

CHAPTER TWO

MAROONED IN IMAGINATION

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MAROONED IN IMAGINATION: THE COMFORTERS; ROBINSON; MEMENTO MORI

In her first novel, The Comforters, Muriel Spark seemed to be trying to define the kind of novel she is prepared to write. It was also a kind of an experimental exploration of the formal nature of fictional truth, the craft of novel-writing:

"I wrote a novel to work out the technique first, to sort of make it all right with myself to write a novel at all." [1]

Caroline Rose, the heroine of The Comforters is identified as the author of the fiction and is categorized as the central character in the third-person narrative. The raw material of the novel was provided by the reality of Spark's own experience. There are some obvious autobiographical elements, particularly in the presentation of Caroline Rose, the heroine of the story whose psychological problems are vividly described.

During the early fifties, Muriel Spark was apparently displaying the symptoms of a psychological withdrawal which was a result of her change in faith. In subjecting her own psychological and spiritual crises to an artistic discipline, she finds an appropriate outlet. The novel is a book within a book to which Spark adds her own twists of surprises.

One of its earliest critics, Evelyn Waugh found the novel "intensely interesting", "highly exhilarating", "very difficult" but "rewarding"[2]. Allan Massie found in it "an uneasy amalgam of modes"[3] and W.H. Auden confessed that he had opened his first novel by Spark with "some misgivings"[4]. He went on to say that to him The Comforters "is a parable about Imagination and Experience; we cannot ever know either what is 'real' or what is 'pure imagination'." [5]

Caroline, affected with "voices"[6], is a student of fiction and is writing a book on the form of the novel. As a result of the hallucinations experienced, she realises that she is a character in the fiction. She hears the sound of a typewriter which records her own thoughts but her attempt to pick the sounds up on a tape recorder meets with no success. Initially she dreads being manoeuvred like a character in a novel and then decides to oppose the destiny predetermined for her. She resists when the voices anticipate her action. She tries to travel by train to Cornwall when the voices have said that she would take the car. But later she realizes that she must miss the train in order to go to mass. And this is precisely the point when she gives in, recognizing the inclusion of her own moral needs in the novel's structure. Caroline is simultaneously a character and a creator of The Comforters (courtesy Spark, of course). Alan Bold has said that the novel "was a strikingly radical book, a flamboyant start to a teasing and powerful fictional career." [7]

There is a riotous cast of Catholics and neurotics in the novel, who are unable to lose their loneliness of mind. None the less, their strange goings on have a kind of stylish glitter about them. Louisa Jepp is the indomitable grandmother of Laurence Manders (Caroline's former lover), who lives in the country, leading a seemingly routine life. But we realize after a few pages that the old lady is an accomplished crook, a smuggler and leader of a gang of criminals. for instance, she stashes diamonds in loaves of bread and supervises a group of three oddly behaved men -- all very mysterious.

Mrs Georgina Hogg, a former employee of the Mander's family is "simply a Catholic atrocity, like the tin medals and bleeding hearts"[8], according to Caroline. She is the warden of St. Philumena's retreat house. We learn that she has no "private life"[9] and simply disappears when others are not aware of her, first in her own room when she is alone, later in a car in which she is a back seat passenger. She accidentally drowns in the end after it has been strongly implied that she is a witch.

Throughout the book, Mrs Hogg does her best to undermine the integrity of other characters; the way she interferes constantly in the lives of others is sinister, to say the least: "It fairly puts you against Catholics, a person like that"[10], says Laurence's larcenous grandmother. There is

savage humour at times in the tart questions Caroline puts to Mrs Hogg:

" 'I mean, when you say, "Our Lady said", do you mean she spoke audibly to you?'
' Oh no. But that's how Our Lady always speaks to me. I ask a question and she answers.' "[12]

Spark's uniqueness can be seen in the way she braids a strain of detective fiction with theological as well as psychological, adding urgency to the plot. Several themes run parallel in the novel -- Caroline's preoccupation with the typewriter ghost; her involvement with Hogg, in spite of the fact that she is repelled by Georgina's physical obesity and spiritual vacuity; Louisa and her gang of smugglers. The fragments of action do not always unite and we, as readers, are left to gauge and enlighten ourselves. We also ask questions : will Caroline escape her voices as well as Mrs Hogg and make a life with Laurence? Will Louisa Jepp and her gang be found out? This is what makes Spark stand apart from other novelists. Spark has said :

