

INTRODUCTION

In our obsession with antagonisms of the moment, we often forget how much unites all the members of humanity. Perhaps we need some outside, universal threat to make us recognize this common bond. I occasionally think how quickly our differences worldwide would vanish if we were facing an alien threat from outside this world. And yet, I ask you, is not an alien force already among us?

—President Ronald Reagan,
United Nations General Assembly,
September 21, 1987, Address

Key words: extraterrestrial intelligence (ETI), Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI), prokaryote, eukaryote, enduring global acknowledgment (EGA), enduring global relationship (EGR), Biosphere I, the Brookings Report.

Are we alone in the universe? Our intelligence and our capacity to feel allow us to recognize and gives us potential to appreciate the innumerable qualities that this universe does and will offer to us. We have a lot to learn about our universal home.

Do we perceive the universe in common with other life-forms? By logical extension and of other types of reasoning, the answer is yes. We would have all of it in common. For many, all that remains is to have irrefutable knowledge that we do share our universe with others.

When and if we do meet up with ET, how will this most historical encounter influence our human condition? All the elements

which constitute the living parameters of our civilization, consisting of many cultural communities, define our human condition, as well as those of all life on Earth.

It is worth considering whether some of the history we wrote about our civilization in the twentieth century and have yet to write today could occupy a place in interplanetary annals. Have certain events, like exploding atomic bombs, two world wars, many smaller ones and their aftermath, and environmental damage to our planet, been considered so important that the galactic community archives have recorded these? Are they, right now, watching these evolutionary events unfold? Reflection on these events could decide how *extra-terrestrial intelligence (ETI)* will deal with us during upcoming visitations. Could this be an explanation for the ever-growing catalogue of UFO/UAP encounters throughout recorded history?

Various opinions are offered as to the shaping of these worldviews toward cosmic meaning, perspectives, and challenges of possible recurring communications with ET. One continuum was discussed by NASA engineer and contributor to the *Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI)* Mark L. Lupisella. This spectrum denotes that, of the philosophical paths we could take in designing a strategy from a pragmatic to a cosmocentric, or a hybrid “bootstrapped” course, Lupisella suggests that “the cosmos and culture co-evolve and will increasingly co-evolve with culture playing an important role in the overall evolution of the universe” (Lupisella 2011).

The coronavirus pandemic of 2020, popularly known as COVID-19, is an example of a phenomenon that has affected everyone within our entire civilization. Another example relates to the effects from worldwide climate change.

You should take pause and reread the quote from President Ronald Reagan at the front of this chapter. The prophecy of his words strikes an acute resonance that exponentially multiplies when you live through one of them. How true do you think his message is to an end point of humankind’s merging attitudes, worldviews, and effects on our human nature and our human condition?

There is a certain existential importance that wisdom and nature assign to addressing for types of phenomena that could arise.

These are just two examples. Another one is defined by the potential eventuality for encountering a first contact with life from outside Earth. We know from the reception to and aftermath from the COVID-19 pandemic the deleterious consequences with which a lack of preparation can cause from a situation. Designing a plan of action in advance of a potential and probable significant event that affects a large populous is one task that our human communities appear deficient in practicing, much less mastering.

Though established only after World War II, the debate aligned with humankind pursuing a strategy of a first-contact event has existed for centuries. Among the early pioneers of message-transmission development include the mathematician Karl Friedrich Gauss, in the 1830s, and astronomer Joseph Johann Littrow. Both used contrived geographic apparatus in their testing protocols. Gauss used the Siberia tundra and plots of trees to draw out the mathematical shape of squares and triangles on the landscape, while Littrow used the Sahara as a sort of blackboard to dig twenty-mile trenches into similar giant mathematical shapes (Seland 2020, 166).

