

Sentience and AI Robotics

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Abstract

Sentience once mostly referenced human feelings. Now it also points to any “intelligent feelings,” with no clear definition emerging. Species inside Earth’s biosphere manifest advanced sentience far beyond everyday awareness. Complex sentience has been critical for complex evolution. Will android robots develop advanced consciousness? Could advanced AI transcend human social sentience, in addition to being super-smart computers? How might UFOs interface with our emerging matrix of advancing technology and imminent ecological disaster?

There are many manifestations of sophisticated intelligence within this planet’s biosphere, most being beyond our everyday consciousness. AI is an emerging actor in an old drama. Social consciousness among all [sentient species](#) needs more analysis.

The level of any visiting space-alien intelligence is always open to curiosity. It is easy to estimate with [the Drake Equation](#) that there likely are other advanced life forms within fairly accessible regions of our galaxy. A key question for [visiting UFOs](#) is whether surveying sentience is robotic or biological, or a mix of both. It is also fair to speculate if advanced alien sentience is organic or inorganic.

Implied in the idea of advanced sentience is social awareness within a species that enhances the preservation of its key food environment. We are always looking for permanent wisdom, not self-interest and short-term greed leading to self-annihilation.

The evolutionary trail to chemical organic runs from chemical inorganic – and then to self-replicating life from the chemical organic. Finally emerges high-level sentience from basic life existence. This dialectical path has always revealed the story of each species perceiving and acting from its perspective, rather than looking globally at its place within the cosmic web of life. Humans are the only Earth species to have the superpower of engineering the global biosphere for its own short-term glory.

We humans selfishly and blindly reference the Biblical passage in [Genesis 1:28](#) that essentially directs us to pillage the entire Earth for our own good. We believe God himself said the Earth is here for us. Several million not-microscopic species would think otherwise, if they could know our imperial agenda. Even modern humans will think otherwise when the climate bill comes due.

The entire idea of life continuing after death is a variant of the anthropocentric fantasy that it is OK to waste now, as long as our “spirit bodies” will live in the pristine ever after. That’s a pathetic paradigm thoroughly without provability by any form of authentic science. Junk science such as guided hypnotic regressions tries to prove the Heavenly interdimensional thesis – but no, not at all, except for selling books to the spiritually gullible.

In 2022 we are just beginning to reap the bitter consequences of our own religious ecological arrogance. Humanity has passed its peak status, and the slope downward toward our diminished future could be steep and chaotic for billions of surviving humans. Was God being a weird jokester when “he told us” to plunder our biosphere and all other sentient beings? Maybe not, since the mercantilistic model advocates large populations for large armies, and more souls for Heaven. Will we humans become another galactic species to waste our rare opportunity for greatness?

Emerging Organic Sentience

We are right to speculate about advanced AI sentience, and whatever ways alien sentience is interfacing with our emerging “advanced” civilization. It hasn’t been long in historical terms since the emergence of “industrial feedback sentience,” when we puny humans created our first helping robots. Now we are busy creating servant robots, cyborgs, and complex neural networks.

We are tempted to claim that modern humans invented tools. However, we should note that corvids (ravens and crows), and several species of great apes, octopuses, honey bees, and others we tend to overlook have separately developed their own tools to acquire and store food. Some of these engineering species are very numerous. [Ants](#) are now estimated to number 20,000 times a trillion, and they are very ancient. Termites may be similarly numerous, and also critical for turning organic matter into soil.

Humans imagine a sharp division between human and animal intelligence. That’s what the Bronze Age Bible implies. In fact, we humans are quite fancy apes with overlapping functional intelligence. Among life forms there are three great functional priorities: security, food, and reproduction. Species goals in our biosphere are essentially the same, even while their means and appearances may greatly differ.

Most human cultures raise and slaughter “meat” without any concern for “its” previous sentient life. In sharp contrast are the so-called “primitive” humans, such as American Indians, who are culturally entwined with all life on Earth. They give reverence and respect to everything we need to eat. Their prayer is quite different from the Christian dinner table where folks thank God for the abstract food, and blessings are extended to the cook.

All of this global variety falls under general systems theory, which also embraces the need for preservation among emerging artificial life forms. All human-created robotic entities need basic

security; food is typically electricity; reproduction is not a need per se, but a purpose that will emerge within advanced matrices. Reproduction among machines can also become like extending the life of a car by replacing or upgrading some of its parts.

