

Wild-Child's play: how we can realize the nature of reality from young children

In the modern West we have much to learn from the nature of the infant child which is gradually coming to the fore. Alison Gopnik's brilliant scientific studies (see <http://www.alisongopnik.com>) in the nature of the way of thinking about children is a further expression of the ancient clarity born from the Tao Te Ching and other books about how a child can understand reality and how adult humans very often anthropomorphise the "wild"-child, which they all are. So often we hear that mummy and daddy are not getting divorced "for the sake of the children" which implies the children are legal experts and have a vested interest in understanding the ins and outs of marriage break-ups. We don't realize that what the children want is connection to their parents and to other people. If mummy has been absent at work all day and now the divorce brings about a situation where she is spending more time with the children, then this is better for them, whatever the legal implications, assuming the mother is wanting/able to connect to this.

Parents fluctuate between the dis-ease of "adulthood" and instinctive sensing, which is the hidden undercurrent. For the most part "adulthood" reigns and they assume children see things from an adult perspective, when in reality of course the child has a simple view through the clarity of natural-instinct and is completely unaware of an ideology-complex called a "self" with which it has to contend. It is commonplace to ask a three year-old to count the ten students in a class and the total number counted by the child is nine, when two years later at the age of about five they will count ten children because he or she is including them-"self" - there are now ten "selves" when before there were nine aspects of One. This is a massive difference in perception. The Eden of the three year-old and younger is gradually or quickly disillusioned by the adult world of "self"-ness.

While the child will gravitate towards its birth mother for food, the nature of the child is such that it is not absolutist about who it accepts connection from. There is an innocence of connection with all things and all people without making differentiation as to whether something is good or bad, it's all about exploration and openness. There is no fear and as a result when pain occurs the child does not associate that with occurring to a "self", the pain occurs then it is let go of quickly and it's on to the next thing. Children experience their environment in this way and the edges of expression are realized. This lives on in all of us, it is the natural expression of life, it's just that the "self" masks this or appears to do so and so we live in a world of masked expression of what is simply a natural child-like nature. What we call "childish" which is often associated with a child having a tantrum, who is upset with the world and frustrated, acting up, and is in anguish, could in fact be termed "adultish" as it is really the beginnings of when a child takes on the adult world, it's just the adult learns methods to dissociate from their irritation. Particular disorientation occurs at ages of 7-18, these are times of major change and physical transformation from child to adult. The world changes from that of "no-self" to that of "self" which contains the dreaded word "responsibility", which society associates with the ability to conform to social constraints upon the natural-expression, rather than its actual meaning which is simply of the ability to respond.

Children simply need human connection, it is natural for them to associate with biological mother and to see all females as mothers of a kind and all males as fathers of a kind. Our primal nature is such that this would be the case if we lived in natural communion with each other and the earth. The nuclear ideology of family is a self-imposed state, as with fashion it is very short-lived. This is no more than the perceived ideal for humans who have been living in this nuclear structure for only a few thousand years, our pre-history was never as “cut off” as it is today. Children by nature do not have a past-memory to uphold, nor an ideology of any label or ideal, they are simply in a state of explorative inquisitiveness and connection, typically drawing towards all that is alive, bright and interesting.

For some reason there is great surprise when teenagers have a “dark mood” and outbursts of explosive violence as seen in the student killings in America. If there is a situation of non-allowance of the natural expression in a world which is constrained and fearful by nature, individualistic and self-orientated, then isolation and its consequences are inevitable.

Children do things purely because they are expressing, not because it seems right or wrong to do them. A child can never do anything wrong, it’s impossible because the child has no concept of “self” and so no concept of right or wrong. Its world is fenced-in by the adult’s perception, which is only a very narrow proportion of the wholeness of reality that the child can see, so no wonder there are difficulties of communication. There may be expressions of pain, frustration, irritation or excitement but it’s all expressed and over with very quickly. This is not so for the adult “self” under the influence of an overdose of the popular drug “responsibility”, which induces an incredible hallucination of guilt of the fragmented world and also a bad hangover!

