

Enni Järvinen

MANIPULATION THROUGH TEACHER AUTHORITY

Authority in Muriel Spark's Novel *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*

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ABSTRACT

Enni Järvinen: Manipulation Through Teacher Authority: Authority in Muriel Spark's Novel *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*

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Authority and manipulation are central themes in Muriel Spark's novel *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. Authority is connected to the titular character Miss Brodie who is an eccentric teacher. Teachers are central figures in society and their authoritative roles are important when teaching the values of the society to children. Spark's novel depicts authority through narrative techniques and the character Miss Brodie. This study is conducted by using the close reading method and analysing the text through the lens of literary theory. The theoretical framework is constructed with theory that discusses narrative structures and previous studies regarding the novel. Throughout the thesis, theory is combined with the analysis of the text.

First, the theory of the unreliable narrator is introduced, and Spark's narrator is compared to common features of unreliability. Next, the point of view theory is defined and the viewpoints in the novel are presented and analysed. After analysing the narrative, the study moves on to analyse the character of Miss Brodie and her use of authority. Miss Brodie's actions are compared to the role of a teacher. Lastly, the analysis of the narrative is compared to Miss Brodie. The results discuss the similarities and differences in authority.

This thesis argues that both the narrative and Miss Brodie's authority is similar. Authority over the audience can be obtained by controlling information that is released to the audience. Narrative has authority over the reader and teachers have authority over their students, and both have the ability to manipulate.

Keywords: The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie, authority, teacher authority, authority of the narrative, unreliable narrator, the point of view in narrative

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Enni Järvinen: Manipulation Through Teacher Authority: Authority in Muriel Spark's Novel *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*

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Auktoriteetti ja manipulaatio ovat keskeisiä teemoja Muriel Sparkin teoksessa "The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie". Teoksen keskeinen hahmo on Neiti Brodie, joka on omalaatuinen opettaja. Opettajahahmoon on liitetty vahva käsitys auktoriteetista. Yhteiskunnassa opettajat ovat merkityksellisiä ihmisiä, joiden tehtävään kuuluu tietynlainen auktoriteetti. Opettajien tärkein tehtävä on kasvattaa lapsista kansalaisia, jotka ymmärtävät yhteiskunnan arvot ja normit. Teoksessa auktoriteettiteema näkyy sekä kertomuksessa että Neiti Brodien hahmossa. Tämä tutkimus on toteutettu tekstianalyysinä, jossa tekstiä analysoidaan teorian valossa. Tutkimuksen teoreettinen viitekehys koostuu kertomuksen tutkimuksesta sekä aikaisemmista teokseen kohdistuneista analyyseistä.

Ensimmäiseksi tutkimuksessa esitellään epäluotettava kertoja, jonka keskeisiin ominaisuuksiin Sparkin kertojahahmoa verrataan. Seuraavaksi määritellään näkökulman merkitys kertomuksessa ja esitellään sekä analysoidaan teoksessa käytettyjä näkökulmia ja niiden yhteyttä kertomuksen auktoriteettiin. Tutkimuksen toisessa osassa keskitytään Neiti Brodien hahmon analyysiin sekä auktoriteetin käyttöön. Neiti Brodien auktoriteettia ja toimintaa verrataan opettajan tyypilliseen rooliin. Lopuksi analyysi vertailee kertomuksen ja Neiti Brodien käyttämää auktoriteettia sekä niiden välisiä yhtäläisyyksiä ja eroavaisuuksia.

Tutkimuksessa todetaan sekä kertomuksen että Neiti Brodien käyttämän auktoriteetin olevan samanlaista. Kontrollioimalla tiedon jakamista voi saavuttaa auktoriteetin, jonka avulla lukijaa tai oppilasta voi manipuloida. Kertomus ja opettaja voivat molemmat hyödyntää auktoriteettia manipuloidakseen yleisöään.

Avainsanat: The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie, auktoriteetti, opettajan auktoriteetti, kertomuksen auktoriteetti, epäluotettava kertoja, näkökulman tutkimus

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	THE AUTHORITY OF THE NARRATIVE	6
2.1	The Unreliable Narrator	6
2.1.1	<i>Text-internal clues</i>	8
2.1.2	<i>Text-external clues</i>	11
2.1.3	<i>Unreliability of the Narrator</i>	13
2.2	Point of View in Narrative	14
3	MISS BRODIE'S AUTHORITY	17
3.1	The Authority of Miss Brodie	18
3.2	The Untrustworthiness of Miss Brodie as a Teacher	20
4	CONCLUSION	23
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	27

1 INTRODUCTION

The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie is one of Muriel Spark's best known literary works. The titular character Miss Brodie is a charismatic and unconventional educator who forms a tight-knit group of five girls from her students. The group is given the name 'the Brodie set', as a sardonic remark by the headmistress of the Marcia Blaine School, since they resemble Miss Brodie in their actions and speech (Spark 5). The novel is set in Edinburgh from the 1930s until after the end of the Second World War and through this time it follows the lives of the Brodie set and their leader Miss Brodie. Miss Brodie is a significant part of the Brodie set's lives even after they move to the secondary school and are no longer Brodie's students. First her role is that of a teacher but later it turns into familiar adult, role model and the leader of their group. Miss Brodie herself is a very authoritative character who uses her role as a teacher to become the absolute role model for the Brodie set. Miss Brodie has also distinguished important features of her individual girls, and these become a basis for her plans for their future. The Brodie set girls include: Rose Stanley, a beautiful girl who Miss Brodie destined to be a great lover; Eunice Gardiner an athletic girl whose energy brings joy to the group; Sandy Stranger with small pig-like eyes and destined to have wits and 'insight'; Jenny Gray "prettiest and most graceful girl of the set" and Mary Macgregor "whose fame rested on her being a silent lump, a nobody whom everybody could blame" (Spark 7–8). The Brodie set is famous for their difference in knowledge compared to the rest of the students in the school:

These girls were discovered to have heard of the Buchmanites and Mussolini, the Italian Renaissance painters, the advantages to the skin of cleansing cream and witch-hazel over honest soap and water, and the word "menarche"; the interior decoration of the London house of the author of *Winnie the Pooh* had been described to them, as had the love lives of Charlotte Bronte and of Miss Brodie herself. They were aware of the existence of Einstein and the arguments of those who consider the Bible to be untrue. They knew the rudiments of astrology but not the date of the Battle of Flodden or the capital of Finland. All of the Brodie set, save one, counted on its fingers, as had Miss Brodie, with accurate results more or less (Spark 5).

This is the selected group formed by Miss Brodie. Miss Brodie's classes focus on the subjects she finds most interesting and therefore the basic knowledge usually taught in schools goes amiss with her students. Miss Brodie uses her role as a teacher to do as she pleases with her students. This makes her an interesting character to study since she is represented as a teacher and a role model to her students.

The historical and ideological background of the novel follows the actual political and ideological issues of its time in Scotland. According to Wickman, Spark's texts often lack a specific ideological basis since they exist in the mixture of stylistic, historical, and religious background (73). The title character Miss Brodie is a self-proclaimed fascist who admires leaders such as Mussolini and Hitler for their capability to lead countries. Moreover, Miss Brodie is religious and belongs to the Scottish Church while condemning the Roman Catholic Church. The novel reflects on the political conversations of its time by addressing Calvinism, Catholicism and Fascism. The multifarious presentation of ideologies forces the reader to consider all the backgrounds represented and consider their importance and meaning in the text. Wickman argues that Spark's texts shift our attention from the effort of placing her in cultural history to understanding culture depicted by her (64). *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* can be analysed from multiple viewpoints depending on the approach chosen for analysis. Previous research has focused on subjects such as religion, education and manipulation as well as fascism. This thesis will take a closer look at education, manipulation and fascism as well as authority.

According to Suh the novel is "a provocative critical representation of fascism" (86). Suh continues that, Spark aims to critique the politics of her time, such as fascism with the use of mostly female characters since "women who participated in fascist politics seem to epitomize the figure of the 'innocent fascist,' for they least of all are assumed to have perceived its real consequences" (87–88). The ideologies of fascism play an interesting role in the novel since

fascism is present in a situation where it is not often connected with since Scotland is not typically associated with fascistic ideologies. Suh argues that for female followers' fascism offered a seeming escape from the patriarchal restrictions of womanhood (86), which could be the reason why Miss Brodie as a modern woman chooses to identify with fascistic values. Katz states that Miss Brodie wants to bring her students up as the romantic heroines of her own imagination and beliefs that are not restricted to the patriarchal rules (627). This ideology could be the reason why fascism is connected to education in the novel.

This thesis follows previous studies on the ideas of manipulation in education but focuses more on the idea of authority in education. Teachers' roles are authoritative in nature since they are instructors and leaders for their students. Teachers are supposed to teach their students to follow the social norms and become active functioning members of society. With small students a teacher's role is often considered equal to an additional parent, since they support the development of the students' psychological and cognitive skills (Katz 622). Teachers are an important authority figure in society and to their students, and thus have a lot of influence over children who are still growing up. Therefore, the role of Miss Brodie is increasingly interesting and raises questions of what kind of teacher role models are good or bad and what kind of authority teachers represent. In this thesis the focus point will be on the authority Miss Brodie uses on her students and how it is depicted in the novel.

In Spark's novel authority goes beyond just the characters and is on display in the text itself. Spark's narrative is complex and formed by using different narrative techniques. According to Stevenson twentieth-century fiction compares authors' relations to their works as something similar to divine power, usually with the aim to critically assess the omniscient narrations, tactics of realism or free will (98). Spark is considered as the novelist "who brings omniscient narrative into closest alignment with the old faiths in an omniscient God" (Stevenson 101). Spark has the skill to use the omniscient narrative to her advantage. Stevenson

argues that Spark moved from poems to longer novels with the intent to explore authority and forces controlling individuals in her novels (99). Free will, control and independency from authority are typical themes found in Spark's novels (ibid.). Often there are visible themes of issues of authority, authorship and control of worlds that are reinforced by her use of different writing tactics, these issues appear most prominently in her novel *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (Stevenson 99). Wickman agrees by stating that one of the key features which sets Spark a part as a writer are her complex narrative structures and distinct use of narrative techniques (73). Through narrative structures Spark can display themes of control and authority. In *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, the narrative has control over the timeline of the novel. Currie argues that a part of the illusion of fiction is that the reader controls their own responses to the characters instead of the responses being manipulated by the rhetoric and narrative (Currie, "Postmodern" 26). Thus, a text can control the reader into agreeing or believing in something without the knowledge of the reader. This thesis will study the authority of the narrative and the control the narrator and narrative have over the reader.

