

CONCLUSIONS

EVOLUTION OF COMPLEX SYSTEMS - AN EXAMINATION OF ERVIN LASZLO'S PHILOSOPHICAL WORK FROM SYSTEMS THEORY TO THE THEORY OF A UNIVERSAL INFORMATION FIELD

My thesis analyses and provides an overview of fifty years of philosophical work by Ervin Laszlo, highlighting the most important ideas, events and turning points in the thinking that led to his present-day philosophical position. This study reviews Laszlo's philosophical voyage towards his uncovering and understanding of how things *are* and how things are *becoming* in terms of the evolution of complex systems as well as the purpose and meaning of human life. I have explored and evaluated how he applied his study of human society and the planet's life support systems to the evolution of human values and consciousness. I have also explored and evaluated his concept of the General Evolution Theory, which led to his postulating an intrinsically interconnected universe – the Akasha Paradigm. This thesis proposes answers to two principal questions:

1. Can the perspectives developed in Laszlo's philosophical work provide a sound basis for a new scientific worldview, in particular his theory of the evolution of complex systems elaborated on the basis of his collaboration with Ludwig von Bertalanffy and Ilya Prigogine?

2. Is Laszlo's theory of an information field, similar to David Bohm's theory of the implicate order and Alfred North Whitehead's concept of comprehensive interconnections among actual entities, sufficient to account for the subtle connections that underlie the processes of evolution in complex systems?

The Discovery and Development of Laszlo's Systems Philosophy

Laszlo's first basic theory and two principal influences

The first part of this thesis focused on the discovery and development of Laszlo's systems philosophy. I have examined Laszlo's encounter with organic metaphysics through Alfred North Whitehead's process philosophy, followed by the inspirational work of Ludwig von Bertalanffy's General Systems Theory.

Laszlo was clear at the very beginning of his philosophical exploration that to understand the entirety of humankind's existence one has to understand the workings of the cosmos, as the micro and the macro world are intrinsically connected. He did not believe that a general law that examines only human behavior is sufficient to provide a full comprehension of humankind and human behavior. A general law or laws must examine the cosmos, which in turn is able to explain how each thing not only *is*, but also *becomes* in the world. He stated that the discovery of the essential dynamics of the cosmos could provide coherent understanding of humankind, society and life in general. Laszlo claims that there are still cosmic laws to be discovered that can fully explain human life, behavior and thus societal processes. Cosmos and humankind share a common 'essentiality', which is linked to the notion of general evolution.

Laszlo asserts that the phenomenon of life is the consequence of an organization of organisms, whose particles are made of a universal substance. An inherent, interactive and dynamic process leads to either the development of a higher organic level or a form of dissolution such as death. He considers the mind a functional organic entity that shares the same cosmic evolutionary processes as an organism, yet the mind is not generated by it. Mind, in Laszlo's understanding, is an emergent entity in evolution that interacts within the organism for a coherent adaptation and selection of the organic structure with regard to its external environment. This understanding has remained a constant in Laszlo's philosophy throughout the years; cutting-edge science has been only

able to provide a scientific explanation for it fifty years after Laszlo's first formulation of this thought.

Alfred North Whitehead's organic metaphysics provided Laszlo with general principles for the relationship between individual organisms and their environments. Whiteheadian thinking, which explains the whole cosmos as an organic unity of its elements wherein organic connections link every actual entity with every other corresponds with Laszlo's understanding. Whitehead's notion of the 'actual togetherness' of entities characterized by *prehension* – the concrete facts of relatedness - greatly influenced Laszlo's thinking. Whitehead also asserted that reality is an integrative evolutionary process. Whitehead's philosophy of organism – process theology - describes the universe as one and God as not concrete but the basis for concrete actuality. Everything exists and all actions disappear and yet live for evermore. Whitehead's seemingly religiously-influenced ideas are very similar to Eastern philosophical tenets such those in Hinduism and Taoism and no doubt influenced Laszlo to delve further into these ancient traditions. Throughout his philosophical trajectory, Laszlo rarely uses the terminology of 'God' as the universal creator as Whitehead does, he prefers to describe it in terms of the cosmic-consciousness of the Akasha Paradigm. Whitehead objected to the assumption that each object has a simple spatial and temporal position. His view that everything is everywhere in all times corresponds to the nonlocal concept of the universe, which Laszlo uses as a strong underpinning to his own philosophy.

