

**Shon O. B.**

Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University

## DISCOURSE OF IDENTITY IN “SPARE” BY PRINCE HARRY: LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVE

*The article examines memoir “Spare” by Prince Harry as an example of autodocumentary literature with a specific focus on its stylistic features. While existing research into memoirs often centres on studying genre specificity, historical context, or psychological interpretation, this study changes the focus to narrative style and discourse strategies used to express the narrator’s personal identity and emotional inner conflict. The memoir is interpreted not merely as a sequence of events, but as an elaborately constructed narrative in which stylistic devices convey the deep inner struggles of the author.*

*The analysis highlights a range of stylistic devices employed in “Spare”, such as questions-in-the-narrative, ellipses, parcellation and parallel constructions. These devices are shown to reflect the narrator’s psychological state and evolving self-perception. Questions-in-the-narrative are used to articulate doubt, emotional dilemmas or inner dialogues. Ellipses introduce hesitation and emotional pauses, intensifying the memoir’s confessional tone. Parcellation breaks sentences into short fragments, creating emotional impact, emphasizing irony, tension or indignation. Parallelism, often combined with antithesis, contrasts royal duty with personal freedom, tradition with emotional need of the narrator. Additionally, the article explores the graphic layout of the text in which short lines and isolated sentences reflect emotional state and vulnerability of the narrator.*

*The stylistic analysis reveals that “Spare” portrays a prolonged inner struggle of the narrator. Through stylistic devices Prince Harry crafts a personal story that challenges royal norms and demonstrates the conflicted inner world of “the Spare Prince”. Future research can include examining the rhetoric of conflict within the text, the linguistic representation of themes such as royal duty and tradition, coding of royal identity, the emotional struggle of the narrator, and the broader social and cultural context of the memoir.*

**Key words:** memoir; narrative; identity; question-in-the-narrative; ellipsis; parcellation; parallelism.

**Statement of the problem.** In recent years documentary writings have become increasingly popular in literature. More and more we see a shift away from stories that create imaginary worlds toward those grounded in real events, personal experiences and factual records. This change reflects a growing desire, both among writers and readers, for honesty, reflection, and a deeper understanding of life as it is actually lived. This is the reason readers turn to memoirs, diaries, biographies and autobiographies looking for answers to important questions or following someone who has walked a significant path in life. In these works the author often takes on the role of a companion or guide, sharing life’s moments through a personal, thoughtful lens that helps readers to make sense of their own experiences by offering a glimpse into someone else’s inner world. The memoirs, biographies and autobiographies of famous people like showbiz stars, celebrities, politicians gain popularity not only as stories of success but also as

the opportunity to look in depth into their lives, see behind the scenes of their personal experience. Many of these examples of documentary prose are widely discussed as the memoir “Spare” by Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex, published on 10 January 2023.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** Documentary and autodocumentary literature have become popular in recent decades thus causing appearance of research on the subject. Though we must admit that articles researching memoir, diaries, biographies and autobiographies usually focus on their genre specificity. Among the publications we should single out the article by T. Cherkashyna in which she studies terminological aspect of memoirs, autobiographical and memoirs-autobiographical prose. She emphasizes on the existing confusion with terms in Ukrainian literature studies and suggests distinguish between autobiographical memoir and memoir autobiography depending on the focus of narration [4, p. 212]. O. Tovt analyses memoirs

as a component of anti-military prose emphasizing on their special place and potential in narrating important historic events [3]. S. Kandiuk-Lebid explores genre features of memoirs stating that its most important genre parameter is conceptuality that is embodiment of certain perception of reality. Every author has their own understanding of reality that is realized in memoirs by means of compositional placement of material, choice and placement of facts and their aesthetic development [1, p. 32]. E. Mintsyys explores interconnection between language and culture as widely represented in memoirs as they are based on storytelling. She seconds the thoughts that memories are significant because they both shape and mirror a person's experience in the world [10]. O. Maksymenko specifies the role of memory as a constituent part of the author (narrator) and subjective representation of events with definite personal feelings, details, facts that the author of memoirs considers important [2, p. 112].