As stated before, this thesis focuses on the depiction of authority both in the characters, especially Miss Brodie, and in the narrative structures. The study will focus on different forms of authority and how the use of authority impacts the Brodie set and the reader. Furthermore, this study will compare the authority of Miss Brodie and the authority of the narrative to see if they have similarities. This thesis will first present the ideas of the authority in narrative through two theories: (1) the unreliable narrator and (2) the point of view narrative. Then this thesis will move on to discuss Miss Brodie's authority through her manipulative features and characteristics as a teacher. Finally, the theories will be connected in the conclusion and similarities between the forms of authority are studied through the central findings.

Methods of close reading are used to analyse Muriel Spark's novel *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. The novel focuses on issues of authority from the perspective of both individuals

and the society. Furthermore, the novel has a very influential teacher character and teachers have been typical authority figures in society throughout history. The study focuses on the authority of the teacher character Miss Brodie as well as the authority and manipulative nature of the narrative. In addition, the similarities between these two forms of authority are analysed, since the hypothesis is that the use of authority is similar in nature. The hypothesis in this study is that both Miss Brodie and the narrative use the accessibility of information to manipulate their target audience. The research questions will be analysed using the close reading method and comparing the findings of this thesis to earlier analysis and theories. The research questions are as follows:

1. What kind of authority does the narrative have to manipulate the storyline and the reader?
2. What kind of authority does Miss Brodie have on the Brodie set and how is it depicted in the novel?
3. What kind of similarities are there in the authority of Miss Brodie and the narrative?

2 THE AUTHORITY OF THE NARRATIVE

Narratology is the study of narrative and the theory behind it (Currie, “Postmodern” 5). Narratives create stories through language which narratology then pursues to analyse and understand (Garrett introduction). Through narrative it is possible to convey meaning to occurrences created by literary tactics, such as selection or the positioning of moral values (Nünning 6). Twentieth century literature has brought new perspectives and analogical tactics to literature studies. Two examples of twentieth century literature features are the coinage of the unreliable narrator and the popularity of the point of view narrative. Both narrative tactics can be used to control or manipulate the reader and thus emphasize the authority of the narrative itself. This chapter will discuss the use of these techniques in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* from the point of view of the authority of narrative and the manipulation of the reader.

2.1 The Unreliable Narrator

According to Nünning trust is a necessary element in human interaction and thus a basis for all social life (1). She states that the decision to consider someone reliable involves a risk of being misled by the other person (1). Reliability is a necessity for successful interaction, but manipulation is a typical human action as well (ibid.). Unreliable narrators are an inescapable part of life both in reality and in fiction (ibid.). According to Nünning “we are therefore faced with a situation fraught with contradictions: As narrators, we may profit from telling unreliable tales; as listeners, we need reliable information” (1). Unreliable narrators are a common focus point in literary analysis (Nünning 2).

The scholar Wayne C. Booth coined the term unreliable narrator in 1961. According to Booth literary texts are constructed around a dialogue between the implied author and the reader

(304). The narrator is reliable when their actions are in accordance with the implied author and the norms of the literary work, otherwise the narrator is considered unreliable (ibid.). According to Booth the unreliable narrator is clearly distinctive since their actions go against the norms of the work, and therefore the reader can recognise the unreliability and the flaws of the narrator (ibid.). In Booth's theory the unreliable narrator is often a character criticised by the implied author and reader (304). The characters actions or direct speech contrast the norms of the text which is recognised by the reader and implied author (ibid.). Booth's theory has been analysed by many literary theorists and critics afterwards. One of them is Nünning who has further built on Booth's ideas. According to Nünning, Booth's theory is easy to apply when trying to identify the unreliable narrator, but the problem created by it is the oversimplification of the kinds of unreliable narrators (6). Furthermore, previous analysis of the subject has mainly focused on the character narrators and not as much on the omniscient narrators or third-person narrators (Nünning 2).

Nünning has also created a set of criteria for identifying unreliable narrators by "three types of clues: text-internal, text-external and paratextual clues" (10). Text-internal clues can be identified by looking for inconsistencies in the story, discourse level or stylistic features. According to Nünning unreliable character narrators commonly use features such as exclamations, ellipses, rhetorical questions, repetitions and speed in their narration (10). Text-external clues refer to cultural values, knowledge and personality theories as well as typical genre conventions. Paratextual clues can be found in titles or forewords (ibid.).

2.1.1 Text-internal clues

In *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, the unreliable narrator is an anonymous third-person narrator, and the narrative is third-person narration. The third-person narrator has omniscient features, which means that they can relate ideas and thoughts of the characters in the novel. The narrator puts special focus on one of the characters called Sandy Stranger, who is a part of the Brodie set. The narrator gives insight into Sandy's thoughts and depicts situations from her perspective. Similarly, the thoughts and ideas of the other Brodie set girls are revealed at times, but there certainly is a special attention to Sandy.

Moreover, the narrator at times makes remarks, about the characters that hint to further instances in the novel that are unknown to the reader at that time. These remarks are called prolepses, which means that the narrator is foreshadowing an event or important knowledge revealed to the reader further in the story (Currie, "About time" 29). The primary function of prolepses is to create anticipation (ibid.). According to Currie the definition of prolepses' are multifaceted and can refer to multiple kinds of glimpses to the future (ibid.). Wickman defines Spark's prolepses as repetitions of names or phrases that work proleptically, or as situations where the narrator suddenly describes a future event (71). For clarity this thesis will adopt Wickman's definition of prolepses. According to Wickman, Spark is especially famous for her use of prolepses, repetitions, and flash forward techniques. In Spark's writing the prolepses may become unusual repetitions throughout the narrative (Wickman 73). In *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, the Brodie set girls have their own distinctive remarks that are often used repetitively. Especially Rose Stanley's character has a unique prolepsis attached to her and it comes up often in the story:

Rose Stanley was famous for sex (Spark 7).

