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The Wafers Dumped: Lamenting a Bleeding Nation in Cry, the Beloved Country**Dr. Leon BASHIRAHISHIZE, Ph. D.**

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Abstract: Alan Paton's wistful novel *Cry, the Beloved Country* which was released at the threshold of Apartheid in South Africa relates the South African socio-political instability at the time when racism and poverty are profoundly shaking the nation's foundations [1]. The work explores the aftermaths brought by racial bondage that the subjugated black endures and the repercussions it casts on the whole South African society. This chapter examines how the writer grapples with the dangers brought by racial discrimination and urban life on the South African community as a whole. Paton's view of *Race* and *city* projects a negative perception about the *white* racism and *black* crime that create tensions between the national forces [1]. This social polarity puts at risk the nation's prospects that would build and maintain the "beloved country" which is gradually collapsing. It is this decaying state of the nation that Paton mourns in the novel. The study establishes that race and skin color do not have any relation that would define an individual's nature and inner feelings to justify one's deportment. The wrong or the right is a result of an individual's moral predisposition coupled with the socio-cultural forces that feature his environment. It has also been noted that urban life corrupts; in some situations, it converts an individual into a rogue becoming a threat against society and an enemy against oneself to impair the common good.

Keywords: *Beloved country/nation, Brotherhood, Migration, Urban life, Racial marginalization*

1. Introduction

The dynamic of social rapports and an aspiration to live a peacefully cultured and integrative society have been a profound preoccupation for writers. The prime of freedom and the liberation of the human soul has been at the center of the writers' thought through centuries. Paton's elegiac novel *Cry, the Beloved Country* discourses on these aspirations [1]. The timelessness and the universality of art have made African literature an insignia that reveals the past and current challenges that Africa as a whole faced at different historical stages in her evolution. From Slavery down Colonization, from Colonization to political Independence, and from the illusory Independence to the misty advent of Democracy, the ordinary African citizen has never been spared from the oppressive political structures of the aristocratic leadership that mutated into veritable theocracies. The vast political landscape of Africa reflects unprincipled political regimes and institutions that rest on political, economic, religious, tribal, ethnic,

and racial marginalization of the *Other* despite decades of political independence and democracy. This situation gives rise to an endless vicious circle of bloody conflicts that are still slicing Africa. Colonization was over and the white man went back around six decades ago in many African nations; he lost power to dominate where he remained since he became an ordinary citizen. Yet *home homogenization* that would procure complete rehabilitation of the African grief-stricken soul is still a quest to struggle for.

Cry, the Beloved Country is set in pre-apartheid South Africa. However, there may be no mistake to argue that the time was quite the same as the established apartheid. The only existing nuance is that the novel was composed and published before the segregationist regime came to be politically institutionalized as the rule of the nation in 1948, the same year the novel was released.

Alan Paton was a South African anti-apartheid white activist who rejected the immoral principles of human bondage. Born in 1903 in Pietermaritzburg, Natal Province—a black-dominated land, he was angered by the racial oppression the black community underwent at the hand of the white man. This chapter reads *Cry, the Beloved Country* as an apology that expresses remorse against the aftermaths caused by the white abusive treatments of racial discrimination in a multiracial melting pot like South Africa.

2. A naturalist perspective

According to Bobzien, the philosophy of naturalism in the arts indicates that human existence is deterministic [2]. This implies that life, in many forms of its facets, is shaped by our past, our present, the inherent nature, heredity, and the environment where we grow and interact with the socio-cultural forces in the struggle to get a place. Naturalist determinism reveals that the human soul is born already predetermined to face the challenges of destructive forces that are hard to defeat. These caustic forces are a result of the diseased environment or simply are the environment itself that holds an individual into captivity. The victim, in many ways, struggles to liberate himself but cannot escape because of the deterministic chains that fetter him pitilessly. Since one has no possibility to escape the social and biological shackles, humans have less power to control what fate might decide. Free will, in this case, has no space as the capacity of human reasoning to make a choice leaves room to the natural forces that have the power to steer the individual's destiny in whatever space they decide.

