Tällberg Forum](#): Through studies and dialogue participants translate the analysis of emerging global patterns into inspiration for change. It is increasingly focused on the systems problems emerging from the growing imbalance between nature and human activity.

Some may take the form of [secret societies](#) and "brotherhoods". As a focus of controversy and conspiracies, these are typically held to include:

- [Freemasonry](#): Various held to be influential in governance at all levels of society, members may progress through degrees (numbering up to 33), understood to be associated ever higher degrees of insight, if not intelligence. [Anti-Masonry](#) consists of widely differing criticisms from diverse (and often incompatible) groups who are hostile to Freemasonry in some form. Critics have included religious groups, political groups, and conspiracy theorists.
- [Opus Dei](#): An influential institution of the Catholic Church whose members seek personal Christian holiness and strive to imbue their work and society with Christian principles. It is a focus of multiple [controversies](#).

Such secretive bodies may, or may not be held to be associated with unaccountable secret branches of government, financed from unexplicated security budgets and secretive extraction of funds -- most notably in the USA, but also purportedly a feature of NATO (Sherwood Ross, *Unaccountable Secret Government: most serious constitutional crisis in American history*, *Global Research*, 15 September 2008; Bill Moyers, *The Secret Government: the Constitution in crisis*, *Global Research TV*, 12 August 2010; Richard Boylan, *The Secret Shadow Government: a structural analysis*).

More complex is the focus on "financial intelligence", of which the [Economist Intelligence Unit](#) is a primary example. Less evident is the operation of international cartels, organized crime, and the secretive communities of those of extreme wealth (*Strategies of Hyper-Elites as Admired and Deprecated*, 2022).

Unconventionally focused environments: In contrast to the focus on conventional forms and measures of intelligence, environments may be created as conscious communities to cultivate self-reflexive spiritual intelligence and wisdom -- [intentional communities](#). To the extent these are associated with particular religious traditions, these may take the form of [monasteries](#) or [ashrams](#). They may otherwise be recognized as alternative communities, especially in the absence of any particular religious affiliation. With any focus on aesthetics (and [aesthetic intelligence](#)), they may take the form of "[artist colonies](#)".

Widely cited (and controversial) explorations of such formats include the intentional communities of [Arcosanti](#), [Auroville](#), [Damanhur](#), [Rajneeshpuram](#), and [Findhorn](#). These may possibly be reframed as [ecovillages](#) within the [Global Ecovillage Network](#) -- and as cultivating "environmental intelligence". In contrast with a "monastery", these may take the form of an "ecostery". This is understood to be a place of confluence in time of ecological values, knowledge and wisdom, by [The Ecostery Foundation](#) and by [ecostery communities](#). (*Reimagining Principles Enabling an Existential Ecostery*, 2013).

Exceptional individuals: The following may be distinguished as primary sources of intelligence:

- [International public figures](#) and leaders: The [InterAction Council of Former Heads of State and Government](#) is an independent non-profit organization that brings together former world leaders to mobilize their energy, experience and international contacts in an effort to develop recommendations and foster co-operation and positive action around the world. [The Elders](#) is an international non-governmental organisation of public figures noted as senior statesmen, peace activists and human rights advocates, who were brought together by Nelson Mandela in 2007 -- described as "independent global leaders working together for peace and human rights". (Such groups clearly overlap with the clubs and fora described above)
- [Laureates](#) and medal recipients: Laureates have come to signify eminence or association with [literary awards](#) or [military glory](#) -- typically associated with a medal. The term is also used for recipients of the [Nobel Prize](#) (*List of Nobel Laureates*), the [Gandhi Peace Award](#), and similar achievements, such as the [Right Livelihood Award](#). The [World Laureates Association](#) has been formed for the advancement of science. The [Fields Medal](#) has been described as the Nobel Prize in Mathematics (*List of prizes known as the Nobel or the highest honors of a field*). This implies a curious relationship between honour and what is recognized as intelligence (*Varieties of Honour and Dishonour: distinguishing intrinsic honour from honourable externalities*, 2005).
- [Intellectually gifted](#): This is an intellectual ability significantly higher than average -- hence the term "supergifted". It is a characteristic of children, variously defined, that motivates differences in school programming. It is thought to persist as a trait into adult life. There is no generally agreed definition of giftedness for either children or adults, but most school placement decisions and most longitudinal studies over the course of individual lives have followed people with IQs in the top 2.5 percent of the population -- that is, IQs [above 130](#). Definitions of giftedness also vary across cultures. In particular, the relationship between artistic ability or musical ability and the high academic ability usually associated with high IQ scores is still being explored, with some authors referring to all of those forms of high ability as "giftedness", while other authors distinguish "giftedness" from "talent".
- "[Cultural creatives](#)": Used by Paul H. Ray and Sherry Ruth Anderson to describe describe a large segment in Western society who since about 1985 have developed beyond the standard paradigm of modernists or progressives versus traditionalists or conservatives (*The Cultural Creatives: How 50 Million People Are Changing the World*, 2000).