We can summarize Whitehead's influence on Laszlo's philosophy in three ideas:

- in the cosmos all things interact with each other,
- all things co-evolve and make each other what they are, and
- they are present nonlocally everywhere.

Whitehead supported a conception of space manifesting *prehensive* unification, whereby separate things can be indeed together in space and in time even if they

are not concurrent. Laszlo's Akasha paradigm explains Whitehead's conception coherently.

For Laszlo, Ludwig von Bertalanffy's general system theory clarified the relations between systems and their environments. Laszlo understood from von Bertalanffy that systems are similarly dynamic at all levels of complexity. Bertalanffy aimed to integrate the field of biology into an overall theory that would apply to other disciplines in natural science as well as to human and social sciences. In his view, systems have isomorphic characteristics and appear as such in the human world. Laszlo had not used the terminology 'system' as a description for the basic entity of the world until he studied and worked with von Bertalanffy. Their collaborative efforts resulted in a concept they called 'systems philosophy', which Laszlo further elaborated on his own in the coming years and decades. Von Bertalanffy provided Laszlo's philosophical development with a tool he was looking for – the General Systems Theory. Bertalanffy's isomorphic systems concept describes a quasi-universal phenomenon but, in Laszlo's view, it lacked an explanation for the process of evolution. Laszlo wanted to identify the nature and meaning of evolving entities in an organically integral universe and come to a fundamental understanding of the relation between systems and environments, in terms of what processes drive irreversible evolution in the biosphere and in the universe as a whole.

Laszlo's Application of Systems Concept to World Order

Practical application of Laszlo's systems philosophy and the next influence on the evolution of his basic theory

The second part of this thesis looks at the applicability of Laszlo's system's concept to human behavior and sociology, and how it relates to world order. The thesis also looked at how Ilya Prigogine's concept of *dissipative structures* that are subject to periodic *bifurcations* provided Laszlo with the

evolutionary dynamic he was looking for and in turn helped him to formulate his General Evolutionary Systems Theory.

Building on the concept of General Systems Theory, Laszlo used the language of systems philosophy to describe societal order, its dysfunctional character and to provide possible world system models to overcome problems on a local and global scale. Laszlo proved in his work of 'Goals for Mankind' (1977) that systems philosophy is not just a theoretical concept, it is capable of evaluating and assessing value systems, cultural differences, political and economical practices, national and regional short- and long-term goals while providing tangible solutions to overcome the inner limitations of humankind. His epistemological study, which blends philosophical, sociological and scientific concepts on the nature of humanity in light of current worldwide problems, was presented within a framework that sees the planet and humankind as complex open systems exposed to both external and internal change. At this stage, Laszlo emerged as a humanist and futurist as well as a philosopher scientist. His reasoned philosophical questioning and quest for scientific evidence was joined to an unwavering belief in humankind's capacity to individual betterment and his clear foresight and the vision of the co-creation of a sustainable global civilization.

The maturation of Laszlo's systems philosophy was greatly advanced by Ilya Prigogine's non-linearly bifurcating dissipative system theory. Prigogine's concept focused on how a system would react to external changes and influences, but it did not seek to predict changes in a system with regard to interactions between internal elements. Laszlo incorporated important elements of Prigogine's work into his own in order to predict societal changes and their possible outcomes. Whitehead and Bertalanffy's work with regard to the principles and clarification of the relation between systems and their environments influenced Laszlo to concentrate on the informational feedback loop between the external and internal elements of systems. Laszlo understood that the universe is a highly coherent system encoded by complex information, which is the basis for coherence in any system. Society, in Laszlo's

understanding, is a highly complex system, whose stability and maintenance depends on internal and external information fluctuations. The characteristics of information exchange between macro- and micro-structures, and macro and micro-events determine the direction of progress – evolution. The actions of humankind affect the biosphere and, in turn humanity as a whole. Laszlo emphasizes the significance of individual action, which as a micro-fluctuation can greatly influence and effect macro-level structural change.

