

# **ADULTHOOD IS A TRAP**

**Anti-Natalism, Youth Liberation, and a Refusal to Surrender**

Flower Bomb

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If life is to be understood as the free-flowing heartbeat of adventure, emotions, and experiences, then adulthood is similar to a clogged artery; an emotional constipation of desire and imagination. Adulthood resembles an alter-ego socially assigned the task of maintaining a work-over-play ethic, creating a nostalgic longing for a distant youthfulness and freedom.

There was a point in my life where my mind was possessed so thoroughly by the phantoms of adulthood. My daily life was a complex web of various social relationships ultimately determined by the slave/master mentality. My wages paid bills and left just enough for me to accumulate trendy materialism - as if in a strange spiritual attempt to feel in control over my life. Work, eat, buy, sleep, and repeat. To the rest of society, I was an ordinary responsible adult. But for me, this lifestyle was nothing more than a graveyard in disguise.

## **To love one's self...**

What if self-love was more than just finding a "better" job, going to church, or accumulating more materialism in order to satisfy that urge for something different? I have come to understand how accurate the whole "misery loves company" concept really is. For every person who finds joy in limitless travel and adventure, there are three times as many who are quick to assume the worst of such a lifestyle. The comfort granted by social assimilation and conformity encourages many individuals to create a personal identity and relationship to sedentary life. Most often this identity and relationship is based on a feeling of safety, and therefore is understood as positive. This all despite the experienced misery of day-to-day monotony and wage-slavery. From this perspective, I am compelled to understand that any lifestyle that strays from the normalcy of *adulthood* can only be perceived by many as dangerous and irresponsible.

I have come to understand that self-love doesn't always resemble conventional ideas of positivity. Ultimately the "positivity" of any lifestyle transformation is always subjective. For some, abandoning all sedentary living - having a job, owning a house or renting an apartment, getting married, and having kids, etc - might be considered down right irresponsible. But for others it is a personal pursuit of creating liberation through refusing to "grow up".

The social pressure to "grow up" corresponds to a general hostility toward youthfulness. Youthfulness is often (accurately) recognized as insubordinate to authority, and is therefore a target for social suppression. This is a big reason why the youth, legally stripped of their autonomy, are viewed by society as in need of authoritarian guidance and discipline. The general consensus insists on the prompt discouragement of any unruly instincts of rebellious play. Adulthood is standardized as the necessary end result of suppressing one's youth. Adulthood could be understood as the forefront, individual responsibility for upholding the mores and values integral to maintaining civil order. Once an individual reaches a certain age, all youthful behavior, desires, and instincts are expected to have been suppressed into a graveyard of distant memories.

But this is not enough...

Upon this completed transformation into adulthood, people are then expected to create *more* youth to eventually turn into adults. Each adult individual is collectively pressured to accept procreation as a normal and necessary part of life - a "common good" wrapped up in the social pressures of culture and tradition, community and religion, love and family.

Each individual adult is expected to fulfill the role of not only maintaining industrial society through their *own* individualized wage-slavery, but also of securing the future of society by cre-

ating more future wage-slaves. And of course, procreation is not without social reward. Society grants those who procreate elevated social status and respectability in the form of praise from friends and family.

So is it any surprise that self-love and improvement are associated with having children - sometimes in an effort to bring hope and meaning to one's life, or sometimes as a solution to a turbulent relationship? But all too often, introducing a child rarely solves the underlying problems in these situations - if anything the problems become more complicated. In situations where having children is made a solution to complex personal problems, the individuals involved are more likely to experience distraction from core problems rather than relief. Necessary self-care is often transformed into care for another.

So what happens when someone makes the decision to never have children?

Due to the generalized social and institutional demands of patriarchy, those individuals who, at birth, are socially gendered as "woman" face the blunt force of pro-natalist pressure. Therefore the decision to prioritize ones *own* care and freedom acts as a bold and courageous statement of resistance. While many say the refusal to have children is a selfish act of social irresponsibility and dissent, others understand this act as a responsibility toward prioritizing oneself.

So in terms of self-love, is it *not* the enjoyment of life to the fullest through creating free time for one's self, and avoiding the stress and complications of creating and raising another life? What is it to love one's self so thoroughly as to never surrender youthful play, dreaming, and imagination to the dusty bookshelves of fading memories? Some may say "why not build wonderful memories with a child?", and to that I say: some may simply prefer the joy of being spoiled by self-indulgence rather than self-employment to another!

## **To love another...**

Long before I even heard the term "anti-natalist", I had already decided against having kids. In addition to my own personal desire for spoiled self-indulgence, I also felt it would be irresponsible to care for a child while simultaneously caring for myself and my own development. Another reason was because despite the illusion of freedom in society, a child brought into this world would immediately be imprisoned by the mental, physical, and emotional conditioning of social conformity. I simply could not find the sense to bring a child into a world where even I, myself, am not free to live my life as I wish (at least not without my active revolt). Industrial society has defined "freedom" in such limited terms that by its own accord, I am only free to become subordinate things like an impulse consumer, a prideful bootlicker, a slave to a boss who will profit from my relatively cheap labor, and so on. If I were to love a child with all the care in my heart, why would I subject that child to such normalized atrocity?

Most people are completely unaware of the warfare that permeates daily life. Those in positions of insitutional and social power have historically defined and determined what "war" is based on *their* vision of the world - a vision that many have been conditioned to internalize. But for me, war is more than just an affair between militaries. I ask: what is "life" when the violence of poverty, homelessness, police brutality, wage-slavery, and institutionalized discrimination define the day-to-day experiences on land occupations seized through bloodshed and genocide? What other way to understand domesticated, colonial, industrial "life" if not *active war* against each individual?

