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## “Children of a Lesser God” or “Superheroes”? Identity Narratives of Persons with Disabilities as University Students

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18778/1733-8069.14.3.07>

**Abstract** The article discusses questions of identity narratives emerging from the responses collected from Polish university students with disabilities to be analyzed by the author. The social image of persons with disabilities, to a large extent shaped by media, is simplified. Stereotypically, images of persons with disabilities function in the antinomy “victim” – “hero,” always weaved around disability as the organizing category. Also the university community seems to be prone to succumb to stereotypes and perceive students with disabilities more through the perspective of their disabilities than through their “studentship.” Whereas a different image of the students’ identity emerges from their own narrative. The image is built around the “normality” discourse. Students with disabilities see themselves the way they want to be viewed – as regular students.

**Keywords** Narrative, Identity, Disability, Student

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The recent years abound with studies pursuing the topic of the image of persons with disabilities created in mass media (Barnes 1997; Stanisławski 2004; Sahaj 2013; Struck-Peregończyk 2013; Niedbalski 2015). According to the researchers, the dominant media discussion is “distorted” (Niedbalski 2015:149). Persons with disabilities are presented in the discussion schematically and stereotypically, which has far-reaching consequences for the situation of this social group. The above results from the fact that media coverage shapes the common perception and understanding of the phenomenon of disability (Sahaj 2013). C. Barnes, in his analysis of disability images in media distinguishes a few most frequent images: persons with disabilities are either “miserable” or “affected by violence,”

“scary and evil,” or “incapable of full participation in social life.” They can also be “freaks and singularities,” “superheroes,” “objects of mockery,” “enemies to their own selves” or a “burden to society.” They are hardly ever presented as “normal people” (Barnes 1997:19).

As rightly observed by J. Niedbalski (2015:153), these dominating images are always associated with a discourse of symbolic violence, which (in the language of political correctness) in an indirect “soft” way excludes, patronizes and questions the entity of persons with disabilities, always highlighting their disability and building the whole narration around that condition. As a result, two opposing, extremely simplified faces of disability emerge in common awareness from the media coverage: of “poor disabled” individuals suffering because of their disabilities (“handicapped”), wronged by fate and needing sympathy and help or, in opposition, “superheroes” struggling with adversity of fate and hardships of everyday life, yet achieving success above the average in spite of their disabilities (Stanisławski 2004).

The aim of the article is to confront the above social images of disability, generated, among others, by Polish media,<sup>1</sup> with opinions and feelings of persons with disabilities about themselves, taking into consideration the way they would like to be

<sup>1</sup> Problems of “social image” of persons with disabilities in Poland is obviously much more complex than the simplified dichotomy “hero-victim” created by media. By analyzing the collected empirical material, the author posed the question if the surveyed students together with their identity narratives are a part of the images dominant in mass culture, and if they elaborate their answers to the question “who am I?” on the basis of these images. Maybe there appear also other plots, some alternate stories building the identity of students at Polish universities.

perceived by society. Still I will concentrate on a selected group of persons with disabilities – students of Polish universities, young people who, in spite of various health issues, have gone through a more or less “standard” education path and have enrolled for studies in a higher education institution. The analyzed research material was collected during elaborate research on the situation of students with disabilities in Polish higher education institutions (Sztobryn-Giercuskiewicz 2018), yet due to a broader character of the afore-mentioned monograph, this material was not incorporated into the publication.

The research, carried out in the years 2014-2015, included all academic centers in Poland (both state and private ones, with vocational HEIs). The population of students with disabilities participating in the research consisted of 590 persons representing 79 higher education institutions in Poland. Potential respondents were reached by the staff of 149 universities engaged in activities supporting this group of students. The universities participated in another part of the research concerning organization of a support system for students with disabilities in Polish higher education. The research was carried out with the use of CAWI method, using an electronic questionnaire comprising of 41 questions.<sup>2</sup> Respondents were encouraged to add their own comments and remarks to each of the questions, with the purpose to enrich the picture of their educational situation by means of their own narrative. The research demonstrated willingness of students

<sup>2</sup> While developing the survey, special attention was paid to making it accessible for respondents with different disabilities, in particular for persons with poor vision and for blind persons (validation and auditing of the questionnaire accessibility was carried out).

with disabilities to enrich the survey with their personal relations and reflections. A huge amount of quality data was collected, which profoundly deepened the conclusions resulting from the quantitative analysis of research data, and it additionally enabled posing new questions and pinpointing areas for further research. The below observations on identity narratives of students with disabilities constitute one of the threads interwoven into their open responses.