With the view to author's perspective we are going to focus on "Spare" by Prince Harry. The book ghostwritten by journalist J.R. Moehringer evoked general interest even before it was published. Readers expected scandalous revelations, the reporters and members of the royal family labelled it as improper. The book received many critical reviews published in media though it has not yet become the material for thorough analysis of its language and style. Most research of the memoir focus on the historical, moral and psychoanalytical aspects of Prince Harry's recollections (though often exposing biased attitude) like critical reviews by V. Friedman or R. Mead [7; 9]. We should single out the publications by L. Englund, S. Ignjatović, E.P. Akpan and U. Offiong as they refer to the study of narration and partially style of "Spare". L. Englund carries out the research of narrative strategies in the memoir analysing the book and The Netflix miniseries "Harry & Meghan". She makes the conclusion that in "Spare" "the redemptive arc ... revolves around presenting a more sympathetic, well-rounded image of the two author subjects, but it also emerges in the battle itself against press and family alike" [6]. She states that Spare doesn't follow the usual pattern we often see in memoirs where someone goes through a hard time and comes out stronger. Instead, the book stays focused on the struggle itself that is the ongoing tension with the royal family and the press rather than any personal transformation or resolution. What makes this different is that the story is not about Prince Harry redeeming himself but about asking those around him, especially the media and

his family, to look critically at their own actions and change [6]. S. Ignjatović explores the unreliable narration in autobiographical writing based on "Spare" and concludes with the opinion that the narrative in Prince Harry's memoirs is pseudo-psychoanalytic and it attempts "to reclaim the public image of its author and reposition it against the royal family as ideologically, morally and emotionally superior" [8, p. 125]. S. Ignjatović states that while the memoir appears introspective, its metafictional elements serve more as formal devices than genuine self-examination. The narrative is marked by textual and figural narcissism, focusing heavily on the author's perspective while minimizing or subjectively portraying others. Thus the memoir's unreliable narration and blurred line between author and narrator require the reader to critically interpret the text's motivations and authenticity [8, p. 126]. S. Ignjatović makes deep focus on the narration leaving aside language and style of Prince Harry's memoir though she dwells on verbal aspect of Harry's self-presentation. E.P. Akpan and U. Offiong perform a corpus stylistics analysis of "Spare" stating that there are words called thematic signals that are used to indicate in a direct or indirect way the main theme of the text, they are the clues to the hidden codes in the text. Among the main themes the authors single out death, pursuit of love, purpose restrictions of royal life, and the effects of press harassment [5, p. 145].

**Task statement.** The purpose of the article is to define the linguistic features of autobiographical narrative in "Spare" by Prince Harry focusing on discourse of identity and stylistic means of expressing the inner conflict of the narrator. The reason for choosing this material for research is that "Spare" by Prince Harry is one of the recent examples of autodocumentary prose where the central theme is not the story of success or overcoming hardships but the story of dealing with them while having brilliant prospects from the start and confrontation with the privilege of being the member of the royal family.

**Outline of the main material of the study.** The title of memoir by Prince Harry refers to the phrase "*the heir and the spare*" used to denote two children, usually male, of a monarch or a higher aristocrat in the line for succession. The older is considered heir apparent or heir presumptive and the younger is regarded as the one who can become an heir should anything happen to the older brother. Harry writes about his position of the younger brother, "a spare" with full awareness of the situation: "*Two years older than me, Willy was the Heir,*

whereas I was the *Spare*. This wasn't merely how the press referred to us – though it was definitely that. This was shorthand often used by Pa and Mummy and Grandpa. And even Granny. *The Heir and the Spare* – there was no judgement about it, but also no ambiguity. I was the shadow, the support, the Plan B. I was brought into the world in case something happened to Willy. I was summoned to provide backup, distraction, diversion and, if necessary, a *spare part*. Kidney, perhaps. Blood transfusion, Speck of bone marrow. This was all made explicitly clear to me from the start of life's journey and regularly reinforced thereafter" [11, p. 15]. The repetition of the phrase "the heir and the spare" becomes the leitmotif of the narration. Combined with metaphor "I was the shadow" as a part of gradation "the shadow, the support, the Plan B", gradation "backup, distraction, diversion", parcellation "a spare part. Kidney, perhaps. Blood transfusion, Speck of bone marrow" it emphasises the meaning of "spare" as "extra", "additional", creating the image of Harry as a secondary member of the royal family whose main purpose is to be on standby and in the shadow of his older brother William. This sets in motion the internal conflict Harry tries to solve looking for his identity and true place in the family.

