

## **Intelligence – A Provisional Taxonomy**

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**Abstract:** This article proposes the identification and cognition of intelligence as a unique, autonomous phenomenon occurring in the natural and physical world as a transient and perishable existence on life or graphology. It is a sequel to the article, "Nothingness in Words"<sup>1</sup> published earlier in this journal in which I had analyzed the various aspects of intelligence such as its interest as a phenomenon both physical and non-physical, or electrical and biochemical. This article is, I believe, the first-ever attempt to classify intelligence as various categories beyond the confines of a concept as vague as it is wide-ranging. The conclusion emphasizes the necessity of a fresh approach and scientific examination of intelligence not as a biological or physiological byproduct but as a distinct subject in itself.

**Keywords :** Intelligence, Individual, Collective, Continuous, Physiological

## Intelligence – A Provisional Taxonomy

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In a previous paper in this journal I had proposed that intelligence, being both material, physical and yet also involving abstractions and imagination, thinking, feeling, moods and emotion, which in turn can be expressed in concrete and material objects (the Great Wall of China, the microscope, *David* and *The Thinker*) as well as forms more tenuous, sublime, and involving phenomena that are yet to be analyzed between the creator, the object (the text, melody or otherwise) and the subject (i.e. the reader, the viewer) such as *La Gioconda*, *Guernica*, works of literature and poetry, as well as music, dance and song which I term INTELLIGENTIAL TRANSACTION, is the field most difficult to analyze, study and define in concrete terms using scientific methodology. Here I attempt to classify this physical and yet non-physical phenomenon, (which I also identify as a naturally occurring phenomenon so far confined to our universe and giving the Anthropocene Age on our Earth its lone and singular identity) into broad categories each distinct and particular, yet cohering their various forms into the single and whole concept and form that we call INTELLIGENCE. My categorization, defining the entire spectrum of thought and intelligence, is as follows –

- 1) INDIVIDUAL INTELLIGENCE. Assuming that one primitive man created fire or invented the wheel, Individual Intelligence is that intelligence – ways of thinking, feeling, imagination, or expression that uniquely forms each individual's intelligential or intellectual identity and thus imparts to the human world its various and innumerable different intelligence-units – Tom, Dick or Harry. “I have nothing to declare but my

genius,” supposedly stated Oscar Wilde when boarding a ship. Individual intelligence forms what is called the personality, characteristics, or idiosyncracies that make up each individual intelligence-unit. In their ideas, ways of thinking, conduct, manners and behavior, they conform to the general traditions of their society, religion or culture while each being as distinct and individual as fingerprints or snowflakes. Yet on occasion a star may shine brighter than the rest of its companion constellation. Thus an Einstein, a Pythagoras, a Rodin, a Beethoven, a Socrates, an Edison or a Homer or Chaplin. Creativity, reason, moods of contemplation, meditation, conceptualization, imagination, resources of creativity or theoretical ratiocination, insight, intuition or intellect make each individual unique and often the universal collective intelligence profits by their individual illuminations. On a more mundane level, the Professor, the doctor, the baker, the butcher and the candlestick maker ply their respective trades without reference to one another.

Thus a ploughman is as different from Chaucer as a carpenter is different from Pierre Jaques Cousteau, an Attenborough quite unlike Frank Lloyd Wright and both different from a gardener as an airman is from a molecular biologist. Yet these varieties coalesce into the broad range of humanity. The fact not to be forgotten is in passing is that each of these, nonetheless, have a broad corpus of pre-formed intelligential base from which they have been benefited in the construction of their particular, individual INTELLIGENCE-IDENTITIES. Which brings me to the next category:

- 2) **HISTORICAL** or **CONTINUOUS INTELLIGENCE**: the “corpus of a pre-formed intelligential base” referred to above constitutes an intelligential data base, in recorded or oral form, where every subsequent generation collects intelligence or information from previous ones. Commonly called “history”, this single term, however, refers to the descent of the bullet train from Watt’s tea-kettle, the exploration of the genome from Mendel, and modern orthopaedic science from the initial studies of Galen. The record of history is also the record of intelligence. Without Copernicus and Galileo without Leeuwenhoek and Pasteur, modern astronomy and microbiology would not have developed: and modern astrophysics and medicine, have literally **EVOLVED** from the **CONTINUITY** of intelligential evolution. Derivatives of preceding studies, it is fortunate that the codes of

languages across the world and time has made modern humanities and sciences possible – the most striking, perhaps, in this context of cross-coda access is the Rosetta stone, and also fortunate is the existence of the investigations Newton, Ernst and Rutherford, or Planck. Indeed, it is a feature of intelligence that with creation of language parchment, quill pen and ink or the typewriter, that intelligence can autonomously preserve itself beyond the confines of its transient, mortal shell, which depends on sexual reproduction for its own continuity, or perhaps, more accurately, the continuity of life. It is the sadness of intelligence that must dependent on life, but language, graphology and in many cases, orality (Alex Haley's *Roots*) have made its widespread existence in material codes possible. Scholars and scientists of all ages have drawn from the past for progression in the present in the interests of the future.

