

## ON THE USES OF AUTISM FOR PRINCES

The history of autism is a varied one. Since the late 19th century, autism has been seen as a genetic and cognitive disease characterised by deficiency in communication and understanding. With particular reference to Victor of Aveyron, the main approach to cure autism has been to treat autistic men as children and educate them at the level appropriate for a child. On the other hand, Romans saw autistic men as burdens to the state, and so it was best to have them killed. In the overwhelming majority of cases, it is men, rather than women, who have autism.

On the other hand, the ancient Greeks and Mediaeval Christendom followed a completely different approach to the Romans and modernists. In the case of the latter, those who were able to serve a purpose in society — in particular amongst peasants — bound by the mercy of the faith, were simply described as simple minded and sent to work on the fields. Whereas, in the ancient Greek case, the Furies, who match the definition of autism, were seen not only in the Mediaeval light, but also with divine qualities. Qualities to imitate that would bring happiness to man.

Like this synopsis, autism is a general term. These deficiencies in communication and understanding manifest themselves in different ways; making each autistic man's symptoms particular to the person. Whilst it is appropriate to describe autistic persons as vulnerable, because of their deficiencies, it is false to conclude these deficiencies fail to equip them and others for a happy life. It is especially refreshing to see such innocent qualities in grown men to highlight the capacity for happiness (over rudimentary bodily amusement) exists for any man in any state. And so, it is appropriate to say autism is a gift of God in that — defining God as the prime mover and the relationship of cause and effect — this relationship exists in nature and so, generally described as genetic and cognitive, we may say that universally autism is the result of nature.

To learn from our modern Furies will help virtuous men live ever more joyful lives. To neglect the lessons their lives teach, similar to neglecting the lessons flowers teach on the nature of human life, is to deny a great opportunity for happiness.

The Furies of Christendom are a means to the happiness of princes. Whilst the Romans would wish them dead, and the modernists seek to pacify their value into banality — like other topics — Mediaeval and ancient Greek times provide the best examples for the uses of autistic persons.

We may say for certain that the Roman view of Furies is flawed. To be a burden to the state, a man must violate or threaten the peace or security of the realm. What can an autistic person do that is so harmful to the state that it merits blame to the same level as we would impose on Napoleon Bonaparte in 1805, or Oliver Cromwell in 1645? In a similar vein, what use would it serve simply to characterise autistic persons and study them like butterflies in a box? The Roman and modernist views, generally speaking, fail to accept and agree the aim of mankind. To apply practical wisdom, one must have something to imitate. The dead have nothing of value to imitate; whilst bland categories fail to have virtue in its natural environment. And so the modernist view is deficient. Therefore, the Roman and modernist views of autism have little value for princes.

Whilst this is so, it is clear the Mediaeval Christians and the Greeks had great use for Furies in the achievement of princes' happiness. Of course, on the menial end, autistic persons, like any other, are a source of labour to build ships, plough fields and fell trees. Naturally, depending on the symptoms, the man could either be extremely efficient or an obstacle to progress. This can be overcome with education which — as well as giving the teacher the virtue of prudence and empathy — gives the learner the skills necessary to perform the tasks needed for a defended, enriched and honoured state. Repetitive behaviour, including echolalia and stimming, teach the observer the importance of repetition for confidence, and ultimately success in life. A diminished capacity to communicate by tongue presents opportunities for other means of communication, such as gesticulation and imagery, further making the most of nature and its resources. Many of these virtues are seldom found in modern men. And, like all things, where opportunity for a skill is lost, so too will the skill frail in direct proportion. This is, at heart, the essence of the Fury. A man with certain virtues less commonly found amongst those who need it. And it is the rarity of these virtues which give them the greatest value they deserve. Especially a failure in cases to recognise danger; providing the imitable fuel for the most important virtue of all in the service of truth and happiness: courage. In these ways, a prince will find the Furies useful for his and his state's happiness.

Our modern Furies are a tool for prosperity, and the means for imitable happiness. The Romans would have you kill these virtuous forests, whilst the modernists would simply stick labels on them and lock them away in boxes. In pursuit of happiness, the Mediaeval Church and the Greeks supply the best route to individual happiness. To spend time in their company will feed your body and soul with virtues. To avoid this it is to gamble with your joy, and with it your honour. And so, what a prince will do, if he aims for happiness, is to have our modern Furies in his churches. Should this prove burdensome, then a *hospitium* for Furies, in which — protected by the Church — Furies may live the noble life of pleasant tuition in the company of erudite masters and friends; with men from time to time visiting them to help and learn the virtues they lack.

So much for the uses of autism for princes.