

DIACHRONIC DIMENSIONS OF GERMAN LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND CULTURE

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Diachronic Dimensions of German Language, Literature and culture

An Indo-German Case Study of Scarred Bodies: Regaining Agency Through Fashion and Arts

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Abstract

Disability caused by acid attacks brings a halt to the normal life of the survivor. This paper delves into the possibility of employing fashion and the arts as media of resistance for acid attack survivors. Defined as horrendous gender-based violence, acid attack scars and cripples the mind and body of the survivor. Survivors are reminded of the inexplicable burning sensation every single time they face a mirror. Taking Indo-German contexts as case studies, this paper examines how fashion and art empower survivors to flaunt their scars with boldness and dignity. Using fashion and art as expressions of liberation and empowerment, the survivors regain confidence and dynamism in their lives. This paper also looks into the contributions of new media in bringing the survivors to the limelight through fashion weeks and ramp shows. The study finds that fashion shows and photography redefine the concept of beauty, enabling scarred bodies to take agency over their bodies and entities. Fashion, photography, and art render them the wings to fly and make a mark in their lives just like any other temporarily abled body.

Keywords: Acid attack, Resilience, Fashion, Art, Gender-based violence, Survivors

Introduction

“...[D]isability brings together traits that may have little in common in order to create a social class of people designated as defective and politically, economically, and socially discriminated against. Thus, people with chronic or acute illnesses, appearance impairments such as birthmarks or fatness, traumatic injuries, congenital impairments or anomalies, sensory impairments, latent conditions such as HIV or hereditary conditions, learning disabilities, and mental, developmental, or emotional illnesses are grouped together under the medical-scientific rubric of abnormality and its accompanying cultural sentence of inferiority” (Thomson 558).

This paper deals with the lives of the acid attack survivors who live with an acquired disability. Acquired disability stands in a different plane in comparison to congenital anomalies. Acid attack is one of the most heinous gender-based violences that aims at snatching away the victims’ agency over their bodies, social status, and