Double Binds and the Polycrisis

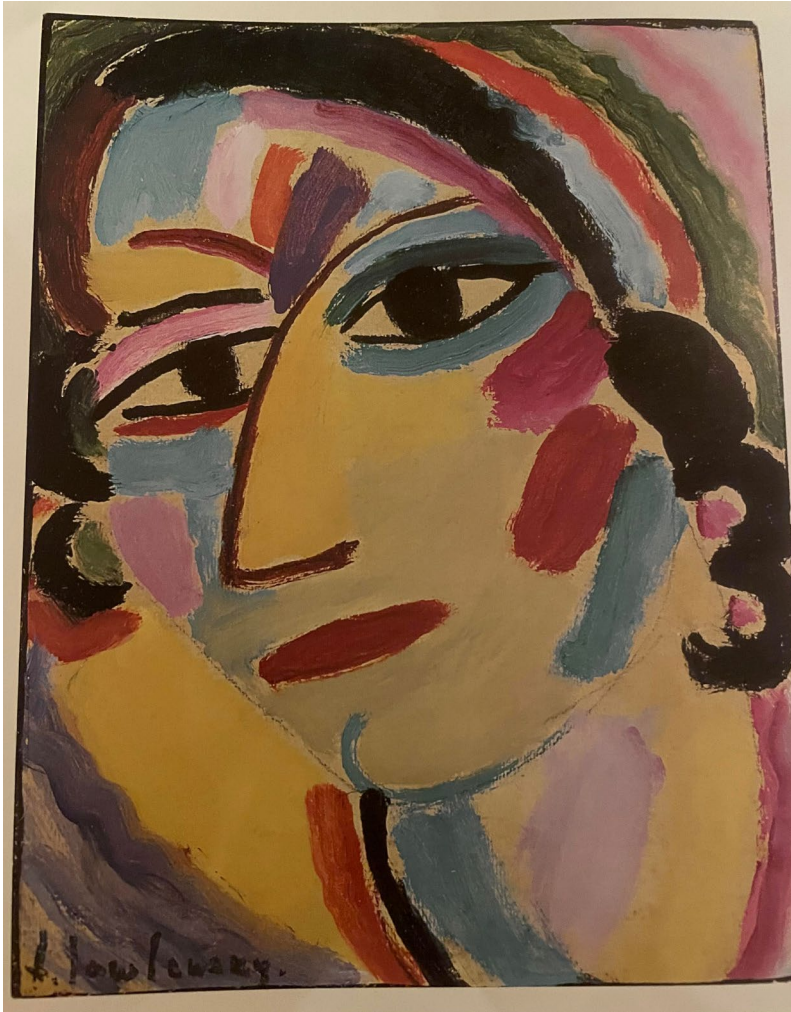Mutual learning between generations in times of rapid change

Metalog 2023

Transcontextual look at the Self

How am I learning and forming through contexts of:
Culture, religion,, education, finance, status, physical strength, gender, history, profession?

Transcontextual Description

The red and blue brush strokes (to the left) combine into the viewer's collection of life experiences to form cheek bones, melancholy and personality. When they are categorized and stacked (as below) the possibility of data combining is completely different, and it is impossible to see the woman again.

Imagine each stack of colored brushstrokes below as a context of identity defining the person by statistical info. Ex: economy, legal, health, education, technology... the warm data is gone. The meta message of the stacks is one of control. The meta message of the painting of the woman is of life. Where is the person?

Warm Data
&
Decontextualized categories

Slide: Warm Data, by Nora Bateson, Photo Ursus Wehrli

The Polycrisis

Double Binds
learning and stuckness

- Multiple contexts form binds across multiple contexts:

- No way to win

To meet the double bind is not to match it.

The necessary response must come from another context besides those inflamed in the bind, with an entirely different aesthetic, tone, feel, and logic.

Feed the Babies...

Mama Now

What It's Like to Be Your Mama Now

Your eyes will see the derailing of assumptions
Your hands will hold the crumble of the old matrix.

I do not have any authority to lean into,
I have empty pockets where parents used to advise their children—
I do not have any maps, myths, or mother-wisdom for you.

I can fix your breakfast, but not the culture,
And when you ask about how to be a good person,
I cannot lie to you.
Everything you touch in a day is in some way bloodied.
You have been born into an edgeless violence.
But I will not judge or measure you against a bygone metric.

I am here, too, ready to learn with you.
Unsure how to be or who to be.
I can only read fragments of your worry,
As the future is a horizon of confusion.

I cannot protect you. And yet it is my only job.
Aching as I witness from this side of the hourglass.

Other generations of parents knew the outlines,
School, career, family, and retirement.
But your life will be another shape entirely.
Forming in the fractures.

When you say you need a goal, I offer you an expired ticket.
Superficial memes roll off the tongue right into your bullshit detector.
Success in the existing system is not going to do you much good.

Your integrity is your rage, and I will nourish it.
Your dignity is your curiosity, and I am tiny beside it.
Your courage is your pain, and I will sing to it with you.

We will riot together.
We will notice the nuance of small graces in the day.
We will wash the grit of loss for each other.

I am your mama, and your future is the story of a storm.
I am your cabin, your boots, your rucksack.

