

December 2019

## Note from the Editors: This Moment of Arrival

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### Recommended Citation

Rozema, Robert and Bass, Christopher (2019) "Note from the Editors: This Moment of Arrival," *Ought: The Journal of Autistic Culture*: Vol. 1: Iss. 1, Article 2.

DOI: 10.9707/2833-1508.1016

Available at: <https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/ought/vol1/iss1/2>

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## Note from the Editors: This Moment of Arrival

In a 2013 article, Joseph N. Straus (2013) observed that “We are living in a period in which a *culture of autism* [my emphasis], constructed not by medical professionals but by people with autism, has begun to arrive” (p.473). We hope this journal further evidences this arrival, signaling that autistic culture is worth examination in its own right and by its own people. As Strauss suggests, this means countering the dominant medical view that positions autism as a mental disorder to be corralled or cured. Instead, we see *Ought: The Journal of Autistic Culture* as a small part of the larger neurodiversity movement—the campaign to recognize neurological difference as normal and necessary to human development (Loftis, 2016). Our part of this campaign is publishing expressions and evaluations of autistic culture, produced by autistic individuals and neurotypical allies who are affected by autism.

This first issue of the journal, then, features Wendi Power’s digital artwork; Linda Chown’s poetic tribute to Greta Thunberg; Joy Schaefer’s critique of *L’Enfant sauvage*, an important early film treatment of autism; Rebecca Burgess’ influential comic “Understanding the Spectrum”; Mairi Evan’s personal essay about the normative societal pressures experienced by autistic people; Merida Lang’s scholarly article exploring the under-representation of autistic students of color; and much more. Some of these contributors identify as neurotypical, and some are autistic. Of course, there cannot and should not be a journal of autistic culture without the experiential knowledge of autistic individuals communities (Charleton, 2000); no inquiries, analyses, or arguments without the “autistic stories and gestures” that Melanie Yergeau (2018) believes can potentially “neuroqueer[ . . . ] what we’ve come to understand as language and being” (p. 5). While this journal is edited by two neurotypicals with close connections to autism—Robert Rozema and Chris Bass—our editorial board consists of both non-autistic and autistic individuals from a range of universities. Collectively, we believe that the best conversations around and about autism involve a variety of voices, neurodivergent and

neurotypical, scholarly and artistic, formal and informal. Our goal is inclusion.

Finally, we hope *Ought* reaches a wider audience than a typical academic journal, due to its subject matter, its blend of scholarly and creative works, and its availability via open access publishing. We envision an audience of autistic and neurotypical readers from differing backgrounds and educational levels, and we encourage you to pass this journal along to your friends, family members, colleagues, and co-workers. Tell them that autistic culture has arrived—and is still arriving.

—Robert Rozema and Chris Bass

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