



**RELIGIOUS CONFLICT
IN MURIEL SPARK'S NOVELS:
*THE BACHELORS, THE COMFORTERS
AND MEMENTO MORI*
Nilgün ŞENOL ADMEŞ
Yüksek Lisans Tezi
İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı
Danışman: Prof. Dr. Hasan BOYNUKARA
2018**

T.C.
TEKİRDAĞ NAMIK KEMAL ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI
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Nilgün ŞENOL ADMEŞ tarafından hazırlanan “*Religious Conflict In Muriel Spark’s Novels: The Bachelors, The Comforters And Memento Mori*” konulu YÜKSEK LİSANS Tezinin Sınavı, Namık Kemal Üniversitesi Lisansüstü Eğitim Öğretim Yönetmeliği uyarınca 30.11.2018 günü saat’de yapılmış olup, tezin OYBİRLİĞİ / OYÇOKLUĞU ile karar verilmiştir.

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Bir Yahudi olmaktan vazgeçip, Katolikliği benimseyen Muriel Spark bir çok yazar gibi yapıtlarında dünya görüşünü, inancını, felsefi görüşlerini yansıtır. Romanlarında din olgusu önemli bir yer tutar. Bu çalışmada tanrı-yazar ilişkisi, dinin kader üzerindeki etkisi, özgür irade (karakterlerin seçimleri ya da istekleri) ve ilahi irade, gerçek ve kurgu, Spark'ın *Bekarlar*, *Avutucular* ve *Öleceğini Hatırla* adlı romanlarında ele alınacaktır. Kader ve özgür irade konuları incelenirken, Spark'ın Katolik karakterlerinin yaşadığı dinsel çatışmalar çözümlenmeye çalışılacaktır. Çalışmada yöntem olarak izlenimci yaklaşım uygulanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Din, kader, özgür irade, ilahi irade, gerçeklik, tanrı-yazar ilişkisi.

ABSTRACT

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Muriel Spark, who was born as Jewish and later adopted Catholicism, like many authors, reflect her ideology, beliefs and philosophy in her works. Religion is a significant issue in her novels. In this study, God-author relationship, the effects of religion on fate, free will (the characters' choices or wishes) and divine will, namely fiction and reality are discussed in Spark's three chosen novels; *The Bachelors*, *The Comforters* and *Memento Mori*. While dealing with the subject of fate and free will, the religious conflicts adopted by her Catholic characters are also analyzed.

Key words: Religion, fate, free will, divine will, Realism, God-author relationship.



for the whole who makes me whole

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INTRODUCTION

The novel is a literary genre that is inevitably influenced by social, cultural and economic events that occur in the time period in which the writer lives, both in terms of subject matter and writing techniques. In addition, it can be said that the author's point of view and beliefs, overtly or covertly, influence the novel. One of the most striking examples in this regard is Muriel Spark, a contemporary British novelist who reputed for her distinct and remarkable novels. One of the most striking aspects of her novels is that she clearly reflects her philosophy of life and religious beliefs in her works very much different from many of her contemporaries. The time she began to write coincides with her converting to Catholicism. This could be accepted as a reason why her works are embedded with her religion thoughts and feelings.

The author's philosophy, beliefs and faith have a crucial role on forming the plot and the characters. This is very much so particularly after her choosing to become a Catholic. Catholicism, particularly in those selected novels, occupies a central place which leads to a dignified plot design and complicated, not easy-to-classify characters. That some of these characters are converts like the novelist is not surprising.

The freedom of characters and novelists, the secular plot and the divine plot, reality and fiction, free will and fate are the main themes in Spark's works. Even if she does not make a suggestion to solve these matters, they are there for the reader to think about. In this thesis, these issues will be examined in detail to picture her view of life and art, the dichotomy of restricted and free will, namely, human will against god's will. This is expected to give a modest clue to Spark readers who aim to understand her works better. Therefore *The Bachelors*, *The Comforters* and *Memento Mori* will be analyzed with respect the controversial issues they put forward.

1.1. Spark and Religion

Religion, as stated above, is a central theme in Muriel Spark's novels. She writes her novels from a Roman Catholic standpoint. She does not mention her religious concerns particularly against label frequently attached to her as a Catholic writer she says; "I never think of myself as a Catholic while I am writing my novels, because it is impossible to think myself any kind of thing." (Memento Mori, 1961: 10). Beyond any doubt, she means Christianity as a whole while talking about religion, but in particular Roman Catholicism, which she converted in 1954. In her reviews, it is possible to see how important Catholicism is for her and how seriously she treats it in her novels. This is because of her being identified with Catholic Church in hard-line (Whittaker, 1982). Moreover, one of the statements she made about her first published short story "The Seraph and the Zambesi" can give us an idea about the topics of her works. She says, "I do not know what gave me the idea for the story, but certainly I believe in angels, and I had been up the Zambesi on the boat". This can be interpreted as the relationship between the secular and the divine, and as we will be seen in the later chapters, between human being's will, viewpoints and God's fate and eternal vision (Memento Mori, 1961: 11).

In her life and career as a writer, Spark's conversion to Roman Catholicism was a crucial point. Spark says that her being a Catholic and beginning to write coincides, and that it makes her feel more confident.

"You want to know that you have a compass in the middle of the sea and the pit shows north. Then you continue to your way confidently. That is the meaning of being a Catholic, finding direction problem resolved. Catholicism provided me a starting point." (Frankel, 1987). After her conversion, her central motivation gets stronger. In an interview she says, "I did not think that I could grasp a subject and achieve it, because it mattered too much. As a Catholic I feel that nothing matters all that much.... And so I

was released in a liberated way.” (Frankel, 1987). This realization enables her to achieve what she has been trying to do for a long time. She says

I think it was the religious upheaval and the fact I had been trying to write and couldn't manage it. I was living in very poor circumstances and I was a bit undernourished as well. I suppose it all combined to give me my breakdown. I had a feeling while I was undergoing this real emotional suffering that it was all part of the conversion', and she believes that 'there is a connection between my writing and my conversion... Certainly all my best work has come since then.' (Memento Mori, 1961: 59-60).

She begins to believe that there is a divine supervision in the background of everything and realizes that there is no coincidence in cosmos, and everything takes place in a determined layout, and with a purpose.

Spark explains the reason why she converted to Catholicism by saying;

Anyone has no unchangeable faith or notion related to any kind of thing. In my opinion, it is very significant as someone has a stable, unchangeable thought. Whether we want it or not, Christian- Jewish tradition comes into Mediterranean Region dictates what is right and what is wrong and describes what we identify absolute (Frankel, 1987).

This is a crucial point to understand Spark. While reading from this point of view, it is likely to get an insight into her novels, these concepts in particular. It also gives some help for the general thematic concerns of her works.

As a result of such statements, Spark has been identified with Catholic Church. However, twentieth-century critics were very much at unease to categorize Spark. She is a difficult novelist to talk about and to classify her into an exact trend of novels. She is not identified with Catholic Church but also with such trends as social realism, the journalistic category of Angry Young Man, and the nouveau roman and post modernism. Primarily, she was regarded as a realist due to her perception and description of traditional codes. Spark mocks the radical and marginal features of social realism, uses attitudes of nouveau roman and adopts twentieth- century technology in order to deal with eternal truths, and the skeptical and materialistic characteristics of the age. By using these kinds of techniques, she tries to persuade readers that angels and demons are not

outmoded entities, and that they can exist on a boat, in a hospital or in a supermarket. Herewith she is far away of the pressures of post-modernism and also realism.

1.2. Spark's Realism

For Spark, reality is symbolic. "She does not know in which style she writes but emphasizes that her writings are not in realistic manner and it is nonsense writing a novel by adhering to the daily facts." (Frankel, 1987). For her novel is to wander in the world of symbols, allusions and myths. Hence, Whittaker explains Spark's distinctiveness for realist novelists (1982: 3);

The realist novel of the fifties reflects a religious commitment; there is no benign, or vengeful God in the background. In Muriel Spark's novels, however, man's actions take place within a divine framework, and are portrayed in the context of relationship, or lack of it, with God.

Compared to the other writers of her time, her perspective is so clear in *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* (1960) in which she chooses a working class community. However, when this novel is compared with, for instance, *A Kind of Loving*, one can realize clearly that her novel is far away from realism. Dugal Douglas is horrified by the state of immorality, not angry about social injustice. In *The Bachelors*, through the character of Evert Thornton she satirizes the equation of virtue and working-class. Her novels are not very much related to social status, or their material worlds. Rather, she is concerned with the characters' spiritual status, not the political or economic conditions. They are merely integral parts of her novels. As Whittaker says, "in Mrs Spark's novels worldly events are made subordinate to the demands of the God-centered plot" (1982: 4).

Cardinal Newman's motto can be evaluated as confirming that notion; 'from shadows and types to the truth' sums up the material world for a Roman Catholic. This truth is the divine world, not the understandable one. Therefore, many Catholic writers are at will to make us believe in the extraordinary world not of the recognizable one.

In the following years, in early seventies, her novels turned into novellas with the qualities that can be compared to the characteristics of the French new roman. In her middle novellas, it is possible to see various techniques of nouveau roman. These techniques can be counted as reflexivity, narrative discontinuity to create suspense, and neutral tone. In addition, the subject matter of her later novels is the absurdity of the material world. The topics like inflation or terrorism can be shown as examples of this notion. Moreover, throughout this period, she was considered as an aesthetician that had formal interests. It can be concluded that Muriel Spark is not a novelist in English realist tradition or concerned merely with the structure of French new roman. These critical discourses cannot change the fact that Spark is a Roman Catholic, but in her works her religion does not emerge as propaganda. Her Christianity subordinates reality to a transcendent world and she writes her novels through a moral standpoint. In order to understand her work, the reader is forced to engage with another world rather than this one. According to Dobie (1969: 280);

A reader, who does not know the close relationship of the author to the religion, cannot realize she is a Roman Catholic. She aims to create curiosity not to teach. Instead of asserting definite thesis, wishes to stir reader's imagination and interests up.... Her novels' purpose to tell ethical and spiritual reality and try to explain cosmos and man's duty and position in it.

