

UNRELIABLE NARRATIVE STRATEGY IN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITING – THE CASE OF SPARE BY PRINCE HARRY

Sanja Ignjatović, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Niš
sanja.ignjatovic@filfak.ni.ac.rs

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Abstract: The paper problematizes unreliable narration in autobiographical writing, exploring the rhetorical effects produced in the process of narrativization that challenge genre conventions in terms of the relativization of objective reality in subjective interpretations. Therefore, the paper analyzes discordant and estranging narration as the outcome of textual effects and the rhetorical layering produced by the author-narrator. The theoretical grounds for the exploration of the types of unreliable narration involves a discussion on authorial fictionalization, the role of fictionality in non-fiction as the rhetorical veil between story and narrative discourse, and textual and figurative narcissism. Illustrations come from *Spare* (2023), the memoir authored and published by Prince Harry, The Duke of Sussex, and his ghostwriter J. R. Moehringer.

Keywords: discordant narration, metafiction, autobiography, memoir, textual narcissism, figural narcissism, fictionality, non-fiction.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Space between Fiction and Non-Fiction

Narratives in autobiographical writing represent interpretations rather than factual accounts of events sourced in the referential reality. The interpretation resides in the space between the non-fictional and fictional, as it relies on the implied veracity of the factual, yet necessarily offers limited readings for a number of reasons which may, or may not, be relevant for the overall value of the text. The autobiography constructs narrative reality by imitating the universals of the collective experience, so that in reading a literary text, the reader finds veracity not only in the potential factual content, but the analogies implied by it, as well as the manner in which they are invited to interpret the text. This is particularly significant for the reception of autobiographical writing, since the genre exploits the space between the non-fictional – in its

claim to truth with regard to real life events, history and objective insight, and the fictional – which is contained in the nature of interpretation of these events from the focalization point of the author of the story. The reader, therefore, approaches this non-fictional genre as a document of sorts, and subjective, though reliable, testament of actual events. The literary competence of the reader, and their implicit reliance on genre conventions, along with the rhetorical instruments present in such writing, usually direct them into perceiving the literary work as leaning towards non-fiction. In the context of contemporary culture, an average reader approaches the genre as a tell-all account, expecting to learn information privy only to the direct experiencer – the author-narrator. Whereas the convention of the biography as a work of non-fiction keeps the reader aware of the potential inconsistencies and the presence of interpretative content, since the author need not be the immediate witness to the events and subject of their writing, autobiography relies heavily on the first-hand quality of the experience. It is this convention, as a rule, that exacerbates the tension between fact and fiction in non-fictional writing. From the reception point of view, the discourse of autobiographical writing assumes not an analogical relation to reality, but one that purports to show something of the truth about it, and therefore, the issue of narrative reliability becomes highlighted. Since the text invokes ideological dimensions, regardless of the actual authorial intention or reader's perceptiveness, narration is experienced in degrees of reliability or unreliability.

Authored by Prince Harry, The Duke of Sussex, with the help of famous ghostwriter J. R. Moehringer whose role and influence remain somewhat mysterious, *Spare* – the memoir consists of three main parts encompassing the author's childhood and early years, the time spent in the military, and finally, the life after meeting his spouse. These chapters are preceded by a Prologue reflecting on the event of his grandfather's death and the infamous *secret* family meeting at Frogmore, which serves as the interpretative key to the entire autobiography. The Epilogue briefly deals with the author's recollections of events immediately preceding the funeral of his grandmother, Queen Elizabeth II, and rounds up the inward journey of the author in his quest to piece together the narrative of the *real* Harry. The analysis of the memoir in this paper willingly disregards the already exposed historical inaccuracies and factual inconsistencies, since their exploration goes beyond the subject of interest. The paper focuses on the noticeable conflict-driven plot patterns that permeate the memoir and bind together the author's self-narration in order to analyze its reliability. Essentially, in Part I, the conflicts that enable narrative progression are the one between the

author and his elder brother, William, and one between the author and the media. These conflicts remain the driving force behind Parts II and III, as the consequence of his perceived mistreatment and neglect – the implied subordinate position against the heir-apparent (his being the *spare*), and his resentment towards the media.

The proposition is that unreliability in *Spare* is the product of figural rather than textual narcissism commonly present in autobiographical writing. Therefore, the paper analyzes the process of narrativization for the manner in which the author establishes truth programmes decoded in the reception of the text.

