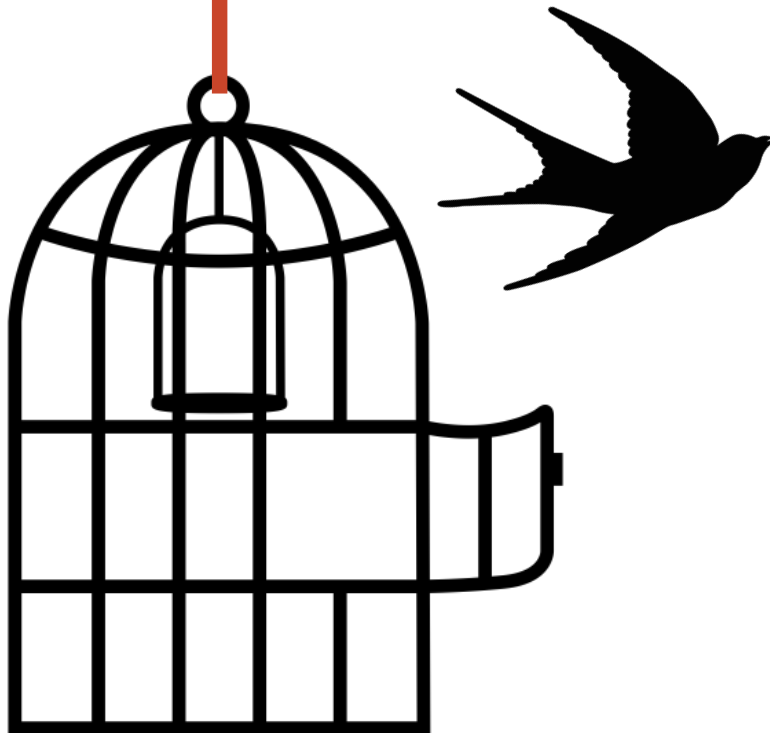


Holotopia

Book manuscript draft by Dino Karabeg



To Noah

Front page illustration:
Swallow by John Melven and
bird cage by Veremeya from
the Noun Project.

[...]



“As you set out for Ithaca”, Constantine Cavafy wrote, “hope that your journey is a long one; full of adventure, full of discovery.” This book is *not* a statement of fact; it is not a mere *description* of **holotopia**.

It is an invitation to a discovery journey.

I’ll be sharing short real-life people-and-situation stories, which I call **vi-gnettes**; your challenge and opportunity will be to see how those pieces fit together by *reflecting* about them; by letting your *intuition* soar.

This book will extend into a **dialog**—a *collective* journey.

Reaching **holotopia** will feel like coming home—provided this journey has sufficiently transformed you.

It is for *this* reason that what you are reading is a book manuscript *draft*.

I’ll let it *remain* a draft for awhile, and possibly forever; and focus on constructing the ‘ship’ (**dialog**) by which our discovery journey will unfold.

And I’ll let new versions of this manuscript—and whole new *manuscripts*, and *other* media material—emerge *through dialog*.

Just as this one did, through our **dialog** with David.



[...]

“**Man is** born free, and everywhere he’s **in chains**”,

Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote in *The Social Contract*, in 1762, to make a case for democracy.

Did democracy set us free?

You might say that it did indeed—if you think of those times when it was *legal* to buy and own humans, and chain them to the oars of a galley; or of the iconic image of Galilei in house arrest, whispering “And yet it moves!” **We** think and speak and act and **pursue happiness as we please**—within the limits of the social contract, of course.

But Rousseau wasn’t talking about *physical* chains. They are not everywhere but *rare*—compared to those internalized cultural and institutional ones; which bind us ever so strongly *because* they are invisible! Slavery was outlawed when it was *perceived* as untenable; Galilei was arrested to keep a certain way of thinking from spreading—which, however, liberated itself; and changed not only how our ancestors *comprehended* the world but also *the world itself*.

Enlightenment, Scientific and Industrial Revolution and democracy followed. Could a similarly sweeping wave of change be in store for us *again*?

Can we *again* liberate ourselves—from the kind of **chains** we don’t even *know* we bear?