Of course it would not be fair to consider Spark's novels as religious sermons or to claim them to be didactic. The reader can easily detect that her characters reach the truth after long quests, conflicts and miseries. Her characters are neither purely evil nor good. They are stuck in between the conflicts of being good or evil, natural or supernatural, the recognizable world or the divine world, fate or will, known or unknown. It has to be accepted that the events, which seem to be natural, has in fact, supernatural quality. Entity is not limited with visibility; it is necessary to realize the invisible behind the visible one. Therefore, to comment on the appearance entails individual to delusions. The human being is a combination of soul and material. To evaluate him/her merely as a material fact is to ignore the other side of man. In Spark's world neither the soul is dominant to the material nor the material is dominant to soul. She struggles to bring them together and create coherence between them. Her characters

have religious conflicts and usually, instead of resolving them, she makes the reader synthesize these conflicts through the events and the characters. In Spark's novels these conflicts arise from the individuals' faith. Their notions contradict their faith's demands. Will and fate are the primary paradoxes. In other words, the characters confront a dilemma in which they have to choose their destinies and freedom. They devise some plans, but a power they cannot see and control comes out and disrupts these plans. As a general view, the ones who realize this power and accept it rest easy, the ones who withstand and deny it, are punished. Spark aims to help the reader realize this unrecognizable world. Her novels tell the spiritual reality and she uses her narration in perspective of the reader to understand this God-centered world.

According to Whittaker, "Spark tries us to believe demons and angels are not outmoded concepts in this skeptical and materialistic world. Her angels, demons and saints are the concepts that Christianity approves. They are authentic; there is no fictional side of them." (1982). In Spark's works, human actions come into existence either through a divine dimension and their relationship with God or through the lack of this relationship. In a review Spark (1961) says

Catholic faith is not something that changes constantly. Now, nobody can deny I speak with my own voice, but before I am a Catholic I could not do that. Because, lots of thoughts that I did not know what they were, piled in my brain. Perpetually, I was speaking others' voices and writing. But it is not so anymore.

Being a Catholic and a novelist, in other words, being in the role of a creator and a created poses a difficult situation. When asked a question, Spark replies,

Newman asked this question, too. (John Henry Newman, an Anglican and later Roman Catholic theologian and cardinal) He said he could not understand how a person can write without dealing with evilness, because writing is related to the people who are inclined to make mistakes. In my opinion, there is no conflict... Christianity tells human beings themselves (Frankel: 1987).

How can a good Catholic write goodness while dealing with evilness or how can one explain obedience while imitating God? George Orwell thought not, maintaining; "usually only bad Catholics wrote good books." (1975:135). In this case,

either Spark is a bad Catholic and her works are good or she is a good Catholic and her works are bad. Opposing to this view, Jacques Maritain claims that only a Christian is exactly qualified to write a good novel “The object it has to create is human life itself; it has to mould, scrutinize and govern humanity.... only a Christian, nay a mystic, because he has some idea of what there is in man, (thus it) can be complete a novelist.” (1923: 225). Moreover, Maritain thinks that there is no need for conflicts between the views of a Christian and requirements of his work: “Do not make the absurd attempt to sever in yourself the artist and the Christian. They are one if you really are a Christian, and if your art is not isolated from your soul by some aesthetic system.” His notion about this subject accords with Newman’s explanation for Catholic literature. According to him, Catholic literature not only deals with Catholic issues, but “all subjects of literature whatever treated as only a Catholic would treat them.” (1923: 285). However, for some Catholic writers their works are means for propaganda. They are not interesting as much as the ones who try to depict loyalty to the Faith and the deviations of men’s acts. Some novelists such as Frederick Rolfe, Graham Greene and David Lodge express the inadequacy of Catholic Church’s relationship with the fallen world. Their attitude to faith is critical. Although Spark is identified with Catholic Church and the belief, she does not write her novels as religious propagandas.

Carol Murphy thinks in the other way. She says Spark differs from Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh, and says, “After converting to Catholicism, Spark writes her novels like preaching a sermon similar to some writers.” (1966: 60). She believes being a Catholic affects Spark in negative ways. Maybe, they have some similar characteristics, but they differ from each other in some ways. Because of his novel, *The Power and the Glory*, the church condemns Greene for the reason of his severely criticizing the traditional church and Catholicism. The protagonist chooses committing suicide in *The Heart of Matter*. For Greene, it is a natural conduct and he is sympathetic to his evildoer character. Nevertheless, it is a sin according to Catholic dogma, in which the character should be damned, and Greene depicts this situation as morally preferable to the Church’s demands. Likewise, in Spark’s *The Driver’s Seat*, the character Lise has

herself killed to a triggerman, an indirect suicide. Spark keeps her silence about this suicide. She keeps her people at a distance. Her attitude towards her evildoers is inflexible. Sin is sin. Nonetheless, she does not accept an excuse against evil action. Whereas, according to her belief, suicide is one of the greatest sins and the character should be damned. She does not reveal an author's love to her characters like John Bayley who says; "a delight in their independent existence as other people, an attitude towards them which is analogous to our feelings towards those we love in life: and an intense interest in their personalities combined with a sort of detached solicitude, a respect for their freedom." (1960: 58). Spark is in distance with this view of independence of characters. Her attitude is in being bound by the ordinances of God, and so bound by the novelist and his restrictions. Their freedom of a human individuality is denied. We are always made aware about their choices and actions have no functions, they are merely integrals of both a divine and novelistic plot.

Their roles are predetermined and Spark does not give us any details about their interior world, physiological aspects, nor does she penetrate their thoughts. Because she believes, if she does so, this may evoke our sympathy to their personalities. In order to prevent us from feeling sympathy with them, she intently gives only a little information about her characters. Usually, her characters are depicted as the ones who do not have any families nor do they have a sense of belonging and are socially and emotionally isolated. They are imaged to have no potential to direct the circumstances beyond their control. In her narration, she uses some inventions to disdain her characters. However, it is a kind of designed attitude and a clear picture for us to see how they are the embodiments of her view of the fallen world. The unendurable charm of evil attracts Spark, too. However, Spark does not convert the human spirit and world into a power collision that good and evil struggle for domination. Good and evil emerge as a conclusion of the individual's behaviours, not as the principals of existence. The reality must be thought as an expression of these oppositions and conflicts. Her approach can be noticed in *The Comforters*. Whittaker exemplifies this as follows (1982: 89);

Two characters agree that true Church was awful, though unfortunately, one couldn't deny true. Mrs. Spark's novels both the awfulness and the truth; the lyricism with which she expresses the latter never wholly negating the misery which she implies is involved in dedication to faith.

In Spark's fiction, both the God and the novelist create a world, and their created human beings have similar characteristics. They are free and captive at the same time, if they have, it is a restricted freedom.

This arouses again the trouble which has been discussed both on secular and divine level. Are the human beings responsible for their acts or not? Are they free to choose or obliged to accept their fate? She tries to answer these questions with the demands of Catholicism. Nonetheless, she does not let the reader reach an exact, recognizable solution; the evolution is in the responsibility of the reader. Different from Greene and Spark, Waugh has no conflict with his beliefs and the Church's laws except at the end of his life, as Whittaker says for between what he wanted to say and what the Church wanted him to say. "Waugh writes from a lofty viewpoint, focuses on romanticism of Catholicism and divine world to come. He achieves being far and merely satirizing and no hope for correcting this mundane, fallen world (1982:41).

1.3. Art and Novel

Spark, in her novels, struggles to depict that the entity is a whole and does not have parts as body and soul. The soul and the body are not separate entities. The supernatural is natural as depicted in her short story *The Seraph and the Zambesi*. It is natural to see the angels while rowing and it should be seen natural, because there is another world that we cannot recognize but feel. They are nested in each other, and they cannot exist without the other. The character of *The Bachelors* Patrick Seton who tries to make this discrimination is in a delusion. Whether we are Catholics or not, Spark invites us to believe the things we cannot recognize or understand.

The reader should pay attention to this invitation of the author, if not, s/he will have difficulty in understanding the tricks, fictional sides and frustrations of the material world. As Whittaker explains;

For Catholic novelists, mimesis has a kind of triviality, almost an immorality, since the real concern is with inimitable. They have impatience with realism because they are anxious to convince the reader not of the recognizable, ordinary world, but rather to make us believe in and respond to the extraordinary (1982: 4-5).

They want us to pay attention to the things that have supernatural qualities while even mentioning ordinary, trivial and commonplace things. In Spark's novels these extraordinary entities function not to establish a familiar world, but an unfamiliar and divine one. In contrast to humanist novelists' stress on the relationship of the man with the familiar world, they draw our attention to the relationship with God. It is possible to realize a spiritual world behind the physical one in all of her works. She narrates the realistic details in a surrealist way. A real novelist forms myths. Novel is lack of myth and the reader must understand that the novel's persona and the plot are fictional. Rationality is necessary to see the reality but not the mere way to reach it. Therefore as Malkoff mentions, in Spark's novels, reason neither provides a base to moral choices nor is a way to understand the cosmos exactly.

According to him; "the supernatural characteristics in her novels are used to represent the irrationality of fate and symbolize to moral conflicts. There is a physiological or moral contradiction of conflicting forces, and a problem to understand a second world via the other, so there is faith trouble." (Malkoff, 1969: 150).

The voice of typewriter in *The Comforters* and the phone message in *Memento Mori* are the messengers of the sacramental one. In *Portobello Road* the narrator dies and then the ghost narrator initiates to tell her murder. The secular and divine one are nested in each other so perfectly that the reader has a difficulty in realizing when s/he passed through from a world to another one. Alva Hoyt identifies Spark as surrealist Jane Austen. He notes that 'Events take place, and I record them after a few minutes',

Spark seems natural, but in that way she also repeats the reality, life consists of mysteries (1969: 126).

Alongside those who praise her approach to secular or the reality, there are ones who do not approve or undermine it. . Kelleher believes that ‘to deal with real troubles and solutions make her a great writer and real world is more significant than those Spark presents to her reader’. (1976: 79). Likewise Mayne remarks his doubt and sorrow for “Spark’s being Catholic as it damages her art.” (1965: 61). Reality has two aspects; one is temporary, variable and merely felt by senses and the other is unexplainable, permanent and felt only spiritually.

According to Whittaker; “like Evelyn Waugh, she sees an appalling abyss between the realms of God and man.” (1982: 145). There is a frustration between God’s eternal entity and man’s temporary faith. As Malkoff (1969: 152) puts it:

The contradiction between natural and supernatural is the outpouring of the basic separation of reality. In this simple contradiction material is far from soul and man is far from God. There is a distance between consciousness and unconsciousness. Reason is in conflict with body and goodness is in conflict with evil.

This divided self is a result of man’s withdrawal from God. All efforts are to sweep this conflict. Baldanza remarks “Spark is interested in divided self, the self is in paradox.” (1974: 21). However, trying to catch the reality in both rational and spiritual levels does not abolish this conflict. Instead, it enlarges the gap and alienates the man himself.

