

The Emergent Cosmos and the Becoming of Reality.....Paul Caracristi (250919.o.1.64)

What has been slowly growing in my mind is the possibility that the laws and principles we take for granted, such as gravity, electromagnetism, quantum behaviour, and the conservation rules, may not be eternal fixtures, as if written in some script that predates the universe itself. Instead, they may be the outcomes of something closer to a natural selection process, where laws emerge not because they are given, but because they work. They are the stable consequences of existence itself.

Seen in this manner, the laws of the universe are not prior to it but born within it, tested against the fabric of being, and only those principles that permit coherence, structure, and continuation endure. Gravity may not be a timeless law inscribed on the cosmos, it may be a principle that has endured because it allows matter to condense together, to form stars, galaxies, and the conditions for life. Other possible "laws", being unstable, incoherent and self-negating, may simply have vanished into silence, never to be recognized, never to be named.

This invisible hand¹ that decides what remains and what disappears might be nothing other than the Will to Be² itself. A drive, an impulse, an underlying push of existence toward persistence, expression, and unfolding. Therefore, the Will to Be is not just a poetic metaphor, but the generative force that shapes the principles by which the universe evolves. Laws become the successful habits of being, the patterns that endure because they serve the necessity of existence.

Hence, natural law is not a fixed decree, but a record of what has endured in the ongoing self-selection of reality. Just as in biological evolution, countless forms vanish while a few survive and propagate, so does in the realm of cosmic principles, where innumerable possibilities fail to manifest, but a few find stability in the ongoing process of the universe becoming itself.

¹ The "Invisible hand" is a concept coined by Adam Smith as a metaphor that refers to the self-regulating behaviour of the marketplace. The concept of an invisible hand can also be seen in action in many other fields, such as chemistry, evolution, culture, technology, consciousness, and herein it refers to Cosmology.

² Will to Be - The intrinsic drive within the Latent realm to manifest into existence, a generative force behind emergence, evolution, and becoming in the universe.

This view aligns with John Wheeler’s notion of “law without law,” the idea that order and structure arise not from pre-written codes but from participation³, interaction⁴, and persistence⁵. It also resonates with Lee Smolin’s suggestion of cosmic natural selection⁶, where universes themselves may evolve. But by linking this process to the Will to Be, something deeper emerges: not blind chance, not arbitrary trial-and-error, but an intrinsic impulse of reality itself, in other words, the desire to exist, to unfold, to be. If this is so, then the laws of nature are not eternal scaffolding, they are the footprints of the Will to Be, pressed into the fabric of the cosmos as it learns⁷ how to endure and evolve.

❖ The Evolution of Cosmic Laws.

If laws and principles are emergent rather than preordained, what does that say about their permanence? What we call the “laws of nature” are not eternal, but contingent. They last only so long as they continue to serve the persistence of being. The universe itself is not bound forever to the same set of principles; laws could evolve, dissolve, or transform as conditions change, just as species evolve in response to their environments.

What we take as fixed and immutable may only be temporary scaffolding. Maybe even gravity, electromagnetism, and quantum behaviour are not guaranteed forever, but are the stable outcomes of a universe still in the act of selecting what endures. If this is so, then the universe is not a finished architecture but an unfinished experiment.

This is not chaos, it is not an arbitrary reshuffling of rules. If the invisible hand of the Will to Be is guiding this selection, then there is a tendency toward coherence. Not a blueprint, but a direction, where the Will to Be favours what allows further expression, persistence and possibility. It is less like a rigid script and more like a current in a river, shaping what can last and what must vanish.

Entropy itself might be reinterpreted, not merely as increasing disorder, but as one face of this self-selection process. Perhaps, entropy clears away what cannot endure, what loses coherence, what no longer participates in the becoming of the whole. Meanwhile,

³ Participation - The active role of elements (matter, energy, consciousness) in shaping outcomes, contributing to the emergence of order and law rather than being passive.

⁴ Interaction - The dynamic interplay between elements, forces, or processes, through which patterns are tested, reinforced, or discarded.

⁵ Persistence – The survival or endurance of principles, structures, or patterns that successfully support stability and coherence in the unfolding universe.

