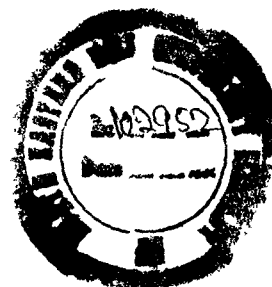


THE SOUTH-AFRICAN DILEMMA : A STUDY OF THE NOVELS OF ALAN PATON

REBECCA LALRINTLUANGI

Dissertation
SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT
FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

TO



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES
NORTH - EASTERN HILL UNIVERSITY
SHILLONG - 793 014

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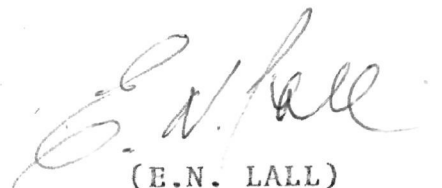
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SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATE

I certify that the dissertation entitled *The South-African Dilemma : A Study of the Novels of Alan Paton* submitted by *Rebecca Lalrintluangi*, in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Philosophy of the North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, is the record of original investigation carried out by her under my supervision.

She has been duly registered and the dissertation presented is worthy of being considered for the award of the M.Phil degree. This work has not been submitted for any degree of any other university.

Date : December 18, 1992


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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to dedicate my dissertation to my dear friends Miss Paula Schrader and Mrs. Laurie Fredrikson of Oak Hills Bible College, Bemidji, MN. USA, without whose generosity I could not have written it. I am deeply indebted to them for sending me the works of Alan Paton not available in India.

I am grateful to my supervisor - Dr. E.N. Lall, Professor and Head of the Department of English, North-Eastern Hill University, for his role as teacher, guide, critic and friend.

I would like to thank T.T. Zothansanga who has typed my manuscript and given me useful advice and help, and also Godfrey Pathaw who has typed the final copy. I would also like to thank all my friends who by their encouragement and enthusiasm has contributed towards the success of my work.

Lastly, my gratitude goes out to my parents and brothers for their unlimited patience and support as I worked far into the night.

Dated : December 18, 1992

Rebecca Lalrintluangi
REBECCA LALRINTLUANGI

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INTRODUCTION

Alan Paton was born in Pietermaritzburgh on January 11, 1903. He was the eldest son of James Paton, a Scot from the Glasgow area, who came to South Africa in 1901 during the Anglo-Boer War. He was educated at Maritzburg College and Natal University. He taught for twelve years in schools till he got the post of Principal at the Diepkloof Reformatory in Johannesburg in 1935. He was there till 1948, during which time he worked tirelessly to turn this prison into a school. His efforts were not always appreciated. At one time it earned him a great deal of criticism from the editor of the Afrikaner newspaper Die Transvaaler, Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd, who later became the Prime Minister and refashioned South Africa according to the doctrines of race separation. Paton later helped to found

the Liberal Party of South Africa and became its President till 1968 when it was declared illegal. He died in April 1988 at the age of 85 in Botha's Hill, Natal. His campaign for justice in South Africa has earned him recognition and international honours. He has been awarded an Honorary D. Litt from Kenyan College, Rhodes, Harvard, Trent, Williamette, Natal, Michigan and Durban-Westville Universities as well as Honorary L.H.D. from Yale and La Salle Universities. He also received the American Freedom Award in 1960 and the Free Academy of Hamburg Award in 1961.

Some of the books written by Paton are Cry, The Beloved Country 1948; Too Late The Phalarope 1953; The Land and People of South Africa 1953; Hope for South Africa 1958; Tales from a Troubled Land 1961; Instrument of Thy Peace 1968; Kontakion for You Departed 1969; Knocking on the Door 1975; Towards the Mountain 1980; Ah, But your Land is Beautiful 1981; Journey Continued 1988 and Save the Beloved Country 1989.

Paton, however, is not a literary giant even though Cry, The Beloved Country has been till today regarded as a representative novel and Too Late The Phalarope was chosen as 'Book of the month' in the USA, 1953. No doubt he is a forerunner of the South African literature, but Ashoke Sen, writing in The Telegraph of 7th February, 1992, states that "Chronologically, an examination of the South African

literary scene should start with Nadine Gordimer (b 1923) who won the Nobel Prize in 1991". Ms. Gordimer's first novel, The Lying Days was written in the same year as Paton's Too Late The Phalarope, five years after the publication of Cry, The Beloved Country. Another noteworthy name in South African literary circle is Athol Fuggard, whose plays portray racial tension and inequality. His works include Statements after an Arrest under the Immorality Act (1972), The Island (1972) and My Africa, My Children (1988). Sen has also mentioned names of other Black South African writers with an apology that their works are not easily available due to South African Censorship¹. Maybe this is one reason why Paton's Cry, The Beloved Country remains a symbol of South African literature in the world.

The pervading theme in Paton's writing is the effects of apartheid in the social, political and personal lives of the people of South Africa. Most of his characters and events are from real life and even the fictitious ones are inspired by or based upon real life. The locale of all his novels is South Africa and the subject is mainly the interaction between the Afrikaners and the Black and Coloured people and the devastating effect inter-action has on the lives and emotions of the people.

Paton has untiringly campaigned for about thirty years for justice in South Africa where the Blacks and other

Coloured people suffer the most outrageous discriminations. Colour consciousness had arisen during the 19th century and particularly after the liberation of slaves in 1834². The Afrikaners have accepted their separateness as the will of God and the Dutch Reformed Churches officially supports apartheid by preaching the myth of an Afrikaner volk chosen by God³.

In 1927, when the Nationalist-Labour Pact was in power, an Act was passed which prohibited extra marital relations between Europeans and Africans⁴. From 1948 when the Nationalist and Afrikaner parties came to power, they immediately set to passing legislations to prohibit both illicit intercourse and marriage between Europeans and Coloureds. The Immorality Act of 1927 was amended in 1950 to include coloureds. A prohibition of mixed Marriage Act was passed which made marriage between a white and a non-white a crime and marriage officers were held responsible to refuse to solemnize such marriages⁵.

The Nationalist Party rode to power on the slogan of "Apartheid", a broad term meaning separation of the races, but which also implied 'baaskap' a political term in South Africa meaning white domination. The word 'Apartheid' was coined by Paul Sauer, who was chairman of a special sub-committee of the Nationalist Party appointed to draw up a programme for the 1948 general election. Dr. D.F. Malan, the leader of the party began with some of the more obvious

forms of separation that could be enforced without too many difficulties. Separate entries were decreed for whites and non-whites to railway stations and public buildings. Railway passengers were ordered to ride in separate coaches and Bills were introduced in Parliament providing for separate group areas and amenities of various kinds⁵.

But in 1953, a new party called the Liberal Party was founded which included in its programme non-racialism, wide non-racial franchise and the abolition of all racial discriminations. As founder member of this party and as an English-speaking South African, Paton is often critical and disapproving in his writings about apartheid and white power. He argues convincingly that there is no justification for Afrikaner domination over the Black and Coloured races. He suggests in his novels that only love can rectify the damages and bridge the enormous racial chasm. The characters in his novels are faced with a dilemma that has riddled South Africa since the implementation of apartheid. Amidst the turbulence of all this, however, is Paton's great love for South Africa and his desire to save his beloved country.

END NOTES

1. The Telegraph, 7th February, 1992.
2. Marquard, Leo : The Peoples and Policies of South Africa, 4th edition, London, Oxford University Press 1969, p.68. All references are to this edition.
3. Wilson, Monica and Thompson, Leonard (Ed.) : The Oxford History of South Africa Vol.II 1870-1966, London, Oxford University Press 1975, pp.370-371.
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5. Ibid., p.70.
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Chapter-I

SUCH A THING IS NOT LIGHTLY DONE

I

Cry, The Beloved Country was born in a lonely hotel room at Trondheim in Norway. The first paragraphs are devoted to the hills and valleys and mountains of Ixopo in distant South Africa. But the story which was eventually finished in America is not so much about the scenic beauty of the land, but about its men and women and the gross inequalities that had and has been disfiguring the national life of that country.

One of the gross inequalities strongly highlighted in the novel is that of the land. Only 13.7 per cent of the total area of the Republic is allotted for the natives which

is far from being sufficient to hold them. In the remaining 86.3 per cent Africans are not entitled to own land. The economy of the Reserves is a simple agricultural subsistence economy and often, there is not enough supply of cash or food for the people staying in them. Many Africans are, therefore, obliged to take work in European areas to earn money¹.

"The men are away, the young men and the girls are away. The soil cannot keep them anymore"². Even when desolate and barren valleys such as Ndotsheni in Cry, The Beloved Country is restored and the grass is made to grow once more, some would still have to go for there would be too many of them for the land to hold. On the other hand, the white man cannot run his economy without African labour and an inter-action of sorts takes place between the Reserves and the white areas.

Out of this first gross inequality springs another gross inequality. With the discovery of gold, cities like Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban boomed. "Every week five or more special trains arrive at Johannesburg with hundreds of Africans going to work on the mines. Some of them have been there before; many of them are coming for the first time from the simple, pastoral life of the Reserves to the rush and noise of a big city, and to a stange, machine-dominated existence in a highly organised industry"³. These

black people saw and envied the white man's world. From the slums of the great cities they watch the white man enjoy the wealth they had helped to achieve. A number of them become alienated from the old tribal Reserves which has slowly been losing its control. Racial character deteriorates and crime increases by the number. Young men and women are gone astray while the old are troubled and confused. This is the central theme in Cry, The Beloved Country. As a number of black men poured into the cities, the white settlers started to fear engulfment. It is for this reason that they voted the Nationalist party with its slogan of 'Apartheid' into power in 1948. It must not, however, be assumed that the white man is solely motivated by fear. As a human being, he has, his fair share of that warm human emotion called love and also a sense of justice. Christianity has imbued in him a sense of love and justice towards his fellow men including even the natives. Therefore, he is a man with a divided conscience. There is a struggle within him between fear and love, justice and survival⁴.

Alan Paton is well aware of this struggle in the hearts of the white men. In his middle age, he used to write such essays as Arthur Jarvis writes in Cry, The Beloved Country. In an essay "The truth about native crime" Jarvis had written about the nature of the South Africa dilemma. I quote the last paragraph of the essay :

"... The truth is that our Christian civilization is riddled through and through with dilemma. We believe in the brotherhood of man, but we do not want it in South Africa. We believe that God endows men with diverse gifts and that human life depends for its fullness on their employment and enjoyment, but we are afraid to explore this belief too deeply. We believe in help for the underdog, but we want him to stay under. And we are therefore compelled, in order to preserve our belief that we are Christian, to ascribe to Almighty God, Creator of Heaven and Earth. Our own human intentions, and to say that because He created white and black. He gives the Divine Approval to any human action that is designed to keep black men from advancement. (We go so far as to credit Almighty God with having created black men to hew wood and draw water for white men). We go so far as to assume that He blesses any action that is designed to prevent black men from the full employment of the gifts He gave them. Alongside of these very arguments we use others totally inconsistent, so that the accusation of repression may be refuted. We say we withhold education because the black child has not the intelligence to profit by it; we withhold opportunity to develop gifts because black people have no gifts; we justify our action by saying that it took us thousands of years to achieve our own advancement, and it would be foolish to suppose that it will take the black men any lesser time, and that therefore, there is no need for hurry. We shift our ground again when a black man does achieve something remarkable, and feel deep pity for a man who is condemned to the loneliness of being remarkable, and decide that it is a Christian kindness not to let black men become remarkable. Thus even our God becomes a confused and inconsistent creature, giving gifts and denying them employment. Is it strange then that our civilization is riddled through and through with dilemma? (The truth is that our civilization is not Christian, it is a tragic compound of great ideal and fearful practice, of high assurance and desperate, anxiety, of lowing charity and fearful clutching of possessions.) Allow me a minute..."^s.

This is indeed the truth about South Africa. Even the Church, especially the Dutch Reformed Church justify

apartheid by applying to themselves Calvinistic doctrines about the elect and the rest. It is then no wonder that South African civilization is riddled with dilemma. In another essay, Jarvis admits that what the white man did in order to develop his country was all permissible in the beginning. To use labour in order to develop the land was permissible. To harness unskilled labour for unskilled work was permissible, but to keep men unskilled for the sake of unskilled work is not permissible. It is also not permissible to mine gold, or manufacture any product or even cultivate any land if such things cannot be done without disintegrating native community life and families. In other words, exploitation is not permissible. In the same essay, Jarvis has written:

"It was permissible to allow the destruction of a tribal system that impeded the growth of the country. It was permissible to believe that its destruction was inevitable. But it is not permissible to watch its destruction, and to replace it by nothing, or by so little, that a whole people deteriorates, physically and morally. The old tribal system was, for all its violence and savagery, for all its superstition and witchcraft, a moral system. Our natives today produce criminals and prostitutes and drunkards, not because it is their nature to do so, but because their simple system of order and tradition and convention had been destroyed. It was destroyed by the impact of our own civilization. Our civilization has therefore an inescapable duty to set up another system of order and tradition and convention. It is true that we hope to preserve the tribal system by a policy of segregation. That was permissible. But we never did it thoroughly or honestly. We set aside one-tenth of the land for four-fifths of the people. Thus we made it inevitable, and some say we did it knowingly, that labour would come to the towns. We are caught in the toils of our own selfishness"⁶.

Unknown to Arthur Jarvis, a black priest Msimangu voices these same sentiments, "The tragedy is not that things are broken, The tragedy is that they are not mended again. The white man has broken the tribe". And "It suited the white man to break the tribe. But it has not suited him to build something in the place of what is broken". But Msimangu quickly adds that there are some white men who give their lives to build something in the place of what had been broken. Arthur Jarvis is such a man. Up to the very last moment before he was shot dead, Jarvis had worked for the welfare of the non-European section of the community. His interest in native crime, native education, non-European hospitals and the mining compound system were regarded 'too hot' that his father-in-law was asked to request him "to pipe down a bit". It is only after his death that his father James Jarvis learns about his son's convictions and missions. The elder Jarvis is moved when he reads the private essay on the evolution of a South African written by his son

"Therefore, I shall devote myself, my time, my energy, my talents to the service of South Africa. I shall no longer ask myself if this or that is expedient, but only if it is right. I do this not because I am courageous and honest, but because it is the only way to end the conflict of my deepest soul. I do it because I am no longer able to aspire to the highest with one part of myself and to deny it with another..."⁷.

Perhaps it is this same conviction that moves James Jarvis to later contribute more than his fair share for the

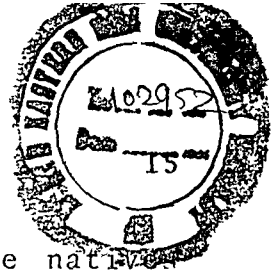
restoration of Ndotsheni. Perhaps it is this same conviction that prompts the young white man about whom more will be written. Perhaps it is this same conviction that led Mr. Carmichael to take the case 'pro-deo' which in English means 'for God'.