Spark’s approach to novel is apparently seen in her reviews. “She resembles art of novel to a sort of deception.” (Maddocks, 1968: 10). According to her, novel is a lie, a pack of lies. My novels are fictional says Spark “they are fictional and only lead us to the reality. I never forget I write a fictional work but the thing I am interested is the reality, the absolute truth.” (Kermode, 1963: 63).

What she means by absolute truth is divine truth. She believes her writings are lies and at best they are some reflections of reality. Randisi comments on the situation

saying; “Satirists are interested in lies, but paradoxically there is truth in the base of these lies.” (1984: 135). Spark believes myth and mythology are the principal elements of novel. Without mythology, novel is nothing and a real novelist who perceives novel, as a continuous poem is a real mythmaker. The beauty of art is hidden in telling a story in numerous ways. While doing this, the method used is inherently mythological. Alexandra mentions about the penetration into the mythical world and puts out history of action. (Spark, 1974: 101). Mythology is timeless and simultaneity is a deception. Although the method in novel writing is inherently mythical ‘art should be interested in human experience’ (Show, 1984: 44). Mythology and experience should work together in a holistic view. It is necessary to balance soul and body; therefore the sacramental point of view is essential. Spark believes that art does not have a saving role on its own; it is a perpetual allegory of divine salvation (Whittaker, 1982: 111).

Spark identifies herself as a satirist and being a satirist enables her to reflect humorous issues in her mind and also to deal with serious matters. “Ridicule and satire are all we have, they are our mere guns.” (Randisi, Spark and Satire, 1984: 6) Moreover, Spark asserts that there will be no living art except for both of them (Spark, 1971).

Randisi (1991: 132) says that the “Satire is a decisive principle of Spark’s novels.”. In a review Spark says; “if you want to tell a notion impressively, ridicule is the only way. Satire is more significant. This is more effectual than saying the wrong. Instead of screaming before lots of troubles, mocking them is a more suitable attitude.” (Rose, 2001).

Kriegel mentions the lack of emotional realm in Spark’s novels. According to him, “Lack of emotional dimension in a novel is the most significant reason that restricts the novelist. If a novel does not cause a sentimental reaction on reader, it is not necessary to write it, at least as a novel.” (1965: 80). It wouldn’t be wrong to say that Spark, who sees novel as a parable, believes in plot’s importance and aims to teach morality. Furthermore, Spark does not consider it as a fault and says; to load a pile of

emotional things on reader is undesirable because this covertly means deception on the part of the reader.

Berhoff identifies Spark's novels as "novellas, parable, extended anecdotes and morality plays" (1967: 104). Except *Territorial Rights* and *Mandelbaum Gate*, her novels fit classification. Some critics explain Spark's writing technique with economy. Since the aim is to teach a moral lesson, it should not be thought as a flaw. She keeps at a distance to her characters and events as a novelist, which is the most remarkable characteristic of her novels.

The novelist is always in an objective manner, only records the events but it is the reader who is responsible for the evaluation.

Chronology is another issue in her some works. So cause and effect relationship is also overturned, past or future is nested. She explains that "the background reasons of an event do not appear before hours, days or years. Sometimes they occur after the case." (Frankel, 1987: 450).

To sum up, Spark's realism and her approach to novel is a mix of reality we live, feel and sense and the reality we feel in a divine dimension, which is hard to explain. The basic approach in her novels represents her attitude towards a secular and divine world, and her characters' conflicts between their wills and God's ordinances. They have contradictions for materialistic world and faiths' demands. While dealing with these issues, she seals her characters' future as a creator. God seals fate for man and the novelist creates a fate for her characters. Plot and fate are similar; one belongs to God and the other to novelist. "I'm not the one speaking, s/he is speaking. Beyond any doubt I am speaking." (Plunket, 1988: 28) says Spark. Just as a man feels free to act in real life so does a character think in the novel; s/he act and expresses himself/herself as free body in a novel Just as the characters and the events of a novel are only the fiction of the novelist, so is the world a spiritual and divine fiction of God, not another thing.

Her calm mood towards violent incidents, deaths and suicides is a result of this belief. In her novels, violent scenes begin and end suddenly. Randisi (1991: 137) believes that this is “a sign of man who cannot control his fate”.

1.4. The Characters, Theme and Setting

Spark’s characters are not free, confirming her point of view about novelist-creator and God-creator. She believes they both resemble each other. The characters are the entities that have no life and choice except for the writer’s fiction. Spark often recalls this issue to the reader and remarks both the novel characters and plot are fictional. “Man is not free from birth, and trying to be free is useless.” (Conradi, 2001: 7). Spark believes the same notion. Man is born with a restricted freedom and struggling for a whole freedom in vain. Although the characters seem to be free or independent, their actions and choices are the parts of novelistic or divine fiction. Robert Maurer identifies “Spark’s characters as insane or can be accepted as insane, a pile of eccentric people who deceive themselves, and incompatible.” (1968:34). Spark removes trivial characters from the story when her matter ends with them as if saying they are not necessary from now on. However, it is not ignored that is not possible to understand her characters without understanding her belief. Probably the characters Maurer described as insane or weird are the characters like Patric Seton, Ronald Bridges, Margaret Damien, Lise, Lister, Joanna Childe, Mrs Hogg, Caroline Rose... For instance, Caroline’s hearing odd voices are not a proof of her eccentricity.

These voices depict the existence of another world we feel but cannot describe, and Caroline achieves to interpret the existence properly.

Spark’s protagonists comprise characters that take the role of God, but cannot succeed to reach beyond its restrictions, if they do that, they are disappointed. There is a misplaced confidence and a selfish viewpoint. Judy Sproxton says (1992: 432);

St Augustine described sin as a turning away from God towards the self. Sin in Christian terms is negative: it is the opposite of all that comes from God. And so we find certain characters in Spark's work mistakenly asserting

themselves as the source of power and their own viewpoint as a criterion of truth.

She goes on adding (1992: 432);

On the other hand we find characters who have a profound need to acknowledge a truth beyond themselves and who strive to come to terms with the essential inadequacy of a human perspective. These characters have a determination to identify what is true and honest in their existence; they have a sense of irony and sometimes a great sense of joy.

Whether good or evil, they are noble like Miss Jean Brodie, Lise, and Caroline Rose... On the other side, there are the ones who are sordid and coarse. All of her protagonists, good or evil, are described as Catholics. However, they are neither prayerful nor depicted as determined and dependent on church ritual or any kind of practice.

On the other hand, the characters have vision, even if they hesitate under difficulties, they do not panic. They evaluate themselves and the circumstances in which they are fine. Until that moment, the characters interpret the reality, which is merely perceivable by senses, and realize the existence of another reality behind the touchable one. Therefore, they nest the temporary and secular one with that of the divine and permanent. Spark's characters are like puppets of their entire fate determined by her and she does not mind explaining that issue to the reader apparently. While writing, she tends to debase and discredit them by suppressing their abilities for their own decisions and choices. According to Spark, novel is the parody of a godlike creation. In her novels, this characteristic is clearly realized. God knows the beginning and outcome beforehand. Likewise the novelist has the possibility to see what the characters come across, how the events take place and what the result is. These features are as crucial for a writer as Spark who searches the eternal truth and aims to make the reader notice the divine world. As a result of her point of view, most of her characters have no families, and they cannot develop a sense of belonging. They are socially and emotionally isolated.

Although they are treated as automats, they try to use their abilities and power towards the events they come across.

Spark's characters evaluate the cases rationally, but conflicts, dilemmas and frustrations begin at this point. That is the reason why in *The Comforters*, Caroline Rose doubts herself. Since she is under the influence of rationality, the voices she hears must be unreal. Whereas they have their existence accepted undeniably.

Although Spark has evil characters like each novelist, her characters are sympathetic and attractive. They are the agents that have a hidden mission to uncover the eternal truth and divine world that we feel but cannot explain. In *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, the protagonist Miss Brodie is the strongest and most interesting, friendly character of the novel for the reader. In *Driver's Seat*, Lise stirs mercy not detestation. Mrs. Hogg's evilness is constructive rather than being destructive.

The women are the most remarkable characters in her work. She accepts that she thinks women are strong and 'they are interesting especially'. (Frankel, 1987: 451) Some of them are the artists like Spark; Caroline Rose, Lister, Jean Taylor... As Hyness remarks; "most characters of her novels are Catholics and the tension springs from the troubles of faithful people in an indifferent world to religion. Her short stories tend not to depict mystery but to create it." (1962: 76). One of the sources of tension in her work is the characters' having difficulty in understanding and commenting godlike one.

Suicides are another noteworthy point in Spark's work. She is calm towards death. In *Memento Mori*, she aims to demonstrate both secular and divine characters' reactions to death.

She reveals her point of view about death by Henry Mortimer's sentences (*Memento Mori*, 1961: 150):

If I had my life over again I should form the habit of nightly composing myself to thoughts of death. I would practice, 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 part of

the full expectancy of life. Without an ever-present sense of death life is insipid. You might as well live on the whites of eggs.

City centers are chosen as setting and she focuses on weird attitudes of a small and outstanding group of people. Men and women live together because of any kind of reasons (*Memento Mori*), in an apartment shared by single girls and boys (*The Bachelors*), students and teachers are gathered in a girls' school (*The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*), servants are gathered in a mansion (*Not to Disturb*), the guests are in a hotel in Venice (*Territorial Rights*), nuns in a monastery (*The Abbess of Crewe*), or in the community of a small town (*The Ballad of Peckham Rye*)... The characters' tendencies, thoughts, reactions and conflicts are commonly depicted. Spark believes the novels should be evaluated through the aspects of pattern and theme. (Potter, 1965: 120) When judged through this thought, setting, plot or fiction loses their significance. Spark is interested in spiritual sides of her characters rather than their status or economical circumstances. In *The Ballad of Peckham Rye*, even though it is a poor town, Dougle, does not mention poverty but complains about immorality and having no vision. In *Take Over* the matter is being unethical, too.

2. THE BACHELORS

Malkoff identifies "Spark's novels *The Girls of Slender Means*, *Takeover*, *Territorial Rights* and *The Bachelors* as autobiography of an age who has lost its belief in God." (1969: 122). In these four novels, the protagonists are in passion to dominate and this situation directs them to destruction. In all of their fundamental ideas, there is a delusion of objection to divine Self with the self. Loving self is a sin. Spark believes to get rid of the self and its dangerous effects, which are merely possible to know the eternal Self. Walker comments, "The novel is a fight of good and evil. Right, both for Ronald and Spark, is to carry out the ordinances of God and Catholic Church." (1988: 28). Everything else, whether secular or divine, is evil and the thing should be avoided.