Harry's reflections about his life, role and status are written as chains of questions-in-the-narrative. A syntactic stylistic means, a question that is asked and answered by one and the same character, question-in-the –narrative is marked with high productivity in the book and is used to express different emotional states and feelings of the narrator.

"Why should my memory organize experience like this? Is it genetic? Trauma? Some Frankenstein-esque combination of the two? Is it my inner soldier, assessing every space as potential battlefield? Is it my innate home-body nature, rebelling against a forced nomadic existence? Is it some base apprehension that the world is essentially a maze, and you should never be caught in a maze without a map?" [11, p. 13]. The chain of questions is used to express Harry's wonder why the position of "spare prince" is so painful for him to realise and why his childhood memories of staying in Balmoral castle are so vague.

"Succession was like the weather, or the position of the planets, or the turn or the seasons. Who had the time to worry about things so unchangeable? Who could bother with being bothered by a fate etched in stone?" [11, p. 15] – the questions express Harry's confidence in the fact that it is useless to worry about his minor position as royal traditions are fixed by centuries and cannot be changed. Simile

"like the weather, or the position of the planets, or the turn or the seasons" reflects Harry's idea of the succession line as something that is impossible to alter.

One of the key recollections in the book is Harry's attitude to Camilla who is to become his stepmother. Harry is aware of the part she played in his parents' divorce and at the same time he wants his father, Prince Charles, to be happy. He accepts Camilla's presence in the life of "Pa" but objects to their marriage. He does not trust her completely and is torn by the inner conflict of feelings. The question reflects his doubts about what to expect from Camilla and wish to be protected against her influence:

"In a funny way I even wanted Camilla to be happy.

*Maybe she'd be less dangerous if she was happy?*" [11, p. 100] – the question is graphically separated and positioned in the next line that creates a pause in perception and intensifies the effect.

When Harry marries Meghan Markle he becomes even more fiercely protective of his life and life of his new family. He recollects the series of minor conflicts with William and Kate and wonders why they seem not to accept his choice. The question-in-the-narrative expresses Harry's suggestion that possibly they were cold with Meghan because of some minor reason or no reason at all.

"Kate thought Meg had wanted her fashion contacts. But Meg had her own. *They'd got on the wrong foot perhaps?*" [11, p. 343].

Questions-in-the-narrative are also used to express Harry's indignation referring to negative comments about Meghan in press and the fact that some members of the royal family supplied the reporters with information.

"We shifted from what to do about the story to where it came from. *Who could've planted such a thing? Who could've leaked it to the press in the first place? Who?*" [11, p. 351]. The parallelism intensifies the created emotional tension.

Another highly productive means used in "Spare" is ellipsis, a stylistic device that is used to create a dramatic pause when another thought is introduced.

"He had a meeting with Nelson Mandela ... and the Spice Girls?" [11, p. 31] – Harry wonders why his father has to go to Africa and finds out he is not only to meet Nelson Mandela, a famous politician and human rights activist, but also Spice Girls. The photo with them will help Prince Charles to "earn some positive headlines" [11, p. 31] after he was heavily criticised for his divorce and tragic



death of Princess Diana. Harry feels hypocrisy of the situation and the pause shows his surprise.

*"I told her this was the cleanest, purest water in the world, because it was filtered by all that papyrus. Even sweeter than the water in the ancient bath at Balmoral, though... better not to think of Balmoral"* [11, p. 280] – ellipsis expresses Harry avoiding thoughts that could spoil his idyllic time with Meghan. He was aware of the fact that his girlfriend had to be approved by the royal family but he preferred not to think about this while he spent time with her.

