**Reconfiguring SETI in the microbial context: panspermia as a solution to Fermi’s paradox**

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**Abstract**

All SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) programmes that were conceived and put into practice since the 1960s have been based on anthropocentric ideas concerning the definition of intelligence on a cosmic-wide scale. Brain-based neuronal intelligence, augmented by AI, are currently thought of as being the only form of intelligence that can engage in SETI-type interactions, and this assumption is likely to be connected with the dilemma of the famous Fermi paradox. I argue that high levels of intelligence and cognition inherent in ensembles of bacteria are much more likely to be the dominant form of cosmic intelligence, and the transfer of such intelligence is enabled by the processes of panspermia. I outline the main principles of bacterial intelligence, and how this intelligence may be used by the planetary-scale bacterial system, or the bacteriosphere, through processes of biological tropism, to connect to any extra-terrestrial microbial forms, independently of human interference.