**PHILOSOPHY/ACTIVITY 2**  Jenica A. Rina G12 Piety

*\*Do forgive this unprompted/uncalled-for, absurdly off-course, overstepping, and obscenely long-winded spiel. I imagine this must be quite a lot to take in. ~~I'm... honestly not completely sure what all of this is even about and am uncertain about the overall coherence of it. But I guess that's just me deflecting... being too much of a coward to acknowledge if this random word-vomit might actually hold some irrefutable truths and becomes a too palpable testament about how I really am struggling. It can be scary to openly admit and lay bare the extent of your own gaping vulnerabilities.~~ Having the opportunity to spend extra time to collect my thoughts in a safe space has allowed me to articulate my actual and unsullied feelings more fully. And I felt that it was important to provide a proper explanation for my increasingly apparent inefficiency, my tardiness… and to show that I am not deliberately trying to be obtuse nor did I randomly decide to become laughably unproductive, out of respect for my teachers' efforts, hard work, and dedication.\**

To be quite honest, with executive dysfunction, chronic mental exhaustion and emotional dysregulation, a lasting severe burnout, anhedonia, and anomic aphasia screwing me over, coupled with this... deeply unnerving disconnect I have with my sense of self — which renders it impossible to think meaningfully, in a way that matters — I have little hopes of articulating an adequately substantial and personally meaningful reflection of what love is to me... *on the spot, at face value, in a rather limited timeframe.*

I’ve been finding it rather hard to maintain a steady capacity to articulate and differentiate my thoughts and emotions — their origins, their boundaries, the interplay, how they intersect, the nuances — these days… everything’s just disordered, indistinguishable buzz. I’m sure there was something that of… an established personal definition of love floating somewhere, but it all swam within my flaky awareness in ambiguity, and nothing could be grasped without causing all to follow. Trying to meaningfully unite these laughably disjointed, fragmented impressions into a concrete and adequately representational summation felt like trying to scoop water from a storm-tossed ocean into a structurally grounded and pristine swimming pool with just my bare, pitifully uncertain, fingers.

I... I just find it insanely difficult to think meaningfully about anything else but this mind-numbing disconnect. There's this seemingly incessant haze that drapes over me, erecting a barrier that, while essentially intangible, is deeply overbearing to my overall lived experience, leaving me feeling detached and disconnected but still painfully awake… hypervigilant. I desperately scramble and try my outmost best to look past it — only to find that my own awareness of myself (of my thoughts, my emotional, and sensorial experience) is vaguely situated at the outside of my body's intimate familiarity... like it's lagging a few feet over/behind it somehow... I feel flimsy… utterly insubstantial; like an empty vessel of diluted stimulus, indistinct experiences, vague sensations, and obscene sentimentality...

*~~I've become far too weak to keep around, haven't I...?~~*

I am confident, however, that my desire to put forth the best of my abilities is not just superficial pretense. I do yearn, painfully so, to put my heart into writing a proper reflection, to be capable of writing it in a straightforward manner and not this... pitifully confused, convoluted nonsense and mindfuckery but... but..

My mind hates my body.

My body hates my mind.

My essence is f rag me nt ed and insubstantial.

The burden of human consciousness weighs… so, *so*, *so* *heavily on* *my fraying sense of self.*

I’m a sentient flesh-bag in fifteen *d*i*s*c*o*rd*a*n*t* p*a*r*ts* **...all at war.**

Too weak to hold.

Too much to bear.

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It's entirely possible that my environment plays a role in my experience. The world as it is... appears to be fundamentally inharmonious and at odds with my very essence... and the societally established beliefs and norms about what it means to be human doesn’t come naturally to me.

