

CRY, THE BELOVED COUNTRY

by Alan Paton



THE AUTHOR

Alan Paton (1903-1988) was born into a Scottish Presbyterian family in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. He graduated from the University of Natal with a degree in physics and became a science teacher in several schools for the rich and privileged white population of the nation. While suffering from an illness in 1934, he decided that he didn't want to spend his life teaching the children of the rich, and applied for a job with the Ministry of Education. Much to his surprise, he was offered a position as principal of the Diepkloof Reformatory - a reform school in Johannesburg for poor blacks who had run afoul of the law, where he served for thirteen years, bringing sweeping changes to the reformatory that are reflected at least to some extent by the character who heads the reform school in Paton's most famous novel. His desire for prison reform led him to take a tour of Europe and America to examine prison conditions in other lands. While he traveled, he wrote the manuscript for *Cry, the Beloved Country*. The book received immediate plaudits, both in South Africa and in America. Paton devoted the rest of his career to writing, producing the novel *Too Late the Phalarope*, various non-fiction works, and an autobiography. He also wrote the screenplay for the 1951 movie version of *Cry, the Beloved Country*. In addition to his writing, Paton was the founder and national president of the Liberal Party, which worked for improved race relations in South Africa, though the party was eventually banned by the apartheid government in 1968. Paton died six years before the fall of apartheid in 1994.

PLOT SUMMARY

The story begins in the village of Ixopo in Ndotsheni in South Africa, where Stephen Kumalo, a Zulu Anglican pastor, receives a letter from Rev. Theophilus Msimangu, a pastor in Johannesburg, who asks Kumalo to come to the city to help his sister Gertrude, who, after spending time in jail for selling bootleg liquor, has fallen into prostitution. Kumalo determines to make the trip, taking with him his meager life savings to cover possible expenses. He also hopes to find something of the whereabouts of his son Absalom, from whom he has not heard for a long time.

He travels by train to Johannesburg, and upon arriving in the big city for the first time, he is cheated of some money by a young man who offers to help him find his way. Eventually, he

arrives at the mission house and meets Msimangu, who offers him a room at the nearby home of Mrs. Lithebe. The younger pastor tells Kumalo about his sister and her plight, informs him that his brother John is now a noted politician in the black community, though he has abandoned the church, and offers to help him locate his son Absalom.

Kumalo then visits his sister Gertrude and convinces her to return with him to Mrs. Lithebe's, and eventually to come back with her young son to Ixopo. He then begins his search for his son. He starts by visiting his brother John, who tells him that Absalom and his own son John Jr. were working at a local factory. When Kumalo goes to the factory, he finds that Absalom is no longer there, but one of the workers tells him the location of the boarding house where he was staying. A visit there yields nothing except the news that Absalom had left because the landlady disapproved of his companions. She did know his next address, however, so Kumalo then tried there, only to find that Absalom had left a year earlier. Msimangu succeeds in getting the landlady to reveal that Absalom had been involved in burglary, and in obtaining the name of a cab driver who might know his whereabouts. The cab driver tells the two pastors that, the last he heard, Absalom had been living in Shanty Town on the outskirts of the city. When Kumalo and Msimangu arrive in Shanty Town, they discover that Absalom has been sent to a reformatory. Upon visiting the reformatory, they find that Absalom was released on good behavior and because he had gotten a young girl pregnant and had promised to support her. When they visit the young girl, they find that Absalom has not been home for a week, nor has he been at work. Kumalo then accompanies Msimangu to a home for the blind for a few days of ministry there. Before leaving for the home for the blind, the two pastors hear the horrifying news that Arthur Jarvis, a young white man who had fought hard for social justice for South African blacks, has been murdered in his home by young black intruders. Kumalo recognizes that Jarvis was the son of James Jarvis, one of his neighbors in Ndotsheni. Meanwhile, Kumalo begins to experience nameless dread about the murder of the young white man. Finally, he hears that his son is in prison, under arrest for the murder of Arthur Jarvis.