With humankind’s twentieth-century explosion in technology advancement, new and varied means of message transmission developed and evolved. The transmission debate today has been infiltrated with new topical concerns. Among these are ideological considerations of a scientific, philosophical, sociopolitical, ethical, cultural, and sizeable risk assessments that often generalize into arguments about the benefits of contact.

While the list of these debate points of contention is long and growing longer, there is one particular constraint worth introducing here. The near-unanimous opinion that contact attempts will be fruitless due to the impossibility for us to communicate across the vast interstellar distances that separate any ET from us is particularly fatalistic and naive. Remember, this same opinion of impossibility was popular before the respective discoveries of humankind breaking the sound barrier, escaping Earth’s atmosphere, landing on the moon, splitting the atom among numerous other achievements. This sequence of events is exemplary of the fallacious logic that exists to explain the current impossibility of interstellar communication.

Our current knowledge has developed very rapidly during the last century; on this, all are in agreement. The quantity and scope of what will be discovered, on a time line sooner rather than later, may significantly change this great debate once it is discovered that these vast interstellar distances are not a barrier to message transmission and communication.

It appears that satisfying the empirical critical thinking needs of the science and engineering communities drive the thought process in this way. If some scientific theory or engineering objective is not yet achievable by us, such as faster-than-light travel or interstellar communication, we tend to perceive and express our opinions in ways that support the impossible theory and also make claims that if it is impossible for us, it must be impossible in nature.

The noted examples are just two of many that exist in the dialogue. Just because humankind has not yet figured out how to conveniently travel to, say, the Zeta Reticuli binary star system, a mere thirty-nine light-years away, we tend to structure our arguments in the way that declares it impossible for any other intelligent being to accomplish, or for nature to allow. It is a type of arrogance that is part of our species' nature, our human condition.

But in the discourse of nature and the existence of phenomena, are we missing out on many monumental discoveries and postponing many achievements by years, decades, and centuries because of this arrogance? What exists in nature exists despite our arrogance, anthropocentrism, or egocentric nature.

As noted, the points of disagreement are numerous, complex, and lengthy. Long-debated arguments continue to rage on in the literature about a multitude of controversial areas in the subject of the extraterrestrial hypothesis (ETH). These include, among others, whether our civilization is sociologically ready for contact; how science, the government, and the military shape the framework of discussion; philosophical controversies over a better use of knowledge and resources to improve our own living situation; ideologies over

globalization; society's individual freedoms; and the large number of perceived risks to a contact scenario. All these conversations will be part of your subsequent reading.

The preceding statements are salient in that, when it comes to a discourse over a plan design process for a particular project with such far-reaching scope and implications as this one, they present the need for involvement of many different communities that comprise our civilization. Thus far, the actors to the debate and more general theme of actual first contact have involved only the government, science (particularly astronomy), and the military. While these cohorts to the first-contact stage are necessary participants, many other communities in our civilization require representation.

I will be discussing, at length, a concept of the *human condition* and how it is applied to this notion. I am presuming here that there has been no prior contact with ET, as per the declarations of our government and the regimes that assert this declaration, such as NASA's active search for new life, SETI's search for new messages undiscovered, and others. That said, I will be exploring the efficacy of whether some or all of Earth's communities can assist in preparing a plan designed for a meaningful first contact with intelligent extraterrestrial life. I will also be exploring the efficacy of creating a plan design itself as a natural prerequisite of the other inquiries.

These "other" communities in the definition of the human condition constitute the many professional fields of study: the social and astrosociences, philosophy, theology, fine arts, legal and sociopolitics, ethics, and economic and cultural thinking ideologies. The sum of these groups' contributions to our planet's existence constitutes my formulation of the human condition concept. I will discuss the efficacy of this notion toward applying a plan design strategy. Additional definitions will be presented next that will assist you in organizing your thoughts and allowing you to test your hypotheses, in addition to engaging and enlightening you to make other inquiries while reading the text.