### Definition of identity narrative

Research of narratives is a branch of science located at the crossroads of psychology, sociology, and linguistics (Dziob 2010). A rich literature is devoted to the perception of relations between narrative and identity. The philosophical foundations for the research have been put by (to mention the best-known and most influential creators of this intellectual legacy) A. McIntyre (1996), Ch. Taylor (2001), A. Giddens (2006), and P. Ricoeur (1993; 2008). Some interesting methodological assumptions concerning conducting research on identity narrative were presented by, for example, T. van Dijk (1989) or M. S. Flannery (2008), who performed semantical analysis of a text with the use of Goffman's frame theory.

The research on subjectivity (the significance of being a person) and identity (the way a subject describes himself or herself against others) applies theories of psychological and cultural narrative. A versatile structure of narrative can be defined as a form of understanding the reality. In this type of narrative a character with certain intentions faces difficulties, which he or she overcomes (or does not overcome)

as a result of some events (Trzebiński 2001a:22). As defined by J. Trzebiński a narrative scheme, that is, a dramatic moment of a certain world sphere, moulds into shapes: protagonists, values, intentions, and realization plans, complications, conditionings, and chances to overcome difficulties and capabilities of realization of intentions (Trzebiński 2001a:20). Ch. Barker, in turn, defines a narrative as a consequence of certain cognitive processes, during which knowledge about the external world is ordered to shape certain schemes of behavior. In his view, the notion of a narrative stands for an ordered descriptive sequence meant to be a record of certain events. Narratives are stories elaborated in attempt to explain the ways the world functions. They provide us with structures of understanding and rules for referring to the existing constructs of the social world, at the same time answering the question "how to live?"<sup>3</sup> (Barker 2005:11).

The article presents identity narratives understood as a specific way of communicating or telling stories under various pretexts. Actually the stories are told mainly for their own sake, and the storytellers build their own identity through them. Such understanding is probably the closest to the thought of Ricoeur, for whom a narrative is amongst the most significant means of constituting identity of western humans. According to this French philosopher, human life is a story that, approached in a most traditional

<sup>3</sup> Among others, Trzebiński (2001b) has proven in his research that persons who can create consistent narratives about themselves achieve much more success in life than persons who do not have such a capability. Trzebiński notices that while building one's identity in a story and upon having a consistent image of one's identity, narrators-participants of the social world are able to transfer this construct into real action, and can program their activities with its use (Trzebiński 2001b:45-47).

sense, derives from Aristotle's "Poetics." This story – *mythos* – is, first of all, a merging structure, an ordering plot, a set of rules for transforming descriptions, dialogues, and events into a unity (Ricoeur 1993). In this context identity narratives of students with disabilities refer first of all to the question "who am I?" – me as a person, me as a student, finally, me as a student with a disability. The narratives presented below are the essence – again referring to Ricoeur – of "understanding the being-in-the world" of this group of persons. The images of themselves that they create condition their functioning in various social roles, also as students.

Due to the character of the study, the author will concentrate only on the threads that are dominant in these narratives, the ones based on the antinomy "hero – victim," yet taking into consideration alternative identity stories of students with disabilities. The research on other aspects, such as consistency of the narratives and derivative consequences of their presence or absence for functioning of students with disabilities in various roles in academic life would demand a separate, much broader study.

### Identity narratives and coping with stigmatization

It is worth presenting a few thoughts on the function of constructing specific narratives in the process of coping with stigma (Goffman 2005; Świągost 2012). Goffman notices that stigma has a contextual and social character. The only thing that one can be confident about in the contemporary world is a continuous change. As G. Green (2009) puts it, changes

can have technological, personal, and organizational character, which influences the understanding of social stigma and attributing significance to it.<sup>4</sup>

According to Green, in the process of building their own identity by persons with disabilities, a great role is played on the personal level of changes. In a personal dimension, change is associated with discovering the fullness of one's humanity, and it is connected with a denial of defining oneself through one's stigma (Green 2009:10). In the author's opinion three ways of personality (autoperception) transformation can be differentiated in case of persons suffering from an illness:

1. *Loss of self* – a process of disintegration of one's image of oneself. It can be said that such a person "does not recognize him/herself in the mirror." This type of narrative may lead to "social death," because the individual retreats from activities performed so far.
2. *Biographical disruption* – one specific aspect of functioning of a stigmatized person is disrupted in this case. The above may refer to his or her earlier plans for the future. This narrative is associated with lack of coherence between the past, the present, and the future and it is strictly associated with the moment when an illness appears. The kids suffering from an illness from birth or the elderly, with whom an illness is treated as an

<sup>4</sup> As an example Green gives a "more flexible" identity obtained thanks to technological changes. Implants, prostheses, and plastic surgery help people hide a stigma and improve their quality of living. Also transferring a large part of social contacts into a virtual world can play a similar role. The Internet gives a possibility to present oneself in any chosen way. Thus a stigma withdraws from human relations (Green 2009:112-113).

integral part of their life and a consequence of their aging, do not create this narrative.

3. *Narrative reconstruction* – the emergence of an illness distorts the perception of oneself and introduces dramatic changes in an individual's biography. Ill persons create a narrative in order to maintain continuity of their identity and "to justify" their illness in front of themselves. The reconstruction is also a manifestation of "fighting for oneself," which alleviates the processes connected with the *loss of self* and the *biographical disruption* (Green 2009:40-41).

A. Frank (1995), in turn, distinguishes three narratives dominating in the case of persons suffering from an illness:

1. *The restitution story* – in which an illness is perceived as an enemy who has to be fought with in order for the person to return to the original health condition;
2. *The chaos story* – in which passivity of an ill person is highlighted; this narrative incorporates a lack of sense of living in illness; and
3. *The quest story* – in which an illness is perceived as a lesson, thanks to which ill persons undergo transformation of their "selves," in order to reconstruct them into a new, stronger form.

Obviously the above typologies are simplified, and in case of many ill persons they appear in a mixed version. Nevertheless they play a role in re-integration of identity of an ill person in a therapeutic pro-

cess, alleviating the consequences of stigmatization (Green 2009).

### Discourse of a "personal tragedy" (of a "victim")?

Coming back to images of disabilities in media described by Barnes, it is easy to notice that at least five out of nine categories dominating in his disability description refer to an image of a "poor, disabled individual" demanding care and support, being an outcast from a "normal" society, full of suffering and unable to function independently. This image, created and perpetuated by media, in social consciousness is perceived as awakening pity and compassion in its recipients and encouraging them to offer help and empathy for cripples wronged by fate. Numerous publications, amongst others the aforementioned study by P. Stanisławski (2004), prove that persons with disabilities themselves do not agree with this image. Also the leading authors of critical studies on disability, such as J. Hosking or D. Goodley highlight the necessity to break free from "the mental prison of ableisms" (Hosking 2008; Goodley 2011).

Do students with disabilities perceive themselves as "victims," a discriminated, socially oppressed minority? How do they define themselves? Do they talk about themselves in the first place as students or as disabled persons, or maybe in a totally different way? Do they highlight suffering and harm in their narratives or do they stress other aspects of their social living?

The "victim" discourse, is somehow present in the analyzed responses, but such cases turn out very

scarce in the total collected material. Some students, while talking about their experiences in earlier stages of education, highlight the barriers they faced:

In XXX [name of a voivodeship capital city] only High School no. 1 was willing to accept a person in a wheelchair. In other so-called 'elite' schools I was told: we cannot imagine you here. Even if you pass entry exams (which was not a problem for me), we do not offer classes on the ground floor; your mother would have to carry you up the stairs. (a student with a significant motor disability, aged 22, study program: Biomedical Engineering);

I could not cope with classes. When I could not hear something properly, my peers laughed at my hearing problems. (a student with a moderate hearing disability, aged 24, study program: Occupational Safety Engineering);

Because of a visible disability I was often an object of raillery and humiliation – it was a psychological torture to me. (a student with a moderate motor disability, aged 46, study program: Management and Production).

Students pay attention to various forms of social oppression expressed also in the linguistic area:

They don't understand [teachers – the author's note], that sometimes we cannot be present during classes. I was even told that the fact that I am "dis-smart" [mockery on "disabled" – author's note] does not justify my absence from classes. (a student with a mild motor disability, aged 25, study program: Culture Studies).

Another student describes the situation of "equal rights" in his university with a certain dose of humor:

Dean's office is always an unpleasant place, independently of the type of a university. Yet it is a tolerant place too. Ladies in the dean's office always treat people bad, no matter if these people have a disability or not. (a student with a significant motor disability, aged 22, study program: Architecture and Urban Planning).