"Lots of people can't take it when I leave things out. But lots of people can, of course. I think I've chosen that way because of something in my nature. I don't like to spell things out. I'm very much on the idea of leaving a lot unsaid, so that a great deal can be gathered. I hate having to explain the obvious." [12]

At the beginning of the novel we find Caroline on retreat trying to adjust to Mrs Hogg's intrusions in her life. Though Caroline maintains a cool exterior, she is irritated to the point of exasperation. Hogg's unpleasant interference is warded

off with her "private formula"[13]. When she is tortured by the mysterious voices she hears, she goes to her unreliable friend Baron Stock. He has his suspect bookshop and is actually the London agent for Louisa's smuggling racket. The amusing account of Laurence's grandmother's smuggling gang runs parallel to Caroline's own bewildering experiences.

Extremely anxious to learn the nature and identity of the mysterious voices, she turns to Baron, Father Jerome and Laurence for comfort, but their responses are typical. Initially a little confused, Caroline later teaches herself to cope with her "voices". In fact it is her triumph that she overcomes this mental activity and in the process realizes the arbitrariness of human life. While discussing the experience with her priest, she realizes that the voices really suggest the formation of a novel in which she and her acquaintances play a role:

" 'it is as if a writer on another plane of existence was writing a story about us'. As soon as she had said these words, Caroline knew that she had hit on the truth." [14]

The readers get to know Caroline through a witty account of the way her mind works. Throughout the novel we find the breakdown of communication between individuals immersed in their own private worlds. They confront each other but do not comfort one another: for example, neither the Catholic church nor Laurence can finally comfort Caroline. On the contrary, she suffers badly from their stupidity and malevolence. The inability of anyone to understand anyone else's predicament is what

Spark seems to convey to us through the title Comforters. All the characters obsessively pursue their own ends, a situation that enables Caroline to observe: "We've reached the stage where each one discourses upon his private obsession ."[15]

Laurence, bright, curious and lively, has no capacity for reflection. He is inquisitive about the mysterious activities of his grandmother. Louisa realizes this but indulges him nevertheless, even though she knows that his inquisitiveness is a threat to her smuggling ring -- so great is her affection for him. Though Laurence is observant, his detached feeling about the "voices" bothers Caroline. She resents his attempt to find a technological solution to everything and yet tolerates him: "And she was aware of the irrationality and prejudice of all these feelings without being able to stop feeling them." [16] She declares to Laurence that it would be a shirking of spiritual responsibility to deny what is happening to her. But Laurence dislikes being a character in a novel as much as Caroline did. He claims that Caroline "martyred by misunderstanding" [17], herself understands none, "for instance the Baron, my father, myself" [18]. Later he suggests a way out. Writing to Caroline of mutual misunderstanding insists that he loves her nonetheless. But instead of sending the note, tears it up. At the end, their future is uncertain, but one feels that, probably Laurence Manders will return to Caroline and all end happily. Judy Sproxton says :

" The irony resulting from the differences in personal motive and situation constitutes an important element in the fabric of Muriel Spark's writing in this book."[19]

In the final chapter, Caroline swims to safety after getting out of the clutches of Georgina and is free to write her novel. She has been able to free herself from the burden of evil supported by others and has thus, solved her own personal problem. The Comforters spices its plot with blackmail, bigamy, diabolism and smuggling -- from this emerges a tale about the "isolation of the creative artist"[20] told with immense literary cunning.

Thematically Spark's The Comforters and Robinson both deal with the isolation of the individual, though the technique used in each is different. The former is a little ambiguous and the latter tells a more direct tale. In an interview with Frank Kermode, Muriel Spark has said :

"Because I observed a kind of wantonness as you call it [in The Comforters], I decided the best thing to do was to stick to a plot, and stick to a formal outline and say what I wanted to say in that limit."[21]

Critics have detected a continuity between the two novels. Alan Bold finds both remarkably successful "as experimental applications of fictional form"[22]. Peter Kemp sees Robinson as providing "a kind of annexe to The Comforters"[23]. Despite the technical difference in the two novels, there is an obvious resemblance between Caroline Rose and January Marlow.

