



The Systems View of the World: A Holistic Vision for Our Time

Ervin Laszlo

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Taking the view that understanding the meaning behind the complex formulas of science is more important than ever, this work attempts to explain the systems view of the world as the paradigm of the latest scientific developments.

The Systems View of the World: A Holistic Vision for Our Time Details

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Bold Bookworm says

... This book is academic, compact and convincing. It is a highbrow sales pitch from a Club of Rome thinker who clearly sees the big picture.

Read the entire review here: <http://boldbookworm.com/sv040611.html>

~ BB

<http://boldbookworm.com>

Michael Weaver says

a very introspective book analyzing the inseparable parts of nature and that everything we do to everyone and everything else influences ourselves as well as well as challenging the reader to think in enriching simplicity, while inviting complete exploration simultaneously.

Ouroboros says

omg - the love of my life

7 - the large groups we thus come to deal w/ appear to establish their own 'personalities.' even if most of their individual members change, the groups' characteristics tend to be preserved. for example, over the years athletic teams exchange their players, w/ younger ones replacing the veteran performers. yet the teams usu maintain much of their own characteristics--their tactics and techniques, their fighting spirit, and so on. even more striking is the continuity in the case of business corporations, where everyone can be replaced, from the president to the office boy, and yet the company can continue to exist w/ very much the same features it had before. this is true for entire communities and nations--even entities as large and nebulous as cultures. individuals come and go; they remain. it is not that they are immune to change themselves, but they do not change w/ the changes in their membership. it is as though they had a life and personality of their own.

- loss of individual identity
- diff hierarchies/orders of time dimensions [w/ higher level lagging behind that of members of the swarm:]
- interneighbor (lateral)
- inter.hierarchical (vertical)

* COMMUNICATION

success is measured by the system's ability to anticipate changes in its sub- & super- structures & to cope w/ them. A hierarchically integrated systems is not, t'fore, a passive system, committed to the status quo. It is, on the contrary, a dynamic & adaptive entity, reflecting in its own functioning the patterns of change in the

entire hierarchy.

nature is 'permissive' - there is purpose w/o slavery, freedom w/o anarchy...

dynamic steady-state

1. natural systems are wholes w/ irreducible properties
2. natural systems maintain themselves in a changing environment
3. natural systems create themselves in response to the challenge of the environment

each variety of cell contributes the integrated energies and functions at its disposal to the community, & in turn receives an environment which enables it to survive.

~~~~~  
whitehead [creativity:] - phylogenesis - creative advance of nature into novelty

consciousness - subjective awareness/experience of sensations [subjectivity/sensitivity:]

- being aware of having sensations/reflection upon mental states

possession of nervous system does not serve as prerequisite for experience of consciousness  
[subjectivity/subjective sensations is then translated into undifferentiated sensation of pleasure/pain:]

mere subjectivity is bound to the immediacy of events;  
only consciousness can liberate one from his actual experience & enable him to control it by his own will

subjectivity is the slave of actuality [it registers actual events when they take place:]

~~~~~  
good = virtue in accordance w/ the harmony of the soul

cultures satisfy not bodily needs, but values. Values define cultural man's need for rationality, meaningfulness in emotional experience, richness of imagination, and depth of faith.

~~~~~  
self-fulfillment of human potential /natural norms w/in natural systems

macrodetermination [systemic determination:] based on final autonomy [of the parts that make up the system:]

108 - we must not stop, therefore, at pointing to the fallacies of existing values: we must point out the new & better values.

109 - what are the intrinsic norms of man? the Greeks had an answer: they said that the end of the good life is happiness. Happiness, Aristotle specified, is the fulfillment of that which is specifically human in us. Self-fulfillment, as contemporary humanistic thinkers and psychologists acknowledge, is the end of human purposeful behavior. It is the actualization of potentials inherent in all of us.

110 - fulfillment means the realization of human potentials for existence as a biological and sociocultural being. It means bodily as well as mental health. Fulfillment also means acting on the environment, both the

internal one of the organism and the external one of the society, and making it compatible w/ the expression of one's potentials. it calls for a dynamic process of integration and adjustment, creating conditions for the actualization of all the potential there is in man.

114 - ...the plasticity of natural systems, which act as dynamic, self-repairing wholes in regard to any deficiency.

115 - fulfillment is predicated upon the freedom to become what one is capable of being--that is, upon the final autonomy of human beings in society

117 - our humanistic goal is to enhance individual fulfillment in an increasingly deterministic multilevel society composed of greatly differentiated individuals. like all complex natural systems, human institutions & societies fn best when they are spontaneous expressions of the freely chosen activites of their interrelated members. such a society is the norm agst which we must measure our existing forms of social structure. what is needed is a reorientation of our cultural values in ref to the norms of individual fulfillment in a flexible and dynamic social system. ...for only if we know both where we are and where we want to go can we act purposively in seeing about getting there.

120 - now we must likewise learn the norms of our manifold ecologic, economic, political, and cultural systems. The supreme challenge of our age is to specify, and learn to respect, the objective norms of existence w/in the complex and delicately balanced hierarchic order that is both in us and around us. when properly articulated, it can give us both factual and normative knowledge. exploring such knowledge and applying it in determining our future is an opportunity we cannot afford to miss.

natural philosophy of science --> systems philosophy

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### **Javier says**

Beginning was fine. Becomes progressively wretched. Wild generalization will do that.

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### **Amber says**

This book provides a general introduction to the sciences of organized complexity. It covers the history in terms of its emergence and opposition to an atomic view; the qualities that define organizational invariants; and how the systems view differs from the atomic view in terms of one's perception of self, community, and culture. However, it lacks footnotes or rigorous notation to back up its statements or lead to further reading.

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### **Ash Moran says**

I'll never do this book justice without writing something longer than it is itself. The mechanistic, reductionist view of the world we got from the classical sciences (from Newton if not before) is inadequate to explain the world. It had already failed in physics, and we're seeing it fail now in our economy and ecology. If you have

any curiosity about how our world works as a set of increasingly complex and differentiated, yet interdependent, systems, you owe it to yourself to read this. (I just can't say what and how much background knowledge is needed to frame it.)

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### **Harry Fulgencio says**

Refreshing and enlightening read. I am especially fond of the last few sentences in this book "The supreme challenge of our age is to specify, and learn to respect, the objective norms of existence within the complex and delicately balanced hierarchic order that is both in us and around us"

Although philosophical in content, it is something relevant to what i am currently pursuing and that is what i will find out in the next few years

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### **Dan Pfeiffer says**

I almost gave it 4 stars but I felt Laszlo's writing style at this time was still a bit steeped in academia as opposed to his more recent books on his realization of the "Akashic" field. Here, we have a work that serves as the genesis of that concept in that a holistic systems view of the world (everything we can perceive and not perceive in the universe) is vital to our understanding of role in it thus better to serve in future structure of action and endeavor. Heady stuff fo sure! But brilliant and thought provoking. I actually found myself wanting its description of various systems to be more technical or component oriented in nature but that is probably just the Business Analyst in me.

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### **Morgan Hastings says**

i stole this from my ex girlfriend's father. (sorry) good philosophical discussion.

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### **Romanas Wolfsborg says**

The book is short, but deep. Ervin Laszlo, one of the great systems thinkers, discusses the integrative approach and how it could lead to a more intelligent future of the mankind. The arguments are profound and philosophical, good for further thinking. I liked the chapter about consciousness and subjectivity. As the author points out: "Subjectivity is the slave of actuality".

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