In detecting intelligent life on Earth at this time, the challenge for the future -- and for extraterrestrials -- may lie in comprehending the gullibility of whole populations in following unquestionably those leaders which are so readily and radically criticized from other human perspectives. Whether it be cult leaders, or leaders of countries, the future may find profoundly puzzling how the leadership by those, who must necessarily remain nameless, should engender such a disproportionate followership -- aside from those named as dictators (Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic, *Why Do So Many Incompetent Men Become Leaders?* *Harvard Business Review*, 22 August 2013; Rob Campbell, *The Buffoons We Admire*, 25 October 2021).

Alternatively, it may indeed be the case that, rather than characteristics of wisdom and maturity (as now understood by humans), those

in quest of intelligent life may attach far higher importance to the communicability of humour and drama -- however twisted and perverse by present standards (*Humour and Play-Fullness: essential integrative processes in governance, religion and transdisciplinarity*, 2005; *Gorbachev as Dramaturge: lessons on social transformation for international organizations*, 1991).

Initiates, the wise and the reborn: Sources of intelligence can be variously considered to include:

- **Councils of the wise:** Namely a group of individuals esteemed by their community (possibly as "elders"). Use is made of this format by governmental and intergovernmental organizations (Jo-Ansie van Wykm, *ECOWAS' Council of the Wise*, 2018; *The African Union Panel of the Wise*, 2012). As UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, set up a committee of "wise men and women" to make recommendations about the UN's future role (*The Challenge of Global Leadership*, 21 November 2011; *Kofi Annan's U.N. reform proposal*, *Radical Middle Newsletter*, 1 May 2005). Of particular relevance is the overview from an American perspective by Robert Schulzinger (*The Wise Men of Foreign Affairs*, 1984).

The European Council set up in 2000 the [Committee of Wise Men on the Regulation of European Securities Markets](#). The format has been used by NATO (*Madeleine Albright named head of NATO's Wise Men*, *Atlantic Council*, 3 August 2009). Albright's appointment highlights the controversy which may be associated with human wisdom, given her defence of UN [sanctions against Iraq](#) for which she was asked: *We have heard that half a million children have died. I mean, that's more children than died in Hiroshima*. To which Albright responded: *We think the price is worth it*. (*Criticism*, 12 May 1996). The format has been developed in the fictional fantasies of the *Lord of the Rings* ([Council of the Wise](#)) and others

Wisdom keepers: These are notably grouped in a global initiative of that name that provides a platform for elders and spiritual leaders from indigenous communities and wisdom traditions around the world. A number of more local initiatives exist. The [Wisdom Keepers Council](#) is a diverse group of elders who draw on vast and varied life experiences and understandings, to collectively design a world where every individual is awakened to the seat of power within. A group of wisdom keepers participated in the Earth Summit of 1992.

- **Initiates and the "reborn":** Considerable significance is accorded by some to the possibility of being "born again", as may be variously understood (*Varieties of Rebirth*, 2004; *Web Resources on Being Born Again*, 2004). The implication is that this engenders a higher order of insight, presumably with strategic implications (*Strategic Opportunities of the Twice Born*, 2004).

The process may be understood in terms of initiation through a succession of "degrees" analogous to those of academia. For example, reference is widely made to the succession of [degrees in Freemasonry](#). An equivalent is evident among indigenous peoples, as in the case of Australia (A. P. Elkin, *Aboriginal Men of High Degree*, University of Queensland Press, 1977; *Ngangkari: Aboriginal Traditional Healers of Central Australia*, Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council Aboriginal Corporation, 2013).

