



Thread



futon penguin 🐧 (Masto: @preeya@bigl... @uberpr... · Oct 2, 2021 ...

Love this thread, and I think there's also an implicit 3) that's shared among many marginalized groups, which is that you navigate the world really differently when you're viscerally aware that there's more than one way to human.



Autistic Max @MaxieMoosie · Oct 2, 2021

I've heard for a long time that autistic people don't understand social norms, and I think that's sort of accurate, but an oversimplification.

I think there's two main reasons:

1) Autistic people don't learn the way NTs do.

2) Our brains demand things to make sense.

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Like, as an autistic who seesaws between being *really* good at social interaction and being *terrible* at it, by far the biggest dividing line is how much out-group socializing the people I'm interacting with do. It doesn't even matter who the in- and out-groups are.



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Because, among people who are aware that there are a variety of different reasonable responses to any given input, there's also a much greater willingness to critically examine their own expectations and discuss frankly and explicitly



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And I really wonder if autistic people are more likely to be that kind of person specifically because we're much more likely to be aware of our own

sensory & thought pattern differences (like special interests or nonverbalizing) from the portrayed norm

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I also very very much know that a huge part of my own "difficulties" with socializing are, again, that I seem to be able to imagine a lot more possible options for any given facial expression

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E.g. I know that if someone tells me a long story and I hesitate before responding, it might be that I got bored, *or* might equally be bc I'm fighting my own tendency to comment on some random throwaway part. So I don't assume that that reaction in others is automatically bad

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Whereas, like, "NT" communication (will explain the quotes in a sec) is much more likely to interpret this as only boredom, because commenting on the random throwaway part isn't something they feel compelled to do, so they can't conceive of the hesitation as not being negative

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Which is then how you get autistic overexplaining and a need for explicitly stated rules of socialization. But as a secondary effect -- just as NT people who immigrate as adults may also end up with similar experiences of needing explicit outlines and explanations

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Because the more aware you have to (or choose to) be of the inherent arbitrariness of all human interactions, the more you focus your cognitive efforts on parsing that out

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And the more you direct your cognitive efforts towards basic good-faith understanding, the less need there is to recreate that complexity & drama by building status games on top of basic socializing



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It can also go the other way -- I've definitely seen people become less and less tolerant of different kinds of interactions as they get deeper into an in-group or niche that fits them. Which IMO is an underappreciated reason for age -> conservatism



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Oh right, the other thing about this is that I think a lot of what the Twitter consensus about NT communication entails is actually very specific to white Western NT styles. Hence "NT" earlier -- I was specifically trying to reference that popular conception



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So when I was giving a specific example earlier, I also wanted to specify that this example mostly makes sense within that conception. NTs in other cultures might or might not be bothered by that specific behavior (hesitating before responding)



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And because of the ubiquity of white Western media, that population is way, WAY more insulated from the idea that there are multiple reasonable ways to human. So the social isolation is WAY more pronounced and worse for autistic people from those populations, IMO



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@uberpreeya



Also because of racism & colonialism, because white Westerners have experienced material benefit from intentionally justifying exploitation by overvaluing conformity for hundreds of years

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Replying to @uberpreeya

Like, in my (limited) experience, NT people from cultures that haven't experienced that are more likely to be accepting of many individual differences, and thus less likely to ostracize autistic people right out of the gate, and suddenly the perceived social differences lessen



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