Gaenor Burchett-Vass
March 2014

Repetition and narrative time in Muriel Spark's 'The Bachelors', 'The Ballad of Peckham Rye' and 'A Member of the Family'

'Story time' is not the same thing as 'narrative time'. The Russian Formalists, active during the early years of the twentieth century, used the terms 'fabula' and 'sjuzhet' to refer respectively to the 'chronological sequence of events' and the 'order and manner in which [these events] are actually presented in the narrative' (Jefferson and Robey, 1986: 39). Scenes which occur once in story time, the fabula, can be repeated many times in the narrative, or the sjuzhet, and any such scene will be brought into prominence, or foregrounded, thereby inviting the reader to assign significance to it. Genette's work on 'frequency' in the second half of the twentieth century is built on the foundations established by the Formalists. In his *Narrative Discourse*, first published in French as *Figures III* in 1972, Genette distinguishes three possible methods available to the writer for recounting events: the singulative, repetitive and iterative.

More recent work among narratologists has pinpointed the difficulties inherent in the fabula/sjuzhet distinction, briefly summarised as follows. The fabula is essentially a construct, put together by the reader at the time of reading and revised to create a final version once the text has been read. It has no external existence unless the fabula and sjuzhet can be seen to be absolutely identical. A 'primary' narrative must be identified to enable the construction of a fabula: this is not always straightforward and disagreements cannot easily be resolved. In his 2012 article 'Experiencing meanings in Spark's *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*', Andrew Caink demonstrates how Teresa Bridgeman's analysis of the structure of this novel can be questioned, but there is no standard against which to measure the two readings and no reason why one should be considered correct as opposed to the other. Mieke Bal suggests that this is not necessarily a huge obstacle to analysis because it suffices merely to be able 'to place the various time units in relation to each other' (1997: 88), but what does present a problem is when the 'anachronous are embedded in each other, intertwined to such an extent that it becomes just too difficult to analyse them'. Textual events themselves can also be difficult to categorise. Bal notes that false anachronies arise where the event has taken place in the consciousness of one of the characters (1997: 87), and similar anachronies can be found in direct

discourse because the 'moment of speech is simply part of the (chronological) story'. In postmodern texts which lean towards the anti-narrative, it can often be impossible to judge whether an event took place at all. It should not be supposed that it is a simple matter to extract the *fabula* from the *sjuzhet*: some texts will lend themselves easily to this task, but others - particularly more modern texts - will prove far more resistant; for example, in Robbe-Grillet's postmodernist novel *Le Voyeur*, it is very difficult for the reader to work out what actually happened, or indeed, if any of the events depicted took place at all. Given that the title of Robbe-Grillet's novel refers to an essentially passive activity, it is possible that the 'events' of the novel all take place in Mathias' consciousness and have no place anywhere else.

Menakhem Perry notes that the attempt to separate fabula and sjuzhet necessarily involves the assumption that there is only one fabula. Perry argues that even the attempt to draw out a chronological depiction of events assumes there is only one 'story' to extract: '[t]his distinction assumes that a narrative text has one *fabula* only. But elements of the text may participate in several temporal frames at once'. A related problem is the value judgement this exercise inevitably entails in that the fabula, in being constructed from the sjuzhet, grows in stature accordingly and is assumed to be the superior of the two: 'the distinction between *fabula* and *sjuzhet* confers upon temporal order an exclusive role in the organization of narrative sequence' (1979: 39-40). Perry sounds a note of caution: it is not to be supposed that the *fabula* is superior to the *sjuzhet*, and that the latter has been constructed merely as some sort of code to be cracked in order to access the former.

Assuming that the story time can be extracted and arranged chronologically, it has to be constructed from a narrative time sequence which will in the majority of cases feature analepses, prolepses and instances of repetition, among other examples of the same kind of distortion of time, all of which Genette refers to as 'anachronies'. The *fabula* can only be realised once the *sjuzhet* has been activated in its entirety.

Any analysis based on the fabula/sjuzhet distinction must necessarily focus on an interpretation arrived at *after* the reading event, when the fabula is fully known, and current practitioners have chosen instead to highlight the activity of the reader in constructing meaning *during* the reading process (Bridgeman, Caink, Herman, Perry, Fludernik). Caink suggests that the interpretation of a text post-reading may well differ to

an interpretation that prioritises the reading process. Perry describes the reader receiving the text as a process of 'concretization'. He argues that the linear character of language - the fact that the reader has to read one word after another - is not to be considered a drawback, but is a feature that writers can and do exploit as a means of guiding or misleading the reader. The reader can entertain several hypotheses about the text at once, some of which will be retained and some discarded as new information comes to light. The traces of the discarded hypotheses still remain, however, and Perry argues that these traces do not cease to colour the reader's impression of the text. Information is built up cumulatively: '[l]iterary texts may effectively utilise the fact that their material is grasped successively; this is at times a central factor in determining their meanings. The ordering and distribution of the elements in a text may exercise considerable influence on the nature, not only of the reading process, but of the resultant whole as well: a rearrangement of the components may result in the activation of alternative potentialities in them and in the structuring of a recognisably different whole' (1979: 35). Perry sums up his position as follows: '[t]he effects of the entire reading process all contribute to the meaning of the work' and '[t]he reader of a text does not wait until the end before beginning to understand it, before embarking upon its semantic integration.' To put these arguments into the context of the concerns of this essay, repeated events will feature only once in the fabula, so the effect of their various appearances in the sjuzhet will not be taken into account in any reading that focuses primarily on the story as constructed post-reading.

Herman's notion of 'emplotment' is concerned with how the order in which events are related contributes to the meaning-making process. He asks '[w]hat is the relation between the temporal structure of events in the storyworld (insofar as that can be reconstructed) and the profile they assume in the process of narration?' He goes on to note that 'this question encompasses issues of *emplotment*, that is, the way events are, in being narrated, set out in a particular order that in turn implies a particular way of understanding causal-chronological relationships among them' (2012). The order of events in the text gives rise to meaning in that the reader interprets events in relation to what they have just seen, or seen before, or what they think they are going to see in future. Again, we can see that the causal-chronological links, established during the reading process, risk being overlooked if it is only the fabula under discussion. Textual anachronies such as repeating prolepses can prove a useful and economical way of linking

apparently unconnected narrative events, thus inviting the reader to draw a comparison and make interpretative inferences.

It is important, then, to acknowledge the limitations of the terms fabula and sjuzhet, but it must also be acknowledged that any discussion involving narrative time will inevitably have recourse to them. As Bridgeman points out in her article on prolepsis, this anachrony among others is a device necessarily bound up with the notion of fabula and sjuzhet because its 'essence…lies in the mismatch between the order of the narrative and a notional chronological story' (2005).