In *Cry, the Beloved Country*, there are characters that appear doomed—condemned to perdition—though they are expected to emerge successfully regarding the social background they were born from. Absalom Kumalo is an archetype of Paton's determinism. He is the son of a renowned pastor; he was born in a Christian family of devout parents who inculcated in him a dignified pious education with positive values to raise him into a successful gentleman. Yet, the future of his existence will prove the opposite. After he has dropped school, young Absalom goes to Johannesburg and becomes a feared gangster—a housebreaker—who kills those who resist him. In complicity with Matthew Kumalo and Johannes Pafuri, it is Absalom who fatally shoots at Arthur Jarvis when they break his house to rob him, “He broke into a house in a place that they call Parkwold, and killed the white man who would have prevented him” [1, p.96].

This paradox in Absalom's life creates a void in his parents' expectations. His father Reverend Stephen Kumalo fails to understand how his son Absalom descended into criminality. Paton describes Stephen Kumalo undertaking a labyrinthine journey in the hazardous city of Johannesburg searching for Absalom. The father spends days and nights touring the town from place to place tirelessly though short of provisions. He finally discovers Absalom in a prison. He has been arrested for the murder of Arthur Jarvis and will soon be sentenced to the death penalty.

His father learns that Absalom had been living an adulterous life with some women in Johannesburg before he got arrested for the murder. This licentious behaviour disgraces the family and stains its social consideration which starts to peter out gradually. Horrified by the shameful experiences of his son, Reverend Kumalo feels profoundly shocked when he learns that there is a girl in Pimville that Absalom got pregnant before he went to jail. Upon the revelations obtained from the young white man that Reverends Kumalo and Msimangu meet at the Reformatory—a correctional institution where young Absalom had been detained for some days—the father understands that every bit of information he gets about Absalom's saga is quite accurate. The young white man unearths the boy's poignant misdeed:

We made an exception in his case, partly because of his good behaviour, partly because of his age, but mainly because there was a girl who was pregnant by him. She came here to see him, and he seemed fond of her and anxious about the child that would be born. And the girl too seemed fond of him, so with all these things in mind, and with his solemn undertaking that he would work for his child and its mother, we asked the Minister to let him go. [1, p.66]

All these disastrous situations that occur in Absalom's life disrupt the earlier hopes that the Ndotsheni community and his parents had had in him before he went loose in Johannesburg. Absalom's life is dictated by the principles of determinism. Despite the early decorous upbringing he got, the young adolescent falls trapped by fate and ends his life piteously. The environmentally damaging forces in which he is immersed since he joined Johannesburg have transformed the boy into a thug—a dreadful rascal—who only aspires to turn society down.

Besides these painful revelations of sensual immorality, Reverend Stephen Kumalo is outraged to hear that his son declared before governmental officers of the Reformatory that he has nobody to care for him. The young white man reassures Kumalo that his son denied having family, "Absalom Kumalo. Yes, I know him well. Strange, he told me he had no people" [1, p.65]. Kumalo feels heartbroken to have been negated by his own son. He imagines that Absalom "was no doubt ashamed" [1, p.65]. The unfounded declarations lead the father to think that Absalom is no longer the son he engendered and brought up with his wife. What seems perplexing is that the girl from Pimville that Absalom impregnated declares also that she has no family. The young white man unveils the sad news to Kumalo, "This girl has no people, and your son told us he had no people, so I myself and my native assistant have arranged it" [1, p.66]. Is it a realistic fact that the girl has no family? Or it is a sort of conspiracy the girl and Absalom constructed together to deceive people in a way to gain understanding, confidence, compassion, and thereby social assistance out of lie? Whatever way it may be, this girl has a tainted past that merits little confidence to believe in her declarations. Now, at age of sixteen, she has revealed to Absalom Kumalo that he is going to be her third husband. To have already known three husbands at such a minor age insinuates that the

girl is a prostitute. This implies that Absalom reunites in marriage with a slut and this union will likely not stand. Their future is uncertain. Paton bemoans the decaying society where the future of the nation is mortgaged. The racist society spares nobody; Absalom, Pafuri, Matthew, or the girl are all young individuals of the new generation; their lives are split apart and are doomed to perdition.