⁶ Lee Smolin’s cosmic natural selection suggests that universes “evolve” over time, with those whose laws favor stability and complexity producing more offspring universes, analogous to natural selection in biology.

⁷ “learn” is used metaphorically to describe the universe’s process of *testing, selecting, and retaining patterns or principles that support persistence and coherence*. It does not imply conscious thought, but rather the natural outcome of trial, interaction, and survival: the universe “learns” which laws and structures endure by the fact that only those that work continue to exist. In other words, learning here is the emergent refinement of stability through the ongoing self-selection of successful principles.

structures that resist dissolution, such as stars, galaxies, life and thought; are temporary victories in the struggle of the Will to Be.

This casts time in a new light. If laws are emergent, then time is not just the medium in which laws operate, but a participant in their unfolding. Time becomes the canvas upon which the Will to Be experiments, allowing principles to be tested, to fail, or to take hold. Perhaps time itself is the first and most enduring law to emerge: the opening of possibility, the stage for all subsequent endurance.

What fascinates me most is that this view strips away the sense of inevitability. The universe is not the expression of a predetermined set of eternal truths. It is the ongoing conversation between possibility and persistence. What exists is not what had to be, but what has managed to be. And maybe that is why meaning is possible at all. If the universe were only the execution of a timeless script, nothing new could ever arise. But if laws themselves are emergent, novelty is real, and meaning is not an accident but part of the very same Will to Be.

❖ Imagining How New Laws Might Emerge

If the laws of nature are emergent rather than preordained, cosmology is no longer the study of an eternally fixed architecture. It becomes the study of a living, evolving system, a cosmos that is not merely expanding in space, but expanding in its very repertoire of principles.

Traditional cosmology assumes that the laws were in place from the first instant, governing the Big Bang and all that followed. But if laws are emergent, then the “beginning” was not the instantaneous application of a cosmic code, but a fertile chaos of possibilities from which order had to be selected. The Big Bang is less the execution of a plan and more the first sorting, the first great culling of principles. Time, space, energy, and matter may themselves be the earliest survivors of this primordial selection.

This changes the narrative of the universe’s history. Instead of seeing cosmology as the unfolding of pre-set equations, we see it as a sequence of thresholds where new rules crystallized out of instability: the emergence of stable particles, the solidification of gravity as a principle of cohesion, the endurance of electromagnetic interactions, the strange success of quantum uncertainty as a principle of persistence in the microcosm. Each stage represents not just events, but victories in the Will to Be’s experiment with coherence.

This perspective also challenges the notion of inevitability. If the universe could have selected other principles, then our cosmos is one realization among countless unrealized alternatives. Yet unlike multiverse theories that scatter endless universes across a timeless backdrop, this framework keeps the focus on this universe: the one that found its way into persistence through selection, guided by the Will to Be. The cosmos is not one of many, it is the unique story of what has endured.

The future of cosmology takes on a new face. If laws can emerge, they can also evolve. The constants we measure, the speed of light, the strength of gravity, the charge of the electron, may not be eternal invariants but the current equilibria of an unfinished process. What if, in some distant epoch, new principles crystallize, altering the very stage upon which the universe plays out its story? Entropy, rather than a simple heat-death, becomes the clearing of failed or unstable configurations, making room for new emergent principles. Far from ending creativity, entropy ensures its continuation.

Perhaps most radically, this framework shifts cosmology away from pure mathematics⁸ and back toward metaphysics. If laws themselves are contingent, no equation, however elegant, can be the final word. Equations describe what has endured up to now, but they cannot guarantee permanence. Cosmology, then, is not just physics scaled to the largest dimensions, but philosophy scaled to the largest possibilities. The Will to Be becomes central: no longer a poetic aside, it becomes the very principle that explains why there are laws at all. The universe, under this view, is self-governing, self-selecting, and perpetually becoming.

❖ Humanity in an Emergent Cosmos

If cosmology shifts from a study of fixed, eternal laws to emergent, provisional ones, then our place within the universe changes profoundly. We are no longer creatures living under an immutable script, bound to predetermined equations. Instead, we are participants in an unfolding reality where novelty is possible, and even the laws themselves are subject to the impetus of the Will to Be.

