

Brief Encounter with the Taos Institute

April 2022

Writing Together: Creating Space for Dialogue, Tension, Resonance, and Celebration of Ideas Becoming Stories



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Perhaps it began with a wonderment, or maybe a wish: co-parenting infant ideas to have a voice in the world (*Infant* literally means “not able to speak”). How do we nurture ideas to help them grow? Without knowing exactly how tall, how wide, and how deep they will be, we said “let’s feed them”, “let’s put them to bed”, “let’s play with them.” And they grew.

What started out as a quick experiment among us three pracademics grew with excitement. Our relationships grew along with pleasant surprises and appreciation of our differences. The relationship wasn’t based on fragile tiptoeing around sensitive issues or different views. Our ideas stewed in a crockpot of challenging dialogues. We explored what ailed us and aided us in our individual and collective *umwelten* - the worlds as we perceive. And there slips an academic jargon.

We share a commitment for constructionist ideas impacting our everyday lives. So we asked ourselves—what are some other ways we can share and create knowledge that can grow and spread? How do these kinds of academic jargons and traditional forms of publishing possibly get in the way of ideas coming and becoming together? Oftentimes we have half-baked ideas that need dialogue and collective input to shape them further. Relational dialogic practices help enrich ideas and create new possibilities.

What are some creative ways to invite and be invited to think together, work together, play together? How do we participate and contribute in facilitating such spaces that can hold and nurture *multiple realities*? How do we mature ideas into the world to permeate and transform everyday conversations? How do we keep these ideas alive and ever changing, including as many voices as possible? As a means to answering these questions, we began our experiment with an online

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Mar 25, 2021 · 13 min read · Listen

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publication platform called Medium to write together. We started with an [article](#) Kristin wrote, and Kristin then invited Haesun and Paloma to add their voice, or rather, add **our** voices. Dialogues occurred--synchronously and asynchronously. We asked questions and considered each other's curiosities. We shared beyond our writing about different aspects of our lives--politics, religion, family--of who we were continually becoming. Our whole experience of writing and sharing together became part of our shared story.

Then a question emerged: *How do we open up this playground to more people?*

It wasn't a yes-or-no question. It was a yes-and-how question. In many of the spaces we operate in there is a preference for certainty, order, and agreements. Also, yes, there would be uncertainty, a bit of mess, and possibly disagreements. Considering this, how do we calibrate ourselves with all our differences and similarities?

So we sent a call out for other Taos Associates to join the conversation on Medium and see what would happen. A myriad of people from different contexts and languages (Papusa Molina, Marge Schiller, Susan Swim, and Alita Taylor) joined in. Together, we witnessed our various infant ideas learn to speak, gain muscles, and show up to the world. We worked to define, refine, and redefine what our ideas are, what they do, and what they could be. And it's only the beginning, we feel.

Our hopes are that we can hold space for dialogue, tension, resonance, and celebration of ideas becoming stories that come from our relational writing. And then, share this writing with the world so it can continue to evolve and respond to what is needed.

Ken Gergen (2015) proposes we consider research as "future forming". We ask, how might writing also be future forming? So we invite: *What's next? Who's next? How do we begin?*

If you want to join this journey, start by visiting the [collaborative space](#), and let's build from there.

Gergen, K. J. (2015) From Mirroring to World-Making: Research as Future Forming. *J Theory Soc Behav*, 45: 287– 310. doi: 10.1111/jtsb.12075.



Kristin Bodiford · Mar 25, 2021 ★

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Conversational co-authors: Kristin Bodiford, Papusa Molina, Haesun Moon, Marge Schiller, Susan Swim, Alita Taylor, Paloma Torres-Davila In this article, we are engaging in conversation about the different values and...



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