Genette's analysis of frequency, based as it is on the fabula/sjuzhet distinction, 'investigates the relationship between the number of times events are inferred to have happened in the storyworld and the number of times that they are narrated' (*Routledge Encyclopaedia of Narrative*, 189). Events can be recounted singulatively (telling once what happened once), iteratively (telling once what happened many times) and repetitively (telling several times what happened once). Merle Coverdale's murder in *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* is an event recounted singulatively: despite the fact that this death is heavily signposted from the outset, the murder scene itself appears in the narrative only once. Bal notes that while the singulative frequency is the most recurrent, an entire narrative constructed like this would be very odd, hence a combination of frequencies is the normal practice (1997: 112). Michael Toolan explains that such combinations are possible because the reader can store and access many different timelines at once: 'we hold all the stories of all the characters in view; we recognise and overlook anachronies - the embedding of voice within voice' (2001).

Dixie and Humphrey's wedding is an example of the repetitive category: the wedding scene is actually narrated three times, and, as Toolan notes, 'an event or episode told with repetitive frequency will inevitably involve anachronies in terms of order' (2001). This will be discussed in more detail later on. An example of the second category, an iterative event, can be found in the first chapter of *The Bachelors*, in Ronald Bridge's deliberate act of memory.

Ronald believes he recognises Patrick when he sees him in the coffee bar, but is at first unable to place him and his concern for the functioning of his 'mental powers' (10) brings to his mind the words of Dr Fleischer from fourteen years previously when Ronald discovers that his epilepsy is incurable. This episode of extradiegetic analeptic recall is something of a false anachrony (Bal, 1997: 87) because the event in question is a cognitive event, Ronald's act of remembering. It takes place in Ronald's consciousness, and is related to us by the same omniscient narrator who is able to reveal the exact state of mind of the specialist as he utters the words Ronald is to memorise and recall thenceforward:

> 'No,' the American specialist had said, irritable with the strain of putting a technical point into common speech, 'there is no reason why your intellect should be impaired except, of course, that you cannot exercise it to the full extent that would be possible were you able to follow and rise to the top of a normal career' (10).

Ronald's habit of calling to mind these words so important to him renders the event an iterative one in narrative time, clearly marked as such by the temporal adverbial phrase 'from time to time' in the following:

> Ronald had retained every one of these words importantly in his memory for the past fourteen years, aware that the specialist himself would possibly remember only the gist, and then only with the aid of his record cards. But Ronald held them tight, from time to time subjecting the words to every possible kind of interpretation (11).

The iterative nature of this event is further confirmed by the appearance in the same paragraph of a second temporal adverbial phrase ('at times throughout the years') and the modal 'would' of habitual activity (Toolan, 2001: 57): 'And anyhow, Ronald **would** think, I can manage' (11, my emphasis). Ronald's careful analysis of the specialist's words is enacted in summary for the reader, interspersed with remembered career advice from his friends. Ronald in this episode is one of Spark's many Job-like figures, surrounded by cheerless comforters who in effect do nothing but remind him of all the professions which are now closed to him because of his affliction.

In the fabula, or story time, Dr Fleischer's words will have been spoken only once, but, unusually for an iterative event, which 'envisag[es] in advance the whole series of occurrences that the first one inaugurates' (Genette, 1980: 72), Dr Fleischer's words are in fact encountered twice by the reader, once in the narrative

present when Ronald brings them to mind after his failure to remember where he has seen Patrick before, and again in the narrative past, when the reader hears the specialist's words in a second analeptic sequence, this time instigated by the narrator. The first flashback, Ronald's act of remembering, is easily processed by the reader because the time-shift is ' "naturalized" as the operation of memory' (Lodge, 1992). Narrative events can appear in the past and then again as a memory in the mind of a character without causing temporal confusion; Rimmon-Kenan notes that '[i]t is because of the present cognitive...act that such events retain, at least partly, their 'normal' place in the first narrative' (2002), so there is a sense in which this kind of analeptic sequence is experienced by the reader as an event in the narrative present. In this instance, Ronald's act of remembering is actually witnessed *before* the event itself. The sequence of time-shifts beginning with the 'false' anachrony in Ronald's cognitive act paves the way for a second embedded analepsis in which the narrator turns to an account of Ronald's early twenties. The narrator takes the reader back to the time when Ronald's fits first began in another extradiegetic analepsis which extends further into the past - and further beyond the boundaries of the narrative - than the first, and provides us with more information about Ronald's personal history. Inevitably, we eventually reach the point in the fabula/story time at which Dr Fleischer speaks the words the reader has already encountered in Ronald's memory-event, and the repetition of these words not only underlines their importance for this particular character, but serves a practical function in that the reader is alerted to the fact that the time frames of the two analepses have now converged and the moment has been reached when Ronald hears the words he will recall for many years to come. It can be seen then, that Ronald's memory-event functions as both an iterative event and a repeating prolepsis: the words of the specialist are experienced proleptically out of chronological sequence and then once again in the rightful place.

In fact, Ronald's life consists of iterative events: the novel opens with a description of the London bachelors' routine and we first meet Ronald while he is doing his weekly shopping; Ronald's life is punctuated by epileptic fits; in the space of one chapter, he is twice seen to throw a shoe. Ronald holds the same conversation over and over: as a bachelor, he discusses food prices, dining arrangements, and whether or not one should marry; as a Catholic, he has compiled a repertoire of conversational sallies to

counter attacks such as that which he is subjected to by Marlene; as a graphologist, he explains that someone's handwriting will not reveal their character or foretell their future, but the inking over the folds in the paper may well reveal a forgery. He has even been involved in the prosecution of Patrick Seton before the events of this novel: 'Ronald…managed to recall the last time he had heard Patrick speak. That had been at the Maidstone Assizes. Then, Patrick had mumbled' (199). Iterative presentation is the reverse of repetition, but here especially in the case of the words of the US specialist, the reader is presented with what is obviously an iterative event that is seen not once, but twice. In Bal's discussion of iterative anticipation, she notes that the event in question is presented in detail and the reader naturally understands that this is an example of something that will happen again and again in the future: the fuller the report, the less credible it becomes because recurring events cannot be exactly the same. However, the narrator is at pains in this novel to impress upon the reader that Ronald has remembered the words of the specialist exactly as they were spoken, and that this is how he experiences them each time he recalls the scene. The event being iterative renders it both analeptic and proleptic in nature: Ronald has recalled these words before and will do so again.

