

# Mind Reading: Psychologist Simon Baron-Cohen on Empathy and the Science of Evil

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## ***TIME:***

Cambridge psychology professor and leading autism expert Simon Baron-Cohen is best known for studying the theory that a key problem in autistic disorders is “mind blindness,” difficulty understanding the thoughts, feelings and intentions of others. He’s also known for positing the “extreme male brain” concept of autism, which suggests that exposure to high levels of testosterone in the womb can cause the brain to focus on systematic knowledge and patterns more than on emotions and connection with others. (Oh, and yes, he’s also the cousin of British comedian Sacha “Borat” Baron Cohen.)

Baron-Cohen’s new book, *The Science of Evil: On Empathy and the Origins of Cruelty*, examines the role of empathy, the ability to understand and care about the emotions of others, not only in autism but in conditions like psychopathy in which lack of care for others leads to antisocial and destructive behavior.

Read more at: [TIME](#)