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characters (and an author or two) widely understood as autistic, ranging from Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, Shaw's St. Joan, Steinbeck's Lennie Small, and Harper Lee's Boo Radley to Mark Haddon's boy detective Christopher Boone and Steig Larsson's Lisbeth Salander. The silent figure trapped inside himself, the savant made famous by his other-worldly intellect, the brilliant detective linked to the criminal mastermind by their common neurology--in these works characters on the spectrum become protean symbols, stand-ins for the chaotic forces of inspiration, contagion, and disorder. These powerful fictional depictions, Loftis argues, are also part of the imagined lives of the autistic, sometimes for good, sometimes threatening to undermine self-identity and the activism of the autistic community" --