When Mathew says, Alice is not a Catholic and that is the reason why he cannot marry her. Then, he asks Ronald what he thinks about the matter as a Catholic. Ronald gets angry and shouts; “don’t ask me how I feel about things as a Catholic. To me, being a Catholic is part of my human existence. I don’t feel one way as a human being and another as a Catholic.” (*The Bachelors*, 1960: 79). No doubt, Ronald is a Catholic like Spark. His opposing to Seton’s spiritualism, rejection of Elsie’s will to have sex and notion even evil can cause to good be the signs of this situation. However, neither Ronald who represents the godlike one, is totally good, he has contradictions (as he turns to God as if a devil in his body was taking its revenge) (*The Bachelors*, 1960: 112), nor Seton who represents demon is totally evil.

When a twenty-three year-old post-graduate Ronald is interested in theology and wants to become a priest, his counselor says; “A vocation to the priesthood is the will of God. Nothing can change God’s will. You are an epileptic. No epileptic can be a priest. Ergo you never had a vocation. But you can do something else.” (*The Bachelors*, 1960: 12). Spark feels us Ronald’s dilemma; maybe conflict his will and God’s will. Page resembles Ronald,

The man possessed with a devil, driven out by Jesus Christ, as recounted in the Gospels, and Patrick, whose surname is close to ‘Satan’, is his opposite (like Hogg’s ‘justified sinner’ he is convinced of his own superiority to considerations of right and wrong, good and evil, as he plots to murder the girl he has promised to marry (1990: 35).

Thanks to this feature of it, the novel can be evaluated as “an allegory of the struggle between the forces of light and darkness.” (1990: 35).

The Bachelors takes place in closed and static settings. A group of bachelors’ lives and their reactions to life, life codes, morality and spiritual values are told throughout the novel. In confrontation of good and evil, Ronald represents good and Seton represents bad. The novel is placed on these two characters’ contrasts. Neither Ronald purified of doubts is truly good nor Seton is doubtlessly evil. Spark aims to depict the two sides of each of these opponent forces. In this way, instead of a didactic way, she adopts an attitude that holds the reader responsible to evaluate the cases.

Tim says that he cannot understand Hildegard's drifting from spiritualism and back to Catholicism again, and "there are other religions she could have tried if she had to have a religion." (*The Bachelors*, 1960: 170). Ronald answers, "There are only two religions, the spiritualist and the Catholic." (*The Bachelors*, 1960: 170). He means all religions by saying spiritualism. Ronald is a Catholic and Patrick is a spiritualist. Thus, Patrick is initially the symbol of evil for Ronald. However, it would not be right to evaluate Patrick through Ronald's eyes. It is necessary to search what kind of man he is.

Patrick is fifty years old and a first-rate medium interested in spiritualism. Marlene (a member of Circle carries out medium séances) says "Mustn't we subordinate all our materialistic endeavors to those of the spirit?" (*The Bachelors*, 1960: 28). Actually, this notion belongs to Patrick Seton. He believes in philosophy that material captivates human beings' souls. His aim is 'to unite the Two Worlds.' (*The Bachelors*, 1960: 35). He is cowed that manipulates the others' love. (Miss Freda and Alice). He says he will save Alice from her fallen body. On the other hand, he does not hesitate to have sex with both Freda and Alice. Moreover, he is a fraud that he has Freda's two thousand pounds by trickery. According to the narrator, Patrick's problem is that he cannot fulfill his ethical responsibility. While they are talking, Matthew says Patrick will not marry Alice and goes on (*The Bachelors*, 1960: 84);

What do you expect of a spiritualist? His mind's attuned to the ghouls of the air all day long. How can he be expected to consider the moral obligations of the flesh? The man's a dualist. No sacramental sense. There have been famous heresies very like spiritualism...

Sex is a sin. Ronald says; "I think the spiritualists have sex. I'm afraid we are heretics or possessed by devils." (*The Bachelors*, 1960: 85). Matthew eats onion to put Elsie off, a mighty fortress against devil and to avoid a case of sin. However, he does not carry out his intention. He has sex with Elsie. The characters contradict themselves. They are aware of what is wrong, but materialistic world and fancy of flesh dominate the divine one. Ronald believes original sin is necessary to salvation (*The Bachelors*, 1960: 85) as he has the point of view of Catholicism.

However, it is mentioned that Seton is not exactly a crook as a medium and he has some spiritual power. He informs Tim about a private problem appallingly. Tim tells the situation by saying; ‘He once told me during a séance about a personal affair at my office that nobody could have known about except me and another chap. And the another chap hadn’t any remote acquaintance with Seton.’ (*The Bachelors*, 1960: 42). Likewise, Dr. Lyte has the similar case. Seton talks to him about a secret related to one of his patients. Therefore the doctor is afraid of Seton. Elsie states a problem that she had with an old friend Colin, and says; ‘it was quite incredible because nobody could have known except Colin and me about this thing that he mentioned, it was a secret between Colin and me.’ (*The Bachelors*, 1960: 54). In a similar way, information given by Seton about Merlene and Freda's partners is surprisingly accurate. Nevertheless, it remains as a mystery that Seton learns them from the other world in a séance or they are the consequences of investigations. It can be understood that Spark contradicts herself as a Catholic by granting the ability to one of her characters to know the mysteries only God knows.

Patrick’s matters are not immorality or being concrete pattern of evilness but he dedicates himself to spiritualism and excludes the material one.

His problem is not being able to see human beings as a combination of body and soul. That is the reason which leads him to killing Alice. Page states, “He resembles the man possessed with a devil.” (1990: 33). A man whose surname recalls ‘Satan’ plots to murder the woman he promised to marry. As Malkoff remarks, “Patrick accepts the soul is the unique truth, so secular guilt (even to kill someone) is not a sin.” (1969: 164). Therefore, his basic contradiction is to think that the soul and the body are not separate things. He discredits the material, but he benefits from its advantages. For instance, using his body in séances is a proof of this assumption.

Influence of Patrick, Marlene is in a similar conflict. She defends the idea that soul is the important one. However, she digs her husband’s corpse up three months after it was buried and burnt. Then she scatters the ashes to the garden. Because she does not

want someone dynamic and energetic like Harry to rot under the soil. The narrator tells the situation by these sentences: “to see his ashes scattered in the Garden of Remembrance was to conceive Harry more nearly as thin air, and since she had come to believe so ardently in Harry the spirit, she simply could not let him lie in the grave and rot.” (*The Bachelors*, 1960: 29). It is a contradiction in her to wipe out the material while trying to materialize it.

Ronald Bridges is the one who tries to fill the gap between the two worlds. His surname has a symbolic meaning. It has a mission of being a bridge between the soul and the substance. Although Ronald represents the good in the novel, he also has conflicts.

He wants to be a priest, but as stated before he fails to do so because of his epilepsy. His counselor says no epileptic can be a priest; it is the will of God. Contrary to Patrick, who is absorbed with his own fantasies, he accepts the truth no matter how boring and depressing it is! While Patrick tries to read the other world through the séances, Ronald refers to his reason and scientifically proven results. He is conscious of his special status that is both a present-day medical problem treated with modern drugs and ‘an ancient phenomenon known by a variety of names and surrounded by superstition’ (Page, 1990: 36) Page comments “there is also an obvious contrast between Patrick’s claims to put people in touch with a spiritual world and Ronald’s unpretentious and uncommercialised wisdom and understanding” (1990: 35). “What do you think?” Martin said. “goes on in a man like Patrick Seton’s mind when he looks back on his life?” (*The Bachelors*, 1960: 44).

People frequently ask these sorts of questions of Ronald. It is as if they hold some ancient superstitions about his epilepsy: ‘the falling sickness’, “the sacred disease, the evil spirit”. Ronald feels that his friends regard him as a sacred cow or a wise monkey. He is perhaps touchy on the point. Sometimes, he thinks after all, “they would have come to him with their deep troubles, consulted him on the nature of things, and listened to his wise old words, even if he wasn’t an afflicted man. If he had been a

priest, people would have consulted him in the same way (*The Bachelors*, 1960: 64). This is another conflict he fails to overcome; a religious person who wants to be a priest believes in reason and scientific data. According to Ronald, his epilepsy puts him out of the reach of marriage.

When Elsie reproaches him by saying “you think I’m not good enough for you... Not your class.”, he replies, “I’m an epileptic... It rather puts one out of the reach of class.” (*The Bachelors*, 1960: 167). Actually, his past engagement to Hildegard ends because of his love freedom and the discomfort of being pitied. Because, she treats him like a mother and interested in everything he does including like buying his theatre tickets. Indeed, she is pure-minded and an incredible personality. She is happy as she helps Ronald, but her possessive and dominant affection bores him and keeps him off. Later on, he asserts that he is an epileptic and continues his life as a bachelor. Matthew Finch comments on Ronald’s seeing his epilepsy as an obstacle to get married as hypocrisy. It is an alibi for him. Because, Ronald himself says: “It shows a dualistic attitude, not to marry if you aren’t going to be a priest or a religious. You’ve got to affirm the oneness of reality in some form another.” (*The Bachelors*, 1960: 85). He thinks they are not heretics but Matthew asserts they have a heretical attitude. Indeed, he believes “A heretical attitude is part of original sin.” (*The Bachelors*, 1960: 85). However, he does not want to marry and he contradicts himself. He was taught in his Jesuit school and in lots of versed heresies “Everything is spiritual. Down with the body. Against sex.” (*The Bachelors*, 1960: 85). Nonetheless, he cannot do what God wants them to do. He cannot carry out God’s ordinances though he is identified as a Catholic. Actually, he is similar to many characters that are identified as Catholics. Their contradictions resemble each other’s conflicts. Ronald’s disagreement about Matthew’s notion related to the original sin, means that he approves it. Even, he remarks; ‘The Christian economy seems to me to be so ordered that original sin is necessary to salvation. And so far as remaining single is concerned that applies to a lot of people.’ (*The Bachelors*, 1960: 85) Ronald does not endure anything that recalls his illness, so his weakness.

When he goes to the church he sees a priest. The narrator tells the situation in these sentences: “Ronald did not like seeing this very young priest, not because he disliked the priest but because the priest was young, and of a physical type similar to himself, and reminded Ronald of his own blighted vocation.” (*The Bachelors*, 1960: 131).

Ronald’s principal conflict is with his Catholic faith and his wishes. Although he believes in God and defends submission to him, he cannot accept his disease. He knows he could never be a first-rate priest, but is a first-rate epileptic. “I could never be first-rate.” His counselor answers; “That’s sheer vanity, you were never meant to be a first-rate careerist.” Ronald goes on: “Only a first-rate epileptic?” “Indeed, yes. Quite seriously, yes,” the counselor says. (*The Bachelors*, 1960: 100) He knows his disease is an obstacle for this kind of situation. On the other hand, he goes on being a bachelor. Instead of giving any spiritual evidence, he explains his pessimism as a Christian by rational approach. “It is better,” he thought, “to be a pessimist in life, it makes life endurable. The slightest optimism invites disappointment.” (*The Bachelors*, 1960: 100).

Spark abandons neither Patrick nor Ronald. Despite his contradiction, Ronald does not neglect the soul and the body (Spark’s characters who convert Catholicism always have these doubts) He has a latent ability similar to Patrick that he can read the thoughts of others. Nonetheless, he always reads the evil sides and bad thoughts of others. In order to get rid of this habit he prays and this attitude unearths he has a restricted freedom and there is another entity in his tendencies. Ronald identifies Patrick as demon. Demon means that not do the right thing, do not obey the command (*The Bachelors*, 1960: 159). However, Patrick whom Ronald categorizes as one of useless souls conduces to emerge from goodness.

First of all, his existence helps Ronald’s improving from the aspect of soul and adheres to his faith further.

Therefore, he understands sin and evil are not in vain in Christianity. On the other hand, Patrick, thanks to his being a medium, unearths Dr. Lyte causes a patient, Gloria's death in the result of an illegal surgery (*The Bachelors*, 1960: 96).

The novel aims to depict the conflict between the secular wishes of people and divine consciousness. Alice knows Patrick will be on trailed by fraud, but she loves him and wants to marry him. Even, she believes it is a test of God. Her belief in God will go on only if Patrick is not sentenced. She says;

I pray for Patrick, and that's the test. If Patrick doesn't get off, I don't believe in God. Whereas, if Patrick is not sentenced, he is going to take Alice to Australia where is a secluded place to kill her. He says for the situation; 'I will release her spirit from this gross body.' (*The Bachelors*, 1960: 157).

"To make Alice into something spiritual. It was godlike, to conquer that body, to return it to the earth..." (*The Bachelors*, 1960: 213) However, Alice shouts, "I don't believe in God." (*The Bachelors*, 1960: 213) Unfortunately, at that moment she cannot realize Patrick's arrest is her salvation. That is the reason of her revolt.

There are lovable and unlovable characteristics of the bachelors. Isobel is a fancy woman who has sex with men, but she is brave to go on to live. Another woman would already commit suicide. 'Marlene is handsome, Tim is loveable, Ewart Thorton is intelligent, Martin Bowles is considerate to his mother.

Matthew Finch is "afflicted by sex and is blessed with a simple love of the old laws" but he does not want to marry, Walter Prett is beset by neglect and foolish fantasies and he loves art and is honest in his profession. Hildegard has a tremendous character (*The Bachelors*, 1960: 112). They are identified as Catholics, but they cannot carry out the ordinances of their faith.

When evaluated from the aspect of Ronald, the novel reflects glory and misery of faith. However, form the aspect of Patrick, being in extremes means inevitably a failure or even a catastrophic consequence. From Alice's point of view, it is merely a delusion to ignore the divine will.

Likewise, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, the treachery provides the truth unearths. Elsie betrays to Father Socket, Father Socket betrays to Garland, Freda betrays to Patrick. It is understood Father Socket is a homosexual and Garland is a fraud. Freda's betrayal to Patrick enables him to judge and his judgement saves Alice's life.

Through the novel, it is apparently inferred most of the characters are given as Catholics, but all of them have contradictions with their belief and this belief's ordinances. They are not successful to carry out God's ordinances and they are in difficulty with their own choices, wishes and God's will. The basic conflict is between secular and divine world, and so between the fate and the characters' wills.

3. THE COMFORTERS

It is the first novel of Spark which handles the meaning of existence, the position of an individual in the world, and the relation between the fate and will, reason and faith, God and man, secular one and divine one. Religion is the basic topic like in her other novels such as *Robinson*, *Mandelbaum Gate*, and *The Abbes of Crew*.

The protagonist Caroline, who is an author like Spark herself, goes to a pilgrimage center after her conversion to Catholicism. After staying there for a while, she comes back home and hears some strange voices of a typewriter, but there is nobody at home. The novel focuses on sense-making these voices. Nancy Potter remarks the novel is not an easy work to understand and his suspicions by saying; "Is this novel is a work that Caroline writes about herself, or is it Spark's novel or God's novel about Spark?" Then, he defines Caroline's situation as; "she realizes both the novel she writes and she lives in and also tells her life..." (*The Comforters*, 1957: 115).

Creation revives the contradiction for Spark who is a Catholic, believes in God, and sees the world as a fiction of God. Is an individual free in a world that God's will is

dominant and man has to behave according to it? We could ask this question in other words; is there a power controls our lives that we are not aware of? Are we directed by an invisible power as the characters directed by the novelist?

Walker says for the situation; “Is this power we cannot control by our side or is it oppose to us? Is our power sufficient to change the fiction (or fate), or else are we left to this power’s cruelty like a novel characters” fate is in the author’s hands (1988: 8). The conflict in the novel emerges at this point.

Caroline, both the novel character and the author, writes a book about forms of modern novel. After coming back home from the pilgrimage center, she hears a typewriter’s voices. She thinks they come from the staircase. She goes outside and looks for them. However, there is nobody. It causes she suspects herself that the voices repeat what she thinks and says exactly. She tells the situation to Willi Stock and Laurence. Laurence brings her a recorder to record the voices. According to him, if these voices are real they will be recorded. “Every voice creates a sound wave and if it exists as an object it will certainly be recorded.” (*The Comforters*, 1957: 78). Willi Stock believes Caroline is neurotic and says; “your brain is so tired.” (*The Comforters*, 1957: 57). Moreover, he wants to learn how these voices exist and how is the quality of them. Caroline answers; “In fact it sounds like one person speaking in several tones at once.” (*The Comforters*, 1957: 64).

Hearing the voices so frequent forces Caroline to think they are real. Someone writes about her. She solves the mystery of the situation and suddenly says; ‘...the typewriter and the voices- it is as if a writer on another plane of existence was writing a story about us.’ (*The Comforters*, 1957: 76). She states, it is as if someone watching her, can read her thoughts and knows everything about her life.

Towards Laurence’s thoughts about the voices she says: “this sound might have another sort of existence and still be real.” (*The Comforters*, 1957: 77). Then she gives up thinking whether they are real or not. Instead of confirming if the voices really exist or not, she focuses that she will get rid of being part of the story written about her or not.

Caroline has to choose one of two options in response to this emerged situation. Either she will put herself in the hands of these voices and power and will give up the election, which is the meaning of her being, her freedom or will rebel and try to throw out herself of this fiction. Spark bases her novel on the relationship of god-human, on the one hand, and the novelist- the novel relation on the other. The source of the conflict for Caroline is the relationship between obeying and opposing . Caroline, is the one both who writes and written about, acted on and acted upon;

Caroline thought, “Well, he will ring in the morning.” She lay on her divan staring out at the night sky beyond her balcony, too tired to draw curtains. She was warmed by the knowledge that Laurence near to hand, wanted to speak her. She could rely on him to take her side, should there be any difficulty with Helena over her rapid departure from St Philumena’s. On the whole she did not think there would be any difficulty with Helena. Just then she heard the sound of a typewriter. It seemed to come through the wall on her left. It stopped, and was immediately followed by a voice remarking her thoughts. It said: On the whole she did not think there would be any difficulty with Helena (*The Comforters*, 1957: 52).

As seen, the invisible typewriter repeats Caroline’s thought.

Spark uses a quite realistic imagery and description in order to make the reader feel these voices and that they are natural and authentic; the house Caroline lives in, the stuff she uses, the stairwell, and the things she sees when she looks outside. Here the aim is aim to fuse natural and unnatural components into one. Just as the things are real that Caroline sees in her sphere, so are the voices she hears are real. The conversation between Willi and Caroline expresses another dimension of the event. Willi; “and you say this chorus comments on your thoughts and actions?” “Not always” said Caroline, “that’s the strange thing. It says “Caroline was thinking or doing this or that’- then sometimes it adds a remark of its own.” (*The Comforters*, 1957: 64).

The voices Caroline hears reflect the relationship both of the novelist and the novel character and also the relationship between God and man. There is merely one voice, although the novelist creates a chorus image by speaking through lots of characters at the same time. The expression “the voice sometimes added a remark of its own” points out the events that take place except from the characters’ choices. (*The*

Comforters, 1957: 65). So, it points out the fate. Caroline tries to get rid of this power's effect that makes her feel any moment. She says that she will not be involved in this fictional plot if she can help it. She wants to spoil it and holds up the action of the novel. She resembles it to a duty. She will stop the improvement of the events. She plans to go to London with Laurence. The voices tell they will go by car. Upon that she thinks; "The narrative says we went by car, all right we must go by train. You do see that, don't you, Laurence? It's a matter of asserting free will." (*The Comforters*, 1957: 118) However, she remembers that she has to attend a ritual and this obligation frustrates the plan going by train. So, Caroline bows down to the wishes of the voices involuntarily. They have an accident during their journey by car. Afterwards this event she absolutely realizes someone observes her in each minutes and intrudes her plans.

Besides she accepts the entities of these voices as a Catholic, she needs to consult her free will. "...Personally, I reject the suspicion- I refuse to have my thoughts and actions controlled by some unknown, possibly sinister being. I intend to subject him to reason. I happen to be a Christian. I happen" (*The Comforters*, 1957: 127) Nonetheless, Caroline's plans take place only in a limited extent. As a free individual she uses her right to choose but realizes this choice does not take place as desired.