- **Spiritual masters, guides and gurus:** Significance is variously associated with individuals recognized as having particular insight characterized by a special form of intelligence. In some traditions the insight may be especially associated with a spiritual lineage (Edo Shonin and William Van Gordon, *The Lineage of Mindfulness, Mindfulness in Practice*, 5 August 2014). By contrast, extreme examples are recognized as "[crazy wisdom](#)", namely unconventional, outrageous, unexpected, or unpredictable behavior linked to religious or spiritual pursuits
- **Esoteric hypotheses:** Insights from extracorporeal spiritual guides continue to widely sought through "[channels](#)" and through trance -- with some leaders renowned for their recourse to this modality. Significance is also accorded by some to the existence of an "invisible" [spiritual hierarchy](#) enabling the development of humanity. This may be associated with speculation regarding a secret group of [Illuminati](#) manipulating the development of humanity for questionable ends.
- **Sacred scriptures:** A primary source of intelligence for many religions -- typically considered sufficient for the crises of the times -- are the insights offered by their [sacred scriptures](#). They differ from literature by being a compilation or discussion of beliefs, mythologies, ritual practices, commandments or laws, ethical conduct, spiritual aspirations, and for creating or fostering a religious community

Divination: A process traditionally used to foresee, to foretell, to predict and to prophesy in the attempt to gain insight into a question or situation by way of an occultic, standardized process or ritual. [Methods of divination](#) can be found around the world, and many cultures practice the same methods under different names. [Augury](#) was a valued practice in the Roman Empire. Leaders of countries are noted to have relied to a surprising degree on particular methods in present times (*How The Reagan White House Used Astrology To Make Decisions*, *Medium*, 21 July 2022).

Indwelling intelligence of humanity

Irrespective of the forms of intelligence noted above, there is an optimistic assumption that humanity is characterized by some inherent form of collective intelligence by which its development is guided. Strategically, this is partially recognized by use of phrases such as the capacity for "[bumbling through](#)" or "[muddling through](#)" (*Charles Lindblom, The Science of 'Muddling Through', Public Administration Review*, 19, 1959).

The implication is that there is an innate intelligence to humanity -- a form of natural genius -- which will enable it to overcome crises in some manner. This potential is explored separately (*Implication of Indwelling Intelligence in Global Confidence-building*, 2012) through the following sections:

<p>Experiential operational descriptors</p> <p>Engagement with indwelling intelligence through nature</p> <p>Engagement with indwelling intelligence through buildings and artefacts</p> <p>Indwelling intelligence of the human body</p> <p>Indwelling intelligence in personal life experience</p> <p>Indwelling intelligence through encounter with an "other"</p> <p>Indwelling intelligence within collectives and communities</p> <p>Indwelling intelligence within systems of belief</p> <p>Branding barrier, semiotic barrier and status barrier</p>	<p>"Universal" intelligence from an "unconditioned" perspective?</p> <p>Indwelling intelligence from an extraterrestrial perspective</p> <p>Intraterrestrials? Outdwelling intelligence? Cyclic intelligence?</p> <p>Mirror awareness?</p> <p>Periodic possibility: an alternative presentation</p> <p>Intelligence and Ignorance: a necessary complementarity?</p> <p>Dynamic of indwelling intelligence: questioning learning</p> <p>Engendering global confidence through sustaining an indwelling question</p>
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Rather than "terrestrial intelligence" being primarily associated with humanity, however inherent or a consequence of "intelligent design", consideration may be given to the planetary intelligence potentially associated with the [Gaia hypothesis](#) (Hunter Parsons, *Scientists Propose Idea of Planetary Intelligence, Gaia*, 21 March 2022).

Engendering intelligence through dialogue?

Considerable significance is attached to the process of dialogue as a means of engendering an intelligent response to a collective challenge -- possibly by accessing the inherent intelligence discussed above. A useful distinction may be made between:

Dialogue between two or more individuals deemed intelligent or wise: This is exemplified by those which have been recorded and widely disseminated, or those which can be imagined from their writings:

- J. Krishnamurti and David Bohm: *The Future of Humanity: a dialog between Krishnamurti and Bohm* (1990); *The Krishnamurti-Bohm Dialogues*;
- S. Gieser: , *Depth Psychology and Quantum Physics: Wolfgang Pauli's dialogue with C.G. Jung* (2005); *Wolfgang Pauli -- Carl Gustav Jung, a dialogue over the boundaries*
- Don Howard: *Revisiting the Einstein-Bohr Dialogue* (Science 2.0, 2009)
- Allan Kulikoff: *Abraham Lincoln and Karl Marx in Dialogue* (Dialogues in History) 2018)
- Daniel Fidel Ferrer: *Triologue between Heidegger, Nietzsche, and Nagarjuna in Todtnauberg* (2011)
- Ralph Abraham, Terence McKenna and Ruper Sheldrake: *Triologues at the Edge of the West: chaos, creativity, and the resacralization of the world* (1992)
- *Mack and MacLean Dialogue on Civil Rights History in Law and History Review* (Legal History Blog, 10 March 2009)

Especially relevant (and problematic) is the compilation by [Renée Weber](#) (*Dialogues with Scientists and Sages: the search for unity*, 1986). It could be considered problematic in that, as indicated by the title, it concerns dialogues "with" scientists and sages, but not "between" them. The challenge which is not addressed is the limited collective insight into the inadequacies of dialogue "between" scientists and sages -- or even between scientists, or between sages. The limited evidence of dialogue between sages is especially striking.

