

**ОПОВІДНА ПЕРСПЕКТИВА У РОМАНІ ДЖ. МАКГРЕГОРА «LEAN, FALL, STAND»**

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**NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE IN J. MCGREGOR'S LEAN, FALL, STAND**

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*У цьому дослідженні вивчається складна оповідна перспектива роману Джона МакГрегора «Lean, Fall, Stand», а саме те, як вона формує емоційну залученість читачів до тем виживання та внутрішньої боротьби. Використовуючи поєднання всезнаючого оповідача, зміщення фокалізації, потоку свідомості, мінімалістичного діалогу та невластне прямої мови, МакГрегор створює багатогранну оповідь, яка занурює читача в емоційні та фізичні реалії персонажів.*

*У розвідці окреслено значення наративної перспективи як лінзи, через яку інтерпретуються персонажі, події та теми, а також підкреслено, як прийоми МакГрегора викликають емоційні реакції, пов'язані з боротьбою героїв за життя. Визначається прогалина в науковій літературі щодо аналізу цих наративних стратегій, яку це дослідження має на меті заповнити, вивчаючи їхній вплив на емоційний досвід читачів.*

*Підкреслюється важливість вибору перспективи в художньому тексті, відзначаючи, як точка зору від першої особи сприяє більшій емпатії, тоді як перспектива від третьої особи створює психологічну дистанцію між автором, героєм і читачем. Таке фундаментальне розуміння підтримує аналіз унікального підходу МакГрегора.*

*У роботі представлено детальний аналіз наративних технік МакГрегора. Всезнаючий оповідач дозволяє вільно досліджувати свідомість кількох персонажів, збагачуючи глибину оповіді. Використання потоку свідомості, особливо в моменти екстремального стресу, передає фрагментарність і хаотичність думок персонажів. Цей прийом посилює відчуття невідкладності та хаосу, притаманне ситуації виживання, що демонструється прикладами невпорядкованого синтаксису, які відображають психологічне сум'яття персонажів.*

*Крім того, запропонований аналіз підкреслює важливість мінімалістичного діалогу та мотиву мовчання, особливо в суворих антарктичних умовах. Перебої у комунікації між героями слугують водночас метафорою ізоляції, підкреслюючи внутрішню боротьбу персонажів та емоційну дистанцію між ними. У дослідженні підкреслюється, як використання невластне прямої мови надає читачам інтимний доступ до думок персонажів, дозволяючи тонко зобразити їхні психологічні стани під час кризових ситуацій.*

*У висновках стверджується, що оповідні техніки МакГрегора глибоко впливають на емоційну залученість читача в боротьбу героїв за виживання. Це є підставою стверджувати, що подальші порівняльні дослідження можуть висвітлити тенденції в тому, як різні автори звертаються до схожих тем за допомогою різних наративних*

*стратегій. Дослідження також відкриває двері для експериментальних досліджень емоційної реакції читачів на прийоми МакГрегора, відкриваючи шлях для подальшого вивчення наративної перспективи в літературі.*

**Ключові слова:** *оповідна перспектива, точка зору, оповідний голос, оповідні техніки, невласне пряма мова.*

*The research explores the intricate narrative perspective in Jon McGregor's *Lean, Fall, Stand*, focusing on how it shapes readers' emotional engagement with the themes of survival and internal struggle. By employing a combination of third-person omniscient narration, shifting focalization, stream of consciousness, minimalist dialogue, and free indirect speech, McGregor constructs a multifaceted narrative that immerses readers in the characters' emotional and physical realities.*

*The paper outlines the significance of narrative perspective as a lens through which characters, events, and themes are interpreted, emphasising how McGregor's techniques evoke emotional responses related to the struggle of the characters for life. The author identifies a gap in academic literature regarding the analysis of these narrative strategies, which this study aims to address by examining their impact on readers' emotional experiences.*

*It emphasises the importance of perspective choice in literature, noting how the first-person viewpoint fosters intimacy while the third-person perspective creates psychological distance between the author, the characters and the reader. This foundational understanding supports the analysis of McGregor's unique approach.*