**Development of Unified Information Field Theory: the Psi-Field,
the QVI Field and the Akashic Field**
Laszlo's mature concept – the Akasha Paradigm

The third part of this thesis examines and presents Laszlo's fully matured philosophy. For Laszlo, natural systems in the world can only evolve by being constantly and intrinsically-interrelated with each other by signal-transmission that is faster than conventional scientific theories can explain. The quantum physics concept of non-local 'entanglement' provided Laszlo with a sufficient explanation for multidimensional and instant connection. This motivated him to formulate his psi-field, and thus to arrive at his Akasha concept. His own earlier works provided a foundation for the formulation of his Akashic Philosophy – a cosmic information field theory, which was influenced by David Bohm's theory of implicate order, cutting-edge consciousness studies, quantum physics and various Eastern traditions. The Akashic Field theory wide perspective is highly relevant and applicable to overcome current worldwide sociological, economical and ecological problems. He gathers evidence to demonstrate that systems in the world are intrinsically interconnected and argues that connections and correlations in the physical and life sciences as well as in consciousness research share the same origin, which is the subtle, all-encompassing and entirely fundamental information field.

For Laszlo, the current scientific theories do not provide sufficient answers to explain a wide range of anomalies that have come, and are still coming to light in all disciplines. His aim is to establish a cross-disciplinary theory to provide a coherent explanation for how 'things' *are* and how 'things' are *becoming*. In his view, there must exist an interdisciplinary theory that bridges metaphysics, the natural and life sciences as well as religion and spirituality: an interdisciplinary theory that can account for order, meaning and evolutionary processes in the universe.

David Bohm proposed a transdisciplinary concept that explains two distinct levels of reality. Everything that occurs in the manifest 'explicate order' is the expression of a deeper 'implicate realm'. Bohm gave a great significance to the undivided wholeness of the universe whereby nothing is fundamentally independent or separate. While Laszlo was in agreement with Bohm's theory of 'implicate-explicate order', he disagreed with Bohm's notion of evolution. Bohm explained that the manifest explicate order arises from the implicate order but he does not explain the origin of this order. Laszlo claims that Bohm's universe does not evolve, it only subsists whereas Laszlo attributes a dominant role to the evolutionary processes of all systems. Bohm's implicate order is Laszlo's psi-field, later termed the Akashic field. According to Laszlo, this psi-field could be the solution for transdisciplinary unification. It has holographic characteristics such as infinite information storage and self-renewing capabilities that continually adapt to the evolution of complexity. The psi-field provides for a 'unified science', which helps us to a coherent understanding of humankind, and can contribute to establishing a more harmonious existence with one other and the environment.

Science is subject to change and the enterprise of science advances through paradigm-shifts. Laszlo reckons that humankind is at the brink of another paradigm-shift and understands how much science with its achievements and shortcomings impacts human lives. Thomas S. Kuhn pointed out that 'in the evolution of science new knowledge would replace ignorance rather than replace knowledge of another and incompatible sort.' (*The Structure*

of Scientific Revolutions 1996, p.,95) Misconception of the nature of the world and the nature of humanity could lead humankind to devolution. Therefore it is vital to formulate and establish a coherent scientific worldview, an all-embracing vision of the emerging world, which advances human lives in a consciously-directed evolution.

Laszlo's coherent scientific worldview describes a universe in which an all-encompassing energy sea connects all phenomena. This underlying energy plenum acts as an infinite memory-field, retaining and transferring the information of prior universes and everything that has ever happened including all traces of human mental and physical activity. Laszlo postulates that in this dense energy field, matter and mind co-evolve and living organisms are not accidental products. His view of the cosmos describes a subtle interconnectedness with all things visible and invisible in the universe. Understanding this can help overcome human beings' concept of alienation from one another, our planet and the cosmos, which in Laszlo's view, is the root of our many of our problems.

Human's activities and their incessant and growing demands in every sphere of life are gradually exceeding the planet's finite resources, resulting in biological life-supporting systems being progressively impaired. Earth is a complex system open to energy and closed to matter. Energy enters the biosphere from the Sun, but matter, in terms of energy stored on the planet cannot leave. Humankind uses the finite energy stored here but does not sufficiently use incoming energy. Humans use up more matter and more energy than they replenish and they do not use vital resources effectively while demand for energy and material resources grows globally and exponentially. Such a trend is not sustainable. This calls for new ways of thinking and understanding the world as an interconnected whole.