- 2) **COLLECTIVE or SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE:** This is most strikingly exemplified in animal behavior, the “herd mentality”. The migrations of birds, fish or animals or the lemmings’ collective suicidal leaps reflect an unifying impulse in many intelligent species to a determined end. Here I will not go into the clumsy attempts to divide the animal world into with toolkis or without. Collective intelligence is signified in culture, the civilized codes of conduct tacitly understood by each individual life-unit. Thus the Samoans offered their wives and daughters to alien guests, and fairness of skin is that perfect attribute which, in the crewmen of the *Bounty*, offered an unlimited sexual haven among the islanders. Religion involves certain codes of conduct to its adherents both individually and collectively. “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife” is one such among many, such as minding your manners, and not forgetting your Ps and Qs. Odd things happen with transactions between different collective-intelligence life-units, such as when an American guest eats the banana leaves placed before him, on which food is traditionally served in many parts of India, or an Indian lost to table manners in the stiff formal etiquette of Britain. Mob psychology, the “herd mentality”, again, is an abnormal kind of collective intelligence that occurred most remarkably in the American exodus, the rush for safety, sparked off by Orson Welles’ radio broadcast of a fictional Martian invasion based on and again derived from H.G. Wells’ *The War of the Worlds*, again derived from an intelligential database preserved in language. Thus we have nudist colonies, artists’

villages, festivals, societies, clubs and Facebook and WhatsApp groups. The radical Muslim ideology of Islamic groups, the lynch mobs and Ku Klux Klan in the days of Negro slavery in America, and both Hindu and Muslim fundamentalism in India and other fanatical groups elsewhere make the term "collective intelligence" easy to understand.

- 3) **ORGANIC INTELLIGENCE:** Heliotropism, photosynthesis and geotropism in plants, spiders' webs, the signals of an individual bee to the rest, or an ant's chemical signals to its tribe informing them of prey or the ants' chemical trail, or a termite nest, signify a rudimentary intelligence limited to a certain organism – right down to mitosis and meiosis, if you will. Also included are the marking of territory in canines or felines, the pollination of flowers, plant carnivores, praying mantids

where the female eats the male after fertilization, the pheromone-ridden communications between insects, the moth at the flame, and the different spheres of the ant and the grasshopper, and the life cycles of butterflies, bacteria and viruses or the entire reproductive process. Which brings me to another category:

- 4) **PHYSIOLOGICAL INTELLIGENCE:** Modern science analyses intelligence in humans as just two loosely organized and inter-related systems: the brain and central-peripheral nervous system. I submit that, instead, the human body is in fact much more subtly and richly organized; it is, in fact, a far more complex and interrelated intelligence system, an intricate composite of physiological, biological, electric, and elemental constituents that are, collectively, an autonomous and all-pervasive intelligence system whereby the many parts communicate, govern, control and form, at the molecular and cellular level, the physical beings of Tom, Dick and Harry. The rush of coagulants to the site of skin bleeds, the separation and synthesis of nutrients in the liver, the alveolar gaseous exchange, response to external and internal stimuli, and the immunological process as also the immunological rejection of transplanted organs are both automatic pre-programmed physiological systems, but cellular co-ordination and co-ordination, especially in reacting to an event such as injury or interference, such as pain, normally passive and hibernating but immediately active when required as a general warning, are examples of intelligence sub-systems yet to be studied in depth and detail and generally taken for granted. The adaptation of bacteria and viruses termed now as

“antibiotic resistance” or the infiltration of host cells by antagonist cells is perhaps the most well-known example of intelligence at the cellular and molecular, or physiological level.

6) SUBVERTED OR PERVERTED INTELLIGENCE: Van Gogh and Goya are representative of the most brilliant art created in a descent into madness or subverted intelligence or self-sabotage. Similar is the intelligence of Down’s syndrome-afflicted, autistic and spastic or otherwise mentally-challenged children. Perverted intelligence can be found in a Heathcliff, a Hitler, or Jack the Ripper. All of these are included in the term “Abnormal Psychology”, but without definite classification of these categories as such.

In its mysterious formless and elusive identity, intelligence does not subject itself to easy analysis. The want of authoritative work particularly in the context I attempt to outline does not help matters. Research on intelligence so far has mainly been on psychology, behavior, brain functions, or artificial intelligence and not on intelligence as a phenomenon *per se*. Its scope for scientific study is vast and necessary so that we can more properly know ourselves in this digital age with all its ramifications, social, intellectual and behavioural. A transient existence of a phenomenon both physical and non-material that makes civilization possible in all its wonders and makes our human planet unique in the reaches of space, Intelligence in itself is an entity needing further study in none other’s interests but our own.

### *Works cited*

<sup>1</sup> Das, Chandan. “Nothingness in Words: Intelligence: Its Mysterious Formlessness and Elusive Identity”. *The Literary Herald*. Dec 2016: 553 – 537.

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