

# Notes

---

1. Alan Massie, *Muriel Spark* (Edinburgh: Ramsey Head Press, 1979), p. 20.
2. Muriel Spark, 'What Images Return', in *Memoirs of a Modern Scotland*, ed. Karl Miller (London: Faber and Faber, 1970), pp. 151–2 (originally published in the *New Statesman* in 1962).
3. Ruth Whittaker, *The Faith and Fiction of Muriel Spark* (London: Macmillan, 1982), p. 18.
4. Derek Stanford, *Muriel Spark: A Biographical and Critical Study* (London: Centaur Press, 1963), p. 43.
5. Derek Stanford, *Inside the Forties: Literary Memoirs 1937–1957* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1977), p. 152.
6. Stanford (1963), p. 28.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Stanford (1977), p. 184.
9. Muriel Spark and Derek Stanford, *Emily Brontë: Her Life and Work* (London: Peter Owen, 1960; repr. Arrow Books, 1985), pp. 11–12. The biographical sections of the volume are by Muriel Spark.
10. Stanford (1963), pp. 57–8.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
12. Muriel Spark, 'My Conversion', *Twentieth Century*, CLXX (Autumn 1961) 58–9.
13. Stanford (1977), p. 189.
14. 'My Conversion', pp. 59–60.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 60.
16. Stanford (1963), p. 62.
17. 'My Conversion', p. 62.
18. Frank Kermode, 'The House of Fiction: Interviews with Seven English Novelists', *Partisan Review*, XXX (Spring 1963) 80.
19. *Daily Telegraph*, 25 September 1970, p. 15 (Muriel Spark was interviewed in London by Jean Scroggie).
20. Kermode, pp. 79–80.
21. Patricia Stubbs, *Muriel Spark*, 'Writers and their Work' series (Harlow: Longmans and British Council, 1973), pp. 5–6.
22. Massie, p. 21.
23. Alan Bold, *Muriel Spark*, 'Contemporary Writers' series (London: Methuen, 1986), p. 41.
24. Malcolm Bradbury, *Possibilities: Essays on the State of the Novel* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 248.

25. Frank Kermode, 'Sheerer Spark', *Listener*, 24 September 1970, p. 426.
26. Bold, p. 43.
27. Peter Kemp, *Muriel Spark*, 'Novelists and their World' series (London: Paul Elek, 1974), p. 37.
28. Whittaker, pp. 48–9.
29. Bold, p. 48; Kemp, pp. 34–5.
30. Kemp, p. 37.
31. Bold, pp. 53, 50, 49.
32. Stubbs, p. 8.
33. Massie, p. 30.
34. James Hogg, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner, Written by Himself*, 'Oxford English Novels' series (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 124–5.
35. Massie, p. 31.
36. Cf. Muriel Spark's comments on marriage in 'My Conversion': 'It's a bit of a nuisance [for a Catholic] not being able to have a sex life if you are not married, but it has its advantages if you have a vocation, a mind obsessed with a certain subject or a job to do in life. It's not so easy for people less obsessed. The best thing then is to get married if you can. . . .' (p. 61)
37. Bold, pp. 59–62.
38. Kemp, pp. 59–70.
39. Whittaker, p. 62.
40. Francis Russell Hart, *The Scottish Novel: A Critical Survey* (London: John Murray, 1978), p. 302.
41. Massie, p. 48.
42. A. S. Byatt, 'Whittled and Spiky Art', *New Statesman*, 15 December 1967, p. 848.
43. Stubbs, pp. 24–5.
44. The point is made by Kemp in his fine discussion of this novel (pp. 84–96).
45. Kermode, 'Sheerer Spark', p. 426.
46. *Ibid.*
47. Whittaker, p. 78.
48. Kemp, p. 101.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 104.
50. Whittaker, p. 70.
51. Stubbs, pp. 26–7.
52. Whittaker, p. 115.
53. Kemp, p. 115.
54. *Ibid.*
55. Bradbury, pp. 250–1.
56. As I was writing this chapter a psychiatrist was reported as saying, at a meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, that 'many murder victims have personality disorders and seal their fate by provoking their killers' (*The Times*, 8 September 1988). An interviewer who talked to Muriel Spark in the year in which *The Driver's Seat* was published refers to the 'modern Swedish furniture' in her Rome apartment (*Daily Telegraph*, 25 September 1970, p. 15).
57. Kermode, 'Sheerer Spark', p. 426.

