I have cited only autism-related books and articles, cognitive literary studies–related books and articles, and literary criticism. The first mentions of the primary novels and short stories appear in the endnotes; after those first mentions, I use in-text citations within parentheses. All other quotations come from the conversations that I had with my collaborators, or from other writers and thinkers, which I’ve treated, the way a memoirist would, as little, uncited flares of wisdom or humor.


2 Consider, for example, the passage . . . Oliver Sacks, An Anthropologist on Mars: Seven Paradoxical Tales (New York: Vintage, 1996), 259.


3 “Her inability to respond deeply . . .” Sacks, Anthropologist on Mars, 86.

3 “There is a similar poverty . . .” Sacks, Anthropologist on Mars, 86.

3 While in some ways Grandin . . . Sacks, Anthropologist on Mars, xx.

3 Because he is such a fine writer . . . Sacks, Anthropologist on Mars, xvi.

4 But my point isn’t simply . . . In line with the thinking of many self-advocates, I prefer the term “autistic” (or “autist”), as a noun, over “person with autism.” As Jim Sinclair notes, “Saying ‘person with autism’ suggests that the autism can be separated from the person.” If autism isn’t understood pejoratively, as something that needs to be eliminated, but rather is celebrated, as a form of neurological difference, then the linguistic problem disappears. See Jim Sinclair, “Why I Dislike ‘Person-First’ Language,” http://autismmythbusters.com/general-public/autistic-vs-people-with-autism/jim

If, as studies have demonstrated . . . See, for example, Hideya Koshino et al., “Functional Connectivity in an fMRI Working Memory Task in High-Functioning Autism,” NeuroImage 24, no. 3 (2005): 810–21. This study asked subjects to remember individual letters presented to them on a screen. Whereas the control group “used the expected verbal strategy . . . to facilitate memory . . . the autism group processed the letter stimuli as nonverbal, visualgraphical codes” (818). The study spoke of autistics as engaging in “lower level visuospatial feature analysis,” and it cited the attachment to such analysis as confirmation of a 2004 study’s claim of underconnectivity in autistic brains. Literate autistics, the theory goes, ought to suppress such basic sensory information in favor of frontal lobe abstractions; instead, they really looked at the letters! According to the study, autistic cognition is “shifted toward the right hemisphere as well as toward the posterior part of the brain” (819).

Neurotypicals, Grandin believes, are . . . Temple Grandin and Catherine Johnson, Animals in Translation: Using the Mysteries of Autism to Decode Animal Behavior (New York: Marioner Books, 2006), 30. Neurotypicals miss much of the actual world—both with respect to what they attend to and how they attend to it. As Olga Bogdashina explains, “With maturation, there is a strategy to suppress [‘raw sensory information’]. The matur ing mind becomes increasingly aware only of concepts to the exclusion of the details that comprise these concepts.” And to the exclusion, we might say, of the things themselves. See Olga Bogdashina, Autism and the Edges of the Known World: Sensitivities, Language, and Constructed Reality (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2010), 84.

“Animals don’t see their ideas . . .” Grandin and Johnson, Animals.

Using a remarkable poetic analogy . . . Klinkenborg, “What Do Animals Think?”

“Everything else is shut off . . .” Klinkenborg, “What Do Animals Think?”

Neurotypical brains, by contrast . . . Klinkenborg, “What Do Animals Think?”

To explain the distinction . . . Laura Otis reminds us that generalizations can only take us so far and often occlude significant differences in the ways that individual minds engage in the production of sensuous mental imagery. Here, in my own ethnographical project, I want to be particularly sensitive to this point. On the one hand, there do indeed appear to be
conspicuous differences between autistic and nonautistic processing; on the other hand, no two autistic or nonautistic people think in exactly the same way. See Laura Otis, *Rethinking Thought: Inside the Minds of Creative Scientists and Artists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

**While the blind may lack images** . . . See, for example, Helder Bertolo, “Visual Imagery without Visual Perception?,” *Psicologica* 26, no. 1 (2005): 173–88. For years, debate reigned about the relationship between visual perception and the generation of visual mental imagery. Was the latter actually a kind of seeing? Did it rely on the same brain regions as the former? Stephen Kosslyn’s work showed that in general it did, but the degree to which it activated these regions varied from person to person. As Otis explains, “When . . . Martha Farah asked participants to form visual images in response to verbal cues, she noticed that in some people the activity reached farther back into the occipital cortex than it did in others. In people with visually rich mental lives, imagery was not like vision; it was vision, relying on the same neural structures that made vision possible” (*Rethinking Thought*, 67). And yet, to conflate visual perception with visual imagery would be a mistake, for it would then follow that the blind cannot produce mental imagery, which is not the case. Indeed, some blind people use mental images more effectively than sighted people.

**My son, for example, carries** . . . I have chosen not to update the book’s biographical elements; rather, I let them develop as the book develops. My son graduated from Oberlin in May 2017—with High Honors in anthropology and election into Phi Beta Kappa.


**As Roth explains, “Prose and . . .”** Roth, “Imagination,” 146.


**For example, I knew that Jamie** . . . Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (New York: Penguin, 2007).

**More and more, scientists are viewing autism** . . . See, for example, the work of Laurent Mottron at the University of Montreal—in particular,


Dora was apparently interested in . . . Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (New York: Del Rey, 1996).


She related that her aunt . . . After Temple’s mother got divorced, she married a man whose sister was married to a rancher. At this man’s ranch, she was introduced to cattle.

A few years back, I wrote to the authors . . . Rinat Gold and Miriam Faust, “Right Hemisphere Dysfunction and Metaphor Comprehension in Young Adults with Asperger Syndrome,” *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* 40, no. 7 (2010): 800–811.


**PROLOGUE**

Having been abandoned by his birth mother . . . For a narrative of DJ’s early years, see Ralph James Savarese, *Reasonable People: A Memoir of Autism and Adoption* (New York: Other Press, 2007).

In the case of Tubman . . . Savarese, *Reasonable People*, 417, 418. To be clear, I am not disparaging intellectually disabled people; nor am I uncritically venerating intelligence. Rather, I am resisting—strenuously—the equation between outward appearance and inward inability, and I am doing so in the context of a historical underappreciation of autistic talent.
In the chapter he wrote for Savarese, *Reasonable People*, 442.


It’s as if DJ had condensed Savarese, *Reasonable People*. This sentence and the one before it appear in *Reasonable People*.

In that chapter he includes Savarese, *Reasonable People*, 434.


“I resent these very hurtful conversations . . .” Savarese, *Reasonable People*, 433.


ONE. FROM A WORLD AS FLUID AS THE SEA

Tito struggles with perseverative behavior . . . A hallmark of autism, according to the fifth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, is repetitive behavior, which experts sometimes refer to as “perseveration.” The autistic person perseveres too long in flicking his fingers or manipulating an object or making a sound. Whereas experts consider these actions to be disruptive and pointless, autistics consider them to be unavoidable and soothing.

The writing table, we learned . . . Melville dedicated *Pierre*, his seventh novel, to Mount Greylock: “To Greylock’s Most Excellent Majesty,” the dedication reads. W. D. Wetherell has called it a “brave and poignant thing to dedicate a novel to a mountain. Brave to match up an imperfect, man-made creation against one of nature’s masterpieces; poignant to be so disenchanted with your fellow humans that a hillside seems your one and only friend.” By this point, Melville’s career as a writer was in great decline. *Moby-Dick* was a popular failure, and *Pierre*, a strange novel with incestuous undertones, would only make things worse. It’s as if, in Greylock, Melville imagined the ideal reader. Tito and I would talk much about the disappointments that mark a writer’s life, and he would be especially moved by Melville’s loneliness and determination. See W. D. Wetherell, “Where Melville Paid Homage to a Mountain,” *New York Times* (June 7, 1998).
“Why can’t I just be . . .” Critics often read Melville’s 1853 short story “Bartleby, the Scrivener” as an allegory for the writer’s despair: he would “prefer not to” write the kind of fiction that sold in the commercial marketplace; he would also “prefer not to” have a job that took time from his writing.


“I have been gifted this mind . . .” Mukhopadhyay, Mind Tree, 169.

Clearly a figure for the nonspeaking . . . Mukhopadhyay, Mind Tree, 169.

Tower of London . . . Mukhopadhyay, Mind Tree, 211.


In The Mind Tree, Tito . . . Mukhopadhyay, Mind Tree, 90.


When they at last extricated themselves . . . In How Can I Talk If My Lips Don’t Move? Tito reports that can “policed our every move, prevented opportunities for interviews, and signed away rights to our story on our behalf, without even having the courtesy of consulting us” (176–77). He is alluding, of course, to the publication of Portia Iverson’s own memoir of autism, Strange Son, which depicts him in a terribly unfavorable manner.

Iverson sold these rights to a production company for a huge sum. “The book Strange Son felt like a slap on my face from someone who Mother and I trusted most,” Tito writes in his Amazon.com review of the book. “Overstimulation and [the] puberty stage can be difficult for many like me. But getting recorded . . . like that hurts more than my autism.” At the end of his review, he tells Iverson’s readers that his new book, How Can I Talk, will soon be published, and it will “describe my sensory conditions, in detail, so that other authors may be more equipped before writing about them as observers if they watch the show.” He also notes that his review “got deleted again” from the Amazon website, sarcastically exclaiming, “Strange deletion!” And he warns that if anyone deletes his review again—say, Iverson or her agent or publisher—he will “put it back.” See

The fact that DJ had in effect . . . The tagline for the documentary about his life, a documentary that DJ wrote and coproduced, reads, “Inclusion shouldn’t be a lottery.” See *Deej*, dir. Robert Rooy, Rooy Media and ITVS (2017).