Caroline lives in two dimensions at the same time. While on the way to Sussex with Laurence they talk about Mrs. Jepp. According to Caroline, Mrs. Jepp is completely made up by the novelist and it is unconvincing and Mrs. Hogg, too. Laurence says his grandma is not a novel character she is an authentic character. Moreover, she is smart enough to fool everybody. This attitude of Caroline shows that she is trying to stay out of the matter while she is inside of it. She forgets that she is a novel character, too. She is at the hospital as the consequence of the traffic accident that she had. When he visits her, she says Willi "this physical suffering displays I am not a novel character and everything is not a product of dream, and an I am an independent person other than a novel person." (*The Comforters*, 1957: 193). Caroline's this claim that she is both of the novel character and the novelist requires bilateral comment. On one hand, we have to remember that we are free as an individual even if we are under the control of a high

degree of will. On the other side, the characters of the novel have their own irrefutable reality, with being a fictional entity. Willi asks, "Am I a character of this novel?" and she answers, "Yes, you are a novel character, too." When mentioned Mrs. Hogg's breasts, Caroline defines the situation as impudence and rudeness. However, according to the narrator she is the one that puts the matter in the novel.

It reflects a difficult dilemma when Caroline says she finds Mrs. Hogg is ugly, malevolent, and insidious as a human being in real life from the one side, and that the other side she is a novel character and that there is no reality. Then, what about Caroline? Does Caroline present a fictional dimension such as Mrs. Hogg, Mrs. Jepp and Laurence and influence the development of events? According to the narrator, yes. One day, she explains, "this typewriter ghost does not record the details of this hospital ward". She says the reason is "the writer does not know how to describe a hospital ward. Therefore, these days I have, will not be a part of the novel." According to the narrator again, Caroline opposes to the improvement of the novel by some annoying words." (*The Comforters*, 1957: 193). On one hand, while Caroline wants to finish as soon as possible her novel that she is writing, on the other hand she waits for an ending the novel that she takes part in. The novel Caroline writes represents the individual's own choice, but the novel she takes part in symbolizes that, there is no relationship of people alive and they are a product of imagination obligation. It is possible to assume the meaning of fate for human life from what she says to Laurence. "If you had not been under the influence and directed in that way, it would not come to mind to seek such a relationship." (*The Comforters*, 1957: 126). According to Caroline, Laurence's search for some relations among the novel characters is a result of the desire of the novelist. All these contradictions that Caroline has experienced ultimately force her to understand her Christian paradox. Full freedom for man is to bow to the fiction of God, that is, to the fate. Caroline realizes with the help of her faith the relationship completes each other between the divine one and the ordinary one.

It is realized the narrator is also in two-pronged attitude.

On one hand, while he behaves as if there is no relationship and no interest in what is going on and on the other side he means that everything in the novel has developed under his own control and knowledge. For instance, “as we have come to this point of the story, we must point.” (*The Comforters*, 1957: 83) or “it is not possible to forget Caroline Rose. At this point of the story, as she did not leave the hospital bed her passages had to be out of the picture.” (*The Comforters*, 1957: 164). As well as Spark reminds you that novels are just fiction, and shakes our fiction beliefs, she shows that she has a more absolute power than Caroline, Laurence, Hogart and Mrs. Hogg. Caroline finishes her book about novel forms with the completion of the novel. This situation shows the presence a larger model which Caroline is in. The individual has the freedom of choice as permitted within this large model which he or she is involved in.

Spark says she does not believe the discrimination of natural or supernatural, she adds they exist together (Randisi, 1984: 23). For her awareness and dream, actuality and fantasy are nested. Caroline will write her next book related to the novel characters. The narrator records these sentences at the end of the novel.

A few weeks later the character called Laurence Manders was snooping around in Caroline Rose’s flat. She was away in Worcestershire writing her novel., and he had gone to the flat to collect some books which she had asked to be sent her...He sat down at Caroline’s desk and wrote her a letter.

I have spent 2 hours 28 minutes in your flat (he wrote). I have found those books for you and the notes for your novel... I will tell you what I think of your notes:

- (1) You misinterpret all of us.
- (2) Obviously you are the martyr-figure.
‘Martyrdom by misunderstanding.’ But actually you yourself understand nobody, for instance the Baron, my father, myself; we are martyred by your misunderstanding.
- (3) I love you. I think you are hopelessly selfish.
- (4) I dislike being a character in your novel. How is it all going to end?

Then, he tore it up into small pieces and threw away...so, and he did not foresee his later wonder, with a curious rejoicing, how the letter had got into the book (*The Comforters*, 1957: 242-243).

This is a good example how Spark deals with actuality and fantasy in a nested way. On one hand, Laurence is emphasized as a novel character, on the other side, there are so factual details indicating, "He was at home for two hours and twenty eight minutes". One of the remarkable dilemmas in the novel is the good-bad dilemma. Mrs. Hogg is presented as the evil character of the novel. She is a liar inserts being a Catholic but she is just an exploiter who exploits Catholicism. The greatest factor in Caroline's being Catholic is the presence of Mrs. Hogg. In *Robinson* by Spark again, so as January Marlow to find the right the presence of Robinson and Tom WELLS is necessary. Mrs. Hogg is necessary for Caroline's emotional development and her way to the right. It is possible to meet similar paradoxes in Spark's other works. It is not wrong to interpret as a sign of Spark's sympathy for the bad people, that the bad people are so full of passion to become splendidly powerful, intelligent and dominant. Spark is in a dualistic attitude on this matter, neither she approves nor abandons them. It is stated that Ms. Hogg has been abandoned by her husband, has had to look after her disabled child, and lives in poverty so that she does not lose favor for the reader. It remains to be approved, even if it is not one of them, because it only contributes to Caroline's psychological development. The narrator's attitude on the invisible forces is again two-fold. The voices Caroline hears are examples for the situation. On the other hand, the witchery of Hogart and Baron interested, both are out of natural possibilities.

One of them is miracle and the other is fraud. For Spark, the mystery is in the positive sense "related to what is known and limited or unknown and unlimited" (Spark, 1976: 136). Magic is a trap, a force that promotes deterioration. Mystery is to know the best unknown or to come to an awareness of an invisible reality. So that both magic and miracles are evocative words for beyond, but one is negative and the other is positive. Mervyn has a dual identity. He uses the surname Hogg when he wants to do evil, and in other times he uses the surname Hogarth. Hogarth deals with the dark magic that the church has forbidden. However sometimes we witness that it is useful, too. For instance, he breaks the spell for his disabled son and the child begins to walk like a healthy person. Elenor and Baron have dual identities, too. As in the evaluation of

events, the two-way approach to the characters is a tendency reflected by Spark. One of the events that shows good outcomes can come from bad actions is about Laurence. Laurence has great pleasure in investigating the issues of private life of others. Therefore, he is warned by Lady Manders. As response he says “it may be wrong for you, but not for me” (*The Comforters*, 1957:13). Laurence is said to have done actions contrary to both legal and moral rules, defends himself. In the direction of the information he receives from a letter he has secretly read, tells Eileen would be a baby, Mrs. Manders says him what he does is not worthy of a cathedral. However, as a result of the terrible crime that Laurence committed by reading Eileen's letters, a strict Catholic wedding takes place (Maddocs, 1968: 57).

The world in the novel and the world outside exist at the same time without having to match each other inevitably. Each of them is necessary and corrects own right, and also both of them must be considered to be separate entities.

It is not inevitable to choose one of them. It is compounded in the novel with the serious one and the funny one, and also natural with supernatural. On one hand, it is spotlighted Laurence is a perfect observer; even the smallest details are recorded. “In another drawer he found a comb with some of his grandmother’s hair on it and noted that the object was none to neat. He got some pleasure from having met these facts, three hairpins, eight mothballs, a comb none to neat.” (*The Comforters*, 1957: 3). On the other side, there are the voices Caroline hears but cannot approve and causes the situation that she is accused of being a mad.

Caroline is mentally split in two. On one side her habits, lover, family and fake Catholics, on the other side the place of man’s on universe and doubts about death. Her dilemma goes on after she chose being a Catholic. What the Irish couple says about Catholicism creates serious suspicions in her mind while coming back from pilgrimage. “It is too much that the Christian religion hopes from the people... A Christian who does not realize from the beginning, cannot remain faithful to his religion. They cannot be honest.” she believes (*The Comforters*, 1957: 47).

The later Catholicism and congenital Catholicism are separate conflicts. Born Catholics are so unlovable that just like Spark, Caroline almost regrets that she is Catholic when they see them. Later Catholic ones are lovable, even if they are

alcoholics; just like an alcoholic lawyer in a navy suit sitting next to a Lady Hogg. Because of this reason he escapes St. Philumena.

The collision between sexuality and religion is another striking subject in *The Comforters*.

Mrs. Hogg represents sexuality and tries to choke her in the river. (Likewise, in *Robinson* Mary Miles Robinson embodies January's cruel and sexual side.) In *My Conversion*, Spark says:

It is uncomfortable that you do not have a sexual life if you are not married, but if you have a job, that is, if you have a job that you can give yourself in your life, there are benefits of it. It is hard for someone who does not have an occupation. Therefore, the best is to get married, if it is possible (1961: 58).

Caroline accepts sexuality as sin and refuses to have sex with her boyfriend. However, it appears in another way as an obsession. While speaking to Mrs. Hogg, "She unwittingly noticed that she had not separated her eyes from her tits for quite some time, and that the dark, large nipples were also visible through the thin white blouse. Apparently she did not wear anything under the blouse." (*The Comforters*, 1957: 38).

Caroline reminds January Marlow in *Robinson* from another aspect. She cannot give up even her mental habits after being a Catholic and attempts to rationalize her beliefs. Marlow, just like Caroline, later became a Catholic, too. However, he cannot completely destroy the same paganistic feelings, too. He notices that all his feelings become clear when he watches the night moon. Marlow treats as if there is no obscure side of this situation. Both Marlow and Robinson reflect a dual attitude between their sexuality and their religion. While both are Catholic, and it is impossible for them to have a forbidden relationship according to their beliefs, they bind their emancipation not to their beliefs but to their emotions. Marlow admires both Jimmie and Robinson. "But because he wants to elect one and to have control over his relationships", he does not have a relation to both of them (Spark, 2003: 39).

After being a Catholic, Caroline restricts their relationship with Laurence, even states that it is not right to go on a vacation together. However, it is not possible to suppress the situation.

Robinson's January Marlow and *The Comforters'* Caroline Ross, both of them disgust Catholic cliques and their prejudices. They experience a tension between the two groups, between their wishes and the requirements of the belief they have accepted. Both January and Ross try to rationalize their beliefs. Especially those characters in *The Comforters* and *Robinson*, are in such contradictions and debates, reveal the contradictions of Spark's beliefs and her Catholicism, in other words, seem to express their obscurities. Despite everything, the novel people aims to reach a balance. Caroline gets rid of Mrs. Hogg's attacks via by her faith. Instead of completely suppressing or surrendering his instincts, January succeeds in establishing a balance between the two.