II

The inevitable result of the gross inequalities in the land allocation and wealth ownership is fear. Fear lurks deep in the hearts of men, haunting them like a nightmare. Indeed it would not be far wrong to say that fear is the keyword in Cry, The Beloved Country. It afflicts men and women, whites and natives alike. The fear of the white men is the fear of engulfment as this statement clearly reveals: "If I didn't look out, I'd have the place full of cousins and uncles and brothers and most of 'em up to no good". Mr. Harrison could well be speaking not only for himself but for the Europeans as a whole. Nevertheless he claims he is 'not a nigger hater' but tries to give them a square deal, decent wage, a clean room and reasonable time off. It is not so much hatred for the natives as a determination to preserve their identity as 'white' and superior beings that bring fear in the hearts of the white men.) As already mentioned in section one, the gross inequality in wealth has sparked off a number of crimes. On Africans it (mining) has been shattering - it destroyed

their tribal economy and irreparably damaged their tribal customs and loyalties. Its effect is violent and demoralizing and more often than not, a miner loses his natural dignity and simplicity. He and his family have to re-adjust themselves painfully to a new environment that is harsh and unsympathetic⁸. The compound system by which sixteen to twenty men are housed in barracks fitted with concrete bunks or army type cots have caused the tribe to be broken⁹. Msimangu says that is why children break the law and white people are robbed. White South Africa is afraid of native crime but she does not know how to put an end to it. The dilemma of South Africa is exposed at great length in section twelve, Book one of Cry, The Beloved Country. In passages not unlike The Wasteland, (Paton illustrates the thousand voices that cry out what must be done. But the voices have no definite solution since one cries this, one cries that and another cries something which is neither this nor that.) Some cry for more police to protect the Europeans while others cry for increased schooling facilities with the hope that this would decrease juvenile delinquency among native children. But others oppose this proposition claiming that education would only produce cleverer criminals.

Others are of the opinion that crimes would lessen if the natives have worthy purpose and worthy goals to inspire them and to work for. They say it is because they have



neither goals nor principles that majority of the natives turn to crime and prostitution. But South Africa does not know which one she prefers - a law-abiding industrious and purposeful native people or a lawless idle and purposeless people, because she fears both of them. Till she makes up her mind, she must pay for her uncertainty. She has however decreed that there will be no equality in Church or state. Some people cry for a separate living areas for the whites and the blacks. It may be mentioned that in 1950, two years after the publication of Cry, The Beloved Country, the Group Areas Act was passed, under which separate residential areas for the different racial groups were established.

(But the answer to the problem does not lie in separate dwelling areas. Rather, it lies in the power of love. Msimangu, the black priest voices these words of wisdom, "But there is only one thing that has power completely, and that is love. Because when a man loves, he seeks no power, and therefore he has power. I see only one hope for our country, and that is when white men and black men, desiring neither power nor money, but desiring only the good of our country, come together to work for it"¹⁰. This is Paton's own conviction) In a Book and Author Luncheon in New York 1949, he said that it is his own belief that the only power that can resist the power of fear is the power of love¹¹.

(Napoleon Letsitsi, introduced a part four of book

three in Cry, The Beloved Country is a symbol of hope for South Africa. He is an embodiment of Msimangu's vision. As he is an agricultural demonstrator, James Jarvis brings him to Ndotsheni to teach farming to the people. He is a symbol of hope because he professes to be working for Africa, the land and the people and not for men or money. He tells Kumalo, 'I am not a man for politics. I am not a man to make trouble in your valley. I desire to restore it, that is all and I hate no man umfundisi. I desire power over none'.)

No less than the power of love, in fact a corollary of love is a more equal distribution of wealth. John Kumalo, the brother of Stephen Kumalo sways the crowd and excites them to a fever pitch by his skill at oratory. He cries that the Black people should be given a little more when more gold is discovered. He argues that it is they who bring out the gold from the bowels of earth and it is only fair that they should partake of the riches. He reasons that the miners should have at least enough for themselves and their families. He challenges the crowd that if the Africans do not work, then the mines would have to be closed down for there would be none to do the work. It is only fair then that they should be paid well for their labour. Twenty-five years after writing Cry, The Beloved Country, Paton still felt the need to write that this inequality of wealth distribution is a "social condition

which if it goes unamended will lead us into terror and blood.) For no police action, however, restrained and skilful can control the anger and the desperation of the people who feel that they are denied a just share of the wealth they produce and who know they are denied it because they are politically powerless and who know they are politically powerless because they are Black"¹². Fortunately for the white people, John Kumalo is only words and no action. He revels in the applause of the crowd. But he does not really want action for that might lead him to prison. He knows that the old tribal system is being destroyed and a new system is being established in Johannesburg. He also knows that there is a better opportunity for a man if he were a politician in the city than if he remains in the safety of his village. But he is caught in a dilemma between really fighting for more wages which might entail going prison or dying as a martyr and clinging to his possessions. He does not want to lose his possessions and what little power he has over the crowds. Even though John Kumalo disregards the church and claims that man must be what God does not, he has no sincerity or courage to really do something for his people. For this reason, his two friends Dubula and Tomlinson even while envying him for his oratory skill regard him with contempt. For John Kumalo is only a voice with no brains and no heart, and of course, with no courage. The simple African crowd hears him and cheer for him not quite realising that

John Kumalo is a selfish man with no courage.

When a man such as John Kumalo is considered a 'great man' in politics it is no wonder that the Africans need a white man to fight for their cause. It is with respect and regret that Msimangu speaks of Professor Hoernle, a great fighter for the natives. He had, Msimangu says, Tomlinson's brains, John Kumalo's voice and Dubula's heart all rolled into one. Paton too, in the Author's note calls him 'Prince of Kafferboeties'. He is one of the few white men who takes upon themselves the task of rebuilding the broken tribe and the broken man and the broken house. These men fully devote themselves for the welfare of the natives as though they must make up for the indifference and cruelties of their fellow whites. In Cry, The Beloved Country, James Jarvis plays a major role in the restoration of Ndotsheni. He began in memory of his son who had worked all his life for native welfare. But towards the end of the novel, Jarvis claims that what he gives, he gives it willingly. The humility, faith and fortitude of the old black priest has touched and impressed him. But in spite of their understanding and the bond that grew out of mutual pain and suffering, there remains up to the very last meeting, a constraint between Jarvis and Kumalo. They cannot comfort each other or talk about the things that come to their hearts for such things are not lightly done. Kumalo weeps when Jarvis cries with compassion, "I

understand completely". There is no doubting of the fact that these two men, one black and the other white, have a deep understanding and respect for each other which is born out of their mutual sorrow.

Another character who stands out prominently is the young white man at the reformatory. His character was inspired by Lanky de Lange who worked in Deipkloof Reformatory and started the 'after care' section which was intended to keep in touch with all the homes of the Johannesburg boys. It was Lanky's job to visit homes and to prepare both boy and home for the final release. He was an Afrikaner, born and brought up in a farm in the country. His people could not understand why he worked for the welfare of the black people and how he could do so with such devotion¹³. Paton confesses that he is very attached to Lanky, for he was the one who had hid his devotion behind fierce and frowning eyes. Similarly, the young white man in the novel, who incidentally, is not given a name, hides his gentler nature behind fierce and frowning eyes or bring it out with anger. He is devoted to his job and when things go wrong, he hurts himself and those around him. His seemingly indifferent appearance hides a sensitive and caring heart. It was he who devined John Kumalo's cunning scheme to deny that his son and the third man were present with Absalom when Arthur Jarvis was killed. The young man therefore suggests that Kumalo must

get a lawyer too. When the judge passes a death sentence on Absalom Kumalo, the young man breaks a custom based on colour difference. He unhesitatingly goes to Stephen Kumalo's side to help him. With fierce and frowning eyes, he assists the broken old man and leads him out of the court from the door meant only for the blacks.

Other instances of white goodwill to the blacks are the lift Kumalo and Maimangu received on their way to Alexandra during the bus boycott. The white man was not even going there for anything. He turned back after dropping them. On their return, they see many white men pick up black pedestrians in their cars. They even hear one of them challenge a policeman to take him to court when the policeman objected to his carrying blacks in his car. There are those who are influenced by Christianity and therefore are a blessing to the black people. Such persons in the novel are Mr. Carmichael, the lawyer, who is 'a great friend' of the black people and the white Superintendent at Ezenzeni. They both address Kumalo as 'Mr. Kumalo' which is not the usual way an European would address a native. Mr. Carmichael takes up the case of Absalom free of cost and unknowingly relieves the old man's anxiety about his dwindling purse. One must not forget Father Vincent, the rosy cheeked priest from England who takes Kumalo's hands in both his own and says, "Anything, anything, You have only to ask. I shall do everything".

Father Vincent belongs to the Church of England and one must remember that the English, who first came to South Africa as governors, missionaries, teachers and fortune hunters were not hostile to the natives. They do not have the colour bar in their churches as the Dutch Reformed Churches do. Though their number is small, these few Europeans who love the natives have a strong impact so that even the absence of a little boy makes a difference. "When you go, something bright will go out of Ndotsheni", Kumalo tells the laughing little boy with the brightness inside him. But the majority of the white people prefer to live the lives of superior people albeit a life beset with fear.

Fear and dilemma also holds the natives in thrall even as it does the Europeans. They are afraid because the once familiar tribal system is breaking up and the new system does not accept them except as labour force. This uprootedness from tradition and convention leads to the increase in crimes and thefts and prostitution. These in turn increases the fear. Gertrude is afraid when her brother, a parson suddenly appears in her doorstep. Her violent world is graphically illustrated in just two sentences: "A man has been killed at her place. They gamble and drink and stab". Kumalo wants to take her back to Ndotsheni. Before they could return, she listens to a woman who wanted to be a nun. She too decides she wants to be a nun as well, saying that as she was a weak woman, it

would be good for her if she becomes a nun. But Gertrude disappears on the night before their return to Ndotsheni and nothing is heard about her again. Her character was inspired by a young man Jacky, who was brought to the author in Diepkloof Reformatory, where he claimed that a voice had called him to be a priest. Jacky went to school to get the necessary education and the day came when he passed standard VI. A place was obtained for him at the Grace Dieu High School near Pietersburg in the Northern Transvaal. Friends of the author provided the necessary new clothes for him and he asked for special leave to visit his uncle and aunt. Jacky did not return. The author latter had a letter from him from prison¹⁴. But Gertrude in Cry, The Beloved Country simply disappears. "He opened Gertrude's door and held up his candle. But Gertrude was gone. The little boy was there, the red dress and the white turban was there. But Gertrude was gone"¹⁵. She has, no doubt gone back to liquor brewing and selling and prostitution, preferring this life to a life of a nun or even the simple life of her native Ndotsheni.

Although it would not be fair to compare him with either Jacky or Gertrude, Msimangu the beloved brother in Christ too admits to a dilemma. He questions his own worthiness to be a priest. He confesses to being a selfish and sinful man on whom God has laid His Hand. He is only a second generation Christian whose father was shown the

light of life by a white man. He has no hate in his heart for white men but he knows that the destruction of the tribe is caused by the white men. When he said these lines, 'I am not for segregation but it is a pity we are not apart', Msimangu is not motivated by hate. He is just a man disturbed by the violence that racial inter-action has precipitated. His own frustration and helplessness is revealed when he accompanies Kumalo to Pimville to meet the girl who was Absalom's 'wife'. Absalom had gone away for nearly a week and Msimangu bitterly asks her if she would perhaps find another man. He argued with Kumalo "I tell you, you can do nothing. Have you not enough troubles for your own? I tell you there are thousands such in Johannesburg. And were your back as broad as heaven, and your purse full of gold and did your compassion reach from here to hell itself, there is nothing you can do"¹⁶. Kumalo weakly protests that the unborn child will be his grandchild to which Msimangu overwhelmed with bitterness retorts angrily "And if he were, how many such more have you? Shall we search them out, day after day, hour after hour? Will it ever end"¹⁷. But he quickly grows ashamed of his outburst and begs to be forgiven. With the wisdom of years Kumalo gently reassures him that God has indeed laid His hand on him even though he were a weak and selfish man. This perhaps is the only instance throughout the novel where Msimangu displays a nature that is less than sublime. At the end of the story, he gives all his savings

to Kumalo for he is going to forsake the world and live in retirement. By this gesture he confirms to the others as well as to himself that God has indeed placed His hand on him and he is worthy to be a priest. Msimangu has one great fear and that is when the whites learn to love the blacks it would be too late, for the blacks would then have turned to hating. There are instances where the white conscience is touched when they see that the natives do not hate them. Msimangu relates the story of how some friends of his took in a white woman who was raped and assaulted by a white man. They gave her clothes to wear and made tea for her and wrapped her warm in a blanket. The man when went to another white man that same night to ask him to come and settle the matter. The white woman had no money with which to show her thanks. But the black people said it was not a matter of money, at which the white man said twice "You are a good Kaffir". Something has touched him.

III

The personal tragedies of the old black priest Stephen Kumalo and the White man James Jarvis are linked with the larger and wider tragedy of South Africa. The two themes are never apart till at the end of the novel they are united, as Kumalo ends his long vigil on the mountain. Just as he has learnt to bear his heartache and to devote himself patiently for the restoration of Ndotsheni, so now

with the dawn of a new day, he learns to hope that some day, the problems of South Africa will be solved and her dilemma resolved. It goes to the credit of Alan Paton that he has interwoven these two themes so that Cry, The Beloved Country, although it is fiction, can also be read as a social record.

The lives of each character is, though in varying degrees, caught in a dilemma, the most painful one being that of Stephen Kumalo. It is indeed a powerful and moving experience to follow his journey from his native village to Johannesburg the great city, in search of his sister, her child and his son. While in Johannesburg, he experiences extreme sorrow as well as true christian love and fellowship, and on his return to Ndotsheni, he is recompensed in such ways as he had never thought possible.