In early life much of what we call “learned” behaviors are driven by the adults around us. As these adults fundamentally are expressing all they “know” from a state of fearfulness about a separate “self” this becomes the foundation by which the “self” within the child begins: it is the root of all dis-ease. These are essentially “phobic” reactionary messages rather than responses. It is also a one-way street: adults “know”, children don’t, supposedly, so this hierarchical patronization means that there is no sensitivity to the nature of the infant only a so-called “teaching” of fearfulness! Of course this is not intended, but when adults lose touch of their instincts and “try” to “bring up” a child, (as if a hand-pump was required!) there becomes a loss of sense of reality, that they is not in “control” of anything at all, neither the child’s growth, its expression, or the sun rising, or the tree blossoming. The phobic attitude of the adult is simply passed on to the child, something that is now an inevitability of the “human condition”. Also inevitable is the decline of the belief in the “self” which is now gradually occurring throughout humanity.

Most processes we come to later in life of learning or re-learning about the body, like Tai-chi, Qi gong, yoga and other expressions simply relate to moving and responding naturally without tension. There is a singularly “adult” belief that this is about reaching a higher goal, becoming enlightened and opened out, attaining a lofty plane of existence, but in fact is simply about playing as a child would - play is what a child’s life is all

about, spontaneous body movement within play or exploration. This is exactly what primates do in the wild till the end of their days, who are not “learning” in the way an adult would think of learning, but are just being, simply expressing for no reason, there is no goal, no expectation and no motive, it’s just energy being expressed. Any mother knows that if you keep children in on a rainy day they will destroy the house! Their energy needs to be given full rein in a natural environment where they can explore and function in perfect alignment with their bodies.

Play is spontaneous, it has no direction to it, no “responsibility” attached to it in adult terms, it’s the one major thing lacking in modern understanding of health. The brilliant teacher and health practitioner Haruchika Noguchi understood the body intuitively through simple observational sensitivity and through his deep experience with patients of all kinds. He was particularly interested in children and their psychology and illnesses. He recognised that the process of healing was a loosening of natural spontaneity within the body of the adult or child, who had often been constrained by one or many psychological ideas. His exercises which are called “Katsugen undo” or “movements that renew the root of life” simply demonstrated a trigger process that would send the body into a natural spontaneous expression of movement such as yawning, stretching and unwinding. This occurred simply through the act of doing whatever was needed after the initial triggering, brought about by techniques of engaging with some of the key places of the body. The origination of this kind of process was also done many thousands of years ago by shamans and their various dances, yogic exercises in India and Dao-Yin in China. There is in fact a form of Qi-going called Zi-Fa Qi-gong which initiates spontaneous movement, this process is very much at the root of our re-learning what has been forgotten in adulthood. The idea is not to become anything other, rather it is to connect to what is.

In his website: www.headless.org, Douglas Harding offers the child-view of the world via the clarity of headless-seeing which is perhaps one of the greatest and deepest meditative triggers there is. Douglas simply points out the obvious fact that we are always looking through a totally invisible visual-field which has no head! Even as you read this now you are reading *from* a place of total transparency, there is no “your-head” in the way of this, this is fundamentally the headless situation which is behind all of our life and everything that we do, just forgotten. It's the reason that a small child will attempt to touch the boy/girl on the other side of the mirror until the mother tries to convince him/her that it’s “you” in the mirror. Even so, the child isn’t convinced of this until about the age of five.

These triggers are points of re-connection. They are not formulas and will not make you a perfect human or an enlightened seer or doer, they are simply tracking back to a sense that is behind all the superstructures of the ideology we live within which are so hard to see through. It is simple and direct, utterly obvious and with no requirement to be practised. It’s not something you need to keep hold of, but something you are already and as such it’s impossible to lose or find, simply there but a little out of focus.

As adults we have bought into the belief that we ought to “teach the child” the right way to be which is an interestingly flawed and patronizing ideology. It would be like the colonial teaching the indigenous person how to live – it’s totally irrelevant. As time goes on there will be a deeper realization that as adults we can actually learn from children. As with our pets and all the other aspects of nature that we allow into our lives, children will be treasured as a resource of *un-learning* the madness of adulthood, rather than continually imbuing future generations with adult ideologies and thereby perpetuating the cycle. We will realise that the reason it’s impossible to work with either children or animals is that both of them are free and they don’t understand why work is relevant when there is a world of unity and no-one to contend with.

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