New ways of thinking, Laszlo says, require new values, new ethics and new modes of life, on both societal and individual levels. Thinking globally entails taking responsible decisions for the benefit and the greater good of all

with respect to the environment. Laszlo insists that humankind is close to a critical tipping point. Such critical tipping points, or bifurcation points, have occurred throughout human history. Many civilizations and cultures like Babylonians, Mayans and Easter Islanders vanished from the historical record but others were able to meet their challenges by transforming for survival. Laszlo points out that our future is in our hands and humanity must consciously create a sustainable global civilization or global crises, which put humanity's survival at risk will be inevitable.

He believes that it is not utopian to construct unity from cultural and religious diversity by exercising greater mutual tolerance and establishing mutually beneficial modes of cooperation in order to create a culture of coexistence based on participatory and harmonious relationships. Laszlo firmly states that humanity can and must consciously guide its own evolution. This means shifting away from egotistic behavior towards all-inclusive humanistic-, nature-, planet-centered behavior. In order to achieve global-scale social, economic and ecological transformation, humankind needs to transform itself, which can only be achieved by conscious evolution through an evolved consciousness. Laszlo envisions that by understanding the full spectrum of the new scientific worldview and the new insights emerging in science, people will look at themselves and the world around them differently in order to act differently.

Laszlo explains that a 'holos' civilization is emerging, which is globally whole but locally diverse. Millions of 'cultural creatives' act and think according to global ethics. They are consciously changing their consciousness, and thus act as pillars of the holos civilization. In Laszlo's view, the currently dominant consciousness is the root cause of individual and global problems; hence the evolution of consciousness is the only way towards holos-consciousness. Laszlo strongly believes and has constantly reiterated that a change of consciousness starts at the individual, 'grass-roots' level, and then spreads through communities, cultures and governments to reach a global scale. He claims that

human evolution rests upon the consciously-directed evolution of human consciousness.

Laszlo's notion of holos civilization rests on the existence of a holofield – the Akashic field - the 5th field, which takes precedence over the fields already recognized classical by science: the gravitational, the electromagnetic, and the strong and weak nuclear fields. Laszlo explains that this holofield is a quantum energy field, which manifests subtle yet universal effects. Although it is termed a 'field', he conceives of the Akasha as a matrix, a fundamental and multi-faceted dimension, a unified background *of* and *for* all phenomena. In his view, the Akasha is a unifying world-concept, where in-formation and information are dominant factors. Laszlo explains that *information* is a real and effective feature of the universe and *in-formation* is a message that actually 'forms' the recipient. His integral vision of the Akasha serves as an integral theory of everything and provides a coherent theory of the origins of the universe; why and how things *are* and are *becoming* in that interconnecting, information-conveying and conserving cosmic plenum. Laszlo's information field concept, the Akashic field theory ties together all the diverse phenomena of the world. It offers connective ties between science and the ancient intuition of the oneness of the cosmic plenum. The Akashic field in-forms and informs everything with everything else. It is responsible for life, stars and galaxies to emerge and evolve in the universe. It is also responsible for the fine-tuned information exchange, which provides for overall coherence and correlation within and between organisms and the environment.

Laszlo argues that the Big Bang theory cannot sufficiently explain the origin and destiny of our universe. 'Bangs' - reoccurring explosions, account for matter in the universe being condensed through gravitational attraction into galactic structures. He outlines a 'Metaverse' cosmology, which holds that holographic memory traces of precursor universes are stored in the Metaverse and passed on to successive universes via 'Bangs' with each successive universe evolving more efficiently as opposed to emerging with a blank slate. Consequently the Metaverse becomes more and more informed and informing.

The unobservable Akashic dimension harbors the trans-cyclic process, which occurs as evolution-devolution in the manifest dimension. The information traces of each evolution-devolution cycle are accumulated and stored in the Akashic dimension, so successive cycles become more and more informed. Laszlo does not believe in the accidental occurrence of a fine-tuned universe. In his understanding, the origins of the universe-generating process is a 'Metaversal Design', a design *for* evolution. According to Laszlo, the evolution of the universe has a definite direction, which is to expand in terms of structure and complexity.