Could a different way of thinking *again* comprehensively improve the human condition?



This humanity's age-old quest—for the *correct* way to use the *mind*, or for *logos* as the ancients called it and as I too will be calling it—has in our time acquired a sense of urgency; because of our civilization's condition. In *One Hundred Pages for the Future*, in 1981, based on a decade of *The Club of Rome's* research into the *future* prospects *of mankind*, Aurelio Peccei—this global think tank's leader and co-founder—concluded:

“It *is* absolutely necessary to find a way to change course.”

Peccei's call to action was to shift focus from material production and consumption to humanistic and cultural pursuits:

“The future will either be *an inspired* product of a great *cultural revival*, or there will be no future.”

He explained why in *The Human Quality*, in 1976:

“Let me recapitulate what seems to me the crucial question at this point of the human venture. Man has acquired such decisive power that his future depends essentially on how he will use it. However, the business of human life has become so complicated that he is culturally unprepared even to understand his new position clearly. As a consequence, his current predicament is not only worsening but, with the accelerated tempo of events, may become decidedly catastrophic in a not too distant future. The downward trend of human fortunes can be countered and reversed only by the advent of a new humanism essentially *based on and aiming at* man's cultural development, that is, a substantial improvement in *human* quality throughout the world.”

In 1984, on the morning of his dying day, Peccei dictated to his secretary from a hospital bed, as part of the unfinished *Agenda for the End of the Century*:

“Human *development* is the most important goal.”

Albert Einstein warned in an interview to The New York Times, in the aftermath of Hiroshima:

“A new type of thinking is essential if mankind is to survive and move toward higher levels.”

Could “a new type of thinking” be “a way to change course”?



We developed a different way to think.

I say “we” because I was fortunate to work with constellations of collaborators, who were often creative leaders in their fields; and because we built on insights of visionary thinkers or *giants*, as I’ll be calling them; and because I benefited from a tenured position in an academic department that tolerated my *transdisciplinary* transgression for nearly thirty years; and to acknowledge other help I’ve received.

I’ll call our proposal *knowledge federation*; and introduce it to you as follows:

To justifiably say I *know*, to step over that all-important threshold that separates *believing* from *knowing*, I *must* consider the evidence.

It may *seem* to me that the Earth is flat and I might even *believe* that; but people have traveled *around* the Earth; and others saw it from outer space. When I take account of evidence—I cannot but change my mind.

Notice also:

I cannot claim that something is *known* unless it's manifested in everyday awareness and action.

Every rational system of thought must ultimately rest upon a fundamental principle or axiom that cannot be argued within that system. *Knowledge federation* stems from this single and simple *knowledge federation axiom*:

Knowledge must be *federated*.

To *federate knowledge* means to account for academic results, people's experiences, cultural artifacts and whatever else might be relevant to the theme or task at hand. Political federation unites smaller geopolitical units to give them visibility and power.

Knowledge federation does that to *information*.



How are we to *federate knowledge*?

Knowledge federation too is *federated*!

Instead of only looking at the world as we are accustomed to, instead of relying on books and articles and academic disciplines, and media news and other inherited or *traditional* ways—we *federate* what we do with information; and create *new* ways to *knowledge*; and take *true* advantage of information technology.

I'll use *holoscope* as keyword to point to our society's new 'headlights'—which will result from *federating knowledge*; and *enable* us to *federate knowledge*.

While I'll be introducing **knowledge federation** techniques gradually, as we go along, a couple of them you have already seen. The first was the metaphor; this book began with one. In what follows I'll be developing a parallel between the times and conditions when Galilei was in house arrest and our contemporary ones. The metaphor has been identified (by Jean Piaget in developmental psychology, and George Lakoff in cognitive linguistics) as *the* building block of meaning. I use inverted commas when I want to emphasize that something is to be interpreted as a metaphor.

The second technique you've seen is to create custom-defined words and expressions; I call them **keywords**; and distinguish them by writing them in a distinct font.

Ulrich Beck remarked in *The Risk Society and Beyond*, in the year 2000:

"I cannot understand how anyone can make use of the frameworks of reference developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth century in order to understand the transformation into the post-traditional cosmopolitan world we live in today."