This reframing unsettles the old comfort of certainty. For centuries, humans have sought security in the idea of absolute principles; that is, if only we could uncover the final equation, we would stand on solid ground. But if laws are emergent, no such finality exists. The ground is not solid but living, shifting, evolving beneath us. To exist in such a cosmos is to live without guarantees.

Yet this uncertainty opens a deeper freedom. If laws are the survivors of possibility, we too are their continuation. Life, thought, and meaning are not accidents but expressions of the same Will to Be that shaped the cosmos from the beginning. To be human, in this light, is to be an inheritor of persistence, a presence through which the Will to Be becomes self-aware.

This gives new weight to creativity. If the universe is unfinished, our role is not merely to observe but to participate. Our acts of imagination, discovery, and meaning-making are part of the ongoing selection of what endures. Each thought, each creation, each new way of living is a gesture of the Will to Be expressing itself through us.

⁸ Mathematics is an extraordinary human invention, a tool that allows us to describe and predict aspects of the natural world with remarkable precision. However, it is not an intrinsic feature of the universe but rather a cognitive framework imposed by human minds to make sense of reality. Its fallibility, as demonstrated by Gödel's theorems and the evolution of mathematical paradigms, underscores the fact that it is not an absolute, infallible language of nature.

It reframes mortality. If nothing is eternally fixed, then our own lives are temporary crystallizations, much like the laws themselves. To exist is to endure for a time, to take part in the larger experiment of being, and then to give way. Yet this does not make life meaningless. On the contrary, it situates our existence within the same pattern of emergence and dissolution that sustains stars and galaxies. In this light, the quality and depth of our participation matter: how we live, create, and reflect shapes not only our own passage through existence but also the unfolding story of the cosmos itself.

Finally, this reframing encourages humility. If the laws we observe are contingent, then our knowledge is always provisional. To know the universe is not to master it, but to witness its current form, understanding that it may evolve beyond our comprehension. Our place is not as conquerors of a finished order, but as companions to an unfinished becoming. In such a cosmos, meaning is not handed down but continually created. Our role is to reflect, to dream, to participate, to add our voice to the ongoing story of the Will to Be. In doing so, we are not merely observers; we are active participants in the impulse of the Will to Be itself, experiencing existence, awareness, and consciousness through our own lives. ⁹

❖ References and Suggested Readings

While this essay is deeply reflective and philosophical in nature, drawing primarily from my own insights, a reference section provides context and support by acknowledging relevant works and thinkers whose ideas intersect with my own. Here are some suggested references:

- McGilchrist, I. (2009). *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World*. Yale University Press.
- Smolin, L. (1997). *The Life of the Cosmos*. Oxford University Press.
- Wheeler, J. A. (1983). "Law without Law." In *Quantum Theory and Measurement*, eds. J. A. Wheeler & W. H. Zurek. Princeton University Press.
- Prigogine, I. (1980). *From Being to Becoming: Time and Complexity in the Physical Sciences*. W. H. Freeman.

⁹ This work is a personal reflection, grounded in my own experience, knowledge, and creative reasoning. It does not claim to offer absolute truths or definitive models, but rather represents a process of inquiry, one shaped by my evolving understanding of the world and the cosmos. These writings are part philosophy, part science, and part imagination, offered in the spirit of open exploration. While I draw upon established ideas where relevant, my intent is not to conform, but to question, reinterpret, and reframe. What you will read is the product of years of thought, observation, and a genuine desire to see beyond the surface of things, to engage not just with information, but with meaning.

"This paper is the sole work of the author. All research, analysis, conceptual developments, philosophical positions, and original insights presented herein are products of the author's own knowledge and experience. Artificial intelligence tools were employed only to assist with matters of clarity, coherence, and linguistic accuracy; they did not contribute to the generation of ideas or arguments."

- Kauffman, S. (2008). *Reinventing the Sacred: A New View of Science, Reason, and Religion*. Basic Books.
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Here are my own references:

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