Muriel Spark’s Stylish Spinsters: 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 Girls of Slender Means
Edinburgh Festival 2009
Edwardian blue silk damask dress: “Bluebell”

Bluebell the cat
Schiaparelli dress, 1938

Schiaparelli Pink

Schiaparelli hat, 1948
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. . . .
An 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”