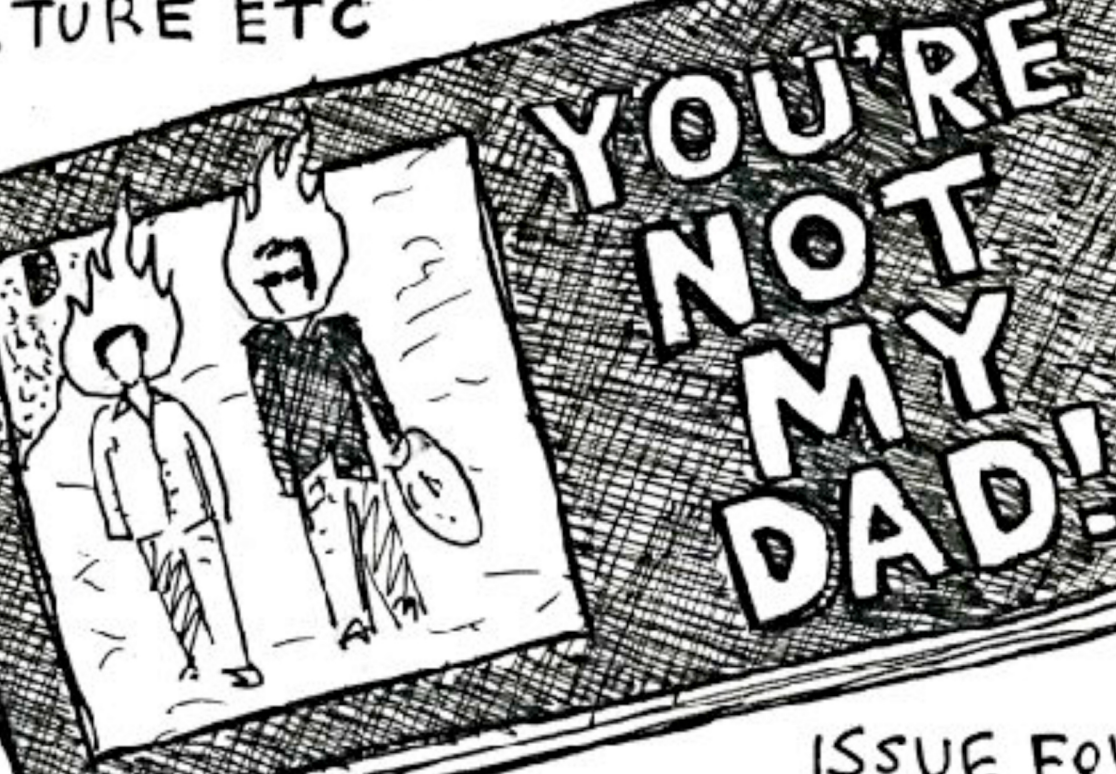


AUTISTIC LIFE,
CULTURE ETC



YOU'RE
NOT
MY
DAD!

ISSUE FOUR
FREE, AUTUMN 2017

One of the side effects of making YNMD! is that I've started to notice other autistic zine-makers. Making a zine is a great way of finding like-minded people. Here are a few that I picked up at Weirdo Zine Fest in London in July. Are there others? Let us know.

Jade makes perzines, zines about their personal experience. Autism is in there as well as witchery and astrology, travelling, moving house, self care and mental health stuff, fish dinners and poo! Jade writes beautifully, with humour and humanity. So real.

Rin's zines are tiny and perfectly-formed critical takes on autism cultures that emphasise conformity and good citizenship. They look good. They are anti-assimilationist killjoys that make me feel glad to be alive.

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You're Not My Dad! is a zine by Simon Murphy and Charlotte Cooper. We are middle-aged queer punks living in an uncool part of East London. One of us is autistic and one of us is neurotypical. We love each other. Our joint special interest is Edgar Reitz' Heimat films. We are also individuals in our own right.

We started this zine as a way of exploring autistic culture in the UK and maybe finding our people. This is the last issue.

*Resist assimilation!
Solidarity with all oppressed
people!
Kick out the jams!
We ride! We ride! We ride!*

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October 2017

<http://tinyurl.com/ynmd-no1>

<http://tinyurl.com/ynmd-no2>

<http://tinyurl.com/ynmd-no3>

I'd never seen it so we watched it recently, and it was terrible and upsetting, so wrong. But the extensive catalogue of goofs on the imdb.com film listing suggest to me that autistics have been having fun with it. There are pages of pedantic, detailed corrections and critiques, I can only dream of who wrote this stuff. Example: "The story line states that 8,095 Buick Roadmaster Convertibles were made for 1949. This is incorrect; the actual total is 8,244." So right.