[a detour: *Take my convoluted relationship with gender, for example. Ever since at a young age, the nuances of the lived experience, reality, values, interests, aspirations — the essence of being a girl, a woman completely eluded me. None of it ever fully registered at all, even now. The intricacies of womanhood were always a foreign script, leaving me adrift. It’s as if everyone was given a script to what being a girl means while I was not. So then (back when I was only aware of the gender binary), the confused kid-me who was desperate to find another place to belong and stable foundation to hold on to and build my identity upon, unknowingly leaned heavily unto masculinity… to drown out the profound alienation I felt towards the experience of being a girl. But well, as time passed and my frame of reference broadened so that now I have more avenues to explore, identify, distinguish, and flesh out my personal experiences… so too did the disparity grew between me and my male counterparts. As I've grown, the binary simplicity no longer fits. While I never identified completely as a woman, I also didn’t seamlessly transition into a masculine identity. What of the queer community then…? Well, I guess the queer community did provide me an adequate and nuanced understanding of my gender identity (agender) But well, I guess I find myself somewhat gender-neutral/apathetic to a keep up with the vibrant self-expression and enthusiasm that characterizes mainstream queer culture to fully integrate myself. Even within the majority of that space, I find myself an observer rather than a full participant in its impassioned self-expression.*]

Because of this, I find myself incessantly preoccupied with deliberately extending careful attention and extra effort to keep track of assimilating myself according to societal expectations, resulting in a mind-numbing travesty, a frenzied cycle of adjusting, coping, compensating, compromising, suppressing, stretching, reorienting, and recalibrating... which dilutes my awareness and compromises the authenticity of my lived experiences, including my ability to engage in introspective explorations on multifaceted and abstract concepts such as love and wisdom, much less attend wholly and meaningfully to numerous other demands of life. And while all of people do mask and tailor their behavior to fit different situations accordingly to some extent… to me it can be all-consuming.

*~~I don’t even have the gall to let myself, my unstifled and authentic self, to breathe and “just be” anymore. I certainly I don't feel safe to be at ease, at all. Cause then I might get carried away and get complacent. And then I might just find myself being unable to stomach the idea of putting the mask, the facade I wear to conform, back on again... and again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and... If... if ever that happens... I’ll be disqualified as a human being. I've become a prisoner of my own facade.~~*

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This makes it so that the process feels disingenuous, a suffocatingly empty endeavor.

Honestly… It can truly be profoundly crippling… when significant tasks (like somehow productively looking in to my already fraying self, in addition to tackling this convoluted ordeal that is having to maintain extensive awareness for the seemingly endless coping and assimilating, for answers to abstract multifaceted philosophical questions, in this case) are abruptly thrusted upon people with unconventional temperaments — that may, of course, come with its own unique brand of struggles that’s liable to be overlooked by most because of its peculiarity — within the confines of a rigidly structured and standardized classroom setting, that is evidently designed primarily (almost exclusively) with the needs of the majority in mind, with little to no acknowledgement, or perhaps, a hasty and often thoughtless condemnation (in favor of the ideal)... for these subtle and easily overshadowed but potent nuances and idiosyncrasies that are heavily consequential in shaping a person’s lived reality; for the differences in social, emotional, cognitive, and psychological profile... to the deviances in the ways of experiencing, navigating, and processing the world, and the like...

…As these matters are often easily and readily dismissed, isolated, and compartmentalized as personal/individual failings. The nature of the wider environment (the way it caters to diversity or treats its minorities and how it contributes to these struggles) is rarely questioned or critically reevaluated, and possible systemic issues rarely discussed and brought to light; it is almost always deemed ultimately to be an exclusively personal matter, with the blame and responsibilities entirely singled out towards the minorities. And this narrow perspective can perpetuate harmful stereotypes and hinder efforts to create more inclusive communities.

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There’s also these cases where every deviances are (casually, indiscriminately, ignorantly, and sometimes even deliberately) misconstrued and demonized into an "absolute wrongness" to shift the focus away from properly acknowledging, and understanding, respecting and honoring the reality of unconventional needs to "correcting" it… and often in a way that fails to look beyond and only, exclusively aligns with what the dominant societal convention generally decides to be acceptable, efficient, proper, as well as profitable and cool™, rather than what's authentically aligned for the individual.

It is twisted into an absolute moral failure, an inhumanity, an abomination… rather than a variation in human experience. By framing divergences as an ultimately detrimental moral failing, the system gets to have an awfully convenient pretext to condemn, to police, to shame, to punish, to suppress, to shun and ostracize… as well as a suitable justification to gatekeeping and withholding affirming accommodations... that would then greatly debilitate a "deviant's" capacity to integrate themselves into a community in a way that is personally meaningful and enriching to them (and especially with their authenticity still perfectly intact). Through all this, they strip a person of their dignity, their sense of self-worth. In making it seem like an abomination, society creates a hostile environment for individuals who don't fit the mold, and force them to struggle not only with societal norms… but also with their own sense of humanity.