The dynamics invite use of provocative metaphors (*Epistemological Challenge of Cognitive Body Odour: exploring the underside of dialogue*, 2006; *Snoring of The Other: a politically relevant psycho-spiritual metaphor?* 2006). These can be understood as unmentionable challenges to sustainable paradigm shifting and social transformation (*Reframing Personal Relationships between Innovators or Leaders*, 1998).

Dialogue within a limited group, whether self-selected or otherwise: Most evident is the dialogue associated with the [jury process](#) -- from which it is expected that an impartial verdict emerges. One variant is known as a [Citizens' Jury](#). This is an innovative means of involving everyday people (rsandomly selected) in the process of government decision-making. Instead of a four-minute telephone call, they are a 40-hour in-person, deliberative process. As the name suggests, in essence, a Citizens' Jury is a group of everyday people chosen by democratic lottery convened to consider a given topic and provide a response or recommendation to the governing body.

Dialogue between two or more collectives through one or more representatives of each party: With three parties, this is termed a [trilogue](#). In the case of the European Union, a [formal trilogue meeting](#) is a is used in the EU legislative process as an informal [tripartite](#) meeting attended by representatives of the [European Parliament](#), the [Council of the European Union](#), and the [European Commission](#). It takes its name from a literary form, the trilogue, which means a conversation with three parties. Other examples include:

- Leonard Swidler, et al: *Triologue: Jews, Christians, and Muslims in Dialogue* (2007)
- Anver M. Emon, et al: *Natural Law A Jewish Christian and Islamic Triologue* (2015)
- Mohiuddin Waseem: *Dialogue between Abrahamic Faiths* (Welcome to Abrahamic Faiths, 2006)
- Ed Whelan: *The Melian Dialogue: the brutal reality of power* (Classical Wisdom, 5 October 2021)

Aside from the [interfaith dialogues](#) indicated above, a form of collective intelligence may be assumed to emerge from inter-disciplinary dialogue (J. R. Martin, et al, *Academic Discourse: an inter-disciplinary dialogue*, 2020). Higher orders of intelligence may be assumed to emerge from [transdisciplinary dialogue](#). Unfortunately the capacity to distinguish the emergence of ever higher orders of insight is not a preoccupation of the various approaches to dialogue analysis (*Questionable adequacy of "dialogue" as practiced?* 2022; *Overview of a variety of approaches to dialogue and conversation*, 2021).

Conferences as "dialogues": More generally, conferences can be understood as a means of eliciting collective intelligence on any topic, and especially on global challenges. From this perspective, the many international organizations and social media fora can be understood as sustaining "dialogues" of relevance to the crises of the times (*Evaluating Synthesis Initiatives and their Sustaining Dialogues*, 2000).

Despite claims to the contrary, and commitment to the possibility, the apparently limited contribution of any form of dialogue in response

to global challenges is necessarily a concern (*Challenging impoverishment of conventional discourse*, 2016). Especially problematic are the assumptions regarding the possibility and nature of consensus in the face of intractable disagreement (*The Consensus Delusion: mysterious attractor undermining global civilization as currently imagined*, 2011).

Democracy as indicator of relative lack of intelligence?

In a global society in crisis, it is appropriate to ask whether the prevalence of democracy (and the challenges to it) are themselves an indicator of the fundamental inadequacy of human collective intelligence -- effectively of collective unintelligence. This perspective is seeming challenged by commentaries such as the following:

- [What Collective Intelligence can do for Democracies](#) (*Democracy Technologies*, 29 November 2022)
- [Democracy as Collective Intelligence](#) (*Involve*, 2 February 2022)
- [Collective Intelligence and Democracy](#) (*GovLab at NYU*, 28 November 2018)
- [Collective Intelligence for Democracy as a Design Challenge](#) (*The Collective Intelligence Blog*, 16 June 2017)
- Stephen Boucher, Carina Antonia Hallin, Lex Paulson (Eds.): *The Routledge Handbook of Collective Intelligence for Democracy and Governance* (2023)

With the array of technical facilities, it is appropriate to ask about the degree of uptake and the resistance to what such technology may offer. Is the intelligence failure characterized by a failure of appropriate application -- a failure of the "operacy" by which understanding of intelligence should be extended?