2. Unreliable Narration

2.1 Contextualizing Narrative Form

In *Transparent Minds* (1978), Dorrit Cohn compares the positions of first-person narrator's attitude towards the narrated past-self to that of a third-person narrator we often find in fiction (1978; 143). This likeness resides in the relationship of "distance between the narrating and the experiencing self" (Cohn, 1978; 143), which she categorizes as the same as the third-person narrator narrating the life of the protagonist. The effect of temporal continuity (Cohn, 1978; 144) between the first-person narrator's past and narrating-self, which separates this type of narration from third-person narration, is analogous to the existential relationship we all have with our past. In Cohn's words, it is a relationship "that differs substantially from the purely functional relationship that binds a narrator to his protagonist in third-person fiction" (1978; 144). First-person narratives utilizing this "autobiographical retrospection" (Cohn, 1978; 145) are characterized by the relationship between the experiencing and narrated selves – contained in the first-person narrator's function. Distinguishing between different types of first-person narration – each specifying the nature of relationship between the experiencing and narrated self, Cohn essentially highlights the rhetorical ambiguity that is produced in the process of life-narration. Although this author's considerations take only fiction as subject, they are applicable in the consideration of writing that positions itself within the non-fiction genre, considering it equally requires extensive narrativization. If narrativization occurs, we must assume that the work is characterized by fictionality – as a communicative strategy (Walsh, 2007; 7; Shen, 2011), especially if the work asserts claims of objectivity, truth and authority as is the case of the convention in autobiography.

In "Discordant Narration" (2000), Cohn contrasts two kinds of unreliable narration with regard to the narrator, which is particularly

interesting for autobiographical writing. One kind of unreliability is of the “factual kind” (Cohn, 2000; 307) pertaining to the inability or lack of capacity of the narrator to provide the facts. Whereas this kind of narrator might not intentionally deceive or omit due to a lack of knowledge, the ideological “is attributed to a narrator who is biased or confused, inducing one to look, behind the story he or she tells, for a different meaning from the one he himself provides” (Cohn, 2000; 307). The source’s lack of knowledge does not necessarily affect the attitude of the reader towards the text. However, the narrator’s overt ideological and rhetorical motivations influence the reception of the discourse. This is what Cohn terms “discordant narration”, because it “[signifies] the possibility for the reader to experience a teller as normatively inappropriate for the story he or she tells” (2000; 307). In terms of fiction, Cohn explores how the reader differentiates between the author’s intentions behind the work, and the discrepancies in the narrator’s storytelling. The reader must exert effort to discover the points at which narration is unreliable and therefore interpret, “against the grain of the narrator’s discourse” (Cohn, 2000; 307). Whereas the narrator’s inability to relate an accurate factual report does not compromise narrative reliability, narration imbued with ideological judgment and visible rhetorical intent causes the reader to disengage from the discourse-established truth programme (Schaeffer, 2012), and turn to the implied author’s intention behind the discordant mode.

In “Unreliability” (2011), Dan Shen explores discordant narration focusing on the process of reception, whereby the reader’s capacity to assess unreliability, rather than the implied author’s potential intent, is emphasized. As Shen explains, drawing on Seymour Chatman and his particular focus on the layers of story and discourse, the problematics of discordant narration lie in “the narrator’s mis- or under-interpretation and evaluation of events and characters” (2011: Para. 7) in contrast to the implied author’s established truth program. Shen interprets Chatman’s understanding of unreliability as occurring when “the story undermines the narrator’s erroneous discourse through the implied reader’s inference of the true facts” (ibid; Para. 6). This further implies a discrepancy between the factual and the ideological layers implemented throughout the discourse that cause the (implied) reader to observe points of incongruence. The emphasis on the *implied* is intentional because the author-narrator’s position invariably targets a specific group of people. When reading an autobiography, the reader is able to evaluate the rationale behind the interpretation of the factual, the conditions upon which the ideological positioning of the author occurs, but also the inconsistencies that might render the narrative unreliable,

or incredible, in the process of the author's fictionalization of events. Similarly, Puxan-Oliva suggests that unreliability is evaluated not against reliability as such, but as a process of narrative construction (2018; 196). This author also proposes that discordant narration, as defined by Dorrit Cohn, and forms of estranging or bonding unreliability as defined by James Phelan, among others, depend on the context in which the reader is invited to assess the ethical, ideological or other dimensions of the text (Puxan-Oliva, 2018; 192). As the genre itself involves creating connections in context, and across media in contemporaneity, it requires a broader approach in interpretation.

