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Current Call for Submissions: Autistic Representation in Popular Culture

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Current Call for Submissions: Autistic Representation in Popular Culture

Deadline: March 15, 2021

In *Imagining Autism: Fiction and Stereotypes on the Spectrum* (2015), Sonya Freeman Loftis writes: “Cultural stories—whether told by the news media, the literature taught in classrooms, or a television sitcom—matter. They influence the way we think about people with autism, the way we think about disabled people as a cultural minority group, and the way our society regards, values, or devalues anyone who is different” (p. 2).

In recent years, cultural stories featuring autistic characters, experiences, and perspectives have gained in popularity. From prime time dramas to *Sesame Street*, popular culture seems to be embracing more inclusive storylines. Autism is showing up—in television (*The Good Doctor*, *Love on the Spectrum*), movies (*The Accountant*, *Please Stand By*) novels (*The Rosie Project*, *Lake Success*) comics (*Fantastic Four*, *Postal*), music (Travis Meeks, Gary Numan), theater (*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*), and young adult novels (*On the Edge of Gone*, *Underdogs*).

The inclusion of autism over the past two decades marks a significant shift for popular culture, which had mostly ignored autism or used autistic characters as quirky plot devices or sidekicks to neurotypical protagonists. Yet, this increased presence of autism raises important questions about representation and inclusion. Has popular culture truly broadened its portrayal of autistic lives? And, how much autistic agency exists within popular media? For the spring 2021 issue of *Ought*, we hope to explore the complexity of autistic presence within popular culture. We encourage submissions that examine one or more of the following questions:

- Is the representation of autistic experiences being “whitewashed” by neurotypical writers?
- To what degree do autistics author themselves or represent themselves in popular culture and media?
- How are popular artists being “outed” as autistic?

- How does popular culture explore the intersectionality of autism and race, gender, or sexuality?
- How does the popular news media report on autistic lives?
- What strategies can educators use to incorporate popular media into inclusion classrooms?
- What role has the memoir had in sharing autistic experiences?

Ought encourages both critical and creative works in every genre, including original research, theoretical scholarship, fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and visual arts. *Ought* is a peer-reviewed journal whose editorial board consists of neurotypical and autistic scholars, educators, and writers. Please submit materials at <http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/ought>.

References

Loftis, S. F. (2015). *Imagining autism: Fiction and stereotypes on the spectrum*. Indiana University Press.