4. MEMENTO MORI

A voice on the phone says to Dame Lettie Colston "Remember, you must die." Upon this voice on the phone repeats the same sentence a few times Colston, staying in a nursing home in which old people stays, gets restless. She tells the event those around; it is reported to doctors and police. Nobody takes serious the things that were told. Her brother Godfrey interprets what she heard as hallucination. When Damie Lettie understands that nobody believes her, she resorts to move away from there and begins to live alone in a house. The main theme of the novel consists of the old people's reactions to "death". Those can be classified in two groups. Godfrey, Damie Lettie, Alec Warner, Guy Leet and Mrs. Pettigrew comment what Dame Lettie heard as an illusion. (Godfrey hears that voice once himself. When Pettigrew hears that voice she tries to pretend not to be heard the voice and delete it from her mind). On the other side John Taylor, Charmian, Henry Mortimer and Emmeline Mortimer believe that the guilty is death

(*Memento Mori*, 1961: 154). Mortimer defends that this voice is the voice of death and it should be accepted as real.

The novel concentrates on the two sides of existence; to live and to die. Those who see death as a part of existence don't get into panic against this warning. Beyond doubt, it is not a coincidence that they are Catholic. When Charmian Colston hears the voice on the phone, she feels like hearing a friend's voice (*Memento Mori*, 1961: 127):

“Is that Mrs. Colston?”

“Yes, speaking.”

“Chariman Piper- that's right, isn't it?”

“Yes, are you reporter?”

“Remember” said the voice, “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.”
(*Memento Mori*, 1961: 127)

Charmian (like Spark) is an author and Catholic. She doesn't accept death as a terrifying thing like Dame Lettie, Mrs. Pettigrew or Godfrey. Accordingly, for Charmian, this voice that is a nightmare for others is a reminder of a truth that she always thinks. The fact that Charmian thinks about death doesn't mean that she delays the life. On the contrary, this voice reactivates her to live the life to the fullest. While she can't drink her tea or she can't remember if she takes her pills or not without Mrs. Pettigrew and Mrs. Anthony, after she hears this voice she goes to kitchen and manages to make tea and drink it by using her whole power in the meantime Mrs. Pettigrew and Anthony is not at home. Charmian is a popular novelist. She says that what she writes seems like “the art of deception” (*Memento Mori*, 1961: 187). Guy answers with a question of “is the practice of deception in life an art too?” Charmian says, “Everything is different in life. Everything is in the province of God when I think of my own life..” (*Memento Mori*, 1961: 188). This is important with regards to the vocalization of Spark's doubts about the function of art. It was emphasized on the similarities with the

relationship of the novelists and the relationship of God and human in *The Comforters*. It was stated that the novel is not an art of deception but is a lie packet in which a kind of reality comes to exist.

It is emphasized that to understand life exactly, death must be accepted. It is possible to gather the reactions of various people about death into two different groups in *Memento Mori*.

Those who want to explain and associate death with concrete and physical weaknesses, illnesses and elderliness are in the first group and on the other side there are people who want to think it as one of the four religious principals that should always be remembered: death, judgment day (doomsday), heaven and hell. It is necessary not only to think about life and to make it meaningful but also not to ignore death and to remember it. Henry Mortimer says:

If I had my life over again I should form the habit of nightly composing myself to thoughts of death. I would practice, 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 part of the full expectancy of life. Without an ever-present sense of death life is insipid. (*Memento Mori*, 1961: 150).

Thus Spark shows the two sides of existence to his readers with another way: to live and to die. Any of them is not dominant or sovereign on the other one. Thinking of death shouldn't retain the person from using his/her energy and talents to the full extent. Also, similarly living shouldn't make you forget death. Besides death is a biological truth, it should be remembered that death has a spiritual extent.

In her novels, there is a voice which is not defined where it comes from (*Memento Mori*), a Devil-Angel mix visitor (*The Ballad of Peckham Rye*), a Messenger who connects between the corpses and the livings, there are the souls waiting at purgatory (*The Hothouse by the River*). Spark persistently avoids accounting for them. Accordingly, there are two sides that are separate but not opponent in Spark's characters. They take part "in a big model". There are both heaven and hell, good and bad.

Manning interprets *Memento Mori* as a means of expression of moral and spiritual anxieties (1987: 27). He attributes the cause of not bringing a rational explanation for mysterious phone conversations to catching various reactions that will be shown against basic humanistic problems; just like the domination of human ego, not accepting the mortality of individual. The thing a character says is the most sensitive point of the novel. "If you don't remember the death, the death recalls itself to your mind" (*Memento Mori*, 1961: 195).

There are both tragic and funny sides in *Memento Mori*. Tragic side is the old ones who lost almost all their talents physically and stir human sentiment in the nursing home. On one hand, there are old ones who try to master the nearby people despite all their weaknesses; like Mrs. Pettigrew who sends Charmian to a nursing home and tries to persuade Godfrey for Mrs. Anthony's moving away, her beautifying to look well for Godfrey despite she is over 70, threatening to tell the forbidden relationship with Lise Brook to Charmian to screw money out of Godfrey... Godfrey feels pleasure for tormenting to Charmian to take his youth contusion's revenge. Dame Lettie throws Gwen out of the house for not obeying her principles. Volvona tries to convince the old people around that horoscopes come true. Despite his poor image, Guy Leet feels pleasure to frighten his old friends. Charmian plans to put Godfrey in a tight spot. Godfrey seeks an opportunity to defeat Charmian by taking advantage of her elderliness. In fact, almost all of them have big difficulties to keep even their living without other's help.

Jean Taylor is the liveliest and the most mature person of the novel in terms of religion. She is one of the people who welcome death well religiously. She complains about arthralgia as a result of elderliness. Before becoming a Catholic, she manages to resist to those pains with patience. Even after going to nursing house, she keeps going to show patience, one year long, with old habits. However, her pains increase after a while and she loses her stoical resistance.

After the first year she resolved to make her suffering a voluntary affair. If this is God's will then it is mine. She gained from this state of mind a

decided and visible dignity, at the same time as she lost her stoical resistance to pain. She complained more, called often her bedpan, and did not hesitate, on one occasion when the nurse was dilatory; to wet the bed as the other grannies did so frequently (*Memento Mori*, 1961: 17).

Jean Taylor's attitude reflects the comprehension of falling into a decline as individual after adopting the religious one. It can be induced from this point that religion is the source of both power and weakness of individual.

Alec Warner is a scientist who searches the causes of illnesses and elderliness. He tries to explain death with concrete and objective causes. Death causes of the old people who died in real confirm Alec Warner's findings. But the other deaths, especially the unexpected deaths show that his efforts went for nothing. For example, Dame Lettie died in her house as a result of an attack. Henry Mortimer died because of an incomprehensible cause at one night although he had no complaint. Godfrey Colston died in a traffic accident. Moreover, all of his collected information "card-index" vanished off as a result of a fire in the building where he works.

After this incident, when he was offered to make the same studies, he replies unfavorably pretending to have no time. Spark seems to emphasize that he doesn't judge Alec Warner's studies unnecessary but it is wrong to embrace everything with a scientific or objective approach (just like in the reasons of death events). Alec evaluates the message "Remember, you must die" as only a physiological disorder, too. Dame Lettie's being the first complaining person and found dead in her home strengthens Alec's arguments that there is a person making all those things (a criminal) otherwise it cannot be but an illusion. In fact, the readers know that the received messages of Dame Lettie, Godfrey, Pettigrew and Jean Colston are real and Dame's received message related to her death is uncorrelated with each other. The way of course of the events confirms Alec. It also shows that Spark's opinion of necessity of scientific and objective approach is necessary although it is not enough.

At the return path of Lise Brook's funeral, Godfrey says that being conserved as burnt after death is the best way. He asserts that cemeteries get dirty with unclean waters. He wants to learn Charmian's opinion. He thinks that Charmian disagrees him

because of his being a Catholic, but Charmian indicates that she agrees. It is hard to understand why he considers himself as a Catholic. He asks the same question to Jean Taylor who says that she doesn't like it emotionally. Godfrey who knows that Taylor is a Catholic asks Taylor whether it is an emotional thing or a belief. "Because" Godfrey says, "It isn't a matter of how you feel it's a question of what your Church says you've not got to do. Your Church says you must not be cremated, that's the point." (*Memento Mori*, 1961: 33).

Whether Taylor's grace to Godfrey or distrust to his belief is not known but he sustains to give his emotions prominence; the conversation between Godfrey and Taylor continues like this (*Memento Mori*, 1961: 33):

"Well, as I say, Mr. Colston, I don't really fancy the idea--"

choice "Fancy the idea... It is not a question of what you fancy. You have no
in the matter, do you see?"

"Well, I always like to see a proper burial, I always like--"

"It's a point of discipline in your Church," he said, "that you mustn't
be cremated. You women don't know your own system."

Taylor's sense of freedom and sensitivity about free overlaps with the other aged people. Despite all insistence, repeating his personal desires by placing his Catholicism on one side reflects the fact that Taylor can face up the risk of being contrary to the Church about the issue of free and independent decision making in his conversation with Godfrey. The conflict between person's freedom and God's will, the conflict in the relationships between the novelist and the free novel character in *The Comforters* come to exist in the form of Taylor's conflict between Catholic Church's (or his belief) impositions and his personal desires or choices. In the meantime, his principle attitude about death proves Catholic Church's or his belief's truth. Questioning the belief is the typical characteristics of Spark's characters. Externalizing it with their speeches and behaviors when they realize that a fault doesn't take them out of religious frame. In addition to his conflictual position, they regulate their lives in accordance with Catholic principles. *The Only Problem* sets the best example regarding this issue, like Harvey's efforts to understand the nature of pain and at the end his conceding its truth.

Godfrey's telling to Charmian that he sticks to what's happening in his mind and reviews them at the end of the day, causes telling to Charmian that this is a religious practice. They are the same things from the aspect of method; however, according to Godfrey the religious one captivates the person's conscious. It keeps the individual from behaving freely. The narrator doesn't let Charmian reply. Thereby, the contrast between religious dogmas and person's free will is emphasized.