2.2 (Meta)Fiction and Narcissism

Autobiographical writing is metafictional because of the narrative techniques employed and the genre's framework involving the author-narrator who addresses the implied reader in sharing the narrativized account of their life. In *Metafiction*, Patricia Waugh explicates metafiction as the process in which writing about oneself, or writing from the first person, necessarily fictionalizes the author (or narrator) (1984; 123). In the process of narrativizing the self – regardless of whether it is an authorial intrusion or autobiographical writing, the author's "identity disappears the moment that it appears in the fictional text" (Waugh, 2001; 143). The awareness of the writing process invariably pushes the writer into fictionalization – self-reflexive or not. Waugh states that metafiction involves "fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality" (2001; 2). However, as a strategy, metafictional writing relies on the storyteller's ability to observe the contexts in which the act of storytelling takes place and the process of telling, which includes reflection on the level of fictionality created in the process, especially in autobiographical writing. The level of awareness remains with the author, and the narrative may rely on metafictionality as an instrument and reject its primary quality of self-reflexiveness when the author's own perception of reality is compromised, which is paradoxical (Hutcheon, 1980; 7). This *semblance* of self-reflexivity provides grounds for unreliability in the form of misinformation, omission and particularly biased interpretation, all of which are related to the phenomenon of textual and figural narcissism in literature.

Autobiographical writing relies particularly on subjective experiences and the ability to hypothesize about events presented. As Hogan explains, "all of us, as storytellers, produce stories from our narrative idiolects, that is, from the complexes of principles that allow us

to tell tales” (2017; 158). These narrative idiolects, though varied, contain universal patterns that allow for interpretation from diverse readership. Moreover, the cognitive and affective structures (Hogan, 2017; 159) in these proto-stories allow for a wide range of responses, since they “bear on our construal of our lives, our assessment of our conditions and prospects, and our moral evaluation of ourselves and others (Hogan, *ibid*). They are observable as patterns, and they can be reduced to simplistic narratives that guide our understanding of interpersonal relations and morality (Hogan, *ibid*), but also the creation of the autobiographical account of oneself. Julie Walsh notices that “the emancipatory potential of narration – or of narrative re-description” (Hogan, 2017; 74) as contextually supported by the “cultural zeitgeist in which projects of self-fashioning, self-actualization all hold sway” (*ibid*). The cultural context of contemporaneity holds the space for textual narcissism, but “a culture in which social actors use therapy to re-write the star part in their own stories” (Walsh, 2017; 74) also allows space for the rewriting of the plots of life-narratives – the paradigms according to which these stories are told.

2.3 Textual and Figural Narcissism: Me, I and They

The evaluation of unreliability in Prince Harry’s *Spare* depends on the reader’s ability to recognize the narcissistic orientation of the text. Textual narcissism (Hutcheon, 1980; Berning, 2017), an expected narrative strategy in autobiographical writing, might be somewhat appreciated by the implied reader – the one who expects the text to be oriented towards the author-subject. On the other hand, figural narcissism, as defined by Berning (2017), drawing on insight by Campbell and Foster in *The Narcissistic Self* (2007), represents the self-regulatory strategy of the character, which is the author-narrator. Whereas textual narcissism is inwardly oriented, figural narcissism in autobiographical writing is contained within the character of the author, focusing on the dialogue with the reader (Hutcheon, 1980; 7). It is a feature of a persuasive discourse, and the outcome of the author’s self-regulation and meaning-making strategies to maintain their narcissistic self-esteem. The reader comprehends such narration as discordant when the narcissistic author’s storytelling reveals the conflict between (objective) reality and erroneous interpretation of facts, or self-inflated or delusional beliefs directed at the reader to influence their interpretation of the discourse. Estranging unreliability becomes evident when the internal strategies of the storytelling process expose the author as unreliable in *their* interpretation, as well as intent on manipulating the dialogical relationship with the reader. The entire narrative structure

serves to aggrandize the authorial figure in the process of their identity-fictionalization, at the expense of other characters who merely feature their narrative as a function.