Soma had a reputation . . . Tito has described his mother like this: “And she became my teacher. A very firm teacher who would not give me the next meal unless I used the pencil in the proper way. And because I was constantly dropping the pencil down she tied it to my hands with a rubber band. And when I was not completing the questions which she had given me after reading a chapter, I was tied down to the chair till I finished it.” Biklen, *Autism*, 128.


When DJ would start thinking . . . And this is exactly what my wife, Emily, and I did: live apart for five years while DJ attended Oberlin. Emily lived in the town, and DJ lived in the dorm with an aide. She coordinated DJ’s many support services and served as an additional aide for studying and socializing. Schools are only required to provide—that is, pay for—an aide while the student is in class. As economically advantaged as we were, we couldn’t possibly afford round-the-clock support. An inclusion specialist, Emily also helped to ensure that DJ received the accommodations he needed.


Tito’s thinking self had lost out . . . Grandin and Panek, *Autistic Brain*.

When I pressed him . . . “I knew that the doors of education would always remain closed for me through a school or through a college because [in India] Autism is another word for madness,” Tito told Professor Biklen. “Why, it is not even allowed for a mad person to become a voter. So when one school said ‘sorry’ and the next school referred me to a school for the mentally retarded, mother did not even try to ask a third” (Biklen, *Autism*, 128). Tito’s view of education has been deeply influenced by the early experience of rejection in India.

Melville, too, was denied . . . Though born into a prosperous family, Melville abandoned the dream of a proper education when his father’s importing business went bankrupt and he later died, leaving his wife to support eight children. Melville was just thirteen at the time, and from this point forward he worked to supplement the family’s income. At age twenty, he served as a cabin boy on a merchant ship bound for Liverpool, and at twenty-one he began his career as a whaler aboard the whaleship *Acushnet*.


In a new environment, he can’t readily . . . One of the prevailing theories of autism is called “weak central coherence” (wcc). First advanced by Uta Frith, it holds that autistics excel at perceiving details but struggle with perceiving wholes. Much has been made of this cognitive proclivity. Indeed, it has been marshaled to explain the traditional “triad of impairments”—in communication, imagination, and social interaction. It has also been presented as lamentably fixed, immune to intervention. The research on wcc is, however, anything but clear. Some scientists have found “local bias” but typical “global” ability, which means that autistics gravitate toward details but when asked about wholes they respond appropriately. In the case of Tito, fragmented perception initially impeded his ability to take in Arrowhead but it in no way prevented the kind of rich, global processing that literary tourism demands. For him, writing is not a record of what he saw and felt; rather, it is the means by which raw perceptual data become what neurotypicals commonly refer to as experience.


A relative lack of “top-down processing . . .” Mottron and colleagues write, “According to the EPF model, superiority of perceptual flow of information

“Hyperfocusing makes the world seem . . . ” Mukhopadhyay, Plankton Dreams, 37.


In the low-imagery setting . . . Kana et al., “Sentence Comprehension,” 2488–89.


Literature is our linguistic lifeline . . . Michel Serres, The Five Senses: A Philosophy of Mingled Bodies (London: Continuum, 2009), 128.

Even figures of speech . . . Simon Lacey, Randall Stilla, and K. Sathian, “Metaphorically Feeling: Comprehending Textual Metaphors Activates Somatosensory Cortex,” Brain and Language 120, no. 3 (2012): 416–21. In an interview, one of the authors appealed to Aristotle to explain his team’s results: “It’s an old idea . . . that we understand complex things, abstract concepts, by reference to simpler things, concrete concepts.” See Steven Cherry, “This Is Your Brain on Metaphor,” IEEE Spectrum (2012), http://spectrum.ieee.org/podcast/biomedical/imaging/this-is-your-brain-on-metaphor. In fact, the study purports to confirm a central premise of conceptual metaphor theory: “that knowledge is structured around metaphorical mappings derived from physical experience.”


Indeed, studies from 2012, 2013, and 2014 . . . In her seminal article “Understanding Minds and Metaphors: Insights from the Study of Figurative Language in Autism,” Francesca Happé established the problem of metaphoric comprehension in autism, connecting it to impaired theory of mind (ToM). See Happé, “Understanding Minds and Metaphors: Insights from the Study of Figurative Language in Autism,” *Metaphor and Symbol* 10, no. 4 (1995): 275–95. By comparing autistic children and children with language impairments, a study from 2005, however, disputed this thesis. It concluded that autism per se did not inhibit metaphoric comprehension. As the author writes, “These analyses showed that only children with language impairment, with or without concurrent autistic features, were impaired on the metaphor task . . . Semantic ability was a stronger predictor of performance on the metaphor task.” See Courtenay Frazier Norbury, “The Relationship between Theory of Mind and Metaphor: Evidence from Children with Language Impairment and Autistic Spectrum Disorder,” *British Journal of Developmental Psychology* 23, no. 3 (2005): 383–99, quote on 383. For evidence of autistic amenability to figurative language instruction, see Angela Persicke et al., “Establishing Metaphorical Reasoning in Children with Autism,” *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders* 6, no. 2 (2012): 913–20. In this study, “multiple exemplar training” not only increased metaphoric understanding but also enabled “generalization to untrained metaphors” (913). See also Jennifer Ranick et al., “Teaching Children with Autism to Detect and Respond to Deceptive Statements,” *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders* 7, no. 4 (2013): 503–8. Addressing the characteristic inability to lie and to perceive the lying of others in autism, researchers in this study used “multiple exemplar training, including rules, modeling, role-play, and immediate feedback” (503) to teach these abilities. The intervention was not only effective but “generalization was demonstrated to novel, untrained lies and to same-age peer confederates who were not involved in training” (503). The study’s authors commented, “The results are promising for a behavioral approach to teaching nonliteral language comprehension and other forms of cognition to individuals with ASD” (503). Finally, see Sergio Melogno and Maria Antonietta Pinto, “Enhancing Metaphor and Metonymy Comprehension in Children with High-Functioning Autism Spectrum Disorder,” *Psychology* 5, no. 11 (2014): 1375–83.

In my creative-writing courses at Grinnell . . . It’s important to recognize that nonautistic people often need tutoring in metaphor comprehension.
Indeed, this is one of my primary responsibilities in introductory literature courses. In creative-writing courses, where the challenge is to produce effective novel metaphors, I often have to show my nonautistic students how to be less cognitive—less top-down and more bottom-up in their thinking. While they can make sense of complex metaphors by professional poets, they cannot generate such metaphors themselves. When your natural inclination is to think in a bottom-up manner, as in autism, you follow your eyes or nose or fingers or tongue and, as a result, make provocative and potentially fruitful connections. Put simply, you organically disrespect convention, while grounding insight in the body. In calling for “the systematic derangement of the senses” in art, Arthur Rimbaud wanted the balloon of perception to be freed from its customary tether.

A researcher once tested . . . Beate Hermelin, *Bright Splinters of the Mind: A Personal Story of Research with Autistic Savants* (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2001), 47. Hermelin writes, “Some psychologists investigating ‘creativity’ have suggested that such ‘field independent’ and ‘diverse thinking’ (i.e. forming unusual and unexpected associations) shows the workings of an original mind. Asperger would have agreed with this and would probably have taken such a far-fetched association as a piece of ravioli on a bed for a sign of what he called ‘spontaneous thought,’ not restricted by conventional and contextual boundaries” (47–48).

One almost wants to side with . . . Quoted in Gillian Silverman, *Bodies and Books* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 89. The reviewer, George Washington Peck, was referring to *Pierre*, but he could just as easily have been talking about *Moby-Dick*. Silverman writes, “Peck was even more discomfited by Melville’s use of ‘word-combinations,’ his tendency to pair language that ‘we cannot, by any mental process hitherto discovered, induce our reasoning faculties to accept’” (89).


This evidence led researchers to postulate . . . Koshino et al., “Functional Connectivity,” 819.


The pattern . . . Savarese, “More Than a Thing to Ignore.”

Although he obviously learned . . . Savarese, “More Than a Thing to Ignore.”

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He has even compared . . . Savarese, “More Than a Thing to Ignore.”


“We hear a unitary phoneme . . . ” Tsur, “Poetic Mode.”

In the process . . . Tsur, “Poetic Mode.”

In contrast to the generalizing talent . . . Tuulia Lepisto, “Cortical Processing of Speech and Non-speech Sounds in Autism and Asperger Syndrome” (PhD dissertation, University of Helsinki, 2008), 40.

In addition, autistics do not appear to have . . . Järvinen-Pasley et al., “Enhanced,” 117.


When the researcher asked . . . Mukhopadhyay, How Can I Talk, 201.

Diane Sawyer, the former host . . . Diane Sawyer, Good Morning, America (June 10, 2008).

While the sensory frequently . . . Williams, Autism and Sensing, 15.

For her this sort of . . . Williams, Autism and Sensing, 15.

“What is my contribution . . . ” Mukhopadhyay, How Can I Talk, 216.

“With my physical . . . ” Mukhopadhyay, How Can I Talk, 216.

But then his words . . . Mukhopadhyay, How Can I Talk, 216.


“When the line is darting out . . . ” Ishmael also compares being seated in the boat to men juggling snakes: “Thus the whale-line folds the whole boat in its complicated coils, twisting and writhing around in almost every
direction. All the oarsmen are involved in its perilous contortions; so that to the timid eye of the landsman, they seem as Indian Jugglers, with the deadliest snakes sportively festooning their limbs.” Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick: A Longman Critical Edition*, ed. John Bryant and Haskell Springer (New York: Longman, 2006), 252.


