A Daughter’s Portrait of Gregory Bateson

An Ecology Of Mind

REMEMBER THE FUTURE

a film by nora bateson

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An Ecology of Mind

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The major problems in the world are the result of the difference between how nature works and the way people think.

Gregory Bateson

60 min. ~ 2010 ~ USA ~ Not Rated

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AN ECOLOGY OF MIND

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BRIEF SYNOPSIS

An Ecology of Mind is a film portrait of Gregory Bateson, celebrated anthropologist, philosopher, author, naturalist, systems theorist, and filmmaker, produced and directed by his daughter, Nora Bateson.

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The film includes footage from Bateson’s own films shot in the 1930s in Bali (with Margaret Mead) and New Guinea, along with photographs, filmed lectures, and interviews. His youngest child, Nora, depicts him as a man who studied the interrelationships of the complex systems in which we live with a depth motivated by scientific rigor and caring integrity.

Nora Bateson’s rediscovery of his work documents the vast – and continuing – influence Bateson’s thinking has had on the work of an amazingly wide range of disciplines. Through contemporary interviews, along with his own words, Bateson’s way of thinking reveals practical approaches to the enormous challenges confronting the human race and the natural world.

Gregory Bateson’s theories, such as “the double bind” and “the pattern which connects”, continue to impact the fields of anthropology, psychiatry, information science, cybernetics, urban planning, biology, and ecology, challenging people to think in new ways.

Until now, his work has been largely inaccessible to most of us. Through this film, Nora Bateson sets out to show that his ideas are not just fodder for academic theory, but can help instruct a way of life. She presents his thinking using a richly personal perspective, focusing on the stories Bateson used to present his ideas and how the beauty of life itself provided the framework of his life’s pursuits.

This film hopes to inspire its audience to see our lives within a larger system - glistening with symmetry, play, and metaphor. An invitation to ask the kinds of questions that could help thread the world back together from the inside.
DIRECTOR BIOGRAPHY

Nora Bateson is a media producer and educator. Her work includes documentaries, multimedia productions, magazine columns, and developing curriculum for elementary and high school students. Central to all her pursuits is the idea of utilizing media and storytelling to encourage cultural understanding, social justice, and environmental awareness.

Ms. Bateson currently lives in Vancouver, British Columbia, where she is developing a curriculum to accompany the film (centering on epistemology and systems thinking), as well as compiling a book of her father's unpublished works. These projects, along with public speaking engagements, have been part of a renewed interest in Gregory's work, which has until now been largely inaccessible to those outside the academic community. She travels internationally giving lectures and workshops on her father's work, and recently published three pieces in Kybernetes, a cybernetics and systems journal.

Ms. Bateson has a steadfast dedication to the possibilities of human evolution, starting with encouraging young children to see the interrelatedness of the natural world with that of the “human-made” world using all media. She developed curricula for several schools in Northern California focused on the formation of teenage identity. Her curriculum, Human Relations, for 7th-12th grade students, integrates self-discovery, relationships, social justice, mythology, environmentalism, and sex education through accountability, interconnectedness, and personal evolution. One principal wrote, “Nora’s Human Relations course gave our students an opening to an unshakable sense of belonging in a profound and sacred world. Not only was this one of the most important courses they will ever take, but they also loved it…”

Her degrees are in Southeast Asian Studies and filmmaking, bringing a cross-cultural perspective to her filmic voice. Her other work includes research and development for a documentary about legendary jazz musician Dave Brubeck; creative direction of the acclaimed CD-ROM 4 Paws of Crab (a narrative Thai cookbook), about witch Mark Potts of the Washington Post wrote, “One of the best looking new products at Mac World… an example of how good CD-ROM design can create a new medium that’s hard to categorize in traditional terms”. Ms. Bateson also developed a series of storytelling videos, entitled Stories Across Generations; and a series of columns for Seventeen Magazine.
CREDITS

Director & Executive Producer:
Nora Bateson

Co-Producer & Editor:
David Sieburg

Scriptwriter & Narrator:
Nora Bateson

Production Studio:
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David Sieburg

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Romilly Starr Grauer
Julia Angus

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Gregory Bateson
Nora Bateson
Stewart Brand
Sahra Brubeck
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David Sieburg
Horst Mayer
Sound Engineers:
Anders Steele
Magic Sound Studios
Riverside Recording Studios
Justin Wong
Rick Kilbourn

Interviewees:
Ralph Abraham
Lois Bateson
Mary Catherine Bateson
Stewart Brand
Jerry Brown
Fritjof Capra
Terry Deacon
Tim Keanini
William Thompson

Archival Footage:
Kai de Fontenay
Milton Berger
The Naropa Institute

Footage of Gregory Bateson directed in 1976 and 1977 by Robert Snyder
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www.mastersmasterworks.com

Archival Restoration:
Monaco Labs
Video Arts

Music:
“An Ecology of Mind”
Original music composed and performed by:
Dan Brubeck, Miles Black, Jack Duncan,
Rick Kilbourn, and Nora Bateson

Aqualactica:
“Fractal Nativo”
“El Anillo del Tiempo”
“Canones”

Parry Music Library:
“Gamelan Theme No.1”

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