Rose Stanley who six years later had a great reputation for sex (Spark 13).

By her side walked Rose Stanley, tall and blonde with a yellow-pale skin, who had not yet won her reputation for sex... (Spark 27–28).

Rose is attached to the idea that she is famous for sex from the very beginning of the novel. While the main repetition is always similar the phrasing and the reference to time changes. First it only states that “Rose was famous for sex”. Later, in the novel the repetition starts to imply a timeline to when Rose started to be famous for sex. The repetition is attached to time and thus can be established as a prolepsis, which foreshadows the future and offers more detailed information when plot progresses. The prolepses create inconsistencies in the discourse level of the narration, which makes them a text-internal feature of unreliability. According to Wickman the prolepses emphasize significant information so that it stands out from the text mass (72), and thus captivates the reader’s attention. In addition, Wickman states that the prolepses direct the reader to look at something that does not fit the narrative framework at the time creating a contradiction in the reader’s knowledge (71).

In addition, to the prolepses presenting future instances Spark also uses a flash forward technique to jump through time. The difference between prolepses and the flash forward technique is that flash forwards are situations where the story moves into another time in the future when again the prolepses by Wickman’s definition (71) are mentions to future events which do not move the whole story to the future but mention a detail regarding future events. In other words, prolepses are shorter and less informative than flash forwards. Prolepses and flash forwards could be used as synonyms (Currie, “About time” 29) but there is a distinctive difference between them in the text which is why they have been separated in this study.

The flash forward technique Spark uses creates suspense in the plot (Wickman 68) since it enables the reader to have some further knowledge of the plot. The technique alters the timeline of the narrative making it nonlinear. The story alternates between different times of the students’ lives. After the introduction of the characters the story resets to the students’

childhood and first flashes forward to describe Mary Macgregor's death at the age of twenty-four years:

She ran into somebody on her third turn, stumbled and died. But at the beginning of the nineteen-thirties, when Mary Macgregor was ten, there she was sitting blankly among Miss Brodie's pupils (Spark 15–16).

The flash forward is only the length of a page before the story jumps back to the students' school years. The flash forward is a reoccurring technique in the novel taking the reader to different scenes in the future. The flashes typically only describe one instance at a time and thus are quite brief. They give insight into something happening in the future but often do not explain the reasons behind the occurrences. This may cause the reader to make assumptions about the progression of the plot and creates suspension.

The text-internal clues such as prolepses, repetitions and flash forward techniques all have the same intention to mix the linearity and progression of time in the narrative. The use of these techniques is often combined with factual inconsistencies in the story that alter the discourse level of the text, which is a text-internal feature identified by Nünning (10). The use of these techniques also alters the speed of the narration since the flash forwards vary in length and occur quite often. *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* applies multiple text-internal features linked to unreliability. Through the use of these techniques the discourse level of the novel changes since flashes and prolepses cause contradictions in the story line that affects the reader's knowledge and level of information.

2.1.2 Text-external clues

The text-external clues regarding the narrator have to do with the social norms of the work and the narrator's attitude towards them (Nünning 10). In the novel the narrator can also be described as an overt narrator, who has a distinctive personality and subjective opinions. However, the opinions depicted by the narrator are consistent with the social norms of the real world and the implied author of the text. The narrator considers Miss Brodie a dangerous character especially when compared to the other teaching staff:

This was the first intimation, to the girls, of an odds between Miss Brodie and the rest of the teaching staff. Indeed, to some of them, it was the first time they had realised it was possible for people glued together in grown-up authority to differ at all. Taking inward note of this, and with the exhilarating feeling of being endangered by it, they followed dangerous Miss Brodie into the secure shade of the elm (Spark 10–11).

It could be argued that the use of the word dangerous is an implication to the students' thoughts in this situation. However, their feelings of excitement are already described in a previous phrase and there is no need to repeat the same information. Furthermore, the students have no reason to consider Miss Brodie dangerous currently since they are merely observing the different actions of adults. Katz also states that the Brodie set are still young children and thus are not inclined to distrust their authority figure (626). The last phrase moves from depicting the students' thoughts to describing their actions, which is a change in narrative voice. Therefore, the narrator is making a statement about Miss Brodie and claiming her dangerous. This opinion is contradictory since the other adults working at the school are suspicious of Miss Brodie but the reason behind the suspicion is not explained. Then again Miss Brodie's actions do not seem suspicious to the reader or the students. This contradictory piece of information leaves the reader in an uncertain situation with no clear answers at this point. Later, in the story the reason behind this proclamation is revealed when a young student dies because Miss Brodie urges her to fulfil a dream and go fight in the Spanish Civil War (Spark 124). Miss Brodie's influence is dangerous especially to the young students she guides under the elm tree. In this

situation the narrator issues a warning which concurs with the social norms of the literary work and of real-life society.