Far from there being any attempt to disguise the repetition by stylistic variation or perspective (Bal, 1997), the event itself - the specialist's diagnosis - is repeated verbatim. But here it is important to note that narratologists have long been aware that repetition is not really repetition. Genette writes that 'none of the occurrences is completely identical to the others, solely by virtue of their co-presence and their succession'. Even if all the words in the repeated account of the event are exactly the same and placed in exactly the same order, this cannot constitute a simple case of repetition, because the reader has seen the words before: the passage in question exists in another place in the same text and one rendition follows another. Bal paraphrases this as follows: 'The first event of a series differs from the one that follows it, if only because it is the first and the other is not'. Bridgeman describes the effect created by the reader's memory of the first encounter with the narrated event: 'repeating prolepsis will always carry within it an analeptic effect, for the eventual narration of an event in its appropriate place in the story always involves recall of the information already established by the *annonce*' (2005). Rimmon-Kenan notes the inevitable change in meaning that will occur on the reader's second encounter with the event in question: 'Strictly

speaking no event is repeatable in all respects, nor is a repeated segment of the text quite the same, since its new location puts it in a different context which necessarily changes its meaning' (2002).

In the example under discussion here, the reader experiences the recollection of the specialist's words exactly as Ronald does, rendering the event iconic of memory in both temporal and experiential terms. Bridgeman notes that

> [a]ll reading is a combination of memory and anticipation. Our focus on whatever moment in the text we have reached will invariably be coloured by our memory of what has gone before and our anticipation of what is to come. The order in which events are presented in the text is therefore crucial to our temporal experience of narrative (2005: 57)

In this instance, exactly the same words are seen twice in the context of analeptic recall, and, as previously noted, the reader encounters Ronald's memory of the event before witnessing the event itself, so when the specialist's words are met for the second time, the reader already carries the memory of those words, and thus the experience of encountering them again mirrors Ronald's own experience.

It is crucial to an understanding of this novel that the reader recognises at the outset the centrality of the character of Ronald and his epilepsy. We are actively encouraged to do so in a variety of ways: the novel begin and ends with Ronald, and we are told more about his background than that of any other character. Bal notes that external retroversions, her term for analepses that extend beyond the time-frame of the narrative, can 'provide information about antecedents…which can be relevant for the interpretation of events' (1997). What we are given in the opening chapter of *The Bachelors* is a history of Ronald not only coming to terms with his epilepsy, but accepting that it is his vocation:

> Ronald does try to accept his epilepsy and incorporates its implications into his way of life. He decides not to marry a girl who attempts to shelter him from its consequences, and when Matthew asks him if he wants to marry, he says, 'No…I'm a *confirmed* bachelor'… The religious pun emphasises that Ronald begins to see the possibility of a vocation in his epilepsy and in his single state (Whittaker, 1982: 61).

The repetition of the specialist's words confirming Ronald's status as an incurable epileptic encourages the reader to assign significance to them, and following their second appearance, the narrator adds Ronald's rejoinder: ' "Perhaps," Ronald said, "I'll be a first-rate epileptic and that will be my career" ' (13). Ronald as

vocational epileptic now takes centre stage, and Ronald's epileptic fits finds their counterpart in the trances of the spiritualist medium, Patrick Seton. Indeed, Ronald's memory-event is an act instigated by this same antithesis and Ronald's initial failure to recognise him.

The discussion thus far has attempted to demonstrate how the repetition of a narrative event can be made to perform an interpretive and symbolic function within the wider context of the novel, and the second example to be considered from *The Bachelors* bears many similarities to the first. During the climactic trial scene which brings the events of the story to a close, Ronald suffers an epileptic fit and once again, this is an iterative event which also figures as a repeating prolepsis because the reader sees Ronald fall on pages 188-189 and once again on pages 197-198. As is the case with the specialist's speech, events are thrown out of chronological sequence and the reader witnesses Ronald's collapse proleptically *before* it takes place in the time-frame currently in operation, and the same fit is seen for a second time in its correct chronological position when the 'proper' time comes.

The 'range', or the length of time that elapses between the event witnessed first proleptically and then chronologically, is short in both examples, and in both instances, although more notably in the case of Ronald's collapse, the reader is able to judge the moment of the event's second appearance with a considerable degree of accuracy. Bridgeman notes that range relates for the most part to the time-frame of the story, that is, the probable amount of narrative time that must elapse before the event can be viewed in its correct place in the chronological sequence, but from the reader's perspective range also involves the physical space of the text, or how many pages must be turned, and the time of reading between the two occurrences measured in hours and minutes (2005). Proleptic *annonces* with only a short range both create suspense and effectively sustain it: with only a few pages separating the *annonce* and the event itself, the reader's attention is bent on the forthcoming appearance of Ronald's anticipated fit in its rightful chronological place. Far from diminishing the effect of suspense, as has been claimed for proleptic episodes, the effect in this novel is to place the reader in the thematically-linked position of seer, or clairvoyant, and there is nothing for the reader to do but to watch anxiously as foretold events rapidly and inexorably unfold. We know that Ronald is 'the third witness for the Prosecution' (188), so it is simply a

question of counting the number of witnesses until the moment when Ronald takes the stand and then waiting for him to fall. The narrator's omniscient and god-like manipulation of narrative time, to be discussed in more detail later on, is clearly demonstrated here: these events will happen, they have already happened, and nothing can stop them from happening.

Both examples under discussion feature short bursts of verbatim repetition, which in the first instance is iconic of the operation of memory, and in the second, as we shall see, the repetition plays out for the reader - again, in iconic fashion - Ronald's ever-repeating present, his life of endlessly repeated iterative moments.

Before Patrick's trial begins, the reader knows that the outcome means life or death for Alice and her unborn child. The question of whether Patrick did or did not defraud Freda Flower of her savings has become a matter of little importance. The reader has been induced from the very beginning to regard Freda Flower as a 'foolish' woman - the adjective is repeatedly attached to her - and Spark does not suffer fools gladly. Freda Flower is an object of ridicule from the outset. Even in a moment of acute psychological distress when she collapses at the end of a séance, the narrator makes Freda into a figure of fun: 'Freda then collapsed with a thud on the floor, where she continued her sobbing, her legs moving as in remorseful pain and revealing the curiously obscene sight of her demure knee-length drawers' (40). The reader is not invited to sympathise with Freda, but to laugh at her underwear. Freda's disastrously vague testimony, during the course of which she is persuaded to believe herself possessed of spiritualistic powers, heightens our contempt for this character and renders us indifferent to her eventual vindication. Alice's predicament is far more worthy of the reader's attention and she is kept constantly in the foreground as a reminder of what is at stake: Alice and Matthew's interspersed snippets of conversation perform a choric function throughout the trial and Patrick glances at Alice frequently as he imagines her demise at his hands. Nevertheless, the real focus of our attention is Ronald, whose epileptic fit at this important stage of the proceedings invites us to consider an alternative reading of the events taking place.