When Harry dates Meghan and later marries her he expects that the press will treat her with respect as a new royal. But the press is unexpectedly rude to her whatever he does. In the examples that follow ellipsis is used to express Harry's surprise and indignation at the fact that he and Meghan are treated not in the way he expected:

*"She got into the queue. Before her were rows and rows of magazines and newspapers, and on all of them, under the most shocking and disgusting headlines... was her"* [11, p. 302].

*"Still, I was feeling worried, and intensely hostile towards the press, and I was now surrounded by... press"* [11, p. 303].

*"Paps scaled the walls and fences of many patients she visited. In other words, every day there was yet another person, like Mummy, whose last sound on earth... would be a click"* [11, p. 305] – the dramatic pause created by ellipsis intensifies Harry's painful recollection of the fact that his mother Princess Diana after the car crash when she was hunted by paparazzi who clicked their camera buttons.

*"One statement, that week, in defense of Meg... it might've made a world of difference"* [11, p. 318] – Harry is disappointed that the royal family did nothing to defend Meghan as he hoped. The hyperbole *"a world of difference"* intensifies the bitterness when Harry realises his family could have influenced the situation.

To make emphasis on the inner conflict Harry goes through while thinking of his place and role in the royal family Parallel constructions are used.

*"We pulled over, stepped out. I could see nothing but a matrix of colored dots. Flowers. And more flowers. I could hear nothing but a rhythmic clicking from across the road. The press"* [11, p. 20] – parallelism is used to express Harry's grief in the first days after his mother Princess Diana's tragic death when the young boy focuses on his inner world and feelings not noticing anything around except some colours and sounds.

In "Spare" parallel constructions are combined with antithesis thus introducing contrasting ideas:

*"There was so much to say, we had so much in common, though we came from such different worlds. She was an American, I was British. She was self-educated, I was decidedly not. She was free as a bird, I was in a gilded cage. And yet none of these differences felt disqualifying or even important"* [11, p. 269] – Harry thinks of his status as Prince comparing it to Meghan's background. For him being British is being conservative but being American is being free and not restrained. Idiom *"free as a bird"* is opposed to metaphor *"a gilded cage"* symbolising Harry's lack of freedom compared to Meghan's situation.

*"Willy didn't hug many strangers. Whereas Meg hugged most strangers. The moment was a classic collision of cultures, like flashlight-torch, which felt to me both funny and charming"* [11, p. 293] – in the example parallel constructions are used to show contrast between reserved manners of Prince William and Meghan who is used to more open display of emotion. Simple exchange of greetings evokes Harry's thoughts about how different royals and non-royals are. The simile *"like flashlight-torch"* is used to emphasise that the moment of "collision of cultures" was brief but it added to further misunderstanding between brothers and their families.

When Harry and Meghan decide to step down as senior working royals Harry could not conceal his happiness. Parallel structures combined with anaphora, repetition of the adjective *"free"* expresses his sense of freedom and prospects of the new life without public attention and assault in press. The ellipsis in the last sentence that is also graphically detached to the new line expresses Harry's insecurity and doubt where they will find the freedom they long for:

*"Free. Free from the British press, free from the drama, free from the lies. But also free from the supposed "public interest" that was used to justify the frenzied coverage of us.*

*The question was... where?"* [11, p. 375].

In "Spare" Prince Harry often expresses his determination, irritation and indignation when he has to defend his personal boundaries. Parcellation becomes the stylistic device that creates the effect:

*"My face froze. My blood stopped. I was angry, but more: ashamed. My Mother Country? Doing this? To her? To us? Really?"* [11, p. 298] – Harry is irritated when the reporters begin to offend Meghan in tabloids, he considers it personal offence

as the press always seemed sympathetic to him. He wonders what has changed and why his girlfriend and then wife is not accepted by them. His irritation raises and soon he becomes indignant. After several attempts to deal with the situation Harry decides to move on his own not caring for what the press, the family and the royal advisors think:

*"But they continued to answer the palace lawyer's repeated warnings with the same non-answers, which amounted to a mocking taunt: **We. Don't. Care**"* [11, p. 299].

