

# Making America Sacred Again

Interview with Glenn Aparicio Parry by David Kopacz

(9/5/20)<sup>1</sup>



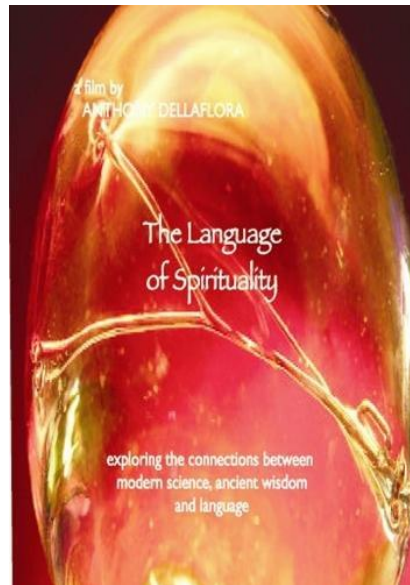
*Glenn Aparicio Parry & Sunrise, in front of Taos Mountain, NM, photo by Sylvia Renick*

Glenn Aparicio Parry: Do you know something about the ritual of the Zozobra in Santa Fe?

David Kopacz: No, I haven't heard of it.

G: Zozobra is a 53-foot high giant creature that represents dark, gloom, and despair. And every year they burn it away. I never paid that much attention to it honestly, but this year it seems highly appropriate [laughs].

D: It really does! That is very appropriate for our talk today about your book, *Original Politics: Making America Sacred Again*. I feel like I know you already after reading this book and also seeing *The Language of Spirituality* documentary that you helped to set up. You know, I've been working with Joseph Rael for about 7 years now and he told me about those meetings and I watched the DVD and was surprised to see Joseph in the documentary!

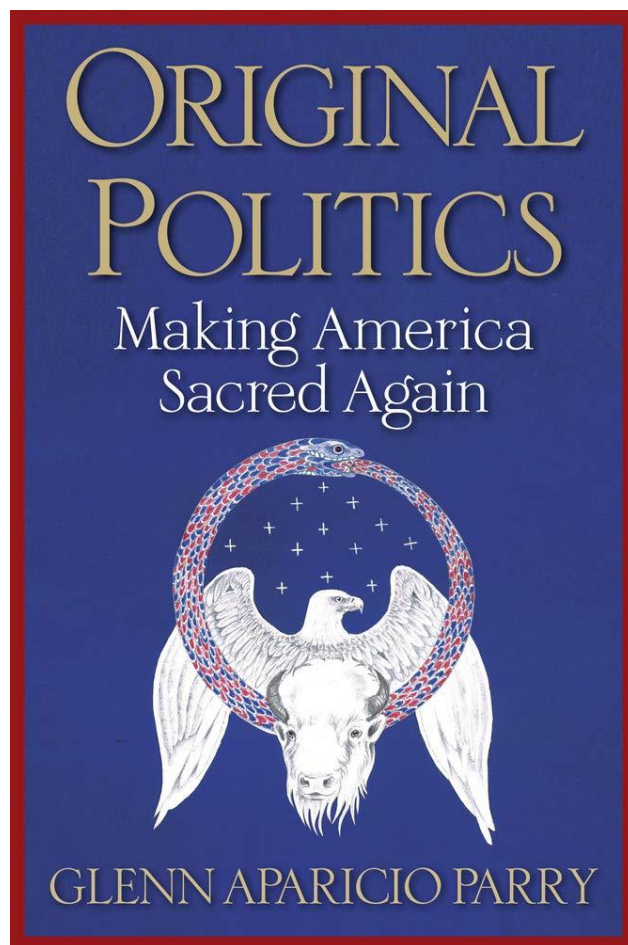


G: I think he sang a song at the end, if I remember. It was quite a moving ending. There was another film done on the history of the Language of Spirit Dialogues by Joyce Anastasia and the Foundation for Global Humanity.