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And the end result? Well… I’m mostly left with little options but to push through despite most of it likely ending up to be a feeble, aimless, soulless scramble to conform, to meet expectations, carried out in a state of barely-conscious compliance, that’s mostly devoid of any concrete substance (because of the obscure context that is the fact that I already feel like I’m stretched thin to begin, with just trying to function in a world that is largely hostile towards my essence).

The exercise devolves into a pitifully desperate, hollow charade driven merely by academic pressures. A perfunctory show of academic performativity rather than authentic intellectual exploration. Hollow and compliant actions rather than genuine engagement.

This brute-forcing... all it does is just stifle the spark of a genuine intellectual curiosity. Now, I’ve lost it in the process, and in its place is a feeling of profound alienation, apathy, a soul-crushing disillusionment, a suffocating void… complex trauma.

And that’s just unfortunate.

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Metaphorically speaking… it all feels like demanding a [fish] to thrive in a [dog park]. Forcing it out of its pond, under the guise of 'helping it grow and adapt'. Then daring to feel offended, disappointed, and betrayed… when it inevitably struggles to survive in its alien environment, and starts a commotion by gasping desperately for water.

Expecting it to thrive in a hostile environment, then criticizing its distress… is not only absurd but also cruel. Such an expectation is not only misguided but also condescending; a blatant disregard for the fish's fundamental needs. It's... it's thoughtless and insensitive. Forcing someone to step outside of their comfort zone without any consideration for their personal boundaries, needs, and nature can do more harm than good. Trying to force a fish to flourish in a dog park is cruel, unfair, downright unreasonable, and most importantly… lethal.

There's a fine line between encouraging meaningful adaptation or personal growth and pushing someone beyond their limits, and using the mantra “get out of your comfort zone” as a way to justify disregarding those differences. In this case, this context, it feels like "get out of your comfort zone" is just society’s alibi to avoid accommodating the minorities as well as to shift the burden of upholding coexistence to them entirely. Society often overlooks individual differences, imposing a singular standard of growth. Then invalidates the lived experiences and needs of unconventional individuals, creating a culture of shame for those who struggle to adapt. Those who struggle to conform to this rigid mold are frequently stigmatized, labeled as slow, lazy, deficient, or inferior.

My whole life, I have been told that I need to get out of my comfort zone. I've been told that it is only through discomfort that we are able to grow and so we can adapt accordingly to the ever-changing world. But the thing is, I'm differently wired, and I'm not claiming that this is true for everyone who are also with unconventional temperaments, but I don't do well outside of my comfort zone. When I'm out of my comfort zone, I enter a state of fight or flight, and that is not conducive to growth. In that state, I am defensive. Agonizingly hypervigilant. I am not open to new things. I am far too preoccupied with adjusting, coping, compensating, compromising, suppressing, stretching, reorienting, and recalibrating… with holding myself together… with *surviving* rather than actually *living*. I am not able to be present and engage meaningfully with my surrounding. You can't grow like that. Growth is essential, but so is finding the optimal environment for it. While discomfort is often touted as a catalyst for change, my experience suggests otherwise. My comfort zone is where I feel safe to be vulnerable, to introspect, and to make intentional steps forward, to express new ideas and explore new things without fearing that I won't be able to keep up. It's a fertile ground for personal development, albeit one that requires a different approach.

And it doesn't mean that I'm letting myself stagnate within it; never exploring new things. Quite the contrary, I believe in cultivating growth from within my comfort zone. It is not a denial of growth but an alternative approach towards it. This is not to suggest that putting oneself out there, beyond one's comfort zone cannot be a good thing for many people, but it certainly isn't a universal prescription nor a cure-all, or whatnot. After all, what works wonders for one person might be severely detrimental to another. Growth is essential, but I believe there's more than one path. It’s not a retreat from challenge but a strategic approach. It’s about discovering a growth trajectory that suits me best; a tailored approach to growth that respects my individual needs. Personal development, skill acquisition, intellectual curiosity and exploring new interests are entirely possible within familiar territory. By curating stimulating yet comfortable environments, I can challenge myself incrementally, fostering growth without compromising and disrupting my well-being, explore fresh perspectives without overwhelming my system. This balance of and novelty, I've found, is the catalyst for my most authentic growth.