Especially questionable, however, is the extent to which the outcome of electoral voting in major democracies may turn on a single percentage point. This has the implication that 51% of the electorate are right (and duly represented), with 49% as being wrong (and excluded from effective representation in government). Disputes in this regard are evident in the invasion of the US Congress on 6 January 2021, purportedly inspired by Donald Trump) and that of the National Congress of Brazil on 8 January 2023 (purportedly inspired by Jair Bolsonaro).

The use of referenda offers other examples, as discussed separately (*Criteria Justifying Recounting or Revoting in Democracy post-Brexit*, 2016).

As described by *Wikipedia*, for example:

Democracy... is a form of government in which the people have the authority to deliberate and decide legislation ("direct democracy"), or to choose governing officials to do so ("representative democracy"). Who is considered part of "the people" and how authority is shared among or delegated by the people has changed over time and at different rates in different countries....

The notion of democracy has evolved over time considerably. Throughout history, one can find evidence of direct democracy, in which communities make decisions through popular assembly. Today, the dominant form of democracy is representative democracy, where citizens elect government officials to govern on their behalf such as in a parliamentary or presidential democracy. Prevalent day-to-day decision making of democracies is the majority rule, though other decision making approaches like supermajority and consensus have also been integral to democracies....

In the common variant of liberal democracy, the powers of the majority are exercised within the framework of a representative democracy, but the constitution limits the majority and protects the minority -- usually through the enjoyment by all of certain individual rights, e.g. freedom of speech or freedom of association....

World public opinion strongly favors democratic systems of government. According to the [V-Dem Institute](#) and [Economist Intelligence Unit](#) democracy indices, less than half the world's population lives in a democracy as of 2021. [Democratic backsliding](#) with a rise in [hybrid regimes](#) has exceeded democratization since the early to mid 2010s. [*Democracy Index 2021: less than half the world lives in a democracy*, *Economist Intelligence Unit*, 10 February 2022]

That *Wikipedia* entry details criticism of the inadequacy of democracy under the following headings:

- [Arrow's theorem](#)
- [Inefficiencies](#)
- [Popular rule as a façade](#)
- [Mob rule](#)
- [Political instability](#)
- [Opposition](#)

Variations and alternatives are then described in the following terms:

- [Constitutional monarchy](#)
- [Republic](#)
- [Liberal democracy](#)
- [Socialist](#)
- [Anarchist](#)
- [Sortition](#)
- [Consociational](#)
- [Consensus democracy](#)
- [Supranational](#)
- [Inclusive](#)
- [Participatory politics](#)
- [Cosmopolitan](#)
- [Creative democracy](#)
- [Guided democracy](#)

With the origins of democracy proudly acclaimed as having originated in Athenian Greece over 2,500 years ago, the question is whether the evolution of democracy since that time can be understood as comparable to the evolution of technology and the intelligence devoted to it. Does the set of variants above imply conscious research into the possibility of more viable alternatives -- or rather a reactive adaptation to a limited degree of sensitivity to inadequacy? (*Collective-Systemic sins and vices -- of democracy?* 2022; *Ambiguity of*

"democratic oversight": institutionalisation of negligence? 2013).

Given the manner in which opposition is integrated into the adversarial processes of democracy, the failure to take account of the insights of oppositional logic is indicative of the indifference to relevant research (*Oppositional Logic as Comprehensible Key to Sustainable Democracy*, 2018). Also curious is the manner in which those with some affinity with the jurisdiction in question are either included or excluded from the electorate, as with diasporas (*Affinity, Diaspora, Identity, Reunification, Return*, 2013). The problematic dynamics are increasingly highlighted by participation in social media (*E-democracy, swarm behaviour and swarm intelligence*, 2009).

There is indeed a degree of preoccupation with "the future of democracy":

- *The Future of Democracy* (Harvard University Global Studies Outreach, August 2022)
- *The Future of Democracy* (Berggruen Institute, 2018)
- *The Future of Democracy Around the World* (Council on Foreign Relations, 2019)
- *The Future of Democracy in America* (OpenDemocracy, 2012)
- *The Future of Democracy* (The New Institute, 2022)
- *The Future of Democracy* (OECD, 2004)
- *The Future of Democracy* (The New Yorker)

However, with the increasing investment in "intelligence", a degree of incompatibility with "democracy" is already evident (Mike Rettig, *Democracy and Intelligence: an uneasy working partnership*, *Fair Observer*, 12 March 2013; Heather Heying, *Why unintelligent protest may kill democracy*, *Big Think*; Vyacheslav Polonski, *How artificial intelligence silently took over democracy*, *World Economic Forum*, 9 August 2017; Steven Feldstein, *How artificial intelligence systems could threaten democracy*, *The Conversation*, 22 April 2019).