Imagine us in "the risk society"—impregnated with existential risks we don't know how to handle; because the still **traditional** way we think and speak prevents us from comprehending the post-**traditional** condition we are in. Imagine us driving into the future while looking at the rearview mirror, as Marshall McLuhan saw us—and you'll easily understand why we *must* create new ways to see, think and speak.

By creating **keywords** we can give old words like "information" and "culture" a distinct function and a new life. **Keyword** creation is a means to linguistic and institutional recycling.

Often but not always, **keywords** are adopted from the terminology of an academic field, cultural tradition or frontier thinker. They enable us to account for what's been seen, experienced or comprehended; to 'stand on the shoulders of **giants**' and see further; to see things in *new* ways and see them whole.

Metaphors and **keywords** define specific ways of seeing things; and invite us to **see** things **as** defined.

Did you notice that I've just turned **see as** into a **keyword**?

I'll use it to ask you to flex your mind; because seeing things as other people saw them is *necessary* if we should see them from all sides and see them whole.



What difference will this make?

Neil Postman—who as a professor and chairman of the Department of Culture and Communication at the New York University founded “media ecology” (we *will* ‘stand on his shoulders’; but I’ll be using Gregory Bateson’s more general keyword **ecology of mind** instead)—observed in a televised interview in 1990:

“We’ve entered an age of information glut. And this is something no culture has really faced before. The typical situation is information scarcity. [...] Lack of information can be very dangerous. [...] But at the same time too much information can be dangerous, because it can lead to a situation of **meaninglessness**, of people not having any basis for knowing what is relevant, what is irrelevant, what is useful, what is not useful, where they live in a culture that is simply committed, through all of its media, to generate tons of information every hour, without categorizing it in any way for you.”

Think of all the spectacles pouring at us through the media. When we begin to **federate knowledge**, we’ll see a *different* kind of spectacle; we see *the* vastest and most important event that is happening in our time.

It is only *in the context of* this mega-event that we can **correctly** comprehend the *meaning* of specific events.

I introduced this mega-event to Noah, my teenage son, by calling it the **elephant**. What *is* the **elephant**? I sang that question to Noah on the tune of The Fox, which you'll find on YouTube:

What is the **elephant**?
Ring-ding-ding-ding-dingeringeding!
What is the **elephant**?
"Wa-pa-pa-pa-pa-pa-pow!"

Noah "knew" the answer: The **elephant** is a figurative nickname for **holo-topia**; but that's the sort of "knowing" Noah learned at school.

To develop *the kind of knowing* we need to be able to see the **elephant**, and truly **know** what goes on in our time—is the next step in evolution of knowledge.

The **elephant** was in the room when the 20th century's **giants** wrote or spoke; but we failed to see him because of the jungleness of our information; and because of disciplinary and cultural fragmentation; and because our thinking and communication are still as the **tradition** shaped them. We heard the **giants** talk about a 'thick snake', a 'fan', a 'tree-trunk' and a 'rope', often in Greek or Latin; they didn't make sense and we ignored them. **How differently information fares when we** understand that it was the 'trunk', the 'ear', the 'leg' and the 'tail' of a vast exotic 'animal' they were talking about; whose very *existence* we ignore!

To **manifest the elephant** is the task we have as generation.

To show him to our children is the duty we have as parents.

So we did as Postman recommended; and as we shall see in Chapter Nine also Plato, at the academic tradition's point of inception:

We categorized.

We identified five *pivotal* categories (I qualify something as *pivotal* if it decisively influences our society-and-culture's evolutionary *course*; and as *correct* if it corrects it):