52 In this way, it required . . . The social construction of normalcy affects not only humans but also animals insofar as any departure from the cognitive norm of neurotypical Homo sapiens is frequently viewed as “lack.” It shouldn’t be surprising that autistic environmentalists seek to link issues of biodiversity with those of human neurodiversity. Increasingly the fields of disability studies and animal studies are cross-fertilizing one another.

53 Admittedly, it is something of a cottage industry . . . I can’t think of another author who was as interested as Melville in the many different kinds of minds that populated the nineteenth century before the medicalization of cognitive difference. These minds were especially prevalent on whaling vessels. The prominent autism researcher Simon Baron-Cohen has suggested that Caspar Hauser, a famous eighteenth-century “wild child” who grew up imprisoned in a dark, underground cell, is “the first well-documented case of autism in literature, or even in history.” See “The Best Books on Autism and Asperger Syndrome Recommended by Simon Baron-Cohen,” interview by Cal Flyn, 2010, http://fivebooks.com/interview/simon-baron-cohen-on-autism-and-asperger-syndrome/.

52 Melville, interestingly enough, makes key allusions to Hauser in *Pierre*, *The Confidence Man*, and *Billy Budd*. Each of these novels takes up the issue of cognitive disability. For an analysis of these allusions and Melville’s treatment of cognitive disability, see Ralph James Savarese, “Neurocosmopolitan Melville,” *Leviathan: A Journal of Melville Studies* 15, no. 2 (2013): 7–19. I had never paid attention to the character of the carpenter until Tito pointed him out; when he did, he said that the carpenter reminded him of Temple Grandin.

In a letter . . . Herman Melville, The Writings of Herman Melville: Correspondence, ed. Lynn Horth (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 173.

TWO. THE HEAVENS OF THE BRAIN


Lunch should be “a time . . .” Biklen, Autism, 250.


It arrived, the burly . . . Quoted in Biklen, Autism, 252.

He believed his “cells . . .” Biklen, Autism, 252.

“Sensory integration has been like . . .” Biklen, Autism, 252.

“It wraps up the stingers . . .” Biklen, Autism, 252.


According to Jamie . . . Quoted in Biklen, Autism, 251.

Suddenly, Jamie could hear . . . Biklen, Autism, 251.


These therapies, Jamie contended . . . Burke, “Power of Communication.”

“In elementary school, beanbag . . .” Burke, “Power of Communication.”

To make lunch bearable . . . Burke, “Power of Communication.”


“I feel stronger when . . .” Burke, “Power of Communication.”

Jamie much preferred a . . . Burke, “Power of Communication.”

“Certainly students like me . . .” Burke, “Power of Communication.”

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“I have been truly fortunate . . .” Burke, “Power of Communication.”

He was especially appreciative . . . Burke, “Power of Communication.”

“I am not planning a . . .” Burke, “Power of Communication.” That support extends to friendship. And yet Jamie doesn’t want simply to be “helped.” He doesn’t want support to come at the expense of his independence or autonomy. “In friendships,” he writes, “it is important to be as a tiger, camouflaged in the background. For I do need the support, but I do not want to have that in full view. It is a dance of steps that takes much rehearsing to accomplish the success, but it is vital.”

Speaking directly to educators . . . Burke, “Power of Communication.”

“I am greatly perplexed when . . .” Burke, “Power of Communication.”

The summer before my son, DJ . . . This exchange can be seen in Deej, the documentary about my son. Deej, dir. Rob Rooy, Rob Rooy Media and ITVS (2017).

For him autism was . . . Burke, “Power of Communication.”

But lest you hear too much resignation . . . The previously cited article from People recounts Jamie’s breakthrough. As he began to speak, he typed, “A new era is coming.”

As a small child, he had been taught . . . See my book Reasonable People: A Memoir of Autism and Adoption (New York: Other Press, 2007) for a discussion of this technique and the controversy that swirls around it. In Jamie’s case that controversy is irrelevant because he types independently—that is, without facilitation.

“I decided to take a risk . . .” Biklen, Autism, 251.

“I know my voice . . .” Biklen, Autism, 251.

“When I was growing up . . .” Biklen, Autism, 250–51.

“This is the journey I am on” . . . Burke, “Power of Communication.”

“It has taken many, many people . . .” Burke, “Power of Communication.”

“I was a little boy . . .” Burke, “Power of Communication.”


In every sense, my son, DJ . . . When DJ was admitted to Oberlin, Jamie sent him this note:
dearest dj

I hear that the news is very lovely to your ears and heart about Oberlin College and the next beginning. This is the next strong power of movement, communicating the call of truth. Love us who seemingly, boldly, simply-directed our lives to these moments of processing the power of potential. You are certainly my friend and journeyman dj.

your friend in life, Jamie

62 I knew that, having now graduated . . . It’s worth pausing to stress once again the achievement of a college degree. As he awaited graduation, Jamie sent this note to friends and family:

my dearest friends of the spirit,

today my letter arrived that will send me to another portion of my journey. this is emotional for engaging the review of memories of the good and the difficult. reasoning this as an educational experience fundamentally required a larger lens of possibility than i formulated on many times in this journey. i love that you hold both my true abilities and my true identity in your minds. this is highly exciting to me attempting to reform the ideas of the power of challenge.

your friend in the journey, and with love, Jamie

63 As he pointed out, his hometown . . . As in the chapter about Tito, remarks without citation occurred in the course of our Skype conversations.

63 I have uprooted the Great White Pine Tree . . . For more information about the Great Law of Peace, see the “History” page of the Onondaga Nation website, http://www.onondaganation.org/history/.

63 The Onondaga welcomed them . . . For more about the 1613 treaty with the Dutch, see “Two Row Wampum—Guswenta,” Onondaga Nation, http://www.onondaganation.org/culture/wampum/two-row-wampum-belt-guswenta/.


64 It was as if Skyholder . . . For a concise history of Lake Onondaga, see the Wikipedia entry at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onondaga_Lake. For a more detailed history, see the documentary Beneath the Surface: The Storied History of Lake Onondaga, Onondaga Historical Association (2017).

64 In English we speak . . . Ancient Roman soldiers were often paid with salt. The word salary comes from the Latin word salarium, which meant a soldier’s allowance to buy salt.
She also exposed him to . . . Only recently have autism professionals begun to encourage “restricted interests” as a way of communicating with autistic people and drawing them into more typical sociality. The assumption had always been that such interests were at best meaningless and at worst detrimental. The obvious irony is that the notion of “restricted interests” could easily be applied to all sorts of neurotypical behavior—from Facebook to TV watching to shopping. In this case, Jamie’s “obsession” with Native American culture seems a fitting corrective to Anglo-American neglect and conquest.


Imagine a philosophy so organically accepting . . . How people react to my son and the other autistics I know has taught me much about the limits of a “diversity” model, which often begrudgingly makes room for difference while refusing to relinquish the idea of a racial, ethnic, gender, class, or cognitive norm.

When I asked him how . . . I met a number of the therapists who worked with Jamie, and I found their approaches to the many challenges of classical autism to be deeply humane and often ingenious. Two people deserve special mention: Maureen Brady, an occupational therapist, and Mark Fohs, a psychologist.

Jamie’s understanding of traumatic recovery . . . It took me years as the father of a traumatized child to see that vanquishing fear was not only impossible but also counterproductive. Such fear, Jamie teaches us, is a sign of one’s fundamental “connection to life.” This vitality must be preserved as the person works through an overwhelming sense of danger.

Rather, by identifying with him . . . Jamie called this phenomenon “the Native belief that all exists in the same time representation.”


As Grandin notes, “People . . .” Grandin and Panek, Autistic Brain, 156.

In the 1980s, a mathematician . . . Quoted in Grandin and Panek, Autistic Brain, 153.

Just as Grandin learned . . . When Grandin was tested using high-definition fiber tracking, her visual track was shown to be 400 percent of a control subject’s; in contrast, the “say what you see” connection, which links vision with language, was 1 percent of a control subject’s. She attributes her ability to draw complex, 3D cattle-processing designs to the

When Jamie reported that he “really enjoys . . .” Chapter 3 of Laura Otis’s *Rethinking Thought: Inside the Minds of Creative Scientists and Artists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015) is bracingly titled “The Vast Range of Visual Worlds.” It bears repeating that generalizations can only take us so far. I provisionally deploy such generalizations in order to make literature seem more hospitable to autism than it has traditionally been thought to be. That said, there is as much variety in the autistic population as there is in the nonautistic population. Even as Grandin has complicated her initial, reductive dichotomy—visual or verbal—she has continued to posit other dichotomies: object or spatial visualizers. As Otis points out, “Visual thinking may be articulable into more than two styles” (113). Indeed, visual thinking may involve, as in Jamie’s case, a mix of two or more styles.


With this kind of seeing . . . Here, the implications of autistic perception for the environmental movement seem profound: when you perceive the natural world in “the process of creation,” you are perhaps more inclined to care for it.


of Biological Psychiatry}, ed. Jaak Panksepp (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons, 2004), 319–44. Finally, see “Yoga and Post-traumatic Stress Disorder: An Interview with Bessel van der Kolk, MD,” http://www.traumacenter.org /clients/maginside.su09.p12-13.pdf. Van der Kolk has championed the importance of body-based therapies for trauma because trauma lodges at the level of the sensory or perceptual—beneath consciousness. The talking cure, while clearly still important, is too cognitive to fundamentally change how the body itself is afraid, how the person’s sensory system has been hijacked by fear and hypervigilance.


76 The social psychologist Carol Gilligan . . . Carol Gilligan, In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women’s Development (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), xvi.