The search for life originating from outside Earth embodies two basic modes: The search for simple biological forms, prokaryotes and simpler eukaryotes, defines the first mode. A *prokaryote* is

a primitive single-celled life-form that does not contain a distinct nucleus enclosed within a membrane or other organelles. This is the domain focus engaged by NASA and other US government-funded agencies. A *eukaryote* is an organism that contains DNA and can be either single or multicelled but, in context of this situation, is deemed by our knowledge not to exhibit characteristics of intelligence. Nongovernment-funded agencies, like SETI, seek out existence signatures from more complex eukaryotes like us humans.

These statements assert that both science and the government are pursuing a course of inquiry, at least one made aware to the public that is within the means of human control. This implies that we are the explorers using technology that is at our level of development to seek contact with simple life-forms, or a rudimentary contact, only with more advanced ETI (extraterrestrial intelligences).

Numerous communities argue that various governmental agencies worldwide have collaborated, or acted alone, to suppress any knowledge of activities with ETI. By logical inference, this means that contact has already taken place.

Within the scope of this discussion, *contact* is defined as “an establishing of communication with someone or an observing or receiving of a significant signal from a person or object” (*Merriam-Webster* 2021). The inclusion of *object* in this definition holds high appeal when considering I will be discussing such objects as artificial intelligence and postbiological intelligence. But this definition easily suggests a mindset where *one single* contact satisfies the object meaning of contact with ETI.

The general theme of my discussions will be to place *contact* along a manifest of what I call an *enduring global acknowledgment* or EGA. This is meant to define a landscape of general irreversible acceptance by our civilization that ETI exists in nature. It implies a more complex and additive nature than what contact would be for many other discussions. Another general theme will be to further discuss, along the same manifest, contact on an avenue toward building a relationship with the ETI cohort. This will be known as an *enduring global relationship* or EGR. I will use EGA, EGR, and ETI frequently throughout our discussions in this work.

Another term you will see frequently is *Biosphere I*. This means “Earth,” our home planet. Biosphere I enriches upon the meaning of Earth in the geophysical sense to include a synergy and connectiveness of the planet and its life-forms, an ambience of naturalness and cosmic proportion that is not present in the term *Earth*. This interpretation of our home planet, in context with the discussions in this book, makes use of the term and concept *Biosphere I* effectual to your enrichment of the associated themes.

Thus far, no knowledge of any plan design for contact on an EGA-EGR protocol has been revealed. If one does, it is not transparent to or accessible by society. In this case, a version may rest within the archives of the government bureaucracy. The closest correlation to any meaningful pertinent information we know of may be the 1960 *Proposed Studies on the Implications of Peaceful Space Activities for Human Affairs*, a.k.a. *The Brookings Report*. This document very rudimentarily mentions the topic that is ET, but that section of the report has since resonated with utmost power throughout the landscape of ufology and society. Its domain only includes the roles of government, predicted public reactions, or military pursuits to an event of contact with intelligent life-forms outside Earth and a call to study the relationships, attitudes, and behaviors of such contingencies to each of these communities. The rest of the document deals with human affairs as explorers and exploiters of our near-Earth space for commercial purposes and not so much to potential encounters with extraterrestrial intelligences.

The US government (NASA) did briefly partner with SETI in its early years until Congress cut off government funding in 1993. SETI has survived as a private research enterprise since. The SETI organization designed a First SETI Protocol in 1989 and was amended in 2010, but only as a roadmap for the single episode defined as a first-contact-message exchange. The SETI work underway is conducted from a science community perspective, though they have employed numerous contributors from other fields of study to publish research papers that delve into some of the issues aligned with establishing contact with ET.

The United Nations briefly, at least transparently, worked on an Outer Space Treaty, which was published in 1967 under the aus-

pices of the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS). As one can induce from the committee's title, the final treaty was heavily influenced by big businesses and the military. I will discuss more about the dearth of efforts in the archives to provide legal and other relevant areas of interest throughout this book and in "Chapter 8: What ET Wants to See from Us."