D: I will have to look for that. The first question I have for you today is about the title of your book. It seems like an obvious riff of “Make America Great Again.” What you would say the difference is between being great and being sacred?

G: That is a great place to start. When I think of “great” I think of power and dominance, I think of the 1927 Yankees, Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig, but when I think of “sacred” I also think of power. I think the power is not coming from the human ego; the power is coming from the land, the power is coming from place, the power is channeled through the human and the human is in service to that power. The word sacred literally comes from the Latin *sacre* — to devote or

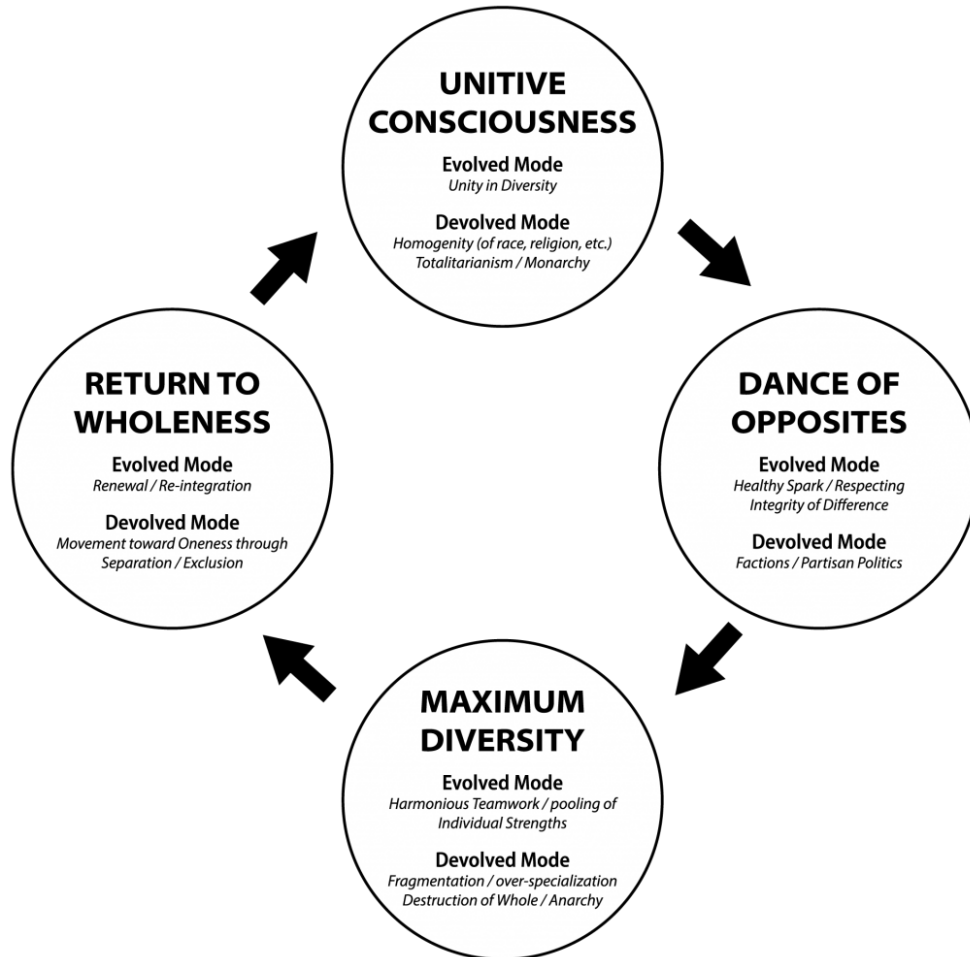
dedicate. To be sacred is to invoke the whole, it is about going beyond the human realm and bringing in all our relations. All that is intended in the title. It is also saying “Make America Sacred Again.” America refers both to the nation and the place. In a sense the land has always been sacred, but the land also needs to be healed. There have been many places on the land where a beautiful ceremony has been conducted that is emanating powerful, positive energy. There are also places on the land, like Littleton, Colorado is an example, where during the Sand Creek massacre where the Cheyenne and the Arapaho were rounded up and moved to Wyoming to clear the way for white settlers to come into the land. I do not see any coincidence that is where the first major school shooting happened at Columbine, because that land had not been healed yet. We need to heal the land; we need to do ceremony to heal the land and heal the rifts that happened in certain places between human beings and then we can move forward.