Consecutively, this naturalist and deterministic state that features Absalom's life is also shared with Gertrude Kumalo, his aunt. Gertrude, after she was separated with her husband who went to work in the mines for no return, descends into an illegal brewery of bootlegged liquor. Kumalo and Msimangu discuss her plight:

She came to look for her husband who was recruited for the mines. But when his time was up, he did not return, nor did he write at all. She did not know if he were dead perhaps. So she took her small child and went to look for him... She lives in Claremont...one of the worst places in Johannesburg. After the police have been there, you can see the liquor running in the streets. [1, p.23]

Beyond that, she has indulged into prostitution despite being married and from a Christian family. Reverend Msimangu reveals Stephen Kumalo the most appalling abyss of his sister, "I shall hide nothing from you, though it is painful for me. These women sleep with any man for their price. A man has been killed at her place. They gamble and drink and stab. She has been in prison, more than once" [1, p.23].

The departure of Gertrude's husband opens Pandora's Box. She sleeps with men she comes across and her sexual appetites have imprisoned her kid whose life is worth an orphan. Gertrude's body has become a shame to the community. To escape from this predicament, she decides to join a nunnery where she hopes her soul shall be delivered and her morality reestablished. Gertrude's awful misconduct is a product of the environment: the mysterious disappearance of her husband and the urban life in Johannesburg have established irrationality over common sense in her psyche. She has become a disgraced lady despite her past Christian upbringing. Reverend Stephen Kumalo gets upset the first time he learns about the horrors surrounding the woman.

Hyppolyte Taine, in his literary treatise *History of English Literature* (1863–64), argues that "vice and virtue are products, like vitriol and sugar" [3, p.178]. The fall of Absalom and Gertrude is undoubtedly the product of the environment that has corroded them to become social misfits. Johannesburg is a place where racial tensions culminating into lynching have antagonized the social relations between the two rival communities of whites and blacks. This racial polarity has frozen the heart of the humble and the fear of the weak to struggle for liberation. However, out of this freezing, the spirit of crime has grown high to threaten both the friend and the enemy, the white and the black, the rich and the poor—all experiencing the pain of human malice irrespective of color.

Prior to apartheid, Johannesburg welcomed a lot of miserable young blacks coming to try life during the period of racial oppression in South Africa. They were generally hired in the mines sites for extraction especially gold where they were overworked and paid menial wages. The degrading political treatments against these "home immigrants"—exacerbated by the deplorable socio-economic conditions they met while expecting a betterment of their lives—transformed part of them into terrible criminals. Some of the disappointed young black generations became drug addicts; others turned into street muggers who would break houses whenever an aperture occurred. Along the crimes of racial oppression, acts of

robbery and prostitution grew in black slums and crimes of all nature made the area a veritable Pandemonium. Paton creates black characters who fail in life with the objective to decry the evils brought by racism which is the source of the entire plight the nation is enduring.

3. Race and city—abandonment and social disintegration

Life in isolation is existence in half. For either humans or animals, community and company are important dynamics to provide comfort to the creature which needs social recognition among fellows. Paton's *Cry* reveals the bitter consequences of societal schism and rejection that threaten the social rapport at home. When Stephen Kumalo visits his brother John at home in Johannesburg, he is terrified to find that John no longer lives with his wife:

— Is your wife Esther well, my brother?

— My wife Esther has left me these ten years, my brother.

— And have you married again?

— Well, well, not what the Church calls married, you know. But she is a good woman.

— You wrote nothing of this, brother.

— No, how could I write? You people in Ndotsheni do not understand the way life is in Johannesburg. I thought it better not to write....

— But I do not understand. How is life different in Johannesburg?

