Theorizing Muriel Spark

Also by Martin McQuillan

DECONSTRUCTION: A Reader

DECONSTRUCTING DISNEY (*with Eleanor Byrne*)

THE NARRATIVE READER

PAUL DE MAN

POST-THEORY: New Directions in Criticism (*co-editor*)

Theorizing Muriel Spark

Gender, Race, Deconstruction

Edited by

Martin McQuillan

Lecturer in Cultural Theory and Analysis

University of Leeds

palgrave

Editorial matter, Introduction and Chapter 4 © Martin McQuillan 2002
Chapter 3 © Patricia Duncker 2002
Chapters 1, 2, 5–11 © Palgrave Publishers Ltd 2002

Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2002 978-0-333-79414-2

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

No paragraph of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written permission or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, or under the terms of any licence permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency, 90 Tottenham Court Road, London W1T 4LP.

Any person who does any unauthorised act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

The authors have asserted their rights to be identified as the authors of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

First published 2002 by
PALGRAVE

Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS and
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10010
Companies and representatives throughout the world

PALGRAVE is the new global academic imprint of
St. Martin's Press LLC Scholarly and Reference Division and
Palgrave Publishers Ltd (formerly Macmillan Press Ltd).

ISBN 978-1-349-42008-7 ISBN 978-0-230-50426-4 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/9780230504264

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources.

A catalogue record for this book is available
from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Theorizing Muriel Spark : gender, race, deconstruction / edited by
Martin McQuillan.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Spark, Muriel—Criticism and interpretation. 2. Women and literature—Great Britain—History—20th century. 3. Sex role in literature. 4. Race in literature. 5. Deconstruction. I. McQuillan, Martin.

PR6037.P29 Z94 2001
823'.914—dc21

2001036535

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
11 10 09 08 07 06 05 04 03 02

Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	vii
<i>Abbreviations</i>	viii
<i>Notes on the Contributors</i>	ix

Introduction: 'I Don't Know Anything about Freud': Muriel Spark Meets Contemporary Criticism <i>Martin McQuillan</i>	1
--	---

Part I Gender

1 Tales of Love: Narcissism and Idealization in <i>The Public Image</i> <i>Susan Sellers</i>	35
2 The Future Perfect's Perfect Future: Spark's and Duras's Narrative Drive <i>Judith Roof</i>	49
3 The Suggestive Spectacle: Queer Passions in Brontë's <i>Villette</i> and <i>The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie</i> <i>Patricia Duncker</i>	67
4 In Bed with Muriel Spark: Mourning, Metonymy and Autobiography <i>Martin McQuillan</i>	78

Part II Race

5 Writing against Conversion: Muriel Spark the Gentile Jewess <i>Bryan Cheyette</i>	95
6 Muriel Spark Shot in Africa <i>Eleanor Byrne</i>	113
7 A Bit of the Other: <i>Symposium</i> , Futility and Scotland <i>Alan Freeman</i>	127

Part III Deconstruction

8	Muriel Spark's Uselessness <i>Jeremy Idle</i>	141
9	Muriel Spark's <i>Mary Shelley</i> : A Gothic and Liminal Life <i>Julian Wolfreys</i>	155
10	Not to Deconstruct? Righting and Deference in <i>Not to Disturb</i> <i>Willy Maley</i>	170
11	Memento Mori <i>Nicholas Royle</i>	189
12	Grimacing Catholicism: Muriel Spark's Macabre Farce and Muriel Spark's Latest Novel: <i>The Public Image</i> <i>Hélène Cixous</i>	204
13	'The Same Informed Air': An Interview with Muriel Spark	210
	<i>A Muriel Spark Bibliography</i>	230
	<i>Index</i>	242

Acknowledgements

It seems that I have been proselytizing about Muriel Spark for most of my adult life. Consequently I would like to thank all those who have been prepared to discuss her work with me over the years. In chronological order (I think) Paddy Lyons, Sandra Kemp, Drummond Bone, Patrick Reilly, Vassiliki Kolokotroni, John Coyle, Bob Maslen, Dorothy Macmillan, Philip Hobsbaum, Faith Pullen, Helen Boden, Brian Reid, Robin Purves, Graeme Macdonald, Stephen Thomson, Paul Wilson, Gun Orgun, Ellen Jackson, Claire Brennan, Megan Fowler, Jeremy Lane, Leslie Macdowell, Shona Allen, Mary Reilly, Janet Stewart, Damien Walsh, Donald MacLoed, Antony Roland, Angela Keane, Peter Buse, Nuria Triana-Toribio, Sharon Kivland, Scott McCracken, Robert Eaglestone, and Lucie Wenigerova. Special thanks go to all the contributors for their wisdom and support, Charmian Hearne, who first commissioned this book, and Eleanor Birne, who saw it through to the end. I would also like to thank the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Staffordshire University which funded a visit to Tuscany, and Robin Smith of the National Library for Scotland whose help has been invaluable. I would like to single out Alan Taylor for very special thanks for all his encouragement and support since the beginnings of my research. Acknowledgements are also due to the publishers of Muriel Spark's work and other copyright material. This book is dedicated to Muriel Spark and Penelope Jardine in thanks for their kind hospitality.

