Twitter Thread by Zito



Zito
@_Zeets

You know, one of the things I've been thinking about during this time of unimaginable grief has been bereavement leave, and how the little time given for grief points to the marginal space human life is given in the world we live in.

I've commented before that so much of the positive thinking or mindfulness seems to be part of a culture that not only personalizes so much struggle but creates this absurd place where your world could be falling apart yet you're encouraged to continuing performing as if it's not

So you have this really absurd existence where it's seen as embarrassing to speak or openly experience the natural and conditioned tragedies of the world, big and small. You lose somebody and after a while, people see it as a drag that you're still sad or not working again.

There's so many cliches around the "get on with it" attitude that sells it as the idea of strength and maturity, when it's really just one of productivity and avoiding making people uncomfortable. I sometimes think kids have it right when they cry openly when they're in pain.

Anyway, I was thinking about how a world can deal with the collective grief of this pandemic. So many lives have been lost, and lives are never singular. For each person, there's connected lives who will be changed forever by the loss. And even worse, the cruel nature of it.

It's not that people are dying, or even that the engine of our society is indifferent to it, but pushed people to early deaths in order to maintain the machine. There's so much grief and anger and not really any space for people to process and express it.

I was being naive in even thinking such grief would have any great effect. Even as people were dying, the narratives were already moving forward. And if there was no respect for those people while they were alive, there's no reason to expect that respect in death.

You can look at the bereavement leave in any state and it's really not much. And worse, people know it's a trap because if you take that time, it could jeopardize your work. And the ones who were hit hardest in this time were people who couldn't even stay home to begin with.

It's one of those things that I think about that really drives in how inhuman so much of this life is. That people can die in such great numbers and their survivors will have to hold back the tears in public to keep things moving. And that's just the way things are.

A few months ago, there was a public memorial for covid victims in Detroit which I thought was a great idea, and probably can only happen precisely because everything had been shut down. But then again, so many more have died since then too.
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