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47th IAA SYMPOSIUM ON THE SEARCH FOR EXTRATERRESTRIAL INTELLIGENCE (SETI) – The Next Steps (A4)
SETI 2: SETI and Society (2)

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CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF HITCHIKER'S
HOW SCIENCE FICTION INSPIRES THE WAY TO SETI

Abstract

First written in 1961 by Frank Drake, the Drake's equation provides a threshold value to the chances of finding Extraterrestrial (ET) life form. A generalized analysis of the equation provides the probability of finding ET in any given distance. At a minimum range of 1300 to 4000 light years, there is 75% chance of finding such life form.

Currently in a range of 500 lights years from earth, it is highly unlikely- almost approaching to zero- that we might detect any signals from ETI. This absence of any consequential result in the research and the odds of obtaining them in the near future; negatively influences the ongoing research to the extent that might lead to a burnout.

Therefore, it is important that any such research is passion driven and not result oriented. This paper focuses on how works of science fiction can ignite the spark for such a passion by actively engaging minds of young souls in the mystery of the life, universe and everything.

Endless pieces of fiction relating to Intelligent Extraterrestrial life forms, both literary and video have emerged in the past century captivating the minds of public. A vast majority of them tend to show the apocalypse that might result from such an intervention. Though, we surely aren't in any such immediate danger, these works stir the minds of people, making them question about the existence of intelligent life forms other than ours.

The paper tends to do an extensive study of realistic elements of some significant works of fiction relating to alien life forms and it's perception by the public. It focuses on how these works have eventually guided the way for science and research. As such works reach the masses; we can hope to have larger number of individuals actively or voluntarily contributing to the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence.