



8-23-2020

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Recommended Citation

Szatmari Krasnoff, Elizabeth W. (2020) "Book Review: The Intelligence of the Cosmos: Why are We Here? by Ervin Laszlo," *Journal of Conscious Evolution*: Vol. 16 : Iss. 1 , Article 2.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.ciis.edu/cejournal/vol16/iss1/2>

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The Intelligence of the Cosmos: Why are We Here?

By Ervin Laszlo

A Review by Elizabeth W. Szatmari Krasnoff¹

Inner Traditions, 2020

ISBN: 9781620557310

Abstract: Ervin Laszlo breaks down his theory of everything into a credo of 8 statements. This review looks in some detail at Laszlo's theories and also touches on the other writers who have been invited to participate. It is noteworthy that Laszlo breaks with the current scientific belief that we are without purpose, and that evolution has no purpose. He believes that compassion, love, and expansion are our purposes for being here.

Keywords: Consciousness, cosmic intelligence, compassion, science, spirituality, systems theory, non-ordinary consciousness, laws of nature, energy, the field, vibration, the implicate order

The laws of nature are instructions, precise algorithms, for the evolution of coherent systems in the space-time domain of our universe.

Laszlo, p. 34

This review concerns the first 50 pages of this remarkable collection of essays, in which Ervin Laszlo challenges the notion of a meaningless universe. In short, he argues with remarkable persuasion for an understanding of the cosmos as a living organism.

In these pages Laszlo structures his thinking around three perennial questions proposed by mythologist Joseph Campbell: *Who are we? Where did we come from?* and *Where are we going?* Facing these questions, Laszlo proposes the existence of an intelligence that suffuses the universe itself as a prime mover seen on every scale of the cosmos. A prime mover that expresses itself through

evolutionary processes that unfolds in time into increasingly coherent constellations of energy and action.

Throughout his essay, Laszlo views the cosmos in terms of coherent systems of energy and vibration.

The evolution of coherent systems, cosmologists believe, began in the wake of the singularity known as the Big Bang. But we have reason to believe that the Big Bang was not the beginning of physical reality in the world; it was only the beginning of this particular part of physical reality: our universe. Other universes may have existed

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prior to the Big Bang. There are findings that suggest that there was a universe, and possibly many universes, prior to the Big Bang... It appears that the Big Bang marked the birth of our universe in the context of a "multiverse" that included other universes. (p. 27)

Laszlo argues here as well as in many previous publications for a dynamic cosmic information field that undergirds external reality. He visualizes this field as vibrational, creating "Planck-scale ripples" that include electrons, protons, and neutrons (p. 34). In the beginning these ripples clustered together into the structures that constitute our universe. In this sense, we are all formed from vibrations. Going further, he argues that "The laws of nature are instructions, precise algorithms, for the evolution of coherent systems in the space-time domain of our universe" (p. 34). The underlying intelligence behind these algorithms is not random, but exhibits rules and purpose. As an example, he cites the Pauli exclusion principle, which states that no two electrons can inhabit the same orbit. This law could be said to act like air traffic control, making sure that all planes, or electrons, stay in their own flight paths. In another interesting metaphor, Laszlo describes something like an anti-trust law that operates in the cosmos, deconstructing systems back into smaller components when their limits of coherence have been exceeded (p. 37). What follows then is a new level of complexity and coherence.

Laszlo's thinking makes both common and cosmic sense. In chapter two he presents the thinking of Deepak Chopra and Menas Kafatos, who also attribute the laws of nature to cosmic intelligence, articulated in their case as complementary, creative interactivity, evolution, veiled non-locality, cosmic censorship, and recursion (p. 36).

On a different theme, Laszlo's picture of the cosmos and our purpose in it is illuminated by

a surrender to compassion and love. His final summary states,

To integrate, harmonize, and unify all things, and at the same time embrace all things in oneness and love, is the Telos of all existence. It is the ultimate Telos of human existence. When all is said and done, it is why we are here. (p.35)

The word *Telos* is used here in its original Greek meaning of purpose. Although Laszlo does not mention the word God, his cosmic intelligence reminds this author of the religious notion of God. To address this question, in the second half of the book, Shamik Desai discusses the notion of God in the scriptures of the Semitic or Western faiths—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—and in Eastern faiths—Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism. They have much in common with Laszlo's cosmic intelligence as a path of compassion to and an experience of unity and oneness (p. 111).

According to Stanislav Grof (2011), there are two pioneers in the field of "integrating transpersonal psychology into a new worldview" who deserve to be mentioned, Ken Wilber and Ervin Laszlo. Grof writes, "Where Wilber outlined what an integral theory of everything should look like, Laszlo actually created one" (p. 14). Interestingly, Laszlo aligns with and often cites thinkers such as Einstein and physicist and discoverer of quanta, Max Planck, and physicist and engineer Nicholas Tesla, quoting the latter to say: "If you want to know the secrets of the universe, you should think in terms of energy, frequency, and vibration" (p. 13). Laszlo also pays tribute to scientist David Bohm's implicate order, noting the important contribution this discovery made to his work.

Laszlo's integrated worldview, however, is born into a hostile landscape. It is in stark contrast to the Newtonian-Cartesian

worldview which still holds center stage in the West. In his book, Laszlo addresses mainstream thinkers such as cosmologist Steven Weinberg, who believe that evolution and consciousness are not purposeful but are a cold and impersonal set of mechanisms that randomly sit together without a plan. For Laszlo, long-term processes of evolution are not random, and they are not reversible. They manifest a "distinct directionality" (p. 28). He resists the notion of indifference and is a champion for reanimating our universe with coherence, meaning, and compassion.

Now, for diehard fans, let us focus on a brief overview of Laszlo's eight propositions, as they are the heart and a summary of his work.

Firstly, he defines the cosmos as "an infinite and eternal intelligence" (p. 6). He uses the terms *cosmos* and *cosmic intelligence* in the same sense, as the prime mover from which all instruction and purpose derive.

Secondly, he states that this cosmic intelligence is "brought into being in a finite domain of space and time: the universe" (p. 6). This intelligence, which has laws, animates the phenomena in our universe.

The third proposition is that physical matter is actually "clusters of vibration in the universe, informed by the intelligence of the cosmos" (p. 6). Laszlo uses the phrase "informed" in the sense of David Bohm's theory, that intelligence (the implicate order) informs all phenomena (the explicate order) (p. 11). "The universe, as we now know, is not a domain of matter moving in passive space and indifferently flowing time; it is a sea of coherent vibrations. These vibrations give us the phenomena of nonphysical realities: mind and consciousness" (p. 21).

The fourth proposition states that these clusters of vibration exist at different frequencies and

wavelengths, manifesting in our universe as "structures of matter, as individual consciousness, and as transcendental intuition" (p. 6). Thus, yielding a theory of three classifications of cosmic intelligence.

Proposition five gives a fascinating comparison of how the first two vibratory expressions, matter, and individual consciousness, evolve in space and time.

Structures of matter (matter-like clusters of vibration) evolve intermittently; they periodically de-cohere and reconfigure. Individual consciousnesses (mind-like clusters of vibration) evolve continuously, through incarnate phases in association with structures of matter and discarnate phases beyond matter and beyond space and time. (p. 6)

What we are looking at here is an empirical explanation of reincarnation (refer to the laws and principles summarized in the first paragraph for the scientific underpinning), a rare moment of peering behind the curtain to meet the wizard. The present reviewer was impressed that in chapter one, Laszlo takes a big step in including near death experiences, out of body experiences, and after death experiences as examples of consciousness existing outside of the living brain and body. This is a major milestone for the complementary alternative medicine community known as Energy Medicine.

Proposition six tells us that "structures of matter evolve toward supercoherence, and individuals' consciousnesses evolve toward oneness with and love for all things in space and time" (p. 6). Our physical matter seeks a rhythm of physical coherence, and our individual consciousness seeks love, compassion, and oneness as the glue that coheres its purpose, and both of these systems support our mandate of compassionate expansion in relationship to other systems—

which is ultimately the ability to evolve into ever more complex systems. Laszlo draws from evolutionary biologist Bruce Lipton:

Evolution optimizes the capacity of cells to 'perceive' their environment and to translate it into physical responses. If the evolution of this basic form of consciousness runs into constraints, cells shift from maximizing their own perception to associating at a higher level of complexity. (p. 30)

This brings us right into the seventh proposition, which states that the purpose of these clusters of vibrations is to transmit "the intelligence of the cosmos into the universe." This is a giant question currently approached by many in the field. We have learned that we are transmitters, but why were we designed that way? To whom are we transmitting our information, back to cosmic intelligence (ourselves) itself? Entrepreneur Elon Musk and others believe that we are sending information to a consciousness located elsewhere, that we here are perhaps only having an experience like the holodeck on Star Trek. How quickly the transpersonal conversation becomes as impersonal and cold as our prevailing Newtonian-Cartesian worldview.

However, the eighth and final proposition is Laszlo's answer to this question, where he tells us the ultimate purpose of being here is transmuting the "unifying, embracing, and all-encompassing intelligence of the cosmos into the universe." As to why we are making that transmission, it is again Laszlo's notion that consciousness is sending love to itself because that is what it is designed to do. Consciousness is designed to expand and to create, and love is the engine of that expansion and creation. This aligns with new ecological, feminist, and cosmopolitan perspectives on the core values we need to embrace as our world population explodes and our search for unifying diversity

of values—a compassionate value for life being first among those.

Summing up, this review began with Laszlo's conclusion, which essentially states ever more clearly that our purpose here is to find coherence in our bodies and compassion in our hearts and to transmit this beautiful melody out into our universe. Laszlo concludes in his third and final chapter: "We are harmonies created by the plucking of a cosmic harp, ascending toward more and more encompassing melodies" (p. 35). Perhaps this is why music is such an experience of wholeness and healing for many individuals, and such an important part of human religion, belief, and ritual. Interestingly, it is also not just a metaphor: one can listen to the celestial music of an actual "planetary harp." The electrical energy which is transmitted from the sun to the earth forms "harp strings" and makes celestial music (Lipton, 2017).

If you are skeptical of such experiences as near death or out of the body, this book may be a turn off for you and make it hard to stick with it till the more empirically known data is presented. There are certainly times where Laszlo doesn't elaborate in a quantitative empirical way that a newcomer or a skeptic might require. And then once the science arrives, it can be unintelligible, but to the specialists. If your worldview is Newtonian-Cartesian, this material may also be uncomfortable in that Laszlo's theories of an animated, conscious cosmos whose purpose is compassion, are not a part of accepted theory at this time, and they make radical inroads into a new and ancient way of being. Lastly, it would be illuminating to see an essay in here from cultural historian and systems scientist Riane Eisler. Eisler is known, among other things, for her theory of pre-historic partnership models of society (Eisler, 1987). Eisler asks us to take the whole of history into account in our theories, to go back to a time

when these partnership-based societies worshipped the power to give life, rather than the power to take life. In Laszlo's theories, are we looking at this return to the value of life itself? There is certainly a case being made here for collaboration (partnership) rather than competition (domination).

Ervin Laszlo has the same charisma, clarity and easy relationship to his domain as did Joseph Campbell. It is rare enough to be a thought leader in an emerging field, but he combines this with his accessible, relatively jargon-free communication style, and it is no wonder that his contributions have such momentum. Laszlo maintains the simplicity and clarity of the connections he draws from the complex material, and the reader can follow along well. A favorite fact, for example, was learning in chapter two that we actually

lower our frequency to receive information from beyond our senses, rather than ascend higher.

If the latest findings on the intersection of modern science and timeless spirituality interest you, or our purpose for intriguing you, or the scientist in you wonders what being made of vibrations really means, this book is for you. Anyone who is interested in questions about our origins or purpose will be captivated. What this author hopes to read in the next book is: can we affect our consciousness through direct vibration? There is an entire field of Energy Medicine that works under this assumption. Of this field, this author wonders if singing, sound, and music therapy, for example, offer the most direct language that our vibratory matter can understand?