

**MURIEL SPARK, *THE PRIME OF MISS JEAN BRODIE* (1961)**

In preparing your draft answers to these questions, please use the materials available in Literature Resource Center. For more general questions, do try to incorporate relevant literary-theoretical references.

1. Read Peter Robert Brown's "'There's Something about Mary:' Narrative and Ethics in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*" (Toledo) and discuss Spark's narrative technique in the novel.
2. "She left the web, she left the loom. . . ." (p. 7) Read Tennyson's "The Lady of Shallot" (<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/174627>) and comment on the novel's engagement with gender.
3. "'[Politics] was only a side line,' Sandy said, 'but it served as an excuse.'" (p. 121) Discuss the novel's treatment of politics in general and fascism in particular. (For some background on fascism, read the article "Fascist politics and literary criticism" on Toledo).
4. For Stephen Dedalus, the protagonist of James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, the difference between Catholicism and Protestantism is that the former is "an absurdity which is logical and coherent" while the latter is an absurdity "which is illogical and incoherent". Comment on Spark's account of religion in the novel.
5. "[T]he political power of the aesthetic, the measure of its impact on reality, necessarily travels by ways of its didactic manifestations. The politics of the aesthetic state are the politics of education." (Paul de Man) Discuss Miss Brodie's theory and practice of education.
6. Google these bits and build a case: "The age of chivalry is past." (p. 10); "Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness." (p. 12); "She is older than the rocks on which she sits." (p. 22); "Females who were up for sex were not called 'Miss' or 'Mrs', they were referred to by their surnames: 'Willis was remanded in custody. . . ' 'Roebuck' said Counsel, 'was discovered to be in a certain condition.'" (p. 68); "Why don't they eat cake?" (p. 117)
7. The novel touches on issues of nation and nationalism, often involving linguistic difference. Record references to Scotland, England, Italy, Germany, France and Europe and discuss.