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It’s quite exhausting… to constantly be invalidated and bullied into submission, to constantly be told to “just get over it” and “just fit in” or “suck it up buttercup”, and “life isn’t fair”, or “that’s just the reality of the world” over and over and over and over again. As if the world is a constant that can merely be accepted than challenged; as some immutable force, and not a complex system shaped by human choices and actions; nor a malleable and ever-shifting collective construct sculpted by human will.

This tired excuse that’s perversely presented under the guise of realism… this stereotyped rationale of ‘it is just the way the world is’ implies that progress is impossible, and that we should just simply resign ourselves to a system that is, by design, prejudiced against particular minorities. People seem to love telling others "that's just how it is" so they can justify their complacency and apathy towards problems in society. Like it’s easier to accept a broken, unfair system that dismisses the experiences of marginalized groups.

The world we inhabit is a social construct, intricately woven from shared beliefs and understandings about what reality is and what it should be. And these 'baseline truths' are frequently shaped by the dominant social groups while marginalizing others, a manufactured consensus reflecting their perspectives and interests. Notion exists that there is some sort of fixed unchangeable, determinate "nature and truths of society". But this is simply lie. It is myth. It is harmful dogma peddled by those who benefit from status quo. This idea that the world is unchangeable, that it's just the way it is? That's just… quitter talk. Society is not set in stone. It's fluid, malleable. It can be molded and reshaped. And most of what’s stopping that change is the apathy, ignorance, complacency, and blind tolerance towards hostile societal notions of the majority.

The world hasn’t always been this way; it was built this way by the accumulated experience humanity, by the dominant narratives and power structures, and many other human-driven order. It's a concept that’s very intimately contoured, created, and intertwined by humanity. As such, we, as the architect of this world, both have the potential and the moral imperative to actively shape it into a just and equitable reality. To suggest otherwise is to shift the obligation off our elbows, to abdicate our duty and responsibility to create a more just and equitable society.

But the obligation exists. And it persists. It cannot be abdicated. It bears our imprints on every surface.

This sentiment is often met with resistance, labeled as unrealistic or idealistic... but that's just not the point. It's not about denying the reality and truths about how society currently operates. It's about recognizing the current state of affairs and questioning how those realities came to be and whether they should continue to exist. It’s about taking a hard look at how society has been set up and asking if its right that things have been set up in a way that is inherently biased against certain minorities and marginalized groups. The goal isn't to deny reality but to critically acknowledge, explore, question, and challenge its origins and implications.

It's tough to see why people aren't more focused on making the world a better place. But I get it. In today's world, just surviving’s become a full-time job. Mostly everyone’s just... preoccupied with getting by these days. Trying to keep their heads above water, trying to make ends meet, trying to not get priced out of existence. It's increasingly evident that we're getting paywalled to just... live. Like, just living itself is becoming a luxury rather than a guarantee, a basic human right. In this climate, it's understandable that people might prioritize immediate needs over complex, larger societal issues. People are simply too bogged down with the immediate challenges, with the day-to-day grind, to have the luxury of broader concerns. When just surviving is such a challenge, there’s little time or energy left to consider the philosophical or social intricacies of the wider world. The immediate concerns of everyday life… the personal challenges and hardships we face… they can be all-consuming.

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*“So… Why can’t you just try as hard as possible to alter yourself to fit into the world as it currently is? Why does there have to be such a large shift of the personal environment in your life? Why do you say that you can’t change yourself when you were blabbering about how even the world and society which is vast and complex is not immutable and can be changed?* *What if… you’re simply just being unnecessarily obtuse, incorrigible, and entitled? What if you’re just using your condition as an excuse?”*

I understand the desire for me to change, it’s a common perspective, and one that's often well-intentioned. But my core self is like a foundation; it's difficult to drastically alter without compromising the whole structure. My inherent way of processing the world is a constant, a steadfast component of my being, and there's only so much alteration I can withstand before my mental health takes a hit. And frankly, that's quite a simplistic assumption about the nature of change, identity, and adaptability.

