



Autism: A Very Short Introduction

Uta Frith

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Everyone has heard of autism, but the disorder itself is little understood. This very short introduction to the condition offers a clear statement on what is currently known about autism and Asperger's syndrome.

Autism: A Very Short Introduction Details

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Ahmad Sharabiani says

Autism : a very short introduction (Very Short Introductions #195), Uta Frith

What causes autism? Is it a genetic disorder, or due to some unknown environmental hazard? Are we facing an autism epidemic? What are the main symptoms, and how does it relate to Asperger syndrome?

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Franzine says

I think this book is a wonderful, short introduction to the topic of Autism. Personally, I didn't always agree on an emotional level on the way she expressed her personal opinions / didn't agree with her way of writing about the concerned people.

Electra says

A fairly good introduction to Autism, especially for people who might have never met an autistic person or are only familiar with only one case and think that case is representative of the entire spectrum.

It's not great if you are looking for more than just a presentation of different cases and several theories about the autistic mind. Also it is full of typos and grammatical mistakes, which I find completely unacceptable.

I must say I found some of the comments very unfair. At no point does the author suggest autistic children are a disappointment to their families, use dehumanizing language or bring up selective abortions. He merely refers to the difficulties a lot of families have to deal with and stresses the differences between highly functioning autistic individuals and severe cases that require around-the-clock care.

Amir The Fat Bookworm says

A good book. It showed me how unsettlingly we know so little about neurodevelopmental disorders such as ASD and ADHD. That being said, it also showed how closely related these deficits are.

Daniel Wright says

Dr Frith's engagement with her subject is eye-opening. Her knowledge is clearly gained by one-to-one, real-life experience, as demonstrated by her numerous and judicious case studies, and her emotional involvement with the people who are affected. In addition to this, she sees them with the observant and analytical eyes of an academic, and enters into dialogue with various popular representations of autism, whether novels or films. The combination of all this is a quite enlightening and informative book.

Teo 2050 says

[Frith U (2008) (03:16) Autism - A Very Short Introduction

List of illustrations

- 01a. Key feature 1: In a world of his own
- 01b. Key feature 2: Unable to communicate
- 01c. Key feature 3: Restricted and repetitive
- 02a. Rainman
- 02b. Kim Peek
- 03. The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time
- 04. Increase in cases diagnosed autistic
- 05. Increase in cases without mental retardation
- 06. Demonstration against MMR
- 07. Connectivity in the brain
- 08. Very large

Simon says

A useful introduction which introduces other psychological concepts in a manner which can be understood. This book is not a manual of how to raise an autistic child and it doesn't pretend to be. As introductory material, it serves its purpose and almost demands further study after reading.

Julia Rodas says

From the book:

"There are now a number of people who have diagnosed themselves as having Asperger syndrome. ... They do not need the attention of a clinician. ... To them it is merely a difference, and a difference to be proud of.

"Some campaigners go even further and say that for the whole of the autism spectrum it is wrong to talk of brain abnormalities, wrong to focus on deficits of the mind, and wrong to highlight impairments in behaviour. Instead there should only be talk of differences in brain and mental make-up, some of which represent the autistic mind. This is a strange proposition. To someone who is familiar with classic cases and other severe cases of autism, and knows of the suffering that is associated with autism, it seems perverse.

You may disagree, but then this book is not for you."

Um, you can say that again!

Persistently uses dehumanizing and objectifying language to talk about autistic people, including relentless use of narrative "we" to address a presumably neurotypical readership and "they" to identify autistic people. Ugh.

Nan says

This is okay as an introduction. It muddies some waters. ASD is so frustrating because it is so poorly understood and defined. This book did nothing to alleviate those frustrations in me. Frith is clear about some things. No, the disorder is not caused by vaccinations. Yes, the disorder is characterized by social impairments. No, not all who have autism are savants. There is a good list of books in "further reading". I will have to follow up.

Joy Isabella says

This was an adequate introduction to Autism. It provided information about some of the symptoms and aspects of the biology behind it. However, it was fairly repetitive and skimmed the surface, rather than giving helpful examples where required. Such a scientific look at a real-life issue did little to educate this reader.

Mina says

good introduction to autism spectrum disorders.it explains many problems faced by autistic individuals...eg, lack of emotional resonance, reading mind
"Angela, the wife of Andrew a man with Asperger syndrome was extremely distressed when her father died , Andrew showed no sympathy a talked loudly & disparagingly about his father in law saying it was his own fault that he had cancer, since he smoked. Ironically, Andrew is very aware of other people's suffering in an abstract sense he always gives generously to a charity in Africa"

Kathleen O'Neal says

I read this book several years back before I knew any Autistic people (I now count many among my closest friends) and as a result did not lack the context for the book I would have if I read it today. My rating reflects my impressions on the book at the time I read it - I cannot say if those would help up well if I reread the book again today. The thing I recall finding most problematic about the book at the time I read it was the author's insistent belief in the importance of a prenatal test for Autism. While I now believe that this would prove a fool's errand as I suspect that the etiologies of Autism differ from person to person, I tend to think that even if this were not the case it was problematic for the author to bring this up without also bringing up the fact that it would likely lead to a great many selective abortions of Autistic fetuses as now happens for

fetuses diagnosed prenatally with Down syndrome, an outcome I got the impression the author would at the very least find potentially troubling. (I know I certainly would.)

Rachel says

The author warned that I wouldn't enjoy the book if I were one to call autism a syndrome of mental differences rather than deficits or impairments. She was right. She persistently used language that enforced an "us and them" attitude. The "them", autistic people, were presented as being subhuman, a drain on society, disappointments to their parents, incapable of connecting with others in any meaningful way no matter what their level of functioning.

The science reported here was quite interesting, if inconclusive. It is sad that it was let down by such an offensive depiction of the very people the book was about.

Laura says

2.5/5

Steven Walle says

This was a very informative book about autism. The book describes the development of the disease and the treatments. I was enlightened by this read and I would recommend it to all.

Enjoy and Be Blessed!

Diamond