76 That view had emerged when . . . A less modular view of the brain allows us to see autism as a complex condition in which sensorimotor challenges can have profound effects on high-order thought and sociality. It also allows for the possibility of innovative treatments and accommodations that intervene in ways previously thought irrelevant to the core “deficits” in autism.


76 It evolved from “utterances . . .” McGilchrist, Master, 111.

76–77 Or as Iain McGilchrist put it . . . McGilchrist, Master, 119.

This study went so far as . . . Savarese, “Moving the Field.”


This last bit is researcher-speak . . . Amos nicely evokes the idea of “downstream effects” when she references early video research on the atypical movements of autistic infants and toddlers: “Watching the subtle struggles embodied in these videos, viewers are reminded of the ways typically developing children proceed to capture their bodies’ spontaneous movements in increasingly intentional and goal-directed ways . . . , and of the profound ways that a lack of predictable movements and reflexes would alter that dynamic, creating a developmental cascade that flows with increasing velocity toward an autism diagnosis” (Amos, “Rhythm,” 142).


These toddlers haven’t yet assimilated . . . Brincker and Torres, “Noise,” 175.

Brincker views “‘sensorimotor priors.’ . . .” Brincker, “Navigating.”

In contrast, autistics must . . . Brincker, “Navigating.”

I am unaware of anyone . . . Reviewing this manuscript for publication, I came across a study that does exactly this: propose a link between movement difficulties in autism and perceptual predilections—what the authors describe as “either a reduced drive to extract overall meaning, termed Weak Central Coherence . . . or an increased dependence on local detail, termed Enhanced Perceptual Functioning.” The authors write, “An alternative [explanation for movement difficulties] is that autistic individuals are able to plan individual aspects of their actions (how to grasp the bar) but are less good at organizing the temporal detail of the action in the chaining tasks. Thus, autistic individuals may plan and execute each component of the action separately and the degree to which they separate action sub-goals may depend on whether they are low or high functioning. . . . Both [weak central

79 For this reason, another researcher . . . Amos, “Rhythm,” 146.

79 Amos concludes, “If these . . .” Amos, “Rhythm,” 146.


79 Research has demonstrated that auditory . . . Hardy and Lagasse, “Rhythm,” 93.

79 It affects both “the . . .” Hardy and Lagasse, “Rhythm,” 90.


80 As the authors note, the cerebellum . . . Hardy and Lagasse, “Rhythm,” 90.

80 It “predicts the timing . . .” Hardy and Lagasse, “Rhythm,” 92.

80 “So many things were hard . . .” Biklen, *Autism*, 251.


80 The authors of the aforementioned . . . Hardy and Lagasse, “Rhythm,” 93.

80 If we should no longer think . . . Currently under assault as impractical, if not worthless, the humanities need a revival that tries to convert its opponents less by means of extolling the value of ideological critique or cultural refinement than by revealing the forgotten or undiscovered uses of art as they relate to the body and human functioning. In this way, I am perplexed by the categorical resistance of many humanities scholars to the burgeoning field of neurohumanities—really, to any use of science in the humanities. This is not to say that I dismiss the need for ideological critique or that I fail to recognize the privileged enthrallment of reading great books. Indeed, what motivates this book is precisely a desire to render such enthrallment less privileged and to critique the prevailing stereotypes of autism. At the same time, I wish to broaden the way that we traditionally conceive of the importance of humanistic inquiry.

80–81 They are not simply effete refinement . . . In *How the Mind Works*, Pinker completely dismisses the adaptive value of music. “It confers no survival advantage,” he writes. It is simply “an exquisite confection crafted to tickle


81 When I pressed Tito on this notion . . . Savarese, “More Than a Thing to Ignore.” At least one study has shown that metrical poetry recitation—specifically, hexameter verse—“exerts a strong influence on [respiratory sinus arrhythmia, or RSA],” which is low in autism and other conditions marked by anxiety, through cardiorespiratory synchronization. RSA is the natural, coordinated, and indeed rhythmic variation in heartbeat as it relates to breathing. Interestingly, the benefits of hexameter recitation exceeded those of controlled breathing exercises without such recitation. Formal poetry, as Tito implies, may bring not only the cortical and subcortical minds but also the heart and lungs into better relation. It may honor, in short, the whole organism—the linguistic animal. See Dirk Cysarz et al., “Oscillations of Heart Rate and Respiration Synchronize during Poetry Recitation,” *American Journal of Heart and Circulatory Physiology* 287, no. 2 (2004), http://www.waldorfresearchinstitute.org/pdf/RCSpeechRes.pdf.

81 There was even evidence that . . . Obermeier et al., “Aesthetic.”


81 “By ruling out certain rhythmic . . .” Turner and Pöppel, “Neural Lyre.”

81 That need, as I have shown . . . Without controlled novelty, the autistic person must resort to habit as a way of managing anxiety. As Tito explains, “Habit can accomplish what reasoning cannot. People don’t understand why there is such an urge for an autistic person like me to scribble on my hand with a ballpoint pen, almost giving it a Queequeg-like look. The habit of making marks, the habit of looking at these marks, the habit of fondly rediscovering them, and the habit of looking at them even more when my visual surroundings become complicated and drown my eyes—habit provides a modicum of comfort.” “Habit is parented,” Tito goes on, mischievously making a habit of using that word. “Habit is watered and
sunned. Habit fruits. Habit seeds. I am the father of my habit. I am ready to grandfather it.” “One can never have enough hand-flapping, back-rocking, finger-flipping, string-twirling or pen-marking,” he says. “Habit thrives in the nerves of autism.” By providing some means of controlled novelty, the need for habit can loosen.

82 Rarely do parents or clinicians . . . I can’t underscore this point enough. These key stakeholders are frequently dismissed and patronized. Yes, I say this as a (defensive) parent, but if you simply take the measure of where the scientific community currently stands on autism, you will miss all sorts of developments—both with respect to what autism, in all of its heterogeneity, is and with respect to the innovative supports and accommodations that allow autistic people to flourish.


83 “Exposure to the printed word . . .” Broderick and Kasa-Hendrickson, “‘Say Just One Word,’” 22.


84 It confirmed that, “having . . .” Lang et al., “Lost in the Rhythm,” 1, 11.

84 Here we have the very basis . . . Neural coupling appears to characterize all sorts of pleasurable social behavior. A study from 2010 found that in successful verbal communication “the speaker’s activity is spatially and temporally coupled with the listener’s activity” (14425). It also noted that such “coupling vanishes when participants fail to communicate” (14425). No one has tested whether rhythm can amplify verbal coupling, but I suspect it can. See Greg J. Stephens, Lauren J. Silbert, and Uri Hasson, “Speaker-Listener Neural Coupling Underlies Successful Communication,” Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 107, no. 32 (2010): 14425–30.
The future will not be worth living . . . “A pattern moved into my brain, giving direction to my hands,” Jamie has said of learning to tie his shoes “after much practice” (Biklen, *Autism*, 250). Just as our motor systems can “listen” in the absence of sound, so our auditory system can move in the absence of movement—both foster “intelligent continuation,” as I have suggested. A spiritual understanding of these neurological workarounds—“a pattern moved into my brain”—allows us to see a way forward for Native American people, a way that remembers the future by rediscovering the past. At the very end of the novel, Silko writes, “[Tayo] had arrived at a convergence of patterns; he could see them clearly now. The stars had always been with them, existing beyond memory . . . Under these same stars the people had come down from White House in the North” (235).

The current concepts of embodied, embedded . . . For more on these different types of cognition and their relation to disability, see Ralph James Savarese, “Cognition,” in *Keywords for Disability Studies*, ed. Rachel Adams, Benjamin Reiss, and David Serlin (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 40–42.

In this way, the idea of medicine . . . Traditionally, the field of disability studies has been deeply critical and suspicious of the medical and scientific fields, which it rightly sees as purveyors of pathology and dehumanizing rehabilitation schemes. But disability studies often goes too far in rejecting medicine and science. As Jamie’s case makes clear, when broadly and humanely construed, healing practices restore the community of which an individual is a part as much as it does the individual himself. Indeed, healing doesn’t take place in the individual; it takes place in the field of relation. For decades autistics have been depicted as inexorably alone, and so any therapy that facilitates greater inclusion and self-determination, while insisting on the work that nonautistic people must do to transform society, should be embraced.

**Three. Andys and Auties**


90 As just such an adult . . . Grandin, *Thinking*, 154.

90 In an important article, the philosopher . . . Ian Hacking, “Autistic Autobiography,” *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London B: Biological Sciences* 364, no. 1522: 1467–73.


91 Like the characters in *Slan* . . . Silberman, *NeuroTribes*, 236.
“To a teenager in the 1930s . . . ” Silberman, *NeuroTribes*, 239.

The more I read about the history . . . In 1964, four years before the publication of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?,* Dick published a novel that explicitly features autism, *The Martian Time-Slip.* While I could have chosen it for this project, I wanted to foreground the topics of empathy and artificial intelligence.


Another self-advocate, Kassiane . . . *Loving Lampposts.*

Unlike Tito, who types with one . . . *Loving Lampposts.*

“I also don’t access words . . .” *Loving Lampposts.*

She thought “in visual . . .” Skype conversation. Unless otherwise noted, Dora’s remarks occurred during our weekly conversations.


It, too, begins, we . . . *My Classic Life as an Artist.*


Called the Academic Autism . . . See https://aaspire.org/?p=home.

A number of these projects . . . In existence for over a decade, *AASPIRE* currently pursues multiple paths of research in healthcare, employment, and violence. As Dora explained the nature of what they do, it is basically “social services research for autistic adults.”