D: Yes, that makes sense. Joseph says that we are “hollow bones,” and particularly if you are a shaman. A shaman is not somebody who is coming from a place of ego, rather they use their ego to create space to let *Wah-Mah-Chi*, or breath matter movement to flow through you, so your being is in service.

G: Yes! That is very beautiful, that is very wise.

D: This second question I have is about your model. How did you come to develop the model of the four circles that looks similar to a Jungian mandala — with Unitive Consciousness, the Dance of Opposites, Maximum Diversity, and Return to Wholeness?



*Original Politics, page xxi*

G: I want to give some credit to my developmental editor, JoAnne O'Brien-Levin. We had a meeting after I had written part one of the book and I realized another element needed to be added – that was the Evolved and the Devolved mode. I already had the model of Unitive Consciousness, Dance of the Opposites, Maximum Diversity and Return to Wholeness. I knew that was similar to what they spoke about in Taoism, from the one comes the two, comes the many things. All along the Tao is driving the unfoldment. I could look at nature and see, what Emerson used to talk about, all our development is unfolding like the vegetable plant, from seed, to root, to bud, to fruit. Then the fruit re-seeds again and goes into another cycle. I was trying to look at human actions and how they are nested in the natural world, because we are part of nature. The full development of the model did come from conversation about the overall arc of the book and that is something my developmental editor is really good at doing.

D: The evolved and devolved also reminded me of a polarity, like Bohm's implicate and explicate order where things are enfolded or unfolded. I thought of these four phases and then each phase has an evolved or devolved state.

G: Well yes, three big influences for the book are Bohm's philosophy, Vedic philosophy and Jean Gebser's philosophy. Gebser, the German philosopher, spoke about efficient and deficient modes. That was a strong reason for wanting to use evolved and devolved modes. Gebser and Aurobindo were contemporaries, as far as I know they did not have a lot of contact with each other, if any, but they both were revitalizing an ancient form of wisdom that understood that when the structures of consciousness unfold that does not make the old obsolete. Most of Western philosophers, in my opinion, focus too much on stages as if one erases the prior stage. Even sometimes the way we look at paradigms is that way. In fact, David Bohm had a little beef with Thomas Kuhn and his book about paradigms [*The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*]. Bohm understood something: that a new paradigm is of a restructuring, reformulation of a lot of aspects of the old. It's not as new as it appears.

In addition to Taoism, the Vedic model of involution and evolution, which closely correlates with Bohm's implicate and explicate order. All of these, in my view, are accurate reflections of how things unfold. In the Vedic model *sat-chit-ananda* (being-consciousness-bliss), *purusha*, or "pure

spirit” descends into matter and then re-emerges or unfolds in the inverse order in which it originally enfolded. That is why lotus is sacred in India, because the lotus enfolds and unfolds. Sometimes I'm not sure how conscious I was of all of that in developing it. I did find the model pleasing and I also would say this, I was aware that some people I highly respect, like Nora Bateson, the youngest daughter of Gregory Bateson, would caution against any model for oversimplifying things. I was aware, for instance how I tended to cast Donald Trump in the book as a disrupter, trickster figure. However, he also took advantage of a certain kind of energy that was unfolding too, even though it might have been devolving.

