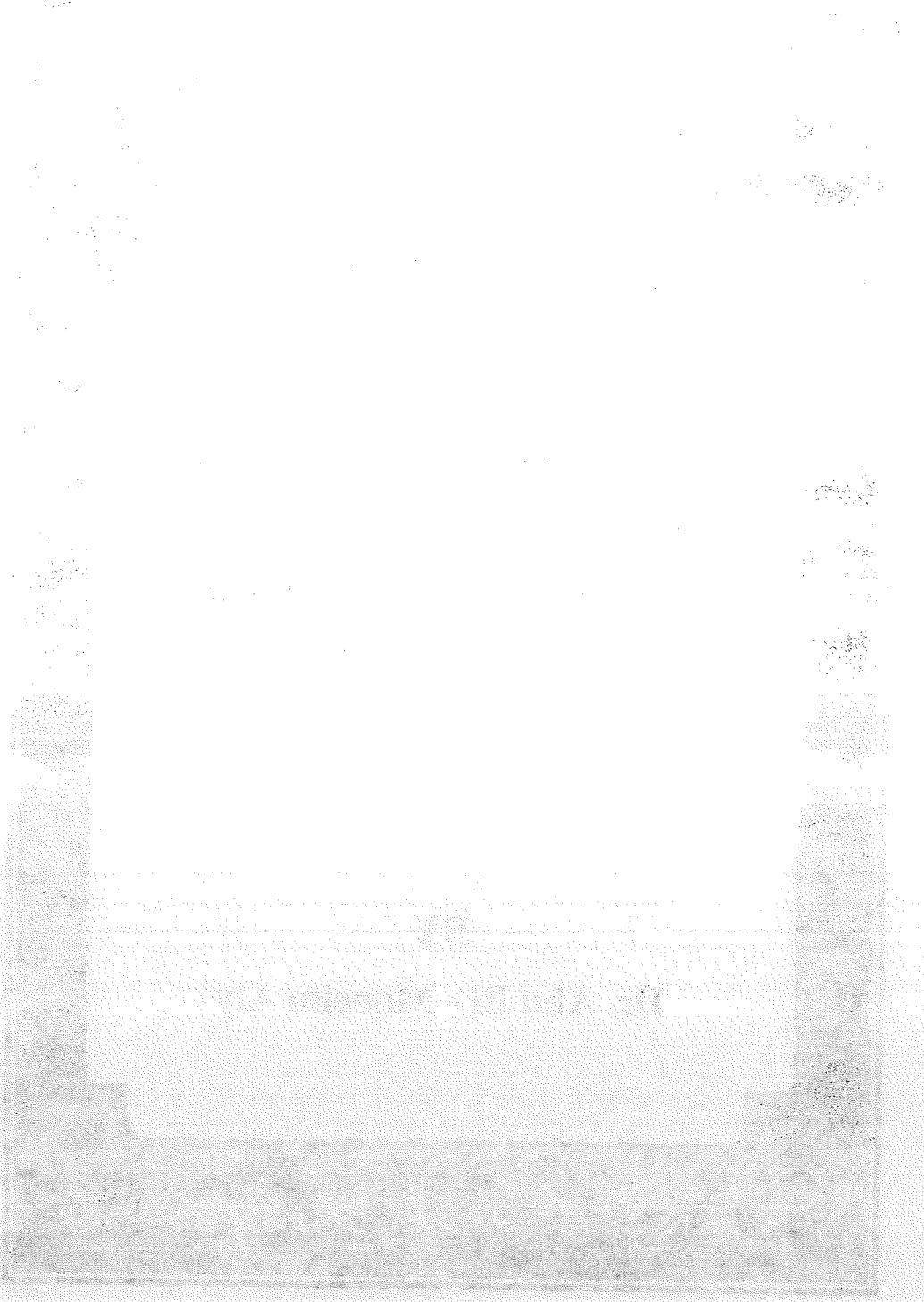


**Forging A Technique : The Hero  
As An Exile In The African  
Short Stories of Muriel Spark**

**BY**

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FORGING A TECHNIQUE: THE HERO AS AN EXILE  
IN THE AFRICAN SHORT STORIES OF MURIEL SPARK

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On 13 August 1937, Muriel Spark (b. 1918) sailed on *The Windsor Castle* to Cape Town, the first leg of her journey to Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) to get married to her husband-to-be Sydney Oswald Spark. Her Husband had previously left for Rhodesia "for an initial three-year job as a teacher."<sup>1</sup> Muriel was only nineteen then and was full of the spirit of adventure. She wrote that she "longed to leave Edinburgh [her home town] and see the world. ... And, of course, the call of adventure in a strange continent was very strong."<sup>2</sup> Yet after her arrival at Rhodesia, Spark began to face many problems because her husband soon showed signs of nervous breakdown and she could not adjust to the ways of the expatriate white community there. She could not feel at home in Southern Rhodesia as evidenced by her own words: "I didn't and couldn't pretend to belong. I intended to stay for the pre-arranged three years and gain as much human experience as I could."<sup>3</sup> Thus when she saw the wives of the British expatriates and the Afrikaans in Rhodesia, she discovered that she was not the type to deal with them. She explained her reasons for that:

Actually I felt too young and too intelligent for all that formal married-woman business. Almost immediately, I was looking forward to getting home again in three years' time, and for that reason I was determined to absorb all I could of these exotic surroundings.<sup>4</sup>

Spark's stay in the British Colony provided her with ripe experience that she made use of in a number of the stories she wrote about Africa and the colonial era there. Such stories are: "The Seraph and the Zambesi" (1951), "The Pawnbroker's Wife" (1953), "The Portbello Road" (1953), "The Go-Away Bird", (1958), "Bang-bang You're Dead" (1958), and "The Curtain Blown by the Breeze" (1961). This group constitutes a "short story cycle" according to the definition of such term by F. L. Ingram.<sup>5</sup> These stories have a heroine as the central figure in the action and she, by and large, represents Spark herself. They are the outcome of a writer who was an 'exile' and give a perfect image of the heroine as one who is uprooted from her environment. This paper will deal with Spark's African short stories as such.

