

PUPPETRY AND VENTRILOQUY FOR THE AUTISTIC AND SPEECH IMPAIRED

Some symptoms of autism are poor social interaction and communication skills, unusual interest in objects and repetitive movement of objects. A ventriloquist puppet with its controls would be an interesting object for repetitive movement by an autistic child's hand, and the keys to unlock the voices of imagination to aid in the child's development. Thinking back, I was a very withdrawn child, quiet, always doing something with my hands. I remember I would sit and play with a puppet for hours on end, no talking, only movement. It was the movement that was important, with imagined sounds kept quiet until time to perform. These mental exercises stirred my imagination then, and still do, even to the point of hoarseness, without ever making a sound. I have not been medically diagnosed as autistic or with any speech disorder, but it is a fine line.

I change interests about every 10 years, applying to new interests that learned from old interests: in the 1950's as a kid ventriloquist; in the 1960's writing songs playing piano; in the 1970's making artificial fishing lures, and of course in the 1980's with advent of personal computer writing a simple computer program to handle all the law cases and points collected on index cards transferred over to a hard drive to help me in lawyering for a living. Come turn of the century I am back to square one so to speak, but in all instances doing something with my hands. It occurs to me that all of my interests seem to overlap; for example, every fisherman is a puppeteer, and every fishing lure is a puppet on a string, with the puppeteer imparting life to an inanimate object to catch fish, so I don't downplay the importance of puppetry in our culture.

About a year ago I was contacted by a speech therapist if ventriloquism would help a child who because of frozen lips and jaws had difficulty speaking, and my response was child would be a perfect ventriloquist and cited [Ventriloquy by Kriket](#). Later, a speech therapy student writing thesis on subject was referred and [Lost Art by Lee Dean](#) also cited on still lip and jaw (plus, distant and double voice, and throat whistle, using ventricular phonation and diplophonia).

You can review my YouTube channel, [Kriket Puppet Shows](#), featuring Dumbshow, something akin to Punch and Judy puppet plays that used an interpreter, like Shakespeare's plays with prologues to explain pantomime sequences. The presentation is essentially that of a child who has lost his voice frightened by bees or dogs in the "Scared Kid", still has not found it in the shrieking "Foxy", but can at least whisper at start then frightened again at finish to get voice back in the growling "Raccoon". The idea is to emphasize importance of movement by simple puppetry transformed by ventriloquy in oral communication. Kriket Skits[®] is being added as fanciful puppet plays written in syntactic semantics for linguistic thought progression to expand the imagination, social and communication skills.

From MS and MD patients to PDD kids and others, puppetry and ventriloquy may be found to be an aid to talk through frozen lips and jaws, or to think. The main thing is the puppet. Get an autistic child a good puppet with some controls, teach the basic movements and how to ventriloquize, then leave child alone who will do the rest. I recommend Willinger/Hurst figures on [Ventriloquist Central](#). See, [Ventriloquism By A Boy With Asperger Syndrome](#) article that ventriloquy should be studied by medical/health care professionals and prescribed if helpful.



Ventriloquist LeeDean

Kriket Puppet Shows

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