When he leaves Ndotsheni for the first time to visit Johannesburg, he arrives a full hour before the train is due, and once on board, he pathetically tries to pretend that he is used to such a journey. But only a moment later, his uncertainty and fear of the unknown great city returns to him and he regrets his little lie. He takes out his sacred book and reads it, seeking refuge in its familiarity. In Johannesburg both Gertrude and Absalom are found, but she is living as a prostitute and he is on trial for the murder of a white man who, ironically has been devoted to the welfare of Africans. His attempts to

reclaim Gertrude and to get Absalom acquitted are both unsuccessful. It is no wonder then that Kumalo suffers a temporary loss of faith. He admits to Msimangu "There is no prayer left in me. I am dumb here inside. I have no words at all". Msimangu proves to be a tower of strength for Kumalo's flagging faith.) When they went together to Ezenzeleni, a place for the blind, where Msimangu would hold a service, he chose his text with care. He reads from the book of Isaiah, the Lord's promise to comfort His people:

"I, the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness and out of the prison house". (Isa 42:6-7).¹⁸

It struck Kumalo that his friend had a voice of gold, the voice of a man who had a heart of gold who was reading from a book of golden words:

"And I will bring the blind by a way that they know not; I will lead them in paths that they have now known; I will make darkness light before them and crooked things straight. These things I will do unto them and not forsake them". (Isa 42:16)¹⁹.

It fell as if the Zulu tongue was transfigured when such words of comfort are read out, Kumalo felt sure the words are meant for him, as indeed Msimangu humbly confirms he had tried every way to touch his friend. Kumalo's weary

spirit is revived when he hears these words:

"Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary? ...²⁰

Even the youths shall faint and be weary and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint" (Isa 40:28, 30-31)²¹.

But Kumalo, sick with worry over his son is desperate again as he confesses to Father Vincent. "It seems that God has turned from me" Father Vincent ministers to him, exhorting him to pray for others and to give thanks whenever he can. He commands at the same time that Kumalo should not pray to understand the ways of God, for such things are secret.) It is interesting to note at this point that Cry, The Beloved Country was produced by Maxwell Anderson and Kurt Weill as a Broadway musical drama with the title Lost in the Stars. The title song "Lost in the stars" was sung by Todd Duncan who played the part of Kumalo. Paton confesses that it was painful hearing it because the song belonged "to the desertion of God genre. God had created the Universe, and more especially He had created the earth, but now He had gone away, forgetting the promise that we heard him say: So 'we are lost out here in the stars'... It is quite true that Stephen Kumalo when he learned that his son had killed a man, suffered a sense of God's desolation, but his was not the theme of my

book"²².

Through the loving ministrations of Msimangu and Father Vincent and the love of his parishioners, Kumalo's faith in God is restored. Moreover, the hand of God reaches out to him from unexpected quarters. A small boy with a brightness inside him prevails upon his grand father to begin a mission of charity. The timely arrival of a letter from James Jarvis, acknowledging Kumalo's message of sympathy saves him, when otherwise, he would have been removed from Ndotsheni. But before his spiritual rejuvenation and maturity is reached, Kumalo encounters and yields to temptation to hurt others. This desire is not born out of an evil nature but from his own hurt. Before coming of Johannesburg, he tells his wife bitterly: "... I do not hurt myself, it is they who are hurting me. My own son, my own sister, my own brother. They go away and they do not write anymore. Perhaps it does not seem to them that we suffer. Perhaps they do not care for it"²³. It is while carrying this feeling of hurt he yields to the temptation to hurt the young girl who was to be his daughter-in-law. He goes alone to see her partly because he felt the slow tribal rhythm of his life could easily irritate those round him and partly because he felt he could reach his goal more surely without the others. The girl opens the door to receive him with a mixture of fear and welcome. He asks her about her husband in a word that

does not quite mean husband. She does not know and so he tells her that he is in prison for killing a white man. He asks her if she had a murderer for a husband before and she cries no, no. He asks her if she would take a fourth husband and desperately she cries she does not want any more husbands. And Kumalo in his wild and cruel mood insists 'not even if I desired you? And she feeling like a trapped animal answers 'I could be willing' Kumalo is ashamed of his cruelty, and laying a priestly touch on the young girl said he is sorry.

Kumalo again gives in to the temptation to hurt others. While visiting his brother John before he returns to Ndotsheni, Kumalo tells a little lie. John's indifference and cunning is too much for the otherwise humble old man. In spite of his prayers for the power to forgive, Kumalo yields to the temptation "I have heard, he said, "that a man might be sent to the shop as a friend". This was meant to make John aware that his brother knew how Absalom was betrayed by his uncle's son. But then, Kumalo not only grew ashamed but repented of these two incidents.

On the train, he again takes refuge in the sacred book in order to avoid awkward questions. But on reaching Ndotsheni, he is greeted with genuine warmth by the people and he is deeply moved. Surrounded by their love, he finds courage to pray aloud for his sinning son. He prays aloud thanking God for the love of his friends and all his

mercies. He prays to God to send the rain and most important of all, he prayed, like in the olden days when men had faith, for his sister who had gone astray and for his son who is condemned to be hanged. His fear of having to leave Ndotsheni after what had happened to his sister and son is removed when a friend assures him that no one wishes him to leave since none condemns him. The letter from Jarvis at a crucial moment seems like 'a letter from God' to Kumalo as it proves to the visiting Bishop that Jarvis does not hate the old black parson whose son killed his own. Kumalo is able to understand more fully what he had learnt from Father Vincent that pain and suffering, kindness and love can make up for the other two. They make it easier for a man to believe in God.

With his soul restored and his hopes renewed, Kumalo makes intercessions for the restoration of Ndotsheni. Help comes unexpectedly from James Jarvis and the two men are bound together not only by mutual pain and sorrow but also by mutual understanding. Kumalo, in time overcomes his fear of the white man as he begins to understand the ways of God's providence. The hurt, the anger and the desolation leaves him and the peace of God comes to him. It is as if a voice cried out from heaven 'comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, these things will I do unto you, and not forsake you'. Here one is struck at the aptness of the sub title 'A story of comfort in desolation' which at first

seems impossible and paradoxical. Kumalo's desolation is indeed immense; at one stage he agonises that it seems as if God had turned from him. But God does care and sends him comfort through the understanding and compassion of the old white man. The friendship of an innocent little boy, 'a small angel from God' and the understanding of James Jarvis are God's providence to comfort Kumalo as are the ministrations of Msimangu and Father Vincent. Paton also describes the first meeting of Kumalo's wife and her daughter-in-law, as 'a comfort in such desolation' while alluding to the girl's grateful acceptance of her new family. A lot of his questions remain unanswered because there are no answers. Man's finite mind cannot comprehend fully the infinite ways of God and so Kumalo put aside the questions from his mind for the answers were a secret. But the question he cannot brush aside was 'Is there nothing that can be done now, is there not an angel that comes there and cries. This is for God not for man, come child, come with me'. Knowing the futility of his hopes, he gives himself over to earnest prayers, as he waits for the dawn of a new day. This new day raises new hope in the old man. Transcending personal tragedy, he sets his mind on the day when South Africa would finally be free.

IV |

The only hope for South Africa as Paton sees it is through the power of love. The white people must learn to

love the blacks before it is too late. Thirty years after Cry, The Beloved Country was written, Paton recalls the words he had put in the mouth of Msimangu "I have one great fear in my heart, that one day, when they turn to loving they will find we are turned to hating" And he asks, 'Has that day come?'²⁴ It remains a secret almost half a century later when South Africa would be freed from the fear. That day has not yet dawned when both the "white men and black men, desiring neither power nor money, but desiring only the good "of their country come together to work for it".

V

The dilemma of South Africa is again exposed in the short stories which came out in 1961. Tales from a Troubled Land is a collection of ten short stories which are mostly about the lives of native boys, the author came across during his years at the Diepkloof Reformatory. Only three of them, 'A drink in the passage', 'Life for a life' and 'Debbie go home', will be taken up for discussion since they are more explicit than the others on the effects of apartheid on individual lives. In the first one, Paton describes the profound hunger of the human heart for sympathy and understanding. Does the heart rule the heart or vice versa. One may wonder while reading about the Afrikaner and the African young man. The quest in their hearts is totally contradictory to what is allowed by the government and social mores of their country. 'Life for a

life' depicts white supremacy at its meanest and cruellest. The Coloured people have very few rights in their native land and they are made to feel that these are privileges which can be taken away from them. They are treated at best, with condescension, and at worst, with injustice. The killing of Enoch Maarman cannot be justified by any moral standard. But whatever bitterness they may feel, the natives must learn to compromise with the politically superior white minority. This is the central theme in 'Debbie Go Home'. In view of the hardships and social injustice, the Coloured people must grab what little and inconsequential favour they can with gratitude. To protest against apartheid too loudly would mean making matters worse for themselves. The main reason for adopting apartheid is to ensure the safety of the whites. But apartheid has done more harm than good. It hangs over the heads of both whites and natives like a spectre, killing human warmth and emotions. It haunts individuals till its presence is felt like a perpetual ache with no respite.

'A Drink in the Passage' has a deeply emotional and moving quality about it. The narrator Edward Simelane recounts his unusual experience to the author. As a sculptor, he had created 'African Mother and Child' which was awarded a one thousand pound prize as the finest piece of sculpture in 1960 when the Union of South Africa celebrated its Golden Jubilee. This sculpture had "not

only excited the admiration, but touched the conscience or heart or whatever it is, of white South Africa'. It had also earned Simelane his first glass of cognac.²⁵

Simelane entered the competition because the officials had left out the 'for whites only' in the regulations and surprisingly, 'Mother and child' was chosen as the winner. The following announcement that Simelane would receive his award along with other white awardees aroused mixed reactions. Part of the white population was glad while the other more traditionalist group was affronted. But Simelane diplomatically was indisposed to personally claim his prize, thereby averting any controversy.

There is a sense of poignancy as Simelane narrates his once-in-a-lifetime experience. One is struck with the impossibility of such a possibility of an Afrikaner sharing a drink with a black man. The 'African Mother and child' is no ordinary sculpture. The artist has brought out a special look on the mother which every white man cannot fail to notice. Jannie van Rensburg puts it like this: "She's loving that child, but she's somehow watching too. Do you see that? Like someone guarding. She knows it won't be an easy life"²⁶. He has been looking at the statue every evening where it was displayed at a shop window. Simelane himself went to look at it one evening and that was how he came to meet the Afrikaner young man. Simelane is curiously reluctant to disclose his identity as van

Rensburg started to talk to him about the statue. Anxious and eager to be friends, the white man insists on taking Simelane who gives his name as Vakalisa to his flat for a drink. Simelane has no choice but to follow the persistent youth, who either does not notice or does not care for the 'for whites only' sign on the gate of the tenement. He confides that he would like to meet Simelane and 'talk his heart out', since in his opinion God must be in the person who could make something so beautiful like 'African mother and child'. He is obviously distressed by the prevailing system in South Africa. Simelane does not pretend to misunderstand his sudden outburst of 'our land is beautiful. But it breaks my heart'. By his own confession, he is not anti-white and he can understand the yearnings of van Rensburg. The two women and uncle are not only sympathetic to their young relation, but they too reveal the same kind of earnest good-will towards the black young man. Simelane senses that these people would like to touch him but do not know how. He has touched them through his creation of 'Mother and Child' even though they do not know his true identity. There is a kind of empathy between the four Afrikaners and the one black man. But years of separation of the races have put a restraint which they cannot shake off. Simelane is alert and tense as he shares a drink in the passage of a white tenement late at night. He supposes his companions feel the same as he does - waiting for one of the doors to suddenly open. But nothing

happens and Simelane takes his leave.

The longing that is there is the story in Arnoldian in its intensity and hopelessness. It recalls to the mind the Poet's lines from 'To Marguerite'.

Oh! then a longing like despair,
Is to their farthest caverns sent;
For surely once, they feel we were
Parts of a single Continent!
Now round us is spread the watery plain
Oh might our margs meet again.

Who order'd, that their longing's fire
Should be, as soon as kindled cool'd?
Who renders vain their deep desire?—
A God, a God, their severance ruled!
And bade betwixt their shores to be,
The unplumb'd salt estranging sea.

This second paragraph is an answer to the Afrikaner belief in race separation. They believe that God made the colour differences because He wants them to be separate. But the heart refuses to accept what the mind dictates. Simelane and van Rensburg feels the urgent and aching need to communicate their deepest emotions. But the silence of apartheid is so loud it drowns the cries of their hearts. Simelane can feel that van Rensburg is filled with anger, hurt and despair. Perhaps he too is experiencing these same frustrating emotions. He knows that if men do not touch one another, they might hurt one another one day. As a black man, apart from creating, 'Mother and Child', there is nothing he can do, His inarticulatedness that so distresses his new friend is punctuated by a hopelessness

that is also a resignation. van Rensburg and the likes of him must learn to hide and stifle their emotions to save their feelings from being hurt. They must, like Simelane, put on the cloaks of seeming indifference till the dark clouds of apartheid are blown away by the same forces that brought them in.

'Life for a Life' depicts white supremacy at its basest and cruellest. The title itself is reminiscent of the mosaic law which decreed that the punishment for crime must be 'a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand and a foot for a foot'. The only difference in Paton's story is that an innocent man is made to pay for a crime committed by others. The life of Enoch Maarman, head Shepherd in a white man's farm is taken because the master of the farm is murdered. There is tragic irony in the killing of Maarman since it is not known for sure who murdered Flip. It could have been a white man who killed and robbed the farmer and not one of the Coloured people on whom the blame is laid with no proof. It is however the lot of the Coloured men to act as scapegoats for the crimes anybody might commit.

Enoch and Sara Maarman do not love their white master Flip but at the same time, they cannot openly show their hatred. To all appearances, they are the perfect employees, humble and servile. Only they themselves know that their salutes and deferences are not sincere. As

such, they do not feel sad or grieved at the killing of Flip. In fact, their indifference gives them a guilty feeling, which is not altogether free from fear. Their fear of the white men is almost palpable and any show of bravado is quickly eclipsed by terror. This is not so much due to their own cowardice and servility but due to the inordinate coldness and cruelty of some of the white men including the late Flip, his sons and Detective Robbertse. Maarman's dilemma is therefore between his apparent humility and inner pride. It is probable that even in the case of other Coloured people, their fear of the white men is real while their respect may be only superficial. On their part, the white men do not treat the Coloured people as persons in their own right, having emotions like every other persons. Detective Robbertse derives an almost sadistic pleasure as he questions Maarman in a way he would never have dared to question another white man. It must be galling for the Maarman's when Robbertse calls Bnech a 'creeping yellow Hottentot bastard' and yet insists that he has not insulted him. Solomon Koopman, Sara's brother typifies the Coloured people's reaction to the cold indifference of the white men. When policemen refuse to comply with Sara's request about her dead husband, the author comments that Koopman would have walked away with a smile on his face and cold hate in his heart. In fact, he urges his sister not to get a lawyer because he has reasoned that if she does, he would lose his butcher's

license and there would be no one to help Sara to keep her son at the University. This is revealing of the fact that many Coloured people have to be silent about the wrongs done to them by the white men out of fear that if they do, their meagre livelihood might be taken away from them. This same fear now silenced Sara over the insensate killing of her husband. She had known all along that she and her husband Enoch would be made to pay for the murder of Flip not because they were the ones who had committed the crime, but because they cannot show a grief which they do not indeed feel.

