



Holoflux: Codex

Form/Movement/Vision

~inspired by~

David Bohm

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Introduction

The new form of insight can perhaps best be called *Undivided Wholeness in Flowing Movement*. This view implies that flow is, in some sense, prior to that of the “things” that can be seen to form and dissolve in this flow.

— David Bohm, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*

It is not an easy thing, or a simple thing, to come to the boundary of how we imagine ourselves. Our identities are put together in such fashion as to guard against such trespass. Beyond that boundary, we suspect, lie uncertainty and confusion—even chaos and dissolution. Better to stick with the known, than to probe into the unknown.

If we do attempt to venture beyond, we quickly encounter a multitude of conservative anchors, well-set and ready to hold us in place as we are. There is the entirety of our personal history—all of our experiences, all of our memories, all of our accumulated meanings. More broadly, there are the cultures in which we have been raised, and the potent, unseen ways in which we have been shaped by these cultures. Beyond that lies the deep time of our ancestral streams, dreamlike, rarely recognized, yet subtly informing how we find ourselves placed in the world.

All of these factors come into play, overtly or tacitly, if we arrive at the boundary of how we imagine ourselves. And for good reason—these identity structures provide us with grounding, with reference points, with orientation. They allow us to create lives of relative authenticity and inner meaning, both individually and culturally. To trespass these boundaries—to dislodge the anchors—really does expose us to the unknown, in profound and unexpected ways. This is not an idle concern. But at various historical junctures, the boundaries of identity and order can begin to fray of their own accord. As the poet Yeats forewarned, “Things fall apart; the center cannot hold.”

We are now in such a time. Social fragmentation is at a breaking point, with no relief in sight. Climate change has morphed into climate emergency, seemingly overnight. Information technology, artificial intelligence, and bio-engineering follow rules of their own, largely unmoored from even short-term implications. Forced migration has exploded worldwide. Wealth inequality has gone off the rails.

The imminent convergence of these trends does not bode well. To the contrary—it is difficult to imagine a more toxic global environment on the near horizon. It is clear that action must be taken, immediately, from many quarters, to forestall the very real “tipping points” that we are often warned about. Without such action at every level—individual, collective, global—our prospects seem very dim indeed.

It is in this historical context that the existential inquiries of the late physicist David Bohm hold a significant place. As early as 1980, Bohm indicated that the circumstances in which we currently find ourselves were all but inevitable. And though he was a proponent of any and all actions that could forestall calamity, he pointed to a source—hiding in plain view—that he felt to be at the root of our

current challenges. This source is the activity of human thought, and the manner in which it has evolved over millennia. The core characteristic of this thought is that it displays a world of independent, self-existing *things*—dogs, tangerines, cars, atoms, trees, galaxies, human beings, forks, meteorites, mountains, cows, carpets, clocks. Things!

We are so profoundly acclimated to seeing the world in this way that it is nearly impossible to imagine it any other way. The fragmented world displayed by thought is so self-evident that it warrants no consideration—a classic feedback loop that appears innocuous in its daily particulars. But when we take a sustained look at the larger social and ecological patterns that accrue from this ingrained fragmentation, the results, as indicated above, are breathtaking. And the correlate to seeing the world as consisting of things is equally fraught, and equally hidden away: we ourselves become a “thing”—a self-existing, independent object among all the others. We then have the “observer” (me, as a thing) and the “observed” (any and every thing other than me). With this, a firm self-referencing system is set in place, re-enacted by each of us, every day, every second of every day.

In Bohm’s view, this recurring cycle of thing-ness and fragmentation underlies the modes of perception and action that result in our present crises. It is natural, when we experience the world as a collection of independent objects, to then conceive of the world mechanistically, and to become mechanistic in our behavior. This pervasive fragmentation filters out relationship, process, participation, wholeness—leading to further fragmentation, in a downward historical spiral. It is by grasping the entirety of this cycle—which is both

individual and cultural—that we might come to realize the necessity of a radical change in the way our consciousness constructs a world. It is only a change of this magnitude, felt Bohm, that could lay the foundation for long-term coherence and stability, rather than erratic and topical “solutions”—however well-intended and necessary these latter may be.

There are many ways one can approach Bohm’s proposals regarding the nature of consciousness. But whether we approach from the point of view of physics, or from the point of view of direct experience, we will find *movement* to be fundamental. The terms Bohm used to indicate this primacy of movement are *holomovement* and alternately, *holoflux*.