MARTIN MCQUILLAN

Abbreviations

References for quotations from the works of Muriel Spark will be given in the body of the text, with the following abbreviations:

A	<i>The Abbess of Crewe</i>
BA	<i>The Bachelors</i>
BP	<i>The Ballad of Peckham Rye</i>
CO	<i>The Comforters</i>
CS	<i>The Collected Stories of Muriel Spark</i>
CV	<i>Curriculum Vitae</i>
DA	'The Desegregation of Art'
DS	<i>The Driver's Seat</i>
G	<i>The Girls of Slender Means</i>
I	<i>The Public Image</i>
K	<i>A Far Cry From Kensington</i>
L	<i>Loitering with Intent</i>
MG	<i>The Mandlebaum Gate</i>
MM	<i>Memento Mori</i>
MS	<i>Mary Shelley: A Biography</i> , revised edition
N	<i>Not to Disturb</i>
O	<i>The Only Problem</i>
P	<i>The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie</i>
S	<i>Symposium</i>
TT	<i>The Takeover</i>
TR	<i>Territorial Rights</i>

Notes on the Contributors

Eleanor Byrne is Lecturer in English at Manchester Metropolitan University. She is the author (with Martin McQuillan) of *Deconstructing Disney* (1999). She has written on post-colonial literature and theory, film, and women's writing.

Bryan Cheyette is Professor of English and Judaic Studies at the University of Southampton. His publications include: *Constructions of 'the Jew' in English Literature and Society: Racial Representations, 1875–1945* (1995), *Muriel Spark* (2000), the edited volumes *Between 'Race' and Culture: Representations of 'the Jew' in English and American Literature* (1996), *Contemporary Jewish Writing in Britain and Ireland: An Anthology* (1998) and the co-edited volume *Modernity, Culture and 'the Jew'* (1998).

Hélène Cixous is Director of Studies at the Centre d'Études Féminines at the Université de Paris VIII. Her recent publications in English translation include *The Third Body* (1999), *First Days of the Year* (1998), *Stigmata* (1998), *Rootprints: Memory and Life Writing* (1997), *Manna, for the Mandelstams for the Mandelas* (1994), *Three Steps on the Ladder to Writing* (1993), *Readings, The Poetics of Blanchot, Joyce, Kafka, Lispector, Tsvetaeva* (1992), *'Coming to Writing' and Other Essays* (1991), *The Book of Promethea* (1991).

Patricia Duncker is Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Wales (Aberystwyth). Her publications include *Sisters and Strangers* (1992) and the acclaimed fictions *Hallucinating Foucault* (1996), *Monsieur Shoushana's Lemon Trees* (1998), and *Miranda James Barry* (2000).

Alan Freeman is Lecturer in British Literature and Literary Theory in Yeditepe University, Istanbul. He has written on women's writing, contemporary fiction, and Scottish literature.

Jeremy Idle is Lecturer in English at Nene University College. He has written on Georges Bataille, contemporary fiction, and Scottish literature.

Martin McQuillan is Lecturer in Cultural Theory and Analysis at the Centre for Cultural Studies, University of Leeds. His publications include *Deconstructing Disney* (1999) with Eleanor Byrne, the co-edited collection *Post-Theory: New Directions in Criticism* (1999), *The Narrative Reader* (2000), *Deconstruction: A Reader* (2000) and *Paul de Man* (2001).

Willy Maley is Professor of Renaissance Literature at the University of Glasgow. His publications include *Salvaging Spenser: Colonialism, Culture and Identity* (1997), *A View of the State of Ireland: From the First Published Edition* (1997), *A Spenser Chronology* (1994) and the co-edited volumes *Postcolonial Criticism* (1997), and *Representing Ireland: Literature and the Origins of Conflict, 1534–1660* (1993).

Judith Roof is Professor of English and Film Studies at Michigan State University. Her publications include *A Lure of Knowledge: Lesbian Sexuality and Theory* (1993), *Reproductions of Reproductions: Imaging Symbolic Change* (1996), *Come As You Are: Sexuality and Narrative* (1996), and the co-edited volumes *Who Can Speak? Authority and Critical Identity* (1995) and *Staging the Rage* (1998).

Nicholas Royle is Professor of English Literature at the University of Sussex. His publications include *Telepathy and Literature: Essays in the Reading Mind* (1991), *After Derrida* (1995), *E.M. Forster* (2000), *The Uncanny* (2000), the edited volumes *Afterwords* (1992) and *Deconstructions* (2000), and with Andrew Bennett *Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel* (1994) and *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism, and Theory* (1999).

Susan Sellers is Professor of English Literature at the University of St. Andrews. Her publications include *Language and Sexual Difference* (1991), *Hélène Cixous: Authorship, Autobiography and Love* (1996), *Writing Differences: Readings from the Seminar of Hélène Cixous* (1998), *The Hélène Cixous Reader* (1994), *The Semi-Transparent Envelope* (1994) with Sue Roe, Nicole Ward Joue, and Michelle Roberts, and the co-edited volume *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf* (2000).

Julian Wolfreys is Associate Professor of English at the University of Florida. His publications include *Being English* (1994), *The Rhetoric of Affirmative Resistances* (1997), *Writing London* (1998), *Deconstruction – Derrida* (1998), *Readings* (2000), *The Derrida Reader: Writing Performances* (1998), *Literary Theories: A Reader and Guide* (1999) and the co-edited

volumes *Victorian Identities: Social and Cultural Formations in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (1995), *Literary Theories: A Case Study in Critical Performance* (1996), *Applying: to Derrida* (1996), *Re: Joyce* (1998), *The French Connections of Jacques Derrida* (1999), *Victorian Gothic* (2000).