Twitter Thread by Celestial Emily



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Our conscious experience exists. In fact, it's the only thing you can directly observe, as everything about reality and how we perceive it is filtered through how our brains process stimuli and information. You are the only one who can define who and what you are.

Don't get me wrong, I am a materialist who believes the universe exists in the absence of beings who can observe it from an intelligence standpoint, but we are all collections of atoms, our function governed by chemical processes, not perfectly replicated by the process of birth.

Our means of DNA replication is imprecise because of billions of years of random evolution. We are on one branch of many, and there is countless variation in how all living beings are formed, and how we classify traits of those creatures, including sex and reproduction methods.

It would be an error to say that people who are intersex and/or transgender are the results of mistakes or errors in reproduction, because it implies DNA is "trying" to create a binary model of people and sometimes gets it wrong. It doesn't "try" to do anything; DNA != conscious.

Rather, our biological blueprints are not precise, and this is true for all living things. We can crossbreed plants and animals because of that imprecise nature, it's responsible for what we perceive as the "races" of people, etc. We can observe variation everywhere.

Our DNA generally produces something we can roughly classify with male and female, but like Newtonian physics, it's lowercase-a accurate without being Capital-G Right. You'll go far with that model but it's incomplete and biology doesn't use it in absolute terms.

To bring it around, our conscious experience includes what we describe as intelligence. The ability to acquire and use understanding of our conscious experience and the universe we inhabit, and words to communicate with one another.

But language is imprecise too. Language is a compromise between consciousnesses to find ways to agree on what things are but even if you agree that an apple and a pomme refer to the same thing we interpret these words and things differently; for example:

Whether we see the same color, like or dislike the taste, etc etc. This applies to psychology, the result of our brains chemicals interacting in different ways that we again classify with general taxonomy.

Someone is born thinking of themselves as a certain gender identity, and it doesn't match up with the general binary model. You can tell such a person "well your body is this so you must be this" doesn't change their conscious experience. The only thing you can directly observe.

Again, it'd be a mistake to say DNA screwed up. Rather, the amount of variation in production of complex beings allows for intersex production of bodies, and for differing gender identity. Gender is a taxonomy built on limited language to attempt to explain conscious observation.

Most of the time, assuming someone will perceive themselves as something that matches our general understanding of our biology is going to be correct. But we as complex beings, are capable of processing that consciousness on a higher level than other creatures do.

And sometimes it goes into unusual territory because of the complex workings of our brains. That understanding of gender is as much the result of chemical processes related to our construction as musical taste, whether you enjoy football (either kind) etc.

Trying to tell a trans person they are wrong for feeling a certain way about themselves is like telling someone their enjoyment of apples is objectively wrong and telling them they should never eat them. In theory you could change the chemicals or neurons to change their taste...

But the brain is the only part of you that is you. You could replace any other body part and your personality wouldn't change, though the experience of having that happen to you might have an impact. Change the brain and you change you.

Your conscious experience is the only thing you can directly observe or understand, only half of which can be involved in the process of using words to explain to others who and what you are. The other half of the brain, however, still works, still lights up neurons, etc.

Only you can determine and observe what your conscious experience is, and what that means to you. Another can do the same for themselves - but not for you. If you're trans it's because you've made the observations and come to conclusions using all parts of your complex brain.

Science is the collaboration of many minds to try to understand as precisely as possible the nature of reality. Scientists also insist that taxonomy and classification is general and imprecise. As understanding improves, so do definitions, but they remain imperfect.

You are what you observe yourself to be, and you don't need another brain who insists on using taxonomy as gospel to validate or invalidate that observation. If someone tells you your understanding of your gender is wrong, they are as wrong as if they said liking apples is wrong.

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