— Well, that is difficult. [1, pp.34-35]

Kumalo comes to learn that John's family dissolved shortly after the couple left Ndotsheni. Reverend Kumalo questions the future of the nation to see families collapse. His feelings are, however, split into two parts: on one side, he condemns the rapaciousness of town life in Johannesburg that he suspects might have been the trigger of the family's crumble. On the other hand, he suspects the racial inequalities that have desecralized the prime of family foundations to be at the origins of the couple's failure. As a parson, he learns much regarding society and spiritual redemption in a world mined by racial divides. John was legally married to his wife Esther; now that he is living an adulterous union, with a woman he randomly met in the streets of Johannesburg, his brother Stephen Kumalo observes that this unethical union ridicules John and cannot last. The love that John and Esther enjoyed while in the rural village of Ndotsheni vanished by the time they came to settle into an urban space that subverts the traditional values that characterized South African ancestry for ages. Besides, the consumerist city of Johannesburg imprisons its inhabitants and enslaves the black community whose financial capacities are very limited. John and his real wife Esther are part of this community that is facing socio-economic whirlwinds. Once in the city, life and social relationships that would typify wife and husband dissolve. They start to alter progressively leaving an immense gap that will result into family collapse.

In the introductory section of the novel, Paton clarifies the motivations, the conditions, and the choice of the central theme that drove him to write the novel:

In the meantime, the position of the black people had been changing beyond recognition. The cities of Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban boomed; inevitably they attracted from the impoverished native reserves a never-ending stream of black people seeking work and city lights. They saw and envied the white man's world—his wealth, his comfort, and his alien ways; meanwhile, their own ancient tribal controls had been weakening. Their young men went astray; their old men were troubled and puzzled. Crime increased; the racial character deteriorated in the wretched hovels where the black men huddled in the slums of the white man's cities. This is the central theme of my novel, *Cry, the Beloved Country*. [sic. 1, p. xviii]

Examining the work's structure, the main incidents that drive force to the novel's plot occur in the city. It is in Johannesburg where Gertrude Kumalo descends into prostitution and bootlegged liquor brewery since she parted with her husband; Absalom drops school back home in Ndotsheni and starts going loose by the time he reaches Johannesburg; Arthur Jarvis like some other characters left Ixopo to settle in Johannesburg for business and humanitarian works; even his murder occurs in the same city too; John Kumalo was deserted by his legitimate wife Esther and took a woman he met in that city; still, it is in the same city of Johannesburg where Absalom is tried, sentenced to death and later executed for the murder of Arthur Jarvis. Paton has chosen the city of Johannesburg as a microcosmic representation of the social instability resulting from the massive emigrations of the deprived blacks across the nation. These young people were leaving the rural areas going to towns across the nation to struggle with life. As they were invading urban centers, crime went high; and police saw the black crime as a threat to the nation; they overgeneralized this black crime as an incarnation of the black race. They saw every black individual as an enemy of the nation—a nemesis to eliminate—a danger to conquer and put outside the spheres of the society. From this biased psychological ideology against blacks, racism deepened.

Cry, the Beloved Country is set in 1945 South Africa. This time of post-World War II is a time of tribulations and despair for the black people in South Africa. Besides the racial oppression, this marginalized community is enduring, they are also facing acute economic poverty that forces them to leave their homes and migrate to towns to try life despite that they know cruelty against coloreds is even harsher than in rural areas.

Is it a case of suicide they are engaged in as they already know the risk of unpredictable arrests and lynching they are running? Do they ignore the pain of forced disappearances and daily killings that are targeting black souls mainly in cities and urban centers? Certainly not. Blacks, like the other coloreds, needed to be recognized; they needed to enjoy equal rights and opportunities granted by the nation. That they massively migrated to towns to seek better economic opportunities especially in the new sites of gold mine extraction in Johannesburg was quite founded. Yet, their arrival was not welcome. It was perceived as a threat against the interests of the powerful decision-maker white man. This black rat race in the urban spaces of the “beloved” nation has been fictionalized by Paton in the novel. A lot of black characters were born in rural areas like Ixopo and went to settle in Johannesburg principally to try life. Though they are living in a place featured by racial uncertainty, some of those characters become bêtes noires in social relations. The case of Absalom, Mathew Kumalo, and Johannes Pafuri is indicative: they become criminals who perturb the city's security. This is also the same case of Gertrude: her misconduct as a prostitute and bootlegged liquor brewer sows chaos and instability. We learn that “a man has been