More shit has been going down since last time. I am now seeing an Advocate who is helping me get care packages sorted with the local council. The system is really bewildering and lots of people slip through the net. I didn't know that I could get this service, which is essentially someone who knows how things work helping me get the support to which I am legally entitled. It is really encouraging and great. The organisation I am with is called Voiceability, they work with various types of marginalised people, maybe they could help you too. The service is FREE.

Hier kann Syntheschmerzmittel zum Einsatz kommen. Es gibt verschiedene Möglichkeiten, wie gut wirksam diese Mittel sind. Hier wird oft von einem starken Einfluss auf die Wirkung von Schmerzmitteln berichtet. Es gibt jedoch auch Fälle, in denen die Wirkung von Schmerzmitteln nicht so stark ist, wie man erwarten würde. Dies kann auf eine Reihe von Faktoren zurückzuführen sein, die die Wirkung von Schmerzmitteln beeinflussen. Diese Faktoren sind:

I wear sunglasses from March to November every year. Sometimes I have to wear them travelling in cars on rainy nights to cut down the dazzle of reflections of incoming headlights. I've been wanting to write about Irlen filters for a while, after I read that Paddy Considine uses them. Seems like Bono might use them too – but maybe he just likes coloured glasses... I thought maybe they were something I could use, but soon realised they are bullshit.

They are tinted glasses that allegedly filter out the specific frequencies of light that cause visual disturbance, in an autism-related 'condition' or called scotopic sensitivity or Irlen syndrome, but the only material I can find about them are by people who are selling them, and most of them are in California. The idea is that symptoms very much like autistic light sensitivity can be reduced by wearing these coloured glasses like sunglasses. You pay for a special complicated eye test where the practitioner discovers the exact frequencies that cause your problems and they scientifically work out what colour you need to filter them out. Science!

There do appear to be a few research studies that suggest that colour overlays can help some dyslexic people in reading, but it's a bit of a stretch to use this to support a whole pseudo-science of colour frequency blocking. It's all the evidence they've got, however, so they make the most of it. On the other hand, an American report from 2009 notes that "[t]he method used to select the lens or filter color has been highly variable, the color selection has also shown considerable variability, and the test-retest consistency has been poor", so basically they make it up! The report did acknowledge that there was some anecdotal evidence that some people found the lenses useful, but I wear sunglasses all the time so I think I can understand this. Naturally the condition is not recognised by any scientific or medical body, and as a bonus the word scotopic relates to low-light vision, and the parts of the eye that do this are not sensitive to colour.

The Autism Show 2017

I'd never been, I was curious and now I know what the Autism Industry looks like in the UK. It isn't pretty. I guess these are the good guys as well, there were no anti-vax or curebie crusaders as far as I could tell, though the Lottery funded(!) Treating Autism had a presence, bleurk.

I'm trying to be generous in my reflections but there was literally nothing about it that was good. The overall impression I got was of craven greed preying on parental fears about disability, all dressed up in primary colours and Comic Sans, and held at a soulless venue that also hosts one of the world's biggest arms fairs.

It was as though the Social Model never happened, that Nothing About Us Without Us was never said, and that pseudo-charitable entrepreneurialism is the only possible way of framing autistic community.

In the whole of the event there was one table by and for autistic people. One! This was undecorated, looked like an afterthought and was sparsely populated. How could this be? It is so shocking!

The rest was made up of: endless fucking squishy balls and sensory toys, truly the icon of the Autism Industry; phenomenally expensive and naff sensory gadgets; private boarding schools aka prisons for kids; surveillance devices; furniture and objects to control and pacify young autistics; creepy use of children as "product ambassadors." Often the stall would be covered in inspirational quotes and testimonies but it was hard to tell what the product being sold actually was. I saw joyless signage 'Clinic: Managing Challenging Behaviour' on a bleak row of cubicles and lots of diagrams of brains during the time I was there. None of the talks appealed. I tried a Virtual Reality thing but it didn't work very well.



The things being sold at Autism Show seemed to imply that it is progressive to control and snoop on young autistic people for their own good, that it is important to be normal and that people should shut up, behave, and stop stimming and flapping. Also, that there is a good living to be made out of this by canny neurotypicals.

I was hoping for a fun roll around in a sensory room but even that was underwhelming and sterile. We left completely demoralised.

Two very nice neurotypical ladies tried to sell me some jam made by autistics on their compound in the country. I like jam and was tempted but then I wondered why the jam-makers weren't there, why they have to work in an isolated compound, if they are free to leave when they want to, if they get paid for their work and what happens to the money they make selling the jam. Then I stopped being tempted.