Having finally found his son, Stephen Kumalo and his brother John go to visit the young men in the prison. Absalom admits that he shot Jarvis, but claimed he did it out of panic, and had no intention of killing the man. John Kumalo, meanwhile, argues that there is no evidence other than the word of Absalom that his son John had been involved in the crime at all, and that no one would take Absalom's word on the matter. He thus sets the stage for the betrayal of Absalom by his friends. Meanwhile, the young man from the reformatory offers to get Absalom a lawyer. Kumalo then visits the young girl again and asks her if she wishes to marry Absalom; if she does, he says, he will accept her into his family and take her back to Ndotsheni with him when he goes. She tearfully accepts his generous offer. He then brings her back to Mrs. Lithebe's house.

The story then switches to the Jarvis family, with James Jarvis receiving the news of his son's murder from the local police. He goes immediately to Johannesburg, where he stays with his daughter-in-law's family while gathering information about his son. The two had disagreed on political matters, particularly with how to deal with native Africans, but he gains respect for his son's views by reading the papers he left behind on his desk.

When the trial of Absalom and John Kumalo and Johannes Pafuri begins, Absalom tells his story of the crime simply and truthfully, but the other two deny their involvement. Several days after the trial, Kumalo inadvertently encounters Jarvis at the home of distant relatives of the Jarvis family. Kumalo and Jarvis recognize each other as neighbors from Ndotsheni, and Kumalo finally works up enough courage to admit that his son killed Arthur Jarvis. James Jarvis,

however, treats Kumalo kindly and says he harbors no anger toward him. A few days later, the judge gives the verdict - Absalom is condemned to hang for the murder of Arthur Jarvis, but the other two defendants are released because of insufficient evidence. Later, Kumalo, Msimangu, and the girl visit Absalom in prison, where the two are married by Father Vincent from the Mission House. After confronting his brother John and lying to him out of a desire to hurt him, Kumalo prepares to return home; before he leaves, Msimangu gives a farewell party for him, and announces that he is forsaking worldly possessions, and wishes to give Kumalo the money he had set aside for himself. After the party, Kumalo discovers that Gertrude has disappeared, leaving her son in the care of Absalom's wife. Jarvis, meanwhile, is also preparing for departure, but before he leaves, he gives his in-laws a large check to be used to continue Arthur's work for social justice.

After his return home, Kumalo begins to pray for the restoration of the community in Ndotsheni. He seeks the cooperation of the chief and the headmaster of the local school, but gets no help from either. While Kumalo is working in his church, a small white boy from the Jarvis estate (probably the son of Arthur Jarvis) visits him and asks him to teach him some Zulu words. During their conversation, the boy discovers that the children of the village have no milk. Soon after, milk arrives from the Jarvis estate for the children of the village. Jarvis then arranges for a dam to be built to bring water to the village on a regular basis, and hires an agricultural expert to teach the farmers how to raise more and better crops. When the bishop visits Ndotsheni and tells Kumalo that he should leave his church to avoid offending Jarvis, Kumalo shows him the letter of thanks he had received from Jarvis for the condolences sent by the church at the death of his wife, along with his offer to build a new church building for the village. The bishop then decides that Kumalo should remain after all. On the night before his son's execution, Kumalo goes alone into the mountains to pray. There he encounters Jarvis, who says he is leaving to live in Johannesburg. Kumalo thanks God for all his blessings, and prays for those who suffer. The book ends with his statement of faith that Africa will be restored, but in a time known only to God.

MAJOR CHARACTERS

- Stephen Kumalo - A Zulu pastor in the town of Ixopo in rural South Africa, Kumalo goes to Johannesburg in search of his sister and son. He discovers that his sister Gertrude has turned to prostitution and his son Absalom, after falling in with bad company, has murdered a white man, Arthur Jarvis. His attempts to rescue Gertrude, her son, and Absalom and his young wife make up the heart of the story. His relationship with his wealthy neighbor James Jarvis, the father of the murdered man, demonstrate the hope of reconciliation that is the principal message of the novel.
- Absalom Kumalo - The son of Stephen Kumalo, he runs away to Johannesburg, where he gets a young girl pregnant and winds up in a reform school. After leaving the reform school, he is involved with two of his friends in a botched robbery, during which he panics and shoots Arthur Jarvis, a young social reformer. He admits his role in the crime and repents, but his friends deny their involvement. They are released, but he is hanged for murder.

