



# KENNEDY INSTITUTE *of* ETHICS JOURNAL

*An interdisciplinary quarterly journal dedicated to philosophical bioethics.*

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### ***SPECIAL ISSUE: Situating Neurodiversity and Madness***

Edited by Quill R. Kukla & Rua Mae Williams

Scholarship and self-advocacy concerning neurodiversity and madness in all their varieties have skyrocketed in recent years. We are starting to unpack the myriad ways in which people who think, feel, and experience differently from the socially recognized and enforced “norm” have varying distinctive capacities and face a variety of challenges. Many of these challenges are socially produced or enhanced, even if they were formerly seen as built-in limitations “defective” individuals. While the relationship between neurodiversity and madness is complicated and itself contested and deserving of more exploration, there are important commonalities and overlaps between them. Both neurodivergent and mad people face the twin challenges of potential over-medicalization and pathologization, on the one hand, and potential under-medicalization, and blame for weakness or simply having a “poor character” on the other. Both groups have been both demonized and romanticized. Both groups encounter significant stigma and misunderstanding, and are burdened by a legacy of low-quality, cruel, and biased science. Both groups fight for appropriate access to various spaces and institutions. Mad identities and neurodivergent identities are both intersectional, interacting in complex ways with race, gender, sexual orientation, class, and employment status, along with other axes. In particular, many kinds of neurodivergence and madness are especially riddled by gendered stereotypes in our cultural imagination. And crucially, many people find they meet sociocultural or diagnostic criteria for both madness and neurodiversity.

Both neurodivergent people and mad people have of late formed vibrant communities that are sources of support, activism, and intellectual collaboration. These communities are profoundly changing the lives of their members, as well as the attitudes and resources in the larger culture. As with other forms of scholarship concerning the lives and identities of oppressed groups, there is a growing understanding that scholarship about neurodiversity or madness should center the voices and research of community members. Because disability studies and bioethics have expanded and deepened over the last decade, we have new theoretical resources available to explore the social, ethical, and political dimensions of neurodiversity and madness; conversely, neurodiverse and mad scholars are currently enriching these disciplinary conversations.

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This special issue of the *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal* invites articles between 5,000 and 10,000 words on any social, ethical, and political issues raised by neurodiversity, madness, or the relationship or contrasts between the two. While anyone may submit a paper, the editors require that all papers center and engage with the voices, lived experiences, and scholarship of neurodivergent and/or mad scholars and advocates, and we especially encourage submissions from community members.

**A note on terminology:** “mad” and “madness” are reclaimed terms that are central to the Mad Studies and Mad Pride movements and connected to a radical history; these are still contested terms, and some people within that community prefer other terms such as “mental illness,” which is also contested. For more on Mad Studies see here: <https://madstudies2014.wordpress.com/>. We recognize a variety of legitimate views on best terminology for the purposes of this issue. We prefer “autistic people,” “autistic,” or “autists” to “people with autism” (which signals that autism is a condition with which people are afflicted) and we ask that authors avoid terms such as “ASD,” “on the spectrum,” “Asperger’s,” and “high/low functioning,” all of which reflect outdated, hierarchical, and/or euphemistic terms for autistic people. Other forms of neurodiversity have not involved as much contested language, but please be generally mindful of avoiding terms and constructions that are dehumanizing, stigmatizing, dated, or reductive.

**Submission deadline:** May 31, 2024, with the goal of publication in our September 2024 issue.

Please use the regular *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal* submission system, at <https://kiej.georgetown.edu/submit/>. Please note in your cover letter that the submission is for the special issue on situating neurodiversity and madness. Inquiries about the issue may be directed to the journal’s Editor-in-Chief, Quill R. Kukla, at [Quill.Kukla@georgetown.edu](mailto:Quill.Kukla@georgetown.edu).