1. **Innovation**—our so rapidly growing ability to create and induce change; which evokes the analogy with the Industrial Revolution and suggests the question: Where will the *next* quantum leap in efficiency and effectiveness of human work come from?
2. **Information**—which includes the artifacts (such as books and TV news and whatever else may record human experience) *and* the processes by which those artifacts are created and communicated and put to use; which brings to mind the Gutenberg Revolution and suggests the question: What will enable the *next* quantum leap in *knowledge*?
3. **Foundation**—which includes the assumptions, often unnamed and unknown, that underlie our quest of *knowledge* and determine what is to be considered as worthwhile and true; which reminds of the Copernican Revolution and suggests the question: What will incite the *next* Enlightenment-like change of the way we use the *mind*?
4. **Method**—by which truth and meaning are created; which evokes the analogy with the Scientific Revolution and brings to mind the question: What new way of pursuing knowledge will have similarly sweeping effects?
5. **Ethos**—which orients “the pursuit of happiness” and our other pursuits; and evokes the analogy with the Renaissance and makes us wonder: What values will mark the *next cultural revival*?

When we looked at each of these *five categories* through the *holoscope*, when we *federated* what's been academically reported or in other ways found out about it—in *each* case the result was an insight that toppled the “conventional wisdom”; and demanded that the habitual comprehension of that category be *thoroughly* revised, and its handling reversed.

Five insights resulted.

And showed:

1. How an update of *innovation* can raise the effectiveness of human work far beyond what the advent of machines made possible
2. How an update of *information* can improve comprehension and meaning—as radically as the printing press improved the *spreading* of documents
3. How an update of *foundation* can help us rebuild culture—in a similar way as architecture revolutionized house construction
4. How an update of *method* can change the way we comprehend life's core themes—as much as science changed the way we comprehend *natural* phenomena
5. How our priorities and values and our very way of being in the world will change beyond recognition—when we base them on *knowledge* instead of *belief*.

And when we used the *five insights* as frame of reference, to illuminate *other* core themes including education, happiness, science, creativity, peace and religion, and democracy, power and freedom—similarly game-changing insights resulted. So we formulated *ten themes* to illustrate that.

Each of the *five insights* points to this single principle or rule of thumb, as the way to implement the requisite updates:

Make things whole.

Holotopia is the vision of a dramatically better cultural and societal order of things or *paradigm* that follows from the *five insights*; which can be actualized by applying this principle. It is also a carefully choreographed strategy and project to make that vision come true.

Holotopia is a practical **way to change course.**



I know: The unfolding of holotopia will take time.

But holotopia transforms the world also instantly—by its very existence!

Margaret Mead wrote in *Continuities in Cultural Evolution*, in 1964:

“We are living in a period of extraordinary danger, as we are faced with the possibility that our whole species will be eliminated from the evolutionary scene. One necessary condition of successfully continuing our existence is the creation of an atmosphere of hope that the huge problems now confronting us can, in fact, be solved—and can be solved in time.”

Holotopia supplies that “one necessary condition of successfully continuing our existence”—a *realizable* vision of a *better* future; it changes the *mood* of our engagement with our society’s dilemmas *and* future.

Before **holotopia** existed, those of us who are parents were facing the question whether to tell our children the disheartening truth; or better let them live in illusion, for as long as it may last.

We can now tell the truth as *good* news!

I was just talking with Noah about Alizée, the 22 year-old climate activist who tied herself to a tennis net and disrupted a French Open semi-finals game. She had “We have 1028 days left” written on her T-shirt. Some spectators booed and whistled—they came to watch a tennis game, not for climate politics; others remained silent.

Have you seen the movie *The Matrix*? I showed Noah the whole trilogy several years ago. *The Matrix* depicts a dystopian future where intelligent machines rule the world; and keep us humans in a computer-created “reality”, which looks rather like the world we see around us. Like the Matrix, the world we’ve created offers Noah’s generation only two options: To be

immersed in a game-like “reality”—of computer games to begin with, and career games later on; or to live in a dystopian reality and keep trying to *disrupt* ‘the game’. **Holotopia** offers a third option—to *transform* ‘the game’.

Holotopia also has this *main* value proposition.

Dennis Meadows (who as a young MIT professor coordinated The Club of Rome’s best known study, which resulted in *The Limits to Growth* report; and then continued to research our civilization’s condition) reported in 2012, on this report’s 40th anniversary event at the Smithsonian in Washington, that sustainable development is *no longer possible*; because we’ve already *surpassed* what our planet can sustain! We are headed toward the “systemic collapse”, Meadows diagnosed; where “the systems in which we live and work” as Bela H. Banathy called them, which I will simply call **systems**, collapse and topple one another like dominos.