Spark's double origin, being a daughter of a Jewish father and an English mother who lived in Scotland, had shaped her thoughts and personality from an early age. Growing up in Edinburgh, Spark had probably experienced an insidious sense of alienation, a sense of living among strangers surrounded by hatred. Spark recounted many incidents in her autobiography which showed her feelings of isolation, especially as a child, among the Scottish. Thus Spark's whole life was shaped by her sense of alienation and lack of roots as well as by her memories of the unpleasant attitude of the Scottish people towards foreigners, especially the English. She chose to travel to Africa to escape feeling as a "foreigner" in her own country of birth. This feeling had probably pushed her to live as an 'exile' almost all her life. She lived as an 'exile' in Africa from 1937 to 1944 then she chose London as her second place of exile; and in 1962 she lived in America and worked for *The New Yorker Magazine* for three years. In 1966,

Spark moved to Italy which is her final place of self-imposed 'exile'. Even in Edinburgh she felt an 'exile'. In an early essay she admitted that:

Edinburgh is the place that I, a constitutional exile, am essentially exiled from. I spent the first 18 years of my life, during the twenties and the thirties, there. It was Edinburgh that bred within me the conditions of exile; and what have I been doing since then but moving from exile into exile? It has ceased to be a fate, it has become a calling.<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, Spark had a love-hate relationship with her homeland, Scotland, and in particular, Edinburgh, her birthplace. She had admitted the influence of Scotland on her writing:

I am certainly a writer of Scottish formation and of course I think of myself as such. I think to describe myself as a 'Scottish Writer' might be ambiguous as one wouldn't know if 'Scottish' applied to the writer or the writing. Then there is the complicated question of whether people of mixed inheritance, like myself, can call themselves Scottish. Some Scots deny it. But Edinburgh where I was born and my father was born has definitely had an effect on my mind, my prose style and my ways of thought.<sup>7</sup>

She also gave her cautious, affectionate and critical appreciation of Edinburgh which was heightened by her sense of acceptance of the city and its people:

Nevertheless, it [Edinburgh] is the place where I was first understood. James Gillespie's Girls' School, set in solid state among the green meadows, showed an

energetic faith in my literary life. I was the school's Poet and Dreamer, with appropriate perquisites and concessions. I took this for granted, and have never since quite accustomed myself to the world's indifference to art and the process of art, and to the special needs of the artist.<sup>8</sup>

At the beginning of her career, Spark looked for the right medium in which she could release her talent. That she started with poetry is something quite natural, taking her childhood experiences into consideration.<sup>9</sup> She showed a desire to write in her early teens when she deliberately set out the writer's craft by imitating a great variety of models in verse and prose. Spark was young when she made acquaintance with the nineteenth and twentieth century poets who influenced her style like R. L. Stevenson (1850-1894) who had a major influence on her and she imitated some of his lines. Stevenson's thought coloured her view of life and his phrases lingered on in her memory.<sup>10</sup> Spark was also an admirer of Wordsworth and John Masefield.<sup>11</sup> Like them she sought to communicate something of a mystery in her short narratives. The narrative verse of both poets might have paved the way for Spark towards writing prose. In an interview, Muriel Spark responded to her persistence with poetry for a long time by saying: "I think I am still a poet. I think my novels are the novels of a poet. I think like a poet and react as one. I had resisted the novel because I thought it was a lazy way of writing poetry. For me poetry was literature, as it was for Aristotle."<sup>12</sup>

Spark's stay in Africa had a great impact on her as a writer. It provided her with ripe experiences which she used in her collection of short stories. She once wrote: "Most of the memorable experiences of my life I

have celebrated, or used for a background in a short story or a novel”<sup>13</sup> That was true and is quite noticed in her novels and short stories. In the short stories Spark started to weave “autobiographical strands into her fiction”<sup>14</sup>, which she had pursued throughout her career, i.e. in her short stories and novels beginning with *The Comforters* (1957) and ending with *Omnibus* (1993).

Thus it was in Africa that Spark felt real exiledom. Yet it was there that she found about a suitable medium for her creative power. No wonder, the short story was the right medium for the promising writer. As Clare Hanson said: “The short story has been the chosen form of exile”<sup>15</sup> That was the reason why Spark chose to mould her experiences in Africa. Though Spark did not write any stories in Africa, her creative power was released by the African journey which offered her material for the short stories which really form the embryonic stage of her literary career.

The narrator in all Spark’s African short stories is a female persona who is exiled in Africa waiting to escape. Spark herself was caught in Africa as a result of the First World War. The war broke out as she was planning to leave Africa. She wrote in her Autobiography: “It was exactly two years after my marriage (which was later dissolved) that war broke out. This put an end to my plans to leave the country. No civilians were allowed to leave Rhodesia. Transport, except for intercity trains, was put exclusively at the disposal of the military. After 3 September 1939, no passenger shipping was normally available.”<sup>16</sup> In the stories, the narrator emphasises the aspects of the place of her exile. It is always different from home; usually hot, rainy and tropical. It is a place that instigates nostalgia and homesickness in her.



In her stories, Spark is always concerned with 'showing' the action rather than 'telling' it.<sup>17</sup> Her point of view is always suspended, yet the reader can easily discover the objectives of the stories. She always leaves her narrators to convey a certain point of view that conforms to the general effect of each of her stories. For instance, in "The Curtain Blown by the Breeze" Mr. Van der Merwe kills the peccanin who peeps through his wife's bedroom while she was suckling her baby because Mr. Van der Merwe is the outcome of the African environment. He is one of the whites who went to the black continent and were transformed into a state which could be described as less than primitive or barbaric. He is the same product of the environment when he kills his wife, Sonia, at the end of the story. Having just come out of prison, and seen her with another man, he shoots the couple and then kills himself.

Thus the characters in all the African short stories are obsessed with the place and time; they all feel trapped in a land they went to by mistake or because of a wrong stroke of fate. As J. R. Randisi said: "Characters are obsessed with points in time and place, and these points emerge to us through a convolution of narrative sequence."<sup>18</sup> The characters are also trapped because they chose the wrong time to go to the place of 'exile'. The war was one of the reasons for their compulsory stay.

Throughout the stories, we see things through the eyes of the narrator. However, we are supposed to connect with the characters as human beings. They are out there in the colony behaving in such and such ways, but after all they are human beings who were affected by the environment around them. This is palpable in examples of characters who shoot other characters and kill them out of revenge, malice or jealousy.



Spark does not comment on the foolishness of her protagonists; she only shows their follies and leaves it for the reader to judge them. Through her economical description, for instance, to show how Sonia changed after her husband went to jail. In the view of other characters she had changed her furniture, name and religion. Her husband, however, did not change. The omniscient narrator does not tell us that she has changed her fidelity to her husband or that she stopped to love him. She was then shown as a victim of his foolish jealousy.

Spark's first short story, "The Seraph and the Zambesi", shows her major idea of the hero as an 'exile'. Samuel Cramer is out of place and time from the start. Both his hybrid origin, being the son of a German father and a Chilean mother, and his being compared with the Fanfarlo of Baudelaire add up to the mysticism of the story. Spark had previously employed him in her poem "The Ballad of the Fanfarlo" describing him as:

"Oh I am Samuel Cramer," he said,  
"Born of a German father  
Who was as pale as my naked bone,  
And a brown Chilean mother."

The confusion of his existence is hence enhanced by his being in Africa close to the Victoria Falls. For him and for the rest of the Europeans in Africa, the Christmas celebrations and festivities which come amid the African December heat is an anomaly. The Europeans themselves represent a strange body in the African atmosphere. Spark's symbolic description of the aridity of the white people is exemplar, in the sense that it is akin to

Conrad's description of the Belgians in *The Congo* in *Heart of Darkness* (1902). The whites are arrogant, snobbish and vengeful.