Ronald's role as witness for Patrick's prosecution 'is…mere setting for a match-up particularized throughout the novel' (Hynes, 39). The trial scene dramatises the action of the novel and the characters are placed under scrutiny in a secular counterpart to Ronald's mental courtroom of chapter eight. Ronald and Patrick are linked so effectively as to be each other's double, Ronald's fits and powers of observation while lucid mirroring Patrick's trances and prophetic utterances. Whittaker notes that

> The ancient beliefs in both the prophetic power and the demonic possession of epileptics are implied in the way Ronald functions in the novel. He is a graphologist, and as a detector of frauds he is placed in a clinal relationship with Patrick, a perpetrator of them. His powers of acute perception, analogous to those of a medium, are related to the illness from which he suffers (1982: 60).

Both Ronald and Patrick are gifted with powers of extraordinary perception and this link between the two men is consolidated when the judge asks 'Is this man a medium?' (198) as Ronald falls from the witness box in a fit. Patrick uses his powers to extort money from weak-minded people such as Freda Flower, whereas Ronald's gift is a cross he must bear: 'Ronald's disability, his wound, entails some compensatory penetration, has endowed him with more than ordinary perception: and…this gift can be uncomfortable, generating acrid states of mind' (Kemp, 1974: 65). Ronald sits in court 'with the demonic aftermath of his fit working within him' (121), and he silently accuses Martin Bowles of having swindled Isobel Billows out of twenty times the sum that Patrick has allegedly stolen from Freda Flower. Ronald's epilepsy marks him out as the novel's genuine truth-teller and in the final courtroom scene, it is Ronald's testimony as an epileptic, sitting in judgement on Martin Bowles among others, which is seen in the final analysis to hold far more significance than the evidence he gives as a graphologist.

The trial is an attempt to discover the truth, but as can be clearly seen, the characters all have their own version of the truth, none of which is entirely satisfactory. Detective-Inspector Fergusson's story is truthful only to a point at which it suits his own agenda, and his story is true only 'as far as the law is concerned' (187). Freda Flower's testimony becomes hopelessly confused as she is persuaded to alter her truth for one that suits Patrick's Defence Counsel. Patrick's truth is a version of events most likely to result in his acquittal and Father Socket's truth is an entire fabrication. The latter is countered by Elsie's truth, which is painted in the courtroom as a story motivated by malice. Even Ronald's testimony as an expert

graphologist is cancelled out by that of Fairley, both accounts being equally plausible. As Hynes points out, the jury make the 'right' decision in that Patrick's conviction saves Alice's life, but it is not clear why a guilty verdict was returned: 'what [the jury] would seem to have relied upon as hard evidence came down to rival graphologists' readings necessarily unresolved' (Hynes, 40).

The trial provides a dramatisation of the search for truth, but we are simultaneously reminded of its essentially fictional nature:

> Patrick's trial has all the rituals and conventions of fiction, the opposing counsels each trying to persuade the jury that their version of the plot is the true one. And to achieve this the characters involved take on specific roles (counsel, judge, jury, prisoner) and even use the deceptions of dressing up in costumes and adopting temporary attitudes for their performance (Whittaker, 1982: 100-101).

Whittaker's perceptive observation can be pushed slightly further. The notion of play-acting is introduced early on in the trial scene with Alice and Matthew's comments on the perceptible change in Patrick's voice: ' "I think he must be making a special effort," Alice whispered. "He feels a strong clear voice is called for".' (188). Ronald, Martin and Isobel are then placed in parallel with one another in the space of one paragraph, each shown to be wearing a costume of sorts. Ronald 'had put on his best dark suit for the occasion' (189) and Matthew's remark when he sees Ronald enter the courtroom is important: ' "Here comes Ronald," said Matthew, "in his new dark chalk-stripe. He should have been a Civil Servant." ' (196). The Civil Service is, of course, closed to Ronald as an epileptic, a fact of which we were informed much earlier in the narrative during one of Ronald's interior monologues: ' "The Civil Service: closed to me"' (11). The chalk-stripe suit is significant, because Ronald's pills are in his *other* suit. If we put these two facts together, we see that Ronald takes the stand as an epileptic rather than a graphologist – and, after being seen in two parallel constructions to fumble first in his inner then his outer pockets for the pills which are elsewhere, Ronald duly suffers a fit.

Martin Bowles in his wig and gown is 'instantly wise, unimpeachable' (189), but we have already learnt from Alice that he has not made a success of the case for the Prosecution and Matthew refers to him as a 'clot' (193). Finally, Isobel Billows recites Portia's courtroom speech from Shakespeare's *The Merchant of*

Venice when she tries on Martin's wig. So, Ronald dresses up as a graphologist, but underneath his suit he is an epileptic; Martin looks the part in his barrister's costume, but does not perform his role well; Isobel's actions with the wig and her recitation of a speech made by a character pretending to be a lawyer in another fiction featuring a courtroom finale reveals the purpose behind this juxtaposition of characters in costume: to emphasise that these are unreal people playing parts in a trial that is a fiction.

Correspondingly, the omniscience of the novel's narrator does much to undermine the illusion of realism and highlights instead the artificial nature of the fictional construct. Genette writes that prolepsis presents problems for 'the traditional fiction of a narrator who must appear more or less to discover the story at the same time that he tells it' (1980: 67), but Spark's narrator makes free and frequent use of temporal anachronies in what is often described as a 'god-like' fashion and as a result the reader is constantly adjusting and amending the constructed local and global situation models. In addition to the proleptic *annonce* revealing in advance the event of Ronald's fit, the narrator speaks directly to the reader in another *annonce*: 'Martin got up to re-examine her. "He'll make matters worse," Matthew said, **and he was right**' (196, my emphasis). The narrator also makes free use of the ellipsis within direct speech as a means of summary during the reading of the indictment and the opening of the case for the prosecution, a method used elsewhere in the novel. This has the effect of speeding up time, of course, but an additional effect in this instance is to give the impression of inattention on the character's part; we already know that Defence Counsel Hugh Farmer's mind is elsewhere, because the narrator has free access not only to an overview of the events of the story, but also to the consciousness of the characters. We are told that Hugh Farmer 'was thinking of his elder daughter, at the moment taking her most important examination in music' (189), and the narrator frequently reveals what is passing through Patrick's mind, speaking with his voice through free indirect discourse: '**the liberation of Alice's spirit** was so imminent, it was like a sunny radiance to distract his understanding from the proceedings of the court' (188, my emphasis).

