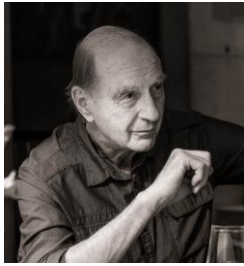


## ***Brief Encounter with the Taos Institute***

**January 2022**



By Kenneth J. Gergen, Taos Institute President and co-founder

# **Resources for the New Age of Turbulence**

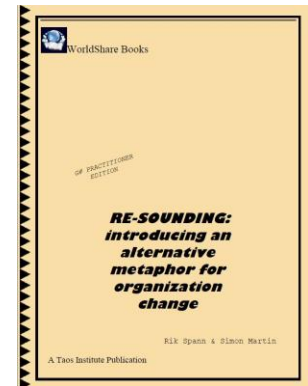
Continuing waves of Corona virus, interspersed storms and draughts, political turmoil, sprouting online economies, malware attacks from nowhere....normal life in 2021. This has not always been so. By all indications we are entering a new age of human history, one in which rapid and unpredictable change will become a daily challenge. What resources are required for living viably in a world of turbulence? In my view, a major shift is needed in our longstanding traditions of understanding. In particular, I believe it essential that we shift from what I will call a structured to a fluid orientation to our endeavors. Human history is dominated by the attempt to establish structures, solid and reliable entities, or foundational systems - whether it be individual persons, families, businesses, governments, economies, religions and so on. All such efforts are challenged by the onrushing turbulence. Required is an orientation to our efforts that is not disrupted by the unpredictable, but moves with it – absorbing, synthesizing, and innovating. The quest for symphonic perfection gives way to jazz improvisation. We move from established rules and principles to the flow of dialogue. The borders once established to ensure identity and permanence are opened to collaboration, cross fertilization, and transformation. Downstream efforts to understand events or patterns now past, are eclipsed by active efforts to build the kind of futures in which we – altogether – may live viably.

It is in this context that I look back on the Taos Institute activities of 2021 with a measure of hope. Here were the wellsprings of exactly the kinds of resources required for our collective wellbeing in a world of turbulence. For example, the Fall conference on *Education as Relating* drew over 300 online registrants from 30 countries. In addition to plenary sessions that included contributions from international educators and students alike, there were 80 concurrent sessions, and 33 video presentations. Available now to the world at large are the plenaries ([YouTube playlist.](#)) along with both the live and pre-recorded sessions ([YouTube playlist of live sessions](#), and [YouTube playlist of pre-recorded sessions.](#)) The sharing continues...all are welcome.

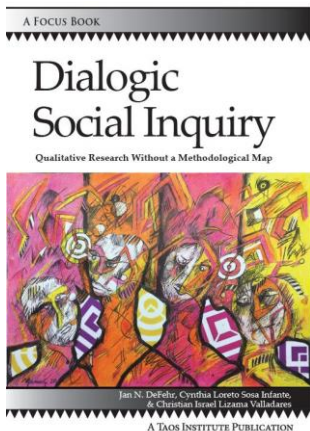
Complementing this concern with relational process in education, the Relational Research Network launched a video series of some 30 interviews with practitioners working with a relational focus on research. These videos are also being shared with the public on this [YouTube playlist.](#)

In addition to these online resources, book publishing continued to flourish. In the WorldShare book series – offering free books in multiple languages for downloading – two new entries were added:

- *RE-SOUNDING: introducing an alternative metaphor for organization change*, by Rik Spann & Simon Martin
- *Cuando hablamos: Hacia una nueva comprensión ‘fluida’ del sentido común de los devenires relacionales* by John Shotter, Translated by Carlos Felipe Villar-Guhl



There are now over 70 freely offered books in the WorldShare series, and in 14 languages. In addition, two printed books were also published:



- *Dialogic Social Inquiry: Qualitative Research Without a Methodological Map*, by Jan DeFehr, Cynthia Loreto Sosa Infante, & Christian Israel Lizama Valladares
- *The Relational Imperative: Resources for a World on Edge*, by Kenneth Gergen

While on the subject of books, a series of eight free [Dialogue with the Author](#) webinars were offered to the public. Six of these introduced chapters and sections from the recently published [Sage Handbook of Social Construction Practice](#).

Education continued as a central focus on the Taos Institute. Five online courses and workshops were offered to the public this year, on topics ranging from social construction to relational theory, social movements, new therapeutic practices, and research as daily practice. Many of the participants in these courses were also enrolled in the [Diploma program in Social Construction and Professional Practice](#). The program yielded six graduates this year, and offers a unique opportunity to work closely with a mentor on a topic of the student's choosing.

#### International Diploma in Social Construction and Professional Practice



May such efforts furnish the seeds for a new harvest in 2022. Our future is at stake.