But the killing of Maarman and his subsequent burial without the knowledge of his wife is a heinous crime which nothing can justify, least of all by Robbertse. The Detective, in his real or pretended madness has undoubtedly killed Maarman to solve his own dilemma. The note of anxiety and urgency is unmistakable as he cries to Maarman before taking him away, "... you see that lieutenant, He rides round in a Chrysler, and by God he wants to know too. And by God he'll ride me if I dont find out". Fear of the lieutenant may have prompted Robbertse to kill Maarman who has no idea where the stolen safe is hidden. Sara is told the next morning that her husband slipped on one of the big stones and fallen on his head. His death certificate claims death due to sub-cranial bleeding. Her request to see Detective Robbertse is met with a bland 'he went away

on holiday this very morning'. The white policemen have no intention of divulging the whereabouts of Robbertse to this coloured woman, distressed though she is. Their indifference and impatience towards Sara is another painful reminder of the colour discrimination, that exist in South Africa. They have no qualms about callously dismissing what would otherwise be a serious case. Any compassion they might show towards one of their own kind is conspicuously absent for the coloured woman, leaving her disappointed and frustrated. Without her husband, what had once been home is not home anymore. It had suddenly become a 'land of stone' and she is impatient to leave it altogether. The three days she is allowed to remain is 'three days too many' before she vacates the cottage for the new head shepherd. She thinks of the Cape, where people lived, according to her son, softer and sweeter lives and she decides to go there. There are more Coloured people living in the Cape, then in other regions and white domination is a little benign. Sara sees a ray of hope at the end of the dark tunnel of hate. She would be re-united with her son who is already in the Cape, and she would be free from cruel insensitive people who are superior to her.'

Just as Paton advocates love as the only power that can cast out fear in Cry, The Beloved Country, so also he expounds the power of love in 'Debbie Go Home'. Jim de Villiers, his wife and two children are filled with anger

and frustration towards a system they cannot change. The brown colour of their skins have made them second-class citizens and outcastes in the country where they are born. But through their love for one another, they are able to resolve their dilemma and restore peace and calm in their little family.

Their impotent anger is the main thrust in the story. The Industrial Conciliation Act which empowered the Minister to resume any occupation for the whites deals a crushing blow to de Villiers. His early arrival home catches his wife and daughter unaware. They have been preparing a dress for Janie to wear at the Debutantes Ball, without the knowledge of Jim. Jim' is against the Ball because his pride is hurt to think that coloured girls are allowed to shake the hands of the Administrator on the night of the Ball, when on other occasions they are treated with disrespect. Either from experience or conjecture, Jim predicts what the white Administrator will say at the Ball, "... the Administrator will talk a lot to shit about the brotherhood of man and the sisterhood of woman". To find his wife and daughter prepare for the ball opens the floodgate of Jim's anger and he rages against them and the Administrator. He finds it disgraceful that his daughter should want to go to the Ball and he accuses his wife of licking the hand that whips them. His wife remonstrates with him that it is all the more reason why Janie should go

to the Ball. She would have at least one night to remember and treasure. Her plea is later parroted by her son Johnny, 'Only this once, let her be treated like a queen'. Johnny too is strongly against the Ball. The Administrator, he says is 'a dirty stinking white. And I'll help no sister of mine to shake his hand'. But Johnny and his friends had decided to go to the Ball with posters like 'Debbie Go Home' and 'Who Stole my Vote Away' and perhaps protest and create scenes? Hard-core though Johnny seems, he softens when his mother pleads with him to help her get permission from their father to let Janie go to the Ball. To his question 'why should I help you for that?' she replies simply 'Because I'm your mother'. When Johnny goes to talk to his father, de Villiers asks him to help him write 'a fighting speech: 'I want to stand up for our rights, but I dont want to blackguard the whites. I dont want trouble'. The note of compromise is already there, and it is picked up at once by his son, Johnny offers to write a 'fighting speech, free of all hatred, bitterness, resentment, full of shit about freedom and the rights of man' for his permission to the Ball. He explains his change of will as a 'rock-bottom necessity'. He says, 'If I boycott American food, and I'm dying of hunger, and everywhere round me in American food, then I eat American food'. In other words, he eats American food so he can go on boycotting American food.

The spirit of compromise is evident in Johnny also. He has pleased both his parents and he will keep to his earlier plans of going to the Ball with his posters. He moreover promises his mother that he will not let Janie see him. The particular dilemma about the Ball and the lost job is temporarily resolved through love and compromise. But the larger dilemma of the Coloured people, remains unresolved, de Villiers will continue his fight for his rights without achieving any positive result. In fact, he is like John Kumalo in Cry, The Beloved Country, who swayed the crowds with powerful speeches without the courage to put his words into action. de Villier's enthusiasm to fight for coloured rights will always be tempered with his reluctance to arouse white displeasure. His 'fighting speeches' will never be considered worth reckoning with. If Johnny gives in to every rock-bottom necessities, he would not be very different from his father. May be, being 'outcastes in the country where they were born' is not as intolerable as it sounds.

END NOTES

1. The Peoples and Policies of South Africa, p.32.
2. Paton, Alan : Cry, The Beloved Country, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons 1948, p.4. All references are to this edition.
3. The Peoples and Policies of South Africa, p.53.
4. Cry, The Beloved Country - Introduction by Lewis Gannet.
5. Ibid., pp.154-155.
6. Ibid., p.146.
7. Ibid., p.175.
8. The Peoples and Policies of South Africa, p.57.
9. Ibid., p.55.
10. Cry, The Beloved Country, pp.39-40.
11. Ibid - Introduction.
12. Paton, Alan : Save the Beloved Country, edited by Hans Strydom and David Jones, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons 1989, p.231. All references are to this edition.
13. Paton, Alan : Towards the Mountain, New York, Macmillan Publishing Company 1988, pp.192, 204.
14. Ibid., p.196.
15. Cry, The Beloved Country, p.216.
16. Ibid., p.68.
17. Ibid., p.68.
18. Ibid., p.90.
19. Ibid., pp.90-91.

20. Ibid., p.91.

21. Ibid., pp.91-92.

22. Paton, Alan : Journey Continued, New York, Macmillan Publishing Company 1988, pp.20-21. All references are to this edition.

23. Cry, The Beloved Country, p.9.

24. Save the Beloved Country, p.152.

25. Paton, Alan : Debbie Go Home, London, Penguin Books in association with Jonathan Cape 1966, p.87.

26. Ibid., p.89.

Chapter-II

O GOD WEES HOM GENADIG (O GOD HAVE MERCY UPON HIM)

Unlike Cry, The Beloved Country which as the author claimed is his autobiography was the result of a creative process, most of which had taken place unconsciously, the next novel Too Late The Phalarope was inspired by an incident which occurred in a country town in the Transvaal Province. A white policeman was charged under the Immorality Act¹ and found guilty. The incident is recounted in Journey Continued :

"The story in itself was not unusual. What moved me deeply was that the policeman's wife sat in court throughout the trial, and by her demeanour showed that she had forgiven him. There was also the implication that when he was discovered, he had confessed to her. Acts of infidelity are as common in South Africa as in any country in the world, and such acts of forgiveness are also not unknown. But the

forgiving of a white man and especially an Afrikaner - by his wife when the act of infidelity had been committed with a black woman has an emotional and moral quality that is unknown in any other country in the world².

The Immorality Act passed in 1927 and amended in 1950 caused a lot of social damage but failed miserably to achieve its object. As if to prove its monumental failure, there is a legend in South Africa that the Cape coloured people are the descendants of Malay, Khoikhoi, San and passing soldiers and sailors. Researches have shown that close on 50 per cent of those who break this law are white men. When a white man is charged under this Act and he is found guilty, his life is ruined forever. Therefore some white men even commit suicide rather than face their trial. People then begin to ask which is the greater offence: to commit the sin of the flesh or to destroy the man who commits the sin. Critics also point out that the application of the Act "entails snooping, tale bearing and other disreputable methods of law enforcement. Policemen shine torches in stationary cars at night and enter private houses 'servants' quarters on suspicion"³. The policemen themselves face a lot of temptation. A solitary policeman on night duty may be tempted to seduce or coerce an attractive black or coloured woman who may be in one of the detention cells. Some policemen yield to the temptation, others lead strict sexual lives while others, fanatically believing in white purity and white identity would go to

any length to expose any of their colleagues who had violated the Act. The protagonist in Too Late The Phalarope offends against the Immorality Act and is exposed by one of his colleagues. Love, remorse and revenge are the main ingredients in this haunting and disturbing novel.

Though not quite so famous as Cry, The Beloved Country, Too Late The Phalarope was selected as Book of the month in the United States. It explores the effects of the Dutch laws concerning inter-racial relationship on one hand and the Dutch Reformed Church's doctrines and practices on the other. As an interpreter of the history of South Africa, Paton has brought into focus a dilemma that is too painful as it is its own creation. Human nature being the same everywhere, the iron law merely acts as a whip by which many are scourged and broken. The enormity of guilt and terror that torments an Afrikaner for having broken this iron law forms a larger part of this novel. The destruction of the van Vlaanderen family is told by Sophie who as the narrator and commentator is also an integral part of the novel. In the course of her narration, she has interjected portions of Pieter's confessions from the 'Secret book' which he had written while in prison. Those confessions which are revealing of the nature of the dilemma raging within the protagonist will be reproduced here at various points to support and strengthen our arguments.

Our first introduction to Pieter van Vlaanderen is through his Aunt Sophie. She, who has known and loved him all through his life claims that even as a child Pieter had always been two men. One part of him was strong-willed and manly while the other was tender and gentle as a girl. This is not to say that Pieter is a split personality. Far from it, in fact, he is endowed with all the qualities that makes one a man. Contrary to Sophie's thinking, it would have been a cause for worry if he had only been one or the other. The root of his destruction lies not in himself but with his parents, especially his father. He has written about them in his 'Secret book':

"... with a father and mother such as I had, one strict and stern, and the other tender and loving; for one I could never openly have disobeyed, and the other I could never knowingly have hurt. My father had a code about women, as strict and stern as himself, and once I had heard him say, in a company where I was by many years the youngest, that he had never touched a woman, other than his wife, nor had he ever desired to do so"⁴.

Pieter feels pride and respect for his father but wonders how he himself is so different from him. He grows up to be a brave soldier winning awards and medals for fighting in the war. Incidentally, his father, a staunch Afrikaner dismisses his medals as 'foreign trash'. He has no respect for the English. Pieter is also a great rugby player, idolised by thousands of boys and men. But there is also another side of him that is silent and grave,

brooding with a 'secret-knowledge' of himself. He projects a sombre and cold exterior to mask his fears and weaknesses. The reason for this duality is given by him in his 'Secret book':

"Then I thought I had perhaps been too obedient as a boy, too anxious to please and win approval, so that I learned to show outwardly what I was not within...

But perhaps when you were too obedient, and did not do openly what others did, and were quiet in the church and hard working in the school, then some unknown rebellion brewed in you, doing harm to you, though how I do not understand"⁵.

The harm that was done to him was that he became afflicted with the 'mad-sickness'. If he had been free as the other children were free, if he had taken part in light-hearted pranks and boyish escapades, it is possible that the black moods would never have bothered him. But discipline and restraint has brought in their wake a strange and sinister result. The 'mad-sickness' which disgusts and frightens Pieter and which eventually destroys him is the direct result of his upbringing. He offends against the Immorality Act not so much because of lust as the inevitable climax of his inner rebellion. It began when he was fourteen years old. His father took away his much loved stamp collection because he had not done his examination satisfactorily. Pieter did not protest what he obviously considered a great injustice. But he suffered and rebelled deep inside where no one could reach

or touch him. What Pieter so desperately needed but was so hopelessly denied was a father's affection and understanding. Jakob van Vlaanderen had taken pains to discipline his son but he had never tried to develop a relationship with him based on warmth and companionship. How starved Pieter is, for paternal affection, is revealed on two occasions. The first time is when Captain Massingham his superior touched him on his shoulder, shaking him softly and said, 'Pieter, its time you went home'. Pieter, who had been coping with the small pox disease that had broken out in Maduna's country was tired and weary. The worry and the stress (he has offended against the Immortality Act) added to his tireness and he pretends to be asleep. "Now, the Captain never called him by his name, nor did he ever touch a man. Therefore, when the captain called him by his name and touched him, as some fathers touch their grown sons and as some do not, and because he was weary unto death and full of misery, therefore, he was moved in some deep place within and something welled up within him that if not mastered, could have burst out of his throat and mouth, making him a girl or child. Therefore, he could not speak nor lift his head nor stand"⁶.

The second time is when the father and the son go to the pan to look for the Phalarope. Jakob almost at once spots the bird. "Then because the son could not see, the

father went and stood behind him, rested his arm on his son's shoulder, and pointed at the bird. But the son could see no bird, for he was again moved in some deep place within, and something welled up within him that if not mastered could have burst out of his throat and mouth, making him a girl or child. Therefore, he could neither see nor speak"⁷. Even a light touch and a casual gesture moved Pieter and tears blur his vision because they indicate a caring and an affection. He has learnt to bury his vulnerabilities and present only the brave and gentle front. But his early deprivations has left an emotional scar which cannot be erased even in later life. Therefore, when Jakob takes his son to the pan to look for the phalarope and later brings stamps worth thirty-two pounds for his birthday, it is already much too late to repair the damage.

As a young married man, Pieter transfers his hunger for love to his wife. For a time, in the early days of his love, he feels happy and whole. But again, it is his misfortune that his wife regards the love of the body as something sinful and ugly. She does not understand until it was too late that what her husband had wanted *and needed* from her was the reassurance of love expressed through the body. In her innocence and simplicity, she had mistaken this love for a physical desire which any self respecting person ought to shun. Her dilemma is pathetic. She knows

what her husband wants from her but she does not know what it is connected with the black moods. She religiously prays for the removal of the black moods and for her to be a better wife, never knowing that she herself withholds the answer to her prayers. Pieter's confessions in the 'secret book' about this misunderstanding is touchingly regretful :

"And I wanted to cry out to her that I could not put the body apart from the soul, and that the comfort of her body was more than a thing of the flesh, but was also a comfort of the soul, and why it was I could not say, and why it should be I could not say, but there was in it nothing that was ugly or evil but only good"⁸.