Told by January in first person, Robinson's narrative line is simple enough. January is involved in a plane crash on a business flight to the Azores. She finds herself, together with two other survivors, Jimmie Waterford and Tommy Wells, on a tiny island in the North Atlantic ocean inhabited by Miles Mary Robinson and his adopted child, a nine-year-old Portuguese boy, Miguel. Significantly, January is "the only woman on the island"[24]. Wearily and out of a sense of duty, Robinson cares for his castaways, though given a choice he would have preferred no visitors. The three survivors are forced to wait on the island for three months for the arrival of the pomegranate boat. January seeks to conserve her dignity and tries to pen the trauma she has undergone in the journal she keeps. She has been advised by Robinson to "keep to facts ... stick to facts"[25] and she does exactly that.

January, from the beginning, feels both defensive towards and intrigued by the others. Soon after the crash she realizes that she is becoming involved with their personalities:

"I...was irritated by this curiosity of mine which did so indicate that these people were becoming part of my world."[26]

She resents this and tells herself to be in "control"[27] of her relationships. She states that she likes to be "in a position to choose"[28]. However she becomes increasingly conscious of her companions and the effect that they have on her. The

crucial point in the novel is January's relation to these three men. Her attitudes towards each change with the passage of time. She is attracted towards Jimmie, the easy going relative of Robinson, although his ineffectuality irritates her often. She takes him as a friend for his youth, his good looks, his affability and above all, for his talents as a raconteur. January learns later that he is Robinson's cousin. Afterwards when Robinson is gone, he surprises her by declaring that the island is his. Jimmie's mode of speech is also very humourously portrayed. He speaks in a peculiar amalgam of formal diction (learned from Shakespeare, seventeenth century poets and Fowler) and slang (learned from various G.I.'s he met during the second war): "You like a drink? Lo!" He says to January. "You take the cup, I swig from the vessel." [29]

She is thoroughly repelled by Tommy Wells, editor of 'Your Future' magazine, who is always rather irrational and violent at times. Wells sells good luck charms. He also advertises in his magazine, "FREE advice", "Friendship", "Consolation", "Happiness" [30]. He is hungry for money, for good food, for leisure and for women. He reminds January of her second brother-in-law, Curly Lonsdale. She says: "I simply did not like Tom Wells." [31]

Robinson's authoritarian, patronizing and repressive nature makes January a little resentful towards him, though at the outset she had taken him as a parental figure.

greatly depending on him. Robinson prescribes a daily routine to each of them and from each, he takes whatever he finds offensive -- from January, her rosary, from Wells, his magazine and his charms. January's initial timidity on the island especially with Robinson, reflects her previous immaturity. But once she discovers this point, she asserts her will against Robinson's. She resents his domination because he reminds her of her late husband and her inquisitive brother-in-law, Ian Brodie. Early in the novel, Robinson calls her "Miss January". She retorts, "My name is not Miss January. I am Mrs Marlow." [32] In a sense, she is. Fragments of her life before the crash is revealed to us. We are told that January's husband had died after six months of marriage; she has one son and is a recent convert to Catholicism and "poet, critic and general articulator of ideas" [33]. Spark also tells us about Agnes and Ian Brodie, January's older sister and brother-in-law and how she resented their interference. She feels differently, however, with her younger sister, Julia and her husband, Curly Tonsdale. Significantly, the three sisters are able to meet on friendly terms only in their adult life when they reflect upon their school days:

"Giggling over childhood anecdotes was the main thing with my sisters, and how, afterwards, I would wonder at my own childishness!" [34]

Muriel Spark's sensitivity to different words and to their hidden wit finds way into each of her novels, leading us to the full understanding of the idiosyncrasies of her characters. In

Robinson, the characters are lead to us through the developing perceptions of the heroine. January is fiercely independent. She acknowledges that there is a strong streak of masculinity in her and is determined to be regarded by her companions as an equal. She strongly resents any suggestion that her sex incapacitates her either mentally or physically. Perhaps the most compelling account in the novel is that of the struggle January has, in her months on the island, to live peacefully and safely, with three men and a boy. January's struggles with the men on the island compound the struggles she had back in England with the two brothers-in-law. They are both described as disparaging to women.

Tension grows and finally Robinson disappears, presumed to be murdered. This is the most dramatic event in the novel. In the absence of the owner of the island, the three temporary inhabitants of Robinson are plunged into a dilemma for they judge each other as one capable of killing. Mutual suspicion adds to the strain. Most importantly, January feels differently towards Tom and even Jimmie. She sees them as strangers; even Jimmie has lost his charm for her. They are "on the same island but in different worlds"[35]. All the characters are estranged from one another.