Three men used their bodies to block me from getting a good look at "Kaspar, the social robot" whilst they 'waved their dicks' around it enthusiastically. The main boffin wants a Kaspar in every school, so that adults can plonk an autistic kid in front of it and they can learn how to do

social interaction. I can't imagine any sentient being learning anything from Kaspar apart from how to be profoundly CREEPED OUT by this majorly CREEPY CREEPY CREEPY THING. It is NIGHTMARISH. I was too scared to look at the picture to draw it for the zine, the eyes are much much worse in real life, like a creature buried alive or imprisoned beyond hope, not even uncanny valley but properly terrifying. Also, massively funded and cheaper than actual social care.

Quite a lot of the gadgets and accessories on display look like sex toys. I'm sure there is a lot of crossover and a lot of action goes on behind the scenes. My favourite was this soft, prongy udder thing that changes colours and plays music when you buh-doinnng it with your hands, arms, face and body (boring plinky-plonky crap, I'm sure you could change the soundtrack to something a bit more bump and grind). Imagine riding that mutha!



I'M NOT NAUGHTY, I'M AUTISTIC



No 7 - GAYLE NEWLAND

Though the actual story is considerably more complex, the media reported this as 'woman jailed for pretending to be a man to have sex with her best friend', with the added prurient interest in the use of a dildo and a blindfold. Later reports indicated that a range of 'mental disorders', including gender dysphoria, eating disorders, OCD, anxiety, depression and Asperger's syndrome, contributed to the case. It's a heartbreaking story, made worse by the fact that she was freed on appeal and granted a re-trial after being sentenced to eight years in

Further AUTISM SHOW thoughts

I have to say I wasn't really into going to this event, but Charlotte said it would be interesting to see it in its grim splendour, so we went. It was a super hot day and as we approached it through the hideous glazed corporate mall that is the ExCel Centre, I was having reservations. My energy drained away, and I had to have a rest even before we found 'Hall 22'. It didn't help that there was another much bigger trade show for surveillance technology on there that day with huge banner ads everywhere. Eventually we found it and it looked shit. We approached it like a jumble sale - have a quick look around first and then go back to look at the interesting things. This approach failed as it was all horrendous, so we just kind of did a circuit, had another rest and then left. One thing I had been looking forward to was the NAS virtual reality autism simulator, Too Much Information! but this too was a let-down. I expected it to be funny. It wasn't.



Simon's illustrated zine DIFFERENT TIMES about queer London in the 1990s drag, punk rock and Asperger's is still available from charlottecooper.bigcartel.com alongside other zines and stuff by Charlotte that you should also buy.

Oliver Sacks

I had never really been interested in him, but I read his foreword to Steve Silberman's book Neurotribes. I came across his book An Anthropologist On Mars recently, and thought I'd give him the benefit of the doubt after a cursory check of the index. It has two chapters about autistic people - the artist Stephen Wiltshire, and Temple Grandin and was published in 1995. The review quotes on the back of the book, from the Telegraph and the Daily Mail (lovely!) emphasise his empathy and how compassionate etc he is/was, but reading him quite closely from an autistic perspective quickly dispels this impression. This isn't to say he was evil, just that he was as bad as any other doctor-researcher in many ways, studying his subjects and judging them coldly, for his own advancement and ultimately financial gain through this book and others.

He becomes obsessed with Wiltshire in 1987 after seeing the proofs of his first book of drawings, and is able to use his contacts in the psycho-medical world to find him and latches onto him. Sacks presents this as a valiant and protracted attempt to 'reach' Stephen and make an NT-level 'connection' with him over several years, but he clearly just wants to use him as a close-up research subject. He repeatedly questions his talents ('can an autistic person truly be considered an artist?' etc.) He undermines him, patronises him, and constantly refers to his "defects". He wants to save Stephen from his autism, apparently without a thought for what Wiltshire himself wants or likes.

In his profile of Temple Grandin his lack of understanding of and prejudice towards autistic people is on full display. Sacks visits her in her capacity as a Professor at Colorado State University, but he does not treat her as a peer. He barely sees her a functioning adult, and admits that he suspected that the self-awareness in her first book was the work of her co-author, because autistic people can't think in those terms. He makes great play of her lacking the social skill of offering him a cup of coffee when he arrives, but he doesn't tell her he is tired or has skipped lunch. How would she know this if he didn't say? Had he not learnt that you have to be straightforward with autistic people, that they can't read minds like NTs? I guess he's used to seeing people in institutional or domestic settings where there are staff/parents/carers around to cater to his needs as a privileged expert. Poor thing! It's actually quite cringey reading his amazement at Grandin's evident ability to run a business, write books, give lectures and get a PhD despite her own obvious defects. He likes that word.

Read Sacks if you must, but read between the lines, with caution, and read the work of autistic people too.

The Inspired Parent