Holotopia transforms the dynamic of collapse into the dynamic of renewal.

Experts urge us to focus on making **systems** “resilient”, so they won’t collapse under pressure. The **holotopia** strategy is to make them *pliable*, and be *transformed* under pressure; suited to the *functions* they need to serve, in *new* conditions.

Holotopia can turn even “the huge problems now confronting us” into assets!

By making it clear that they compel us—and hence empower us—to take an evolutionary quantum leap in **human quality** and **culture**; by following the **course** the humanity’s great teachers have been pointing to.



Holotopia is hard to believe?

I'll put your mind to rest: I don't expect you to **believe** what I say; or even to understand it right away. In the second book of *holotopia* series we'll begin to elaborate details.

Here I only want to show you around, give you a glimpse of *holotopia* as a whole; and if some of this might interest you, invite you to a conversation.

Which may seem like an easy matter but it's not. What I have in mind is a 5D-like image of the *elephant* (Noah told me that an X-ray-like picture of an object's inside is now called "fourth dimension"; and we agreed that the fifth dimension could be the timeline of the object's evolution). This image took shape during these thirty years while I thought and practiced and worked in a certain uncommon way, which I'll tell you about in Chapter Two. Try as I might, I've been unable to turn what I see into a linear sequence of words.

The only way our communication can work is if you engage in it *actively*.

So here is what I'll do: I'll continue to share these snippets, which I call *vignettes*; each of them is a snapshot of (some detail of) the *elephant*. And I'll leave it to you to reflect on them, and see how they fit together and compose the whole big thing. That will turn this book into a puzzle.

While working through this puzzle you'll have a chance to practice this different way to think, this art of *connecting the dots*; which you'll need—which we'll *all* need—to be able to see the *elephant*; and *change course*.

[...]



How shall we put an end to war—*once and for all?*

So that it no longer hangs over our heads like the sword of Damocles!
This little *vignette* will put that large theme on our map.

Alfred Nobel had 355 patents registered to his name.

Some of them were used in warfare, and the legacy he'd leave behind worried him. Then he thought of a solution: He would use his fortune to help *other* creative people give *their* gifts. Peace was of primary importance; Nobel thought that only the Norwegians—those quintessential peacemakers—could be trusted to award the peace prize in his name.

But there was a rub: To recognize a creative contribution, *you yourself* need to be creative! And this is all the more a challenge when putting an end to *war* is the creative goal. You may have noticed that, as a rule, the recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize contributed only *palliative* solutions, such as negotiating a peace treaty. Not surprisingly; because if I challenge *you* to name a creative contribution, even *hypothetical*, that *could* lead to the *conclusive* end to war—you too might be standing still!

But if I ask you to name a *person* who might have made such contribution—the name “Gandhi” will probably come to mind.

Gandhi was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize *five times* without receiving it; since empowering Gandhi in that way could have been perceived as a diplomatic slap to the United Kingdom, this was not considered opportune.

Even *the noblest* of our committees has not always managed to steer clear of *power structure*!

Finally in 1947 India became independent; and Gandhi was to receive the Nobel Peace Prize the following year; but he was assassinated in January of 1948! The Nobel Peace Prize was not at all awarded that year; so indirectly Gandhi *did* receive the honor.

But he didn't have a chance to give his acceptance speech; to deliver his *message* to the world!

So what was Gandhi's creative contribution to the cause of peace?

Arne Næss—Norway's most loved philosopher—undertook to find out.

His investigation resulted in a tiny paperback *Gandhi and Group Conflict* subtitled "An Exploration of *Satyagraha*; Theoretical Background". Although this little jewel of Western analytic philosophy applied to **federate** the message of an Eastern holy man and political reformer was issued by my home institution, by the University of Oslo Press, I would have surely ignored its existence—had I not received a signed copy from Kit Fai Næss, Arne's wife; when we met at a university's café for lunch; at the point when Arne was hospitalized for Alzheimer's.

Arne's conclusion surprised me.