And if one recognizes and acknowledges this harsh reality, why continue to enable it by contributing another being to the death march?

Some people experience pressure from this very same understanding and feel the proper response would be to create and raise children who would embody progressive values. What these well-meaning people (liberals and radicals alike) don't seem to understand is that such an assumption is based on an assumed ownership over a child's thinking and decisions. This is common since young people are treated as if devoid of critical thinking, and therefore in need of an instillation of values. And while it is possible to mold a child into a desired vision, there is still a risk of resentment and even full-blown rebellion when ideas are coerced rather than independently embraced.

Sometimes procreation isn't socially pressured by outside forces. Sometimes it is self-driven, born from a desire to control another living being, or to live vicariously through the life of another. These particular top-to-bottom power dynamics are not uncommon, and unfortunately not the limit of an individual's youth-based oppression.

At birth, the youth - generally speaking - are immediately subjected to the warfare of gender assignments, circumcisions, baptisms and whatever other religious ceremonies, cultural or traditional practices enforced by adults. Before even developing a thorough sense of awareness and understanding of the processes taking place, these new lives are assigned an identity number and quickly registered with the higher authority of the State. Once able to walk, these young beings are admitted to the educational industrial complex for social indoctrination. Any youth who fails to effectively suppress their natural curiosity and excitement are deemed insubordinate to the behavioral expectations of these institutions and are promptly scolded. If the youth continue to resist, they are coerced into taking brain-altering chemicals in the form of psychiatric medications to ensure physical and mental obedience. Throughout the most critical 12 years of their lives for understanding the world around them, they are confined to the square cubicles of classrooms seated in fixed, orderly rows beneath bright fluorescent lights. In this classroom, all information is filtered through a single person, and intended to be memorized rather than learned from actual interaction with the natural world.

Many formative years of youthful development and imagination are riddled with the bullet holes of coercion and emotional labor demanded by one form of authority of another. Any resistance comes with consequences intended to influence and shape one's fear with precision. And in a subtle voice, the pressure of distant adulthood repeats a mantra; "grow up and get to work".

While children *have* been created and raised with miraculous and mysteriously positive outcomes, I personally do not have the trust in this prison world to guarantee a child the type of freedom and safety that I feel one deserves. I can not find it in my heart to subject another child to a future of progressed environmental devastation already unfolding at a catastrophic level as I write out this text. Therefore, not just for myself but also out of love for another, I reject my assigned role and identity of "adult", in part by refusing to pro-create for the satisfaction of industrial society, but also by refusing to bring another child into the bowels of civilized hell.

From this perspective, one could summarize this anti-natalist anarchy as an individualized contribution to both a war against social control and industrial domination, and to a war against adulthood in the name of youth liberation.

## To drop out and play...

...It would be a lie if I said it was impossible to do. It would also be a lie if I said I never met anyone who did it. And if I want to continue being honest, I would be obligated to say that I am sure there will be more. Whether society likes it or not, all the schools, psychiatric facilities, and youth detention centers can't keep every youth governed or confined. And despite all the social pressures, privileges, and the appeal of financial security, there are also prison breaks from adulthood.

Sometimes we stumble across each other and share stories of war and play, love and hatred, while waiting in train yards or around campfires under overpasses, and sometimes we meet in spaces liberated by fire and the sound of breaking glass - places where even an entire precinct of police can't dominate and suppress the urge for something new, something illegal - and sometimes even dangerous!

And surely the world *expects* this type of behavior from delinquents, or "misguided" youth, but adults? They say "*How frightening! Are they mentally ill? On drugs? There must be some explanation for this "childish" behavior!*"

The internalized social contract of lawful obedience constitutes a relationship of fear between the adult and the State. But when an institute corners an animal - an individual pushed too far by society - a wild reaction occurs with a sudden burst of youthful insurgency! Sometimes when the internalized contract of obedience crafted between parent and child is destroyed, it is by something as simple as a gentle curiosity rather than a violent push. When the *Wormsley Common Gang* sets fire to the mattress full of money, one could suggest a possible reason for such an act was simply to satisfy a thirst for something new and exciting, allowing for the exploration of emotions beyond the tranquilizing power of the mighty dollar. But we may never know for sure.

The concept of youth is subjective to each individual and shit, for all I know, someone might experience their youth best while working a job. In terms of identity politics, the "youth" (as a categorized grouping) do not need me to represent them anymore than I need a politician to represent myself. I have seen many youth express themselves - from written works to the ashes of schools having been set ablaze around the world. And some youth may want nothing to do with the anti-authoritarian ideas presented in this text. But my understanding of "youth" is not limited to identity politics, nor do I consider the "youth" to be a monolith. When I speak of *the youth*, I don't just mean those legally labelled as youth. This text equally refers to those anti-authoritarian "adults" who reject adult supremacy, and have decided to follow their wildest dreams above and beyond the narrow confines of adulthood.

If those reading this are to understand *youth* to mean the spirit of existing as non-adults, both with and without the intention of resisting adulthood, then it is my hope that they will understand this text as a bridge; a place where anti-natalists and youth liberation meet - *perhaps recognizing an interconnected war against the world* - all while overlooking industrial society like a playground for mischievous opportunity.

When I speak of "play", I mean exactly as the word suggests: *activity for personal enjoyment*. And even though this word and its definition are commonly attributed to an exclusive age group, I say fuck that! There is nothing more deserving of the definition of *play* than the exhilarating experience of "acting out" against a society that demands life for its divine worship of work.

When the vibrancy of life is dulled by perpetual work and obligation, life becomes limited only to an artwork of dying.

And so somehow, someday - (and never too late!), the wild ones always drop out and play...  
Long live the power of youth, of which one may never surrender!

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