

# SEEING THE WHOLE

Meaning, Purpose, and Need in Human–System–Environment Design

Dr. Mohammad Rajabali Nejad

# SEEING THE WHOLE

Meaning, Purpose, and Need in Human–System–Environment Design

Author: Dr. Mohammad Rajabali Nejad

ISBN: *9789465381626*

Copyright © 2025 Dr. Mohammad Rajabali Nejad

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the copyright holders, except for brief quotations in academic, educational, or review contexts.

Printed in The Netherlands

# Preface

This book begins from a situation that is historically new.

Human beings have always reflected on their place in the world. Philosophers, poets, theologians, and scientists have long asked what it means to exist, to act, and to live together. For most of history, however, these questions could remain largely reflective. Human power was limited. Actions were local. Mistakes were often reversible. The world could absorb human error.

That condition no longer holds.

Today, humanity operates technologies whose speed, scale, and reach exceed our natural capacity to intuit their consequences. Technical systems reshape environments, societies, and future possibilities faster than ethical reflection, governance, or collective understanding can follow. Decisions made locally propagate globally. Comfort in one place may produce suffering elsewhere. Efficiency in one domain may destabilise another. Errors no longer remain contained.

This book is written because, under these conditions, the way we see the world has become a matter of survival.

**Seeing the whole** is not a metaphor for optimism, nor a call for abstract harmony. It is a practical necessity arising from the reality of interconnection. When systems are tightly coupled, when consequences travel across time and space, and when technology amplifies human action, fragmented thinking becomes dangerous. One-sided views do not merely misrepresent reality; they actively contribute to harm.

To see only the part is no longer sufficient.

This book therefore does not begin with design, control, or solutions. It begins earlier, at the level of orientation. Before we can act responsibly, regulate wisely, or design safely, we must learn how to see, sense, and understand ourselves as part of a larger whole. This includes not only intellectual understanding, but perception, feeling, and existential awareness.

Seeing the whole means recognising that pain and benefit are not symmetrical. What is unpleasant locally may be essential globally. Rain may be uncomfortable for the individual standing beneath it, yet without rain, life cannot continue. Restrictions may feel limiting in the short term, yet without restraint, systems collapse. Comfort may undermine resilience. These are not moral paradoxes; they are structural realities of living systems.

Across cultures and traditions, this insight has been expressed in many forms. One recurring metaphor describes humanity as a body: when one part is in pain, the entire body suffers. In the past, such metaphors were ethical or spiritual reminders. Today, they have become empirically visible. Environmental damage, unsafe technologies, social fragmentation, and unregulated innovation propagate suffering across ecosystems, infrastructures, and generations.

The whole reacts.

This book treats wholeness not as an ideal to be admired, but as a condition that must be acknowledged if we are to continue existing together. It does not argue against technology, progress, or human creativity. On the contrary, it recognises that technology is now inseparable from human life. The question is no longer whether we will shape the world, but whether we can learn to coexist with what we create.

Coexistence requires more than intelligence. It requires a way of seeing that resists reduction, that holds multiple perspectives at once, and that recognises indirect consequences as real. It requires an attitude that understands responsibility not as an external imposition, but as something that emerges naturally from belonging to a whole.

The cube appears in this book only in this limited sense: as a discipline of perception. It is a reminder that reality has more than one side, and that focusing on a single face inevitably distorts the whole. At this stage, the cube is not a structure, a model, or a theory. It is a way of resisting one-dimensional thinking.

Formal structures, methods, and technical languages will come later. They become necessary only after this foundational orientation is established. Without the capacity to see the whole, no design can remain safe, no system can remain sustainable, and no freedom can endure.

This book is written for those who must act in a world where actions scale, where consequences propagate, and where survival depends on our ability to anticipate more than immediate outcomes. It does not offer solutions. It prepares the ground on which responsible solutions can exist.

If this book succeeds, it will not persuade the reader of a doctrine. It will leave the reader with a different posture toward the world: more attentive, more restrained, and more aware of belonging to something larger than any single perspective.

Only from such a posture can meaningful action begin.

# Contents

Preface	iii
I    AWAKENING TO THE WHOLE	1
1    Before Structure: Why Seeing Matters	3
2    The World as a Whole	7
II   MEANING, PURPOSE, AND NEED	11
3    Meaning Before Design	13
4    Layers of Need	15
III   INTERCONNECTION AND CONSEQUENCE	17
5    Everything Is Connected	19
6    Suffering, Harm, and Responsibility	21
IV   SEEING AS A HUMAN PRACTICE	23
7    Seeing, Feeling, and Understanding	25
8    Wholeness Across Traditions	29
V    FROM WHOLENESS TO STRUCTURE	31
9    When Meaning Meets the World	33
10   The Birth of Structure	35

---

<b>VI THE CUBE AS A WAY OF SEEING</b>	<b>37</b>
11 Why We Think in Multiple Sides	39
12 From Seeing the Whole to First Geometry	41
<b>VII LOOKING AHEAD</b>	<b>43</b>
13 Why This Book Ends Here	45
Epilogue: Being Part of the Whole	47