Adults and especially teachers are supposed to be dependable instead of dangerous members of the society. The narrator's opinions overall are ambiguous since the narrator both proclaims opinions very prominently and sometimes only explains situations with a neutral attitude leaving the assessment of the situation to the reader. However, the narrator does not go against the norms of society or the literary work and thus cannot be considered unreliable in the text-external sense, but the ambiguity of the narrator does not make them completely trustworthy either. Lyons states that "Spark's narrators were anonymous, but with traits tending to make them not exactly neutral, partial rather than all-knowing" (90). In *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, the narrator expresses opinions in a seemingly random way only taking part in the commentary of the story at times. Lyons also argues that Spark's narrator's knowledge has blind spots when it comes to explanatory information (90). Thus, distinctive remarks about characters or actions are not explained further. The passages of blankness make it impossible for the narrator to be completely omniscient and all-knowing (Lyons 91). Booth argues that "many stories require confusion in the reader, and the most effective way to achieve it is to use an observer who is himself confused" (284). Therefore, the narrator's occasional blankness and confusion feed into the confusion of the reader, and confusion is used as a narrative device.

2.1.3 Unreliability of the Narrator

The narrator in the novel is not strictly applicable to the text-external clues of the unreliable narrator created by Nünning. There are not any paratextual clues of untrustworthiness either. Spark's narrator does not exemplify the most common features of unreliability except in the field of text-internal clues where the narrative techniques are consistent with unreliability. This is especially interesting since it cannot be stated definitely that the narrator is unreliable. However, the narrator's knowledge has blind spots regarding important information about the characters which can mislead the reader. This creates a problematic situation for the reader since if they trust the narrator's comments there is a likely chance they will be misled. Especially in the case of the character Rose Stanley and the prolepsis attached to her. The reader may assume that Rose is known for sex due to sleeping with the teacher Teddy Lloyd, which is Miss Brodie's intention (Spark 119). This may be anticipated from the information distributed by the narrator and the direct speech of Miss Brodie. In this case the reader will eventually find out their mistake, but they will have already been misled. Rose is known for sex for a completely different reason:

Rose was greatly popular with these boys, which was the only reason why she was famed for sex, although she did not really talk about sex, far less indulge it (Spark 110).

There is a possibility to misunderstand Rose's affiliation to sex until the narrator fully explains the reason for this connection. The storyline combines the remarks about Rose to the direct speech of Miss Brodie and the blind spots, which allow the reader to make their own suggestion for the course of events. It cannot be said that the narrator would mislead purposefully since they are clearly not omniscient. However, the ambiguity of the narrative voice can manipulate the reader to make wrong assumptions about the story. The narrative voice and the form of the narrative in itself has authorial control over the reader. Spark combines free indirect style of

narration to the occasional blankness of the narrator (Lyons 91) and the result is a narrator whose objectives are unattainable to the reader until the very ending of the novel.

2.2 Point of View in Narrative

The titular character of the novel is an elementary school teacher called Miss Brodie. The novel depicts Miss Brodie from the projections of other characters, for example her students, lovers, and other teaching staff, but never from her own point of view (Berndt 211). Most of the novel surrounds Miss Brodie as she is a continuous influence on the Brodie set even after they move to the upper schools. First her role is the one of a teacher but later it evolves to a familiar adult, leader of their group and confidant. Miss Brodie is a central character in the novel and therefore the omission of her thoughts and viewpoint is exceptionally odd. The reader must base their opinions of her character, on her direct speech and actions, described from the viewpoint of the narrator or other characters. Due to the omission of her point of view, Miss Brodie's thoughts and emotions are unexplored and leave room for interpretation (Berndt 211).

According to Currie point of view narrative presents the story from one viewpoint at a time by describing, for example, a character's thoughts or actions ("Postmodern" 26). The viewpoint can shift in the novel presenting new ways of seeing the narrative (ibid.) Currie argues that the point of view narrative can have a strong impact on the readers attitude towards characters by creating sympathy ("Postmodern" 26). Sympathy is controlled by access, closeness and distance to the characters (Currie, "Postmodern" 27). Readers can develop sympathy for characters that are not sympathetic in their nature or that go against the reader's moral values (ibid.). This can be achieved by giving access to the inside mind of the characters or by controlling the information distributed to the reader (ibid.). Information accessible to the reader is controlled by where it comes from, for example who relates the information, and how it is presented to the reader (Currie, "Postmodern" 28). In *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, the

tactics of viewpoint manipulate the reader's level of knowledge and their relationship to the characters and especially to Miss Brodie. Since the novel begins from the childhood of the Brodie set the impression given of Miss Brodie corresponds to the knowledge of the characters narrating her life. Miss Brodie is favoured by her students and her life is a part of their lives, for example she has an important role in Sandy and Jenny's playtime outside of school (Spark 18). Miss Brodie is a trusted and loved adult to her Brodie set. However, the character of Miss Brodie is contradicted from the very beginning by the scepticism of the other teachers (Spark 26). Still Miss Brodie's influence is downplayed in the beginning by phrases such as "I always knew your upbringing was a bit peculiar" (Spark 26). This leaves the reader with a sense of a peculiar teacher character but not necessarily someone who is manipulative in nature. Miss Brodie is depicted as a character with strange opinions and an individual personality.