Parcellation is used to express irony. The detached parts become Harry's ironic comments:

*"Willy and Kate invited us for tea. **To clear the air**"* [11, p. 343] – Harry expresses his ironic attitude to attempts of William and Kate to smooth things over after several cold receptions. His comment suggests that he does not think the invitation will help.

*"We all hugged. **Kind of**.*

*And then I said we'd better be going"* [11, p. 344] – Harry's comment shows that the hugs were not sincere and possibly formal and they did not help to establish warmer relations between the two families who again started to speak about past offenses. The sentence that follows the detached part *"kind of"* extends the context and shows that the meeting did not last long and probably did not end as it was planned.

Graphic arrangement of the text frequently represents Harry's thoughts about his status and the inner conflicts he goes through while thinking of his identity. Short sentences positioned in short lines create the sense of brief exchange, opposition, emphasis on the most important ideas.

*"I wasn't Granny.*

*I wasn't Pa.*

*I wasn't Willy".*

*I was third in line behind them"* [11, p. 15] – Harry's thoughts about the line of succession show this line at the same time marking him as only the fourth in the queue for the crown. Harry understands that when William marries and has children this

line will expand and he will be moved back. Harry accepts this fact but feels upset about many restrictions he has to follow though he will never be king.

*"You are about to meet the Queen.*

*I know, but it's your grandma.*

*But she's the Queen"* [11, p. 291] – when Harry wants to introduce Meghan to the royal family he feels discrepancy between perception of Elisabeth II as grandmother who loves him and wishes him happiness and Queen for whom duty is the first and marriage is also a political matter. Harry worries what will prevail.

**Conclusions.** Having analysed "Spare" by Prince Harry we make the conclusion that the memoir employs a variety of stylistic devices that effectively communicate the narrator's search for identity often resulting in inner conflicts. The use of questions-in-the-narrative conveys Harry's personal reflections, revealing his doubts, frustrations, and attempts to make sense of his position as the "spare" prince. Ellipses introduce dramatic pauses that emphasize hesitation and emotional weight while parcellation breaks the narrative into fragmented, impactful statements that convey irony, indignation, and inner turmoil. Parallelism, often combined with antithesis, emphasises the contrasts between duty and desire, tradition and freedom highlighting the tensions that define much of his experience. The graphic arrangement of the text visually mirrors the memoir's emotional rhythms and fragmentation, emphasising the sense of conflict and vulnerability. These stylistic devices are used to express the unresolved tensions and subjective experience in Harry's story. By combining these linguistic and visual techniques, "Spare" offers a deeply personal and nuanced portrayal of identity shaped by privilege, pain, and resilience. The focus of further research can include rhetoric of conflict in the memoir, linguistic representation of such topics as royal duty, royal traditions, coding of the royal identity, emotional struggle of the narrator, social and cultural contexts of the memoir.

### Bibliography:

1. Кандюк-Лебідь С. Жанрові особливості української мемуарної прози початку XIX століття. «Південний архів» (Збірник наукових праць. Філологічні науки), 2018. Випуск 74. С. 31–33.
2. Максименко О. Мемуарна проза як метажанр. *Мова та література в мультикультурному дискурсі: збірник матеріалів Міжнародної науково-практичної конференції (пам'яті професора Олександра Галича)*. Полтава: ДЗ «Луганський національний університет імені Тараса Шевченка», 2024. С. 111–114.
3. Товт О.О. Мемуаристика як складник антимілітарної прози про події першої світової війни. *Закарпатські філологічні студії*, 2024. Випуск 36. С. 312–317. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32782/tps2663-4880/2024.36.53>