Cramer's masque for the Christmas party is to be challenged by the Nativity Masque of the true Seraph. Symbolically the true Seraph belongs to Africa. It has come to tell Cramer who plays the role of the Seraph in the Masque to "go away". This is also echoed in the cry of the grey-crested lourie which is piping "go-away, go-away" now and then throughout the action of the story. However, Cramer has had a big row with the true Seraph. He won't give way to the Africans and go-away. He will put the performance of his masque on stage by Christmas Eve. But with the appearance of the true Seraph, something mysterious takes place. The garage where the masque has been stage is set ablaze. When the natives put out the fire, Cramer who is not insured says: "my policy covers everything except acts of God - that means lightning or flood".<sup>19</sup> The Seraph is a God-send to tell the whites to go out of Africa.

Spark wrote "The Seraph and the Zambesi" after a visit to the Victoria Falls. She described this same experience in her autobiography: "The Falls became to me a symbol of spiritual strength. I had no settled religion, but I recognized the experience of the falls as spiritual in kind. They are one of these works of nature that cannot be distinguished from a sublime work of art."<sup>20</sup> Spark went on to say that: "In that story ... I felt a compulsion to describe the Zambesi River and the approach to the falls through the mysterious Rain Forrest as a mystical experience. I expressed symbolically, how the aridity of the white people there had affected me."<sup>21</sup>

In "Bang, Bang, You're Dead", the action relies on deterministic coincidence. The resemblance of Sybil and Desiree since their childhood has

something behind it. From the start this fact is emphasised. Since their childhood, Desiree chases Sybil in a way which foreshadows the end of the story. It is only at the end of the story that we realize the intention of the writer. Desiree dies instead of Sybil; as if she has been her surrogate from the very beginning.

“The seraph and the Zambesi” echoes Spark’s poem “The Ballad of the Fanfarlo”<sup>22</sup> which was inspired by a short story by Baudelaire. Derek Stanford summarises the poem as follows:

The subject ... is that the romantic personality (symbolised by Samuel Cramer) is merely a mask, a *persona*, disguising an essential emptiness within. And because the inner ego is unreal the self is asserted all the more by the speaker. The *persona* becomes a character-ideal, and the pursuit and worship of this false self obscures from the man all knowledge of his true nature and its actual failings. It also precludes him from attendance upon, and submission to, God.<sup>23</sup>

“The Seraph and the Zambesi” of Spark is very much similar to a ballad. Many of the characteristics of the ballad protagonists are ascribed to the heroes of the story. The Seraph in the story is described as:

The eyes took up nearly the whole of the head, extending far over the cheekbones. From the back of the head came two muscular wings which from time to time folded themselves over the eyes, making a draught of scorching air. There was hardly any neck. Another pair of wings, tough and supple, spread from below the shoulders, and a third pair extended from the calves of the legs, appearing to sustain the body. The feet looked too fragile to bear up such a concentrated degree of being

(The Seraph and the Zambesi, p. 160)

Thus the Seraph is to be recognized like no other, anyway none of us has ever seen a real seraph. Cramer describes it as an 'abnormality' with wings. Maybe such a form makes it easier for us as audience to imagine his disappearance at the end. Cramer and the Seraph quarrel over some materialistic reasons. Each claims the Nativity masque to be his own. Such is the reason, perhaps, which is offered by Spark for the bad conduct of the white man in Africa.

The mask put on by Cramer and the Fanfarlo is full of blasphemous implications; it also represents the commercialism of the spirit of Christmas. It is performed to gain profit for Cramer and the Fanfarlo. The Seraph pays a visit to the Colony to argue with Cramer over the show:

".....this is my show," continued Cramer.

"since when?" the Seraph said.

"Right from the start," Cramer breathed at him.

"Well, it's been mine from the Beginning," said the Seraph, "and the Beginning began first."

When the whole thing is set on fire, we are offered a solution that may satisfy the good among the audience. It was presumably done by the Seraph. The Seraph in the end is united with the natural scene of the Zambesi and the rain Forest. The narrator tries to tell us the whereabouts of the Seraph which disappeared at the end of the story: She followed a track through the dense vegetation of the Rain Forest, where the spray from the Falls descends perpetually. She continues:

Then I noticed that along the whole mile of the waterfalls crest the spray was rising higher than usual. This I took to be steam from the Seraph's heat. I

was right, for presently, by the mute flashes of summer lightning, we watched him ride the Zambesi away from us, among the rocks that look like the crocodiles that look like the rocks.

In "Bang, Bang You're Dead", Sybil, the protagonist, is presented as an 'exile' from the start. We first see her as a child through a cinematic technique, i. e. what could be seen as an illusion of reality. That we see her as a child and on a projector screen is twice removed from reality. This is intensified by her being confused with Desiree who looked like her as a child. It is also aggravated by the fact that she was in an alien place; she was away from home and suffering from boredom and alienation. Moreover, she was singled out as different from all the rest, even her look-alike, Desiree. Yet as a child Sybil "was precocious, her brain was like a blade."<sup>24</sup> After the death of her husband, she would not marry again. She said "Other women do not wish to be married to a Mind. Yet I do, and I am a freak and should not have married. In fact I am not the marrying type." ("Bang-bang You're Dead", p. 60). As they grew older, the two girls became more and more different. As Derek Stanford said: "Desiree grew up to be *femme moyenne sensuelle*, while Sybil, without moral effort, transcends sex".<sup>25</sup> Therefore she would not get married again after the death of her husband. She had married Donald, an archaeologist who came to Africa in a research trip. Yet "Eighteen months after their marriage Donald was mauled by a lioness and died on the long way stretcher journey back to the station." ("Bang-bang You're Dead", p. 58). Sybil was not able to leave the dark continent because "War had been declared. Civilians were not permitted to leave the continent, and Sybil was caught, like Donald under the lioness." ("Bang-bang You're

Dead”, p. 59) Sybil did not feel sorry for the death of her husband; she felt sorry for herself. However:

She wished he had lived to enjoy a life of his own, as she intended to do. It was plain to her that they must have separated had he lived. There had been no disagreement but ... given another tow years there would have been disagreements. Donald had shown signs of becoming a bore. By the last, the twenty seventh year of his life, his mind had ceased to enquire.

