

**Editorial****Disability and Multilingualism: A Global Perspective**Sona Kazemi<sup>1</sup> and Hemachandran Karah<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup> Ohio State University, Columbus, United States<sup>2</sup> Indian Institute of Technology Madras, Chennai, India

Another issue of our long envisioned and politically imperative issue of the Global Perspective Section of the journal is here. As we had imagined this section, we hope 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. Creating this section, we hope to complicate what is disability as *injury*, and what it means to become, and remain disabled under exploitative social relations and oppressive historical continuities and discontinuities. To this end, we strive to create a space that challenges what we think as “normative” disability consciousness, “normative” disabling conditions, and “normative” disability expression mobilized by patriarchal, colonial, fascist, theocratic, and imperialistic legacies.

In the previous issue we included a story in Turkish and English by Nibel Genc, a political activist imprisoned in Turkey since 1994 defending the freedom and autonomy of Kurdish people. In this issue, we include a reflection piece by an acid attack survivor, Maryam Zamani.

Although acid attacks occur all over the world, this type of violence is most common in the developing world. According to Acid Survivors Trust International (ASTI), however, the U.K. has one of the highest rates of acid attacks per capita in the world (see <http://www.asti.org.uk/about-us.html>). In 2016, ASTI figures show there were over 601 acid attacks in the U.K., with 67% of the victims being male, but statistics from ASTI suggest that 80% of victims worldwide are women (Jack, 2017). Research shows that there is a significant difference between the intention of throwing acid on women versus men. It's believed that acid attacks on women are intended to disfigure them, isolate them, and make them “undesirable” to other men (Chowdhury, 2015; Cambodian Acid Survivors Charity, 2010; Mannan, Ghani, Sen, Clarke, & Butler, 2004; Welsh, 2009; Swanson, 2002), whereas acid attacks on men are intended to humiliate them (Evans, 2013). Acid survivors invariably face societal isolation, ostracism, social anxiety, avoidance, negative self-perception, and decreased self-esteem, with little or no chance of ever finding employment. Added to the stigma of visible disfigurement, the acid survivor is most likely to experience both physical and psychological trauma (Mannan et al., 2004; Lansdown, 1997).

Maryam Zamani starred recently in a stage production titled *Vengeance in Crime* (between February 28 and March 17, 2021, at Mehregan auditorium) to bring attention to and raise awareness about the problem of acid attacks in Iran.

We offer a translation of her reflections. This was done under the oversight of our allies, Dr. Mehrak Kamali Sarvestani, a professor of Persian Literature at Ohio State University and Mr. Sepehr Manouchehri, a professional translator residing in Australia. The solidarity network that went into materializing this piece, just like the previous issue, is also noteworthy. We asked Maryam Zamani to write a reflection. Being a housewife, she is not used to typing in a Word document. We are not even sure if she has access to a computer. So, she used a pencil to write down her reflection in a piece of paper. We asked another disabled young woman, Omolbanin Shahmirzadi in a rural city in Iran, who makes a living by typing texts for clients, to put down Maryam's reflection in a Word document so we could upload it to the journal's website. Again, another network of solidarity was mobilized to render a survivor's voice audible to the world.

Reflective pieces like Maryam's, besides possessing truthfulness and clarity, have the power to challenge what we already know, namely, disablement via Gender-Based Violence (GBV). Having a disability analysis for a GBV should be at the heart of any intersectional analysis, especially when dealing with infliction of violence by a weapon such as a corrosive substance like acid. Maryam Zamani and her fellow survivors stay visible in the face of invisibility, ableism, misogyny, and destructive patriarchy.

To locate and echo Maryam's voice as an Iranian woman acid survivor, to find another disabled woman to type the piece, to have Mehrak and Sepehr edit the translation, and finally to materialize all of these endeavors collectively in this issue, is all a profound example of transnational solidarity. The journey of connecting the institutional dots, creating transdisciplinary conversations, building feminist and crip solidarity, and developing a multilingual analysis, is proving to be a pedagogical journey for us. Transnational solidarity transpires here in the following ways: first Maryam's recollection of violence and her gradual recuperation; her dramaturgy of the same in Persian; a plane act of penciling it down; its rendition in typography; formal translation into English by translators spreading across the continents; and its eventual appearance in English and Persian in this forum. This facilitation for Maryam's voice to be heard, via multiple layers of solidarity, is central to our Transnational Disability Studies project in this journal, because it provides "access" to the silenced voices at the margins of degenerative public and private spaces.

The feminist and multilingual engagement with an injured Iranian woman's voice, who has survived an acid attack with her three daughters, aims at defetishizing disablement by unmasking the naturalization of GBV in certain spaces and among certain people. We argue that a transformative approach to transnational disability studies should be emancipatory in a sense that it not only explains (not just describes) the social relations and processes involved in injuring bodyminds but also possesses a revolutionary potential for ending those

relations and stopping violence. By including Maryam's reflection in both Persian and English in this issue, we hope to bring alive a new rhetoric of translation.

Further, the dual linguistic presentation we hope may invoke at least three modes of activism:

1. Readers of Persian may see newer political meanings emerging beyond their cultural geography.
2. English readers, on the other hand, may become familiar with registers of debility that are not usually available to them. By debility, we mean structural excesses such as toxicity, environmental degradation, police brutality, domestic violence, and lack or no access to healthcare and education that systemically undermine people's sense of personhood, bodily integrity, and wellbeing.
3. And, when put together this way, the original and the story in translation do not perform as mere mirror images of each other. In some sense, they orchestrate what we call 'solidarity-speak'. During a solidarity speak adventure, languages in question do not compete with each other. Instead, they treat every translation endeavor as yet another feat of enrichment and moral openness.

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