Ironically, it is only too common for competing political parties in a democracy to accuse each other in legislative debates of lack of intelligence -- even with terms such as "stupidity", "ignorance", "irrationality", and the like.

The question is whether governance in the future will be inspired by democracy (as an extrapolation or adaptation thereof) or by more fundamental insights -- potentially resulting from contact with extraterrestrials. As indicated by current crises, is society increasingly ungovernable in the light of current insights (*Ungovernability of Sustainable Global Democracy?* 2011). Given the probability of innovation, society currently exhibits a degree of naivety in science fiction speculation on forms of governance and plenary assembly in the far distant future -- and in galactic empires (*World government in fiction*, *Wikipedia*)-- variously held to be extrapolations of the format of the United Nations (*Aesthetics of Governance in the Year 2490*, 1990).

Given the evident outcome of democratic processes, more problematic is the potential justification of any hypothetical intervention by extraterrestrials -- their equivalent of "humanitarian intervention". This may be framed by more "universal", as can be speculatively explored (*Writing Guidelines for Future Occupation of Earth by Extraterrestrials*, 2010; *Anticipation of Judicial Inquisition of Humans by Extraterrestrials*, 2020).

Intelligence as a recognizable capacity -- or otherwise?

The manner in which the quest for intelligence and sentience is framed by the above argument is in all probability completely misleading -- especially from any future perspective. To the extent that what is implied by intelligence is associated with the capacity to organize information fruitfully, consideration of longer-term viability and implementation may have a far higher degree of relevance.

There is therefore a degree of irony to the relation between intelligence and current understandings of sustainability -- in a society in crisis, much challenged by ensuring it. Can a society be held to exhibit collective intelligence if it is incapable of sustaining itself -- over an extended period of time, rather than an electoral cycle? The rise and fall of past civilizations could be explored in terms of their capacity to embody collective intelligence (Johan Galtung and Sohail Inayatullah, *Macrohistory and Macrohistorians: perspectives on individual, social, and civilizational change*, 1997).

This frames the question as to the form of intelligence which enables sustainability, if sustainability is a key expression of intelligence. Is such intelligence then to be understood as intimately related to engendering negentropy, namely higher degrees of order -- however that may come to be collectively comprehended? (*Engaging with Insight of a Higher Order*, 2014). As in many traditional folktales, provocatively it might be asked whether the intelligence sought on Earth is associated with the capacity to solve a fundamental puzzle (*Global Governance as a Riddle: but is a solution the answer to the question?* 2018). Given the use of the so-called **mirror test** to distinguish non-human awareness, a more complex form of that test might characterize the quest for intelligence on Earth (*Mirror self-recognition and environmental mirroring*, 2008).

Rather than the distinction between "sentient life" and "intelligence", is the focus from an extraterrestrial or future perspective on a modality which is more general and subtle? Wisdom and its current appreciation may be indicative of a confused comprehension of its nature -- as an emergent or indwelling modality. The reflections of **Pierre Teilhard de Chardin** on a potential **Omega Point** convergence are then relevant.

Especially misleading may be any endeavour to articulate the question in terms of conventional academic understandings of "category". It is highly probable that such conventions will be called into question by the future, irrespective of their appreciation by extraterrestrials. The point is emphasized by the contrast between Western mindsets and the so-called **Dreamtime** of indigenous Australians. Will the current engagement with reality by humanity be disparaged by both as a form of "dreaming" in a manner similar to the framings of the mindsets of various indigenous peoples (Darrell A. Posey, *Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity*, United Nations Environmental Programme, 1999).

University of Earth ∞ University of Ignorance?

Collectively dysfunctional intelligence and expertise? Despite humanity's immense intellectual resources and insight, variously upheld as the height of intelligence, a basic question at this time is why these appear to be inadequate to the challenges it faces. Seemingly there is not the slightest doubt in that regard -- ironically at the highest levels of governance. Humanity is appropriately proud of its intelligence, but insensitive to its limitations. Is there no case for recognizing that -- from the perspective of the future -- human intelligence may currently not be "fit for purpose"? This view may well be shared by extraterrestrials -- however hypothetical they may be deemed to be.