Further into the novel the Brodie set slowly grows up and their perception of Miss Brodie changes. Similarly, the information distributed to the reader alters when the knowledge of the Brodie set increases and they become critical of the world around them. Miss Brodie's selfish ends become visible, and the viewpoint from which Miss Brodie is looked at becomes increasingly critical. In the novel Sandy realises the reality of Miss Brodie's obsession towards the relationship of Rose Stanley and Teddy Lloyd:

And Miss Brodie said to Sandy: "From what you tell me I should think that Rose and Teddy Lloyd will soon be lovers." All at once Sandy realised that this was not all theory and a kind of Brodie game, in the way so much of life was unreal talk and game-planning, like the prospect of a war and other theories that people were putting about in the air like pigeons, and one said, "Yes, of course, it's inevitable." But this was not theory, Miss Brodie meant it. Sandy looked at her, and perceived that the woman was obsessed by the need for Rose to sleep with the man she herself was in love with; there was nothing new in the idea, it was the reality that was new (Spark 119).

A younger version of Sandy considered Miss Brodie's schemes as games that had no impact on the real world. Sandy realizes that the games are actually Brodie's plans for their real lives and starts to question her motives. Sandy's thoughts about her role model change as she starts to consider Miss Brodie ridiculous (Spark 122).

The point of view of the Brodie set develops as they become young adults and correspondingly the impressions conveyed to the reader change. In addition, Kostić draws parallels between the understanding of the reader and the Brodie set:

However, although utterly dazzled by Brodie's seductive powers, just like her set of schoolgirls, the readers soon realize that this schoolteacher represents a powerful projection of the authoritative arrogant dominance and obscene manipulation, seemingly strongly criticized by Brodie herself (Kostić 57).

Moreover, Kostić argues that the reader is able to discover the hidden values Brodie applies as she uses her authority to subdue the Brodie set to her own ends (57). According to Currie the analysis of point of view in fiction resembles the discovering of authorial control ("Postmodern" 26–27). Through the analysis of viewpoint the authority of the narrative can be revealed. In *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, the narrator has the authority to either relay information and thoughts to the reader or omit them. The nonlinearity of the narrative creates a contradiction between the views of the Brodie set as girls versus as adults. Glimpses of the future events and opinions are available to the reader as well as the naïve childlike views of the Brodie set as girls. The information distributed to the reader is affected by the storyline's sequence. Whether the information is accessed through the thoughts of an adult, or a child makes all the difference. The authority of the narrative lies in the gradual exposing of the storyline.

The adult life of the girls is exposed, at first, in short flashes which render some further information to the reader. Therefore, the reader is not completely controlled by the narrative and has a chance to critically assess the characters and their objectives as well as the role of narrator. Moreover, the progression of the narrative enables the reader to grow with the members of the Brodie set and make discoveries with them. Using the complex narrative structure, the narrator alternates between manipulating the reader and showing the reader how manipulation works. The authority of the novel is created through narrative techniques.

3 MISS BRODIE'S AUTHORITY

Kostić describes Miss Brodie's character as impressive and influential and in contrast to the other characters in the novel (56). Katz views Miss Brodie as "a dedicated, charismatic teacher, a Romantic, a non-conformist to traditional conservative Scottish values", further stressing her uniqueness (625). The stark distinction between Brodie and the other teachers creates an opposition between the 'avant-garde' and conservative forms of education (Kostić 56), making Miss Brodie seem like a creative and modern teacher. Katz states that novels with diverse characters enable many possible interpretations of the characters and their motives (625), which makes Miss Brodie difficult to pin down as well. The ambiguity of Miss Brodie's actions and the omission of the reasons behind them make it difficult to have a set opinion of the character. According to Suh Miss Brodie is created as a character whom the reader can have a hard time condemning since she might not understand the consequences of her actions (87). Berndt agrees by stating that Miss Brodie is politically ignorant to a degree that is disturbing (211). Furthermore, Katz says that "she sees herself as a heroine who will save them [the Brodie set] from the pedestrian depths of conventional Scottish morality" (627). Miss Brodie's intentions can be viewed as benevolent since she aims to bring up the Brodie set as positive role models and romantic heroines, still her oblivious conduct is greatly harmful to her students (Katz 623). According to Katz Miss Brodie lacks the understanding of her own motivations and needs, which leads to the misuse and manipulation of students (Katz 621–622). Moreover, Brodie narcissistically implements her own values to the Brodie set by conveying her "values, dreams, fantasies, and delusions of power" to them (Katz 631). Brodie's manipulative conduct reaches its most heightened point when she convinces the student Joyce Emily to go fight in the Spanish Civil War (Spark 112). According to Katz, Miss Brodie's misplaced political views and values of heroism cause the death of Joyce Emily and make her a victim of misused authorial power

(630). Miss Brodie's intentions are ambiguous, and theorists disagree of the level of understanding she has for the consequences of her actions (such as Kostić, Katz). However, the negative influences of her actions are indisputable and universally accepted by theorists. This chapter will discuss the different forms of Miss Brodie's authority and manipulation of the Brodie set.

3.1 The Authority of Miss Brodie

Miss Brodie imposes her authority on her students', and this is depicted partly by the rigorous use of prolepses attached to characters. Stevenson argues that the use of continuous prolepses emphasizes the judgement that Miss Brodie considers herself all powerful:

Almost divine powers and influences are confirmed by regular glimpses of the future and of the various 'ends' of her pupils – in particular, the death in a hotel fire of a character whose fatal bewilderment may well result from her teacher's convincing her of her clumsiness and stupidity (100).