In “On the Seductions of Psychoanalytic Story-telling: Narcissism and the Problems of Narrative”, Julie Walsh explicates how “the quest for a seamless narrative is not the exclusive preserve of a therapeutic world-view” (2017; 78), but essentially a feature of our (cognitive) capacities that rely on storytelling to explain the experiences of our inner-worlds. Our emplotment capacity (Bruner, 1990; Ignjatović, 2018) enables the structuring and comprehension of complex experiences into mental constructs that we can further write upon, or re-write. This implies the rewriting of countless experiences from interpersonal contacts and events. This extends to the rewriting of narratives that Hogan explains as patterns (2017, 159) solidifying into narrative idiolects (ibid, 18), which hold cognitive and affective dimensions, modify our notions of morality and position our self-narrative in the framework of matrix-plots. As Walsh suggests, “once the self is conceived as a planning project – or a project of self-design/self-fashioning – the question of authorship becomes again critical” (2017, 77), because the author of the narrative not only approaches their identity from an existential distance, but from a distance that merges the real and imagined, the actual and desired. Self-narration, therefore, necessitates gap-filling or elision tasks in order to resolve narrative inconsistencies (Walsh, 2017; 80). This act, Walsh suggests, similarly to Waugh, is an act of “dissemblance” (ibid). The identity of the author is a fictionalized construct, motivated by the desire to stabilize their own image using metafiction as a tool.

Exploring narrative in the psychoanalytic practice and the broader context, Julie Walsh comments on the importance of paradigms signaling narcissism (2017; 71), and emphasizes that “beginnings and endings are particularly vulnerable to falsehoods and fabrications on the grounds that it is at these critical junctures that we strain most to give sense and shape to experience” (ibid.). It is for this reason that the analysis particularly focuses on the Prologue and Epilogue of the memoir as the framework within which the author establishes the truth programme using the two recurring plot-patterns. Moreover, these plot-patterns in *Spare* represent the foundation of the narrative and institute clear rhetorical and ideological positions crucial for the interpretation of the entire discourse. This approach is motivated by Walsh’s position that individuals, who in the psychoanalytic self-narration process become attached to “the particular version of the story that they are compelled to recount” (2017; 72), appear to compulsively repeat it as if cued by the triggering beginning, retelling the fictionalized account as a finished

product. As if the complete and meaningful narrative of the self is the goal, it becomes a compulsion. Walsh deduces that, “[when] stories are worn too tightly – taken as gospel, so to speak – then the teller risks becoming a mouthpiece for a story that, in truth, she has yet to make her own” (Ibid.).

2.4 Plot-Pattern: Rivalry between Brothers

The main plot pattern of *Spare*, as the title itself suggests, is the bitter rivalry between brothers revealed by the younger sibling. The Prologue begins with the details of the meeting between Harry, his father and brother, shortly after the funeral of Prince Phillip in Frogmore gardens. The poetic descriptions of the place aside, the truth programme of the entire narrative is subtly introduced in the signaling of contrasts and qualities ascribed to *him*, as the main character, and others – those who create the atmosphere in which he must remain calm (Prince Harry, 2023; 6)¹. The Frogmore estate, once Harry’s home, is now the place he and his wife flee, “in fear for our sanity and physical safety” (Ibid.), which implicitly positions those remaining on its premises – his brother among others, as threats. In the setting of Frogmore – the resting place of many a royal member, the author subtly finds the thread connecting his own life’s circumstances to those of the infamous King Edward (P. H., 2023; 7) and Wallis Simpson. However superficial and inaccurate the analogy, though they both did flirt with Nazis in one way or another, Harry manages to relate his supposed exile to this King’s popularly romanticized, though misinterpreted, choice of love over the throne. By this point in narrative, the second page of the book, the image of late Diana, appears on at least three occasions, which is unsurprising considering that Harry is anxiously waiting for the meeting parties, surrounded by dead relatives and historical figures. Yet what he relates of his mother are images, which is where it becomes tragically poignant that the author’s recollections are merged with her representations in the media (P. H., 2023; 8). A more skeptical individual would probably address the position that writing about the late Princess Diana sells even decades after her death, and that the pragmatic structuring of Harry’s narrative might be the contribution of the experienced ghostwriter in terms of content design.

Maybe she was omnipresent for the very same reason that she was indescribable – because she was light, pure and radiant light, and how can you really describe light? Even

¹ Further references to the scenes from the book are listed using the author’s initials only, i.e. (P. H., 2023; 6).