The tensions which result from the encounter of different personalities on the island are magnified as a result of their isolation. As a consequence of the threat of disintegra-

tion of all civilized attitudes, January comes to appreciate the strengths of the values which Robinson has, in his solitary existence, striven to nurture. It is this understanding that she has of Robinson that helps her develop. The intensely "cousinly love"[37] that she had felt for Robinson has a maturing effect on her. Towards the end January is ready to accept the terrible truth that "all things are possible" only through the enlightenment she has achieved via Robinson. It is also because of this realization that she is able to enlarge her own spiritual horizon. January's experiences on the island are accompanied by an increasing dimension of self awareness. What she learns about the others, she learns, in effect, about herself.

Alan Bold has compared Robinson and Georgina Hogg (The Comforters) saying that they are alike in that "they are both characters contaminated by contact with Catholic faith,"[38] They are different in the sense that whereas Georgina projected herself as an intimate of Our Lady, Robinson is "unable to cope with the dogmatic demands of his True Faith on the subject"[39]. And these religious characters of Robinson's fascinates January Marlow.

Later in the book, Tom Wells tries to blackmail January and Jimmie into signing a false account of Robinson's disappearance so that none of them is blamed for the murder. He also demands part of Robinson's estate and threatens to accuse the two of murder when the boat arrives unless he gets what he

wants. Although Jimmie is willing to pay Wells's price for silence, January refuses. This sharpens the depth of antagonism between Tom and January. She prepares a document to offer the law in contradiction to any statement Wells may make. But through sheer carelessness she lets him steal the diary which she retrieves afterwards, seeking to hide it underground in the tunnels which run beneath the island. Retracing her journey, she is confronted by Wells who threatens to stab her. But she eludes him and then crawls back through "the terrible hole"[40], emerging into the mist thoroughly exhausted. January understands perfectly well that evil can be countered only by cunning. Bold says about Robinson :

"Spark also drops into her narrative details that transform the tale into a religious allegory... her sensibility is so saturated in ritual and symbolism that she inevitably extracts the maximum of meaning from the layers of language at her disposal."[41]

The next day Jimmie and Tom fight over January -- it is a symbolic struggle between good and evil. With the unexpected return of Robinson, the combat ends. January does not passively accept his account of his behaviour. She argues with him, questions him. January is angry and thinks that Robinson's behaviour has been the result of whim and fancy with no consideration for the others. Exasperated she tells him:

"I chucked the antinomian pose when I was twenty.
There's no such thing as a private morality."[42]

However, her ultimate thought on Robinson is one of gratitude:
"But really, after all, it was his island, and he probably at

the start, had saved our lives." [43] Subsequently she returns once again to the world she has left -- to human society. According to William McBrien: "The work is more poetically than novelistically imagined." [44] Familiar figures and images recur. Metaphors are original and catchy, the wittily composed dialogue are amusing and when Robinson disappears, the narrative proceeds at the pace of a thriller. The novel ends with a flashforward, a device that Spark uses repeatedly in her books, and describes what will happen to certain characters and to the island itself.

After the rescue, January learns that Tom Wells has been imprisoned for blackmail and that Robinson, the island, is sinking as a result of volcanic action. Though reluctantly, January has learnt a moral lesson which is that the individual cannot entirely evade a collective responsibility, cannot forever ignore the existence of evil. By the end of the novel, January thinks of the island as "a place of the mind ... an apocryphal island." [45] Judy Sproxton commenting on January says :

"It is a tribute to her self knowledge and appreciation of good, that she has survived the terrible threats of infinite possibility, and finds now in this a cause for celebration." [46]

Memento Mori. Spark's third novel deals with problems of other people, especially the old. The novel is artfully confined to a set of upper - middle class and aged people whose past relationships are revealed as the story proceeds. About

the book, William McBrien says: "Spark's novel offers a rare, compassionate, yet altogether unsentimental look at old people and how they confront death." [47] Alan Bold calls it "one of her most powerful." [48] He adds: "Going beyond the egocentric atmosphere of The Comforters and Robinson, She shows herself as scrupulously accurate observer alert to the hardly human condition of infirmity." [49] Norman Page writes: "Memento Mori is not only the best of the author's first three novels but one of the most satisfying of all her books." [50]