Consider, for example, that . . . Dora elaborates: “For some it may be alienation, but for others it is not understanding the healthcare system, not being able to access it, having insufficient support, or, more generally, a failure within the healthcare system to meet needs. The er-use stat in particular is a key indicator of the failure of the healthcare system to meet patient needs.”


What Chris Martin has said . . . Personal correspondence.


In the last chapter . . . titled . . . Raymaker, “Intersections,” 117.

And this one, about her . . . Raymaker, “Intersections,” 119.


If this interstellar wild child, this corporate . . . Simon Baron-Cohen considers Hauser to be the first documented case of autism. See my article about Herman Melville and Caspar Hauser, “Neurocosmopolitan Melville.”


This result was confirmed by . . . Isabel Dziobek et al., “Dissociation of Cognitive and Emotional Empathy in Adults with Asperger Syndrome Using the Multifaceted Empathy Test (met),” *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* 38, no. 3 (2007): 464–73, quote on 464.


Whereas the former genre... Maria Chiara Pino and Monica Mazza, “The Use of ‘Literary Fiction’ to Promote Mentalizing Ability,” *PLOS ONE* 11, no. 8 (2016), http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0160254.

“Perhaps for this reason...” Pino and Mazza, “Use of ‘Literary Fiction.’”

As the authors note, “A more...” Pino and Mazza, “Use of ‘Literary Fiction.’”

Consider, for example, the “weirdly poignant...” Nicholas Carr, “Is Google Making Us Stupid? What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains,” *Atlantic* (July/August 2008), https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2008/07/is-google-making-us-stupid/306868/.

In Nicholas Carr’s retelling... Carr, “Is Google Making Us Stupid?”

“Dave, stop...” Carr, “Is Google Making Us Stupid?”

According to Carr... Carr, “Is Google Making Us Stupid?”


Again, Tito... Savarese, “More Than a Thing to Ignore.”


“If he drops a food wrapper...” “Obsessive Empathy.”


“We’re afraid of the life we’re...” Silk, “Marionette Theatre,” 171.

“If a cross is a witness...” Silk, “Marionette Theatre,” 171.


Researchers have found recently... Daniel J. Ricks and Mark B. Colton, “Trends and Considerations in Robot-Assisted Autism Therapy,” Robotics and Automation (ICRA), IEEE International Conference (2010), 1.

The normative drive won’t allow... Quoted in Erin Manning, Always More Than One: Individuation’s Dance (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), 130.

It is tempting here to speak... Manning, Always More Than One, xx.

In this context, the concept... Dora called Sturgeon’s novel “one of my all-time favorites. ... It’s an exploration of neurodiversity in many ways, as well as humanity, and so many things ... plus, a rare instance where I get some characters I can identify with.” Theodore Sturgeon, More Than Human (1953; New York: Vintage, 1998).

For Manning, the problem... Graham Harvey, Animism: Respecting the Living World (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), xiv.


These consequences include... Waytz, Cacioppo, and Epley, “Who Sees Human?”

“Seeing human” when seeing... Debate continues about the neurological underpinnings of anthropomorphism—specifically, the extent to which it reflects a genuine regard for objects. A study titled “The Brooms in Fantasia” found that anthropomorphism does not appear to activate the medial prefrontal cortex (MPFC), a brain region considered central to social cognition. See Lasana T. Harris and Susan T. Fiske, “The Brooms in Fantasia: Neural Correlates of Anthropomorphizing Objects,” Social Cognition 26, no. 2 (2008): 210–23. Harris and Fiske note with respect to the Disney cartoon that their study references, “One can imagine an army of brooms without thinking about their minds as humanly complex” (221). Deploying the insights of their previous neuroimaging work on the perception of “extreme outgroups,” such as homeless people and drug addicts, Harris and Fiske hypothesized that objects, unlike people in “extreme outgroups,” do not profit from the individuation that familiarity occasions. Whereas simply wondering what a particular homeless person had for lunch can bring the MPFC online, an object, despite its apparent humanization in anthropomorphism, remains resolutely nonhuman. It remains, that is, like members of an “extreme outgroup” who have been conceived in strictly categorical terms. Other researchers, however, suggest that the MPFC might be activated: “Although there are very few neuroimaging...
studies of personification, the available evidence implicates a personification network that includes five critical areas, including the medial frontal cortex. See Daniel Smilek et al., “When ‘3’ Is a Jerk and ‘E’ Is a King: Personifying Inanimate Objects in Synesthesia,” *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience* 19, no. 6 (2007): 981–92, quote on 989.


As the researchers report . . . Smilek et al., “When ‘3’ Is a Jerk,” 989.

Previous research had documented . . . J. Simner and E. M. Hubbard, “Variants of Synesthesia Interact in Cognitive Tasks: Evidence for Implicit Associations and Late Connectivity in Cross-Talk Theories,” *Neuroscience* 143, no. 3 (2006): 805–14, quote on 806. Grapheme-color synesthesia and ordinal linguistic personification “tend to co-occur and share characteristics . . . with other variants of synesthesia” (806).

The authors of the 2007 study . . . Smilek et al., “When ‘3’ Is a Jerk,” 990.

Such connections probably take place . . . Smilek et al., “When ‘3’ Is a Jerk,” 990.


The intensity of this sort of anthropomorphism . . . I hope that it is unnecessary to defend the repeated appeal to neurology. I am in no way reducing the complexity of life to mechanistic functioning. As the study by Waytz and colleagues (“Who Sees Human?”) makes clear, neurological predispositions interact with specific features of social life to produce “individual differences in anthropomorphism.” Even the neurological predispositions themselves are variable from person to person.


Like the “digital natives” . . . Silberman, NeuroTribes, 3.


“To recall each digit . . .” Tammet, Born on a Blue Day.

He is also aided by . . . Tammet, Born on a Blue Day, 2.

If Tammet “see[s] numbers . . .” Tammet, Born on a Blue Day, 2.


Looking back on his work . . . See Philip K. Dick, The Exegesis of Philip K. Dick, ed. Pamela Renee Jackson and Jonathan Lethem (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011), 257. After revising this chapter, I came across an essay titled “How Am I Not Myself? Philip K. Dick, the Autism Connection.” Jasun Horsley suggests that Dick himself may have been autistic but that he was an “autist-author in denial of his own autism.” He writes, “Ironically—and tellingly—it is the film version and not Dick’s original book that turns a sympathetic eye toward the autist-androids, showing, in very clear terms, that empathy, as a lost human trait, has now moved into the realm of the machine.” While the claim may be largely true, it undervalues the novel’s raging ambiguity: the part of Dick, whether autistic or not, that very much sides with the androids. See https://auticulture.wordpress.com/2013/10/28/philip-k-dick-autistic-time-slip/.


Even the Russian choreographer . . . Quoted in Sullivan, “Saving the Black Swan.” When reading this chapter, Eugenie stuck a digital note to this
remark: “Funny how Balanchine was so adamant about color in ballet. Yet he married an Osage Indian (Maria Tallchief) and told her that he felt as if he were one of her people.”


The subject of this chapter . . . I follow the common practice of capitalizing the word “Deaf” when it refers not to audiological status but to membership in the Deaf community.

If Dora has elected to mark . . . The issue of passing, of choosing not to disclose one’s disability, is not only complicated but also contentious. As I note, Eugenie chooses this strategy in some settings but not in others, and she is careful to avoid making any general recommendations about when and if to pass. This is her solution to the problem of discrimination in the highly particular context of her coaching life. With regard to disguising her identity in this book, she well understands that some readers will know immediately who “Eugenie” is, but she seeks to protect the privacy of her mother, husband, and autistic son.


When I say that Eugenie . . . Eugenie kindly but firmly pointed out the problematic nature of such statements. In the spirit of this book—and in the interest of dramatizing the difficult labor of progressive anthropology—I have not tried to clean up my own shortcomings.

To her, deafness, like autism . . . In using the term “impairment,” I follow the accepted distinction in the field of disability studies. An “impairment” only becomes disabling when a society refuses to accommodate it. Of course, many Deaf people reject the notion of impairment, insisting that it preserves a hearing norm.


As one researcher puts it . . . Kang and Bodenhausen, “Multiple Identities,” 560.

Due to the widely recognized... Kang and Bodenhausen, “Multiple Identities,” 565.

Multiraciality is said to produce... Kang and Bodenhausen, “Multiple Identities,” 554.


“In art... grotesque...” Wikipedia, “Grotesque.”

It takes advantage of... Kenny Fries, ed., Staring Back: The Disability Experience from the Inside Out (New York: Plume, 1997).


Singer’s “nonverbal communication...” Russell, Reading Embodied Citizenship, 76.


He also echoes... At Eugenie’s request, I am withholding the citation.

Because he can’t be contained... Biff’s enthusiasm for disability is astonishing, and it’s hard not to read it as a half-repressed wish to mark his own body as different, even disfigured. He longs, it would seem, to be able to corporeally express a trans sensibility. “What he had said to Alice was true—[Biff] did like freaks. He had a special feeling for sick people and cripples... There was one fellow who had had his peter... blown off in a boiler explosion, and whenever he came to town there was a free pint waiting for him.” See Carson McCullers, The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter (1940; New York: Penguin Books, 2000), 22.

Think, for example, of... Robert McRuer, Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability (New York: New York University Press, 2006).

Quite, as the activist/scholar... Petra Kuppers, Disability Culture and Community Performance: Find a Strange and Twisted Shape (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

Just as, according to one theory... I am not equating hormones with gender, which is socially constructed. Rather, I am noting how McCullers views stable notions of gender as a gross betrayal of the fluid, changing, and varied nature of human bodies.