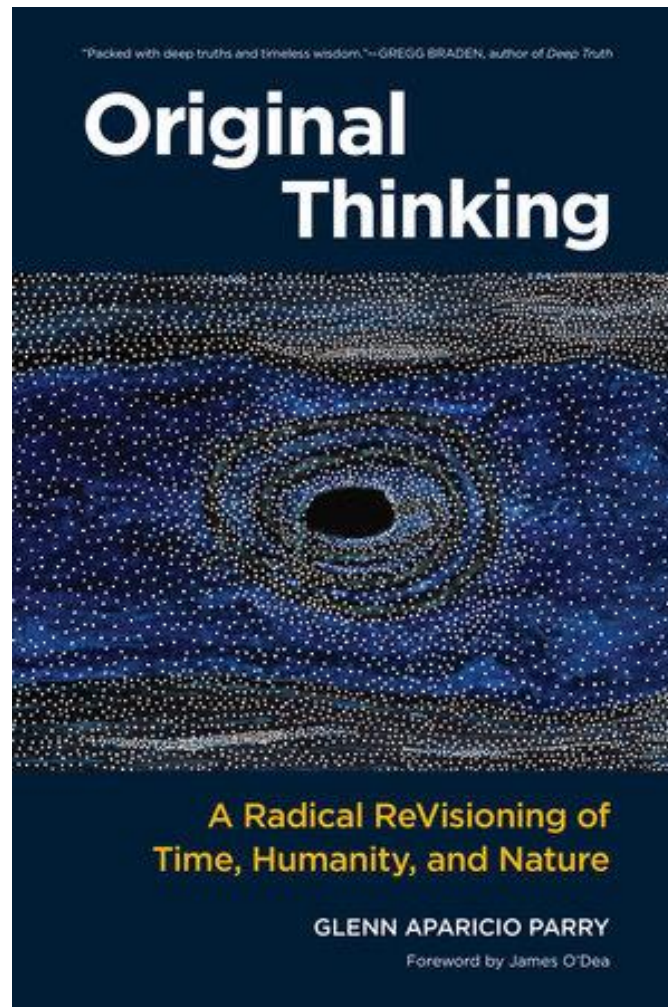
Some of my Navajo friends, David Begay and Nancy Maryboy did a beautiful doctoral dissertation on the Navajo order, the whole title of it is *Nanitá'Sqáqh Naaghaí Nanitá'Bikeh Hózhóón = Living the Order: Dynamic Cosmic Process of Diné Cosmology*.<sup>2</sup> In their model they have cycles, but at the end of one cycle they will go back the other direction. They are recognizing that things sometimes go the opposite direction. I think that it is true and it is confusing to people sometimes when devolution is occurring it does appear like we are going backwards, and a lot of people are feeling that now. They are feeling “Oh no! Did we go anywhere from the 1960's?” It seems like it is just the same, like in race relations, but it is not the same, although it is a reiteration of something.

D: I am happy to hear about the Vedic influence as well because I have been studying Nondual Shaivism, called iRest or Integrative Restoration that focuses on using nondual consciousness for healing purposes. It is based on this idea that, similar to the Tao, that there is an ultimate Shiva who is unitary and then splits into Shiva and Shakti, into the opposites and from them the diversity comes out, and at a certain point there is a return. You hit the phase of maximum diversity and then the individual starts this path of meditation or self-realization of going back up the same steps, but in reverse order, towards that nondual or unitive consciousness.

G: I hope we are recording your words as well. I look at where we are now, with the seed of colonization coming out of the advent of linear perspective in art, and the concomitant separation in language, with the dualistic subject-object separation, and in our science where we are studying objectively things in separation. We develop abstract knowledge. Once it has been abstracted we harbor this illusion that abstract knowledge is superior. Then we take it some place where people



are living in rhythm with the natural iterations of the land and we (when I say “we” I really mean Western civilization) believe that we have somehow progressed more. And what Gebser would say is that we substituted the concept of progress for distance from the origin. That is a central concept of my book *Original Thinking*, where I develop that much more, but it is also in *Original Politics*. I find it to be one of the most important concepts, a guiding concept for me.