Still it should be emphasized that the statements following the trend of a "poor disabled individual" appear extremely rarely. This situation can be interpreted in two ways. On one hand persons with disabilities in general do not wish to be pitied or do not want people to be over-sympathetic to them. They do not want special treatment nor, which is obvious, stigmatizing:

At the Technical University there is a special limit of places reserved for the enrolment of candidates with disabilities. I consider that rule useless and sometimes derogatory. Despite having received the required number of points (second highest result of the University, 14 candidates per one place) I was admitted as a disabled person 'from a special reserve list'. I didn't ask for it, but having submitted a certificate of disability, I was automatically excluded from the regular recruitment. The results were public, and next to my name there was a 'tick' and a reference to the way I was admitted. I strongly oppose against such "help." (a student with a significant motor disability, aged 21, study program: Material Engineering).

Yet, another student writes about "unwanted" compassion from her study colleagues:

If someone is a more close colleague of mine, it is something [information about disability – author's note] that sooner or later comes out. When I am absent from the university, it is obvious that someone will call me to ask what happened. It makes no sense to say every time that I have the flu or something. I am lucky because I have NEVER encountered a negative attitude to me or to the disability issue itself on the part of other students. Most importantly, the behavior of my colleagues never came out of compassion but it was natural instead. <<Oh, you are disabled, that's not cool– so just say if you need some help>> – that's all, without tears, compassion, or any odd behavior. (a student with a moderate disability caused by general health condition, aged 24, study program: Biotechnology).

Having been fighting all their life with different obstacles resulting from their health situation, they rather want to see themselves as "tough" persons, whereas placing them in specific (socially expected) patterns by such a "crippled" image does not empower them but, instead, it weakens them internally, it discourages them from studying and having high self-expectations:

Administrative staff considers excessive care worse than fascism, whereas teachers show too much pity and indulgence when giving credits for exams. This gives me the impression that people with disabilities take advantage of this approach and complete their studies by using their disability. (a student with a significant motor disability, aged 25, study program: Management).

Another aspect is the fact that students with disabilities are an exceptional group, and they are neither average in their age group nor in the group of young people with disabilities. The students' comments confirm a huge engagement of their families in their educational path, their own hard work, frequently incredible motivation for studying (especially with more serious illnesses) and determination to achieve the goals they set for themselves. The "victim" discourse is absent in the identity narratives of this group of persons. They do not perceive their situation as a "personal tragedy." If they talk about themselves, this is rather in terms of being "winners" and not "losers":

Studies are a complete folly to me – it is cool, I broke out of a small town, finally I am independent. (a student with a significant motor disability, aged 23, study program: Sociology)

### Or maybe – students with disabilities as "superheroes"?

As often as they criticize the image of "victims," persons with disabilities show aversion to the image of "heroes" – strong personas struggling with adversities of fate, frequently accompanied by a sob story of disability in the background (Stanisławski 2004). According to A. Fox, wonderful media stories of "courageous" disabled who demonstrate heroic strength and bravery are an antithesis for the image of self-pitying, bitter, disabled persons who cannot accept their situation. In her opinion showing courage, accomplishments, and achievements of persons with disabilities can be used in the social reception context as a message for fully "capable" persons. If

somebody, thus tragically crippled can overcome "so many" adversities and climb to "such" heights, then what would stop the "healthy" ones from reaching the heights of their potential (Lipkin and Fox 2001)? Successes and accomplishments of persons with disabilities can be a model for other persons with disabilities, who are actually regarded as the least active social group (Stanisławski 2004).

Classic examples of "superheroes" can be found in the media coverages of disabled sportspersons – Paralympians, who, through their heroic fight, overcome all kinds of barriers. This type of discursive reproduction of a stereotype, which manifests itself in accentuating one specific characteristic (disability) and skipping through other ones or referring to them on the sidelines (e.g., the spirit of rivalry or being sportive), perpetuates negative and simplified associations of society about disability (Niedbalski 2015).

In that case, do students with disabilities see themselves as "superheroes," do they stress their "exceptionality" and "achievements"? It turns out from the analyzed responses that also this type of narrative is rare. That attitude is particularly visible in the thoughts of the respondents on what they consider their biggest success in studies:

It was already a huge success to me to enrol for studies. (a student with a moderate motor disability, aged 42, study program: Finances and Accounting)

Success? Passing exams in mechanics! (a student with a moderate visual disability, aged 23, study program: Automatics and Robotics)

Nothing in such statements (and in a number of similar responses to the questions on grants, high average of grades, diploma project defence, etc.) indicates perception of oneself in the categories of the one who has some "superpowers."