How is it that the inadequacy of the intelligence is not a matter of concern -- irrespective of the frustrations of intelligence agencies and their quest for ever higher degrees of surveillance? Is the SETI focus on extraterrestrial intelligence a reflection of a basic psychological tendency to project inadequacy elsewhere -- whether the inadequacy is individual or collective? Tragically it could be said that there is far greater investment in assisting the disabled worldwide than in enabling the response of higher orders of intelligence to global crises, especially in a society permeated by [cancel culture](#) preoccupations.

Whilst intelligence of every degree can indeed be detected, the issue would seem to be the lack of a higher order of insight into how such intelligence might be appropriately and memorably configured in response global crises -- and how resistance to any such configuration is engendered. Ironically it is the exemplars of intelligence who are most assiduous in deprecating each others perspective -- as exemplified between disciplines and between religions, and within them. Also ironical is the manner in which it is the "intelligence agencies" who are most assiduous in identifying and coopting those of higher intelligence -- and grooming them questionably to focus narrowly on national rather than global security.

Ungovernability of a global society in crisis? As intelligence is currently understood and variously appreciated it, is there a need to confront the reality that it reinforces the ungovernability of global society? The interrelationship between the different approaches to intelligence may well be seen as enabling misleadership, and ensuring "misfollowership", whether deliberately or inadvertently (*Emergence of a Global Misleadership Council: misleading as vital to governance of the future?* 2007; *Framing the Interplay of Leadership and Misleadership*, 2007).

Alternatively the assumption that global society is governable (with the current forms of intelligence) may be usefully called into question, as argued separately (*Ungovernability of Sustainable Global Democracy?* 2011) in the following sections:

Recognition of ungovernability	Dependence of viable governance on extrajudicial initiatives
Major current indications of inherent ungovernability	Successful secret governance?
Secondary indicators of ungovernability	Societal grooming as a key to sustainable governance?
Arrogant cultivation of the pretence of successful governance	Rendez-vous of governance with time

Such is the perceived degree of ungovernability that many with resources are actively imagining the possibility of a higher quality of life "elsewhere" -- however this can be understood (*Future Global Exodus to the Metasphere*, 2022; Kate Stephens and Pallab Ghosh, *Can humanity's new giant leap into space succeed?* BBC, 17 January 2023).

Search for Earth-based Intelligence? In the light of various current efforts to institutionalize and fund the [Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence](#) (SETI), the argument above frames the need for a complementary "Search for Earth-based Intelligence" -- perhaps to be labelled "SETI-prime"? What forms might it take given the cognitive modalities through which it may be expressed from the various perspectives currently considered "alien" by the different cultures and disciplines of Earth? Could it be recognized by conventional cognitive modalities? How might the quest be embodied institutionally or enabled by AI as a form of "global brain"?

One archetypal inspiration for many has been the speculative articulation by [Isaac Asimov](#) of the [Galactic Library on Trantor](#) -- also referenced as the [Imperial Library](#). Somewhat related speculation is that of [Jorge Luis Borges](#) (*The Library of Babel*, 1941) and its inspiration for the initiative of Jonathan Basile (*The Library of Babel*, 2015). A contrasting inspiration has been the historical [Great Library of Alexandria](#), with current efforts at its reconstitution as the [Bibliotheca Alexandrina](#)

Somewhat different is the inspiration offered by the periodic game in [Castalia](#) to which the Nobel laureate [Hermann Hesse](#) speculatively alludes (*The Glass Bead Game*, 1943), as discussed separately (*Evoking Castalia as Envisaged, Entoned and Embodied*, 2016). The [Bridges Conferences](#) promoting interdisciplinary work in mathematics and art could be considered as initiatives in that spirit.

An earlier "complementary" project proposal has been made by [Olivier Auber](#) (*On the Search for Terrestrial Intelligence, Humanities, Arts and Society*, June 2020). With the acronym STI (rather than SETI), this assumes that extraterrestrials would be characterized by intelligence rather than "cosmic stupidity" (as has been suggested by others). The STI initiative is envisaged as creating a network of detectors and amplifiers of human intelligence, capable of revealing the mechanisms of human stupidity and neutralizing them. The proposal addresses the paradox of human systemic stupidity:

At the heart of the paradox are networks and what we do with them. STI could be limited to this at first, and invite us to ask ourselves the following questions: What status do we give to our networks? What information dynamics animate them? What evolution do we envision for our artificial networks in relation to our biological, social, and cultural nature?