4. Черкашина Т.Ю. Мемуарна, автобіографічна, мемуарно-автобіографічна проза: термінологічний аспект. *Вісник Житомирського державного університету*, 2014. Випуск 1 (73). Філологічні науки. С. 210–214.
5. Akpan E.P., Offiong U. Examining Thematic Realization through Word Frequencies: A Corpus Stylistics Analysis of Wole Soyinka's "You Must Set Forth at Dawn" and Prince Harry's "Spare". *Bayero Journal of Education in Africa*, 2023. Volume 9, No 2. P. 139–154. URL: <https://surli.cc/iyjeys> (дата звернення: 12.06.2025).
6. Englund L. (2025). Reclaiming and Redeeming the Narrative in "Harry & Meghan" and "Spare". *Popular Communication*, 1–13. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15405702.2025.2495810>
7. Friedman V. Prince Harry, Up Close. *International New York Times*, 2023. URL: <https://surl.li/cuuxnk> (дата звернення: 14.06.2025).
8. Ignjatović S. Unreliable Narrative Strategy in Autobiographical Writing – the Case of "Spare" by Prince Harry. *Folia Linguistica et Litteraria*, 2024. № 49. P. 111–127. DOI: 10.31902/fl.49.2024.7
9. Mead R. The Haunting of Prince Harry. *The New Yorker*, 2023. URL: <https://surl.li/iwsaqj> (дата звернення: 14.06.2025).
10. Mintsy E. Language and Culture in the Context of Victoria Belim's Memoir "The Rooster House": Nationally Biased Lexicon. *Folium*. № 6 (2025). P. 108–113. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32782/folium/2025.6.15>
11. Prince Harry, The Duke of Sussex. *Spare*. Random House Publishing Group, 2023. 410 p.

### **Шонь О. Б. ДИСКУРС ІДЕНТИЧНОСТІ В МЕМУАРАХ ПРИНЦА ГАРРІ «ЗАПАСНИЙ»: ЛІНГВІСТИЧНИЙ АНАЛІЗ АВТОБІОГРАФІЧНОГО НАРАТИВУ**

У статті розглядаються мемуари принца Гаррі «Запасний» як приклад автодокументальної літератури з особливим акцентом на їх лінгвостилістичні особливості. Тоді як дослідники мемуарів часто зосереджуються на вивченні їх жанрової специфіки, історичного контексту або психологічної інтерпретації, це дослідження мемуарів принца Гаррі сфокусоване на стилі оповіді та дискурсивних стратегіях, що використовуються для вираження власної ідентичності оповідача та емоційного внутрішнього конфлікту. Мемуари інтерпретуються не просто як виклад подій, а як сконструйована оповідь, у якій стилістичні засоби використовуються для відображення глибоких внутрішніх переживань автора.

У статті проаналізовано низку стилістичних засобів, використаних у «Запасному», таких як риторичні запитання, еліпси, парцеляція та паралелізми. З'ясовано, що ці засоби відображають психологічний стан оповідача та еволюцію його самосприйняття. Риторичні запитання використовуються для вираження сумнівів, емоційних дилем або внутрішніх діалогів. Еліпси виражають вагання та емоційні паузи, підсилюючи сповідальну тональність мемуарів. Парцеляція розбиває речення на короткі фрагменти, створюючи емоційний вплив, підкреслюючи іронію, напругу, обурення. Паралелізм, часто у поєднанні з антитезою, протиставляє королівський обов'язок особистій свободі, традицію – емоційній потребі оповідача. Крім того, у статті досліджується графічне оформлення тексту, де короткі рядки та ізольовані речення відображають емоційний стан і вразливість оповідача.

Стилістичний аналіз показує, що в мемуарах «Запасний» зображено тривалу внутрішню боротьбу оповідача. За допомогою стилістичних засобів принц Гаррі створює особисту історію, яка кидає виклик королівським нормам і демонструє внутрішній конфлікт «запасного принца». Подальші дослідження можуть включати вивчення риторики конфлікту в тексті, лінгвістичне зображення таких тем, як королівський обов'язок і традиції, кодування королівської ідентичності, емоційна боротьба наратора, а також ширший соціокультурний контекст мемуарів.

**Ключові слова:** мемуари, наратив, ідентичність, риторичні запитання, еліпс, парцеляція, паралелізм.