

## Editorial

### Disability and Multilingualism: A Global Perspective

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It is with great honor and privilege that we report our long envisioned, and politically imperative issue of the Global Perspective Section of the journal has finally materialized. As we had imagined this section, we hoped to create a space for multilingualism as a framework, political endeavor, accessibility commitment, and a cultural setting where languages appear more than an identity marker or private possession of a community. We have long believed that in some sense, multilingualism thrives when seemingly rigid monolingual communities see the need for crossing linguistic borders. All the same, crossing linguistic borders need not always involve bridge-making across languages. Instead, it can flourish amidst a spectrum of human expressions that can animate from nowhere. Because they are required to subvert rigid institutional arrangements, including the ones that accrue via linguistic hegemonies, disabled people and survivors of disabling traumas do go on to become active agents of such a multilingual crossover.

For example, disabled people may straddle across myriad expressions and registers so as to handle a life replete with activism, corporeal pain, structural violence, discriminatory interpersonal bonding, and caregiving. In all these situations, disabled people feel the need to break open regularized linguistic borders that they are routinely pushed into. Very often, these linguistic borders remain constrained by a monochromatic idiom with a penchant for ableism. Apparently, when disabled people break free from such linguistic borders by a million means, they end up inventing novel modalities of multilingualism.

Additionally, creating this section, we have hoped to complicate what it means to be, become, and remain disabled under exploitative social relations and oppressive historical continuities and discontinuities. To this end, we have strived to create a space that challenges what we think as “normative” disability expression, “normative” disabling conditions, and “normative” generational traumas mobilized by colonial, fascist, theocratic, and imperialistic legacies.

In this issue we have included two poems in Polish by a disability rights activist, Magda Szarota, and a story in Turkish by Nibel Genc, a political activist imprisoned in Turkey since 1994 defending the freedom and autonomy of Kurdish people.

Magda Szarota's poems in her own words are her:


way of using poems to probe what it means to feel 'whole' and in tune with oneself vis-à-vis delineations and interventions imposed by medicine and culture. Specifically, as a disabled woman with invisible impairments [she] often face[s] people's reactions that meander between harsh ableism and privileged treatment. Contradictory lived experiences that are interconnected with [her] 'untypical' and non-apparent impairments inform [her] poetry as well. (Szarota, 2020).

Nibel Genc's fiction story "The Engraved Lighter" is about a great-grandfather who survived the 1938 Dersim massacre with his son, whom he managed to rescue from the hands of the Turkish soldiers. When they were caught and waiting for their fate to unfold, another prisoner gave his engraved lighter to the great-grandfather just before the prisoner was shot.

Stories like Nibel's, besides possessing literary aesthetic, have the power to challenge what we already know about resisting unequal power relations such as colonialism, patriarchy, and ableism. The story is that of struggle, humility, and interdependence, all values that social movements for autonomy and agency share. It is critical we realize that disabled people's struggle for freedom, access, autonomy, and equality is connected to Indigenous people's anti-colonial struggle for self-determination.

## References

- Genc, N. (2017). The Engraved Lighter. *Misir Kocanlarini Kizartan Koku* [The Smell That Turns the Corn Cobs Red]. Nota Bene Yayinlari.
- Szarota, M. (2020). two poems / dwa wiersze. *Review of Disability Studies: An International Journal*, 15(2–4).

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