The trial begins *in media res* with an iterative event belonging to Patrick, who visualises Alice's projected death on an Austrian mountainside at various moments throughout the chapter. Patrick's fantasies are prolepsis of a sort, a cognitive act such as Ronald's memory-event, but here we see a glimpse of what a

character imagines or hopes the future to be (Toolan, 2001: 58), which is apt, of course, for a novel in which foretelling the future plays such an important role. The subject matter of *The Bachelors* means that this is a story in which many predictions concerning future events are made, so in a sense the default position is to see an idea repeated or worked over many times, and each prediction can be considered a moment of prolepsis. Predictions made during the course of the story invariably come true, but this is because these predictions frequently take the form of general, pat reassurances and remarks designed to flatter which serve to satisfy the vanity of clients and often become self-fulfilling. For example, Patrick tells Marlene while in a trance that, ' "You were born to be a leader but you have not yet fulfilled yourself. Now is the time to start living your true life." ' (29). Marlene subsequently assumes leadership of the Wider Infinity and purges it of 'cranks', all to Patrick's benefit. Alternatively, and more importantly, the predictions made form part of the story and are therefore narratorial in nature rather than clairvoyant. In effect, the characters are guessing at, and in some cases attempting to manipulate, the end of the story in which they feature, as Caroline Rose does in Spark's first novel, *The Comforters*. Ronald anticipates Patrick's imprisonment and Matthew's subsequent marriage with Alice: ' "I think you'll have a chance after Patrick Seton has served a few months of his prison sentence" ' (83), and in chapter two, Mike accurately predicts Patrick's eventual conviction, the prophecy delivered in a quasi-Biblical register:

> But Mike, with his hands to his temples and head thrown back, began to intone. 'There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. I see the prisoner brought to judgement and cast into outer darkness. There will be a trial. I see a young woman in distress and an older woman justified. I see – ' (39)

Whether or not we can believe that 'Mike's late overflowing of the soul actually did evoke pronounced psychic talents' (150), the fact remains that what we are given in each of these instances is one of those moments of prolepsis so characteristic of Spark's work, the revelation of Lise's brutal death in *The Driver's Seat* being the most well-known and notorious example.

The propensity of every character but Ronald to either fantasise about their future or, in the case of Walter Prett, to rewrite their past, is in stark contrast with Ronald's being fixed in an endlessly repeating present. It was noted above that Ronald's life consists of a series of iterative events - his food shopping, his

graphological work, his conversations - and here at the climax of the story, we witness the most important iterative event: Ronald's epileptic fit, repeated for us here in a moment of repeating prolepsis in which the narrator employs almost exactly the same words. The solipsism of the other characters is not, as Massie claims (1979: 35), something to which Ronald is subject precisely because he no longer expects his future to be any different from his past: his only vocation is as an epileptic and he suffers the same fit repeatedly. The narratorial repetition of Ronald's fit in the courtroom once again imbues the text with an element of iconicity: Ronald's endlessly repeated fit is repeated in full for the reader so that we too are forced to relive the moment.

Ronald's affliction places him firmly in the present and he does not try to organise the world around his own wants and desires as the other characters do. The glimpse given to us of Patrick's consciousness in chapter ten reveals a man who has retained an adolescent's solipsism and who is 'emotionally retarded', a man completely incapable of imagining the existence of the minds of others. By way of contrast, during the episode of his mental trial and judgement of his friends played out in chapter eight, Ronald is seen to put himself in the shoes of others and to supply his friends' answers in their place, in an effort to provide them with an opportunity to defend themselves. For this reason, it seems curious to accuse Ronald of solipsism, a failing from which many of Spark's characters suffer both in this novel and elsewhere. In rejecting a solipsistic attitude and relinquishing the attempt to visualise or control his future, Ronald accepts his role as a character in a pre-existing narrative. Indeed, several readers have equated the figure of Ronald with that of the narrator and author: Richmond likens the epileptic to the artist with 'a special vision that brings moral responsibility' (1985: 85); Kemp compares Ronald with the novelist undergoing 'the vatic frenzies of the oracle or sybil' (1974: 64), or the satirist whose 'exhilaration at accomplished ridicule attractively antidotes any despondency at the nature of what is being ridiculed' (66); Cheyette argues that Ronald 'thinks like an author' and that Spark is 'exploring the extent to which the novelist's imagination and god-like pretensions are, in the end, depraved' (2000: 47). Ronald may certainly be acting as Spark's mouth-piece in his assumed role as implied author, but as a character, his epilepsy has wrested from him any vestige of control over events he may have had and his gradual acceptance of his vocation as epileptic is indicative of his recognition of this. He even rejects the controlling influence of Hildegarde so

that he may pursue this vocation unimpeded. Hildegarde is herself tainted with that solipsism and tendency to worship false idols so prevalent in the other characters.

The examples of repetition in narrative time discussed so far take the form of iterative events presented as repeating prolepses. Bridgeman notes that the textual anachrony of an *annonce* means it is foregrounded, thereby inviting predictive inferences and carrying the implication that it is important to know whatever information is imparted now, at the present moment, rather than later (2005). However, Spark would appear to be setting these temporal anachronies to a separate purpose. Prolepsis is used here to underline the significance of key moments in Ronald's life and to suggest a reading of the events of the novel in the light of Ronald's visionary role as vocational epileptic, emphasised for us through the repetition of the two moments discussed. The narrator's repetition of the exact wording of these proleptic scenes enables the temporal anachrony to function iconically: in the first instance as iconic of memory and in the second as iconic of an endlessly repeating iterative moment. It can be seen, then, that both blocks of time, Ronald's memory-event and his epileptic fit, are in fact curiously independent of time.

The first example to be discussed from the second novel under consideration in this essay - *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* - is rather different in that it involves not verbatim repetition, but a second rendition of the same scene recounted from a different point of view. A character retelling a scene already witnessed fits Genette's framework as a repeated scene retold with a different 'focaliser' (1980). In *The Ballad of Peckham Rye*, Joyce Willis' letter to Dougal recounts in more detail the encounter between Leslie and Richard Willis that Elaine has just described for Dougal's benefit: the letter informs Dougal of the substance of Leslie's conversation and Willis' response to the remarks made (131-132). The doubling and embellishing of this small narrative episode reinforces the larger, global theme of oral storytelling or ballad-making, and on a local level we are confronted with the many versions of Dougal - lover, duplicate employee, police informant - underlined by his response to Joyce's letter which is to improvise a variation on a remark he made much earlier to Merle Coverdale (29).