D: I will give a summary and then ask the third question. You describe in great detail the influence of the Land and the Indigenous American Peoples and Ideas of this land on the early colonists – this is a great gift to this country. You write “The land retains the energy of what came before. Memories held in specific sites across this great land, are arising in the modern psyche,” (254). Also, “All the hopes, dreams, and aspirations of our ancestors—as well as the broken promises

and treaties—remain in this sacred ground,” (xvii). How do you understand this influence of land on culture, of soil on soul?

G: What a beautifully framed question. Your use of the words “influence of soil on soul,” that gives me chills. I think I used humus and human because I do tend to think of human beings as earth and clay. That whole idea of emerging from the land as in many origin stories of Indigenous peoples, it really has a deep resonance. It is even in the Western Bible. It is a very deeply rooted archetype, probably because it is true. Because we are the land, we are the light, air, water, earth. We are the elements, but all of those elements are in the land, if you want to use a general term, and so we are deeply rooted to the land.

Land has a vibration. The best person to answer this question might be Joseph Rael. Land has a vibration, and one of the things that came out in the dialogues, even before the Seed Institute happened, when Indigenous peoples were dialoguing with western scientists, the quantum theorists and the Indigenous elders all agreed that everything that exists vibrates. And the vibration also is permanent. So, if you were to take a Tibetan singing bowl and strike it or to more artfully, go in a circle around to make that beautiful sound. That vibration, if you listen to it, it will seem to go away, just like when you throw a rock into a stream and you see the ripples go out from it. Those ripples get bigger and bigger and after a while they seem to disappear, but they have not because they go into the invisible realm. And as everybody should understand now that the invisible realm has a power because right now, we are in a worldwide Covid crisis over something invisible, literally, to the human eye. Viruses are part of nature. In fact, germs, germinate, so it is part of growth, they are a part of life, a part of soil. Always praying to the soil, to the living elements, I pray a lot to earthworms that are named after their mother, Earth. Such beautiful creatures, they are so watery, they do not have eyes, but they still can see, and they do not have ears, but they can hear because they are tuned into the vibrations. Every place has a vibration, every place has a particular frequency. Those who are aware of this can work with those energies and frequencies, and do prayer and ceremony that come from and are in direct communication with those places. Quite the opposite can happen too, where people are completely unaware and completely looking at the land as a dead, just a playing board, a chess board or something where they are playing out their battles. And when that happens, when that energy happens to the land and the blood goes into



the ground, the land remembers, and the vibration is there. To say “the land remembers” might be confusing to people. Maybe it is better to say the vibration remains and if one is sensitive enough, they can feel it. In New Mexico we have places called Ghost Ranch, an incredibly evocative name where Georgia O’Keeffe lived and made some beautiful paintings, but that land is full of some massacres too, so it is a land that still needs healing. There are a lot of places in the United States that need healing and more ceremony. Some of the sacred sites have been cordoned off in unnatural ways, sometimes with good intentions, but are not necessarily fully thought out. When Teddy Roosevelt was creating all the national parks, most Americans will look at national parks and think, “Oh, this is an incredibly beautiful thing, how can anything ever be wrong with that?” But when they created the national parks, they often took away access to sacred sites that Native Americans, on this land, have been conducting ceremony for millennia. Sometimes those things were reversed, the Havasupai living in the basin of the Grand Canyon now, unbeknownst to almost all the tourists that go there. They were first taken out, then they were allowed to come back in. Certain things have been reversed and sometimes there have been beautiful partnerships, like at Canyon De Chelly between the Navajo and the park service. And that is good. The more we become sensitive and re-indigenize to the land, the more we become aware of the vibrations of the land, the better. Because that is a living way that we can heal, and we need healing now.