*In what follows, the study presents a detailed examination of McGregor's narrative techniques. The third-person omniscient point of view allows for a fluid exploration of multiple characters' consciousness, enriching the narrative's depth. The use of stream of consciousness, particularly during moments of extreme stress, conveys the characters' fragmented and chaotic thoughts. This technique enhances the sense of urgency and chaos inherent in their survival situation, as demonstrated through examples of disordered syntax that reflect the psychological turmoil of the characters.*

*Moreover, the analysis highlights the significance of minimalist dialogue and the motif of silence, particularly in the harsh Antarctic setting. Communication breakdowns serve as metaphors for isolation, underscoring the characters' internal struggles and the emotional distance between them. The research emphasises how the use of free indirect speech provides readers with intimate access to the characters' thoughts, allowing for a nuanced portrayal of their psychological states during crises.*

*In conclusion, the study posits that McGregor's sophisticated narrative techniques profoundly impact the reader's emotional engagement with the struggle of the protagonist for survival. It suggests that further comparative studies could illuminate how different authors address similar themes through varying narrative strategies. The research also opens the door for empirical research to investigate readers' emotional responses to McGregor's techniques, providing a pathway for future exploration of narrative perspective in literature.*

**Key words:** *narrative perspective, point of view, narrative voice, narrative techniques, free indirect speech.*

## **Introduction**

The narrative perspective in Jon McGregor's *Lean, Fall, Stand* is a pivotal element that shapes the storytelling, immersing readers in the emotional and physical realities of its characters (van Peer and Chesnokova, 2019).

Narrative perspective encompasses the selection of a particular viewpoint from which a story's events are portrayed, significantly influencing how characters, events, and themes are interpreted. By employing various narrative techniques, McGregor intricately weaves the thoughts, emotions, and experiences of his characters into the fabric of the narrative, guiding the reader's engagement with the story.

This research aims to analyse the specific narrative techniques McGregor utilises to evoke emotional responses related to the struggle for life, thereby highlighting the relationship between narrative perspective and the reader's understanding of the characters' survival challenges. Through examination of these elements, this study seeks to elucidate how McGregor's narrative choices contribute to the profound emotional resonance found within *Lean, Fall, Stand*.

## **Formulation of the problem**

In *Lean, Fall, Stand*, Jon McGregor employs a range of narrative techniques, such as the third-person point of view, stream of consciousness, minimalist dialogues, and free indirect speech, to evoke deep emotional responses related to the struggle of the characters for life. There has been limited academic analysis on how these specific techniques are used to depict the internal and external battles of survival, so this research seeks to fill this gap by exploring how McGregor uses narrative strategies to impact the reader's emotional engagement with the characters' fight for survival throughout the novel.

One of those researchers who did studies in the field is van Peer. In one of his examples he (2001, 105) examines *Untouchable* by Anand, where Bakha, a sweeper's son, faces a mix of personal admiration and societal disdain. Here, the narrative shifts between an external view and internal focalization to highlight Bakha's personal battles within a caste-oppressive society. The perspective deepens reader empathy by revealing Bakha's thoughts and aspirations, subtly invoking social critique through his internal lens, even while he remains a constrained focal point of narration.

Another narrative method examined by van Peer (2001, 118) is psychonarration, used to depict internal conflicts. In Conrad's *The Secret Agent*, Winnie Verloc's emotional turmoil after a family tragedy is conveyed through psychonarration, enabling insights into her subconscious chaos. This technique reveals her unarticulated grief and horror, elements a standard interior monologue might not fully capture. The narrator's interpretive role serves to emphasise the intensity of her internalised suffering and isolation by depicting thoughts that are "unverbalized" or "obscure".

In addition, the conversion narrative tradition, as explored by van Peer (2001, 86) in works like Bunyan's *Grace Abounding*, uses dual temporal perspectives reflecting on past despair with present wisdom. This narrative choice deepens the depiction of spiritual battles by blending past and present selves, enriching readers' comprehension of an internal journey in overcoming existential fear and self-rejection, while externally showing a progression towards redemption.

These examples underscore how narrative can juxtapose personal, internal conflicts with broader, external societal pressures, creating layers that expose a character's psyche in response to both internal drives and social realities.