The prolepses support the criticism of Miss Brodie and emphasizes the results of her relations to her students. Furthermore, her tactics to implement personality traits and plan futures to her students try to ensure that the Brodie set conforms with her designs for them (Stevenson 100). The members of the Brodie set all have a specific trait they are known for, and which Miss Brodie enforces, for example Monica Douglas was famous for her mathematics skills and Mary Macgregor for being "a silent lump, a nobody who everybody could blame" (Spark 7–8). These traits are enforced by the actions and direct speech of Miss Brodie. According to Stevenson Miss Brodie's power resembles a novelist or artist in imposing her imagination on the Brodie set (100). In the novel Sandy describes Miss Brodie's conduct as a "method of making patterns with facts" (Spark 72). Miss Brodie trusts in her own capability to control the lives of others for her gain. Her artistic inclinations support her authority as a teacher and fortify her manipulation. Miss Brodie sets distinctive expectations and ideals for each of her students and

then uses her authoritative power to see they adopt them. Stevenson combines the ideologies of fascism to artistic tendencies:

Spark's central character, in other words, employs extreme forms of authority, and rigorously imposes patterns of behaviour on others, in ways strongly identified not only with artistic practice, but with the dictatorial, regimenting tactics of fascism (102).

The dictatorial tactics of fascism are relevant features to the teaching method applied by Miss Brodie. Miss Brodie expresses her own attitudes plainly to her students and teaches them information that she has a personal interest in. As a leader to her students, she follows her fascist heroes, Mussolini, Franco and Hitler, by teaching subjective certainties that are not allowed to be questioned (Kostić 58-59). The boundaries she sets in the classroom demand respect and discipline with the promise of punishment among failure (ibid.). Brodie repeatedly neglects the school's schedules and curriculums teaching instead stories from her personal history. Her students' knowledge is described as "being vastly informed on a lot of subjects irrelevant to the authorised curriculum, as the headmistress said, and useless to the school as a school" (Spark 5). She also teaches completely subjective opinions:

"Who is the greatest Italian painter?"

"Leonardo da Vinci, Miss Brodie."

"That is incorrect. The answer is Giotto, he is my favourite." (Spark 11).

Miss Brodie completely ignores the other possible answers to her very subjective question and only considers the information that is important to herself. The authority of Miss Brodie is fortified by the control of information taught to her students. She creates a set that has its own values which differ from the values of the school and other teachers, for example the Brodie set objects to 'team spirit' which is one of the key values of the Marcia Blane School (Spark 6).

According to Katz "*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* reveals the dangers of a powerful personality seeking to dominate the lives of young impressionable girls" (621). Brodie obtains

authority by using her authoritative role as a teacher to her advantage. Her teaching methods create a distinct difference between her and the other teachers, which enables her to gain respect from the Brodie set (Kostić 61). For example, The Brodie set is at first dazzled by Miss Brodie and completely horrified by the ways of the other teachers, such as Miss Gaunt.

“She did not care at all for the Brodie set who were stunned by a sudden plunge into industrious learning and very put out by Miss Gaunt’s horrible sharpness and strict insistence on silence throughout the day” (Spark 56).

The difference between the teachers’ methods causes the Brodie set to completely dislike Miss Gaunt and this is precisely what Brodie aims for. Eventually this separation between the teachers pays off as the students become obedient to Brodie instead of the school in general (Kostić 61). Therefore, the only acceptable role model becomes Miss Brodie, and she has all the authority over her set.

3.2 The Untrustworthiness of Miss Brodie as a Teacher

Teachers are supposed to meet certain role specific standards, such as teach according to the curriculum and initiate learning of the required subjects (Katz 622). Teachers’ role may also include the governing of the students’ moral, social and psychological development and cognitive growth which are features resembling a surrogate parent (Katz 622). The main objective of education is to create self-proficient citizens (Antikainen et al. 225) which means that teachers are burdened with great responsibility but also have the luxury of power. Teachers have the power to make decision about students learning pace, grades, future careers and self-esteem (Antikainen et al. 229). This places teacher in an influential position where they can affect the student’s wellbeing and moral code either intentionally or unintentionally (Katz 622). According to Katz, teachers’ trustworthiness is demonstrated by three moral virtues: caring for students in healthy ways, representing fairness in academic roles and interactions, and respecting their students and facilitating their growth to individual persons. Katz argues that

Miss Brodie fails to exemplify any of these traits and is thus an untrustworthy teacher. Furthermore, Katz describes Miss Brodie as narcissistic since she pursues to control her students, bring them up as images of herself and all in all shape their lives to satisfy her own personal needs, “Miss Brodie’s form of narcissism is so powerful, in fact, that it functions, I believe, as the primary cause of her pervasive moral blindness and underlies her need to dominate her favoured students’ lives” (627). Miss Brodie has a need to be loved, admired and respected by her students as a powerful role model and adult in their lives (Katz 627–628). Miss Brodie’s students are taught to be obedient to her “own vision of superiority, domination and mastery” (Kostić 62), instead of learning the social norms and rules of the school or ruling society. Brodie’s need to be a loved role model makes her unable to be a trustworthy teacher with sensible use of a teacher’s authority.

Teachers are authoritative figures especially in the lives of young students and have a great impact on the lives of their students. A part of teachers’ authority especially when it comes to young students ensues from the amount of life experiences and knowledge that the teachers have compared to their students (Antikainen et al 230). Teachers have pedagogical authority and thus they should understand the norms and values they represent in their own actions and how these values influence the students (Harjunen 404). Through understanding the norms and values represented teachers can avoid the political and educational indoctrination of students (Katz 632). The indoctrination of students with private values is a violation of the boundaries set for a teachers’ designated role (ibid.). There is a distinct difference between pedagogical authority and authoritarian authority (Harjunen 404) and Miss Brodie’s actions resemble the latter since she indoctrinates her students with her personal values. Miss Brodie’s aim to mould her students into romantic heroines of her own values violates their rights as individuals (Katz 623). Miss Brodie betrays the trust of her students, parents, and the staff of the school and

becomes an untrustworthy teacher (Katz 624). Furthermore, Miss Brodie abuses the authority which she is granted as a teacher when she manipulates her students.