- Gertrude Kumalo - Stephen's younger sister, she goes to Johannesburg, where she is deserted by her husband. She supports her young son, first by selling bootleg liquor, then by means of prostitution. Rev. Msimangu sends a letter to Stephen Kumalo asking him to rescue his sister; the letter initiates the action of the story. Gertrude agrees to come back to Ixopo with her brother, but runs away again at the last minute, leaving her young son with Rev. Kumalo.
- John Kumalo - Brother of Stephen, he runs a successful business in Johannesburg and has become a prominent political leader in the black community, largely because of his powerful speaking ability. He has turned away from the church and leads an immoral life, keeping a mistress after casting his wife aside. His son John is one of the men who robs the Jarvis home, but he betrays Absalom at his father's urging and is acquitted.
- John Kumalo, Jr. - Involved in the robbery with his cousin, he denies responsibility for the crime and is acquitted.
- Johannes Pafuri - The instigator of the robbery of the Jarvis home, he too denies his involvement and is freed despite the fact that he assaulted the servant of the house.
- Rev. Theophilus Msimangu - A pastor in Johannesburg who writes a letter urging Stephen Kumalo to come rescue his sister. When Kumalo arrives, Msimangu accompanies him in his search for his sister and son, and supports him throughout Absalom's trial and execution. He eventually dedicates himself to a life of poverty and gives his life savings to Kumalo, who has spent all he had during his time in Johannesburg.
- Mrs. Lithebe - Gives room and board to Stephen Kumalo while he is in Johannesburg, and also cares for Gertrude and Absalom's young mistress.
- Absalom's mistress - She is never named in the novel. She agrees to marry Absalom shortly before his execution, then gladly returns with Stephen Kumalo to Ixopo, where he cares for her and the son that is born.
- Father Vincent - A white priest in Johannesburg who assists Kumalo in his search and helps him to obtain a lawyer for Absalom.
- Principal of the Reformatory - Another unnamed character, he helps Kumalo in his search for his son; he is the figure in the story most like Alan Paton, who drew from his own experiences as principal of a reform school in Johannesburg.
- James Jarvis - A wealthy white man who lives near the Kumalo family, it is his son who is murdered by Absalom in the robbery of the young man's home. As he deals with his own grief and comes to know Stephen Kumalo, he opens his heart to the plight of his black neighbors, providing milk for starving children, arranging to have a dam built and an agricultural expert brought in to improve the lives of those in the black community, and finally building a church for Rev. Kumalo and his congregation.

- Margaret Jarvis - Wife of James Jarvis, she dies after a long illness and the grief of losing her only son.
- Arthur Jarvis - Son of James Jarvis, he is a social reformer who works for racial equality and fair treatment for blacks in South Africa. He is murdered by Absalom Kumalo when he surprises the young man and his friends in the process of robbing his house. Jarvis' writings, found by his father after the young man's death, convince James Jarvis to take a more active role in matters of social justice.
- The young white boy - Probably the son of Arthur Jarvis, this young boy visits Kumalo in his church and asks to learn Zulu words. When he asks for milk, Kumalo tells him they have none. It is after this visit that Jarvis sends milk for the children of the village, beginning his efforts to improve their lives. The young boy is pictured as a beacon of light by Kumalo.
- Napoleon Letsitsi - The agricultural expert hired by James Jarvis to improve the farms of the black population in his area.

NOTABLE QUOTATIONS

“The great red hills stand desolate, and the earth has torn away like flesh. The lightning flashes over them, the clouds pour down upon them, the dead streams come to life, full of the red blood of the earth. Down in the valleys women scratch the soil that is left, and the maize hardly reaches the height of a man. They are valleys of old men and old women, of mothers and children. The men are away, the young men and the girls are away. The soil cannot keep them any more.” (p.4)

“He stopped in the street and spoke quietly and earnestly to his companion. ‘Because the white man has power, we too want power,’ he said. ‘But when a black man gets power, when he gets money, he is a great man if he is not corrupted. I have seen it often. He seeks power and money to put right what is wrong, and when he gets them, why, he enjoys the power and the money. Now he can gratify his lusts, now he can arrange ways to get the white man’s liquor, he can speak to thousands and hear them clap their hands. Some of us think when we have power, we shall revenge ourselves on the white man who has had power, and because our desire is corrupt, we are corrupted, and the power has no heart in it. But most white men do not know this truth about power, and they are afraid lest we get it.’