-Nora Bateson From *Combining*

There will be no community without first communing.

Groups that can improvise together will be the safest, offer the most healing of collective trauma, and be able to meet crises without turning against one another.

Symmathesy:

Each one of us is a crooked tree,
Reaching for water and light,
Bending ourselves around obstacles,
Scary thoughts, hurtful moments,
darkness & thirst,
Finding a way to breathe in the sun and hold the soil,
Our branches are kinked and twisted,
Because that is what it took to be here,
The ways of learning to be in our worlds,
Have shaped responses,
Our many experiences are speaking through every gesture.
Our loves, and broken paths, a tenderness, a criticism,
Learning always,
Yearning always,
In crooked beauty...
To be a home for those who may find comfort
In the asymmetry of our belonging,
A nest cradling new life,
Tucked into an old log teeming with creatures,
learning to be in each other's reshaping.   ---*N.bateson* 2022

Sym = Together

Mathesi = Learning
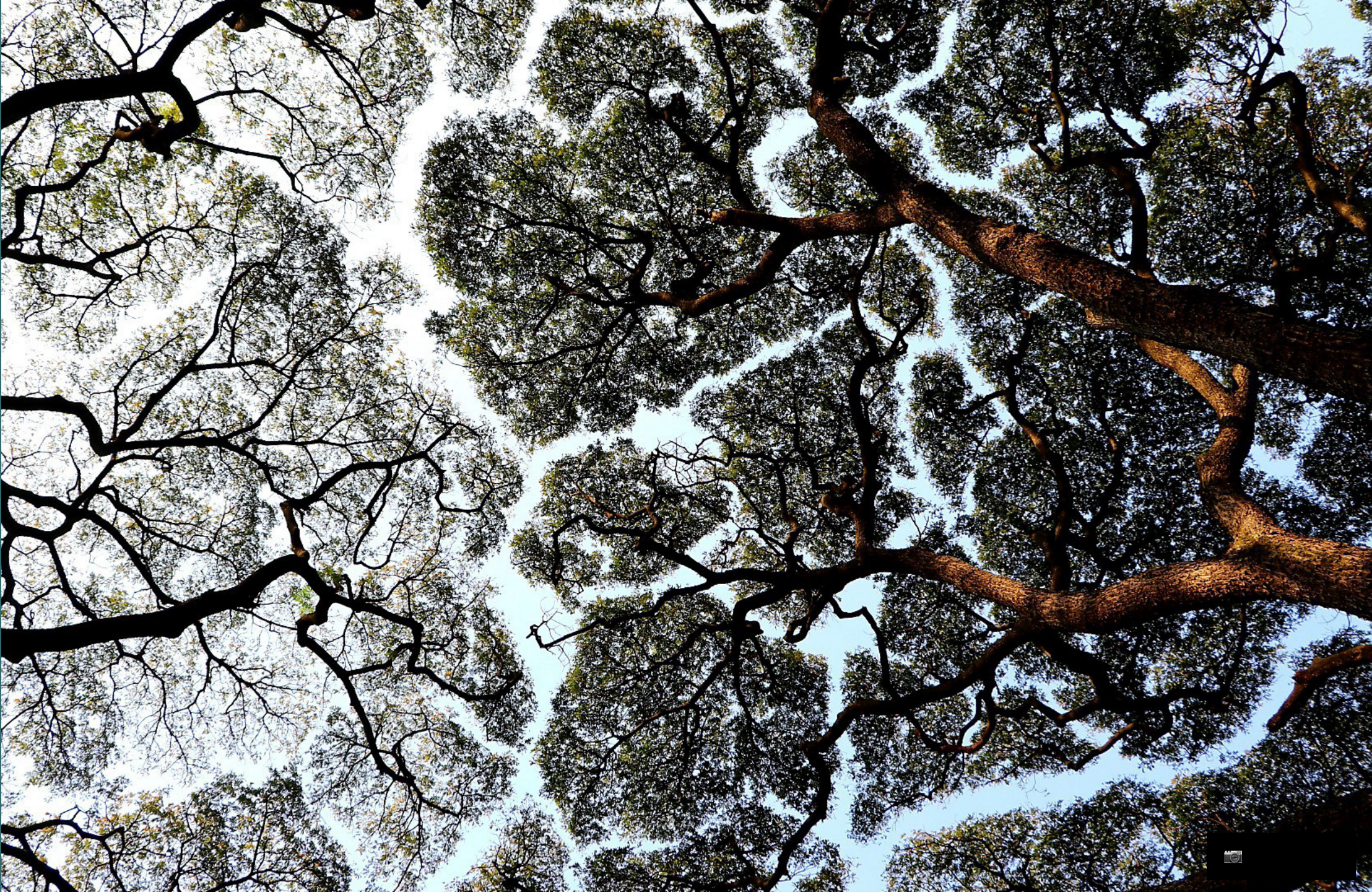
Symmathesy = Learning together

Symmathesy

Noun: An entity formed by transcontextual mutual learning through interaction.

@NoraBateson

Symmathesize

Verb: To generate mutual learning contexts through the process of interaction between multiple variables in a living entity.

Liminal

"Warm Data" can be defined as:

Information that is alive.

Or:

Transcontextual information about the interrelationships that integrate a complex system.