It's like suggesting a square peg can simply force itself into a round hole and that’s no big of a deal. Well, it might just fit if you try hard enough… but the friction will eventually cause it to break or be ruined. The pain and pressure of that coercion are immense, and it often leads to a fracturing of the self, not meaningful transformation or change. While it might be theoretically possible, it's fundamentally detrimental with to my overall well-being. You can't force a square peg into a round hole without either the peg or the hole giving out. Even if we do manage to force ourselves into that mold through sheer willpower (which would be incredibly taxing and could potentially lead to burnout and mental health issues) it's unlikely to provide a sense of lasting fulfillment. It’s like forcing a worm to fly like a bird—a thankless task that only leads to strife.

This deep obsession for universal adaptability can be a subtle form of systemic violence. It presumes a monolithic human experience and ignores the diverse range of neurocognitive and sensory processes, of perceiving and interacting with the world. And by establishing a rigid framework of acceptability based on this singular “ideal way to live and function”, society creates a clear divide between the rewarded and the punished. Those who possess the privilege of aligning with dominant norms reap the benefits of inclusion, opportunity, and resource allocation. On the other hand, individuals who deviate from these standards are subjected to discrimination, prejudice, and a host of systemic barriers.

And, like, I am not just haphazardly suggesting a wholesale overhaul of society and carelessly making light of the cost of it. Nor am I rejecting the significance of having a set of social norms as they are understandably crucial and necessary for maintaining order and stability. And I am absolutely not asking for everything to accommodate me at the expense of everything else nor demanding that the world bend to my own will and whatnot. It's not about asking for unfeasible accommodations or making light of societal structures, but rather about acknowledging that not everyone fits within those structures as they currently are.

I am simply suggesting a proper acknowledgement that not everyone fits neatly into the existing mainstream structures (the weight of trying to fit into societal structures that clash with our own nature... it's a burden that's often overlooked and underestimated). And I think it's also really important to acknowledge the immense effort and significant toll that comes with trying to fit into a mold that doesn't fit. Seeking external changes doesn't mean I’m abandoning my responsibility for personal growth; it's about creating a more supportive and affirming context for that growth to occur authentically and healthily. The call for change in my personal environment stems from the hope of creating a space where my natural inclinations and perspectives are valued rather than forced into an ill-fitting mold.

This is not about denying individual responsibility or the possible need for change on a personal level, but about acknowledging the heavily disproportionate weight of expectation placed on unconventional minorities to repeatedly mask, conform, compensate, and assimilate, rather than the system to provide safe & affirming spaces for differences and reasonable degree of accommodations to aid in navigating the systemic barriers faced by individuals who don't conform to societal norms, for the inevitable disadvantages that comes with trying to coexist in a society that’s largely inharmonious with said predisposition.

*(As previously mentioned, systemic issues are also usually ignored or overlooked in favor of attributing challenges faced by minorities solely to individual failings. Heavily emphasizing personal responsibility and downplaying the role of systemic factors)*

It’s kind of ironic that dominant social groups expect individuals who are fundamentally different to seamlessly (instead of agonizingly) integrate to society, when society hasn't given us any patience, understanding, acknowledgement, validation, tools to actually function and proper opportunity to adapt in a way that meaningfully aligns and is healthy for us. Again, if we're consistently being forced to work against the way that we need to process, not only is society robbing us of being able to process things to its fullest capacity and to our highest potential so that we can contribute within it meaningfully (meaningful in a way that’s not only in society’s views but also personally meaningful for ourselves) but also working our body and brain to the ground trying to do so.

The onus should not solely fall on individuals to adapt to a system that frequently invalidates and continuously fails to accommodate them. While personal growth is undoubtedly valuable, it cannot be the sole remedy for systemic inequality. To demand smooth integration without acknowledging the systemic incompatibility is like persecuting a fish for its inability to climb a tree or a cow for not being able to fly, when those actions go against their intrinsic nature, abilities, and characteristics. It's not just deeply ignorant; it's fundamentally nonsensical and damaging.

