

## **ABSTRACT**

Novels by Scottish author Janice Galloway belong to the most influential works in contemporary Scottish women's writing and her female characters often offer a stunning insight into the minds of women, who are stricken by various forms of emotional or existential distress. The aim of this thesis is to discuss and closely examine the main character Joy Stone in Galloway's most famous novel *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, in order to analyse the position of a woman in contemporary Scottish society and underline the importance of work such as this one.

The first aspect that attracts attention is its unusual and experimental form apparent from the very first sight by the mere flicking through the book. The text seems to be living its own life, often changing form, breaking down into lists, signs or play-like dialogues, and some words even partly disappear off the pages. This fragmentation is one of the main focuses of the novel and it is expressed in two levels. One of them is the fragmentation of the text which mirrors the second one, the mental breakdown of the main character Joy Stone. This study is going to concentrate on both of these aspects, firstly it will deal with disintegration of the mind of Joy and the world around her, and subsequently it will proceed onto the form of the novel and look at it from a more technical point of view.

The paper itself will be divided into three chapters. The first one is going to serve as an introductory chapter, presenting the methodology of the thesis and its theoretical background. The second chapter will focus mainly on the heroine, Joy Stone and will attempt to deal with the questions concerning the process of grieving Joy is going through and how it is influencing the issues of gender, effacement and her lack of identity. All of these elements contribute to the fragmented state of Joy's mind, and by analysing them the thesis will attempt to trace their connection to stereotypes imposed

on women. In the last, third, part the focus will move onto examining the means Joy uses to challenge the patriarchal system of oppression that surrounds her. The fragmentation of the text, which is a direct reflexion of Joy's inner distress, incorporates a variety of discourses and various typographical means of expressing Joy's inner world and internal collapse of character. One aspect of the chapter will be devoted to the effects that this narrative strategy has on the reader. Necessarily included in this section will also be brief account of the ways Galloway works with humour and irony.