In Laszlo's Akasha paradigm our world is not just things moving about in space and time; that is only the surface. Below, there is an interconnected, holographically "in-formed" and fundamentally whole world where all things interpenetrate with all other things. Our universe could be understood as an all-pervasive consciousness that expresses itself in space and time, energy and matter through geometric patterns on all scales of existence.

Laszlo argues that consciousness is as fundamental as energy and that the cosmos is psychophysical, characterized by its mental and physical aspects. According to Max Planck 'I regard consciousness as fundamental. I regard matter as derivative from consciousness. We cannot get behind consciousness. Everything that we talk about, everything that we regard as existing, postulates consciousness'.¹ Consciousness is not material, it has no mass and yet through our consciousness we experience space, time and matter. The idea that conscious experience, or consciousness itself, has evolved, and may continue to evolve, through time and history has been expressed by many philosophers, helping paradigm shifts to take place. Georg Wilhelm Hegel, (1770-1831), foresaw history as the struggle of the divine spirit towards self-manifestation. Hegel suggested that mind, spirit and consciousness form a unity, and humanity is a vehicle via which the divine spirit finds its own realization. Henri Bergson (1859-1941) saw consciousness as the *raison d'être* for all life, and human beings as its highest evolutionary expression. Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955), a brilliant successor to Bergson, explained that consciousness endeavours in the course of

¹ Quoted in *The Observer* 25 January 1931

evolution to achieve ever-greater freedom of expression through increasingly complex supporting structures such as the human nervous system. William James carried out some pioneering work a hundred years ago in the analysis of mystical and spiritual experiences in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. In the nineteen-seventies, biologist Sir Alistair Hardy² summed up his influential work in *The Spiritual Nature of Man: A Study of Contemporary Religious Experience*. He postulated the existence of realms that transcend the physical dimension and the normal states of human consciousness.

Laszlo's work on Consciousness

Akasha Consciousness and the Evolution of Human Consciousness

Consciousness evolves through complex forms in complex systems. Laszlo asserts that consciousness is associated with matter-like entities in the manifest dimension as well as intrinsic in the deeper dimension, the Akashic dimension. Empirical evidence and clinical studies support the idea that consciousness does not reside in or is not produced by the brain. The brain receives and displays it. Laszlo explains that consciousness is not observable and humans experience it in a fundamentally different way to the way they experience events and entities in the manifest world. In his view, human consciousness is the expression of the Akasha consciousness; the totality of information that makes up individual consciousness is infinitely stored in the Akasha dimension and can be accessed during altered states of consciousness, by mediums, past-life recollection and reincarnation-type experiences and so on. Just like universes, humans leave holographic traces in the Akasha, creating a superhologram of all people, a sort of collective information assembly of humankind. Innovative neuroscience offers tangible explanations of ways in which humans perceive such quantum-resonance information through intuitions, visions and sensations. In altered-

² Alister Hardy (1896 – 1985) was an English marine biologist. He founded the Religious Experience Research Center.

states of consciousness like deep prayer, meditation or hypnotic states, quantum based information can reach conscious awareness.

Laszlo claims that human consciousness follows an evolutionary path and progress from ego-based towards transpersonal-based consciousness. Transpersonal consciousness is a necessary step towards the creation of a sustainable planet.

The evolution of human consciousness goes through the same cyclical phase as other systems in the universe. He states that human consciousness does not perish at the moment of physical death, thus human consciousness is immortal. The realization of the immortality of consciousness has implication concerning the way humans live their lives. It implies living without fear of death or dying, living more responsibly towards one another and the environment, and living a more fulfilled life. Laszlo's understanding of the immortality of consciousness and the role it plays in human life pushes the boundaries of our overall knowledge of the world.

