

Ought: The Journal of Autistic Culture

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Issue 1 *Sexuality*

Article 1

November 2022

Front Matter



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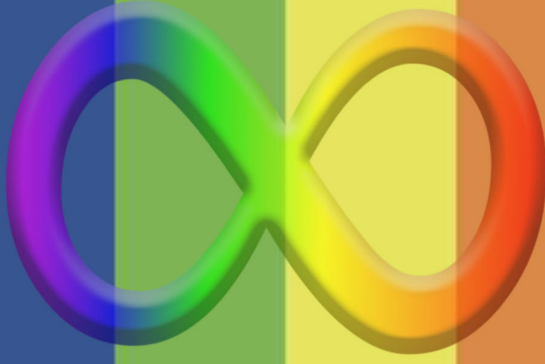
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**Ought: The Journal of
Autistic Culture**



SEXUALITY+?

Volume 4 //
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OUGHT

the journal of autistic culture

Volume 4, Issue 1

Fall 2022

OUGHT: The Journal of Autistic Culture

Ought: The Journal of Autistic Culture is a peer-reviewed, biannual journal that aims to document autistic culture by publishing scholarly and creative works examining and exploring it. *Ought* focuses on contributions of the autistic community, celebrating the visual, verbal, and non-verbal accomplishments of autistic scholars, artists, and others. It also showcases the work of the scholars, scientists, parents, professionals, and other autistic-adjacent individuals who share experiences with autistic people and influence their lives. In blending creative and critical works about autism, *Ought* seeks to break down barriers between academic disciplines, between genres of artistic expression, between caretakers and professionals, and finally, between neurotypicals and autistics. *Ought* is the conversation about autism as it ought to be.

Language and Labels

Ought uses identity-first language to refer to autistic individuals whenever possible. Identity-first language communicates our commitment to neurodiversity and aligns with the journal's focus on autistic culture. *Ought* does employ the term "Autism Spectrum Disorder" to refer to autism, given the widespread use of this term in autism-related research. Nevertheless, *Ought* recognizes and values contributors who resist the pathologizing term "disorder."

Submit to Ought: The Journal of Autistic Culture

Ought welcomes contributions from scholars, researchers, writers, and artists. Contributors are the initial owners of the copyright to their submitted pieces. For more information and the latest calls for submissions, please see <http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/ought>.



About the Cover Image

The cover image, titled *Expanding Views*, is by the autistic artist Pernille Fraser. As Fraser explains in a short essay in this issue, the piece combines many historical and contemporary representations of LGBTQI+ and autistic people and movements.

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Our editorial board consists of a balance of autistic and neurotypical scholars from universities around the world.

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Note from the Editors: On Sexuality

Ought was recently cited in the legal journal *Human Rights Review* as a significant contributor to the discussion of autistic culture. In the article, titled “Should Autists Have Cultural Rights?” Bouke de Vries (2022) asks whether autistic individuals can claim special legal protection for their culture in the same manner as other ethnocultural minorities (e.g., the Somali population in Minnesota). Ultimately, de Vries concludes that while autistic people do have many of the “building blocks” of a distinct subculture, including shared experiences, dispositions, behaviors, interests, beliefs, literature, texts, and methods of communication (pp. 210-211), the lack of unifying social norms governing the lives of autistic people disqualifies them from being defined as a separate subculture—and, consequently, from special accommodations under the law.

This journal, of course, is founded on the opposite assumption—namely, that autistic culture exists and is worth careful examination, documentation, and preservation. Indeed, the implicit argument of this issue is that autistics have culturally unique social norms surrounding gender identity, sexual orientation, and sexual practices and proclivities, as a wealth of research has demonstrated (Gougeon, 2010; van Schalkwyk, 2015; George, 2017).

To this end, this issue features several examinations of autistic sexuality, including an experimental, theory-informed poem by Anna Nygren and Hanna Hanna Bertilsdotter Rosqvist, in which the authors discuss their own autistic sexual practices as a new kind of rhetoric. More traditionally, Ariel E. Pliskin provides a comprehensive review of research on autism and BDSM practices, arguing that “neurological differences interact . . . to explain why autistic people may be particularly likely to get their needs met through BDSM.”

Two additional contributions interrogate the representation of autistic sexuality in popular culture. Jinx Mylo praises the unusually thoughtful representations of neuroqueer individuals in *Everything’s Going to Be Okay*, a Freeform/Hulu drama written by autistics and featuring autistic actors. And Ought Co-editor Robert Rozema reconsiders the children’s classic

Crow Boy (Taro Yashima, 1955) as a work that deliberately subverts the eugenicist reproductive policies of pre-war Japan. Rozema's work is followed, appropriately, by Jon Adams' illustration of corvids, birds the artist finds "stimmy" and "neurodivergent."

In the fine arts category, Pernille Fraser's cover art (and accompanying essay) explores the intersecting symbols of LGBTQ and autistic advocacy movements. and newcomer Laurie Green offers startling photography depicting their own journey toward sexual self-acceptance and expression. Finally, Donald Brackett reviews *The Wanting Way*, a new collection of poetry by Adam Wolfond, whose work was previously featured in the fall 2020 issue of this journal.

—Robert Rozema and Christopher Bass

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