Still amongst the analyzed responses there is also the following one (a response to the question: "What was your motivation for choosing a specific study program?"):

What mattered for me, were mainly my interests, my plans for the future, and only in the very end, whether I would be able to do what I planned. In fact, **for me the impossible doesn't exist.** (a student with a significant motor disability, aged 25, study program: German Philology)

This is an example of building one's personal identity around the image of a "superhero" – a manifestation of the sense of pride with one's achievements, capabilities, and successes; an example of the feeling of power that, while shaping a personality, really makes that person cope successfully with all adversities (by the psychological mechanism of a "self-fulfilling prophecy").

If these students feel somehow "exceptional," it is only due to their intricate biographies that shaped and tempered them. The respondents stress that they are "older from their study colleagues" – often in the direct age-related sense, but also mentally – they are richer with difficult experiences, which for most of them did not result in negative attitudes towards life and the environment. Among the responses there are also the ones indicating a certain sense of

"superiority" coming from the story of these students' lives:

I don't go to any student parties. I go to parties with my friends who are not from the university. I don't like people from my university because I consider them very infantile. Due to my disability, I am much more mature than they are. (a student with a moderate motor disability, aged 23, study program: Iberian studies)

Yet, in general the discourse of "superheroes" is actually absent in responses of the students with disabilities. Scarce voices confirming identities of "heroes" amongst the students probably show that they apply this strategy to thus cope with the "stigma" (Goffman 2005).

### **Quis sum? The "normality" discourse in the narratives by students with disabilities**

So how do students with disabilities think about themselves and how would they like to be perceived by their environment? Most of the comments from the respondents in relation to identity narratives are concentrated around a "sense of their own normality" and a "feeling of lack of differences":

It is hard for me to say, because I am an ordinary guy. I don't know if that kind of question is in place. (in response to the question on what should be done to offer equal educational opportunities to persons with disabilities – a student with a mild motor disability, aged 24, study program: Sound Editing)

I am an ordinary person, so why should anyone be informed about that?" (question "Do you inform any-

one about your disability? (a student with a moderate hearing disability, aged 26, study program: Design)

Also the need for a "standard" treatment from the environment is important for students with disabilities and stressed in almost each narrative of this type:

I don't inform people about my disability. It is not clearly visible. I don't want it to have any impact on my relations with schoolmates. (question: "Do you inform anyone about your disability?" – a student with a moderate disability due to a mental illness, aged 26, study program: Computer Science)

Students with disability are somewhat normal students, and they shouldn't be distinguished in that way [question about special university units supporting students with disabilities – a student with a significant motor disability, aged 23, study program: Mechanics and Machine Building)

It would mean that I want to be treated leniently. I want to be treated in the same way as others are. (questions: "Do you inform anyone about your disability?" – a student with a moderate visual disability, aged 23, study program: Administration)

It is significant that part of the students with disabilities to which the survey was addressed absolutely do not perceive themselves as disabled persons. The disabled ones are the "different" ones: those moving in wheelchairs, blind, et cetera. The above proves that these students are prone to social stereotyping of the image of persons with disabilities as much as the rest of society:

"I don't know, I only have a speech defect, I don't know the things that bother people with disabilities. (question if the university is adjusted to the needs of persons with disabilities – a student with a mild disability in the category of other types of disability, aged 35, study program: International Relations)

A response of one of the students participating in the survey can serve as a sort of summary to such narratives:

We don't want anything "extra," we only want to be treated in a standard way, without allowances, compassion, and without raptures on how fantastic we are to study after all. My friend from university has a little child and no disability. Life isn't easy for her either, but no one raves about her. (a student with a moderate motor disability, aged 23, study program: Pedagogy)

The discourse of "normality" can be also a method of coping with a "stigma" – there appears no person "with disability" in these narratives, there is only a "student." There exists no category of a "difference." "Diversity," or more clearly "unity" with the academic community, becomes highlighted instead. This way of constructing their own identity by persons with disabilities is by many researchers who deal with the phenomenon noticed as a dominant one in narrations and a demanded one due to the process of empowerment of persons with disabilities (por. Lipkin and Fox 2001; Stanisławski 2004; Green 2009). A refusal to create one's own identity narrative around the category of disability and to define oneself through one's "stigma" proves the increase of recognition of the stigmatized group (in this case of students with disabilities) as persons, and an at-

tempt to gain better control over their own lives and to build a better image of themselves (Świgost 2012).