You, the reader, will decide specific elements to be used in an overall plan design from the following discussions. Chapters 2 and 3 will offer immersion into the five *w*'s of a first contact/EGA and/or EGR. Factors as to how and what would motivate an ETI to interact with us include:

- Whether a single ET nation envoy or a delegate group from a galactic club would happen upon us
- How friendly or aggressive they are
- Their ethical and moral virtuousness
- In common cultural and worldviews
- Want and/or need on many levels, including the aforementioned cultural and also economic, cultural, scientific, sociopolitical, spiritual, or existential
- Factors as to when and where humans would encounter such incontrovertible evidence for an EGA (enduring global acknowledgment) could include
- Finding artifacts close by, either in space or on a planet/satellite in the solar system
- A signal of some kind: visual, audio, telepathic, or of some other modality
- A space object, ship, or probe of some kind
- An intelligence of a manufactured type, a sort of artificial intelligence (AI)

A civilization can change in many different ways and degrees from a first-contact regime with an extraterrestrial intelligence. Some salient factors would include: the level of their evolutionary and technical achievements, their communication modality, or medium through which we are contacted. Additional factors consider an evo-

lution and raising of the consciousness of both ET and humankind prior to and upon these introductory meetings. Inspection of these topics is the theme for chapters 4, 5, and 6.

Because an inquiry of this magnitude is generally agreed by default to be constrained by impediments to progress, it is necessary to make an inspection of these influences. The discussion will provide detailed analysis of these elements of the investigation in chapters 7 and 8.

There is both intrinsic and extrinsic value to discussing and pursuing these activities. An intrinsic value that, of just the work activity inherent in designing a metapolicy such as this, allows entry into answering many EGA-EGR questions that would arise in the workaday tasks themselves. Another intrinsic value would allow for new discoveries that can provide efficacy to both the project at hand and for other projects unrelated to this subject matter. Extrinsic value opportunities are also abundant and will be extensively featured in "Chapter 9: How We Need to More Effectively Prepare."

Are we alone in the universe? Our intelligence and sentience allow us to recognize and gives us potential to appreciate the innumerable qualities that this universe does and will offer. Note that I also say "will offer." We have a lot to learn about our universal home.

Do we have the universe in common with other life-forms? By logical extension and other types of reasoning and conclusion, the answer is yes. We would have all of it in common. For many, all that remains is to have irrefutable knowledge that we do share our universe with others.

When and if we meet up with ET, how will this most historical encounter influence our human condition? All the elements which constitute the living parameters of our civilization, consisting of many cultural communities, define our human condition, as well as those of all life on Earth. Are we ready to accept the challenge of preparing for this event? Is it time to reflect upon and evolve our human

nature, human condition, connectedness, and our consciousness in order to accept this challenge? After all is said and done, will ET talk with us?

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Chapter 2

WHAT, WITH WHOM, AND WHEN

To be unique is to be lonely. It is a chilling thought that in all the universe man and his biosphere are the only living things. As long as all men believed in heaven man was not alone in the universe. Could it possibly be in this age of scientific materialism that man’s desperate search for extraterrestrial life stems from a fear of being alone? That he is searching for a substitute for heaven?

—Vincent G. Dethier,
Life on Other Planets, Catholic
World 198 (January 1963), 250

Key words: astrobiology, postbiological, divergent evolution theory, convergent evolutionary theory, cognitive maps, astrocognition, zoo hypothesis, the Great Filter, planetarium hypothesis, Fermi paradox, principal of mediocrity.

What Will ETI Look Like?

How would you feel about coming face-to-face with your first ET and discover that he or she looks just like you? For that matter, the first dozen ETs? When you do, you will be conducting a study exercise in what is formally known as the study of *astrobiology*. Astrobiology, formerly known as exobiology, is an interdisciplinary scientific field that studies the origins, early evolution, distribution,