58. Bold, p. 94.
59. Kemp, p. 132.
60. Whittaker, p. 119.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 131.
62. Bold, pp. 95–6.
63. Whittaker, p. 121.
64. Bold, pp. 96, 98.
65. Kemp, p. 141.
66. *Ibid.*, pp. 141, 146, 157.
67. Whittaker, p. 103.
68. *Ibid.*, pp. 105, 104.
69. Bold, pp. 99, 101.
70. Whittaker, pp. 82–3.
71. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
73. Bold, p. 110.
74. With Muriel Spark one ought never to take anything for granted, but in fact 30 June 1950 *was* a Friday. However, the date was not, strictly speaking, ‘right in the middle of the twentieth century’ (p. 200): that would presumably have been midnight on 31 December 1950/1 January 1951.
75. Whittaker, p. 121.
76. Bold, p. 114.
77. One of the sections of Proust’s *A la recherche du temps perdu* is titled *A l’ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*.
78. According to Derek Stanford, she had been commissioned by the publisher Frank Sheed to write a book on Job in the early 1950s; Stanford recalls her reading part of the introduction to him, but it seems never to have been finished. On 15 April 1955 Muriel Spark published in *The Church of England Newspaper* ‘The Mystery of Job’s Suffering’, a substantial review of C. J. Jung’s *Answer to Job* in an English translation. The essay suggests that ‘The stumbling-block for most intelligent readers of *Job* is the epilogue’.
79. Bold, pp. 116–18.
80. There is also some self-quotation in this novel. A speaker on the BBC radio programme ‘The Critics’ singled out for praise, as an example of Muriel Spark’s wit in *A Far Cry from Kensington*, the expression ‘a rapacity for suffering’; the phrase is also used of Caroline Rose in *The Comforters* (Penguin edition, p. 38). Possibly a detailed search would yield further examples.
81. Professor Philip Thody tells me that the expression ‘pisseur de copie’ appears not to exist in French, though there is a slang expression ‘un pisse-copie’, meaning a hack-writer.
82. ‘What Images Return’, p. 152.
83. *London Review of Books*, 2 June 1988.
84. Massie, p. 76.
85. Patrick Parrinder, ‘Muriel Spark and her Critics’, *Critical Quarterly*, XXV (Summer 1983) 23–31.

# Select Bibliography

---

## MURIEL SPARK'S WRITINGS

### NOVELS

- The Comforters* (1957)  
*Robinson* (1958)  
*Memento Mori* (1959)  
*The Ballad of Peckham Rye* (1960)  
*The Bachelors* (1960)  
*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1961)  
*The Girls of Slender Means* (1963)  
*The Mandelbaum Gate* (1965)  
*The Public Image* (1968)  
*The Driver's Seat* (1970)  
*Not to Disturb* (1971)  
*The Hothouse by the East River* (1973)  
*The Abbess of Crewe* (1974)  
*The Takeover* (1976)  
*Territorial Rights* (1979)  
*Loitering with Intent* (1981)  
*The Only Problem* (1984)  
*A Far Cry from Kensington* (1988)

### SHORT STORIES

*The Stories of Muriel Spark* (USA edition, 1985; UK edition, 1987) contains stories that appeared earlier in *The Go-Away Bird and Other Stories* (1958), *Voices at Play* (1961), *Collected Stories I* (1967) and *Bang-Bang You're Dead and Other Stories* (1982). *Voices at Play* also contains the scripts of several radio plays.

### POEMS

- The Fanfarlo and Other Verse* (1952)  
*Collected Poems I* (1967)  
*Going Up To Sotheby's and Other Poems* (1982)

### BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM

(Edited with Derek Stanford) *Tribute to Wordsworth: A Miscellany of Opinions for the Centenary of the Poet's Death* (1950)

- Child of Light: A Reassessment of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley* (1951)  
 (Edited, with introduction) *A Selection of Poems by Emily Brontë* (1952)  
 (Edited, with introduction) *The Brontë Letters* (1953)  
 (Edited with Derek Stanford) *Emily Brontë: Her Life and Work* (1953)  
 (Edited with Derek Stanford) *My Best Mary: Selected Letters of Mary Shelley*  
 (1953)  
*John Masefield* (1953)  
 (Edited with Derek Stanford) *Letters of John Henry Newman* (1957)

## MISCELLANEOUS

- Doctors of Philosophy* (1963) (play)  
*The Very Fine Clock* (1969) (children's book)

