I imagine the frustration you would feel if you were unable to articulate your thoughts in spoken words. Chances are, people would assume your inability to verbalize might stem from poorer intelligence. This problem plagues the autistic. Autism, a debilitating neurodevelopment disorder, leads to impaired social skills, problems with verbal and non-verbal communication, and behavioral issues. The clinical hallmark of this disorder is a lack of speech during childhood (Caronna, Milunsky, & Tager-Flusberg, 2008). Once seen as a shameful disease, autism was attributed to lack of maternal nurturing. This view has changed in the last decade due to a drastic increase in research and advocacy (Caronna et al., 2008). Although the neurological and genetic cause remains elusive, scientists have observed differences in brain volumes in regions such as the cortical lobes, while matter, and amygdala (Caronna et al., 2008). About one in ten autistics are also savants, meaning they possess a genius ability and usually an advanced memory (Treffert, 2009). As the stigma associated with mental disabilities begins to lift, autobiographies and films have begun to emerge. Temple Grandin, diagnosed in 1949, wrote the book Thinking in Pictures: My Life with Autism. Then, in 2010, HBO Films produced the movie Temple Grandin starring Claire Danes. The most widely known depiction of autism, the film Rain Man, features a fictional autistic savant named Raymond Babbitt. A comparison of these two films and Grandin's autobiography yield fascinating insights into some of the facets of this disorder.

Despite the fact Temple Grandin could not speak until four and was recommended to be institutionalized, she went on to earn her PhD, design livestock-holding facilities that improve the conditions of animals, and write several books. Her autobiography Thinking in Pictures offers readers a glimpse into the mind of an autistic person. Most people depend on spoken and written language to communicate; autistic thinkers use visual and spatial information to form mental images. The structure of her book mirrors this thinking pattern. The book is not narrative nor does it follow chronological order. For example, in chapter one, Grandin designs a vat for John Wayne's Red River feed yard in 1978. In chapter two, Grandin is two, rather, the book is divided by categories, such as emotions and autism and relationships. Due to the lack of narration, this book seems somewhat emotionless. Grandin writes about her life so objectively. It feels like she is describing someone else's life. Grandin explains that when she recalls a past situation, she can review it without the initial emotion. When writing about being bullied or feeling poorly intelligence, this problem plagues the autistic. Autism, a debilitating ne...