(“Bang-bang You’re Dead,” p. 59)

The story bears a great deal of resemblance to Spark’s account of her own experience in Africa in her autobiography. Desiree’s character is to be identified with a friend of Spark’s. In *Curriculum Vitae*, Spark recounts the story of Nita McEwan (the real name of the fictional Desiree) and the background of “Bang-bang You’re Dead”. She writes:

Nita McEwan was already in her first year at James Gillespie’s School when I saw her with her parents, walking between them, holding their hands. I was doing the same thing. I was not yet at school. ... My Mother remarked how like me the little girl was, one of her parents must have said the same to her. I looked round at the child and saw she was looking round at me. Either her likeness to me or something else made me feel strange. I didn’t yet know she was called Nita. Later, at school, although Nita was in a higher class and we never played together, our physical resemblance was often remarked upon. Her hair was slightly redder than mine. Years later, when I was twenty one, I was to meet Nita McEwan in a boarding house in the then Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. There our likeness to each other was greatly remarked on. One night, Nita was shot dead by her husband, who then shot himself. I heard two girls’ screams followed by a shot, then another shot. That

was the factual origin of my short story "Bang-bang You're Dead."<sup>26</sup>

Thus Spark has dramatised a real life story with a difference in her short story. She had been in a different situation in Africa. Her husband, S. O. Spark was on the verge of madness. Therefore they were separated ; as she said in her *Curriculum Vitae*:

By the time I had been in Africa two years, I thought of leaving my husband. He became a borderline case, and I didn't like what I found either side of the border. He got more and more violent. I thought I could argue rationally with him. This never worked for any length of time. When Nita McEwan, a friend from school, was killed that night by her husband in the hotel where I was staying, I got seriously frightened. My husband had a small revolver, a 'baby Browning', which he liked to fire off in corridors and courtyards. I hid it, and refused to had it over when he demanded it.<sup>27</sup>

In "Bang-bang You're Dead", Desiree was killed by the lover of her friend who mistook her for Sybil. The lover, David Carter, was desperate when Sybil rejected his marriage proposal. Thus he decided to kill her; but having discovered his mistake he committed suicide. Spark managed to do this in a very convincing manner. She emphasised the likeness of the two girls from the very beginning. The lives of the two girls were intertwined in such a way that makes one predicts the fatal end of either or of both of them. She also uses the flashback (prolepsis) technique through the use of film reels to show the reader the likeness of the two girls both in the past and in the present. The films were shot in England and in Africa.

In "Bang-bang You're Dead" as in many of her short stories, Spark has skillfully dealt with a theme she has come to again and again in her later



novels, i. e. failed human potentialities and the impact they have on characters. Barry Weston feels embittered by his failure in his relationship with his wife, Desiree. He is also dismayed by the negative reception of his book of poems, *Home Thoughts* by critics and readers in England. The book has been a success in the Colony; and he himself has been a successful passion-fruit planter. Yet since the arrival of Sybil, things did not go the way he liked .. Sybil provided him with a less satisfying answer when she told him he was a third-rate poet.

Barry Carter too is cornered in the third-rate class of poets. He is also snubbed by Sybil who rejects his offer of marriage as she is not the marriageable type. At the end of the story she says that she is in a state of sexlessness. Her state is described thus: "It's a not caring for sexual relations. It is not merely a lack of pleasure in sex, it is dislike of the excitement. And it is not merely dislike, it is worse, it is boredom". ("Bang-bang You're Dead", p. 62) After the mistaken murder of Desiree, Sybil desperately questions her state: "Am I a woman? She thought calmly, or an intellectual monster?" ("Band-bang You're Dead", p. 76).

The action of the story moves forward in a succession of effectively contrasted scenes that follow each other with the flow of cinematic montage. This is done through the use of three films, one is set in Scotland and tells of the early similarity between Sybil and Desiree as children; the other two are set in Africa and recount the complications resulting from such a strange situation. By using the technique of film reels, Spark manages to create an illusion of reality on the screen. The reader is thus offered the action and the life of the characters in frames. The authorial voice in the story has a double persona, that of the past as opposed to that of the present.

Spark used a variant technique in "The Portbello Road". The authorial voice, too, has a double persona represented in the double role of Needle as a heroine and narrator. Yet the use of the supernatural element in the story emphasises the strangeness of George's behaviour and double crime. Spark uses the supernatural to enhance the exile of the protagonist, Needle. At the beginning of the story Spark gives a brief account of her protagonists' early relationships. Needle, Kathleen, George and Skinny were childhood friends in Scotland. The episode of the background behind Needle's name which is associated with the proverbial "Needle in the haystack" foreshadows the end of the story. The murder of Needle by George is prepared for by the tense atmosphere of expectancy from the very beginning. Needle is killed because she would tell Kathleen, George's would-be wife, that George was already married.

In "The Portbello Road", Spark uses an ingenious technique to enhance the supernatural exile of her protagonist. Needle is resurrected from the dead to tell her story five years after her death. Needle's ghost is the narrator of the story. The ghost came back to haunt George the murderer and the bigamist. George was in Africa and whilst he was there he married a half-caste woman. Needle is the only one who can tell her friend, Kathleen whom George wanted to marry again, about his previous marriage. George was able to leave his half-caste wife in Africa and return to London to marry Kathleen. The action of the story begins five years after the murder and the bigamy; both crimes having been committed by George. Needle had come back from the dead to tell George the truth about himself. He had been living in sin with his wife for five years. Needle's ghost met him, while

accompanied by his wife, Kathleen, in The Portbello Road. Since that meeting, George's life was completely changed.

The murder of Needle is thus the centre of events in the story. It is well prepared for from the start. The needle in the haystack which pricked Needle at the very beginning (while the four protagonists were playing as children) is symbolic. At the end of the story we discover that needle was also killed in the haystack. George killed her by stuffing hay into her mouth until she was suffocated. She describes the crime in detail as follows:

he stuffed hay into my mouth until it could hold no more, kneeling on my body to keep it still, holding both my wrists tight in his huge left hand. I saw the red full lines of his mouth and the white slit of his teeth last thing on earth. No other soul passed by as he pressed my body into the stack, as made deep nest for me, tearing up the hay to make a groove the length of my corpse, and finally pulling the warm dry stuff in a mound over this concealment, so natural-looking  
in a broken haystack.<sup>28</sup>

Before the murder, George met Needle on a farm where he went to buy milk. The confrontation between them took place there. George told Needle of his wish to marry Kathleen and wanted Needle to keep his earlier marriage to the half-caste a secret. Needle refused to deceive her friend, Kathleen, and to betray her faith in the divine and the human. George is thus guilty of a double crime; his murder of Needle and his sacrilegious marriage to Kathleen. Needle held the evidence against George although George took all the precautions against being implicated before committing the crime. Thus Spark resorts to the resurrection of the ghost that haunts the murderer

to reveal the truth of George's heinous crimes. Needle's ghost is called upon to clarify the muddle in which George is emerged.

George, Needle, Skinny and Kathleen were childhood friends and the episode about Needle in the haystack was recorded in a photograph distributed by George to all members of the group. The photograph is just another symbol in the story. The snapshot is taken by George. The Haystack Murder as it was later dubbed by the police was also committed by George's hands.

As a heroine, Needle is distinguished from the rest; this is made known early in the story when she says: "Already and privately for some years I had been guessing that I was set apart from the common run." The needle in the haystack incident attested to that fact. Needle's luck in finding the needle singles her out for her future destiny.. She accompanies her fiancé, Skinny to Africa. Skinny, like Sybil's husband in "Bang-bang You're Dead", is an archaeologist with an English team investigating King Solomon's mines.

that series of ancient workings ranging from the ancient port of Ophir, now called Beira, across Portuguese East Africa and Southern Rhodesia to the Mighty jungle-city of Zimbabwe whose temple walls still stand by the approach to an ancient and secret mountain, where the rubble of that civilization scatters itself over the surrounding Rhodesian waste.