Einstein struggled with that one. [...] That was my mother. [...] That – and the fact that I was carrying her flag. I'd come to those gardens because I wanted peace. [...] I wanted it for my family's sake, and for my own – but also for hers. (P. H., 2023; 8-9)

In a matter of a few short paragraphs, the author establishes the analogy between himself and the romantic idealist – Edward, but also his mother – the unmistakable, infallible, elusive, eternal peacemaker. The reader is reminded of Harry's mother's achievements (ibid.), which serves to strengthen his own position in coming to Frogmore, although from the dialogue that is subsequently told one can understand that peacemaking is not Harry's strong suit. The metaphor that serves to reinforce the two plot-patterns in the memoir – “Windsors [...] at war” (ibid.) is established and only deepened and expanded in the accounts of events described in the rest of the book.

Shoulder to shoulder, striding towards me, they looked grim, almost menacing. More, they looked tightly aligned. My stomach dropped. Normally they'd be squabbling about one thing or another, but now they appeared to be in lockstep – in league. (ibid.)

Not only is Harry *surprised* by the apparent absence of animosity between his brother and father, he is also *outnumbered* – supported only by the omnipresence of late Diana. The stomach-dropping shock leads him to question whether “we [are] meeting for a walk... or a duel?” (ibid.). In fact, he must consciously work on calming himself down by taking deep breaths due to “fear [...] a kind of hyper-awareness, and a hugely intense vulnerability” (P. H., 2023; 10). The sight of his father and sibling taking steps towards him reminds him of walking behind his mother's coffin, experiences of war, public speaking, and so on (ibid.) – in other words, a sense of generalized anxiety, which might lead a discerning reader to question the author's state of mind and perception. After all, this meeting happens hours after the funeral of a family member, which is unsurprisingly a difficult time. However, Harry's concern is the matter of his own project – the exile, and the requests for funding of his former lifestyle. After resigning the royal position, Harry must use his own funds – his mother's inheritance amounting to scanty \$10 million, to sustain the standard that involves a luxurious villa in Montecito California.

I tried to explain my side of things. I wasn't at my best. For starters, I was still nervous, fighting to keep my emotions in

check, while also striving to be succinct and precise. More, I'd vowed not to let this encounter devolve into another argument. But I quickly discovered that it wasn't up to me. Pa and Willy had their parts to play, and they'd come ready for a fight. (P. H., 2023; 11)

The excerpt contrasts Harry, at the literal level, as vulnerable and intimidated against the belligerent sibling and father, intent on shutting down any conversation. Figural narcissism operates in the provided excerpts as the superficiality of the intended self-reflection (introspection) and the naively manipulative creation of binary oppositions elaborated in the remainder of the book. Moreover, on the day Prince Charles buries his father, Harry's apparent realization of his father's age not only comes with an undertone of disgust (*ibid.*), but also a reminder that in a matter of years, he would be in the same place – burying him. Concurrently, yet unsurprisingly, his perception of William changes:

All at once something shifted inside of me. I looked at Willy, really looked at him, maybe for the first time since we were boys. [...] his familiar scowl, which had always been his default in dealings with me; his alarming baldness, more advanced than my own; his famous resemblance to Mummy, which was fading with time. With age. In some ways he was my mirror, in some ways he was my opposite. My beloved brother, my arch nemesis, how had that happened? (*ibid.*)

On the surface, Harry's revelations about the feelings for his brother resemble a moment of self-reflection. However, considering this epiphany comes immediately after Harry is reminded of his father's mortality, therefore, the succession, and his being farther down the line of heirs, it cannot possibly be interpreted outside of the context of the Frogmore meeting. The configuration of the truth programme in contrasting the brothers as opposites, as well as placing the father on the side of the antagonizing forces in Harry's life, inevitably represent Harry, once again, as unfairly subordinated to the two. This rivalry plot establishes the paradigm of *me vs. them*, as Harry is being acted upon by the brother and father, with no agency. Descriptions of William range from emotionless, unsympathetic, indifferent and rigid, violent and uncompromising, with feigned rationalization about it being his abiding by the rules of the crown that favors him for being the firstborn. However, the main reason is his being entirely *different* from the author. The memoir-Harry is established not as the successor to the Crown, but the

true successor of his mother, whereas William is her fading image.