### **Summary**

An image of oneself is shaped, on one hand, by identity narratives created by oneself and, on the other hand, by what one can see in a "social mirror." As presented in the above samples taken from the comments of students with disabilities, they do not perceive themselves as "the poor disabled" or as "superheroes." Other researches carried out among students with disabilities (among others by Byra and Parchomiuk 2012) indicate that it is very seldom that students with disabilities experience discriminative, devaluating, or distancing reactions and behaviors from the university community (Byra and Parchomiuk 2012:30), which most probably influences the process of constructing their identity as students.<sup>5</sup> Identity narratives of students with disabilities are created mostly basing on the "normality" discourse, which is a manifestation of the need to be perceived not through the perspective of "disability" but rather through the "studentship." Of course, in this group

<sup>5</sup> It is worth mentioning at this point that there exists a distinction between an "enacted stigma" and a "felt stigma" (Green 2007). As far as in the case of the academic community, the first of the mentioned ways of stigmatizing may actually be quite rare (the situations when the students are discriminated or devaluated in any way due to their disability), the second type of stigmatizing occurs much more frequently. What happens, is actually "auto-stigmatizing," described as a shame associated with a stigma (illness, disability) and obsessive fear of stigmatizing reactions. Thus it is an awareness of being a subject to stigmatizing due to belonging to a group of persons with disabilities. Hence the described group of students shows stronger will to highlight the very fact of studying (uniformity) and reluctance to highlight disability (otherness). This attitude is close to Goffman's "virtual identity" – persons with disabilities are expected at the University to get well-adjusted to the role of a student, and persons manifesting their disability are poorly perceived because of "acting against their role" (Goffman 2005; Barnes and Mercer 2008).

there occur individuals who build their identity around the image of a "victim" ("I am disabled so I am entitled to...") or a "hero" ("I can do anything... even study"), yet these are only single voices. Each of these narratives is a demonstration of a deep desire to set oneself free from stigmatization and to reconstruct one's own identity towards the "empowered self." When analyzing the problems, still scarcely explored in sociological studies, one should take into consideration first of all the fact that the surveyed group of persons with disabilities is not representative for persons with disabilities in general, even in the same age range. Although the study includes participants

representing varied disabilities (all categories and levels of disability), as well as different dimensions of "stigma" (students with both visible and unperceivable disabilities, persons disabled from birth, and those who acquired disabilities later on in their lives, e.g. during their studies), all respondents share one important aspect of their biographies: they have not been excluded from education due to their disabilities. This situation must have had a critical influence on the process of constructing their image of themselves and their identity as persons with disabilities, as well as students. The problem is interesting, and it requires a further, more profound research.

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## Citation

Sztobryn-Giercuskiewicz, Joanna. 2018. "Children of a Lesser God" or "Superheroes"? Identity Narratives of Persons with Disabilities as University Students." *Przegląd Socjologii Jakościowej*, 14(3):114-125. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18778/1733-8069.14.3.07>.

## „Dzieci gorszego Boga” czy „superherosi”? Narracje tożsamościowe osób niepełnosprawnych w roli studentów wyższych uczelni

**Abstrakt:** W artykule rozważane są kwestie narracji tożsamościowych wyłaniających się z analizowanych przez autorkę wypowiedzi niepełnosprawnych studentów polskich uczelni. Obraz społeczny osób niepełnosprawnych, kształtowany w głównej mierze przez media, jest uproszczony. Stereotypowo przedstawiane wizerunki osób niepełnosprawnych funkcjonują w antynomii „ofiara”–„heros”, zawsze jednak osnute wokół niepełnosprawności jako kategorii organizującej. Wydaje się, że również społeczność akademicka podlegać może tej stereotypizacji wizerunków i widzieć studentów niepełnosprawnych bardziej przez pryzmat ich niepełnosprawności niż „studentkości”. Tymczasem z narracji tej grupy studentów wyłania się odmienny obraz ich tożsamości, zbudowany wokół dyskursu „normalności”. Studenci z niepełnosprawnościami widzą siebie – i chcą tak być postrzegani – jako normalnych studentów.

**Słowa kluczowe:** narracja, tożsamość, niepełnosprawność, student