killed at her place” [1, p.23]; her baby is neglected; she is arrested and jailed at various times. These images of crimes insinuate a “double” perception of the black by the white man who absolutely regards every black person as a criminal and a permanent danger to society. Of course, this sweeping generalization that incriminates the innocent is unfounded. Crime is personal. It cannot be extended to a group or a community of people for the only reason that the culprit may have some socio-cultural relationships with the community to which they belong.

The urban alienation and racial marginalization uproot black existence. The ordeal of social disintegration that strikes John Kumalo does not spare Absalom, the only son of Reverend Pastor Stephen Kumalo. Under the illusionary dreams of town welfare, he drops schooling and joins Johannesburg. Upon the corruptive power of urban life, he becomes a rogue despite he is the son of a pastor. Above we saw how he descends into adultery and impregnates the promiscuous “woman-girl” at a younger age of sixteen. More poignantly, he becomes a feared robber and murderer. He kills the white altruist and benefactor Arthur Jarvis in an attempt to rob him. After a long tiresome search, the young white man together with Theophilus Msimangu and Stephen Kumalo finally discover where Absalom lies:

- (...) He is in prison, arrested for the murder of a white man.
- Murder? ... Still less about the murder of a white man.
- Yes, murder. He broke into a house in a place that they call Parkwold, and killed the white man who would have prevented him. [1, p.96]

Absalom’s life falls into dustbin. He goes to prison and is sentenced to the death penalty for the crime he committed—Arthur Jarvis’s assassination. The gracious upbringing he got from his Christian parents has been gashed by the city life that empties all the social values. Since he embraced rascality, the whole future that his parents had expected from him—being the only child they have—shatters.

Besides the evils of racial oppression, Morgainne Sue Du Plessis observes that urban life affected profoundly the living conditions of the black community [4]:

The diminished economic and political status, as determined by race, in the urban areas was worse than in the villages, in that the rural area may be poor, “but the Africans have at least a land to call home; in the urban areas, where they have no land, they become squatters, living in a village of sack, plank and iron, where nothing truly grows.”...white led-urbanisation led to the economic and moral degradation of black people in South Africa’s urban centres. [4, p.3]

Paton’s “beloved country” that he pleurably describes from the novel’s inception—“a lovely road” passing through “the fairest valleys” of rich green grass [1, p.3]—shortly dissolves with the painful representations of the destruction of the nation by racism and town life. The black “petals” that he sees falling down under the destructive hand of the authoritarian white man discomforts the writer who denies the social immoralities and unjustified domination that are sacking the foundations of the nation. Paton wants his “Cry” to permeate the country leaders’ minds in the hope to see them change their corrupt mindset and adjust the trajectory along which they are moving. Land and ancestry in African tradition

are interlinked. These dynamics define an individual's identity and situate them into a context of ownership, possession, recognition, and social consideration. To take away one's land or simply put to spoliates one's identity translates to enslavement, a sort of emasculation that cannot psychologically be healed. Paton decries the social excesses which are the source of family and society disintegration. These people who leave the village for the town are forced by the deplorable socio-economic conditions that do not enable them to live happily.

It is important to note that since the early years of South Africa's invasion by the whites, Blacks had been victims of land spoliation—a situation that placed them into a state of economic dependency as they were relocated to barren lands. In addition to the pain of racial marginalization, they also endured acute poverty. Both the two evils drove many young blacks to constitute gangs to claim for survival by hook or by crook either through peace or violence. Paton creates a group of three criminals—Absalom, Matthew, and Johannes Pafuri—to personify the black gangs that formed in cities to sow chaos by robbing, killing, raping in a way to create a retaliative force against white racism. There is nothing to observe; there is nothing to honour; there is nothing to revere. All is messed up. Even women are affected. The novel portrays Gertrude Kumalo descending into prostitution and an illegal brewery just to cope with the vicissitudes of life since her husband disappeared. Like Absalom, she becomes a social misfit because of the oppressive political structures that are enslaving black existence.

