Dramatic representations of disability in theatre have traditionally focused on metaphorical modes that use disability to symbolize a character’s otherness without recourse to the lived realities of having physical disabilities. D.W. Gregory is Pulitzer Prize nominated playwright who is challenging these oppressive tropes by exploring new ways of representing people with disabilities in her plays.

Furthermore, Disability Studies is a burgeoning field that has been underutilized as an analytic tool within theatre and performance studies. This project demonstrates the power and significance of exploring disability and theatre, and how a more thorough understanding of bodily difference can impact and transform understandings of identity, subjectivity, sexuality, interdependence, and the nature of life itself. I use three of Gregory’s plays (Dirty Pictures, The Good Daughter, and Radium Girls) to show how different aspects of Disability studies can be used in dramatic criticism to create new layers of meaning that can challenge and disrupt oppressive paradigms like ableism and sexism. Ultimately, I argue that these three plays represent new ways of thinking about disability on stage, and that Disability Studies is a powerful tool for creativity and social justice that theatre artists and scholars need to begin using much more.