4 CONCLUSION

This thesis has set three research questions that guide the close reading analysis of Muriel Spark's novel *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. The first research question focuses on the authority and manipulation of the narrative and how it affects the storyline and the reader. As stated before, the narrator in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* is an overt third-person narrator which means that the narrator has omniscient features and can provide insight into the characters' thoughts. According to Lyons the narrator is not completely omniscient since their knowledge has blank spots (90–91) and therefore they cannot predict future events with clarity. The omission of information grants authority to the narrative since the reader is dependent on relayed knowledge. The use of prolepses and flash forward technique foreshadow the future to the reader but leave major instances of the storyline untold. This may cause the reader to make their own guesses which are almost certainly doomed for failure. The narrative and the narrator are unreliable in the sense that they use text-internal features of unreliability, such as prolepses and repetition, and their information is filled with blankness and cannot be considered trustworthy.

In addition, the point of view of the narrative manipulates the reader. The reader is mainly regarded with the same amount of knowledge as the Brodie set, who in the beginning of the novel are children. Occasionally the reader receives a remark from the narrator that does not fit the current storyline. The narrator has subjective opinions and expresses thoughts about the occurrences in the narrative. Contradictory information creates an alteration in the level of discourse again leaving the reader in a state of confusion. Furthermore, the reader does not have access to the thoughts and inner world of Miss Brodie. Her opinions and objectives can only be conjectured. In conclusion the distribution of information manipulates the storyline's

progression and the understanding of the reader. The narrative can manipulate by rendering and omitting information displayed in the text.

The second research question focuses on the authority of Miss Brodie and the depiction of it in the novel. Miss Brodie manipulates the Brodie set by placing distinct features and traits on her students that she further acknowledges in her direct speech. She has planned the futures of her set and pursues to bring them up as romantic heroines according to her own values and beliefs. Miss Brodie's teaching methods are adopted from her own fascistic role models as she teaches her students information of her own choosing and completely subjective opinions. Miss Brodie is a stern teacher and going against her instructions will have consequences. The environment created around the Brodie set ensures that Miss Brodie is the role model and the students her devoted followers. Brodie's model as a teacher goes against the typical designated role of teachers and supports indoctrination of students. Whether the indoctrination is intentional or not it still has major negative effects on the students' lives. Brodie's fascistic and subjective teaching causes the students to only learn information valued by her and their priorities are therefore misled.

The third research question focuses on the similarities of the authority of the narrative and the authority of Miss Brodie. Authority is gained by controlling the audience and one simple way of doing that is to control the distribution of information. In the novel both the narrative and Miss Brodie have authority since they have control over information. Moreover, both lose at least some of their authority when the audience, either reader or the Brodie set, obtain enough information to make their own conclusions. The power to manipulate can be obtained in a closed environment through the control of information. The conventional role of a teacher is to distribute information and educate the students to become functioning members of society. As stated by Katz, teachers have an important role with much influence over their students (622). The authoritative power of the narrative and of Miss Brodie is similar to the power of a teacher.

Through knowledge and information control can be either obtained or shared and the person with the authority is responsible of the outcome.

A central theme in this study is the connection between education and fiction. Literary and fiction are an important part of education in general since through a variety of texts the norms and values of society can be represented, and experiences shared. Fiction is by default the product of imagination and thus fictive works do not strictly correspond with reality. However, fiction as well as literature is created by humans who live their lives in constructed societies and cultures that contain their own rules and values. Therefore, the texts written by authors often correspond with reality in some way. Fictive texts are often influenced by issues of reality, and they can reflect on different themes that arise from everyday life. Even texts that are considered fantasy often connect with reality by either completely rejecting reality and creating something in opposition to it or handling issues of reality as the background themes of the texts. Similarly, education is always connected to reality and to the society which values the educational approaches follow. Educational values are created to match the values of society since the aim is to teach students necessary skills to become active citizens. These values are defined by the societies and cultures in question which means that they are distinctive to their surroundings. In some cases, education may not follow the values of the mainstream culture in a society but rather the beliefs of a smaller group or ideology. Nevertheless, the educational values follow some sort of a world view.

Narratives represent the way in which we expect lives to turn out in certain environments. Narratives have the power to alter the turn of events time and time again until a satisfactory path is found. However, even narratives typically follow the rules of literature and try to stick to the boundaries created by the assumptions of well written stories. Humans are like narratives in the sense that we find our paths through trial and error and the scope in which we operate is somewhat predetermined by the expectations of society. A teacher's role is to guide and help

children find their way in society. This means that teachers are the upholders of the norms and rules of the society. This ‘puppeteering’ is necessary and extremely helpful if done correctly and with the child’s interest at heart. However, if the role is taken lightly, without the required knowledge or with selfish endeavours it can have an especially harmful outcome. Spark’s novel really manages to depict the importance of a teacher and the use of authority. The power of a teacher is a recurring topic in the field of education and one that will never become unnecessary, because teachers need to understand both their responsibilities and capability to influence in their line of work.

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