(*"The Portbello Road*, p. 169)

Such a description shows a part of the setting of the story. It is similar to the African background to many of the stories set in Africa. The mighty surroundings are fit for the magnitudinal incidents that take place close to

them. Such a background stands witness for George's preparation for his crimes.

George was an unstable character, he was undecided whether to live in Britain or in Africa, and whether to keep his half-caste wife or to marry Kathleen. He escaped to Africa to look for work and evade marrying Kathleen. He gave very ungrounded reasons for marrying the half-caste wife. He then escaped from his exile in Africa back to Britain. The obstacle against marrying Kathleen there, was his Catholic half-caste wife who would not divorce. The alternative was to live with Kathleen in sin through bigamy. Having been deprived of divine grace, he duplicates his crime by deciding to murder Needle. Thus his crimes were committed against his closest friends. Yet this doesn't seem to be an act of free will but something imposed by his ill-fate. A few weeks after seeing Needle's ghost, George began to lose his senses. That he turned mad at the end must elicit our sympathy for him. He wanted to expiate by confession to both crimes in vain because he was denied the chance. He was committed to a nursing home but he escaped to tell the police that he murdered Needle. Once he tried to tell Kathleen about his marriage to the half-caste woman in Africa but Kathleen was so kind to listen to his story without any comment. He was swept up in an unmerciful cycle of agony. Every Saturday the Portbello Road represented a trauma for him. Skinny, the ex-fiancé of Needle persuaded Kathleen to take George and emigrate to Canada. Thus he was destined to remain in 'exile', something he escaped from while in Africa many years ago.

Spark's poetic technique of narrative is extended to her novels. All her novels are unfolded in poetic style which she started with the short

stories. The main idea of "Bang-bang You're Dead" was later dealt with in detail in her novel, *The Bachelors* (1960). In "The Portbello Road", Spark discusses the idea which she also elaborated later on in her novel, *The Hothouse by the East River* which was conveyed in the manner of a fantasy. The key sentence in the novel is: "One should live first, then die, not die then live; everything to its own time." The novel is narrated in the present tense and it concerns a group of ghosts who have been brought into collective consciousness of one of them, Paul Hazlett, a reluctant corpse whose "heart knocks on the sides of the coffin".

The "Pawnbroker's Wife" is yet another of Spark's stories which can be described as a consideration of self-indulgence, an exposition of the dangers and evil of life that is concentrated solely in self. The main characters of the story as well as the narrator are isolated physically and spiritually. The opening of the story offers a paradoxical picture of hilarity and presumed mourning:

At Sea Point, on the coast of the Cape of Good Hope, in 1942, there was everywhere the sight of rejoicing, there was the sound of hilarity, and the sea washed up each day one or two bodies of servicemen in all kinds of uniform. The waters round the Cape were heavily mined. The people flocked to bring in the survivors.

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The narrator of the story, like Spark, was in Cape Town waiting for a ship to take her back to England where she lived in the house of Mrs Jan Cloote, a pawnbroker's wife. Spark wrote about her view of "The Pawnbroker's Wife":

My story 'The Pawnbroker's Wife' is set in Cape Town. I think it expresses what to my mind was a refusal of the white people of South Africa to face the human facts around them. They were in a 'world of their own'. Their speech was surrealistic. Even more than in Rhodesia I felt that their world was not the real world. I wanted the reality of home, even though it meant the bombs of war.<sup>30</sup>

The occasion of the story was Spark's escape from Rhodesia to England via Cape Town during World War II. That was in 1944 and Spark reminisced about Cape Town:

There had been an atmosphere of unreality about Cape Town. The Community was divided into three: coloured, black and white. The coloured comprised Malays, Indians and people of mixed blood. There were three entrances to the cinemas, and other public places, labelled 'Coloured', 'Black' and 'White'. I thought this quite amusing when I didn't think it tragic. The buses bore the warning 'Do Not Spit' in English and Afrikaans. I had a room in a district called The Gardens where certain visiting naval officers of all nationalities would arrive at odd hours to visit Girlie Lonsdale, an ageing gentleman who occupied the room opposite.<sup>31</sup>

Spark transformed her real experience into the fictional one of Mrs Jan Cloote and her three daughters. She certainly didn't feel at home in South Africa since she felt hounded by the circumstances of war. She felt in yet another temporary exile. Mrs Jan Cloote is a casualty of the war. The opening paragraph of the story shows numerous war casualties like her. These were the dead bodies of the officers who were washed ashore in Cape Town. Mrs Cloote is a casualty who lives a kind of death-in-life like many other characters especially her three young daughters. They epitomize the



plight of the lost generation, one that lived in a world where traditional values and expectations had been displaced. Mrs Cloote is very self-conscious; she is aware of the discrepancy between other people and herself. She practises apartheid upon the Blacks and the coloured. Her three daughters, especially Isa, represent the unrealized potentialities of hers. She expects they would realize many things denied her.

As in all her short stories, the style of this story, so evocative in its economy and simple language, reflected the experience of Spark's early poetic career. There are many particular qualities in Mrs Cloote to make her a typical Sparkian heroine. Such idiosyncrasies of hers anticipate many well known protagonists like Miss Jean Brodie of *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, Caroline Rose of *The Comforters* and many others. Her physical and spiritual exile make her behave in a way which may seem extraordinary to us. She is charismatic, cautious, affectionate, yet callous, selfish and obstinate. Circumstances around her push her to do many a provocative thing. Her husband jilted her to live with a native woman in a society where apartheid prevailed. Mrs Cloote developed the shop which her husband left and bought another where she sold the second hand miscellany, unredeemed from the pawnshop. Her daughters, Greta, Maida and Isa had also flourished. They had much in common with their mother. The youngest, Isa, was preparing herself for a future which would be even more notorious. She is a precocious girl of ten and she is capable of many things.

Spark is upholding the tangible reality of the African scene and its vivid impact on the characters. Mrs Cloote, like Sybil, Sonia, Needle, and many other female and men characters in the stories have suffered some kind of change as a result of existence amid the alien African environment.

It is true they have retained many qualities of their own background but their general identity was coloured by Spark's preconceptions of inevitable change. However, Spark seems to subordinate the tangible reality of some characters and of the place to the intangible reality of the events. The episode about the picture which Mrs Cloote refused to return to its owner claiming it to be Isa's picture. The picture

was dreadful as a piece of work, at the same time as it was fascinating on account of the period it stood for. The date of this period would be about the mid-eighteen-nineties. It represented a girl bound to a railway line. Her blue sash fluttered across her body, and her hands were raised in anguish to her head, where the hair, yellow and abundant, was spreading over the rails around her. Twenty yards away was a bend on the rail-track. A train approached this bend, full-steam. The driver could not see the girl. As you know, the case was hopeless. A moment, and she would be pulp. But wait! A motor-car, one of the first of its kind, was approaching a level crossing near by. A group of young men, out for a joy-ride, were loaded into this high, bright vehicle. One of them had seen the girl's plight. This Johnnie was standing on the seat, waving his motoring cap high above his head and pointing to her. His companions were just on the point of realizing what had happened. Would they be in time to rescue her? - to stop the onrushing train? Of course not. The perspective of the picture told me this clearly enough. There was not a chance for the girl. And anyhow, I reflected, she lies there for as long as the picture lasts; the train approaches; the young mashers in their brand-new automobile - they are always on the point of seeing before them the girl tied to the rails, her hair spread around her, the ridiculous sash waving about, and her hands uplifted to her head.