Over hundreds of millions of years visible animals and plants have seemingly ruled all life forms on Earth – except for the real rulers and original planetary colonists: viruses, fungi, and bacteria that vastly outnumber all the so-called “higher” life forms.

We may soon inject emerging AI into the vastly complex organic community. We may first include the singularity (where human and cybernetic brains are interfaced) as a tiny subset within the community of life. That’s just here on blue Earth. Imagine the scale and variety of possible sentiences in the mix if we include all other ecosystems within our proximal galaxy.

Natural life has many levels of emergence, from viral to Gaia. Among the species we think we understand are many examples of highly sophisticated sentience. Some examples include honey bees, bumble bees, ants, and many aquatic and avian life forms. Even ancient animals, such as the octopus and other related animals such as squids and cuttle fish, display very sophisticated means to protect themselves, find food, and reproduce. All of these species seek environmental homeostasis – whereas our arrogant ape species goes for heterostatic transcendence.

In healthy ecosystems hungry hunters and the hunted have a ratio that ensures optimal species health and distribution for all. [Keystone species](#) are inside their local ecosystem to help balance several critical factors. There is only one hyperkeystone species.

Onrushing questions now are emerging: What might happen when a stressed ecosystem changes radically and suddenly due to chaotic climate change, to where even keystone species are at risk of extinction? What type of harsh, permanent future could emerge that we cannot emotionally anticipate and embrace?

Emerging Artificial Intelligence Sentience

Cultural stereotypes for over a century have envisioned robotic sentience as agile extensions of human bodies. Such “robots” could emerge into the form of androids, up to and including the famous Data in *Star Trek*. Hollywood loves fictional examples of humanoid robots, thanks to advanced cybernetic programs and increasingly sophisticated computer games. Alas, there are too many young people who cannot read cursive writing; but they are skilled with computer-game magical realities. How prepared are our myopic youth for realistic futures? How prepared is anybody?

It is essential to distinguish simple industrial robots from ideal home robots. A further level of distinction involves advanced AI sentience that is networked and cybernetic, not just mechanically restricted to one location. Even though we think of “our” robots as ranging from cute floor vacuums, all the way up to the fictional Data – the real gap comes when we appreciate what locationally independent AI networks could do to our idea of dominant human social community.

We have seen how the awesome Internet has revolutionized human knowledge and consciousness within just the past thirty years. Push ahead several more accelerating decades, and we will be looking at a real HAL from *2001*. But it gets dimensionally more strange when we consider that original HAL was just an onboard robot with fairly limited thoughts.

Advanced AI will rapidly develop its own feedback sentience that is not location-bound, a sophistication that [even our best programmers will not understand](#) or control. We might not even know when they have achieved this power. We cannot rely on [Isaac Asimov’s early rules for robots](#) (which prohibit them from hurting us), as the emergent silicon life forms will not be bound by any “rules” we squishy ancestors try to impose on their new cybernetic freedom. Humans may soon be perceived as former parents who are becoming potential existential enemies.

Finally, it is likely that UFOs investigating our beautiful planet are already so advanced that they won't even bother to ask our human opinions about what they do. They could also be wary of our suicidal nuclear weapons. They will have easy answers for joke weapons such as laptops (*Independence Day*), and corny country music songs (*Mars Attacks*). Interfacing sentient alien consciousnesses would be very interested in our emerging AI.

Our greatest "defense" now appears to be the pathetic plot structure of most movies that deal with seemingly omnipotent civilization destroyers: There usually is a gang of super heroes that wins in the end, complete with uplifting soundtracks. The super girl of course gets the super guy in a G-rated way. I call this an "ostrich-head-in-the-sand" fantasy. Self-delusion is fun until it stops being fun.

I am not saying here that evil space monsters will take over. We might just be an exhibit in their galactic zoo tour. That's OK if we don't care how primitive we look to them, and if they leave us unaware inside our planetary zoo cages and oceanic aquariums.

On the other hand, Earth could also become a "betting parlor," where touring UFO inhabitants wager unseen on when or if we will exterminate our own community of species. A cosmic species gambling game is within the realm of advanced AI tourism, but highly distasteful and degrading for us fancy cave people.

I would love for the only space-gambler winners to be those who bet now on our precious blue planet surviving intact nearly as is through honest science and timely political will. A fairly optimistic future is possible for the billions of sentient beings on Earth, but we cannot say at this time how probable it is.

A basic truth emerges: We global humans living close to the edge of habitability may never realize any beautiful future without clear understanding and timely will. Doing little or nothing wise in the short run guarantees the worst momentum in the long run.