For Pieter, the love of the body, the mind and the soul are the same thing. When he and his wife love each other, a feeling of wholeness and strength permeates his being and drive away the anger and the black moods. Nella does not know how vital her love is for her husband. With her misguided idea that the love of the body is apart from the love of the soul, "and had a place where it stayed and had to be called from, and when it was called and done then it went back to its place, and stayed till it was called again, according to some rule and custom", she denies Pieter what otherwise would have been his salvation. She is neither a prude nor a tease. Her love for Pieter is real, but sadly, she lacks what in today's society would be known as sex-education. Perhaps this ignorance is accounted for by her fiercely protective father.

Pieter is filled with the mad-sickness that shocks and torments him. All that is refined in him recoils with horror and loathing at himself. He is filled with longing to tell someone, to confide and purge his misery. He envies his brother Frans, the young dominee Vos and the constable Vorster for their open faces that hides no secret and no darkness. But ironically, these same men hold him in such high esteem, he cannot come down from the pedestal where they place him. But ultimately Pieter falls down like a great golden statue with feet of clay. A young coloured girl, with a child whose father was unknown, well-known to the police for her illicit brewing of liquor induces Pieter to break the iron law. In her more experienced way, she recognises the 'mad-sickness' in Pieter and offers herself. She gives him a knowing look, a little smile then informs him the time and place she could be found after her work. Sophie, who intercepted Stephanie's look spends a sleepless night praying for her nephew, hoping that the look does not mean what she thinks it means. She is later to feel remorse for not having warned Pieter then and bring the matter out in the open. Stephanie may have trapped Pieter simply because she sensed his hunger without thinking of the danger the breaking of the law involved for him. Sergeant Steyn, whom Pieter has humbled in a fit of anger is poised to strike Pieter when he can. Although it is not explicitly mentioned, Steyn has threatened to take Stephanie's child away from her if she

does not fall with his plan. Just as her misconducts are well-known to the police, so is Stephanie's attachment to her child well-known. In fact, Sophie exclaims that the girl is like a tigress where her child is concerned. If Sergeant Steyn threatens to take her child away, Stephanie will do anything he says. She forces Pieter to repeat his offence so he could be charged and exposed. It is unfortunate that there should be the Sergeants of this world, who have nothing to gain by their despicable actions besides compromising their own integrities.

Before actually breaking the law, Pieter is well aware of the danger he is exposed to. He prays continually 'O God, wees my genadig, Here Jesus wees my genadig' which is 'O God, have mercy upon me, Lord Jesus have mercy upon me'. His Christian upbringing to a certain extent checks and influences his thoughts. The dominee's sermons about repentance, mercy and the liberating power of God's love moves him deeply. But when the dominee emphasizes the importance of obedience, Pieter does not agree as he has deduced that his obedience was the cause of his black moods. Unaware of the dilemma and Pieter's subsequent capitulation to temptation, dominee Vos asks him to be a diaken in the church. There is a kind of tragic irony in their conversation :

"...You're looked up to by the whole community.
You've been given great gifts by the Lord.
Shouldn't these gifts be given back to Him

also?, Mightn't some young fellow say, there's Pieter van Vlaanderen, and what he does I'll do too?

So Pieter van Vlaanderen put on all his armour, and he looked straight at the young dominee and said, I'm not good enough.

-Ah, its right to say that. But often when a man says, I'm not good enough to do it, but I'll do it, then he finds he has strength to be better"⁹.

Pieter says he will think it over and he writes his thoughts in the 'secret book':

"When he had gone, and Nella had gone to bed, I went to my study and thought over the matter of becoming a diaken. I did not know if it would help me or otherwise, for if I could break one sacred vow, why should I be able to keep another? And if I broke one law, why would two be better? Then I thought perhaps it would give me a higher duty and the very highness of the duty would be a help to me; yet why should a man be able to do a higher duty when he cannot do a low?

I vowed anew that never again would I commit the unspeakable offence, and I decided that I would take no second vow until I could keep the first"¹⁰.

But Pieter does commit the offence again. As before, a feeling of uncleanness and self loathing fills him. But the prayers and the vows, although they come from the depth of his being are not really the prayers of a man who has sinned and cried out to God in repentance. As a Christian, Pieter has broken the commandment not to commit adultery. But this has not really registered in his mind. He is only aware of having broken the iron law and his prayers and supplications are prompted by the fear of being found out.

With imagination suddenly grown wild, Pieter thinks that may be God would work wonders such as the unseen watcher and Stephanie might die, there might be a war or a natural calamity so awful that everything else would be forgotten or forgiven. But when Pieter repeats his offence, he does not pray as before. It is as if the various biblical passages concerning temptation and forgiveness of sins have some meaning which is beyond his understanding. A gentleness and humility and a sort of peace comes over him till the charge is brought out against him when again fear and terror assails him. Fear of the law is apparently greater than the fear of God for Afrikaners because an offender is promptly punished as soon as the offence is discovered. Whereas God forgives, Afrikaners punish without giving one a chance to repent. Once the charge is made and the guilt proved, Pieter passes through yet another phase. He is no longer afraid of the punishment nor is he assailed by the black moods. He is in a way purged and cleansed of all unholy desires. He had been at the point of taking his own life when his friend Kapie finds him in Slabbert's Field. Pieter talks to him and tells him about how he feels cleansed, and Sophie knows that he is truly destroyed. But the exposure of his folly, at the same time it destroys him and his family has cleansed him. His is a broken and contrite heart - a sacrifice God does not despise. But why should he and his family be struck down in order to cleanse him is a secret.

The image of a terrified young man afraid of being discovered and exposed is replaced by a new one as at the end, Pieter gains in dignity and stature. The sorrowing man, repentant of his sins attains the stature of a tragic hero.

Besides the personal dilemma of Pieter van Vlaanderen, the rigidity of the Church, especially the Dutch Reformed Church, whose belief and practice is contrary to the teachings of Christ finds exposure in the novel. Its laws and principles are as rigid as the Mosaic laws in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, especially in Leviticus and Deuteronomy the Lord has decreed through Moses that adulterers should be stoned to death. In South Africa, the rigidity of the Immorality Act is almost parallel to these ancient laws except that it was made out of the sense of superiority and pride. As an eminent and faithful member of the Church, Jakob van Vlaanderen does not hesitate to disown his son who has offended against this Act. He orders his sister Sophie to remove every trace of 'the man' so that for all he cares, Pieter might never have existed. He had once answered a drunken fool who cried "whats the point of living, whats the point of life?" with 'The point of living is to serve the Lord your God and to uphold the honour of your Church and language and people'. By his offence, his son has dishonoured the Lord, the church and the Afrikaners and so in Jakob's opinion, he is not fit to

live anymore. He reads the terrible words from the Hundreth and ninth Psalm, which Sophie feels, should not be in any Holy book:

"When he shall be judged, let him be condemned; and let his prayer become a sin. Let his days be few; and let another take his office. Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow... Let there be none to extend mercy unto him; neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children..."

It has never occurred to Jakob that there is such a thing as the wonder of the mercy of God. For a person who reads only the Bible and that too regularly, Jakob is strangely ignorant of the forgiveness of sin through grace. With true Afrikaner pride, his daughter Martha returns her engagement ring to dominee Vos. The dominee who had preached powerful sermons about backsliders and forgiveness is bewildered and hurt, thinking for a time only about his love. The old dominee does not know how to counsel him because the Church is more important than personal feelings, and it must at all cost remain beyond reproach and not be a stumbling block for its members. In recent years, serious doubts have arisen within the ministries of the Dutch Reformed Church about the moral basis of Apartheid. Since no man is infallible and even the most upright of man is liable to fall or stumble, it is necessary for the church to reconsider its stand. Captain Massingham rightly says that if man takes unto himself God's right to punish, then he must also take upon himself

God's promise to restore; while an offender must be punished, it is the greatest offence to punish and not restore. This is the offence of South Africa. She punishes but does not restore those who offend against the Immorality Act. Her argument being an offence had been committed against the race. Captain Massingham's reply to Nella's father is worthy of note: "Meneer, as a policeman, I know an offence against the law, and as a Christian, I know an offence against God; but I do not know an offence against the race". The Captain is an Englishman and it may be noted that the English speaking white South Africans are more liberal than the Afrikaners. It is he who promises to stand by Pieter and not Jakob. Jakob van Vlaanderen is a true Afrikaner. He is contemptuous of Englishmen as a whole, with the exception of one or two. He is a member of the Dutch Reformed Church and he regards the Apostolic Churches as traitors. With Pieter's offence, Jakob van Vlaanderen is destroyed along with the rest of his family. He dies searching the book of Job for the answers of his silent questions. He had, even on earlier occasions read from the book of Job, but ironically, he fails to do for his children, what Job does for his own. "Job... rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually"¹¹.

What Jakob fails to do for his son, Mrs. van Vlaanderen does for him. She had prayed for Pieter ceaselessly that whatever was troubling him would be removed. She is all love and gentleness, cast in the mould of obedience, subject to the will and authority of her husband. This obedience to her husband prevents her from going to her son who asks for her in his hour of pain. Nevertheless she sends her love and support through Sophie by saying, "... God is both lover and judge of man and it is His commandment that we join Him in loving, but to judge we are forbidden. You will say both to my son and my daughter that my love is multiplied, and although I am shut off from them by the door of a house, all the doors of my heart are open; I will remember them by day and by night, till I am permitted to go to my rest. But this love I may not show, you will show for me.

And you will say to my son that though he may suffer under the law, there is no law that can cut him off from our love, nor from the love of his friends"¹².

Mrs. van Vlaanderen does not condemn her son like her husband. Who knows that deep inside her, unknown to her husband and sister-in-law, her heart is not broken in two. There is a degree of similarity between Mrs. van Vlaanderen and Mary, the mother of Jesus. Both pondered in their hearts about their sons and it was prophesied to Mary that a sword would pierce his mother's soul like a sword. But

in the way Mrs. van Vlaanderen meekly submits to the will of her husband, delegating her sister-in-law to be surrogate mother, she is more in line with Clara Copperfield, who leaves it to Peggoty to visit young David Copperfield when his step father imprisoned him in the attic. Sophie experiences no dilemma between going to her nephew and staying in her brother's house. It does not matter to her that by going to her nephew, she must sever all ties with her brother with whom she had lived for thirty years. A young man broken and bruised of heart is more important than herself. She is full of love for her nephew and also full of sorrow and regret that she had not warned him of his danger. She is no less greater than Mrs. van Vlaanderen as an embodiment of Christian love. These two women and Captain Massingham are the only real subscribers to true Christianity. They have neither the Afrikaner's pride nor the Dutch Reformed Church's rigidity. Instead of feeling self-righteous they are sympathetic and forgiving, because they are aware of their own shortcomings and past mistakes.

Just as there is the restoration of Ndotsheni in Cry, The Beloved Country, so also there is action for restoration in Too Late The Phalarope. Mrs. van Vlaanderen, Sophie, and Japie Grobler are involved in a social work to uplift native, women and children. This is again a part of the South African dilemma. While

Afrikaners strive to maintain and preserve white purity and identity, to the point of enforcing a law such as the Immorality Act, they cannot ignore the natives. Mrs. van Vlaanderen is President of the Women's Welfare Committee and it is at her insistence that Japie Grobler is called to Venterspan to function as Social Welfare Officer. Their struggles for the upliftment of the natives proves to be the cause of their destruction, but they are not bitter towards the natives. Love, which had prompted them in the first place sustains them and helps them to forgive the wrongdoers. Unlike them, James Jarvis in Cry, The Beloved Country takes up social work not for love of the natives, but because his son had the conviction that service to South Africa is the only way to end the conflict in one's deepest soul. By reading through his son's papers, Jarvis realises that white South Africa needs to do something for the development of the natives which will in turn bring her peace of mind. By involving themselves in social work, Jarvis, Mrs. van Vlaanderen and Sophie are able to bear the hurts and the wrongs done to them by natives without anger and thoughts of revenge. They are blessed with a kind of peace even though they grieve for the country that gives them birth. Captain Massingham has rightly observed to Sophie that "When a deep injury is done to us, we never recover until we forgive". This holds true not only for the few characters involved in the novel but for South Africa as a whole. There is little hope for South Africa

unless her children - blacks, whites and coloureds learn to forgive one another. Since forgiveness comes only through love as we see in the case of Nella, Sophie and Mrs. van Vlaanderen, Paton has, as in his previous novel advocated love as the only solution for the South African dilemma. If this love does not come soon, it will be too late for South Africa as it is for Pieter van Vlaanderen.

END NOTES

1. Explained in the Introduction.
2. Paton, Alan : Journey Continued, pp.47-48.
3. Marquard, Leo : The Peoples and Policies of South Africa, p.70.
4. Paton, Alan : Too Late The Phalarope, p.84.
5. Ibid., p.85.
6. Ibid, pp.209-210.
7. Ibid., p.213.
8. Ibid., p.88.
9. Ibid., p.204.
10. Ibid., p.205.
11. Holy Bible : Job 1:5.
12. Paton, Alan : Too Late The Phalarope, p.255, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953.

Chapter-III

GIVE US BACK A DWELLING PLACE

Twenty-eight years after the publication of Too Late The Phalarope, Paton's third novel, Ah, But Your Land is Beautiful appeared in 1981. It was originally planned to be the first of a trilogy, but ill health and old age prevented him from attempting any other novel. It is a historical political novel set in the South Africa of the years between 1952 and 1958. It follows step by step, the growth of the Nationalist Party which came to power in 1948, up to the assumption of the office of the Prime Minister by Dr. Hendrik in 1958. At the same time, it also gives a faithful account of the opposition of the Nationalist Party by the Liberal Party, the South African Indian Congress and the African National Congress. In the

Author's note, Paton explains that the novel contains both real and fictitious characters as well as real and invented events. However, the novel appears to be a political record, with the story element added merely to hold the unity of the book. Even so, it reads at times, as a mere conglomeration of facts and disjointed events. The title of the book is revealing. It serves as a clue to the reader that the content is not a panegyric on South Africa. A phrase used by visitors such as the Scandinavians, Germans and Americans, 'Ah, but your land is beautiful' is a recurring motif in the novel. It focuses the attention not on the beauty of the land but on the unique and cruel laws of the land. The book is divided into six parts, beginning with the Defiance Campaign of 1952 and ending with the vision of a 'golden age' where ironically, the blacks will have no part except as 'certain forms of labour'. The narrative technique on Ah, But Your Land is Beautiful is different from Cry, The Beloved Country and Too Late The Phalarope. Paton presents multiple viewpoints in the form of letters written by some of the characters. The letters reports actions and also throw light on the attitude of the Afrikaners towards apartheid and the theory of separate development. They are given almost alternately with the main story narrated by the author. Taken as a whole, the novel is a powerful exposition of the dilemma that is riddling South Africa in every aspect of life. The dilemma in Ah, But Your Land is Beautiful, is not so much

personal as national, especially for white south Africa.