("The Pawnbroker's Wife" p. 40)

Here fantasy is mixed with reality in a very subtle way. The involvement of the narrator in commenting on the picture and giving her inner impressions

alert the reader to the symbolic meaning behind the picture. Spark plays ruthlessly with our imagination which should be stretched to the extreme boundaries. She projects a symbolic vision upon the real situation of Isa and her relationship with her mother. The picture shows Mrs Cloote's obsession with Isa's capabilities. She finds in her a miniature of her own image. Her tragic position as an abandoned wife in a strange environment has pushed her off the limits of ordinary manners. She will do any amount of crooked conduct to get her own way and to flourish together with her three daughters despite all the odds. Mrs Cloote would invent fabricated stories to justify her aggressive confiscation of items from her customers. She has this to tell the narrator about the picture:

‘It’s a very wonderful picture,’ she declared. ‘A very famous English artist flew out on a Sunderland on purpose to paint Isa. The R. A. F. let him have the plane and all the crew so that he could come. As soon as they saw Isa’s photo at the R. A. F. Headquarters in London, they told the artist to take Sunderland.’

(“The Pawnbroker’s Wife” p. 41)

The same thing happens with the narrator’s compass which Mrs Cloote has sequestered and bequeathed to Isa. She claimed that Max Melville, a very famous artist gave the compass away to Isa because he wanted her for the films. To make her audience suspend disbelief, Mrs Cloote adds:

“Max’s great-grandfather was an explorer, and he had this very compass on him when he crossed the Himalayas. He never came back, but the compass was found on his body. So it was very very

precious to Max, but he parted with it to Isa.” (“The Pawnbroker’s Wife” p. 44) But we soon discover that Mrs Cloote’s story is far from real. The narrator recognizes her compass. She remembers: “I had been given the

compass when I was fourteen; it was new then; I recognized it immediately, and while Mrs Cloote was talking, I recognized it more and more. The scratches, the dents which I made on my own possessions are always familiar to me, like my own signature." ("The Pawnbroker's Wife" p. 44) Such is the truth behind the compass. Yet the narrator cannot claim her compass because she has seen what happened to the man who claimed his own picture. After a fruitless argument with Mrs Cloote about his right to the picture he was unceremoniously dismissed from the Cloote shop 'hopeless and lost'.

Mrs Cloote is therefore engaged in a quest for identity. Her despotic manner of dealing with her customers does negate her self-assurance. That she encourages her daughters to act according to her own style is significant. she wants them to succeed in what she had failed to do. In Mrs Cloote one finds traces of many of Spark's future famous heroines and heroes. For instance she was prejudiced against dark skinned people of South Africa. Here she anticipates Freddy, the British diplomat in Jerusalem in *The Mandelbaum Gate* for whom dark skin becomes an emblem of intemperance. She has also made a 'set' of her daughters who were in their prime and very impressionable. Therefore she foreshadows Miss Jean Brodie and her 'set' of girls in *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. Likewise, there are some traces of Sandy Stranger in the precocious Isa Cloote. Indeed she is the forerunner of many of the girls in the Marcia Blaine School as well as other female heroines of Spark.

In "The Go Away Bird", Daphne de Toit is the Sparkian prototype 'exile' of the early set of African short stories. Her feeling of dislocation is made synonymous to the accompanying call of the lourie which acted as a

refrain throughout the story. The call of the Go-Away Bird has haunted Daphne especially when she was alone. It became an obsession with her. The grey-crested lourie with its famous cry 'go-way, go-way' appeared in Spark's first short story, "the Seraph and the Zambesi."<sup>32</sup> It was associated with the supernatural and mystical power behind the action of the story. It told the whites to get away and leave Africa because they did not belong there. Thus fantasy was always mixed with realism in Spark's works. She wrote about this in her book on John Masefield: "how sharp and lucid fantasy can be when it is deliberately intagliated on the surface of realism."

<sup>33</sup> This applies to many of the short stories. She resorts to supernatural and extraterrestrial elements in some of her stories. These are represented by the seraph, the grey-crested lourie and the ghost of Needle (in 'Bang-bang You're Dead).

The cry of the lourie is also used as a general motif in "The Go-Away Bird". Stressing its importance, Tom Hubbard rightly says:

The go-away bird is Daphne's link with the eternal; its cry unites her present and her past and transcends them. Try as she will to find some niche in this world, her exile is a calling, and it is the bird which calls. She leaves South Africa, but cannot leave the bird behind; in England he is grotesquely echoed and parodied by the budgerigar which is the unwelcome gift to Daphne from her devious landlady.<sup>34</sup>

Thus being singled out from the very beginning as the only person who can hear the cry of the bird makes Daphne unique among Spark's characters. She is different from all the other characters in many respects. That is why she extracts our sympathy for her plight. She suffers from a severe sense of isolation from which she has no escape except in death. From the start we are told of her unique relationship with the bird:

All over the Colony it was possible to hear the subtle voice of the grey-crested lourie, commonly known as the go-away bird by its call, 'go'way, go'way'. It was possible to hear the bird, but very few did, for it was part of the background to everything, a choir of birds and beats, the crackle of vegetation in the great prevalent sunlight, and the soft rhythmic pad of natives, as they went barefoot and in single-file, from kraal to kraal.  
(“The Go-Away Bird” p. 71)

Thus Daphne is different from all the other characters of the story in the quality of her imagination. She is the only one who is capable of hearing the call of the go-away bird. So she is endowed with a power which is superior to all the rest. In this she is the forerunner of many of Spark's future heroines like Fleur Talbot in *Loitering with Intent* and Miss Jean Brodie. Daphne continues to change and discover new facets of life throughout the story.

Yet the outstanding feature of “The Go-Away Bird” is the insight that Spark allows us into the ending of the story. We have a kind of foreknowledge that at the end Daphne would be murdered, perhaps by Tuys. This has always been a pattern followed by Spark in some of her short stories and in many novels like *The Driver's Seat* (1970) and *Memento Mori*. Daphne is always taking journey's into the unknown. In her trip to Cape Town and to London she knows nothing about what may happen to her. Yet we are warned that something rotten might happen. She is thus betrayed by everyone. The relations and acquaintances in England betray her and mar the beauty of the image she has of the glories of historic England. However, she seems to be asking for her tragic end.