Listen to Lydia Brown... Lydia X. Brown, “Gendervague: At the Intersection of Autistic and Trans Experience,” The Blog (web log) (June 22,


This is not the case with Eugenie . . . This book has been seven years in the making. Were I to commence writing it today, I would most certainly include a neurodivergent trans reader. Some of the most important writing today is coming from this group of diverse autistics.

With the persistence of . . . Eugenie didn’t entirely dismiss the novel’s treatment of race. She recognized how, in some ways, it could be considered progressive for the period and place in which it was written. Perhaps Richard Wright was engaged in this sort of mental gymnastics when he remarked, in a blurb, “The most impressive aspect of [McCullers’s work] is the astonishing humanity that enables a white writer, for the first time in Southern fiction, to handle Negro characters with as much ease and justice as those of her own race.”

Exhibit A . . . Eugenie objected to the way that McCullers’s black characters never move beyond stereotype—never show a richness or dynamism within, and in spite of, the oppression to which they are subjected.


This wasn’t the “beyond” of . . . See Wikipedia, “Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1,” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parents_Involved_in_Community_Schools_v_Sea_attle_School_District_No_1.


So central is the notion . . . Kang and Bodenhausen, “Multiple Identities,” 552.

Even when the aim is ultimately . . . Kang and Bodenhausen, “Multiple Identities,” 548.

In a study of the facial . . . Kang and Bodenhausen, “Multiple Identities,” 552.

In contrast, multiracial subjects . . . Kang and Bodenhausen, “Multiple Identities,” 552.

If the multiracial subject did not . . . Kang and Bodenhausen, “Multiple Identities,” 552.
To the best of my knowledge . . . I recognize that prosopagnosia (or face-blindness), which is fairly common in autism, would make it difficult to test my hypothesis.

As the researchers put it . . . Kang and Bodenhausen, “Multiple Identities,” 556.


Researchers stress that “multiple . . . ” Kang and Bodenhausen, “Multiple Identities,” 554.


Researchers found that “individuals’ . . . ” Fini et al., “Embodying an Outgroup.”

The study relied on the principle . . . Fini et al., “Embodying an Outgroup.”

So much so that when . . . Fini et al., “Embodying an Outgroup.”

When researchers increased . . . Fini et al., “Embodying an Outgroup.”

As important, the difference in the . . . Fini et al., “Embodying an Outgroup.”

Scientists call this phenomenon . . . Fini et al., “Embodying an Outgroup.”

The study’s authors speculate . . . Fini et al., “Embodying an Outgroup.”

Here, engaging with an outgroup . . . Literature, I’ve been intimating, might work partly in this way. It offers a multisensory representation of the other, and it insists that characters be “processed at an individual-, rather than at a categorical-level.”


Because they possess unisensory . . . Exclusively visual apprehensions of the Other lend themselves to abstract categorization.

No one had offered her . . . Being deaf likely didn’t delay Eugenie’s Asperger diagnosis, though this isn’t the case for deaf autistics generally. According to a 2008 study, deaf children receive an autism diagnosis almost two years later than their hearing counterparts. See Michelle Leach, “Deafness with Autism: A School Age Communication Perspective,” Audiology Online (November 17, 2014), http://www.audiologyonline.com/articles/deafness-with-autism-school-age-13001.

Of course, once it has been reclaimed . . . As an activist, Eugenie understood the appeal of identity claims—how they organize, empower, and provide solace—but, as a multiracial person, she worried about their divisive, self-perpetuating trap. Her goal, in the words of aforementioned scientists, was “decatégorization”—utterly “natural [which is to say unremarkable] ambiguity.”


In 2013, 10 percent . . . Saulny, “Census Data.”

**FIVE. TAKE FOR GRANDIN**

I dedicate this chapter to Lisa Zunshine, who once used Temple Grandin to show the importance of theory of mind (ToM) to reading fiction. Autism, she argued, prevented Grandin from following, or being interested in, the purposeful convolutions of social inference. At the 2011 meeting of the Modern Language Association, I challenged this view. Two years later, at the same conference, Zunshine delivered a paper titled “Real Mindblindness, or, I Was Wrong,” leading Michael Bérubé to joke that it “may have been the first paper in the history of the MLA since 1884 to bear that subtitle” (Bérubé, The Secret Life of Stories: From Don Quixote to Harry Potter, How Understanding Intellectual Disability Transforms the Way We Read [New York: New York University, 2016], 170). See Lisa Zunshine, Why We Read Fiction: Theory of Mind and the Novel (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006). See also Lisa Zunshine, “Theory of Mind and Experimental Representations of Fictional Consciousness,” in Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies, ed. Lisa Zunshine (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 193–213. I very much admire Lisa’s willingness to change her mind. Over the last half decade, she has worked diligently to incorporate nonnormative notions of Otherness into the burgeoning field of cognitive literary studies. For her, the assertion of “loose universals” is entirely compatible with cultural, historical, neurological, sexual, class, and gender differences. In 2014, we published an article together. See Ralph James Savarese and Lisa Zunshine, “The Critic as Neuracosmopolite; Or, What Cognitive Approaches to Literature Can Learn from Disability Studies,” Narrative 22, no. 1 (2014): 17–44.

Bayne called Keats . . . White, *Notes and Queries*, 464.


For example, “If I . . .” Grandin, *Thinking*, 12.

Consider the following sentence . . . Grandin, *Thinking*, 15.


“I was very attached” . . . Sacks, *Anthropologist*, 261.


Increasingly, research has demonstrated . . . A study from 2013 offers a nice summary of previous efforts to understand the prosocial effects . . .
of reading fiction: “Familiarity with fiction, self-reported empathy, and performance on an advanced affective ToM test have been correlated . . . , and limited experimental evidence suggests that reading fiction increases self-reported empathy. . . . Fiction also seems to expand our knowledge of others’ lives, helping us to recognize our similarity to them.” See David Comer Kidd and Emanuele Castano, “Reading Literary Fiction Improves Theory of Mind,” Science 342, no. 6156 (October 18, 2013): 377–80, quote on 377. Two things make this study distinctive: (1) it distinguishes between popular fiction, literary fiction, and nonfiction, finding that only the second “temporarily enhances ToM” (377), and (2) it uses empirical tests, instead of self-reports, to measure a subject’s ability to infer the thoughts and emotions of other people. In this study, reading literary fiction before taking the “Reading the Mind in the Eyes” test improved participants’ scores. The authors believe that literary fiction “uniquely engages the psychological processes needed to gain access to characters' subjective experiences” (378).

A study from 2016, which I previously critiqued for its sweeping claim that “the pleasure in reading science fiction . . . comes from imagining different realities than from understanding characters,” thus making it the “preferred genre [of] individuals with autism,” also found that reading literary fiction improves mentalizing abilities. See Maria Chiara Pino and Monica Mazza, “The Use of ‘Literary Fiction’ to Promote Mentalizing Ability,” PLOS ONE 11, no. 8 (2016), doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0160254. While the authors of these studies do admit to the problem of precisely defining “literariness,” they lean quite hard on old-fashioned distinctions of genre and authorial reputation, which seem far from reliable. A study from 2012 found genre to be less important than perceived “artistic merit” in driving changes in a reader’s personality, perhaps suggesting that the former is not especially, or at least entirely, decisive. See Maja Djikic, Keith Oatley, and Matthew Carland, “Genre or Artistic Merit? The Effect of Literature on Personality,” Scientific Study of Literature 2, no. 1 (2012): 25–36. The field is obviously in its infancy, and much more research needs to be conducted, but the aforementioned studies appear to capture something important about what Kidd and Castano, quoting Roland Barthes, call “writerly” (as opposed to “readerly”) texts. Such texts “unsettle readers’ expectations” (“Reading Literary Fiction,” 377) by “trigger[ing] presupposition (a focus on implicit meanings)” (378).

In the words of Raymond Mar . . . Raymond A. Mar and Keith Oatley, “The Function of Fiction Is the Abstraction and Simulation of Social Experience,” Perspectives on Psychological Science 3, no. 3 (2008): 173–92, quote on 173. “We have recently shown,” write Mar and Oatley, “that individuals who have been exposed to more fictional literature tend to exhibit better empathic abilities . . . , and that this relation cannot be explained by individual differences in personality . . . . Further research
from our group indicates that reading appears to invoke a social-processing mode in readers, priming them for the understanding of social relations” (182). Although genre may not be decisive, some studies have connected reading fiction with social inclusion and support. See Raymond A. Mar et al., “Bookworms versus Nerds: Exposure to Fiction versus Non-fiction, Divergent Associations with Social Ability, and the Simulation of Fictional Social Worlds,” *Journal of Research in Personality* 40, no. 5 (2006): 694–712. See also Raymond A. Mar, “Simulation-Based Theories of Narrative Comprehension: Evidence and Implications” (PhD dissertation, University of Toronto, 2007). Confirming and extending the results of their 2006 study, Mar and his colleagues found that “fiction was positively correlated to social support” whereas “exposure to nonfiction . . . was associated with loneliness, and negatively related to social support” (407). They write, “The myth that avid fiction readers are socially isolated is untrue; their social networks were found to be better than those of people who read less fiction” (499). See Raymond A. Mar, Keith Oatley, and Jordan B. Peterson, “Exploring the Link between Reading Fiction and Empathy: Ruling Out Individual Differences and Examining Outcomes,” *Communications* 34, no. 4 (2009): 407–28. This finding, while needing additional investigation, may be relevant to some autistics who, through a combination of neurological difference and societal neglect, if not antipathy, struggle with “comorbid” conditions such as depression.