### **Analysis of recent studies and publications**

According to Tahiri (2020, 203), a narrative perspective is a key concept in literature that involves choosing a particular viewpoint from which a story's events are depicted. It includes different methods by which a narrative is organised and shared with the reader, shaping the way characters, events, and themes are interpreted within the work. By selecting a specific narrative perspective, authors express the emotions, thoughts, and experiences of characters while also controlling the flow of information and how the reader engages with the story.

In his turn, Indriyanto (2022, 87) argues that employing multiple voices and perspectives (polyvocal narration) enhances the narrative by offering a broader, more multi-dimensional understanding of both characters and events. The effective use of narrative voice, particularly through rich sensory details and varying viewpoints, contributes to the creation of immersive fictional worlds. This allows readers to mentally simulate the characters' experiences, deepening their engagement and comprehension of the emotional and cultural context of the story. Narrative voice serves as a tool that helps readers build mental representations of the fictional environment, enabling them to connect with the narrative on a more meaningful level. This process is essential in fostering an environmental imagination, linking readers to the physical and cultural spaces portrayed in the text. The narrative voice provides textual signals that direct how readers perceive and interpret the story. These signals include language shifts, sensory imagery, and changes in perspective, all of which shape the reader's interaction with the narrative world.

Narrative voice refers to the viewpoint from which a story is narrated, commonly divided into first-person, second-person, and third-person perspectives. The selection of narrative voice is an essential formal element that influences how the audience perceives and interprets the story. In the first-person perspective, the narrator is an active participant in the story, directly sharing their experiences with the audience, which fosters a closer connection with the protagonist by providing insight into their thoughts and emotions. In contrast, the third-person perspective features a narrator who is external to the story, describing the protagonist's experiences from an observational standpoint, thus creating a certain psychological distance between the audience and the character. The

second-person perspective, where the reader is directly addressed as “you”, is rarely employed, particularly in social or health-related campaigns (Igartua & Guerrero-Martín, 2022, 22).

### **Objective**

This research aims to analyse the narrative techniques J. McGregor employs in *Lean, Fall, Stand* to evoke emotional responses related to the struggle of the character for life. By examining the narrative perspective the study aims to identify how these elements contribute to the reader’s emotional experience and understanding of the characters’ survival challenges.

### **Research results**

The narrative perspective in *Lean Fall Stand* is a key element that shapes the storytelling, as McGregor uses various techniques to immerse the reader in the emotional and physical realities of the characters. The plot mainly focuses on Robert Wright trying to survive the storm in Antarctica along with his two colleagues, and then him facing the aftermath of the stroke he had there.

In the novel, the author predominantly employs a third-person omniscient point of view, but with specific variations and techniques that evolve throughout different sections of the book. The events are presented by a third-person omniscient narrator, but McGregor frequently shifts the focalization to different characters. This allows the reader to enter the consciousness of each character, providing insight into their thoughts, feelings, and sensory experiences (van Peer et al, 2017). This shifting focalization enables the reader to witness the same event from different angles, creating a rich, multi-perspective narrative that captures the complexity of the crisis depicted. Each character is given depth, as their personal thoughts, emotions, and reactions are laid bare.

Moreover, in the first part of the novel characters face the storm in Antarctica, and McGregor uses a stream of consciousness to depict their disordered and fragmented thoughts, especially during moments of intense stress. The storm sequences, in particular, are marked by chaotic, fragmented sentences that reflect the confusion and terror of the characters: «*The roar of it was everything. He had only his weight against the ice to know which way up he was in the world. He couldn’t see the others. He couldn’t see anything.*» (McGregor, 2021, 9) This fragmented sentence structure mirrors the character’s confusion as he loses his sense of direction in the storm. Another example is the following: «*Remain calm. Stay in place. Make contact. He shouldn’t have put down the radio. He shouldn’t have moved away from Luke. He shouldn’t have agreed with Doc’s idea about climbing Priestley Head just for the sake of a photograph.*» (McGregor, 2021, 12) The use of short, clipped sentences shows a character trying to stay calm but increasingly losing control of the situation as panic starts to take over. In the passage, his regret and second-guessing are conveyed through repetitive phrases, indicating his mounting panic and helplessness as the storm takes over.