Need for an intelligence "wiki"? Given the variety of periodic awards and prizes for intelligent achievement, it is curious that no effort is made to enable a compilation of intelligent insights having some degree of relevance to the global crises of the times. There is no annual ranking of insights -- as might be a reflection of the output of think tanks, for example. There is no prize for institutional intelligence or policy innovation -- as might provide a focus for global policy-makers. There is no ranking of dialogues of higher quality by which greater insight is engendered.

Some disciplines, notably those with a spiritual emphasis, may well compile insights of their leaders as being all that is required by the

times. Insightful quotes of key figures in more conventional disciplines may be assiduously compiled. However no effort is made to use information technology to integrate insights across disciplines as might be done in an appropriate "wiki" format. Specialized and sectoral initiatives in that regard have been envisaged, as explored separately (*Corpus Callosum of the Global Brain? Locating the integrative function within the world wide web*, 2014).

With respect to preoccupation with global conflict, a *Bulletin of Peace Proposals* provided one framework from 1970 to 1992 -- before its transformation into *Security Dialogue*. There is indeed extensive preoccupation with "data mining" and the requisite information technology. Given the complex relation between "data" and "intelligence", it is curious that so little reference is made to "intelligence mining" (in contrast to "mining intelligence"). If intelligence is the product of data mining, where is that product highlighted? In patents alone?

How might "wisdom mining" be distinguished from data mining -- given its potential relevance in times of crisis? (Salma Khan and Muhammad Shaheen, *From data mining to wisdom mining*, *Journal of Information Science*, July 2021). Missing from the mining metaphor is the challenge of integrative configuration of what is extracted by such a process.

One initiative in partial response to the challenge is the online set of interrelated databases of the *Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential*. However this makes no effort to focus on the quality of wisdom and maturity which may be the primary characteristic of the intelligence which extraterrestrials might hope to detect -- as with future humans. It is currently naive to imagine a global civilization informed by such qualities, as separately speculated (*The Isdom of the Wisdom Society: embodying time as the heartland of humanity*, 2003).

University of Earth? In contrast to the role of the World Wide Web, is there a case for some form of "University of Earth" as an integrative focus for Earth-based intelligence? The early inspiration for an integrative organization of knowledge by some disciplines and the library sciences has seemingly long been lost. How then might such an initiative be organized to contrast with the fragmentation so effectively insitutionalized in the many "world universities" and by the web itself?

Rather than the somewhat presumptuous focus on what is known, a "University of Earth" could be usefully complemented by an alternative functionality focused on ignorance, as discussed separately (*University of Ignorance*, 2013). More provocatively sensitive to a potential future and extraterrestrial challenges, this could cultivate engagement with "nothing", the unknown, the incomprehensible, and the unsaid, as variously imagined (*Global Strategic Implications of the "Unsaid": from myth-making towards a "wisdom society"*, 2003; *Emerging Significance of Nothing*, 2012; *Unknown Undoing: challenge of incomprehensibility of systemic neglect*, 2008).

Unknowns and ignorance? Especially problematic is the manner in which intelligence is associated with what is known, despite the articulation notoriously offered in 2002 by Donald Rumsfeld as US Secretary of Defence regarding the **knowns in relation to the unknowns**. The associated concerns had been reflected in an earlier report by the American Psychological Association (*Intelligence: Knowns and Unknowns*, 1995). The strategic implications of the focus on the known can be variously explored (*Unknown Undoing: challenge of incomprehensibility of systemic neglect*, 2008).

Rather than the conventional university focus on "learning", there is therefore a strong case for an environment in which "unlearning" is cultivated -- with the associated facility of "unsaying" as variously envisaged (Michael A. Sells. *Mystical Languages of Unsaying*, 1994; *Being What You Want: problematic kataphatic identity vs. potential of apophatic identity?* 2008). There is a case for a much greater appreciation of ignorance -- especially given the contrast between present understanding and the insights of the future -- if humanity is indeed to grow and develop as widely assumed (Nicholas Rescher, *Ignorance: on the wider implications of deficient knowledge*, 2009).

One expression of the apparent need is the "requirement to embrace error", as articulated by Donald N. Michael (*On Learning to Plan and Planning to Learn*, 1973; *The Unprepared Society: planning for a precarious future*, 1968):

More bluntly, future-responsive societal learning makes it necessary for individuals and organizations to embrace error. It is the only way to ensure a shared self-consciousness about limited theory to the nature of social dynamics, about limited data for testing theory, and hence about our limited ability to control our situation well enough to be successful more often than not.

As expressed by the poet John Keats, the need is for the capacity to be in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts -- without any irritable reaching after fact and reason (*Negative Capability*, 1817).

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