



## CALL FOR PAPERS

Azimuth. Philosophical Coordinates in Modern and Contemporary Age  
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### ***Theorising Disability and Neurodivergence. Philosophical Foundations and Challenges***

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Disability and neurodivergence have garnered growing interest in philosophy, as evidenced by several essays and collected volumes recently published, not so rarely by disabled and/or neurodivergent scholars (among others, see the work by Robert Chapman, Adam Cureton, Alan Jurgens, Shelley Tremain, David Wasserman). Whereas scholars have pointed out how at least some philosophical analyses of these phenomena may produce inaccurate or inaccessible descriptions of material experiences (see for example the positions of Tom Shakespeare and Mike Oliver who share this concern, or Kenneth A. Richman's analyses), a further perspective suggests that an analytic approach could yield a better understanding of them, with practical consequences as well (see for example the work by Ian Hacking, Nick Watson, and Simo Vehmas).

Concerning these research interests, it is significant to note, primarily, how philosophical inquiries frequently "[take] for granted the metaphysical status and epistemological character of the category of disability" (Tremain, *Philosophy and the apparatus of disability*, 2022, p. 82), and of the categories implied by the concept of neurodivergence. Nonetheless, Disability Studies and Neurodiversity Studies do indeed propose analyses theoretically charged – whether explicitly grounded in philosophical methodologies or not – and this proceeding should not be overlooked. For example, Disability Studies started to discuss "models" of disability in the 1980s, when Mike Oliver proposed the social model. The nature of these models, however, is not always clear; sometimes they are proposed as new frameworks to conceptualise disability more effectively, while in other cases, they serve to point out pervasive (and problematic) societal interpretations. Furthermore, in some cases, these theories (e.g. the social, cultural, political-relational models of disability, etc.), do not aspire to be exclusively descriptive but they are also somehow prescriptive; they embody expectations on how disability should be framed. The concepts of neurodivergence and neurodiversity follow a similar trajectory; beyond the often ambiguous biomedical findings, the value of these frameworks is not only explanatory but also driven by social and political demands. Furthermore, Neurodiversity Studies have criticised the paradigms proposed by philosophy so far (specifically philosophy of mind), such as the Theory of Mind, and therefore serve as a resource for revising and improving these conceptual frameworks.

In both cases of disability and neurodivergence, the relationship between philosophical and sociocultural explanatory models with medical and psychiatric criteria appears still fraught. If, on the one hand, the medical and psychiatric interpretation is avoided, aligning with critiques of the current tendency to over-medicalisation and pathologisation, on the other hand, drawing upon that interpretation is still supported. This move is mostly endorsed because of the legitimisation it seems

to offer to personal experiences (in this regard, see for example the choice to recall a *neuro* paradigm in the case of the Neurodiversity movement).

The joint discussion solicited by the current Call for Papers does not intend to homogenise disability and neurodivergence. Nonetheless, historically, advocacy and theories on disability and neurodivergence have shared some perspectives and approaches, motivated by similar social and medical responses. Both research fields have critically addressed how scientific, cultural and social theories and practices have tended to produce and discipline “normal” subjects, while establishing, in the meantime, “the others” that are situated in a position of minority. A further purpose behind the Special Issue, therefore, is to invite scholars to discuss whether the intersection between the two fields might be fertile (for example, concerning the application of the social model of disability to neurodivergence), or present a risk of misreading and flattening the two categories.

We invite interested scholars to submit their papers with particular but not exclusive reference to the following topics and questions:

- Ontological and conceptual foundations of disability and neurodivergence (and related concepts such as ability and neurotypicality): How do frameworks such as fictionalism, realism, constructivism, or pragmatism shape our understanding of these phenomena? Are disability and neurodivergence best understood as natural kinds, socially constructed categories, or through other philosophical lenses? Which role have medical and psychiatric diagnoses here?
- Epistemological value of models of disability: are they a social theory, a heuristic tool, or explanatory models of systemic inequality? What are their strengths and limitations in addressing the realities of disabled and neurodivergent lives?
- What impact can the conversation between Disability Studies and Neurodiversity Studies have concerning models and methods?
- Critical perspectives on how cognitive disabilities and autism are conceptualised and represented: How have qualitative and quantitative approaches shaped our understanding of intelligence and cognitive diversity?
- Can the analyses of disability and neurodivergence impact the philosophical method and the foundational concepts of philosophy?
- Disability and neurodivergence and the sensory experiences, the experience of beauty and our broader engagement with reality: What new insights can these experiences provide for (among others) theories of aesthetics and cognition?
- Can theorising on disability and neurodivergence represent a form of epistemic injustice?

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*Azimuth* invites full contributions in **English**. Please, sign in to <https://editorial.losguarda.net/ojs/index.php/AZ/submissions> to submit your **full, anonymized** contribution (incl. English abstract and 5 keywords) by creating your author account, and follow the instructions to upload a new article. Papers should comply to the **journal editorial rules** (available for download at: <https://www.azimuthjournal.com/call-for-papers/>). Approx. length expected: **8.000 words**.

Submission deadline: **January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026**. *All articles will be subjected to double blind review process.*

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