## ARTICLES

- Muriel Spark published a number of articles in the earlier part of her career, of which the most important are the following:  
 'The Religion of an Agnostic: A Sacramental View of the World in the Writings of Proust', *The Church of England Newspaper*, 27 November, 1953.  
 'The Mystery of Job's Suffering', *The Church of England Newspaper*, 15 April 1955.  
 'How I Became a Novelist', *John O'London's Weekly*, 1 December 1960.  
 'My Conversion', *Twentieth Century*, Autumn 1961.  
 'What Images Return' [recollections of Edinburgh], in *Memoirs of a Modern Scotland*, ed. Karl Miller (1970).

## INTERVIEWS

- Muriel Spark has given numerous interviews; some of those originally given on radio or television have been published in an abridged form or not at all. The following may be consulted by anyone interested in the *obiter dicta* of an artist who in recent years has increasingly preferred to let her works speak for themselves (the interviewer's name is given in parenthesis).  
*Queen*, August 1961 (Elizabeth Jane Howard).  
*Sunday Times*, 30 September 1962 (Joyce Emerson).  
*Partisan Review*, Spring 1963 (Frank Kermode).  
*Observer Colour Supplement*, 17 October 1965 (Mary Holland).  
*Guardian*, 30 September 1970 (George Armstrong).  
*Listener*, 24 September 1970 (Ian Gillham).  
*Daily Telegraph*, 25 September 1970 (Jean Scroggie).  
*Observer Colour Supplement*, 7 November 1971 (Philip Toynbee).  
*Sunday Express*, 4 May 1973 (Graham Lord).  
*Listener*, 28 November 1974.  
*Guardian*, 8 November 1974 (Alex Hamilton).  
*Observer*, 30 May 1976 (Lorna Sage).

## CRITICISM OF MURIEL SPARK

## BOOKS

The best of the eight books devoted to Muriel Spark are those by Peter Kemp and Ruth Whittaker. Kemp's *Muriel Spark* (1974) is often brilliantly perceptive and is extremely well written, but deals with the novels only as far as *The Hothouse by the East River*. Whittaker's *The Faith and Fiction of Muriel Spark* (1982) is thoroughly researched and more complete, lacking discussion only of *The Only Problem* and *A Far Cry from Kensington*. The other books (those by Stubbs and Malkoff are actually no more than pamphlets) are:

Alan Bold, *Muriel Spark* (1986).

Alan Bold (ed), *Muriel Spark: An Odd Capacity for Vision* (1984).

Karl Malkoff, *Muriel Spark* (1968).

Allan Massie, *Muriel Spark* (1979).

Derek Stanford, *Muriel Spark: A Biographical and Critical Study* (1963).

Patricia Stubbs, *Muriel Spark* (1973).

There is no biography of Muriel Spark, but Stanford's book listed above, supplemented by his somewhat franker account in *Inside the Forties: Literary Memoirs 1937-1957* (1977), provides some interesting material on her early career in London.

## REVIEWS

Muriel Spark's books have been widely reviewed as they appeared, and some of these reviews are worth looking up. A number of the most interesting (by, for example, A. S. Byatt, Frank Kermode, Evelyn Waugh and Angus Wilson) are referred to in the notes. A lengthy list will be found in the bibliography of Ruth Whittaker's book.