Death is the inescapable and unavoidable external force in this novel. The Latin phrase "Memento Mori" means "remember that you must die". It has traditionally been used to refer to an emblem of mortality, such as a skull, but Spark replaces the skull by a more insistent and intrusive counterpart -- a voice on the telephone. As the novel develops, the characters are challenged by their own mortality. By doing this Spark puts her principal characters under a sentence of death. In this novel, Spark has turned away from the restrictions of cast and setting as in Robinson and has returned in the novel a "more crowded and socially varied world of The Comforters" [51]. As in the first novel, the present novel's plot is also complex, with its secrets and coincidences. Page remarks: "the effect of this is almost parodic, as if the convolutions of traditional fiction were being held up for amused critical inspection." [52]

Most of the characters in the story are old and many of them receive telephone calls reminding them that they must die. The voices differ, depending upon the recipient though the message is the same. At first startled to receive the advice, the characters later dismiss their callers as madmen, cranks, criminals or obliging young men who have rung up to interview them for papers. But we as readers often wonder about the identity of the unidentified caller as the plot progresses. The callers are never identified but the two most rational and enlightened characters in the novel, ex-police inspector Mortimer and former servant Jean Taylor think the caller to be Death. Each character is confronted not only with the reminder of his or her ultimate death, but also with a fundamental understanding of life: "Yet the calls cannot be dismissed as auditory hallucinations since, unlike the voices heard by Caroline Rose in The Comforters, they are sometimes heard by those for whom they are not intended." [53] Spark does not offer any rational or realistic explanation but a supernatural explanation is hinted at.

Each recipient of these calls has a different attitude towards this ultimate limitation and respond differently to these unsettling messages. The large group headed by Dame Lettie Colston and her brother Godfrey are shaken by the grim reminder, whereas Alec Warner, who, at seventy-nine, nightly records the day's experience for a study of the aged which he

cannot possibly live to finish; Charmion Colston, formerly a popular novelist; Jean Taylor, once a companion to Charmion; and Henry Mortimer, a retired Police Inspector, take it in their stride. The last three conclude that Death is the mysterious caller and in their different ways they behave rather well in the face of death. William McBrien says : "Accepting death, they live creatively, even debonairly." [54] One of the wiser character, Jean, comments : "Being over seventy is like being engaged in a war. All our friends are going or gone and we survive amongst the dead and the dying as on a battlefield." [55] According to Alan Bold :

"The narrator does not ... dominate the novel as a moralistic judge but hovers as a recording angel, observing human frailties objectively ... As an observer, the narrator of Memento Mori is as omniscient as the Typing Ghost of The Comforters." [56]

Spark announces the theme of this novel rather abruptly, stating the sentence of death. The theme is sombre and full of intrigue which is typical of the author. When the call to Dame Lettie Colston, aged seventy-nine, is recounted at the beginning of the book, it is apparent that she has already received similar calls. She knows that the message will be the same -- "Remember you must die" [57], and before she can ask who the caller is, he has already gone off the line. She devotes all her energies to seeking the identity of the caller. She ignores the message itself as she feels certain that the relatives and friends mentioned in her will are trying to frighten her. Yet she is disturbed enough to inform the police and discuss her

feels with her brother Godfrey Colston. About the latter we are told that he is convinced that, at eighty-seven, he remains possessed of all his faculties -- even though his driving, a matter of angry bursts of speed and forgetful dawdling, imperils everyone in his vicinity. Charmion Colston, Godfrey's wife, is a Roman Catholic convert and a once popular novelist grown senile. At eighty-five, she still acts the role of the beautiful and successful novelist she really was in her middle years. She finds difficulty in distinguishing Lettie from her old family servant Jean Taylor. Charmion's disturbing dottiness, as far as Godfrey and Lettie are concerned, is a symptom of the advanced years. Yet it is she who regains a grip on life as it progresses and shows a calm acceptance of the inevitable :

" 'Remember,' he said, 'you must die.'
'Oh, as to that,' she said, 'for the past thirty years and more I have thought of it from time to time. My memory is failing in certain respects. I am gone eighty-six. But somehow I do not forget my death, whenever that will be.'
'Delighted to hear it', he said. 'Goodbye for now.' "[53]