Joyce's letter clearly serves a practical purpose in the narrative in that it fleshes out the bare bones of an incident previously related by an imperfect witness. The following example of a scene related more than once from a varying perspective differs in that it does not supply any new information as far as the plot is concerned: what it does do is to tell us more about the character of Mavis, to forge a link between Mavis and Trevor, and to re-enact for the reader the process of oral story-telling.

Mavis's opening conversation with Humphrey is repeated when Mavis tells the story of the encounter to Trevor Lomas later on (11). This scene is fresh in the reader's mind, having taken place only moments before in terms of reading time. Mavis' rendition of the encounter is a scene of analeptic recall: as is the case in the examples from *The Bachelors* previously discussed, we are given access to a character's memories, this time through the character's own direct speech. The repetition is partially disguised by Mavis' viewpoint, but it is obviously recognisable as the same scene and the differences between the two accounts are clearly foregrounded. Mavis freely embellishes her story. She is clearly anxious to give the impression that she faced down Humphrey rather more actively and conclusively than she actually did. Additional snippets of dialogue are introduced ('You just hop it, you' (11)) which the reader knows were not actually uttered at the time. Mavis recreates the encounter as she would have liked it to happen: she has included what she *would* have said to Humphrey had she thought of it at the time, or had she had the courage to do so. The way in which Mavis retells the story adds to the impression of her as a weak and ineffectual woman when her intention is to create quite the opposite effect. In fact, Mavis rapidly emerges as a relatively powerless character. Words describing Mavis' actions - 'slammed', 'burst out', 'arguing', 'quick little steps' (7-11) - have the cumulative effect of depicting a woman who exhibits uncontrolled, flamboyant, but essentially ineffectual behaviour. For all of Mavis' bluster, Dixie shows very little respect for her and Leslie is completely beyond either of his parents' control. In parallel with Mavis, Trevor also exaggerates his encounter with Humphrey, claiming to have 'knocked his head off' (11) when the reader has been told previously that the combatants 'suffered equal damage to different features of the face' before they were 'parted by onlookers' (9); Trevor and Humphrey are equally matched as potential suitors for Dixie, and this is further illustrated in Spark's use of tableaux. Both Trevor and Mavis choose to

underplay Humphrey's performance and elaborate on their own, so we can attribute a level of bravado to each. More important than character-creation, however, is the element of story-telling in these episodes. What we see is an enactment of how people tell stories, and Spark's text demonstrates through these Chinese-whispers style repetitions how oral narratives come into being. Here, Trevor and Mavis are actively creating the ballad of Peckham Rye.

Once again there is an element of textual iconicity in that the repetitions mirror the process of gossiping and rumour-mongering. The novel ends more or less where it begins, with the story of the jilted bride being repeated and passed from teller to teller, until the tale passes into local legend as the ballad of Peckham Rye. We are witness to the creative process as the story of Humphrey and Dixie passes from mouth to mouth and the tale gathers several different endings in the telling. We see how the story of Humphrey and Dixie is altered and amended as it moves from pub to pub in an echo of Humphrey's own movements. Eventually, the story takes on an existence in its own right and what really happened is no longer relevant. Ballads are narratives with an outcome, but Humphrey and Dixie's eventual marriage is *not* the outcome of *this* ballad, because the people of Peckham Rye do not agree on the ending of the story after Humphrey leaves Dixie at the altar:

> Some said Humphrey came back and married the girl in the end. Some said, no, he married another girl. Others said, it was like this, Dixie died of a broken heart and he never looked at another girl again. Some thought he had returned, and she had slammed the door in his face and called him a dirty swine, which he was. One or two recalled there had been a fight between Humphrey and Trevor Lomas. But at all events everyone remembered how a man had answered 'No' at his wedding (143).

The jilting scene itself is therefore the climax of the eponymous ballad to which the inhabitants of Peckham Rye supply their own individual resolutions. The dramatic resonance of this event and its status as the high point of the ballad merits its repetition. Spark's novel closely reflects the border ballads on which it is based:

> [t]hese poems are typically short to the point of being elliptical, show great narrative economy, make use of laconic dialogue and stylised description, and introduce scenes of death and often of violence and the supernatural. They are also transmitted by oral tradition and much modified in the telling. All these qualities are to be found embodied or referred to in the novel, which affirms the connection between its story and the ballad or folktale tradition by drawing attention at the beginning and end to the way in which, even in a twentieth-century urban community, folklore and legend enjoy a vigorous life (Page, 1990: 28).

We see Humphrey's refusal to marry Dixie twice, three times if we include the episode in Dougal's room in which Dougal enacts the forthcoming wedding scene and supplies Humphrey with the words he is to speak when he jilts Dixie: 'Then he put the plate aside and knelt; he was a sinister goggling bridegroom. "No," he declared to the ceiling, "I won't, quite frankly." ' (112). The extent of Dougal's influence over Humphrey is made clear, both here and in the response Humphrey gives to Arthur's enquiry after the jilting:

> ' "She's blaming Dougal Douglas. Is he here with you?"
>
> "Not so's you'd notice it," Humphrey said.' (143).

In a sense Dougal *is* present at Dixie's wedding after all.

The opening chapter of *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* is enormously complicated in its organisation of narrative time and it is debatable whether this chapter should be taken as the main temporal frame or should be treated as an extended prolepsis. If taken as the main frame, then the events to follow are told in analepsis, right up until Dixie tells us that she has a cold, which is when the two temporal strands meet. Once Trevor and Humphrey have left the pub to fight in the car park, the jilting scene is seen for the first time in an analepsis which contains a brief prolepsis - Arthur Crewe's words on the wedding that didn't happen feature in the next day's newspapers (8) - and another analepsis within the framing analepsis, in which Dixie tells Humphrey about her cold. The latter serves the reader as another time marker much later in the novel, when, following the departure of Dougal, Dixie's complaint that she has a cold provides an indication that the wedding day is almost at hand. The reader is in this way made aware that narrative events have caught up with themselves. Changes in tense also guide the reader through the forest of analepses and prolepses: the switch to the simple past perfect - 'She had said' (8) - indicates that yet another time shift has occurred.