In short, it changes people . . . A study from 2009 by Maja Djikic and colleagues found that literary fiction “can cause significant changes in the experience of one’s own personality traits under laboratory conditions.” See Djikic et al., “On Being Moved by Art: How Reading Fiction Transforms the Self,” *Creativity Research Journal* 21, no. 1 (2009): 24–29, quote on 24. One hundred sixty-six first-year undergraduates participated, with some reading Chekhov’s short story “The Lady and the Dog” and others reading a “comparison text that had the same content as the story, but was documentary in form” (25). In other words, all literary or stylistic aspects had been removed. The results, the authors contend, were “due to the difference in the artistic form between the experimental and control conditions, rather than the difference in interest level or story content” (25). Conceiving of the act of reading literary fiction as “cognitive and emotional simulation,” they believe it invites a “re-schematization of categories, including those relating to oneself” (25). (Here, the term “re-schematization of categories” should resonate with the term “decategorization” from the last chapter: literary fiction, like multiraciality, can move us beyond established ways of understanding experience.) In addition to its various stylistic features (rhythm, syntax, sound effects, tone, and figurative language), literary fiction depends on open-endedness and indirection—what Emily Dickinson famously called a “slanted” approach to the truth. Djikic and Oatley
comment, “A striking feature of self-change through literature is that the effects are not direct, as occurs with persuasion, where the author intends the reader to think, feel, or to be disposed to act, in a way she desires. The art in fiction is a social influence, but one that helps people to understand and feel, and even change their selfhood, in their own ways.” See Maja Djikic and Keith Oatley, “The Art in Fiction: From Indirect Communication to Changes in the Self,” *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts* 8, no. 4 (2014): 498–505, quote on 498.

In one study . . . Kidd and Castano, “Reading Literary Fiction.”

In another, “individuals . . .” The quotation appears in Raymond A. Mar et al., “Emotion and Narrative Fiction: Interactive Influences before, during, and after Reading,” *Cognition and Emotion* 25, no. 5 (2011): 818–33, quote on 830. It describes a finding of a previous study. See Maja Djikic et al., “Defenseless against Art? Impact of Reading Fiction on Emotion in Avoidantly Attached Individuals,” *Journal of Research in Personality* 43, no. 1 (2009): 14–17. This study used the same story by Chekhov and the same setup (“art” versus “non-art” conditions) to show that reading literary fiction can “subvert habitual emotional disengagement of avoidantly attached individuals” (14). “Some aspects of art,” write the authors, “such as form or structure, cannot be defended against. How does one defend against a structure or rhythm of a short story? How does one defend against a juxtaposition of images or thoughts? So, while it is conceivable that one can potentially distance oneself from the content of a short story or a novel—by not engaging fully, or by discounting what is going on as merely a story and therefore unimportant—to defend against the form of a piece would be difficult, not least because it cannot be easily isolated or located” (15). Their hypothesis—that avoidantly attached people in the “art” condition would experience greater emotional change than “less defensive individuals”—proved correct. As in the study of undergraduates, the story did not “promote change of emotion in any prescribed way” (16).


I want to be careful . . . Can the notion of neurodiversity be squared with therapeutic intervention? CNN’s Dr. Sanjay Gupta once interviewed my son, DJ, asking him, “Should autism be treated?” “Yes,” DJ replied, “treated with respect.” This witty retort nicely undermines the stark (and misleading) binary—difference or disorder—by insisting that respect ought to motivate both conceptions of autism. One can help Jamie with his movement or Tito with his anxiety or Temple with her emotions without subscribing to the idea that autistics are broken. Let us not forget that autism often brings considerable talents, thus blurring the ability/disability divide. Autism is
either an enabling disability or a disabling ability—just like so-called neurotypicality. (My son, for example, helps me with my memory and sense of direction.) See the final endnote of chapter 2. See Emily T. Savarese and Ralph J. Savarese, “‘The Superior Half of Speaking’: An Introduction,” Disability Studies Quarterly 30, no. 1 (2010), http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/1062/1230.

In the end, my aim . . . As the reader will see, particularly in the third section of the chapter, I actively root for an emotional response to “The Ecstatic Cry.” I do so less because I am invested in a fundamental norm than because I loathe autistic stereotypes and because Grandin has come to represent the condition as a whole. Complicating what we think we know about her will encourage us, in the words of Anne Donnellan, to practice “the least dangerous assumption” and to make room for many different kinds of autism and autistic emotion. As the previous chapters should make clear, while I frequently refer to scientific studies, I completely acknowledge the normative impulse that tends to drive them. Anne M. Donnellan, “The Criterion of the Least Dangerous Assumption,” Behavioral Disorders 9, no. 2 (1984): 141–50.

In it she writes, “I had . . .” Grandin, Thinking, 226.


The story refuses to collapse . . . Brooks, Well Wrought Urn, 209.

A sense of panic ballooned . . . My student Merlin Mathews suggested that the author purposefully fails to tell us what kind of animal “Meat” is so as to make it seem more human.


Her mind was as associative . . . Grandin, Thinking, 9.

In Thinking in Pictures she . . . Grandin, Thinking, 9.

But was she indicting herself . . . That code depends on the notion of contrapasso (or counterpenalty), whereby sinners receive a punishment that mirrors the crime. As with a boomerang, their actions come back unerringly to clobber them.

Her first encounter with . . . Grandin, Thinking, 227.

Later, when she designed . . . Grandin, Thinking, 230.
“I believe that the place where an animal . . .” Grandin, Thinking, 239.

It settled for “abstractification” . . . Grandin and Johnson, Animals, 27.


Adopting what she calls . . . Grandin, Thinking, 167, 168. When she does this, she is not, she says, a person in a bovine costume. Grandin thus disagrees with the philosopher Thomas Nagel, who argued that we cannot know what it is like to be a bat because we do not possess a bat’s perceptual experience. We can only “imagine what it would be like for [us] to behave as a bat behaves” (439). A person engaging in such a thought experiment would, according to Nagel, be precisely a bat man in, yes, a bat costume. See Thomas Nagel, “What Is It Like to Be a Bat?,” Philosophical Review 83, no. 4 (1974): 435–50.

Temple “credit[s] autism . . .” Grandin, Thinking, 111.

. . . in particular, the long-range . . . Grandin and Johnson, Animals, 65.

During sensory simulations there are . . . Grandin and Johnson, Animals, 17. Grandin writes, “My final judgment comes out in words, but not the process that led up to the judgment. If you think about a judge and a jury, all my deliberations are in pictures, and only my final verdict is in words” (17). Ironically, the “final verdict” functions in a top-down manner. Although she champions sensuous particularity, her books present one long stream of generalizations, and I wonder if Grandin the writer isn’t at odds with Grandin the livestock handler—if with the latter’s translation into language, something fundamental isn’t lost. Imagine if she could write creatively.

Abidingly practical, she values . . . Grandin, Thinking, 160.

Because carnivores, as . . . Grandin and Johnson, Animals, 180.

“The strongest feeling I have . . .” Grandin, Thinking, 91.

Temple has plenty of . . . Grandin, Thinking, 94.

So reluctant is she . . . Grandin doesn’t seem to fit the research showing that autistics, on average, struggle not with emotional empathy, that bottom-up feeling system, but with cognitive empathy, that top-down thinking system. As she says of her sensory simulations, she “tune[s] into what the actual sensations are like . . . rather than having the idea of death rile up [her] emotions” (Thinking, 94). Part of what the chapter explores
is the tension between purposeful avoidance of emotion, diminution of emotional response as a side effect of anxiety medication, and alexithymia, an actual condition in which people cannot feel, express, or describe their emotions.

In *Thinking in Pictures* she had . . . Grandin, * Thinking, 164.

But she has also said that her . . . Grandin, * Thinking, 93, 89.


She herself has been on Prozac . . . Grandin, * Thinking, 91.


In the aforementioned study of . . . Djikic et al., “Defenseless,” 14, 16.

In addition to teaching her . . . Grandin and Johnson, * Animals, 114.

In *Thinking in Pictures* she wrote . . . Grandin, * Thinking, 84.


She deliberately thought her way . . . In her book *Authoring Autism: On Rhetoric and Neurological Queerness* (Durham, NC: Duke University
Notes to Chapter Five

Press, 2018), Melanie Yergeau aggressively pushes back against the “hacking hypothesis”: “Reason, topoi, tropes, narrative arcs, diplomacy—these will only ever be attempts or, as Frith and Happé call them, ‘hacks’ toward a normative embodiment, ‘hacks’ toward a normative rhetoric. Appearing to know myself or others is merely appearing to know myself or others. I can appear, but I can never know. I have symptoms, and they have rhetoric.”

Yergeau reminds us of just how normative the thinking of many scientists is; they can’t imagine another way of doing something. Nor can they imagine, in a different context, the potential advantages of what they pejoratively label a “hack.” (There is nothing “hacked” about Grandin’s interactions with animals.) I invoke the “hacking hypothesis” because Grandin alludes to it, in one way or another, to explain her own social development.

Such a coping strategy . . . A study from 2006, compellingly titled “The Bitter-Sweet Labor of Emoting: The Linguistic Comparison of Writers and Physicists,” predictably found that the former use many more feeling words, “in particular more negative-emotion words, including the greater use of anger-related, anxiety-related, and depression or sadness-related words” to describe what they do. The authors of the study attribute this tendency to the fact that “the writers’ work is suffused with these emotions,” and they speculate that “some individuals might choose artistic rather than scientific endeavor because artistic vocation provides a culturally sanctioned means of remaining preoccupied with one’s emotional life.” See Maja Dijkic, Keith Oatley, and Jordan B. Peterson, “The Bitter-Sweet Labor of Emoting: The Linguistic Comparison of Writers and Physicists,” Creativity Research Journal 18, no. 2 (2006): 195–201, quotes on 195, 200. The obverse could also be true and may, in part, explain Grandin’s own choice of career.

