

## The Desire for Neurodivergence

by shy\* play

A question that has been repeatedly directed towards neurodivergent/neurodiverse people is: "If your neurodivergence(s) could be cured, would you pursue that path of potential liberation?" "What if a magical pill or behavioural therapy would allow you instant access to normativity? Surely, a society without neurodiversity/neurodivergence would come ever closer to a utopia."

The pill to illumination and a life of potential fulfilment is the/a reality for neurodivergent/neurodiverse people, as is behavioural therapy. Even more so, for many of us, conversion is imposed and demanded not just by large Political structures, but also by small social architectures: families, friends, partners, lovers, etc. Neurotypical contagion is real!

How can anyone desire neurodivergence? lala trilala bam bam bam pffffff

Allow me to be frank and direct:

I desire neurodivergence

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Before handing out affirmative slaps to anyone who has ever asked me the question of cure, or to anyone who hasn't asked me but couldn't possibly realise why anyone would desire neurodivergence, I must emphasise that the desire for neurodivergence operates in very complex ways. (You deserve slaps for being too neurotypical so as to struggle to apprehend neurodiverse/neurodivergent forms of being, which are very very different from your own.) (Before you judge my slaps, don't worry; my slaps never come with sorrow, anger, devastation, or hate; they are also slaps of joy!)

My desire for neurodivergence does not take the form of an identity, a collection of identities, or a yearning for an identity. As Deleuze and Guattari might put it, desire materialises as worlds ("worlding") and should not be confused with assemblages of things. My desire for neurodivergence is not a lack either. Instead, it launches me into experimenting with sociality away from neurotypicality. Yes, this desire is productive and not anti-productive, as many of you might think! It is social and profoundly relational, and not asocial, as many of you might think! It is oh so healthy!

Neurotypicality makes it its job to pathologise these desires, to consider them insignificant, devoid of value and meaning. Neurotypicality is the absence of shadow knowledge, but I say shadow is where "fugitivity" takes place. Neurodivergence is the "right for opacity" (Edouard Glissant), opaque from every neurotypical model and narrative; it is imperceptible in its eyes.

Desire for neurodivergence includes at least two sides of a single coin, performing as a spectrum of neurodiverse/neurodivergent sorrow, trauma, precarity, joy, and rebellion. Tina M. Campt's description of the Black quotidian as "a continuum of terror and joy" is equally valid to describe a desire for neurodivergence. It is oh so affective; it feels and feels, oftentimes transcending speech. The worldings that transpire due to the force of neurodiverse flows produce lines of different kinds of sociality - "one where our future is realised not only through tenacious struggle, but through the reparative power of [neurodiverse] intimacy" (Tina M. Campt).

To the slap receivers:

"One of the things about autism is that a lot of things can make you terribly unhappy while barely affecting others. A lot of things are harder.

But some things? Some things are so much easier. Sometimes being autistic means that you get to be incredibly happy. And then you get to flap. You get to persevere. You get to have just about the coolest obsessions....

It's that the experience is so rich. It's textured, vibrant, and layered. It exudes joy. It is a hug machine for my brain. It makes my heart pump faster and my mouth twitch back into a smile every few minutes. I feel like I'm sparkling. Every inch of me is totally engaged in and powered up by the obsession. Things are clear.

It is beautiful. It is perfect.

Being autistic, to me, means a lot of different things, but one of the best things is that I can be so happy, so enraptured about things no one else understands and so wrapped up in my own joy that, not only does it not matter that no one else shares it, but it can become contagious.

This is the part about autism I can never explain. This is the part I never want to lose. Without this part autism is not worth having" (Julia Bascom).

Chorus:

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