D: I’d like to read a couple of quotes from your book and then ask a question. You wrote, “Part I focused on Unitive Consciousness because the desire to unite was the driving force behind the creation of the United States, as it was for the Iroquois Confederacy before,” (79). And also, “It is this underlying value of unity in diversity that is America’s sacred purpose,” (117). Can you speak to the prophetic element of your book (if you are comfortable with that term) that the land, the people, and the country of the United States wants a return to Unitive Consciousness?

G: The land, the people, the country want to return to Unitive Conscious. I was not trying to be prophetic, but it is what I am seeing. I think that what we were talking about before, about involution and evolution, the idea of Spirit enfolding itself into matter and then reemerging in the inverse order in which it originally unfolded, means that everybody’s spiritual quest feels like a returning home to where they came from. That is where the urge to return to unity seems to be universal. Along the way people can get confused about this and I think that is where the evolved

or the devolved modes come in. Everybody is seeking unity, but some people seek unity through exclusion. They are trying to disperse or destroy those that they see as different from them and send them away, literally, “go back to where you came from.” Others are more welcoming and realize that unity in diversity can be the highest or most evolved mode of unitive consciousness. The American nation, the political nation, was formed as a breaking away from a Mother country. That is also really a very deep archetype because every human being that is born comes from a mother that they were one with at one point, and they tried to establish their own identity after they are born. There are different philosophies about that, I do not want to over Westernize that because I think that sometimes this is mixed up with different cultures. In some level the newborn establishes their own identity; in some cultures, they still retain a lot of relations to the land and to their whole village. They could be raised by a village, for instance. At some level they try to establish their own identity, but they never really completely separate from the mother, and there is nothing wrong with that. They retain that tie.

The question about America’s sacred purpose, unity in diversity, that came to me, probably a long time ago. I was raised in New York, and I was always moved by the Statue of Liberty and the Emma Lazarus poem “give me your tired, your poor, your hungry, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free...” I mean that concept appeals to me and yet when the United States was formed, politically, the founding fathers only gave the vote to white male property owners. Since then as Theodore Parker said, and Barack Obama and Martin Luther King like to repeat, we started to have an unfolding of the moral arc of justice [“The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice”]. Over time the nation has moved to be more inclusive, that does not mean there has not been push back, because there has been, there has been devolution where people do not want that. At the same time, we have moved from having white male property owners having the vote to under Andrew Jackson, all white males, which believe it or not, was considered a progress. Then after the Civil War African American men getting the vote. Then in 1920, presumable all women, but because of Jim Crow a lot of women of color were not able to vote. Then you have the Voting Rights Act, 1965, and we have more people are given the true franchise, the ability to vote. We are moving in a direction of unfolding greater unity and diversity. I see that as our sacred purpose, I see that as inexorable and eventual, but I cannot predict exactly how long it will be until it is fully realized.

D: You have a chapter on Trump as a trickster, you write *“Trump is both the worst liar of any American president and a truth teller who reveals what no other president would dare speak of;”* (232). You also have a chapter on fascism. Things have been unfolding so quickly, at first in the media he was called a “populist” and then maybe that had “totalitarian tendencies.” More recently, just in the past couple months it seems like people are coming out and using the word, “fascist.” Two different parts of this question, one is when does a trickster become a fascist who should be resisted, and has there been a change in your attitude toward him since your book came out in light of recent events?

G: One thing that might be of interest to you, I am going answer your question in a minute, the way that I first came to determine the order of the chapters was really through prayer. Through prayer to ancestors and what came through, almost four years ago, was these chapters, I am not sure if Donald Trump had even been elected yet. One of them was “Sacred America, Fascist America.” My egoic mind was worried about that particular chapter, for some reasons you just alluded to, I wondered, “is this going to be relevant by the time I get around to finishing this book.” I had a big research project ahead of me; I am not a historian by trade, so I had a lot of research to do. As events unfolded it only became increasingly more relevant. In answer to the last part of your question, no I do not feel that the book needed to be changed because something beyond my personal consciousness was directing the order of the chapters and what to cover. I think the other aspect you were asking about was Trump the trickster...what is the difference between a trickster and a fascist, you are saying?