Indeed, she has compared herself . . . The scientist Antonio Damasio demonstrated that such people often make catastrophic financial decisions because what they took to be a rational process actually depends on feeling. “I can handle situations where stroke patients may fail because I never relied on emotional cues in the first place,” Grandin says. Yet the very stark comparison belies her own clear, if uneven, emotional abilities. See Temple Grandin, “An Inside View of Autism,” in High-Functioning Individuals with Autism, ed. Eric Schopler and Gary B. Mesibov (New York: Plenum Press, 1992), available at https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/pages/An-Inside-View-of-Autism.

Literature, of course, is not only sensory-driven . . . Building on previous neuroimaging studies of single-word reading, which showed that “readers’ representations of word meaning are grounded in visual and motor representations,” a study from 2009 had subjects read four short narratives in a scanner. The authors found that “regions involved in processing goal-directed human activity, navigating spatial environments, and manually manipulating objects in the real world increased in activation at points when those specific aspects of the narrated situation were changing . . . These results suggest that readers use perceptual and motor representations in the process of comprehending narrated activity, and these representations are dynamically updated at points where relevant aspects of the situation are changing.” See Nicole K. Speer et al., “Reading Stories Activates Neural Representations of Visual and Motor Experiences,” Psychological Science 20, no. 8 (2009): 989–99, quotes on 989, 998. A neuroimaging study from 2015, however, found that readers “differ in their engagement with fiction: some people are mostly drawn into a story by mentalizing about the thoughts and beliefs of others, whereas others engage in literature by simulating more concrete events such as actions.” See Annabel D. Nijhof and Roel M. Willems, “Simulating Fiction: Individual Differences in Literature Comprehension Revealed with fMRI,” PLOS ONE 10, no. 2 (2015), http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0116492. The very title of the study affirms the central point of this chapter: that generalizations about anything occlude important differences. 

While poetry more clearly . . . A study from 2013, which sought “to identify the regional brain activations associated with the special qualities of literary language use” (133), found that, in both poetry and prose, “the emotional charge of literary texts is mediated by similar brain structures to the emotional charge of music” (151). Stylistically evocative fiction may thus be suited to the therapeutic needs of some autistic readers. See Adam Zeman et al., “By Heart: An fMRI Study of Brain Activation by Poetry and Prose,” Journal of Consciousness Studies 20, no. 9–10 (2013): 132–58.

Despite having deployed the idiom . . . Grandin, Thinking, 91–92.

Although she claims to have . . . Grandin, Thinking, 199.


What Robert Penn Warren said . . . Quoted in Brooks, Well Wrought Urn, 212. With her squeeze machine in mind, we might imagine Grandin borrowing the words of Wallace Stevens, who, describing how he went about writing poems, once remarked, “I don’t feel that I have touched the thing until I touch it in ambiguous form.” Quoted in James Longenbach, Wallace Stevens: The Plain Sense of Things (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 148.


Following the work of . . . Miall, “Emotions,” 325.


An evolutionary inheritance designed . . . Quoted in Miall, “Emotions,” 331.

Because the amygdala is also . . . Miall, “Emotions,” 330.


Recent research stresses the importance . . . A study from 2014 by John Stansfield and Louise Bunce helped to clarify the effects of reading fiction on empathy. Confirming previous studies that had linked “transportation,” or “how vividly a person imagines scenes and characters in a particular episode of story-reading,” with increased affective empathy and prosocial behavior, they demonstrated that significant exposure to fiction is associated with better mentalizing abilities (or cognitive empathy) but not necessarily with increased affective empathy and altruistic action. For the latter, transportation appears to be key. See Stansfield and Bunce, “The Relationship between Empathy and Reading Fiction: Separate Roles for Cognitive and Affective Components,” *Journal of European Psychology Students* 5, no. 3 (2014): 9–18, quote on 14. See also Dan R. Johnson, “Transportation into a Story Increases Empathy, Prosocial Behavior, and Perceptual Bias toward Fearful Expressions,” *Personality and Individual Differences* 52, no. 2 (2012): 150–55. In this study, subjects who reported greater transportation while reading were more likely to pick up pens that had been “accidentally” dropped by the experimenter. Finally, see Dan R. Johnson et al., “Potentiating Empathic Growth: Generating Imagery while Reading Fiction Increases Empathy and Prosocial Behavior,” *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts* 7, no. 3 (2013): 306–12. In this study, instructions to generate mental imagery while reading resulted in greater transportation, affective empathy, and helping tendencies.

“We were able to move forward . . .” Mark Osteen, participant, “Neurodiversity and Caregiving: A Roundtable with Parents and Siblings of Children with Autism,” *Disability Studies Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (2010), http://dx.doi.org/10.18061/dsq.v30i1.1061.
“Learn[] to see and accept . . .” Osteen, “Neurodiversity.”

She was vigorously relating to . . . Gillian Silverman, personal correspondence.

Temple’s reaction to “The Ecstatic Cry” . . . Silverman, personal correspondence.

Reminded of Temple’s comment . . . Silverman, personal correspondence.

Why can’t she be avoidantly attached . . . My aim is less to diagnose Grandin or to insist on some sort of emotional or relationship norm than to rescue her from neurological fatalism. By substituting a psychological reading, I risk reducing her difference, and yet by not insisting on a psychological reading, I risk consigning her to unfeeling Otherness.


Recovering yet another norm . . . Pity, of course, is an insidious, self-congratulatory response to physiological and behavioral distinctiveness. Much has been written about this subject. See, for example, Joseph P. Shapiro’s seminal book, No Pity: People with Disabilities Forging a New Civil Rights Movement (New York: Crown, 1993).


In the control condition, where . . . Djikic et al., “Defenseless,” 17.

The authors reasoned that . . . Djikic et al., “Defenseless,” 17.

Of the period in the 1970s . . . Grandin, Thinking, 115.


In a separate study of undergraduates . . . Djikic et al., “Moved by Art,” 25.


Not all of them . . . Mar et al., “Effect of Reading.”

Miall, as I indicated . . . Miall, “Emotions,” 341.
Miall, though, is especially sensitive. Miall, “Emotions,” 341.


Put another way, the squeeze machine. The poet Chris Martin, who teaches poetry writing to autistic people, once said to me that a poem’s formal elements and/or organizational structures work like a squeeze machine: with the right amount of pressure, a kind of musical, thought-feeling amalgam occurs. I have adapted this insight for fiction. In *Thinking in Pictures*, Grandin actually speaks of a “language of pressure”: “In developing many varied, complex ways to operate the squeeze machine on myself, I keep discovering that slight changes in the way I manipulate the control lever affect how I feel. When I slowly increase the pressure, I make small changes in the rate and timing of the increase. It is like a language of pressure. . . For me this is the tactile equivalent of a complex emotion and [it] has helped me to understand the complexity of feeling” (92). The very idea of embodied cognition presupposes a tight link between lower-level sensory input and higher-level thought. Sensory equivalents, *integrated* sensory equivalents, are precisely what literature has to offer. As Grandin has said of this machine, so with additional experience she might say of fiction or poetry, “[It] made me feel *social*.” See Grandin and Johnson, *Animals*, 114.

I still marvel at the coincidence. In an interview in *Arizona Agriculture*, Grandin remarks, “If I hadn’t gone to my aunt’s ranch I wouldn’t have gone into the beef industry. It’s that simple. If I had not been exposed to cattle, I would not have gotten interested in them.” See Julie Murphree, “Arizona Agriculture Shares the Full Conversation We Had with Temple Grandin,” *Arizona Farm Bureau* (March 25, 2015), https://www.azfb.org/Article/Arizona-Agriculture-Shares-the-Full-Conversation-We-Had-with-Temple-Grandin.

If Tito is a “Derridean of sound”. Although they may end up in the same place, it’s worth distinguishing between top-down and bottom-up deconstruction. The former unmakes the world in a deliberate, abstract way; the latter constructs it slowly and concretely.

In the context of medical claims. Describing animal studies and disability studies as “two of the most philosophically ambitious and ethically challenging” fields “to have emerged over the past decade,” Cary Wolfe criticizes the latter for not properly adhering to the dictates of posthumanism, that “after” [in which] new lines of empathy, affinity, and respect between different forms of life, both human and non-human, may be realized in ways not accountable . . . by the basic coordinates of liberal humanism.” See Cary Wolfe, “Learning from Temple Grandin, or, Animal Studies, Dis-
ability Studies, and Who Comes after the Subject?,” *New Formations* 64 (Summer 2008): 110–23, quotes on 110. According to Wolfe, the problem with liberal humanism “is not so much what it wants, as the price it pays for what it wants: that in its very attempt to recognize the unique difference and specific ethical value of the other, it reinstates the very normative model of subjectivity that it insists is the problem in the first place” (118).

No doubt Wolfe, who tellingly refers to Dawn Prince as a “sufferer” (111) of autism, would level this charge at me. But just as women and African Americans resisted the smug announcement of the “death of the subject” in the 1970s and 1980s, so many people with disabilities resist it now. They can’t afford Wolfe’s poststructuralist acrobatics—there is too much left to fight for. Grandin’s appeal to our common humanity is thus quite different from a privileged person’s. And even if we accept Wolfe’s critique, the recuperation of universals isn’t necessarily as regressive as he thinks. Rough and hesitant—barely functional—autistic universals preserve distinction and reconfigure value.

**EPILOGUE**


194 Dora just won a National . . . What is more, Dora’s novel just found a publisher. *Hoshi and the Red City Circuit* will appear in 2018 from Argawarga Press, which is the sci-fi/fantasy imprint of the autistic-run Autonomous Press.