# Index

---

- Africa, 2  
Agius, Father, 5  
Amis, Kingsley, 22  
Andrew, Nigel, 114, 115  
Aristotle, 71, 77, 79  
Astor, David, 5
- Barrie, J. M., 86, 87, 88  
Baudelaire, Charles, 4  
Beckett, Samuel, 22, 33–4, 78, 82  
Beerbohm, Max, 31, 84, 119  
Bible, 3, 58, 105ff  
Blake, William, 32  
Bold, Alan, 12, 17–18, 19, 21, 37, 81,  
86, 91, 99, 104, 107  
Bradbury, Malcolm, 16, 68–9  
Brontë, Charlotte, 29, 71  
Brontë, Emily, 4, 120  
Brookner, Anita, 112  
Burgess, Anthony, 115  
Byatt, A. S., 43  
Byron, Lord, 49
- Caraman, Father, 6  
Clapp, Susannah, 120  
Coleridge, S. T., 49  
Compton-Burnett, Ivy, 83  
Conrad, Joseph, 33
- Defoe, Daniel, 17  
Dickens, Charles, 71, 114
- Edinburgh, 1–2, 9, 28, 39ff, 116  
Eliot, George, 56  
Eliot, T. S., 5, 6, 45, 82, 99  
Enright, D. J., 55
- Firbank, Ronald, 84, 119  
Flaubert, Gustave, 14  
Forster, E. M., 31, 56, 62  
*Forum*, 3  
Frazer, J. G., 93–4
- Golding, William, 15–16, 17, 18, 20,  
22, 52, 86–7, 111, 114–15  
Greene, Graham, 80, 111
- Hardy, Thomas, 111  
Hart, Francis Russell, 39  
Heppenstall, Rayner, 8  
Hogg, James, 30, 40, 119  
Hopkins, G. M., 49  
Humphreys, Christmas, 3
- James, Henry, 117  
Josipovici, Gabriel, 110
- Keats, John, 62  
Kemp, Peter, 18, 19–20, 37, 38, 57,  
58, 68, 82, 84, 87–8  
Kermode, Frank, 16, 52–3, 80, 86,  
108–10, 117, 119  
Kissinger, Henry, 89
- Massie, Allan, 1, 11, 31, 43, 120–1  
Muggeridge, Malcolm, 102
- Newman, J. H., 5  
New York, 9  
Nixon, Richard, 89, 91
- Observer*, 4, 10  
O'Malley, Father, 6

- Parrinder, Patrick, 120–1  
*Poetry Review*, 3  
 Poetry Society, 3  
 Proust, Marcel, 104  
 Pym, Barbara, 22
- Rhodes, C. O., 5  
 Robbe-Grillet, Alain, 16, 73  
 Roth, Joseph, 106, 108
- Scott, Paul, 22  
 Shakespeare, William, 20, 98  
 Smith, Maggie, 39  
 Spark, Muriel, Works by:  
   *Abbess of Crew, The*, 89–92, 117  
   *Bachelors, The*, 32–9, 45, 48, 49, 51,  
   93, 112  
   *Ballad of Peckham Rye, The*, 7,  
   27–32, 38, 47, 51, 89, 91, 101,  
   114  
   *Comforters, The*, 6–7, 10–16, 17, 38,  
   45, 51, 52, 55, 67, 93, 101, 105,  
   106, 112, 113, 125 n80  
   *Driver's Seat, The*, 69–81, 86, 87, 92,  
   96, 105, 118, 124 n56  
   *Far Cry from Kensington, A*, 3, 99,  
   104, 111–15, 117, 125 n80  
   *Girls of Slender Means, The*, 44–50,  
   52, 54, 55, 107, 113, 114, 121  
   *Hothouse by the East River, The*, 9, 81,  
   86–9, 121  
   *Loitering with Intent*, 3, 17, 70,  
   99–105, 117, 120, 122  
   *Mandelbaum Gate, The*, 7, 54–62,  
   117, 120
- Memento Mori*, 20–27, 34, 38, 49, 51,  
 70, 105, 113, 120, 121  
*Not to Disturb*, 81–6, 96, 99, 121  
*Only Problem, The*, 3, 105–10, 114  
*Prime of Miss Jean Brodie, The*, 1, 8,  
 39–44, 45, 49, 55, 91, 105, 116  
*Public Image, The*, 1, 64–9, 80, 81,  
 83, 85, 92, 114, 117  
*Robinson*, 17–20, 26, 52, 100, 105,  
 116, 121  
*Takeover, The*, 89, 92–7, 99, 118  
*Territorial Rights*, 97–9, 109, 119  
 poems, 4, 31  
 short stories, 2, 4–5, 6, 50–1, 54–5  
 essays, 6, 7, 124 n36, 125 n78  
 biography and criticism, 3–4  
 interviews, 7–8, 10–11, 37, 55, 61,  
 86, 102, 117, 124 n56
- Stanford, Derek, 2–5, 17, 125 n78  
 Stubbs, Patricia, 11, 22, 61
- Tour, Georges de la, 105  
 Traherne, Thomas, 21, 32, 49  
 Trevor, William, 22
- Updike, John, 91
- Waugh, Evelyn, 6, 8–9, 11, 12, 13,  
 34, 99  
 Webster, John, 81  
 Whittaker, Ruth, 2, 38, 56, 57, 82, 85,  
 86, 90, 91, 92, 96–7, 99, 103  
 Wilson, Angus, 55  
 Wordsworth, William, 49
- Yeats, W. B., 21, 83