

Unleash Your Radical Child

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When the young radical enters into conversation with the old liberal the young radical is swiftly subjected to patronising ageism. When the young radical speaks of deconstructing socialisation, overturning corrupt institutions, and creating democratic social movements, the old liberal in his placid acceptance of the existing order dismissively writes her off as naive. With high levels of investment in the current system and a narrow political imagination the old liberal deflects discussion of root causes and remains cynical of social upheaval. Wallowing in learned powerlessness he seeks to squash the radical's spirit and reduce their ambition to the 'realistic', to the 'achievable', to the 'pragmatic'. Anything radical he classes as 'naive', 'childish' and 'idealistic'.

But a defining characteristic of the young radical is that she resists this subordination. She embraces radical childishness as a revolutionary consciousness. For childishness contains the capacity for unabashed critical thought, the creativity and imagination to build utopian social relations and the innocent belief in the inherent goodness of the humyn species. The child is guided by compassion for all living creatures and shudders at the thought of causing harm to people or animals. The child is the blank slate, before socialisation, the child is free.

The young radical finds freedom in her radical child. She understands that her dreams are idealistic but nevertheless still she strives for systemic and utopian change as it is the search for perfection which propels progression. Meeting the old liberal, the young radical's faith is given another test, not only is she presented with those who are yet unwilling to reflect and change, but the old liberal also asserts an ageist superiority. The hierarchical attitude of the adult is used to silence dissent and guide the young radical to the same level of mundanity to make him feel more comfortable of his own petrified position. This usually comes as condescending advice, unsolicited advice, a sticky sap of stagnancy designed to slow the radicals mind and smother her spirit so she submits to the established order and falls into a state of apathy and listlessness. The old seek to crush the potential of the young, they tell us to vote, they tell us to work, they tell us to respect. If this fails then, well, 'she's just very young, she'll know when she's older.'

The young radical refuses to be quelled. In a society where the market and state encroaches upon ever increasing spheres of our existence she retreats into her dreams for hope. As it is in her dreams, in her youthful imagination that lies her revolutionary consciousness. In her imagination lies a direct and functioning democracy, where all have the freedom to participate in open, inclusive and equal decision-making. She sees us liberated from gender constructs and free to

express ourselves as individuals without personality-depriving social norms. She sees a society where whiteness is dissolved and lands, institutions and minds decolonised. She sees a future where animals are not exploited and tortured for trivial taste and enjoyment but respected as equals. A future where workplaces are cooperatively owned and run, where bosses don't dominate and collect the profit from our labour. A future where the environment, habitat and the lives of people and animals around the world are put above profit. A society where adulthood is an ancient construct.

The battle of the young radical is to continue to resist the social and institutional pressure to conform to notions of adulthood as they grow older and to keep their radical child alive. To be an adult in the white west is to be the old liberal. To be an adult is to unflinchingly accept the status quo and participate unproblematically in the life capitalism and colonialism has laid out for us and to passively follow the path of ecological and societal collapse. The adult disengages in rebellious youthful counterculture, abandons their quest for a better world, and neglects the urge to question. He cleans up, shuts up, and goes to work. In doing so the adult is stripped of his individuality and moulded into uniformity. He polices himself, get embarrassed at the prospect of play, and denies himself the beauty and grace of public displays of enjoyment and affection. He cast aside his dreams of the betterment of society, joins the crowd and fades into obscurity.

It is revolutionary to keep our radical imagination alive because the expectation of adulthood maintains the social order by destroying our impulse to dream let alone to make them reality. Destroying our dreams is integral, since in our imagination lies the key to social change. Imagination is inspiring and the inspiration is infectious. The work of the radical is to spread this hope and to create the conditions which critical thought is fostered and acted upon.

The young radicals must be aggressive and assertive in our resistance of adulthood. We must reject the existing order and act outside of these oppressive institutions. We must abandon positions of status and privilege and develop new ways of being guided by our innermost intuition. We must fervently pursue our dreams and maintain a commitment to revolutionary politics and action. We must model ourselves on the wisdom of children, share their enchantment with and love for the world and emulate their free and authentic expression. We aspire to be like the child for we remember and yearn for that time before our intuition is inhibited by intellect, before our soul was silenced by society and before our curiosity was clouded by conformity. As a radical child, we are free.

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