

About Face



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著者:Jonathan Cole

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From Library Journal

British neurophysiologist Cole has produced a fascinating but difficult-to-categorize book about the importance of the face and facial expression to the development of personality and character. Largely through interviews with those who are blind,

autistic, or suffer from various neurological disorders that limit facial expression, Cole considers just how much of ourselves is contained in our faces. Less personable and quirky than Oliver Sacks's books and less personal than the work of doctor-writers like Lewis Thomas or Richard Selzer, this is nonetheless a very interesting title that will likely appeal to a wide audience?lay readers, specialists in the neurosciences and psychological fields, and scholars who contemplate the origins of the self. Recommended for general collections with literate readership, as well as academic collections.?Mark L. Shelton, Univ. of Massachusetts Medical Ctr., Worcester

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From Kirkus Reviews

A physician's curiosity leads him to a subject oddly underexplored in its own right: the face. British neurophysiologist Cole pursues the link between our faces and our inner selves in a science-minded inquiry that is very much a natural history rather than a cultural one. But it's not strictly scientific, either: Cole's topic lies among questions just out of the confident grasp of science--the nature and relationship of mind and body, of thoughts and feelings, the definition of consciousness itself. Given that, Cole assembles persuasive speculations from his journalistic research among people who either can't perceive facial expressions or can't make them as a result of blindness, autism, disfigurement, or face-impairing M"bius syndrome, Bell's palsy, and Parkinson's disease. Despite the variety of conditions described in these uniformly heartfelt interviews, his conclusions from them are largely similar: that facial expression exists somewhere pivotal between the mental and the physical, that the face, beyond simply expressing interior states, actually affects the emotional life through its importance in relating to others. The chapters on autistic subjects--for whom the distinctions between self and others, body and mind and emotion, are strangely ruptured--are powerfully suggestive of the complexity of the face's meaning; but relying heavily, in brief encounters, on the ad hoc personal vocabulary used by subjects to try to explain their experiences, this study remains little more than suggestive. But that's only to say that Cole has initiated an ambitious synthesis, putting the face at the center of various disciplines that touch on it--neurological, psychiatric, evolutionary (he surmises that faces function emotionally in primates' individual relationships as well as humans') that may be taken up by such specialists in response to his impressions. A genial peek--in the mirror, as it were--at the mystery of the self. (13 illustrations, not seen) -- Copyright ©1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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