This paradigm, and the disregard for the context in which the event takes place, suggest either deliberate underreporting or misinformation, or the narrator's inability to fully grasp the contexts of the past. The theme of rivalry and the war with media are furthered by claims that being called and treated as a spare was not "merely how the press referred to us – though it was definitely that," but also the "shorthand often used by Pa and Mummy and Grandpa. And even Granny" (P. H., 2023; 19). Prince Harry states that the term itself contained no judgment, "but also no ambiguity" (ibid.) explaining that his purpose was to be the holder of spare parts for William, "Kidney, perhaps. Blood transfusion." (ibid.), which "was all made explicitly clear to me from the start of life's journey and regularly reinforced thereafter" (ibid.). This incongruous reporting is not the effect of irony, or humour. It appears as if two conflicting sides reside within the fictionalized author. One sees the label as a matter of cultural idiolect – being no ordinary younger sibling, but a Windsor. The other toys with anti-monarchist sentiments, promoting equality. However, it is this particular ideological layer is based on pure sibling jealousy – the slight at not being granted everything that his older sibling got, which may be one of the most relatable dimensions of the book to the wide readership, although the most bizarre as well. Harry is simultaneously unbothered by his status, succession being "like the weather" (ibid.), and sardonically wounded that it encouraged an instinctive definition of his identity as "a byproduct of who you weren't" (ibid.). In the Prologue scene, Harry retains his position against his *old* father – another privileged Windsor implicitly and explicitly blamed for his mother's accident, and the Prince of Wales who was even privileged to have their mother's looks on top of everything else. Harry's rationalizations for grievances, including the claimed exile, include being given smaller rooms in castles and palaces, not being able to marry and have a family before William due to his trauma and relationship issues, not being able to build his career in the military due to the exposure and media, or privately sustain substance abuse due to the paparazzi, and so on. In other words, the fictionalized Harry insists on suffering the unprivileged status within the family, as well as the eyes of the public.

As Berning suggests, in literature, narcissism is "shaped, on the motivational side, by a continuous and intense craving for having one's superiority reaffirmed" (Berning, 2017; 116). Being the younger sibling, Harry is unable to achieve superiority over his elder brother. The author's polarized thinking leads him into an unfortunate generalization that clearly reveals class awareness. Clumsily socializing the issue of sibling jealousy, the author assumes that "[every] boy and girl, at least

once, imagines themselves as a prince or princess” (P. H., 2023; 20), which also exposes awareness of the privileged position he enjoyed until resigning from senior royalty. The very foundation of the ideology behind the narrative, verging on pragmatic anti-monarchist ideas, exposes the actual attitude of the author. The fictionalized author of the memoir additionally establishes moral superiority in the consistent invocation of his mother’s memory and image, and his claims of likeness to it. Moreover, her slightly awkward presence as some kind of a spectral figure following and supporting him on his path becomes a fully established paradigm – in the function of justifying the author’s actions towards his brother, father and the media. In other words, the narrative positions him and his mother’s legacy in contrast to the living members of the family, which grants fictionalized Harry the authority to address not only his family, but the world (P. H., 2023; 12), with the (re-written) *truth* in the ironic attempt to *reclaim* the narrative by once again releasing it to the media. This is the point in the narrative where the paradigm of me vs. them shifts into *I vs. them* – in the very act of self-narration. The agency is contained within the refashioning of his image and identity in the act of self-narration, and this agency is the source of unreliability.

All my life I’d told people I couldn’t remember the past, couldn’t remember my mum, but I never gave anyone the full picture. My memory was dead. (P. H., 2023; 357)

Discordant narration, as a textual effect (Puxan-Oliva, 2018; 198) presumes the reader’s knowledge about the arguments pertaining to a judgment presented in the text at the degree to which they could agree or disagree with them. The entire rivalry plot-pattern relates populist value judgments in representing the circumstances of the author – a former senior royal. The idea of the neglected, overlooked and downright humiliated *spare* appeals to the reader’s ability to empathize in the broader social, political and economic context, yet one analogous to them. This is where the discrepancy occurs and the reader is most likely to *disagree* with the author. However, what particularly estranges the reader are “the discrepancies between the narrator’s reports, interpretations, or evaluations and the inferences about those things made by the authorial audience” (Phelan, 2007; 225). In the act of self-aggrandizing carelessness, the author admits that his “memory lies” (P.H., 2023; 15), that he could “make no verbatim claims” (P.H., 2023; 17), that he cannot clearly remember his own words (ibid; 24), that his memory places people and events in different times on occasions (ibid; 27), that perhaps it is his defense mechanism that renders his memory