In addition, the first part of the novel is marked by the use of minimalist dialogue and the significant presence of silence, which is fitting for the Antarctic setting. Communication between

characters, especially during the storm, is often broken or incomplete. The author uses the failure of communication—particularly via radio—as a motif for isolation and helplessness. There are several moments when the characters are trying to communicate but can only hear static or fragments of speech. The dialogue becomes sparse, and what is left unsaid becomes as important as what is spoken. This reflects the characters' increasing isolation not only from each other, but also from themselves, as they grapple with their own internal crises: «*He heard the radio again, and again he scrabbled around at his feet. Luke's voice was shrill, and distant. There were breaks in the transmission. "Doc, Thomas, come in. Come in, Doc? [. . .] anyone? [. . .]"*» (McGregor, 2021, 15-16) The fragmented transmission emphasizes the growing sense of isolation and helplessness as the character struggles to reach out in the chaos. Another instance is the following: «*"Thomas, Thomas, come in? Doc, come in? Over." There was another hiss, and the faint crackle of an incoming transmission. And then nothing.*» (McGregor, 2021, 20) The character's repeated calls go unanswered, emphasizing both the physical and emotional isolation they are experiencing. The hiss of static punctuates the silence, marking the breakdown of communication: «*"Nice one, Thomas, thank fuck. You were starting to worry me, where the fuck are you? I can't see you. I can't see anything." "Yes, Luke . . . issue, over." "Missing word before issue, can you repeat, over?"*» (McGregor, 2021, 20-21) The dialogue is broken up by static and missing words, reflecting the incomplete communication and growing confusion between the characters: «*He heard Luke's voice again. The sound was fainter now. There was a kind of ringing or rushing in his ears and he couldn't be sure he was hearing the radio at all.*» (McGregor, 2021, 14-15) This passage merges silence with internal disorientation, as the character loses his sense of direction, both physically and mentally.

Finally, in the novel, free indirect speech is used extensively to give the reader intimate access to the characters' thoughts, particularly during moments of intense internal conflict or crisis. This technique allows McGregor to fluidly switch between the character's interiority and the third-person narrative, providing a nuanced portrayal of their psychological states: «*Remain calm. Stay in place. Make contact.*» (McGregor, 2021, 12) Here, McGregor uses free indirect speech to place the reader inside the character's mind, allowing us to experience his attempt at self-reassurance without explicit markers. The thoughts blend seamlessly into the narrative, portraying his instinctive reliance on training under pressure: «*He shouldn't have put down the radio. He shouldn't have moved away from Luke. He shouldn't have agreed with Doc's idea about climbing Priestley Head just for the sake of a photograph.*» (McGregor, 2021, 12) This passage shifts fluidly between third-person narration and the character's inner conflict, allowing readers to witness his mental self-recrimination as he reflects on his actions. The lack of explicit attribution intensifies the intimacy of his guilt and fear: «*It was too soon to be worried, but he should have heard something by now. He was getting cold already. He checked the battery levels and the volume, tucked the handset back inside his jacket, and ran through*

*his options.*» (McGregor, 2021, 17) Character's practical side is highlighted as the narrative presents his process of rationalising the situation and weighing his options, merging his logical thoughts with the third-person viewpoint. This technique brings the reader closer to his inner struggle.

### **Conclusions and prospects for further research**

Thus, in his *Lean Fall Stand* Jon McGregor utilises a sophisticated narrative perspective that intricately interlaces the emotional and physical experiences of its characters. By employing a third-person omniscient narrator combined with shifting focalization, McGregor crafts a multifaceted narrative that facilitates a deep exploration of the characters' interiority. The application of stream of consciousness during high-stress scenarios effectively conveys the disordered and fragmented nature of the characters' thoughts, thereby heightening the narrative's tension and urgency.

The research can lead to a comparative study of how various authors depict the theme of survival, focusing on different narrative techniques. This could highlight emerging trends and establish a framework for how future writers might approach this theme. Moreover, one might consider conducting an experiment, in line with the tenets of empirical studies of literature (Zyngier et al, 2008; van Peer and Chesnokova, 2022) to figure out how McGregor's techniques engage readers emotionally.

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