Gandhi did not teach that violence had to be abolished because it's inherently wrong.

But because **non-violence works**—and works *better* than violence; when practiced in a certain specific way; by a certain *method*.

Furthermore, Gandhi reached this conclusion *empirically*; by making "experiments with truth" as he called them in his autobiography. In Arne's words:

“Gandhi, then, had a substantial experimental basis for his claim that the consistent, or pure, forms of *satyagraha* (strictly, ‘method of holding on to truth’) are more effective than the less consistent, or less pure, and that an increase in consistency or purity is especially favorable when a struggle is already well-advanced. He had, in other words, an argument for non-violence over and above the purely moral one, and this argument is strongly empirical and utilitarian.”

The core of Gandhi’s method was to put “truth” before and above *all* conventional “interests”; on page 64, while summarizing Gandhi’s method, Næss explains:

“If we take self-realization to be the ultimate goal, and a non-violent society to be a necessary condition for reaching supremely high levels of self-realization, all non-ultimate ends *and all means* must be judged in relation to self-realization and the non-violent society.”

“Self-realization”, or ***wholeness*** as I prefer to call it, is only possible in a *non-violent* society; in a society *without* in-built tension!

Gandhi was not liberating only India from United Kingdom; he was also liberating United Kingdom from an oppressive relationship with India; and also his compatriots from *themselves*—to prepare them for creating a non-violent society once India would become independent.

What qualities must one manifest to be a catalyst of non-violent resolution of group conflict; if non-violence is to be *more* effective than violence? Arne explained under the title “The self of egotism and the universal self”:

“The term ‘humility’ is used in many important connections in Gandhian writings, and not only to express ‘lack of arrogance or pride’. One sense seems relatively clear and acceptable to persons with different ideological backgrounds: a person lacks hu-

mility to the extent that he suffers from egotism (self-conceit). By ‘shedding the ego’ one then means shedding the egotism. To reduce oneself to zero – a phrase often used by Gandhi – is accordingly to be understood as reducing the egotism-self to zero, i.e. as eliminating it.”

Gandhi made it clear that his political work stemmed from (his devoted connection to) the *archetype*:

“He is a devotee who is jealous of none, who is a fountain of mercy, who is without egotism, who is selfless, who treats alike cold and heat, happiness and misery, who is ever forgiving, who is always contented, whose resolutions are firm, who has dedicated mind and soul to God, who causes no dread [...]”.

[...]



In 1984 two wise old men—representing Western science and Oriental wisdom—sat face-to-face and had a *dialog* about the future of man. Listen to them talk:

Krishnamurti: I thought we were going to talk about the future of man.

Bohm: Yes.

Krishnamurti: [Reflects, then speaks] I mean, really when we talk about “man”, we talk about the humanity.

Bohm: All of mankind.

Krishnamurti: All of mankind. Not the British, or the French or the Russian or the American, but the whole...

Bohm: The future is all interlinked now anyway.

Krishnamurti: As things are, from what one observes, the world has become tremendously dangerous.

Bohm: Yes, sir! [...]

Krishnamurti: Problems seem to multiply more and more. So—what’s the future of man? [Reflects] What’s the future of not only the present generation, but the coming generation.

Bohm: Well, the future looks very grim...

Krishnamurti: Very grim. If you were quite young, and I was quite young, what would we do? Knowing all this. What would be our reaction, what would be our life, our way of earning a livelihood and so on?

Bohm: I have often thought of that. For example, I asked myself would I go into science again.

Krishnamurti: Yes.

Bohm: I am not at all certain now, because science does not seem to be relevant to this crisis.

Krishnamurti: No, on the contrary—they are helping!

Bohm: It makes it worse. It might help, but in fact it isn't that.

Krishnamurti: So what would you do?

It took David Bohm and Jiddu Krishnamurti only a minute or two to zoom in on *the question on whose answer the future of man will depend*:

What profession, what course of action, what source of livelihood should our students and children choose *to be part of the solution?*

They subsequently continued this conversation for another hour; and met again later and talked more; but they never come back to this key question. It is easy to see why:

This question *has no answer*, not yet.

I invite you to join us in creating it.