For those non-physicists interested in Bohm’s work with consciousness, there have typically been two available avenues. One is his work with dialogue, with an emphasis on collective thought and meaning. The other is often more individualized, following his proposals regarding thought as a system and proprioception of thought. In either approach, there has been a tendency to sideline Bohm’s emphasis on movement. On the one hand, it is easy to dismiss movement as something so obvious, so simple, that it can’t really be all that significant. On the other hand, when one considers the implications of *holoflux*, it may seem too vast, too unreckonable.

And indeed, holoflux indicates something truly vast. In Bohm’s metaphysics, it points to *all that is*—the fluxing, dynamic movement of the ever-emerging whole, of all that can possibly be. Holoflux “carries” and subsumes all he described as explicate orders, and all he described as implicate orders. Everything we think of as “world” and “cosmos” is perpetually unfolding from holoflux, from holomovement.

Indeed, Bohm suggested that there really are no “things” at all—only constellations and vortices of movement that temporarily appear as things (dogs, atoms, mountains, cows), only to eventually dissolve back into the flux from which they arose.

So yes, holoflux is vast—but it is also intimate. We too are perpetually unfolding from and re-enfolding into holoflux. Every particle of our physicality, every shading and nuance of our consciousness—all is unfolding from holoflux. In this view, our deepest nature, our primordial being, is movement, flux. Alas, for most of us, this is not how we experience the world. The world we inhabit—the world created by our thought—is the world of thing-ness.



It was just these considerations of movement, of holoflux, that inspired a small group of thirty or so people to embark on an experimental approach to Bohm’s work. Sponsored by the Pari Center in Pari, Italy, we began with a program, “Entering Bohm’s Holoflux.” Rather than come to movement as a subset of dialogue, or a subset of proprioceptive awareness, we *began* with movement, placing it front and center. Our working hypothesis has been that if we can refine and deepen our innate sense of movement, other aspects of Bohm’s proposals could be more intuitively understood—less abstract, more concrete, more embodied.

Among these other aspects is *meaning*. From the rudimentary mind-like qualities of the quantum realm, to the prospect of vast intelligences in the cosmos more generally, a Bohmian cosmos is shot through with meaning. By opening ourselves to such more-than-human meaning, felt Bohm, we might renew our capacities

for relationship, for wholeness—and actively enter a participatory world. In our nascent holoflux experiments, testing these prospects began with movement.

The fulcrum around which these experiments turn is *rheosoma*, that is, the flowing body. In the first instance, “body” means our personal, individual body. What is the movement of the life-force within that body? How thoroughly can we attune to that? We thus begin very close to home, sensing the combinations and permutations of movement within us—literally. With this basis, we then extend the experiment “outward,” into the world around us. If we can attune to that “outer” world *through* the movement we have discovered within us, what new dimensions of movement, relationship, and participation are revealed?

As our experiment unfolded, individuals began to give formal presentations to the group, using a variety of media to illustrate how they had been experiencing movement, *rheosoma*, and other glimmerings of holoflux. It soon became apparent that it might be useful to share these experiences beyond the confines of our working group. We determined early on that a printed book would be the most durable medium for this purpose, but we immediately faced a conundrum. How could the original multi-media presentations be made into a book? The answer was, they couldn’t be. The solution was for each contributor to return to the wellsprings, and find a way of conveying their experience that would be oriented to the printed page.

But in keeping with our experiment, each person’s experience was also in a process of flux, and had in most cases changed considerably, or even totally, from the time of the original presentations. Their contributions, then, reflect moments in time, already come and gone, though still very much alive. They are, to use a

term from our experiments, *indefinites*—probing into increasingly subtle aspects of movement and flux.

It is our hope that a random image from the book, or some turn of phrase, could inspire further inquiry into the nature of movement, the nature of holoflux—which is our own nature. Such inquiry could reach beyond the theoretical, into the weave and warp of daily life. Finding our way back into “Bohmian” movement may indeed be challenging, as it necessarily involves questions of personal identity and orientation. But it also opens entirely new vistas of beauty and meaning, of coherence and wholeness. There is then the prospect that, rather than being pushed by historical forces to the boundary of how we imagine ourselves, we could do so intentionally, creatively. To come to this boundary knowingly, without resistance or conflict—this itself could be an inflection point in those forces which are otherwise poised to engender more fear, more divisiveness, more confusion.

And while it does seem that something very much along these lines is what David Bohm was concerned with, *Holoflux: Codex* is not a treatise on the work of Bohm. Nor is it an “art book” in any conventional sense. It is the documentation of six individuals, mid-stream in experimentation, inspired by Bohm—by his vision, his boundary-crossing, and his life-long reliance on movement and flux as the testing ground for all he brought forth.

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