“He stood a though he was testing his exposition. ‘Yes, that is right about power,’ he said. ‘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 their country, come together to work for it.’

“He was grave and silent, and then he said sombrely, ‘I have one great fear in my heart, that one day when they turn to loving they will find we are turned to hating.’” (Msimangu, p.39-40)

“There is not much talking now. A silence falls upon them all. This is no time to talk of hedges and fields, or the beauties of any country. Sadness and fear and hate, how they well up in the heart and mind, whenever one opens the pages of these messengers of doom. Cry for the broken tribe, for the law and the custom that is gone. Aye, and cry aloud for the man who is dead, for the woman and children bereaved. Cry, the beloved country, these things are not yet at an end. The sun pours down on the earth, on the lovely land that man cannot enjoy. He knows only the fear of his heart.” (p.73-74)

“After seeing Johannesburg he would return with a deeper understanding to Ndotsheni. Yes, and with a greater humility, for had his own sister not been a prostitute? And his son a thief? And might not he himself be grandfather to a child that would have no name? This he thought without bitterness, though with pain. One could go back knowing better the things that one fought against, knowing better the kind of thing that one must build. He would go back with a new and quickened interest in the school, not as a place where children learned to read and write and count only, but as a place where they must be prepared for life in any place to which they might go. Oh for education for his people, for schools up and down the land, where something might be built that would serve them when they went away to the towns, something that would take the place of tribal law and custom.” (p.88)

“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 loving charity and fearful clutching of possessions.” (Arthur Jarvis, p.155)

“The Judge does not make the Law. It is the People that make the Law. Therefore if a Law is unjust, and if the Judge judges according to the Law, that is justice, even if it is not just.

It is the duty of a Judge to do justice, but it is only the People that can be just. Therefore if justice be not just, that is not to be laid at the door of the Judge, but at the door of the People, which means at the door of the White People, for it is the White People that make the Law.

In South Africa men are proud of their Judges, because they believe they are incorruptible. Even the black men have faith in them, though they do not always have faith in the Law. In a land of fear this incorruptibility is like a lamp set upon a stand, giving light to all that are in the house.” (p.158)

“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.” (Arthur Jarvis, p.175)

“I have never thought that a Christian would be free of suffering, umfundisi. For our Lord suffered. And I come to believe that he suffered, not to save us from suffering, but to teach us how to bear suffering. For he knew that there is no life without suffering.” (p.227)

“After the Bishop had gone, Kumalo stood outside the church in the gathering dark. The rain had stopped, but the sky was black with promise. It was cool, and the breeze blew gently from the great river, and the soul of the man was uplifted. And while he stood there looking out

over the great valley, there was a voice that cried out of heaven, Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, these things will I do unto you, and not forsake you.

Only it did not happen as men deem such things to happen, it happened otherwise. It happened in that fashion that men call illusion, or the imaginings of people overwrought, or an intimation of the divine.” (p.263)

“Ndotsheni is still in darkness, but the light will come there also. For it is the dawn that has come, as it has come for a thousand centuries, never failing. But when that dawn will come, of our emancipation, from the fear of bondage and the bondage of fear, why, that is a secret.” (p.277)

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Discuss the following in a five-paragraph essay:

1. Compare and contrast the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa as it is pictured in Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country* with the civil rights movement in the United States.
2. In Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country* we find the moving story of Stephen Kumalo, a Zulu pastor in search of his sister and son in the big city of Johannesburg. In what ways does this story illustrate a bigger story - the search for racial equality in opposition to the practice of apartheid in South Africa?
3. Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country* contains parallel narratives of the Kumalo and Jarvis families. Compare and contrast the two fathers, Stephen Kumalo and James Jarvis, in their reactions to the tragedy involving their sons.
4. Alan Paton wrote *Cry, the Beloved Country* shortly before apartheid was instituted in South Africa. At this time blacks and whites alike were filled with fear, and even the noble hearts on both sides of the racial divide were concerned that, as Rev. Msimangu said, "I have one great fear in my heart, that one day when they turn to loving they will find we are turned to hating." After over forty years apartheid finally did collapse, and when a new constitution was adopted in 1996, President Nelson Mandela had this to say: "Now it is universally acknowledged that unity and reconciliation are written in the hearts of millions of South Africans. They are an indelible principle of our founding pledge. They are the glowing fire of our New Patriotism. They shall remain the condition for reconstruction and development, inasmuch as reconstruction and development will depend on unity and reconciliation." How is that spirit of unity and reconciliation present in Paton's book, written in 1948, forty years before the fall of apartheid? Give specific examples to illustrate your point.
5. As clearly illustrated in Genesis 2, the family has been ordained by God as the basic building block of society. One of the main themes of Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country* is that society cannot long endure the breakdown of the family structure. How does the novel illustrate this point? Use specific incidents from the story.

