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 allocated 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 money.

"The men are away, the young men and the girls are away. The soil cannot keep them anymore". 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 interaction 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 strange, machine-dominated existence in a highly organised industry". 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 survival.

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..."

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."
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. Harriston 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 unsympathetic. 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 broken. 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. 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 Kafferboetes'. 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 Deepkloof 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 devotion. 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 devised John Kumalo's cunning scheme to deny that his son and the third man were present with Abalom 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 Msimangu 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 in the white Superintendent at Ezenzeleli. 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 person 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 Pieterburg 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 later had a letter from him from prison. 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." 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, Mlamangu 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 interaction 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". 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". 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.

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).

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).

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 Universo, 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 thorno of my
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." 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 Absolom 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 winning 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?' 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".

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 Diépkloof 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 men. 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 marges 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 betwint 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 feel 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 doffences 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 when Robbertse calls Bnoch 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 indifferences 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 don't 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, than 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

5. Ibid., pp.154-155.
6. Ibid., p.146.
7. Ibid., p.175.
9. Ibid., p.55.
11. Ibid - Introduction.
16. Ibid., p.68.
17. Ibid., p.68.
18. Ibid., p.90.
20. Ibid., p.91.

21. Ibid., pp.91-92.


26. Ibid., p.89.