There are ironies surrounding the story of Leo Kanner. In modern day, there are many disagreements and controversies. In modern day, many celebrate Kanner as the father of autism, a hero in fighting for parents and children with autism's lives. The two key features that Kanner used for diagnosing autism, abnormal social interaction and the presence of child-like symptoms, were the same diagnostic criteria used in the DSM-V. However, the 70-year journey from Kanner's 1943 paper to the 2013 DSM-V was complicated by academic debate, public outrage, and controversy. In modern day, many celebrate Kanner as the father of autism, a hero in fighting for parents and children with autism, but Kanner's story is much more complicated. Through analyzing medical journals, archival records, and personal letters, we can understand Kanner's life story and the complexities of his work.

In the 1940s-1960s, Kanner believed that parents with autistic children were "cold" and that the "lack of warmth" caused their child's autism. The "refrigerator mother" concept was born and parents were shocked with intense guilt and self-blame. However, despite Kanner's successes, his approach to autism caused many problems. With training in poetry and cultural writing, Kanner was a humanist who happened to also be a psychiatrist. He approached autism with a disregard for the social and cultural needs of society. Kanner was none of this. In searching for the psychobiology of autism – the psychological, social, cultural, and biological causes of autism – Kanner provided no evidence for the biological and remained focus on the "social" autism. Kanner was a great man and his work has been influential, but his approach to autism caused many problems.

In conclusion, the irony of Kanner is that his greatest strength was also his greatest weakness. His approach to autism with a disregard for the social and cultural needs of society. Kanner was none of this. In searching for the psychobiology of autism – the psychological, social, cultural, and biological causes of autism – Kanner provided no evidence for the biological and remained focus on the "social" autism. Kanner was a great man and his work has been influential, but his approach to autism caused many problems. In the 1960s, counterculture brought the refrigerator mother theory and Kanner was a great humanist who happened to also be a psychiatrist. He approached autism with a disregard for the social and cultural needs of society. Kanner was none of this. In searching for the psychobiology of autism – the psychological, social, cultural, and biological causes of autism – Kanner provided no evidence for the biological and remained focus on the "social" autism. Kanner was a great man and his approach to autism caused many problems.