Repetition can be seen in this way to perform a practical function in aiding the reader to locate the end of a time shift, which will in turn contribute to the reader's construction of a global time frame. Repetition

can also alert the reader that a temporal shift in the narrative has occurred. When Trevor and Humphrey start fighting, the barmaid is twice heard to order the two men outside (7&9). It is not to be supposed that the barmaid actually uttered her words twice; instead, the reader understands that the narrative has jumped forward in time from the jilting scene and Humphrey's subsequent departure to the moment when the analepsis begins, after Trevor and Humphrey have been ordered out of the Harbinger. What is notable here is that we are given two pieces of information when we only need one - it would have been enough merely to hear the barmaid say 'Outside', and yet we are shown the female bystander's comment twice as well: ' "It wouldn't have happened if Dougal Douglas hadn't come here" ' (7&9). In fact, the woman's comment is foregrounded in two ways: firstly, in that it is repeated, and secondly in that the speech adverbial 'remarked' breaks the pattern established prior to this moment. Until this point, every spoken comment is marked simply as 'said'. The change calls attention to the woman's remark, which is in fact an important one because it refers to Dougal Douglas for the first time. The responsibility for the events of the narrative to follow is placed squarely on Dougal's misshapen shoulders at this early stage. The 'remark' is also understood as an observation rather than a conversational turn. We do not know the identity of the woman's interlocutor, and she receives no reply. The narrative switches at this point to the aborted wedding scene, so the remark is left hanging in the air immediately before the reader sees the scene of the jilting for which Dougal is being blamed. The indefinite article – '*a* woman' – spotlights the remark itself, not the speaker, as does the positioning of the remark in the sentence, which comes *before* we know who is speaking and to whom. The woman is not important. Her comment *is*, because it serves as the repeated refrain of a ballad, it introduces our hero as a troublemaker, and it sets up what is arguably the primary narrative.

We can see, therefore, that repetition in dialogue or direct speech can function as much more than a simple indication that a time-shift has occurred. The focus of Spark's short story *A Member of the Family* is a spoken invitation, which manifests itself throughout the text at various points and in several different forms: however, the invitation turns out to have an entirely unexpected outcome for the recipient.

Trudy meets Richard Seeton, ostensibly by chance, while holidaying in Southern Austria with Gwen, and she embarks on a love affair with him. Trudy is very keen to meet Richard's mother, because for her, this will signify that Richard's intentions are serious. The invitation is not forthcoming, however, and Trudy becomes steadily more obsessed with the idea. It seems as if Richard is losing interest in the relationship, but finally, Trudy is invited to meet Lucy Seeton. The meeting does not go as Trudy had envisaged: Richard doesn't stay, but leaves Trudy to dine with Lucy and Gwen. The following Sunday, Trudy has dinner with Lucy again, and this time there are two other women present as well as Gwen. The five of them spend the whole evening discussing Richard. Trudy finally realises that all these women – there are at least another three she has yet to meet – are Richard's ex-girlfriends, as, indeed, is she. Trudy, as one of Richard's exes who dines with his mother every Sunday, has become a 'member of the family'.

The opening scene of the story, including the all-important invitation, is reproduced below:

> 'You must,' said Richard, suddenly, one day in November, 'come and meet my mother.'
> Trudy, who had been waiting for a long time for this invitation, after all was amazed.
> 'I should like you,' said Richard, 'to meet my mother. She's looking forward to it.'
> 'Oh, does she know about me?'
> 'Rather,' Richard said.
> 'Oh!'
> 'No need to be nervous,' Richard said. 'She's awfully sweet.'
> 'Oh, I'm sure she is. Yes, of course, I'd love – '
> 'Come to tea on Sunday,' he said. (*Complete Short Stories*)

The story opens at the defining moment when Richard invites Trudy to meet his mother – a moment which signals the end of the relationship, rather than its beginning, as Trudy is to discover later. This opening scene is repeated almost in its entirety about half-way through the story and when we see this scene for the second time, we already know that something is wrong. We have plenty of reason to suspect that Richard's commitment to the relationship is on the wane. The phrase 'a member of the family', which crops up on a regular basis, becomes more and more sinister as the story wears on and in fact, the story closes with these words, by which time both Trudy and the reader are aware of their true meaning. As noted in the introduction to this section, words and phrases are repeated in a sequence and the relative positions of successive repetitions within that sequence invite the reader to respond differently each time. Here, the repeated phrases quickly lose their innocence and their assumed meaning is gradually replaced by another.

In his biography of Spark, Stannard tells us that she stayed with Christine Brooke-Rose in the Austrian Alps, and when asked what she thought of the view, she replied 'It's just like Wales'. Stannard notes that everyone laughed, although 'privately [Brooke-Rose] thought it verged on bad manners in a guest' (2009: 214). Spark may or may not have picked up on Brooke-Rose's mild displeasure, but in any case this remark is given to Trudy, who tells Gwen that she thinks Southern Austria is 'all rather like Wales' (124). The reader already knows that Gwen and Richard talk about Trudy behind her back: 'as he told Gwen afterwards, this remarkable statement was almost an invitation to a love affair' (127). We can therefore infer that Gwen has also told Richard of Trudy's dull remark about Wales, because Richard himself makes this comparison while he and Trudy are out boating: ' "It looks like Windermere today, doesn't it?... Sometimes this place,' he said, 'is very like Yorkshire, but only when the weather's bad. Or, over on the mountain side, Wales" ' (128). It is obvious now to the reader that Richard is amusing himself at Trudy's expense because he elaborates and improvises on her original dull-witted observation: they are on a lake which looks like Windermere, another lake; the landscape of Southern Austria is similar to Wales because it has mountains, as does Wales; furthermore, the Austrian Alps look just like Yorkshire when it's raining because it rains in Yorkshire too. Trudy, of course, is completely unaware that she is being mocked.

In fact, Trudy is manipulated in a more calculated manner than this: Richard's appearance in Austria was most likely engineered, and the intention to recruit Trudy as a member of the family was there right from the start. Trudy was not ensnared purely by chance: she was deliberately targeted as the next victim. Even before Trudy meets Richard's mother, she is already cast as a member of the family in her relations with Gwen:

> Trudy wanted to move her lodgings in London but she was prevented from doing so by a desire to be near Gwen, who saw Richard daily at school, and who knew his mother so well. And therefore Gwen's experience of Richard filled in the gaps in his life which were unknown to Trudy and which intrigued her (129).

Already, Trudy spends much of her time discussing Richard in the company of another woman. So desperate is she for news of him that she suppresses her wish to change lodgings in order to have ready

access to information about her lover from Gwen. Trudy is playing out by way of rehearsal what will be her role eternally once Richard has finished with her.