Laszlo investigated the possibility that individual consciousness is an intrinsic part of the consciousness of the deep dimension. Could consciousness be described as the core of the cosmos? He maintains that there is observable evidence of the effect of cosmic consciousness on the manifest world. In his view, there exist a cosmic order that originates from the deep dimension, which in-forms the manifest world. He assumes that consciousness in-forms the universe for order, for the universe to *be* and to *become*. Overall coherence in the universe allowed the emergence of complex systems – life. Coherent multi-scale and multidimensional connections maintain complex systems and do the same with other systems such as the biosphere. Without such constant and active interconnection, life and the maintenance of life would not be possible. Laszlo states that the evolution of life points to the coherence of living organisms with their environment. He posits that the deep dimension of the cosmos is a consciousness that creates localized and non-localized manifestations of itself. It is a complex hologram, which re-creates itself in the universe. Laszlo explains

that human consciousness is in fact a localized form of cosmic consciousness. Human consciousness could be the one through which cosmic consciousness evolves itself. He concludes that there is a *logos* – a consciousness beyond space and time in the deep dimension that underlies the whole world.

An Assessment

Laszlo's Akasha Philosophy and the Evolution of Complex Systems

Laszlo's new science is integral and not reductionist. It regards nature in terms of connections and partnership and not as objects to be mastered by humans. The Akasha paradigm, the unobservable dimension is the ultimate foundation and reality from which the observable universe emerges. Traditional cosmologies, like Hindu cosmology and David Bohm's 'implicate-explicate' order and innovative theoreticians, assume the existence of a 'hidden dimension'.

The concept of the existence of a deeper dimension of the cosmos has been proposed for millennia. Greek metaphysicians affirmed a hidden dimension. Pythagoras explained an unbroken wholeness – Kosmos, Plato talked about Ideas and Forms, and Plotinus 'The One'. Giordano Bruno claimed the existence of an infinite universe composed of an unseen substance he called aether or spiritus. Modern cutting-edge theoreticians suggest that space-time is not the ultimate reality, and that beyond there is a deeper dimension of which holographic projections are the emergent manifestations of all things in spacetime. Laszlo explained that cosmic or integral consciousness could be likened to what the Hindus called Brahman, or the Chinese philosophy Tao. Erwin Schrödinger argued that consciousness does not exist in a plural form and there is only one consciousness, which concord with Laszlo's view that individual consciousness is a localized form of cosmic consciousness.

What is a complex system and how does a complex system evolve in Laszlo's worldview? A complex system is composed of various parts that manage to maintain itself in conjunction with its environment through input processing and the production of energy, matter and information. The continued existence

of systems depends on their access to, and utilization of, the correct flow of energy, matter and information. Through these flows of and processes, a complex system forms a functional unit with its environment. The unit of system-environment is nested within systems of hierarchy extending to the entire biosphere. It entails systems like humanity forming a functional unity with its environment, thus making life possible on this planet and in the ecosphere. He explains that all things that emerge in nature are natural systems and those that evolve are evolutionary natural systems, which appear as matter and are not absolute and separate entities. Laszlo says that matter is informed energy. Evolutionary natural systems are constantly informed and in-formed - using David Bohm's terminology - through interaction and evolution. The action and reaction of information result in evolutionary natural systems to 'prehend' - using Whitehead's terminology - in-formation. Laszlo's evolutionary systems theory thus explains the information interaction between evolutionary natural systems and becoming in-formed by the cosmic matrix he calls Akasha. The purpose of the evolution of complex systems is to achieve higher levels of coherence in the universe.

Throughout history, humans had a compelling need to find conceptions of the universe, a universe within which they can regard their own life as meaningful. Humans want to know how they fit into the scheme of things and how to relate to the objective world. They want to know the significance and purpose of their own existence. Laszlo's Akasha concept answers all these interrogations coherently and offers major implications and orientation for humankind. It proposes an integral understanding of the natural and humanistic disciplines a step towards achieving higher levels of wellbeing and sustainability. It changes the way humans understand themselves and the world, and it helps modify human aspirations. As an integral worldview, the Akasha paradigm, explains that humankind is an active participator in the integrally-evolving universe and not just merely part of it. Humans have the privilege and responsibility to consciously participate in it to direct their own evolution towards an optimally functioning society and environment. The worldwide shift towards attaining global sustainability and wellbeing can be achieved by shifting

from our current, limited human consciousness towards a more evolved, holistic consciousness. In his view, the individual shift in values, ethics and consciousness to local-shift and then globalshift is the path to survival for humans as a species. System-wide change is urgently required followed by system-wide actions.