The novel opens with the Defiance Campaign of 1952 and we are given an account of how segregation laws are defied by Indians, Africans and even by Afrikaners. The Defiance Campaign or the Passive Resistance Campaign was organised by the African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress. The participation of a young Indian girl by the name of Prem Bodasingh in the Campaign causes trouble in Pietermaritzburg. Dr. William Johnson, Director of Education for the Province of Natal does not want to take action against her, while the Chairman of the Natal Executive Mr. Harry Mainwaring says he must. Dr. Johnson visits Prem in the prison and as he knows that Prem wants to be a social worker, he tells her to ask herself which is better, to serve one's country and one's people for thirty years as a social worker or to go in and out of prison for thirty years. Dr. Johnson knows and he also tells Prem that the situation of their world cannot be changed and bettered overnight. This is also what Patrick Duncan learnt when he joins the Campaign. Duncan had a veneration for the Mahatma and believed in the power of truth or Satyagraha, the soul force. The news of Prem Bodasingh and the refusal of Albert Lutuli to obey Dr. Hendrik to either resign his Chieftainship or his presidency of the Natal Branch of the African Congress affects him deeply. Dr. Hendrik deposes Lutuli from his Chieftainship and Lutuli

issues a statement of intention:

"Who will deny that thirty years of my life have been spent knocking in vain, patiently, moderately and modestly at a closed and barred door... I have embraced the non-violent passive resistance technique in fighting for freedom because I am convinced it is the only non-revolutionary, legitimate and humane way that could be used by people denied, as we are, effective constitutional means to further aspirations... I only pray to the Almighty to strengthen my resolve... for the sake of the good name of our beloved country, the Union of South Africa, to make it a true democracy and a true union in form and spirit of all the communities of the land"¹.

Lutuli's statement has a tremendous effect on Duncan. He resigns his work as Judicial Commissioner in the British Colonial Service in Basutoland to join in the Campaign. He feels it is his duty to persuade South Africa to usher in change without violence. But there is already rioting and killing of even innocent people. The Blacks are driven to destroy everything that is white by the laws of apartheid, poverty and frustration. Duncan is joined by Hugh Mainwaring and Manilal Gandhi and they enter Germiston location where Duncan urges the people to do what they have to do with love, and gives the freedom cry "Mayibuye! Afrika!" and "Julle vryheid kom! Julle vryheid kom deur Kongres. Your freedom is coming through the Congress". But Paton asks this question: "Can White hopes and Black hopes be realised together, in this southern land to which both White and Black have given their devotion? who knows the answer to that question?"² The Defiance Campaign is

called off because the Criminal Law Amendment Act is passed by Parliament, which makes it an offence to break any law, however trivial, if it is broken 'by way of protest. Through van Onselen, we come to know that the Cabinet is angry at the co-operation of the African National Congress and the Indian Congress; and that Parliament has taken the drastic step of ending the campaign because 'it is a well known scientific fact that racial mixing leads inevitably to racial conflict'.

The Bantu Education Act of 1953 seeks to transfer the control of African Education from the Provincial Education Department to the Department of Native Affairs. The declared aim of this legislation was, according to Lutuli, 'to produce Africans who would aspire to nothing in white South Africa higher than 'certain forms of labour' which Dr. Verwoerd fixed as the top limit of African aspiration'³. In part two of Ah, But Your Land is Beautiful, Paton introduces two headmasters, one Black and the other White. Wilberforce Nhlapo is headmaster of the J.H. Hofmeyr High School. He is condemned by the Black teachers and some students because he has not resigned in protest against the Bantu Education Act. The strain of having to put up their silent disapproval is slowly demoralizing him. His daughter and son, for whose sake he holds his job does not know what to feel. Half of them wanted their father to resign while half of them wanted

their education. Even the University where they study was torn between those who wanted to boycott all education and those who wanted to continue their studies. Nhlapo's position becomes awkward when the security police started questioning him. But Nhlapo does not openly defy the government by joining the Liberal Party as his friend Mansfield does. Only after Mansfield's emigration does Nhlapo join the Natal African Land Owners Association (NALA), a black organisation to resist expropriation, thereby finally taking his stand among his people.

His friend Robert Mansfield, who is also Headmaster finds himself in a more unfortunate position. He and Nhlapo arranges inter-school sports so that White and Black children would grow up to be aware of each other. White parents disapproves this racial mixing and campaign that Mansfield is a hundred years before his time. It has aroused the disgust and anger of many White people. But it does not stop here. Dr. William Johnson, Director of Education for the Province of Natal, who had stood up for Prem Bodasingh issued a circular to all headmasters and headmistresses under his authority stating that it was not the Department's policy to encourage socially mixed functions in the schools. Mansfield resigns from his post as headmaster to fight for the things he believed in from a national platform. He joins the newly founded Liberal Party. But Mansfield is haunted by the series of anonymous

letters signed by the 'Proud White Christian Woman', taunting and mocking him. The letters reveal that the writer is a sick and imbalanced person with an obsession for White purity. The reason Paton brings her into the novel may be to satirise Afrikaner women who often think like her. A woman no less than Mrs. Betsy Verwoerd was filled with abhorrence and horror at the sight of black skin⁴. Moreover, a one man 'Preservation of White South Africa League' sends threatening letters. On one occasion, Prem Bodasingh is shot in the face in the Mansfield home. Matters come to a head when the League blows off a good part of the Mansfield home along with his own head. These are real proofs that there are Afrikaners who would go to any length to preserve their separateness, and would never approve of any effort towards racial mixture. Mansfield, whose first priority and loyalty has always been the party, is now forced to think of his family first. Instead of switching party allegiance, he decides to emigrate to Australia. His decision still more adds to his unpopularity because Afrikaners view emigration to be cowardly. "It shows a lack of faith in Afrikanerdom, of its ability to face adversity as it did in the Anglo-Boer war of 1899-1902. To emigrate is to lose the identity that God and History have given to the Afrikaner"⁵. There is only a small group of White and Black Liberalists to see the Mansfields off.

The Liberal Party, founded in 1953 attracted to its ranks a number of south Africans of all races who threw themselves heart and soul to propagate liberalism. Paton says in his novel that the Libral Party which he in fact hlep[er]ed to found "has had a contemptuous reception from the ruling Nationalist Party. Indeed some Nationalists are implacably hostile and want it to be made a criminal offence to oppose the policies of separate co-existence. They regard the establishment of a non-racial party as a flagrant defiance of the powers - that be. Most other White South Africans, are hostile also, because, while they reject certain forms of racial discrimination they really cannot approve of co-operating with other races to fight it"⁶. His own reason for founding the Liberal Party is that he "felt compelled to oppose any law that decreed racial separation, especially a law that public amenities had to be separate but did not have to be equal, and to oppose the cruelties of the group Areas Act and the taking away of houses and land from people who had acquired them honestly and legally"⁷. As if to emphasize his point, Paton includes the story of Lodwyk Prinsloo in Ah, But Your Land is Beautiful. Apparently seeming to have no connection with the rest of the novel, the story serves to illustrate the cruelties of the group Areas Act. Prinsloo is a clerk in-charge in the employ of the South African Railways and Harbours. With a wife and three children, he has risen from humble beginnings and now owns a comfortable

and respectable house in Claremont, Cape. Although he had always passed for White, his birth certificate classified him as Coloured. The sword of damocles that always had been hanging overhead falls down one day and destroys his world. Two men from the government come to him and inform him that as a Coloured man he can no longer hold his post of clerk-in-charge in the Railways and Harbours Administration. He is also informed that under the Group Areas Act, he can no longer live in Claremont. His wife is outraged that she had been deceived and she leaves him, taking the children with her, not realising that they too are Coloured. The Prinsloo affair justifies Paton's observation that "it is one of the meanest traits of White South Africa that they are able to feel such a contempt for the people they themselves have fathered"⁸.

The Liberal Party has recruited Manilal Gandhi, the son of Mahatma besides Margaret and William Ballinger, Donald Molteno, Leo Marquard, founder of the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) and John Parker. Parker is a leading sports master in the Transvaal who had resigned when the Transvaal Education Department banned all sporting relationship between White students and the others. He proposes that the Party should work for the exclusion of all South African teams from International sports. This extreme view causes a rift in the party between the militant and the more conservative members.

van Onselen opines that it is the work of Parker, when years later, the International Table Tennis Federation refuses to recognise the South African team belonging to the South African Table Tennis Union which is White. The ITTF announces that it recognises only the South African Table Tennis Board which has no colour bar. The SATT Union cannot play any overseas matches unless the Board gives permission and it will not give until colour bar is removed. The Union on its part is adamant against admitting Black players or even spectators. It reinforces its stand by the Native Laws Amendment Act (1957) which empowers the Minister, "after consulting local authorities to forbid a Dantu to attend any function in a white area". The President of the SATT Board says that any white player is welcome to join any of the clubs controlled by the Board.

The Black Soccer team also stirs up trouble. It wants FIFA the Federation of International Football Association to recognise the Black federation and not the White association. It refuses to affiliate itself to the White association which offers it affiliation without voting powers. The Government announces that it will not issue passports to anyone who would go abroad to lobby for the exclusion of South Africa from world sports. The South African Olympic Council has decided that no competition, between the White and Black would be allowed in any sports

affiliated to it. According to van Onselen, it is Parker's supreme aim in life to have White South Africa excluded from all international games. His fears regarding the exclusion of South Africa from international sports such as tennis, cricket, rugby and golf have come true. He cites extreme politicians who say that rather than give up their way of life, they should go back to the ox-wagon and extreme theologians who say that if apartheid is God's will for them, why should they resist it?

There has been demands from the National Party that the Liberal Party should be banned under the Suppression of Communism Act. The Minister of Justice and Dr. Hendrik are not only contemptuous at it but also angered that while there is restructuring with the 'golden age' in view, there should be people trying to obstruct it. Nevertheless, the party has attracted the three Berg Brothers whose father had been a Malan supporter and who were brought up by the Minister of Justice after their father's death. "Their action must be regarded as courageous. It is not an easy thing to proclaim yourself a liberal in Pretoria, the seat of government, the home of Cabinet Ministers and the Civil Service, the stronghold of the Army and the Air Force...⁹. They are regarded as 'renegades' 'scum of the Afrikaner nation', but they remain faithful to their new party. The party also attracts Prof. Eddie, a Boer and former member of the Communist Party. The Liberal Party, in his

own words, is "made up of cranks, utopians, and impractical idealists; desperate Black people who think their threatened rights can be saved by White liberals just because they are white; scheming Black people who for some extra-ordinary reason joint White people to fight for things they both believe in"¹⁰. The reason why he, an aging Professor of Biology should join the Party remains a puzzle even to himself. The most likely reason he can think of is the 'lump in his throat': that is the sentiments roused in him by the selfless dedication of some Afrikaners especially women to the cause of the natives. Their activities during the campaign against the destruction of Sophiatown and then again during the bus boycott of 1957 when they gave lifts to the Black pedestrians especially the old and the sick have persuaded him to leave the Communist Party and join the Liberal Party. The most active person whose self-less service to the Bantu people finally won Prof. Eddie is Laura de Koch. A slip of a girl, shy and terrified of the police, she goes to the police station to inquire about 'Bantu female Elizabeth Mofokeng' who is unjustly detained. Laura secured Elizabeth's release with the help of a white woman lawyer called Ruth. Prof. Eddie comments that this particular task of enquiring about a Bantu is a difficult thing for most White South Afrikaners as it gives them a feeling of disloyalty and a feeling of interference with the police. Laura is again active, during the bus boycott.

With her husband joining her whenever he can, she is busy giving lifts to Black men and women to and from Johannesburg. Laura and her kind render this kind of service to the natives because they have 'Ubuntu', a Bantu word which means "it is..well... they see a woman, and she is breathing badly, but they do not see a black woman, they see a woman breathing badly so they take her to Johannesburg that is ubuntu"¹¹. Presumably, in the South African context, 'ubuntu' has a deeper and more profound meaning than 'humanitarianism' or 'Philantropism'. The black spots became offensive after the Nationalists came to power with their policy of separation of the races. Black townships like Ethembeni, Sophiatown and District Six were destroyed. Sophiatown was razed to the ground on 10th February 1955 in spite of campaigns and protests. The inhabitants were forcibly removed to Meadowlands. The background of the story was given to the world the following year by the Anglican Missionary Father Trevor Huddleston in Naught for Your Comfort. Huddleston loved Sophiatown and the Black children. His activities earned him the displeasure of the Minister of Justice. The construction of Meadowlands is regarded as a step forward in the Great Plan despite the fact that many old Black hearts are broken in the process.

The Congress of the People consisting of the African National Congress, the South African Indian Congress, the

South African Coloured People's Organisation, the non-racial South African Congress of Trade Unions and other like-minded parties met at Kliptown on June 25th 1955 to draw up the Freedom Charter. It demanded a non-racial and socialist democracy based on universal suffrage. The result was that there was nation-wide round-up where 156 persons including Lutuli, Professor Z.K. Matthews, Dr. Naicker and Mrs. Helen Joseph among others were arrested on charge of High treason. It was here that the Liberal Party came up with the Treason Trial Defence Fund¹². Paton gives a detailed account of their arrest and the Treason Trial Defence Fund in parts three and four of the novel. The Fund was headed by the most Reverend Archbishop Clayton in Cape Town, Bishop Reeves and J.B. Webb. The fund also received considerable support from Canon John Collins of St. Paul's Cathedral in London and his Defence and Aid Fund. van Onselen, who from his vantage position in the Department of Justice knows everything that is going on says that his Minister considers the setting up of the Fund as a reasonable act in itself and would have banned it if he had permission from the Prime Minister. Lutulu's appreciation of the Fund is remarkable as he noted in his autobiography that "the difference which the Fund made in our lives is beyond calculation... It cannot be denied that the character of the people who sponsored the Fund gave the world some inkling that the true nature of the trial and also brought in observers from overseas... I shudder to

think what might have been the fates of parents and families but for this help and of all of us if we had been obliged to do without a brilliant team of lawyers who fought every inch of the ground¹³. The trial ended with the acquittal of the accused in March 1961¹⁴. In spite of the support given to the Congress of the people with its new freedom charter by the Indian and Africans, it is interesting to note Mrs. Bodasingh's retort to her husband. He had been saying that he believes in the struggle and he supports it. She says, "You dont believe in the struggle, you support it, but you dont believe in it. You dont want to be liberated, nor does Jay want to be liberated. Why can't you be honest? You'd much rather be governed by Dr. Malan than by Chief Lutuli and Dr. Monty¹⁵. If her shrewd observation applies to other Indians and Coloured citizens, then it is doubtful that the struggle would be fruitful.