unable to “[record] things quite as it once did” (ibid; 34), that his “memory equaled grief” and “[not] remembering was balm” (ibid; 58), that his “memory was dead” (ibid; 357) and that, ultimately, “my memory is my memory, it does what it does, gathers and curates as it sees fit, and there’s just as much truth in what I remember and how I remember it as there is in the so-called objective facts” (ibid; 17). The last quote was his ghostwriter’s response when asked to explain the factual inaccuracies in the book. The question should perhaps instead have addressed the overall unreliability of the narration.

2.5 Plot-Pattern: Persecution by the Media

The second plot-pattern, embodied in Harry’s fierce war with the media – the press and paparazzi, revolves around their portrayal of his behaviour, particularly in his early twenties, but later on as well. This extends to portrayals of his wife, claims of racism, criticism of her fashion style, and all other topics that contemporary tabloids might assess as interesting to the detail-hungry readership. The plot-conflict is established in the Prologue when Harry’s self-proclaimed resemblance to his mother and her causes implies their sharing the same treatment by the media. The inference is that the media attention Lady Diana attracted is extended to the author, by virtue of his relation to her and status, but also the resemblance of his spouse to his mother. Severing ideological, emotional and all other ties with the *evil* Windsors, he assumes the role of the saviour of his allegedly persecuted wife, in contrast to his father, and justifies trying to prevent the same accident that happened to his mother from happening to her. His moral superiority hangs precisely in the contrast to his father and the media. The complete, though bizarre, identification with his mother is achieved as he becomes the saviour, and his wife Lady Diana’s avatar. Yet, in the elaboration of the effect ill-intentioned press had on Meghan Markle – including accounts of untruthful reporting and malicious twisting of facts, we learn that the physical threats were in fact the alleged suicidal thoughts of the American. Conversely, the author admits to his therapist the compulsion to read tabloid articles about himself – the apparent cause of his two-decade-long vicious cycle of substance abuse. In other words, the physical threats mentioned at the beginning of the Prologue, blamed on the royal family, refer to mental states and anger issues caused by the couple’s inability to reconcile their own images about themselves, against the overwhelming slurs of the tabloids. Similarly, after publishing the memoir, Prince Harry’s requests for the royal family to provide security become even louder. This is only exacerbated by the memoir revealing the number of people he killed during military service

– an imprudent disclosure drawing attention to the already exposed couple, now with two children. Whereas the latter example shows the propensity for irrational judgment on the part of the Duke, the former examples testify to the under-reporting and misinforming processes present in narration.

The episodes with the media Harry singles out as particularly significant are those in which substance abuse is highlighted. Incidentally, these perhaps tell us most about the *real* Harry, because he does confirm most of the allegations, albeit not taking any accountability and presenting the issue as a coping mechanism. He not only fervently defends his rampant alcohol and drug use as a means of self-regulation (P. H., 2023; 91), but equally aggressively and disparagingly describes the editors who published accounts of his behaviour (P. H., 2023; 28). He finds himself in situations where uncontrollable substance use escalates and reaches the eyes of the public either due to his being stalked by the paparazzi, or poor judgment in choice of company. Incapable of trusting his own memory, yet concerned about the implications of his unacceptable behaviour, he resorts to deceiving his own courtiers, as well as shifting the blame onto the media invading his privacy. He is seventeen when one of the tabloids discovers that he is using cocaine, and due to his memory problems, he has to *reassure* himself (P. H., 2023; 91) that the editor has no proof. The entire endeavor of convincing the courtier that he would not “*submit to blackmail*” (ibid.), much like his other accounts of the press publishing stories damaging his reputation, ends with his refusal take any responsibility or accountability. However, for whatever reason, the author shares:

Of course... I had been doing cocaine around this time. At someone's country house, during a shooting weekend, I'd been offered a line, and I'd done a few more since. [...] That was what I told myself anyway. Back then, I could lie to myself as effortlessly as I'd lied to that courtier. (P. H., 2023; 91)

