Twitter Thread by John Moe

John Moe
@johnmoe

(a thread)

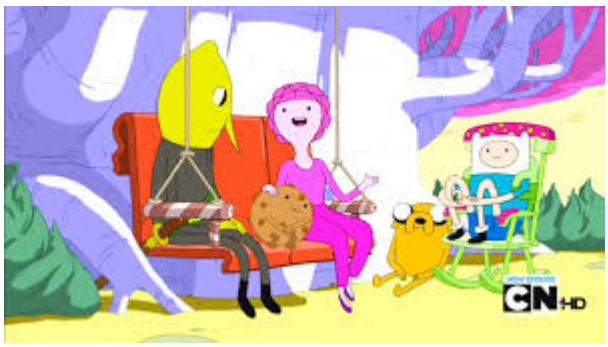
My favorite tv show is Adventure Time. I am here to argue that if you look at the show from an angle of mental health and managing it, Finn and Jake are not the lead characters. Princess Bubblegum is. 1



The most compelling character on the show, to me anyway, is Lemongrab. He was created by PB, the first of the candy people she created to “go wrong”. Lemongrab has devastating anxiety. He doesn’t know and can’t learn how to interact with the world. 2



When he’s lonely, he sneaks into the castle to stare at people while they sleep. PB tries to teach him to cuddle and play with a candy person but he can only poke and slap. He screams, he calls things “unacceptable”, he sentences folks to the dungeon. 3



When given a castle of his own and a clone to keep him company, everything gets donked up. He and his clone make living messed-up people out of their food, they eat each other, it’s a horrifying place. 4



Lemongrab just CAN’T with other people. The more he tries, the more frustrating it gets, so the more he screams.
For the purpose of this thread, Lemongrab represents ANXIETY. 5

Princess Bubblegum is CONSCIOUS SELF. And she’s mostly pretty healthy. She doesn’t hate Lemongrab or banish him; she sees him for who he is and accepts him. She just needs to manage him. 6



So she gets him set up in a castle, not too far from her own kingdom but not close enough to cause problems. Her efforts to contain and calm him don’t always work. But that’s not her anxiety’s fault. They mostly work and that’s good enough. 7



Marceline, the vampire queen, represents DEPRESSION. Her childhood was loaded with trauma and there is an awareness of darkness in her life that she must manage. Not that Marceline is always sad, depression isn't like that. 8



When PB finally stops trying to block herself off from Marceline or change her or cure her, that's when they become close after a long rift. Eventually, they become a couple, each respecting the other's values and philosophy while not always sharing them. 9



So through Lemongrab and Marceline, the story of the series run of Adventure Time is Princess Bubblegum learning to work with her own mental tendencies and manage their presence in her life. It's done through awareness and empathy. 10



Ice King feels like MANIA, maybe OCD. He fixates on the things and people he thinks can make his life better, as if marrying that princess or becoming true friends with Finn will make him whole. Actions, as many as possible, are key to him, not introspection. 11



When Ice King kidnaps Princess Bubblegum, as he occasionally does out of loneliness and desperation, she gets annoyed but she accepts it. That’s just what Ice King does. It’s who he is. The trick, again, is to manage it, not deny it. 12



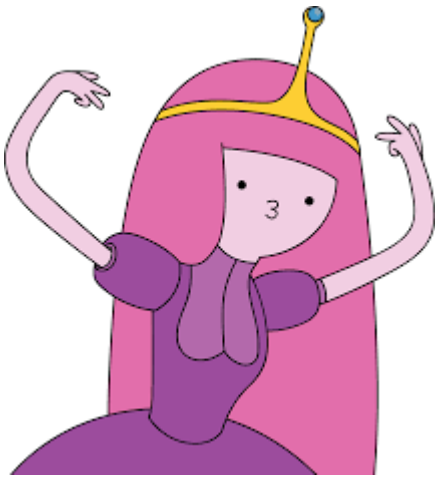
Do all these characters exist in Princess Bubblegum’s head then? No. They live in Ooo.
By the way, think twice before image searching on Adventure Time. There's some donked up biz out there.

13

Adventure Time is a universe of thousands of characters and they don’t all fit any one thing. Finn and Jake, maybe chaos or freedom? Peppermint Butler, maybe responsibility? I don’t know where that leaves Tree Trunks. I’d rather not know. 14



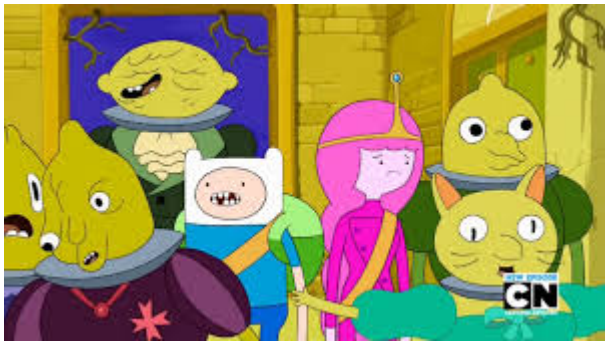
And of course @buenothebear and @MrMuto didn't construct their world this way, it's just a way of viewing it that I think is useful. Princess Bubblegum is a person in the world and must balance her mind and contain strong forces to follow her morality. 15



She often says that her first responsibility is to her subjects/community. Her ongoing effort to manage her mind and function is not always easy but she does it well. She never (well, rarely) seeks to destroy it's more about empathetic containment. 16



She can't pretend Lemongrab isn't in her life because then he'll cause trouble in unpredictable ways. She recognizes and validates his existence, sees his powers AND limitations, and THEN responds with thoughtful action. 17



Anyway. It's a good show. 18 (end)