6. In Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*, the author draws parallels between the unities of family and nation. In what ways are the two similar, and in what ways are they different? To what extent does one depend on the other?
7. One of the consequences of European colonialism in Africa was the dissolution of the tribal structure. An alien way of life destroyed the ties of the past, tearing families and villages apart. In Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*, the author acknowledges this when he writes, "Down in the valleys women scratch the soil that is left, and the maize hardly reaches the height of a man. They are valleys of old men and old women, of mothers and children. The men are away, the young men and the girls are away. The soil cannot keep them any more." Does Paton, himself a descendent of European colonists, picture colonialism as an unmixed evil, or does he see any value in what South Africa was in his day or what it had the potential to become? Illustrate your answer with specifics from the novel.
8. Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country* is a Christian novel. The author sees Christian values as the only solution for the problems South Africa is experiencing. Choose one specific Christian virtue and discuss how that virtue may be traced thematically through the story. How does it contribute to the atmosphere of hope with which the book ends?
9. Many of the names chosen by Alan Paton in *Cry, the Beloved Country* have their roots in the Bible. Choose three such names from the story and discuss the symbolic significance of these names in relationship to the themes, characters and plot of the novel.
10. In Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*, the two brothers, Stephen and John Kumalo, are foils. Among other things, they serve to establish the contrast between city and country, and between Christianity and secularism. How does the contrast between these two characters help to establish the main themes of the novel? Use specific quotations and incidents from the story in order to answer the question.
11. One of the underlying themes in Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country* is the emancipation of the slaves in the United States. Abraham Lincoln is clearly one of Arthur Jarvis' heroes. In what sense is the comparison between mid-twentieth-century South Africa and mid-nineteenth-century America appropriate? What did the two have in common, and how were they different? What message was Paton trying to communicate through the comparison?
12. Biblical allusions abound in Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*. Choose three quotations that incorporate Scriptural language and discuss how these quotations communicate important themes in the novel.
13. According to the narrative in Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*, who is more responsible for the plight of the black population of South Africa, the whites or the blacks themselves? Support your conclusion with specific quotations from the novel.

14. Repentance as a prerequisite for cleansing is a frequent theme in Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*. Choose three characters in the story for whom repentance - either repentance that does occur or that which does not - is a matter of great importance in their lives. How do the stories of these three characters illustrate the need for repentance? Does Paton take a biblical view of the subject?
15. In Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*, Stephen Kumalo bemoans the dissolution of the tribe, while his brother John rejoices that he is free of tribal authority while living in the world dominated by the white man. Which brother, in your opinion, has a more realistic view of the value of the tribe in the life of his people? Support your conclusion with specifics from the book.
16. In Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*, what does the author believe is the only real solution for the problems facing South Africa? Has the history of the last half-century shed any light on Paton's proposed solution? Do you think his answer is a good one? Why or why not?
17. The search for Absalom Kumalo in Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country* takes Stephen Kumalo and Theophilus Msimangu through many of the neighborhoods of Johannesburg and exposes many of the problems of blacks in South Africa. Using examples from the long quest of the two men, discuss whether the author views the troubles of blacks as primarily economic or primarily political. Do you agree with his assessment? Why or why not?
18. In Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*, racism provides an assumed backdrop for the events of the story, but is rarely treated in any direct way. In fact, in most of the incidents of the story, relations between whites and blacks are remarkably cordial and respectful despite the ingrained attitudes displayed in the speech of some of the white characters. In your opinion, does this constitute a major flaw in the novel, or did Paton have a reason for choosing this approach? Support your assessment with specifics from the novel.
19. Discuss the imagery of blindness in chapter 13 of Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*. Who, according to the implications of this chapter, is really blind, and who can see? Why is the time spent at Ezenzeleni such an important turning point in the story?
20. Catharsis involves the idea of edification through suffering. In Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*, choose one main character who experiences such a catharsis. What suffering does he experience? How does he change as a result?
21. In Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*, Absalom Kumalo and the young girl he marries in prison share similar character qualities. What are those qualities? Do both of them experience the themes of sin and redemption in the same way? How do their experiences differ, and why?