The author's memory-issues and admission of deceptive habits, clearly call for the reader's estrangement from the narrative due to the failing logic of his truth programme. The absence of the author's reflection on the consequences of his action to his interpersonal relationships in the memoir, but also in the aftermath of its publishing, all add arguments in support of the discussion of the memoir featuring a figural narcissist as the protagonist. The affective (emotive) dimension of *Spare* indicates a manipulative or pragmatic intention behind the narrative structure. Similarly to how the Prologue opens with the immediate mention of Lady Diana, which suggests an awareness on the

part of the author(s) about the value of merging narratives about this historical figure for various purposes, the Epilogue employs similar strategies in attempting to merge the fictionalized identities of Harry, but more specifically Meghan, to the late Princess. The occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Lady Diana's death becomes the opportunity for the Sussex couple to seek spiritual guidance. Whereas Harry senses her presence at Frogmore at the beginning of the narrative, it is Meghan here who "also [wants] a moment" (P. H., 2023; 459) in order to kneel and pray at the grave, "eyes shut, palms against the stone" (ibid.). In the next days, the events of the Queen's health and subsequent death reveal more animosity between Prince Charles and Harry: "I checked the BBC website. Granny was gone. Pa was King." (P. H., 2023; 461)

3. Conclusion

The pseudo-psychoanalytic narrative of *Spare* attempts to reclaim the public image of its author and reposition it against the royal family as ideologically, morally and emotionally superior. However, from the title suggesting the main grievance and plot-pattern, to the use of royal title in the copyrighting of the book – albeit the populist attitudes promoted throughout, and the allegations of mistreatment, neglect, favoritism, racism, and so on – all contrasted to apparent privilege, Prince Harry exposes the very process of the creation of *his* discursive reality. The author's metafictional experimentation focuses not on the questioning of the process itself, as it might seem due to the journey-metaphor permeating the discourse. Rather, metafiction, as the instrument of textual narcissism, is employed only for its formal properties, imposing its ideological content onto the reader. Whereas textual narcissism is inherently present in *Spare* for its modality – memoir, its consistent rejection of self-analysis and (emphatic) consideration of other *characters* featuring the memoir reveals figural narcissism. The argument for the loose employment of the term *character* is premised on the idea that if the author fictionalizes their own identity, then invariably, the identities of others must be highly subjective interpretations. As Walsh suggests, "the psychoanalytic project reminds us that as soon as we put an account of ourselves into story form, we risk speaking beyond our means" (Walsh, 2017; 76). The project of self-narrativization easily becomes excessive in its insistence to claim the truth of one's own experience at the expense of others'. Ideally, the convention of the autobiography implies a merging of the implied author – as the real person, and the narrator – the storyteller, into a single entity. Yet, due to the narrative strategies employed and overall unreliable narration, this autobiography does not directly tell us

about the experiences or identity of the private person who purports to present himself in the function of the author-narrator. Indirectly, the reader, as the recipient of the incongruous discourse, must scrutinize the narrative in order to extrapolate the potential interpretations, as well as motivations for the direction of the fictionalization of the author's identity.

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NEPOUZDANOST PRIPOVEDAČKE STRATEGIJE U AUTOBIOGRAFIJI – SLUČAJ MEMOARA REZERVA AUTORA PRINCA HARIJA

Rad problematizuje nepouzdanu pripovedanje u autobiografiji, i ispituje način na koji efekti koji nastaju u procesu narativizacije izlaze iz okvira konvencija žanra u pogledu relativizacije objektivne realnosti subjektivnom interpretacijom. Diskordno i otuđujuće pripovedanje analiziraju se kao posledica tekstualnih efekata i retoričkog poslojavanja od strane autora-pripovedača. Teorijski okvir za ispitivanje tipova nepouzdanog pripovedanja uključuje diskusije o fikcionalizaciji autora, o ulozi fikcionalnosti kao retoričkom sloju koji povezuje priču i diskurs, i tekstualnom i figuralnom narcizmu. Memoar *Rezerva* (2023), autora Princa Harija, Vojvode od Saseksa, i Dž. R. Moringera – kao ghostwriter-a, odabran je za ilustrovanje nepouzdanog pripovedanja sa otuđujućim efektom.

Ključne reči: nepouzdanu pripovedanje, metafikcija, autobiografija, memoar, tekstualni narcizam, figuralni narcizam, fikcionalnost, , dokumentarna književnost