Professor Eddie remarks that the riddles of White South African nature is the most difficult of all. The Black Sash declared that it was White woman's fight "to rouse public opinion over the government's proposal to enlarge the senate and, thus, to secure the necessary two-third majority for taking Coloured votes off the common role". The Torch Commando its predecessor had fought for Coloured rights but would not admit Coloured members. The Appellate Court twice struck down the Act that tried to put Coloured votes in a separate roll and van Onselen says that

his minister suspects Judge Olivier to have influenced the Court to strike down the two Acts. Part five of the novel deals with the story of how Judge Olivier jeopardises his chance of becoming Chief Justice. One of the most learned sons of South Africa, commonly regarded as 'God's gift to the nation' is Dr. Jan Woltemade Fischer B.A., B.Ed., LL.B., Ph.D honorary LL.D. He is a Broederbonder, which van Onselen says is the 'brain of the National Party and Afrikanerdom'. He is a fine orator and one of the greatest and most distinguished lay sons of the church. He is held in high esteem especially for his unshakable principles on all matters of sex and race. Yet ironically Dr. Fischer offends against the Immorality Act 1927 amended in 1950. Dr. Fischer in the words of his mother "was two men, and one was clever and good, and considerate of his mother. But the other was a doomed man. He never looked at a White woman". There are no death penalty under the Act of 1927 nor the amended Act of 1950. But Dr. Fischer is sentenced to death for the crime of treason. He had spoken that to offend against the Immorality Act is not to commit a sin of the flesh but treason against the nation. Dr. Fischer shoots himself in the head. Dr. Fischer, as his father before him had believed that only separateness would bring peace for South Africa. This belief however never brought them happiness nor does it bring happiness to his mother who believes otherwise. The dominee Vos from the Dutch Reformed Church refuses to hold his funeral service and the

Reverend Andrew Mc Allister from the Presbyterian Church is called instead. The Department of Justice, the University, the church and the Orighstad Town Council that had so respected and honoured him hastens to remove every trace of his existence. Indeed, the Minister assigns van Onselen to deal with all matters concerning Dr. Fischer without any reference to him. The death proves to be a blessing in disguise for van Onselen. Mrs. Fischer and he takes a liking for each other and soon she takes the place of his dead mother. The case of Dr. Fischer is not unlike that of Pieter van Vlaanderen in Too Late The Phalarope. Pieter, who offends against the Immorality Act 1927, amended in 1950 is being described by his aunt as 'two men'. Both men are Afrikaner and men of high renown. Their subsequent punishment after their offence is revealing of the fact that no person, however great, however respected he may be, can be condoned if he offends against the notion of the purity of the White nation.

In course of the novel, van Onselen time and again expresses his confidence and hopes in Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd. He is the Minister of Native Affairs and usually regarded as the corner-stone of apartheid. He submitted a Native Laws Amendment Bill in Parliament and one of the clauses, 29(c) provides that no church in a white area will be able to admit Africans to worship without the permission of the Minister of Native Affairs, given with the concurrence of

the local authority¹⁶. This would apply not only to worship but any meeting held in the premises of the church, schools, hospitals and clubs in white areas under the Group Areas Act. Archbishop Clayton decided that the Anglican Church should inform the Prime Minister that it would not be able to obey Clause 29(c) of the Native Laws Amendment Bill if the Bill was made into law. He summoned the Committee composed of the bishops of Grahamstown, Johannesburg, Pretoria and Natal, to decide on the crucial matter. The Archbishop took this step with heavy heart. In all his seventy-three years, it had never occurred to him that he would one day defy the state. Though he had often preached on the text 'We ought to obey God rather than men' he had nevertheless cast unfavourable eyes on people like Father Huddleston and the Reverend Scott who thought that was what they were doing. Now he was about to do as they had. He confides to a dear friend of his that he has written a letter which will not be liked by the Government and he may be sent to prison for it. He cries, 'I don't want to go to prison. I am much too old. But if I have to go, I'll go'¹⁷. The letter that is sent to the Prime Minister contained these sentences :

"We recognise the great gravity of disobedience to the law of the land. We believe that obedience to secular authority, even in matters about which we differ in opinion, is a command laid upon us by God. But we are commanded to render unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's and to God that things which are God's. There are therefore some matters which are God's not

Caesar's, and we believe that the matters dealt with in Clause 29(c) are among them. It is because we believe this that we feel bound to state that if the Bill were to become law in its present form, we should ourselves be unable to obey it or to counsel our clergy to do so"¹⁸.

A few hours after signing this letter the Archbishop whether by divine providence or weighed down by his worries died. Neither the Government nor the Governor-General was represented in the funeral. All English-speaking Churches took their cue from the Archbishop and the Afrikan Churches, though not associating with the protests, sent a deputation to the government. The Bill became Law on 24th April 1957 and on 14th July, letters were read out in all Anglican churches in South Africa urging them not to comply with the Law. The White NGK congregation at Pinelands invited an African minister to its pulpit. Die Kerkbode, the national periodical of the NGK clarified that this was not a demonstration against Clause 29(c):

"It is an exception that will occur very seldom in our church but which however is also again completely natural in the light of the spiritual bonds that exist between us and Bantu christians. Our church policy is not undermined by this, nor renounced not even changed, but rather refined to stand out in its spiritual light and clarity"¹⁹.

The Afrikaners are divided in their opinions regarding Black worship. Some of them lend their garage to the Blacks for holding worship services on Sunday afternoons. Some members of the Kerk are deeply distressed that the

Blacks have no place of worship, and that their singing and preaching are deemed public-nuisance by others. Others feel that if the doctrine of racial purity and separate co-existence is infringed in this respect, then the process of erosion has began and soon all the God given identities would be lost. Some of them have moved that White Churches should be made available for Black worship. Opposition to this movement comes from those who say that the noise would be terrible as the congregation would naturally multiply. A woman asks 'What is happening to us Afrikaners when the sound of the praise of our God has become an offence to us?'

The theory of separate co-existence is carried too far when dominees refuse to hold funeral services because Black and Coloured mourners are present. Paton gives two such instances in the novel. The first is when Dominco Krog refuses to hold the funeral of Cornelius Bezuidenhout till the Coloured mourners leave. The sons of the deceased remonstrated with him, but he claimed that he is acting according to the Synodal ruling. The funeral was postponed to be held in the Methodist Church. Mrs. Bezuidenhout exclaims that she is shocked that such a thing could happen in a Christian Church.

The other incident occurs at Bloemfontein. Dominee van Rooyen announces that the funeral service of Karel Bosman will not be held because Black and Coloured mourners

are present. Their presence was against the practice of the NGK and against the Native Laws Amendment Act 1957. Dr. Michael Bosman, one of Bloemfontein's leading surgeon says, "The people of Bochabella wanted to pay their respects to my father, and it is a scandal that there can be a law to prevent them. My father was a life-long supporter of the National Party, but he was very critical of the harshness of many of the laws, especially those which control black movement and black housing in a place like Bochabella"²⁰. His mother also cries "I did not believe that such a thing could happen in a Christian country. It makes me wonder what is happening to us Afrikaner people"²⁰. In both these cases, White opinion is divided between those who regard the dominees' actions as a Christian scandal and those who justify it. A third faction simply feel that Blacks have no right to sit in White churches any time for any reason as they are black.

This is very painful to the Black people. Their feeling is eloquently expressed by Reverend Zaccheus Richard Mahabane. One of the leading ministers of the Methodist Church in South Africa, seventy-seven years old, white-haired and venerable, he had hoped that Christian ethics would influence the shaping of racial policy. He tells reporters in an interview: "The people who do this kind of thing, the people who make this kind of law, they do not understand what they are doing to us. This man

Karel Bosman was beloved by the people of Bochabella. Now he dies, and they weep for his family, and they want to go to this church to show their sorrow... And then they are told they are not wanted there. Their love is not wanted because there is a law that says Black people cannot show their love in a White church... The old ones are grieved, but the young ones say, we told you so; you want to love White people, but white people don't want your love. These young people are angry with their elders. They say, 'If white people don't want Black love, then they can have Black hate'²². We are reminded of Msimangu in Cry, The Beloved Country who said, "I have one great fear in my heart, that one day when they are turned to loving, they will find we are already turned to hating"²³.

To ease the hurt of the Black people over the Bloemfontein affair, the Reverend Isaiah Buti, Pastor of the Holy Church of Zion invites the acting Chief Justice J.C. Olivier to take part in the washing of the feet service. It would be an act of reconciliation and there would be no publicity. The judge washes the feet of Mattha Fortuin, who is his servant at home. Her years of devotion to his family moves him to kiss her feet. Unfortunately the service is witnessed by a White reporter who then flashes the story across the nation. The national reaction is divided. Half the people are disgusted while the other half hopes that the judge's action would wipe out past

scandals and rape of the black spots and perhaps lengthen White supremacy. Dr. Hendrik and the Minister of Justice takes the judge's action as direct challenge to themselves. But the judge is not sorry or ashamed. His daughter too is proud of him and she tells him that her mother would have been glad too. She regards her father's action as something Afrikaners needed to soften their hard hearts. Prem Bodasingh is glad because she understands how hard it is for a White person to do what the judge had done. van Ooselen's aunt and Olivier's friend Trina de Lange weeps with joy. New Guard on its 8th April 1958 issue publishes that the act was

"an example of white condescension at its very worst. The Holy Church of Zion should be ashamed of itself for staging such a demeaning spectacle. Mrs. Martha Tortuin should never have lent herself to this act of supreme hypocrisy. The wages that she earns probably amount to three or four percent of the judge's salary. Such gross inequality are not removed by any amount of washing or kissing"²⁴.

The Noordelrig Pretoria also on its 8th April 1958 issue says:

"...In the first place, the judge's action at Boachabella ran counter to the racial policies of the government, and conflicted with the spirit, if not with the letter of clause 29(c) of the Native Laws Amendment Act of 1957. Mixed worship is not compatible with racial separation and racial separation is the mandate given to the government in 1948/and renewed even more strongly in 1953... To the washing of the feet, he added a further highly sentimental and in our view extremely objectionable element, namely he kissed the feet of a Black woman after he had washed them... an embellishment of this kind is

repugnant to most White Christian opinion, and certainly to most Afrikaner Christian opinion..."²⁵.

It must be born in mind when one reads the above publication that Judge Olivier's action was neither contrived as a farce nor defiance of government. It was an impulse prompted by the Black woman's love and devotion to his children and his home.

The last chapter of the novel contains the address of the new Prime Minister Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd. van Onselen's hopes come true as the Prime Minister J.G. Strizdom died on 24th August 1958 and Dr. Verwoerd assumes office. In his address to the nation, he said

"The policy of separate policy is designed for happiness, security, and the stability provided by their home language and administration, for the Bantu as well as the whites... I have earnestly asked myself whether the advocates of total unity of the different races can bring justice and fairness to everybody. I am absolutely convinced that integration in a country like South Africa cannot possibly succeed... We shall provide our races with happiness and prosperity"²⁶.

But New Guard on its 29th August 1958 issue states that

"Dr. Hendrik is deceiving himself, his party and his people. He hopes to deceive the masses as well, but he will not succeed. Freedom is not yet"²⁷.

Just as the gross inequality in the land is highlighted in Cry, The Beloved Country, so too in Ah, But Your Land is Beautiful. In the chapter called 'Come Back Africa', Paton observes that "Lutuli and his party would have liked to say, 'Ah, But the Land is Beautiful', but the words would not come out of their mouths because it was the land that was taken from them. In his autobiography, Lutuli has written :

"Who owns Africa?"
 With the exception of a small group of black nationalists who have learned their policies from Dr. Verwoerd's and general Smuts' parties, the great majority of Africans reply that the country now belongs to fourteen million people of different races - it is jointly owned by all its inhabitants quite regardless of their colour... With the exception of a small number of people crying in the wilderness, the overwhelming majority of whites reply that South Africa is exclusively owned by three million whites... In this view the whites, because they are 'white' extend their possession to ownership of the remaining eleven million people, who are expected to regard themselves as fortunate to be allowed to live and breathe and work in a white man's country"²⁸.

The problem of the land is stated in the novel by Reverend Isaiah Buti. He tells Judge Olivier, "We have no dwelling place... once you lose a house Judge it is very difficult to get another... We have been placed in South Africa and we have no dwelling place of our own"²⁹. Young people are more affected than the old ones. They feel that the Lord is a White Lord and no self-respecting Black should worship Him. The White men, they reason, give them Bibles with one

hand and take away their lands with the other.

The truth is that, paradoxically, many Afrikaners find the policy of separate development especially the land system revolting. Legislations such as the Natives Land Act 1913, Natives (Urban Areas) Act 1923 and the Group Areas Act 1950 prevents Africans and Indians from settling in traditional white areas. When an area is proclaimed for any race, people of other races can no longer own or occupy property in it. There is often no squeamishness about moving thousands of Indians without providing alternative accommodations for them³⁰.

Yet South Africa is loved by all her children whether White, Black or Coloured. Mrs. Bodasingh tells her friend that the reason why she did not marry an Englishman was that she wanted to return to Durban, to the hotels where she is not allowed to stay and to the beaches where she is not allowed to swim. Her daughter Prem and Hugh Mainwaring sacrifice their love for each other for the sake of their country. Instead of going away where they can marry each other, they decide to remain in South Africa to work for the cause they both believe in and not marry each other.

"Ah, but your land is beautiful, cruel and beautiful"³¹, Riddled with a dilemma that cannot be resolved, Dr. Hendrik the hope of the Afrikaner Nationalists is expected to lead them into the golden age

but is not trusted by both Black and White non-nationalists for his self-certitude and inflexibility. Even the party loyalist like Trina de Lange have said that the party which was 'God's instrument to raise the Afrikaner from the dust and ashes of the English war has degenerated into an instrument of the Devil to treat others just as the English had treated them'. Robert Mansfield says 'Apartheid is driving us apart. That's what its meant to do, isn't it? Its not only that the centre cannot hold. Its being torn to pieces. If it isn't put together again, the whole country will fall apart. Your children will fight my children Wilberforce"³². He also tells Dr. William Johnson, Director of Education for Natal, "... It fills me with despair for the future. We all live in the same country, yet we allow our children to grow up in total ignorance of their future fellow South Africans. And I'm telling you Bill, that if they don't play with each other today, then they're going to kill each other tomorrow"³³. This same sentiment is expressed by Chief Lutuli to Mansfield himself. The same sentiment is felt by Simelane in 'A Drink in the Passage'³⁴. It appears, therefore, to be Paton's fear for the Future of South Africa that unless the different races interact and began to love one another, South Africa would be doomed. But so long as apartheid is looked upon as the solution, the dilemma will never be resolved. In fact, this is the paradox of the South African dilemma. Racial separation is caused by apartheid

while the same is regarded as a solution to end the South African riddle.

