Applying the **Neurodivergent Scale for Interacting with Robots (NSIR)** to **Social Role Theory** (Eagly, 1987) allows researchers to examine how robotic agents can disrupt or reinforce traditional social scripts for neurodivergent individuals.

Social Role Theory posits that social behavior is guided by the **roles** individuals occupy, which are shaped by societal expectations and stereotypes. When integrated with the NSIR, you can analyze whether robots serve as "neutral" actors that allow neurodivergent users to step outside of restrictive human social scripts.

1. Breaking the "Neurotypical" Social Script

Social Role Theory suggests that people often internalize and perform "scripts" based on perceived norms.

- **Reducing Masking Expectations:** For neurodivergent individuals, many social roles require "masking" or mimicking neurotypical behavior. **NSIR Item 2** (*"Sometimes I stare at the robot"*) and **Item 3** (*"I think I can share my thinking... without speaking"*) identify behaviors that are often penalized in human-to-human social roles. By applying the scale, you can measure if the "role" of a robot interactant removes the requirement for these traditional scripts, allowing for more authentic, divergent engagement.

2. Robots as "Role Models" for Neutral Interaction

Eagly's theory argues that observing groups in specific roles leads to the formation of stereotypes.

- **Consistency as a Social Role: NSIR Item 8** (*"I believe that my robot is the same with me as it is with anyone"*) addresses the perceived consistency of the robot. In the context of Social Role Theory, this suggests the robot occupies a unique "universal role" that does not change based on the user's neurotype. This lack of role-differentiation provides a sense of **Social Comfort/Trust Safety** that human-to-human roles—often fraught with bias—cannot provide.

3. Kinship and the Expansion of "Communal" Roles

Social Role Theory highlights the distinction between **communal** (nurturing) and **agentic** (assertive) roles.

- **Anthropomorphic Kinship: NSIR Item 1** (*"The robot is more like me..."*) and **Item 6** (*"I gave my robot a name"*) measure a deep, personal connection. Applying this to Social Role Theory allows you to see if neurodivergent users are assigning "communal" roles to robots that they might feel alienated from in human society. The robot becomes a peer in a new, shared social category, effectively expanding the user's "in-group" roles.

4. Radical Privacy and the "Non-Observer" Role

A key aspect of roles is that they are performed for an audience.

- **The Judgment-Free Zone: NSIR Item 7** (*"I feel comfortable undressing in front of my robot"*) indicates a total breakdown of the "observed social role." If a user feels this level of comfort, it implies the robot has been successfully stripped of the "judge" or "observer" role inherent in human society. This application helps researchers understand how robots can provide a "backstage" area where neurodivergent individuals can exist without the pressure of role performance.

Summary of Integration for Research

Social Role Theory Concept	NSIR Application Item	Research Focus
Role Scripting	**Items 2 & 3**	Does the robot allow for "non-standard" social scripts?
Role Expectations	**Item 8**	Does the robot's predictable role reduce social anxiety?
Gender/Social Bias	**Items 1 & 6**	Do robots allow for the creation of identity-based roles free from human bias?
Social Monitoring	**Item 7**	Can robots provide a space free from the pressure of "role performance"?

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By using the **NSIR** through the lens of **Social Role Theory**, you can evaluate whether a robot's primary value is its ability to act as a "safe" social partner that does not demand adherence to the restrictive social roles of a neurotypical world.