Karl Malkoff seems to think Charmion as a writer, is the spokesman for Spark, as she echoes her creator's own position while talking to Guy Leet: "The art of fiction is very like the practice of deception." [59] Malkoff comments that at the heart of Muriel Spark's aesthetic there lies the notion "that art is deception, a supreme fiction" [60]. Norman Page thinks differently. He suggests that "Mortimer is a spokesman for the authorial point of view" [61], who views death as "part of

the full expectancy of life"[62]. According to him, Spark as a Catholic novelist feels that "death is not a fearful and sometimes humiliating and painful end, but a beginning." [63]

The phrase 'Remember that you must die' echoes through the novel like a refrain. The series of episodes are inter-linked with plot and subplot very cleverly by Spark so as to capture the reader's attention.

She takes us to Maud Lang Medical Ward, where we are introduced to twelve old ladies, collectively known as the Grannies, including Jean Taylor, formerly companion-maid to Charmion. She is a figure of dignity and fortitude throughout the book. Jean had become a Catholic convert "just to please Charmion"[64]. Although she has received no phone calls herself, she is provided with her own "memento mori" by the cases coming into her ward. When Lettie tells her of the phone calls Taylor replies: "In my belief, the author of the anonymous telephone calls is Death himself, as you might say ... If you don't remember Death, Death reminds you to do so." [65]

Having scrutinized the dying, Spark goes on to complicate the novel with her usual cunning. There is blackmail, bigamy and murder in the novel which remains a mystery till the end.

Godfrey and Charmion have had extramarital affairs in the past. Mabel Pettigrew, mentioned in the will of her late

employer Lisa Brooke, blackmails Godfrey over his affair with Lisa. But Lisa was already married to Matthew O'Brien when she married Guy Leet, the critic, and then had the affair with Godfrey. O'Brien still living, though a mental patient of Alec Warner, a sociologist and former lover of Jean Taylor, thus becomes the beneficiary of Lisa's will. But his death some time later proves fortunate for Mabel who inherits the whole amount at last. In the midst of all this, Dame Lettie is battered to death by a robber who breaks into her house and when death comes, Lettie is unprepared. Even at such times Spark does not give up her humour. So when death comes to the unsympathetic Dame Lettie at the hands of a nocturnal thief, the witty burden is "don't say you weren't famously warned".

Memento Mori's crucial speech is delivered by Henry Mortimer, the first to suspect Death as the caller :

"If I had my life over again I should form the habit of nightly composing myself to thoughts of death. I would practise, as it were, the remembrance of death. There is no other practice which so intensifies life. Death, when it approaches, ought not to take one by surprise. It should be a part of the full expectancy of life." [66]

Mortimer, whose surname suggests a connection with death, is a retired detective. He is asked to solve the mystery of the phone calls but the solution he offers does not satisfy the characters who have assembled to hear about the offender.

In spite of all the mystery, the complexity and the puzzle which pervades the novel, Spark adds her little comic

touches -- for instance, the rock-heroic duel with walking sticks between Guy Leet and the old poet Percy Mannerling; the poignant humour of the hearing aids of the patients at the Maud Lang Ward.

Spark never neglects her main theme old age and the inevitability of death. Spark neatly rounds off her book by making most of her characters simply succumb to the demands of death: "Charmion died one morning ... Godfrey died the same year ... Guy Leet died at the age of seventy-eight ... Chief Inspector Mortimer died suddenly of heart - failure ... Miss Valvona went to her rest. Many of the Grannies followed her." [67] Jean's death is the last to be mentioned in this novel "preoccupied with endings" [68]. She alone spends her last days "employing her pain to magnify the Lord, and meditating sometimes confidently upon Death, the first of the Four Last Things to be ever remembered." [69]

Memorato Mori is a "vindication of integrity." [70] The anonymous phone calls pervade the mind and the readers are left to judge for themselves which of the characters has the wisdom and the integrity to face reality. Death gives these characters their identity and the reminder of their humanity it is only when they rely on their faith and inner warmth of enlightenment that they are able to confront problems and challenges and eventually measure up to the reality of the human condition. Alan Bold remarks :

"Spark's central concern, then, is still the problem of surpassing the limitations of the self -- as Iain seems to do by reaching out for a truth larger than fact or fiction." [71]

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