However, Daphne is a person who is more sinned against than sinning. Her childhood is haunted by the go-away bird whose cry seems to command her to leave the provincial, semi-savage British African Colony for the glory of England. In the Colony she is thrust in a place where human evil is not controlled. In such a place as Donald Cloete, the most philosophic mouthpiece in the story says: "We are getting control over malaria. But we haven't got *the savage in ourselves* under control. This place brings out *the savage in ourselves*." This applies first to Old Tuys who is bent on revenge from Chakata, Daphne's uncle, who committed adultery with his wife. Old Tuys tried to rape Chakata's wife but failed and she always carried a gun on her for self defence. Thus Tuys staked Daphne to fulfil his intention. He would murder or rape her. He always waited in ambush for a chance to kill Daphne.

Nevertheless, Daphne seems to be doomed from the very beginning. She engaged herself to marry an officer in Cape Town but he was killed in action during World War II. Old Tuys was about to succeed in murdering Daphne once, but he was shot from behind by an anonymous assailant and Daphne was saved. After her journey to England and her betrayal by many people there she was "as affected with an attack of longing for the Colony, more dire than any of those bouts of homesickness which she had yet experienced." ("The Go-Away Bird", p. 113) Thus Daphne goes back to "the boredom of colonial clubland, and to a fate that is too painful to record."<sup>35</sup> Daphne is surrounded by hostile people and environment both in Africa and England. At the same time she is supposed to communicate her feelings. However, she is denied this natural prerogative. This is a pattern which spark repeated with subtle variations in many of her novels from *The*



*Comforters* onward. Daphne has found great difficulties in making contact with other characters because they are locked behind the barriers of her isolated worlds. The story contains a large number of characters and its form which burgeons on that of the novella allows Spark to act with great freedom. The plot is mainly developed by means of the main character, Daphne, and a number of others in Southern Rhodesia, Cape Town and England. The setting of "The Go-Away Bird, as in many of Spark's novels, according to Peter Kemp's words: "comes to fit more and more closely, more and more satisfyingly, its theme."<sup>36</sup> All the characters are isolated mentally, each inhabiting a private world of obsession that is remote and inaccessible to others. Examples like Daphne, Chakata, Old Tuys, Mr. Donald Cloete, Ralph Mercer aptly fit into such a pattern. There is lack of understanding between them because they do not enter each other's mental worlds. Daphne is the extreme example of this. She exemplifies the burden of the story: that, intellectually, the individual is very much alone. When she tries to open her mind to others he meets incomprehension, if not betrayal.

This pattern is repeated with other characters. Chakata hated the Dutch who constitute a majority in the Colony. Old Tuys, a Dutch, is bent to avenge himself on Chakata. Mrs Chakata had a revolver on her side by day and a man keeping guard by her room at night. Chakata gave the adolescent Daphne a gun telling her "Always take a gun when you go out on the veldt. It's a golden rule." ("The Go-Away Bird", p. 120) Greta Casse and her idiotic son, Michael, robbed Daphne of her money in London. Ralph Mercer, the artist, whom Daphne loved in London led her to "a hell of a life. That was what it meant to be tied up with an artist." When she decided to back to Africa, Ralph said to Daphne: "Go-away and leave me in peace." All

that made Daphne to cry just before her death: "God help me. Life is unbearable." ("The Go-Away Bird", p. 118) Thus when Ralph Merceer intended to write a story after the murder of Daphne he decided to write a tragedy: "He thought of Daphne. That might lead to something both exotic and tragic. He recalled her stories of Old Tuys and Chakata, the theme of the lifelong feud." and when he visited Daphne's grave he could hear the cry of the lourie just behind Daphne's grave. He wanted to be free of its voice thus he escaped to the capital. Yet the cry continued to haunt him.

The Go-away bird's call has the effect of an epiphany. It helped to reveal the influence of the supernatural on the destiny of Daphne. Spark harped on the role of the supernatural in many of her short stories and novels. She has often tried to emphasise the tragic situation of her protagonists which mainly stemmed from her tragic vision of life exacerbated by the characters' feelings of alienation and exile. Her characters are always exposed to tension as a result of passing through dilemmas that normally uproots them of their reality. They just kill one another in cold blood. For example: "He looked as if he would murder me and he did", ("The Portbello Road", p. 185). And in "Bang-bang You're Dead", there a similar situation in which the murder takes place in a rather dramatic way: "She looked round, but in the same second it was over. A deafening crack from the pistol and Desiree crumpled up. A movement by the inner door and David's body dropped sideways.", ("Bang-bang You're Dead", p. 75).

Although "The Go-Away Bird" is not autobiographical, there is much of Muriel Spark in Daphne de Toit. Whilst in Africa, Spark wrote a poem called "The Go-Away Bird". It was "about the haunting cry of the

grey-crested lourie that one could hear all over the veldt of the Colony. The bird cried 'go-'way, go-'way'". This gave her the idea to write the novella with the same title many years after her return to England. She went on to say:

I felt that it [the lourie] spoke to me, and in later years my longshort story 'The Go-Away Bird' expressed the intermittent sad feelings of those years, the ignorant ill-will of some who had longed for 'home', in England they had never known, and who found there everything cold, changed, and many people on themake. I was really, myself, a 'Go-away Bird'.<sup>37</sup>

This is proof enough of the extent of the influence of the African experience on Muriel Spark and her work. It also touches on the most important theme of the 'exile' in her stories.

"The Curtain Blown by the Breeze" is the final story in which the effect of the African experience is reflected in Spark's work. Spark portrays the character of Sonia der Merwe who is one of the white Afrikaans she met there. We are admitted to the society of the colony of Fort Beit through the curtain of the window of Mrs van der Merwe. Sonia's husband shot a peccanin boy who was peeping through the curtain to watch Sonia whilst suckling her baby. The husband went to jail and Sonia began to behave in her own way. There is some similarity between Sonia and Mrs. Cloote of "The Pawnbroker's Wife". Both represent the white female sex in Africa during the colonial era. Spark was shocked at the uncivilized conduct of the

whites she met in Africa. She wrote about this in her autobiography as she said:

The white women mainly went around clutching a hundred cigarette box of Gold Leaf cigarettes (the Rhodesian brand) in their hands, with a lighted cigarette perpetually drooping out of the side of their mouths. I didn't like these women. When we next moved, to Salisbury, they proliferated. They were very sure of themselves as women. In the colony, there was one white woman to three white men which led to violent situations - sometimes to murder - among the men.<sup>38</sup>

Sonia van der Merwe was not an exception; she was very conscious of herself as a white woman. Before her husband went to prison she was confined to solitary incarceration. By going to jail for his crime, Jannie van der Merwe had released Sonia of her financial and emotional worries. She began to open up on the outside world. She started to socialise; she had even changed her name, religion and the furniture of her home. It was as if she was suffering from a kind of xenophobia in the room with the drawn curtains. She was set free with her husband's imprisonment. As Ruth Whittaker rightly says: "Mrs. Spark dwells on the isolation and claustrophobic atmosphere of the white expatriate communities, in which emotions are intensified."<sup>39</sup> The action is set against a background of savagery and alienation. The narrator of the story is an expatriate and through her eyes the country is seen as potentially savage and inhospitable:

This was a territory where you could not bathe in the gentlestream but a germ from the water entered your kidneys and blighted your body for life; where you could not go for a walk before six in the evening without

returning crazed by the sun; and in this remote part of the territory, largely occupied by poor whites amidst the overwhelming natural growth of natives, a young spinster could not keep a cat for a pet but it would be one day captured and pitifully shaved the local white bachelors for fun; it was a place where the tall grass was dangerous from snakes and the floors dangerous from snakes.