22. In Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*, Gertrude and the young girl who bears Absalom Kumalo's child serve as foils for one another. In what ways is this the case? How do their characters differ, and how do those differences lead to different outcomes for the two women? How do their plights reflect the major themes of the novel?
23. In Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*, how does the author use writings of Arthur Jarvis to convey his own views of South Africa and its problems? To what extent are those views motivated by Christian values? Do you agree with Jarvis', and by extension with Paton's, conclusions, or do you agree more with the critic who argued that "Paton asks for a wholesale abandonment of human nature as the solution for the problems of South Africa"? Support your conclusion.
24. In what sense does Ndotsheni serve as a microcosm for all of South Africa in Book III of Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*? How does the resolution of the novel leave the reader with an understanding of how hope might be brought to the nation as a whole? Be specific in supporting your arguments.
25. In Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*, how do the characters of Stephen Kumalo and James Jarvis influence on another? In what ways does each man change because of his encounter with the other? Be specific in illustrating your points.
26. In the next-to-last chapter of Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*, Stephen Kumalo scorns the idea that he should be considered "a white man's dog" because he appreciates the help his village has received from Jarvis. In twentieth-century America, such a black man might be referred to as an "Uncle Tom." Do you think such negative assessments of Kumalo's character unjust, or is there some validity to such criticisms? Support your conclusion with specific information from the novel and from history.
27. Discuss the author's use of point of view in Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*. How do the shifts in the point of view from which the narrative is written help to communicate the themes the author desires to emphasize? Use specifics from the novel in supporting your argument.
28. The style of writing used by Alan Paton in *Cry, the Beloved Country* is very unusual. Short sentences, simple vocabulary, and repetition give the language a music that is reminiscent both of the Zulu language that is the native language of the protagonist and the language of the Bible itself. Discuss the impact of the stylistic elements of the novel on the reader. Illustrate with specific examples the relationship between theme and style that permeates the novel, as well as the emotional impact of the stylistic elements of the book.
29. Alan Paton had been reading John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* just before writing his great novel *Cry, the Beloved Country*. Compare and contrast the social messages of the two works. In what ways are the depictions of the plight of blacks in South Africa and that of migrant workers in the United States similar, and in what ways are they different? Be sure to compare the techniques and perspectives of the two authors and the solutions they advocate for the problems they present in their respective novels.

30. The theme of reconciliation is a prominent one in Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*, and encompasses not only reconciliation between black and white, as represented by the relationship between Stephen Kumalo and James Jarvis, but also reconciliation between father and son. Compare and contrast the reconciliations between Kumalo and his son and Jarvis and his son. How do these reconciliations change the fathers? How do these changes serve to communicate the major themes of the novel? Be sure to use specifics to support your arguments.
31. In Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*, it is clear that the author believes that Christianity is the only solution for the problems of South Africa. It is also true, however, that the misuse of Christianity has helped to create the problems with which the novel is preoccupied. Discuss the ways in which Paton presents distorted forms of Christianity as the cause of South Africa's problems. Are his conclusions justified? Why or why not?
32. Discuss similarities and differences between Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country* and the biblical story of Job. What do these comparisons and contrasts lead us to conclude about the fundamental meaning of the novel? Use specifics from the novel and from Job to support your arguments.
33. Discuss similarities and differences between Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country* and the Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son. What do these comparisons and contrasts lead us to conclude about the fundamental meaning of the novel? Use specifics from the novel and from the parable to support your arguments.
34. Pastor Stephen Kumalo is the protagonist of Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*, but he is by no means presented as a flawless character. Discuss the sins of Stephen Kumalo throughout the story. How does Paton's portrayal of these sins make Kumalo a more sympathetic character, and in fact contribute strongly to the message of the book?
35. Compare and contrast Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country* with Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Which, in your opinion, is the more effective indictment of racial prejudice? Why do you think so? Support your argument with specifics from the two novels.