

Divergent Natures: Embodying Doing and Being in Neuroqueer Ecowellness

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Author Note

These artifacts of a capstone project represent the author's reflections on neuroqueer theory and neurodivergent praxis within healing contexts, contemplative community, academia, corporate politics, society at large, and in natural settings. Slides for presentation of this material are publicly available (with video from the conference where they were delivered forthcoming):

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Consideration of inclusive practices has the potential to feel like an attempt to juggle a dizzying array of variables. An ecological attunement to wellness, similarly, holds entire landscapes, systems of interdependence, indigenous fungi, flora, and fauna, heritable traits and behaviors, as well as individual actors within deep matrices of relationality and mutual benefit. Acknowledgment of *neurodiversity* as a biological fact (Yergeau, 2018), and labels like *autism* as human inventions useful in categorizing people (Pearson & Rose, 2023), allow one to begin examining challenges to including people whose lives are ruled by systems that are designed to reject their embodied divergence in pursuit of an easily managed and homogeneous monoculture (Quetelet, 1835; Bernays, 1947; Bleuler, 2018; Silberman, 2015; Chapman, 2023; Larson, 2025).

Consideration of historical evidence left by ancestors of today's most privileged people has the potential to feel like re-reading a hero's journey, or perusing a catalog of the world's most heinous and violent potentials, depending on the sources cited (Bascom et al., 2012; Coel, 1981; Moser & Grant, 1965; Watson, 1924). What matters most in such a review is depth and variety in sources we select. From within the modern era, this (dis)information age, to avoid integrating and promoting the voices of *the other* is to invite elimination of their possible futures. There is no longer any possibility of a public act that avoids politics; even silence frequently proves to be thunderous and calamitous (Schwartz, 2000; Jones et al., 2020; ASAN, 2022; Schalk, 2022).

Consideration of how to move through this mess we're in can be paralyzing (Macy & Johnstone, 2012; Shah, 2019; Canty, 2022; Real, 2022). Approaching via *radical acceptance*, fostering capacity for sitting with discomfort, and engaging in shadow work as minimum prerequisites to liberatory praxis as one seeks to counter the ever-present oppression that

pervades the modern era (Bottema-Beutel et al., 2021; Chapman & Botha, 2022; Heller & Kammer, 2022; Green & Shaughnessy, 2023). As Nieto et al. have shown, anti-oppression efforts are, by necessity, life-long practices where *Agent* group members lean into the level of effort required to maintain *Awareness* and action on behalf of *Target* group members (2014).

Similarly, the *Empowerment* and *Strategy* skills that *Target* group members need to develop depend upon support found in *Target*-only spaces; access to which is quite difficult to provide and maintain. Labor-intensive work from both *Agent* and *Target* group members is the only way to achieve *Allyship* and *Recentering* in ways that support self-defined rhetorics, liberatory experience, and *neurocosmopolitan* futures (Bascom et al., 2012; Nieto et al., 2014; Yergeau, 2018; Heumann, 2020; Murray, 2020; Price 2021; Walker, 2021; Pearson & Rose, 2023; Radulski, 2023; Ward et al., 2023; AASPIRE, 2025; Kurchak, 2025; Woods, 2025).

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Appendix A

Secondary Resources

While essential to a baseline understanding of the conceptual space covered by this presentation (e.g. neurodivergent oppression), these are not directly cited in the presentation or in connection with neuroqueering, ecowellness, or the transcendence of identity politics.

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Appendix B

Unsupportive Resources

In consideration of the NeuroAffective Relational Model (Heller & Kammer, 2022), Neurodivergence-Informed Therapy (Chapman & Botha, 2022), and community generated guidance on how to avoid the inherently ableist language of the mechanistic and bio-medical framing of difference native to the dominant narratives foundational to the pathology paradigm (Bottema-Beutel et al., 2021), this listing contains items that would otherwise be found under the Resources section. It is offered as an example of targets for theoretical and praxis changes defined by neurodivergent academics, clinicians, and research teams who participate in global counter-cultural and liberatory movements otherwise known as neurodivergent pride.

Locating specific reasons for inclusion in this list is an exercise left for the reader (hint: autism-as-modifier vs. autistic-as-modifier as per Yergeau, 2018). Feel free to contact the author to engage in discussion of your reflections or inquiries, though expect to be ignored or turned away unless you present as neurodivergent and/or having wrestled with relevant contemplations of marginalized praxis (e.g. Jones et al., 2020). Emotional labor may be billed at double current market rates for professional consultation.

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Appendix C

Neuroqueer Counseling

Divergence Mental Health Group, LLC: <https://www.divergencementalhealth.com/>

Professional Biography

As a clinician trained in transpersonal wilderness therapy, I stand ready to provide ecotherapy, horticulture, and other nature-based options for healing and personal growth sourced from many different wisdom traditions. Using tools like rites of passage and ritual, among others more common to trauma informed and social justice focus, we may work together on anything you are ready to bring into a therapeutic relationship. Are you ready to make an investment in your own future wellness? Are you looking for a clinician with a profound capacity for sitting with difference or discomfort? Look no further.

Coming of age while focused on vocal music training solidified in me an embodied sense that humans share much more than spoken languages every day. Recently retired from software development, I seek to answer resounding calls from neurodivergent and queer populations for support from counselors with similar lived experience. I frequently express an ability to offer novel insight based on skillful observation, intersectional awareness, and presence in attunement while helping people make meaning within various social locations, intentions, and experiences.

Client Testimony

Lif was one of the best counselors I could have asked for. Their lived experiences in a variety of marginalized communities made it a lot easier for me to feel safe and understood. They respected the fact that I had a very rigid comfort zone but also wasn't afraid to help the work get done when I was ready for it. I'm truly grateful for the experience I had with them and Divergence.

—former client, after 6 months in relationship

Appendix D

QR Codes for Access to Digital Resources



<https://presentation-archive.herokuapp.com/divergent-natures.html>



<https://presentation-archive.herokuapp.com/divergent-natures.pdf>



<https://presentation-archive.herokuapp.com/capstone-handout.pdf>
[presentation handout including an annotated bibliography]



<https://presentation-archive.herokuapp.com/divergent-landscapes.pdf>
[original paper upon which this presentation was based]