Laszlo's (R)evolutionary Vision

Paradigm of Interconnection and Conscious Evolution

The Akasha theory is the result of Laszlo's five decades of research and work, and the evolution of his thinking and consciousness. His multi-dimensional worldview embraces cutting-edge findings in physics, biology and consciousness research while bridging science, religion and spirituality with life-sustaining implications for humankind. It explains that humans are active agents able consciously direct their lives, and intrinsically and subtly connected with one another and the cosmos. This holistic worldview encourages people to make conscious life choices for the maintenance and establishment of high level of individual, social and ecological coherence.

There is a wide and deep trajectory in the evolution of Laszlo's thinking and understanding of the world, and about humankind's place in the world. He started by recognizing that the world is not constructed as separate physical, living and social things but things that are interrelated and evolve together. Then he realized that if everything is interconnected then every thing must be in communication with each other and evolve further. Laszlo's Akasha paradigm is a mature (r)evolutionary vision with characteristics of extensibility, consistency and scope of applicability. It makes up a basic set of concepts, which define the interdisciplinary paradigm of systems change, continuity and transformation in the world at large. His intellectual development was led by two guidelines: one, promoted by Albert Einstein, is that we cannot solve problems in the world today with the kind of thinking that gave rise to those same problems. The other

was a maxim strongly held by Mahatma Gandhi that we must be the change we want to see in the world.

Max Planck said that ‘Science cannot solve the ultimate mystery of nature. And that is because, in the last analysis, we ourselves are part of nature and therefore part of the mystery that we are trying to solve.’³ (*Where is Science Going?* Max Planck 1932) Laszlo tried to solve this mystery. His perspective is that of a participatory consciousness, which recognizes that there is no separation between subject and object, observer and observed, conscious and unconscious. Everything is intrinsically interconnected and evolves – consciously.

A fine-tuned coherence of the human body, living organisms and the cosmos points to the existence of universal constants, which allow the emergence and the evolution of life. Coherence between the human mind, living organisms and the cosmos points to a subtle information interconnection and exchange that pervades the whole universe. What conveys the information is an underlying field – the Akashic field. Laszlo holds that the whole world is a living organism, whose evolutionary path is toward wholeness and coherence, through interconnection and interaction.

Why Laszlo’s Akasha Paradigm is important in the world

Why we should care and potential next steps

Ervin Laszlo has been, and continues to be, dedicated to research on this new paradigm and its implications for human life and wellbeing. His work links and interrelates scientific and philosophical theories and declarations on how humans relate to each other. The recognition that each individual is interrelated to others, nature and cosmos, is a precondition to a timely and effective shift in our world. He is considered a global leader whose strong efforts have helped to shift humankind’s obsolescent world and its worldview.

³ Where is science going? – Max Planck 1933

Laszlo's Akasha paradigm concept offers a fertile ground for ongoing research and is intended to inspire and guide researchers to further elaborate on a greater understanding of the world. Laszlo's conceptualization serves as a platform to develop, research and articulate new findings and new understandings in the fields of science, philosophy and sociology. The further development and application of the Akasha paradigm in disciplines such as physics, cosmology, life sciences, contemporary spirituality and the study of consciousness could contribute to sustainability and higher level of overall wellbeing in society. Laszlo's formulation of the Akasha paradigm serves as a unifying conceptual framework for many scientific disciplines while providing a bridge between science and the world's greatest spiritual traditions. His interdisciplinary synthesis today serves as a significant cornerstone to scientific worldviews of the present and future alike. As Thomas S. Kuhn said 'To be accepted as a paradigm, a theory must seem better than its competitors, but it need not, and in fact never does, explain all the facts with which it can be confronted.' (1996, p.17-18)

Ervin Laszlo's Akasha paradigm philosophy is a comprehensive 'Integral Theory of Everything' and has proved a coherent explanation for the evolution of consciousness and the conscious evolution of humankind and in the cosmos. It gives us a way forward towards a more harmonious and connected society, ecology and civilization.