

41st SYMPOSIUM ON THE SEARCH FOR EXTRATERRESTRIAL INTELLIGENCE (SETI) – The  
Next Steps (A4)  
SETI 2: SETI and Society (2)

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THE ‘INTELLIGENCE’ IN SETI: HISTORICAL CONCEPTS AND NEW RESEARCH

**Abstract**

Thought about intelligence elsewhere in the universe is diverse in scope, venerable in age, and as yet, utterly unconstrained by data from beyond Earth. This makes it exceptionally interesting as a source of examples of historical and contemporary reasoning about the unknown, not least because it highlights the workings of different logics. This paper will include a brief review before proposing a path forward through the comparative study of intelligence on Earth, which is highly multidisciplinary, incorporating areas as diverse as evolutionary biology, paleontology, physical anthropology, philosophy, psychology, neuroscience, cognitive science, linguistics, animal communication, ethology, education, and computer science. The concept of intelligence is further extended by disciplines like anthropology and the history of science and technology, which focus upon large-scale phenomena that emerge from communities of intelligent beings. This diversity of perspectives, data, and theory concerning intelligent life on Earth is a significant resource which can be used more fully when considering possible intelligent life elsewhere.