D: Yes, with a trickster you think, “Okay, well this is somebody who is shaking things up but they are not maybe destroying things.” Where is the line between somebody who is shaking up democracy to have it be reformed verses somebody who is risking running off with democracy all together?

G: The fascist leader does not necessary run off with democracy all together. Look at Germany, they had Hitler, and they are very much a functioning democracy now. They also are a place that really looks closely at their shadow, whereas America is a nation that does not look at its shadow.

I do not know how much it has to unfold for America to wake up. My prayer is that America can see the way it really is now and make change, but it could be that there is still further destruction. It seems like, it is destruction actually, of some of the core principals in order to revive it. I know what you are saying, because in my heart of hearts I would hate to see America fully become a totalitarian regime. Of all places the American experiment has been one that has been, seemingly at times, a model of participatory democracy. There are two things that are important I was trying to bring out in the book. One is that you cannot credit the founding fathers; the majority of democracy was not created by white men in powdered wigs. It is something that they learned from living Native American cultures. It is the direct influence of Native Americans, in some cases a direct appropriation of Native principles that brought some of the best things in America in the first place. It is not the Constitution. I was shocked to read in a very good book by Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die*, that the Constitution of Argentina, in 1853, had copied two thirds of the United States Constitution verbatim and they still had autocratic regimes of Perón emerge. So it is not the Constitution, and people keep confusing this, and I do try to point this out in my book, because at one-point Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer were saying we have a constitutional crisis. We do not have a *constitutional crisis* under Trump, we have a crisis of *norms being exploded* and that is what Trump is testing at all times. He is doing things that are illegal and saying, “Stop me, stop me, see if you can stop me.” Recently, the Democrats lost a case where they had subpoenaed somebody to appear before the House and somebody blew off the subpoena. They contested that in the court system. The court system came back and said, “No you do not have the legal right to enforce the subpoena.” Which was surprising to me, actually, but it came back and the courts said, “You have to make a law that specifically gives you the rights.” The whole system is being reexamined and, in many cases, unraveled now. But as you probably remember, the most important story I told in *Original Politics* about today was the White Mountain Apache story. It was about the old woman who was weaving the beautiful rug and as she nears completion of the rug, she gets up to start the soup that is on the fire. When she gets up to start the soup, her black dog that has been sleeping in the corner, awakens and then takes a thread, pulls on it with his mouth and unravels the whole rug. She returns, she is unfazed, she looks at the rug and where there was beauty and harmony there is now chaos and disorder. She picks up her thread and she reimagines an even more beautiful way to re-weave the rug. That gets to the heart of your question better than any of my other words probably, because both are going on at the same time.

The countries norms are being unraveled, but we do get to see America as it really is and then we have an opportunity to reweave a more beautiful rug. It is both dangerous, it is a very dangerous time, and it is a time of opportunity to do things a little bit better.

D: The final question, following from that, what can people do? You are great at finding strengths and weaknesses within individuals and fitting them together. For example, you wrote, “considering them together as two aspects of one whole enriches our understanding like the two political parties.” It is a very wise perspective to be able to see this, understand it and not get reactionary, not to feed into the dangerousness of the situation. What would you recommend for people practically who see what is going on and say, “This is not my idea of America, I do not think this is consistent with the archetype or the idea of America?” In the book you do not talk about prayer or ceremony but in talking today you mention both of those and those seem like practical things that people can do. What would you tell somebody who thinks, “I just read the book and I agree with everything! What do I do now?”