Sometimes, the environment needs to change to accommodate the equally real and valid of those on the margins, not just the other way around. Perhaps instead of solely demanding minorities to change to fit the system, we should be adapting the system to accommodate a wider range of human experiences. Is it easier to change the world or oneself? Well, that's a false dichotomy. It implies an either/or choice, when in reality, both are essential for creating a harmonious existence. Both are undoubtedly challenging, but a harmonious existence requires a balance between individual adaptation and societal evolution. This balance is vital to create environments that are truly inclusive and allow individuals to thrive without being constantly on a precarious ledge of fitting in or falling off.

And it also isn’t about obstinacy but rather a reflection of an internal reality that feels overwhelmingly incompatible with external demands. To force myself into a mold that doesn't fit is to invite a lifetime of suffocating dissonance. ~~Hey now, I am genuinely struggling here... and yet society seem to see it fitting to (implicitly) demonize me into some entitled egocentric jerk? And for simply exercising my right to preserve and honor my already-fraying sense of humanity...?~~ It's not about being obstinate or making excuses, but about recognizing the very real limitations of personal malleability in the face of systemic barriers and injustices, as well as advocating for a world that values diversity in all its forms.

Ultimately, the goal is to create a world where individuals can thrive without feeling constrained by societal expectations so they can meaningfully contribute and wholly participate within it, and where society is enriched by the diversity of its members.

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*On why I really struggle to communicate and share my struggles:*

~~Ah, back then, what a… wonderful parent my xxxxx…… was. I was deeply overcome with grief, with confusion… with a bones-deep exhaustion from stretching myself thin over and over and over and over and over again to make them proud... and yet when I inevitably faltered from all the weight of it, when I dared to express my pain and grievances for once… they were quick to antagonize me. They mercilessly condemned me, bombarded me with toxic positivity... casually invalidated, demonized, misconstrued my pain, my distress into something that’s inherently and utterly malicious… my struggles as simple “laziness”, as “disobedience”, as a sign of “contempt” and “hatred” for them, and as “being ungrateful” to their efforts and sacrifices — which could not be further from the truth. And then, threatened me... a helplessly vulnerable child, that they'll jump off a bridge if I don't get my shit together.~~

~~Hah… I don't think I'll live long enough to be able to completely forget that.~~

~~Holy God… that really fucked me up.~~

~~But... what hurts the most is that it was ultimately founded with good intentions... albeit she enacted it in a painfully ignorant, and unhealthy way... it's not malice it's love… love that's.. just a bit tainted with ignorance. I’m sure of it.~~

How could I possibly not lose my confidence in them…? When faced with their constant barrage of these cutting condemnations and dire ultimatums, sickeningly-empty platitudes, toxic and superficial positivity, and tired excuses… these cardboard-cut-out-responses that often ignore the external factors that contribute to my challenges, place an impossible burden on me to overcome them alone, and does not adequately acknowledge the complexity of the situation nor offer any practical and tangible support.

Like casually spouting… “Someone like you won’t have a future in this world.” or "Just be positive!" or "Everything happens for a reason." or "It's all in your head." or "You shouldn't feel your emotions cause it inconveniences me makes me uncomfortable." or "You're just being too sensitive. Too fragile." or "Others have it worse." or "Everything will work out in the end." or "Everyone goes through tough times." or “That’s just the way the world is. If you’re human you conform. If you don’t then go ahead and be an alien. It is what it is. That’s the truth of the world. You won’t survive in this world if you’re like that.” and then calling it a day…

~~Well, of course, I definitely won’t be surviving in it for long if it continues to be this way (and all the more so, now that the people who’s supposed to be my support system seems to find it terribly daunting to ever truly acknowledge the extent of my condition and its implications) nor will I ever easily thrive in it because it isn’t built for someone like me in the first place …that’s old news.~~

These are just dismissive, simplistic answers that don't actually address the issue at hand or offer any meaningful support and are ultimately counterproductive. What did you even say that for…? If the conceivable point of it is just to be an implicit threat to somehow pressure my already-fraying self into repeatedly conforming to things that is debilitating and doesn’t align with me in the first place. That’s just twisted… You know how I’m already struggling with just trying to live and function in a world that is hostile to my essence, and you’re just going to persecute me, call me an alien for not being able to conform any longer. Then leave me feeling utterly misunderstood, isolated, and inadequate…?