(“The Curtain Blown by the Breeze”, p. 21-2)

The European settlers seem to fit in quite well in such an environment:

The white people seized on the slightest word, Nature took the slightest footfall, with fanatical seriousness. The English nurses discovered that they could not sit next a man at dinner and be agreeable -perhaps asking him, so as to slice up the boredom, to tell them all the story of his life - without his taking it for a great flirtation and turning up next day after breakfast for the love affair; it was a place where there was never a breath of breeze except in the season of storms and where the curtains in the windows never moved in the breeze unless a storm was to follow.

(“The Curtain Blown by the Breeze”, p. 22)

There is a severe sense of alienation governing the behaviour of the whites here. Perhaps it was a kind of defence mechanism against the sterility of the environment. They behave in a way that breaks all the norms they are accustomed to at home. This causes the narrator to reject their prevalent values. Of the ‘storm’ is used here both literally and metaphorically. Storms do also happen inside family circles and a husband murders his wife and friends. This is a precaution for what is going to happen later on in the story. It is also a pattern that is repeated in many of Sparks stories and novels. The crisis that happened between Sonia and her husband and led to her murder

and his suicide was accompanied by a storm. Sonia had sought the employment of Frank, the narrator's fiancé as the Chief Medical Officer of the north of the country because she wanted him. No sooner had they started an affair than her husband was set free from jail. Thus the characters are ensnared in the sterile personal relationships which frequently lead to death.

The narrator in this story as well as in all the African stories is a female persona exiled in Africa waiting to be moved out. She always emphasises the place of her exile. It is always different from home back in Europe, usually hot, stormy and rainy. It is a place that instigates nostalgia and homesickness.

To conclude, the African set of short stories represent a watershed in Spark's fiction. They are a breakthrough to the fuller form in her art. She has always preferred to write short novels and novellas where everything - including the characters is easier to keep under control. In her tight crisp fiction she could easily handle her favorite theme of the hero as an exile. Spark has called herself "a constitutional exile"<sup>40</sup> All her African short stories present a frightening perception of the Colony where the atmosphere is shown to perpetuate a sense of dislocation. The setting of her stories fluctuates between peacetime Africa and wartime England and Scotland. The message in almost all the stories is "people fail you". This is certainly the feeling of the oppressed and the exile.

## NOTES

1. Muriel Spark, *Curriculum Vitae; Autobiography*, London: Constable, 1992, p. 116.
2. Loc cit.
3. Ibid., p. 123.
4. Ibid., p. 125.
5. Forrest L. Ingram, *Representative Short Story Cycles of the Twentieth Century: Studies in a Literary Genre*, The Hague: Mouton, 1971, p. 15.
6. Muriel Spark, "Edinburgh-born", *New Statesman*, (10 August 1962), p.180.
7. Quoted in Alan Bold, (ed.), *Modern Scottish Literature*, London: Longman, 1983, p. 221.
8. Muriel Spark, "What Images Return", in Karl Miller (ed.), *Memoires of*



- Modern Scotland*, London: Faber & Faber, 1970, p. 152.
9. See Muriel Spark, *Curriculum Vitae*, pp. 17-100, passim.
  10. Ibid., p. 35.
  11. Later on Spark published an edition of Wordsworth's poetry in collaboration with Derek Stanford; see *Tribute to Wordsworth* (ed. with Derek Stanford). London: Allan Wingate, 1950; she also wrote a book on John Masefield; see her book, *John Masefield*, London: Peter Nevill, 1953.
  12. Ian Gillham, "Keeping it Short- Muriel Spark Talks about her Books to Ian Gillham," *The Listener*, (24 September 1970), p. 412.
  13. Muriel Spark, *Curriculum Vitae*, p. 120.
  14. Valerie Shaw, "Fun and Games with Life-Stories", in Alan Bold, (ed.) *Muriel Spark: An Odd Capacity for Vision*, London: Vision and Barnes & Noble, 1984, p. 48.
  15. Clare Hanson, (ed.), *Re-reading the Short Story*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989, p. 3.
  16. Muriel Spark, *Curriculum Vitae*, p. 130.
  17. See Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1961.
  18. J. R. Randisi, "Muriel Spark and Satire", in Alan Bold (ed.), *Muriel Spark: An Odd Capacity for Vision*, p. 136.
  19. Muriel Spark, "The Seraph and the Zambesi", *The Go-Away Bird and Other Stories*, (London: Penguin Books, 1963), p.162. Further references to the story are taken from this edition and will be henceforward cited parenthetically in the text.

20. Muriel Spark, *Curriculum Vitae*, p. 128.
21. Op. cit., p. 128.
22. See Muriel Spark. *Collected Poems I*, London, 1967.
23. Derek Stanford, *Muriel Spark*, Fontwell: Centaur Press, 1963, p. 94.
24. Muriel Spark, "Bang-bang You're Dead," *The Stories of Muriel Spark*, London: The Bodley Head, 1985, p. 55. Further references to the story are taken from this edition and will be henceforward cited parenthetically within the text.
25. Derek Stanford, *Muriel Spark*, p. 111.
26. Muriel Spark, *Curriculum Vitae*, p.34.
27. Ibid., p.130.
28. Muriel Spark, "The Portbello Road", *The Stories of Muriel Spark*, London: The Bodley Head, 1985, p. 185. Further references to the story are taken from this edition and will henceforward be cited parenthetically in the text.
29. Muriel Spark, "The Pawnbroker's Wife", *The Go-Away Bird and Other Stories*, p. 33.
30. Muriel Spark, *Curriculum Vitae*, p. 140.
31. Ibid., pp. 139-140.
32. See p. above.
33. Muriel Spark, *John Masefield*, London: Peter Nevill, 1953, p. 174.
34. Tom Hubbard, "The Liberated Instant: Muriel spark and the Short Story," in Alan Bold, (ed.), *Muriel Spark: an Odd Capacity for Vision*, p. 176.
35. Anonymous, "Confidence Trickster", *Time*, (14 November 1960),

- p. 110. A Review of "The Go-Away Bird" by M. Spark: Lippincott.
36. Peter Kemp, *Muriel Spark*, London: Paul Elek, 1974, p. 11.
37. Muriel Spark, *Curriculum Vitae*, p. 135.
38. *Ibid.*, pp. 125-6.
39. Ruth Wittaker, *The Faith and Fiction of Muriel Spark*, London: Macmillan, 1982, 1984, p. 21.
40. Muriel Spark, "What Images Return", in Karl Miller, (ed.) *Memoirs of Modern Scotland*, p. 151.

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