G: Great question! I hope I did not completely leave out prayer and ceremony from the book, but if I did that is an error, you always learn after you have finish. One thought I would like to add to the book, if I had to change it now, came to me recently when I was asked to present at a conference commemorating David Bohm’s life. I realized the greater vision of Bohm was about recovering coherency in politics and society, I think that what people need to do is recover coherency. That is a big task to ask and it comes down to watching their thoughts, very carefully. What David Bohm was so wise about was realizing that *thought itself* had become a trickster like figure in the world today, in the modern world. That might be why trickster figures are emerging as the leaders, because the leaders are always a reflection of the people and people are led astray by their thoughts. As Bohm would say, people think (and it is not just Bohm because it is also coming from Krishnamurti) that their thoughts are describing the world as it is, but really that is a kind of literal thought that has a practical application for doing things, but it misses what is really going on underneath – the participation we have with nature and the natural world, our thoughts and our society, all our conditioning that has affected us from our parents, to our language, to our subculture, to our region, to the way we were brought up, our gender, our nationality, those things are sometimes very deceiving and yet very controlling. We tend to not solve anything. You are

asking what people can do. You probably know Richard Rohr in Albuquerque who has an organization called the Center for Action & Contemplation, which is a very interesting name. The first time I heard it I thought “Well why does he not have that reversed?” I would think you would need to contemplate first before you act. I think he named it that way because he recognized it as a cycle. You have to act at some point, and then you contemplate, and then you act, and then you contemplate. Before people act too swiftly about things, they need to understand what is really going on. I am trying to offer some context for this in a book that goes into the history, because I think that deep history of the nation is contributing to the present, as William Faulkner said, “the past is never dead, in fact it isn’t even past.” The history is here in the present, it is easy to get caught up in what is happening and try to resist it and resistance, to quote the Borg in Star Trek... [both laugh] “resistance is futile.”

D: Right, right...but that is according to the Borg’s perspective. You are not part of Borg, but “resistance is futile.”

G: I understand, I am trying to be funny, but *what we resist, persists*. It is more like, in this beautiful loving way that Joseph, I am sure you have experienced this with working with Joseph Rael. Almost in an Aikido like way, you have to take incoming hatred and soften it. Grandfather Leon Secatero, was a great teacher for me, for that. Joseph knew him too because he was a very powerful presence at the Seed dialogues. He was a powerful presence in a very soft way. Leon, his own children told me that he never got angry at them. When people would get angry, Leon would wait, and maybe he was doing something else psychically to melt their anger, but it would pass quickly. They would not even know what happened, they would be no longer angry. I think that what people really need to do is a deep process, and maybe some of us that are called to do this can help others because I do believe that Margaret Mead was right when she said, “never doubt that a small group of dedicated individuals can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” Prayer and ceremony would be really important and all these prayer and ceremony for the whole, it would not be prayer and ceremony if it did not include that. Prayer for all the five-fingered ones and all our relations to allow things to reset and to balance. Just like with Covid-19, because Covid-19 is our opportunity to pause and to see the way we have been treating the world, and hopefully reset. Honestly, I am not sure that humanity is ready to do the full reset that it needs to do. I think that



some people have been awakened to the idea that the Earth needed a breather and are seeing human industry almost as a metaphor. The same thing that happened to George Floyd, was already happening to the earth. We had our foot on the neck of the land, we were pushing it in that same way. We have to let our foot off the land, the neck — and that did happen when humans retreated into their stay-in-place mode, at least for a time. We cannot just go back to what we were doing. I think that is a long answer to your question, but I hope that gets at it.

D: It is a beautiful answer and I am used to listening to long answers from Joseph so, I think that is a wise answer. I like that I think that is a good place for us to come to an end for today.

G: Thank you, I enjoyed it. I hope that this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship, as Claude Rains said to Humphrey Bogart.

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<sup>1</sup> Transcription by Coquina Littlebow from a recording of a phone conversation.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.worldcat.org/title/nanita-saah-naaghai-nanita-bikeh-hozhoon-living-the-order-dynamic-cosmic-process-of-dine-cosmology/oclc/55614069>