Really, how could I not lose my resolve, how could I not falter and hesitate when the people around me don't seem to genuinely try to understand my unique needs or think beyond their own experience? When they can’t even think beyond what works for themselves that it’s almost pitiful…? How can I possibly maintain confidence in people who consistently offer hollow platitudes instead of genuine support? How could I possibly maintain my faith in those who offer little but icy condemnation and despair? Their dire finalities –– are as unprogressive as they are damaging.

And, like, the fact that everyone struggles also does not mean that it’s okay for someone to disregard a person’s situation and trivialize their distress.

Of course, I understand the world wasn’t designed for someone like me. It's a harsh reality I've long accepted. I am not asking for special treatment, only for understanding, acknowledgment, and support. I long for someone to see me for who I am, with all my quaintness, unconventionalities, oddities, peculiarities, and vulnerabilities. Instead, I'm often met with demands to conform or to simply "pull myself together." The desire for quick fixes and easy answers often overshadows the depth of my pain. To be met with such dismissive pessimism, as if my struggles are a mere inconvenience… and their unwillingness to empathize, to truly see me… is a profound betrayal, a gaping wound, a constant reminder of my isolation. It’s as if they’ve erected an impenetrable wall between their experiences and mine, refusing to acknowledge that what works for them might be a recipe for disaster for someone like me.

It’s a cruel irony that those closest to me deeply struggle — or outright refuse — to understand my struggles. They condemn it as some sort of defiance, as a form of rebellion, a challenge to their authority as parents that needs to be subjugated. They demand of me to navigate a personally hostile world alone, offering nothing concrete but condemnation for my inability to seamlessly conform. They prioritize conformity and assimilation over personal well-being, suggesting that sacrificing one’s identity is a small price to pay for a stable life at the forefront of the dominant side of society. They incessantly prescribe to me that complete conformity and assimilation are the ultimate sacrifices, a necessary evil to secure a stable (albeit personally soul-crushing and empty) place in society.

To suggest that I should sacrifice my core self for a semblance of stability is to fundamentally misunderstand the human spirit. Their perspective is a narrow one, rooted in a world they have come to dominate. They cannot fathom a reality beyond their own experiences, and so they project their fears and limitations onto me. Their borderline cult-like insistence on conformity is not a testament to strength but to a fear of difference. Their adherence to a singular way of living or thinking is more about maintaining a sense of comfort and security in the familiar than it is about true strength or innovation.

The implication is that the agony of losing one's identity is a minor price to pay for mere survival. But… in forcing individuals to conform and abandon their uniqueness, society risks stifling growth, creativity, and the rich diversity that makes human experience so beautiful. It's a tragedy that too often, survival is prioritized over genuine living.

I cannot reconcile myself to this notion. Blindly following their advice would reduce me into a mere automaton, existing with painfully soulless, inauthentic purpose and passion. In such a state, I would be a hollow shell, enduring life rather than truly living it. I refuse to sacrifice my authenticity on the altar of conformity, even if it means forgoing the superficial comforts that society deems essential. To surrender to their demands would be to abandon my humanity and to betray myself. It would be to exchange my soul for a superficial sense of security and approval. I am more than a cog in a machine, more than a statistic. I am a complex individual with a unique perspective. And I will not let anyone, especially those closest to me, diminish that.

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With all that having said, and as maddening as it has been… I believe that it’s important to remind ourselves that, ultimately, we’re not necessarily doing it out of malice, and that we’re all just godawfully confused. I just have a unique case of struggles and they're just trying to help in their own way. They're not just throwing out empty platitudes; they're trying to keep me safe, guide me, to facilitate my journey towards a… hopefully beautiful, perfectly comfortable life in the only ways they know how.

Still, that does not necessarily mean that we shouldn’t do better and simply remain in this awkward limbo of miscommunication and ignorance. While I understand that their intentions may be good, their actions are… actually harmful. Perhaps they are simply limited by their own experiences. Still, it’s essential to recognize that said approach is… clearly ineffective and creates a harmful dynamic.

It’s one thing to be unable to understand because it’s difficult to understand how someone's brain and emotions might work in a vastly different way than your own, but it’s a whole other thing to not even try to understand someone's emotional state and then invalidate them on top of that. There is a difference between ignorance and willful ignorance, and there is also a point where someone should be held accountable for choosing to remain willfully ignorant. Especially if their ignorance and belief systems are causing harm to others in the process.

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