Pettigrew "is both a fine-looking and an irritating woman" (*Memento Mori*, 1961: 58). Almost none of the characters (including Charmian and Taylor who are both Catholic) are praised or hanged.. On the contrary, they have both sympathetic and antipathetic aspects. Spark's attitude is to see the people with two aspects. Being threatened of Godfrey by Mrs. Pettigrew conduces to arise the new truths related to the past of the characters via Alec. Thus, making the reader to realize that the characters with good sides can be bad and those with bad sides may have have good aspects . Leaving strict moralism and Catholicism aside, Taylor doesn't let Mrs. Pettigrew subject him psychological torture despite her criticism that doesn't believe in the priests and the church and also humiliates them like Godfrey. Pettigrew who knows the secret relationship of Godfrey with Lise Brooke in his youth makes a threat to tell Charmian with the aim of screwing out money from him. Suddenly, Godfrey "is brought to the position of being oppressed from the position of being cruel" (*Memento Mori*, 1961: 68). Godfrey's being pity and his desperation against Olive turns him into a pitiable person, not into a damnable person. What make Godfrey an unbearable person are his guilt feelings. If he wouldn't be overwhelmed with guilt feelings, if he would really be a bad person he wouldn't have been obliged to confront with a psychological torture.

On the other side, we are made to understand that Charmian's innocent and religious identity cannot be seen clearly with some truths that she conceals. The secret affair of Charmian who punishes Godfrey to cheat herself with Guy Leet comes out. . Insensitive and self-seeker attitudes of Mrs Pettigrew originate from injustices of Charmian, Godfrey and Guy Leet, which is reflected by implication. . Gaining wealth that she really wants at the end of the novel, being awarded in acknowledgement of her

efforts with the narrator's expressions (Lise leaves her wealth to Mrs. Pettigrew) (*Memento Mori*, 1961: 218) are the indicators of this situation. Taylor's attitudes can also be evaluated in two aspects (it damages the opinion that his attitude is totally right). Firstly; Godfrey was deemed worthy of a punishment that he didn't deserve, the second one is jealousy (Alec: Were you ever jealous of Charmian? Taylor: Of course I was, from time to time.) (*Memento Mori*, 1961: 171). First one is the necessity of moral responsibility; it is an expected manner from his religious personality. Second one can be explained with his selfishness. It is his aspect that doesn't comply with his belief. On the other hand, betraying to Charmian whom he has a close friendship reveals a conflict which can be argued in terms of morality. He defends himself about this issue; "There is a time for loyalty and a time when loyalty comes to an end" (*Memento Mori*, 1961: 171). However, it is still Taylor's opinion. It is not a satisfying explanation for Alec; "The more people are religionist, the more they are surprising" (*Memento Mori*, 1961: 172). On the other hand, although she had a secret affair with Alec Warner in her youth, she cannot explain it anyone. Guy Leet is not different from the others. He accepts to marry Lise Brooke in order not to be known his relationship with Charmian and not to be in a scandal. Lise threatens him by reporting the situation to Godfrey. Guy Leet is sympathetic and attractive.

The narrator says that Godfrey died because of "pneumonia" a few days later of an accident as if the narrator wants to remind not to ignore Alec Warner's loss of his notes in a fire along with casting doubt on our belief of his objective manner. Actually, it is no other thing that Alec tries to prove.

When evaluated in general, it'll be seen that the characters in the novel are always tried kept in a balance. Like Mortimer Robinson's January Marlow, despite his pagan beliefs, he leads a righteous and beneficial life. His death occurs in a joyful mood like his life. Henry Mortimer is a pagan and "bad", Jean Taylor is Catholic and "good". But Spark is apt to confirm both of them. Whether it is complying with Catholic beliefs or the contrary.

Her characters are in the position of understanding the truth of life and death. Accepting this truth does not set them free from their sufferings nevertheless is the right path to take. The people who try to rationalize all happenings around them, like Dame Lettie, to forget the bitter truths like Godfrey and to be indifferent like Pettigrew protect their personal traits. Except for Ellemine Mortimer, we do not meet any other character who embodies Spark's views, that is, her religious inclination.

CONCLUSION

Spark is a novelist who reflects her own worldview without hesitation in her novels and is not apologetic in this respect. . She attempts to place all her novels directly and indirectly in a religious framework. For her, plot means destiny. Whatever the fate is for the man so is the plot for the novel character. Destiny means living according to a plan prepared outside the control and choice of the individual. Novel characters have to act in a program or plan determined by the author without any choice or opportunity. When viewed this point of view, the individual and the novel character are alike. Spark sees the novel as a parody of divine creation. Novel characters search for the meaning of existence. They try to get out of the plotline, so as to be free (like Caroline Rose, Jean Brodie, Lister or Barbara Vaughan) and make plans for this purpose. As a result, they play the role of god to determine their own destiny, but these efforts result only in their disappointment. The *Driver's Seat's* Lise, despite all her determination and deliberate plan, loses control at the last minute and her plan ends up in the way that she didn't expect. . Brodie, like God, attempts to create a group that bears her own marks, but is upset by the most trustworthy person, Sandy. Caroline tries to resist the fate and get rid of being part of the plot, but unexpected events prevent her from fulfilling her wish. Unexpected events prevent rationally prepared fictions. Spark places emphasis on choice and the principle of obligation. Undoubtedly it is one of the

subjects that human beings have been discussing for centuries; free will and divine will. Spark's characters try to get rid of this dilemma, but their attempts are doomed to fail. The only way to solve the problem is to accept the presence of an authority above and beyond us. In the works studied, *The Bachelors*, *The Comforters*, and *Memento Mori*, Spark tries to depict what that authority is. It is hard to say that Spark solved the dilemma in a satisfactory manner. In her view, the individual must use her "freedom of choice" at the expense of a number of difficulties, dangers and troubles. Coming over these difficulties will make him/her an individual. However, it should be noted that the freedom of choice of the individual is not infinite. In *Mandelbaum Gate*, Barbara voluntarily chooses Catholicism, but it is entirely out of her choice to come to the world as a Jew. Caroline, who chooses to be a writer, is also a novel character at the same time, confronts with a dilemma between choice and obligation. January Marlow's being in Robinson Island is not a choice. Choice is restricted by his life on the island. It is not a choice again for *The Bachelors'* Ronald being an epileptic. As a way of solving the conflict, there is a claim for the individual usage of freedom of choice, also acknowledges the existence of a power other than himself. Fate does not require the individual to be in a passive position. The characters like Caroline, Lister, Barbara, Ronald and Harwey accept this truth and try to keep fate and will in a balance. Those who do not accept it, head down to a tragic end. One of the striking points in Spark's novels is the good-bad dilemma. The vices are bestowed with a more vivid, attractive, admirable features in an incomprehensible reason. They are not passive as good people. For instance, Mrs. Hogg is more dynamic, powerful and more passionate than Caroline, and Patric Seton is more than Ronald Bridges. Metaphorically, good is bad, evil is good. The main issue is to find the right way through the wicked. It is remarkable that Hogg is an effective force in Caroline's being a good Catholic and Seton is crucial in Ronald's finding the truth. According to Spark, sometimes evil is an inevitable achievement to reach the good. Then the individual is not to ignore the existence of malice, or even its goodness. This, of course, is one of the main dilemmas in her novels. It is naturally

necessary to evaluate them in a good manner as their actions are apt to the supreme purposes instead of evaluating the evils of Spark in a bad manner.

It is obvious that Spark views everything in two dimensions. To create antagonisms and then to obtain a whole from these antagonisms is the method that is often resorted to by Spark. Image and reality, substance and soul, life with death, sacred and profane, reason with faith, free will and divine authority, evil and decent are the oppositions she frequently appeals to. Two aspects of a certain thing need to be known in order for the existence to be meaningful. A rational approach to the world and to the object leads to only seeing the boundaries of the mind. After one point, belief should go into effect. Harvey Gotham explores the nature of human suffering in a world under the control of a merciful God and tries to understand.

He explains this as follows;

A beautiful and enchanting light illuminating the world, a merciful and good God who is always strong everywhere, if he so wishes, he can abandon the sufferings in the world. It is to be allowed to withdraw the pain and it is also the creator of it, how to bond with the God is good (Spark, 1984: 22).

Harvey, in spite of all the pangs he draws, cannot find a response to the nature of the pain with a rational approach. The result he finds in the answer is based entirely on faithfulness. According to him, the answer to the question is; the human spirit has signed an agreement with God before he was born, according to this agreement, he accepted to suffer as long as he lived. We are forgetting this deal, but we did it. (Spark, 1984: 23). Harvey, along with this situation, does not regret taking on the idea of understanding the nature of the pain. Ultimately the individual will think and examine but will have to acknowledge that he will not understand everything with his knowledge.

In *The Bachelors*, Patric Seton discriminates the entity from matter and spirit. All his effort is to abolish the matter. Seton tries to kill Alice to save her from her filthy body, but cannot escape being judged. Dame Letti tries not to hear the message "Remember, you must die." Death is a reality that must always be remembered and announces the existence of another world. Neither the other world nor this world needs

to ignore the existence of each other. Dame Letti leaves the nursing home to get rid of this voice and dies in great sorrows.

In *The Hothouse by the East River*, the distinction between past and future is lifted. Paul and Else continue to live on another dimension even though they die. To separate the slices of past and future time is really to get away from reality. Past and future are an integral part of a moment. Spark's people are not good or bad with a rough classification. As Maddocks mentions, "Each person has two prints, one positive and the other negative, letting us choose one of these." (Maddocks: 1968:10). Randisi talks about Spark's characters as saying;

What we do as long as we are human will be good or bad. As long as we do good or bad things, we are human beings. Paradoxically doing evil things is better than doing nothing. At least we exist. Man's glory is in his talent to salvation; but at the same time his glory is having the ability to damn (to do evil). The worst thing that we can say about our evil, from our statesmen to our thieves, they are not as brave and courageous as to do evil. (1984: 109)

Spark's characters have the personalities that confirm this argument. Seton has bad sides as well as good sides, like Mrs. Hogg. The crucial conflict that constitutes the contradictions of the people is their desire that they cannot destroy it with the belief they have. They struggle between their faith and their wishes. Although Alexandra is a nun, she prefers secular poems to hymns. Barbara decides to marry Harry even though the Church does not allow her to. According to her, the fact that such a thing is not allowed indicates the illogicality of the Church. Caroline suffers from the pain of a struggle between her belief and her way of thinking.

All of Spark's effort is focused on dissolving the differences in a pot. It is possible to say that whether she is successful or not; such as Spark the reader confirms a religious view of events and this can be considered to be remarkably successful. Otherwise, as Hoyt points out, the conflict in perspective remains unresolved (Saphiro, 1965: 75). What is emphasized is that that the only salvation for a person who is astray in a godless world is religion that is Catholicism. Thereby it is not possible to understand

Spark without becoming aware of her differentiating characteristics. To conclude in a sentence Spark's faith is an indispensable feature of her novels.

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