As previously noted, Richard's suggestion that Trudy come and meet his mother is very much the focus of the story and, for that reason, the invitation appears many times across the text, in one way or another. Trudy is made very anxious when the invitation if not forthcoming and the reader gradually comes to recognise the many repetitions of the invitation as iconic of Trudy's obsession with it.

Richard's invitation is heard twice in the opening scene, but the wording is slightly different each time: 'You must...come and meet my mother'/'I should like you...to meet my mother'. The difference between the two versions of the invitation is one of modality, and it is an important difference. In relating the conversation to Gwen, Trudy may prefer the second version to the first, for example, depending on how she wishes to depict her relationship with Richard. The first invitation – 'You must...come and meet my mother' – has a casual, throwaway air about it, whereas the second, 'I should like you...to meet my mother', is more formal and considered, and it expresses a direct wish on Richard's part, which the first invitation does not. The second of these two statements is expressive of a desire on the speaker's part to gain the addressee's approval. In fact, when Trudy does relate the conversation to Gwen, she opts for a modified version of her own: 'He said, "I want you to meet Mother. I've told her all about you', a version which places an even greater emphasis on Richard's imagined commitment to the relationship: 'should like' has become 'want' and 'I've told her all about you' is a more fanciful rendition of Richard's 'Rather,' in response to Trudy's question, 'Oh, does she know about me?' Trudy clearly wishes Gwen to believe – and is also perhaps trying to convince herself – that Richard has spent many hours regaling his mother with tales of Trudy and her delightful 'young way'.

In fact, we see at least three different versions of Richard's invitation. One is clearly Trudy's voice because it is rendered in direct speech and addressed to Gwen. That is Trudy's version of events. But we see two versions of the invitation in the opening scene, both in direct speech, and both uttered by Richard. It would be tempting to imagine that Richard simply repeated his invitation in the belief that Trudy had not

heard or understood him the first time: one could argue that she is too 'amazed' to respond initially, but as we saw with the examples taken from *The Ballad of Peckham Rye*, it is not to be supposed that the character has actually made the utterance in question twice. It is a narratorial trick, altering the tale slightly in the telling. The character's words are heard by the reader again after a brief interlude in which the reader is supplied with a little more information, so that on hearing the words a second time, the reader's reaction to the utterance is modified in response to the narratorial intervention.

There is another alternative explanation: when telling stories, we don't necessarily remember verbatim what someone said, and will give instead a modified version of the original utterance which simply captures the gist. The narrator's trick here is to mimic that process, but in a written form – a form that usually purports to record events exactly as they occurred. The different versions of Richard's invitation seen here give a sense of the vague woolliness one would expect from a story told verbally. However, given that the narrator is supposed to know exactly what was said and to record it faithfully, one could argue that either Spark's narrator is not actually omniscient, or - and what is a more likely explanation given what else we know of Spark's concerns and preoccupations as a writer - the varying renditions of the invitation are there to remind the reader that this is fiction, and that the words were never actually spoken at all.

Conclusions

This essay has explored the ways in which Spark uses repetition in narrative time. A close examination of examples taken from the two novels published in 1960 and the short story *A Member of the Family* demonstrates that textual repetition in Spark's work functions on many different levels and is instrumental in the creation of meaning during the reading process. On a practical level, repetition marks time-shifts for the reader and can provide additional information about both plot and characters. Repeated sections of text were shown to be iconic of the function of memory and a continually recycled present in Spark's use of iterative events presented as repeating prolepses. Spark's particular use of prolepsis situates a flash-forward device in the past as memory, in the present as an iterative event, and in

the future as a fantasy or a prediction. We also encountered the partial disguise of repetition through the reiteration of an event with a different focaliser. Repetitive structures in *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* were seen to reflect the structure of an external, informing text to which the text under consideration alludes. Repetition bestows significance and can serve as an aid to interpretation, which can in turn lead to accusations of didacticism: Cheyette describes *The Bachelors* as 'overly didactic and moralistic' (2000: 49) and Massie notes that 'the reader is more happily placed in his certainty of what is going on and how he is to judge it in *The Bachelors* than in any of...Spark's other novels' (1979: 43). Most importantly, repetition in Spark's writing works to highlight the artificiality of the fiction.

Gaenor Burchett-Vass, March 2014

Bibliography

BAL, M. 1997. *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
BRIDGEMAN, T. 2005. Thinking Ahead: A Cognitive Approach to Prolepsis. *Narrative.* 13**,** 125-159.
CAINK, A. 2012. Experiencing meanings in Spark's The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie. *Journal of Literary Semantics.* 41**,** 121-138.
CHEYETTE, B. 2000. *Muriel Spark.* Tavistock: Northcote House.
FLUDERNIK, M. 2009. *An Introduction to Narratology.* London: Routledge.
GENETTE, G. 1980. *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
HERMAN, D. 2012. *Narrative Theory: Core Concepts & Critical Debates,* Columbus, Ohio University Press.
HYNES, J. 1993. Muriel Spark and the Oxymoronic Vision. *In:* HOSMER, R. E. (ed.) *Contemporary British Women Writers: Narrative Strategies.* New York: St Martin's.
JEFFERSON, A. & ROBEY, D. 1986. *Modern Literary Theory: A Comparative Introduction.* London: Batsford.
KEMP, P. 1974. *Muriel Spark.* London: Paul Elek.
LODGE, D. 1992. Time-Shift. *The Art of Fiction.* Harmondsworth: Penguin.
MASSIE, A. 1979. *Muriel Spark.* Edinburgh: Ramsay Head Press.
PAGE, N. 1990. *Muriel Spark.* Basingstoke: Macmillan.
PERRY, M. 1979. Literary Dynamics: How the Order of a Text Creates Its Meanings [With an Analysis of Faulkner's 'A Rose for Emily']. *Poetics Today.* 1**,** 35-64 + 311-361.
RICHMOND, V. B. 1985. *Muriel Spark.* New York: Ungar.
RIMMON-KENAN, S. 2002. *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics.* London: Routledge.
ROBBE-GRILLET, A. 1958. *Le Voyeur*. New York: Grove Press.
SPARK, M. 1960. *The Bachelors.* London: Penguin.
SPARK, M. 1960. *The Ballad of Peckham Rye.* London: Penguin.

SPARK, M. 2002. *The Complete Short Stories.* London: Penguin.
STANNARD, M. 2009. *Muriel Spark: the Biography.* London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.
TOOLAN, M. 2001. *Narrative: A Critical Linguistic Introduction.* London: Routledge.
WHITTAKER, R. 1982. *The Faith and Fiction of Muriel Spark.* London: Macmillan.