

In my project I analyze literary and journalistic representations of disability (physical, intellectual, sensory, cognitive, and developmental) in post-1989 Poland and their interconnection with representations of Polish capitalism and democracy in literature and media accounts after 1989. The questions that drive my analysis are:

- 1. What kind of place do disabled people occupy in Poland after 1989?,**
- 2. What can we learn about Polish capitalism and Polish democracy from the perspective of disability?**

By analyzing the interconnection of disability and capitalism representations I will examine to what extent the democratic promise of freedom and equality for all citizens has materialized in post-1989 Poland.

Disability is a useful category in the analysis of capitalism, because it allows to look critically at its main tenets: “productivity,” “independence,” “financial success.” I am also interested in the employment of disability metaphors in the public debate on capitalism and socialism, e.g., expressions such as “socialism crippled Poland,” “socialism was a schizophrenic period in Polish history,” “we were deaf and blind” (this is an expression used by Michał Boni in an interview about the 1989 systemic transformation published in one of the biggest daily newspapers in Poland *Gazeta Wyborcza* in 2016). While disabled people are often invisible in Polish public life, and literature does not offer many portrayals of disabled people as main characters, disability often appears in language in reference to political and economic systems. In my project I analyze disability in relation to other categories of identity such as gender, age, class, race, and sexuality.

Disability studies is my main methodology. Disability studies has been present at Western universities since 1980s. It is a theoretical perspective, which does not approach disability as a misfortune, defect or a condition that requires a medical intervention. According to disability studies scholars, disability is a form of difference, which requires accommodations and change of the societal perception of disability. Disability is an identity category similarly to gender, race, age, class, and sexuality.