END NOTES

1. Paton, Alan : Ah, But Your Land is Beautiful, pp.23-24.
2. Ibid., p.30.
3. Lutuli, Albert : Let My People Go, p.46.
4. Paton, Alan : Journey Continued, p.36.
5. Paton, Alan : Ah, But Your Land is Beautiful, p.222.
6. Ibid., p.59.
7. Paton, Alan : Journey Continued, p.116.
8. Paton, Alan : Towards the Mountain, p.16.
9. Paton, Alan : Ah, But Your Land is Beautiful, p.71.
10. Ibid., p.112.
11. Ibid., p.167.
12. The Treason Trial Defence Fund was supported by well-known people like Eleanor Roosevelt, Daphne Du Mariver, T.S. Eliot, Christopher Fry, Alan Paton, Henry Moore, Graham Sutherland, and John Gunther - Leo Marquard : The Peoples and Policies of South Africa, p.120.
13. Lutuli, Albert : Let My People Go, p. 151.
14. Marquard, Leo : The Peoples and Policies of South Africa, p.119.
15. Paton, Alan : Ah, But Your Land is Beautiful, p.92.
16. Ibid., p.160.

17. Paton, Alan : Ah, But Your Land is Beautiful,
p.161.

18. Ibid., pp.161-162.

19. Ibid., p.178.

20. Ibid., p.224.

21. Ibid., p.224.

22. Ibid., pp.225-226.

23. Paton, Alan : Cry, The Beloved Country, p.40.

24. Paton, Alan : Ah, But Your Land is Beautiful,
p.249.

25. Ibid., pp.249-250.

26. Ibid., pp.265-266.

27. Ibid., p.267.

28. Lutuli, Albert : Let My People Go, pp.79-80.

29. Paton, Alan : Ah, But Your Land is Beautiful,
pp.230-231.

30. Keppel, Jones : South Africa, p.182.

31. Paton, Alan : Ah, But Your Land is Beautiful,
p.194.

32. Ibid., p.53.

33. Ibid., p.56.

34. Paton, Alan : Tales from a Troubled Land/Debbie Go
Home, p.95.

CONCLUSION

The novels of Alan Paton have a distinctive quality which evoke poignant pity and sympathy at the human tragedies they depict but which are never depressive. Hope and faith are somehow kept alive in the characters through the author's own optimism. The world he describes in the novels are shadows of a real world: a world he is familiar with and one he loves. The narrative is so vivid that at times it is difficult to differentiate between the shadow and the reality. But Paton's novels for all their realism are not simply a social record nor are they didactic. In his own words, Paton says,

"above all I tried to make a story, not a denunciation or a sermon or a lesson... If your story also expounds some moral truth because of the kind of person you are, that is acceptable

so long as it is the writer and not the preacher or teacher who tells the story. If the preacher or teacher intrudes, that will mean the end of the story"¹.

He has been successful in adhering to this principle and the resultant objectivity constitutes his strength as a novelist. In Cry, The Beloved Country, the omniscient narrator gives a reliable account of the story of South Africa. He is reliable because he is not a participant but an observer. Neither is he a moralist nor a teacher. The characters are allowed to enact their drama without intrusion from Paton the man. The open ending is another indication of its objectivity. Just as Kumalo does not find the answers to his manifold questions, so also is the narrator content to accept the fact that when that dawn of emancipation will come is a secret. It is Paton's greatness as a writer that, committed as he is to his country, he does not intrude in his story to theorise or moralise. The narrative is carried on in a manner of detached objectivity. The characters enact their dramas and tell their tales without disruption from their author.

Another important aspect of Alan Paton's novels is the impact of the Authorised Version of the English Bible, on the novels especially in Cry, The Beloved Country. The Biblical style adds to the power of the book as it captures not only the mind but also the emotion of the reader. For

instance when the young White man vents his anger and frustration on Kumalo, the old man is hurt and bewildered and cannot bring himself to climb into the car with him. The young man, smitten with remorse at this outburst comes to Kumalo's lodging to make amends. Still fresh from the pain of their encounter, Kumalo shrinks from him which goes not unnoticed by the young man. He searches for humble and pleading words, but none comes to him. He looks at the floor while the young man, looking angrier than ever makes his apology and suggests that they get a lawyer for Absalom. Kumalo struggles within himself 'for it is thus with a black man, who has learnt to be humble and who yet desires to be something that is himself'.

Another highly emotive scene is the unexpected meeting of James Jarvis and Stephen Kumalo in Johannesburg when Kumalo had gone to the house of Barbara Smith to enquire about a native servant. Kumalo recognises Jarvis immediately and the intensity of his emotion shakes his old frame. He sits down on the steps to steady himself and when he tries to rise up again with the help of his stick, the stick falls from his hands clattering on the stones. Jarvis, who all this time is patiently waiting for him to regain his self-control picks it up for him. When Kumalo finally looks up, Jarvis finds his face full of suffering that is caused neither by illness nor hunger. Jarvis is torn between compassion and irritation and when Kumalo is

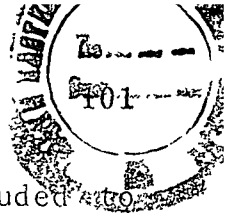
finally able to reveal the cause of his suffering, Jarvis with heroic fortitude tells him that there is no anger in him. In instances such as these, Paton inspires in the reader sympathy for the old Black parson, a liking for the young White man and respect for the old White man. It is Paton's greatness as a novelist that the narrative, however intense or emotive, is never allowed to degenerate into mere sentimentality. Perhaps it is the inner strength or self-respect of characters like Stephen Kumalo, James Jarvis, Simelane and Enoch Maarman, to mention a few, which lends strength and nobility of stature to his works. The archaism serves to give a realistic effect to the narrative. It suggests the symbolic quality of the Zulu language and also the way in which Black people use the English language. It also serves to enlighten the reader on the thought process of the Africans. Since the Bible is one book they are familiar with, as in the case of Kumalo, it is natural that its style should influence their speeches. The short simple sentences have a curious rhythm which is not unlike poetry. The use of a preliminary dash to indicate conversation instead of the usual inverted commas is a style which Paton learnt from John Steinbeck's Grapes of Wrath². He uses this style in all his three novels.

Besides the style, the spirit of the book is itself Biblical. From the very first page when the author exhorts

the reader to stand unshod upon the ground that is holy, the mood is set for the rest of the narrative. In the Old Testament, when the Angel of the Lord appeared to Moses and to Joshua, they were ordered to unshod their feet for the grounds that they stood upon were Holy grounds.³

The names of Stephen Kumalo and his son Absalom are suggestive. In the New Testament, Stephen was one of the seven deacons chosen to minister to the believers. He was full of faith and of the Holy Ghost⁴. Absalom was one of King David's sons who rebelled against his father and was later killed. David's lament for his son is echoed by Kumalo when his son too is to be killed "O my son Absalom, my son my son..."⁴. Throughout his ordeal, the flame of Kumalo's faith is never wholly extinguished, even though at times it is blown by winds of doubt and desolation. Perhaps it is the constant invocation of God, the Protector and the Comforter that lends the book its deep spirituality. Although it is a story of South Africa, Cry, The Beloved Country can be classified as a Christian literature. In fact, Reinhold Niehburh, while talking to the New York Times Book Review in May 1948 said, "...The book (Cry, The Beloved Country) has a genuine religious Christian content and has a nobly tragic element in it"⁵.

Too Late The Phalarope is a planned novel quite different from Cry, The Beloved Country. In its own way it bears the impact of the Holy Bible. The Psalm of David



after his adultery with Bathsheba⁶ is strongly alluded throughout the novel. The author seems to challenge the Church for usurping God's right to punish sinners. God has said 'Vengeance is mine'⁷. Yet the people have taken upon themselves to punish a wrongdoer. He also subtly suggests that church laws and doctrines can be vastly different from the teachings of Christ. In their quest for racial purity, the Afrikaners have forgotten the words Jesus spoke about the woman caught in adultery. 'He that is without sin among you let him first cast a stone at her'⁸. The narrator Sophie often alludes to Biblical verses. One such recurring example is, 'I should have cried out there not ceasing' which corresponds to Paul's exhortation 'Pray without ceasing'⁹. Moreover, she draws a parallel between herself for writing her story and John at Patmos for writing the Revelation. The Bible is the most important book in the van Vlaanderen household. The Old Testament with its stern and rigid laws have more attraction for Jakob while Sophie thinks more of forgiveness and mercy through Christ. The book has a religious overtone although the subject is not religious. But it lacks the deep spirituality of Cry, The Beloved Country. This is not because the protagonist is a policeman while the other is a parson. There are domineers even in Too Late The Phalarope just as there are priests in Cry, The Beloved Country. It is also not because White Christianity is less profound than Black Christianity. The reason could be the simple

faith of the Old Black priest, who evinces a sincerity and trustfulness of a child. He is always aware of God either to give thanks or pray for protection. He does not doubt that his prayers are not heard. Even in the short time he lost his faith in Johannesburg, he obeys Father Vincent's command to pray and give thanks. In fact, his prayers for the restoration of Ndotsheni is answered in a wonderful way. He is able to hear a voice from heaven cry "Comfort ye Comfort ye, my people, these things will I do unto you, and not forsake you"¹⁰.

In the case of Pieter van Vlaanderen he too prays for mercy constantly and there is no doubt that his prayers come from the depth of his being. But he does not have the faith of Kumalo. Moments after his first offence, he prays to God but before each prayer he says 'If I may pray, if I may pray'. He doubts if his prayers are heard. "For he had a vision that a trumpet had been blown in Heaven, and that the Lord Most High had ordered the closing of the doors, that no prayer might enter in from such a man, who knowing the laws and the commandments, had of his own choice and will, defied them"¹¹. The writer of Hebrews in the New Testament says it is impossible to please God without faith¹². Pieter has no faith that his prayers would reach God. The comforting presence of God is absent in the novel.

The last novel, Ah, But Your Land is Beautiful, has no Biblical impact as such. It bears little resemblance to either Cry, The Beloved Country or Too Late The Phalarope. It is largely a political history that traces the growth of apartheid in South Africa upto the becoming of Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd as the Prime Minister. It is also a record of the endeavours of the Black and Coloured races to shake the unshakable foundation of apartheid with the help of a few White men and women. Wilberforce Nhlapo aptly says 'We are a defeated race but not so defeated as that'. Till today, White Pretoria still holds the reigns of power and the Blacks are still struggling against it. As such, Paton's writing is still relevant. The dilemma of South Africa which he first introduced in the essays of Arthur Jarvis in Cry, The Beloved Country is not yet resolved. It pervades different races at various levels. It is faced by individuals and families either in the home or in their place of work and even in their inter-action with the other races. Hearts are broken and lives are lost while racial discrimination remains not only intact but strong and powerful. The struggle against apartheid has little or no result and men are left frustrated and dissatisfied. In our own time, President F.W. de Klerk has made commendable effort to dismantle apartheid. On 2nd February 1991, he asked Parliament to scrap the Group Areas Act 1950; the Land Acts 1913 and 1936 and the Population Registration Act 1950. But it will take more than mere Acts of Parliament

to uproot the age old tradition of racial separation and inequalities. A colleague of Albert Lutuli once said to him that Afrikaner children are "brought up to dislike and look down on natives"¹³. In a way these people are victims of their own past and Lutuli claims that this particular confession has given him an insight into the dilemma of the Afrikaners. The Afrikan National Congress leader Nelson Mandela who was released on 2nd February 1990 after twenty-seven years imprisonment says that the euphoria about apartheid being on its way out is 'misplaced'. In a forward to a book South Africa : One Year After Mandela's Release by journalist commentator Hari Sharan Chhabra, Nelson Mandela has said that, "Apartheid remains intact, while South Africans are still in full and total control of all power - political, economic and social"¹⁴. At the end of Cry, The Beloved Country, Paton writes these lines: "But when that dawn will come, of our emancipation, from the fear of bondage, and the bondage of fear, why, that is a secret"¹⁵. Till today it seems to continue to be a secret. Paton, in the same novel makes Msimangu speak these lines: "I see only one hope for our country, and that is when white men and black men, desiring neither power nor money, but desiring only the good of their country, come together to work for it"¹⁶. Yet Ah, But Your Land is Beautiful, ends with the poem -

"Black man, we are going to shut you off,
We are going to set you apart,
We mean nothing evil towards you...¹⁷.

The dilemma of South Africa remains a paradox and will no doubt continue to be so. Once again I quote Professor Eddie from Ah, But Your Land is Beautiful "...How does one explain these riddles of human nature? But the most difficult of all are the riddles of White South African nature"¹⁸. As the White and Black non-Nationalists did when Dr. Hendrik became Prime Minister, one may as well adopt a policy of wait and see. The repeal of the obnoxious racial laws has resulted in the lifting of economic sanctions against South Africa and her re-admission to the International Olympic Committee and the International Cricket Committee in 1991. But South Africa is not yet a democracy with one person, one vote. Almost everyday, newspapers carry reports of violence and massacre in South Africa. The Nationalist Party has allegedly funded the Inkathas to fight the African National Congress which proves again that politicians are not what South Africa needs in order to resolve her dilemma. John Kumalo in Cry, The Beloved Country could not emancipate his people. Neither Lutuli nor Dr. Hendrik with his infamous theory of separate development in Ah, But Your Land is Beautiful could resolve the dilemma. What South Africa needs today are the Arthur Jarvises, the Napoleon Letsitsis and the Judge Oliviers, who would dedicate themselves for service to Africa and her people. Her dilemma can be resolved only when white men and black men, desiring neither power nor money, but desiring only the good of

their country, come together¹⁹ and work for the beloved country.

END NOTES

1. Paton, Alan : Towards the Mountain, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons 1980, pp.272-273.
2. Ibid., p.269.
3. Exodus 3:5, Joshua 5:15, KJV All quotations are from the King James Version.
4. Acts 6:5 KJV.
5. Towards the Mountain, p.300.
6. Psalm 51.
7. Romans : 12:19.
8. John 8:7.
9. II Thessolonians 5:17.
10. Paton, Alan : Cry, The Beloved Country, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons 1948, p.263.
11. Paton, Alan : Too Late The Phalarope, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953, p.154.
12. Hebrews 11:6.
13. Lutuli, Albert : Let My People Go - An Autobiography, London, Collins Fontana, 1962, p.37.
14. Paton, Alan . Cry, The Beloved Country, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons 1948, p.277.
15. Ibid., pp.39-40.
16. Cry, The Beloved Country.
17. Ah, But Your Land is Beautiful, p.270.
18. Ibid., p.119.
19. Cry, The Beloved Country, pp.39-40.

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7. The Sentinel, 7th June, 1991.
8. The Telegraph, 7th February, 1992.
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