



Muriel Spark's Stylish Spinster: Miss Jean Brodie Past Her Prime

Hope Howell Hodgkins



Maggie Smith in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1969)



Fashion succeeds by promising to annul the fragmented conditions of modernity with the imposition of a coherent subjectivity.

Leslie Rabine / Joanne Finkelstein





Baudelairean *dédoublement*: The wise man is
“one who had acquired by habit a power of
rapid self-division (*dédoublement*) and thus of
assisting as a disinterested spectator at the
phenomena of his own ego.”

-D'Essence de la Rire

“. . . head up, like Sybil Thorndike, her nose arched and proud.”



**She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.**

Alfred, Lord Tennyson
"The Lady of Shalott"



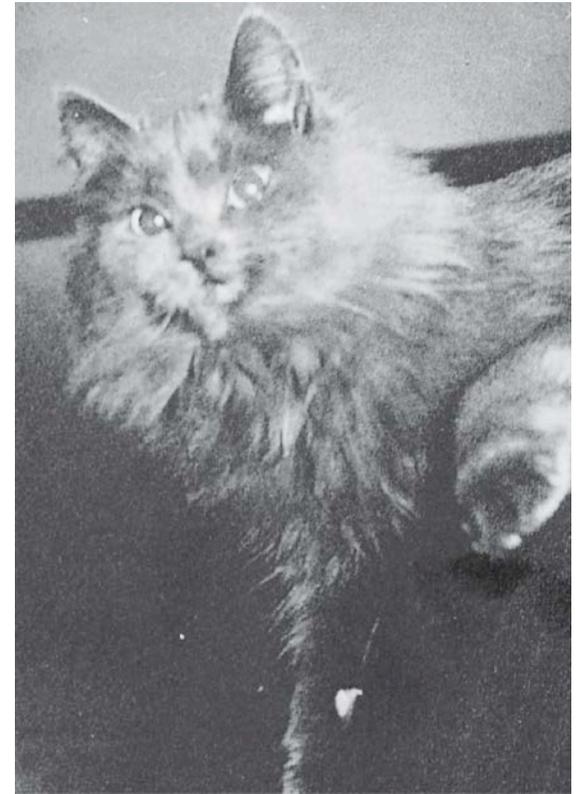
*The Lady of Shalott, William Holman Hunt, 1889-92
(Wadsworth Museum of Art)*



The Girls of Slender Means
Edinburgh Festival 2009



Edwardian blue silk damask dress:
“Bluebell”



Bluebell the cat

B6218
Schiaparelli





*Schiaparelli dress,
1938*

Schiaparelli Pink



Schiaparelli hat, 1948





The Driver's Seat,
1970

MODERN CLASSICS



Muriel Spark
The Driver's Seat



The Driver's Seat (European title: *Identikit*), 1974
Mona Washbourne & Elizabeth Taylor



“Plump, motherly”:
Spark with her son, early 1940s

Her own work of art:
Spark in Rome, 1970 (Jerry Bauer, NLS)





Stylish into old age. . . .



[A]n artist is only an artist on condition that he is a double man and that there is not one single phenomenon of his double nature of which he is ignorant.

Charles Baudelaire, “D’Essence de la rire”