However, it can be argued that these crimes committed by blacks do not solely originate from the instigators' free will. The society that excludes them transforms the young generation into a population out of tradition. While reading the novel, the reader perceives a sad reality through Arthur Jarvis's papers "The Truth about the Native Crime" and "Private Essays on the Evolution of a South African". The white society has some part of responsibility in the crime committed by blacks. The nation's traditional values are gone to observe a community featured by jungle and mouse-cat watch. Jarvis's papers justify the legitimacy and foundation of the black comportment. In Arthur's argument, blacks should be heard to heal the psychological wounds of exclusion they carry which make them alien. Paton shows that blacks need recognition and careful attention from whites if ever one wants to build an integrative society devoid of racial attributes. The writer underlies the importance of this attention for social cohesion through the narrative.

While the writer reveals in the first position the dangers of city life for the marginalized black community, he however presents another façade that attests to the possibility of South African renaissance. To bring relief and hope to the nation in general and to the black community in particular, Paton imagines a triumphant black character John Kumalo despite the challenges he met on his journey to victory. He emerges from the downtrodden state to a successful politician with considerable wealth to confer him honor and respectability. This position that John achieves—a stage that some whites have never attained—provides ataraxia to the hopeless blacks. They start to realize that the horrors of racial exclusion they are enduring since the arrival of the Dutch in 1652 will not last forever though it is hard to imagine the time when salvation shall intervene.

4. Advocating unity and reconciliation

To underpin futuristic promising dawn, Paton introduces white characters in the novel who act as benevolent or as careful sympathizers of the black cause. At the center, the writer places the character Arthur Jarvis—a white young man—who sacrifices his life in the investigation of the main factors that have buried underground black destiny. The essays he writes mostly turn around this subject that sets to identify the roots of the black plight and what should be done to end it. Even the titles of his papers are very indicative of this point. Jarvis is white by skin, but he distances himself from the corrupt white mindset that seeks to destroy the *Other* on the basis of differences in skin color. Jarvis cannot tolerate this immoral debasement that tarnishes the name and identity of the white community. In his papers, he even goes far as to condemn his parents to have concealed him the real face of the South African society when he was still too young to understand the racial mysteries:

I was born on a farm, brought up by honourable parents, given all that a child could need or desire. They were upright and kind and law-abiding; they taught me my prayers and took me regularly to church; they had no trouble with servants and my father was never short of labour. From them, I learned all that a child should learn of honour and charity, and generosity. But of South Africa, I learned nothing at all. [1, p.174]

In an intimate conversation with John Harris, Arthur's father James Jarvis accepts this accusation, "My son and I didn't see eye to eye on the native question, John. In fact, he and I got quite heated about it on more than one occasion" [1, p.137]. Being white, Paton would like to reveal that all the white folk did not support the barbarous treatment that South African political authority directed against the black man. To exemplify this state of white goodness to the black cause, and in addition to Arthur Jarvis's benevolence, the writer imagines another white character Mr. Carmichael, a lawyer who undertakes to defend in court a black criminal—Absalom—who has killed a white man—the goodhearted and altruist Mr. Arthur Jarvis. This artistic weaving that Paton creates where the unexpected happens comforts the weak and foreshadows the aurora of redemption. Examining the writer's religious background, Du Plessis observes that

Paton evolved away from his particular branch of Christianity's isolationism, and in turn, came to believe in a more universal doctrine that was inclusive of all denominations. It transcended race, class, and privilege. Paton's religious universalism and belief in the power of Christian redemption manifest in *Cry, the Beloved Country*. It is evident at the end of the novel when both Jarvis and Khumalo have lost their sons, but find comfort in their universal Christian perspectives. (Sic,4, p.8)

That a white man defends in the court of justice a black culprit over a crime committed against a white person is actually unbelievable in the real context of what the society experiences. Paton breaks these barriers and demonstrates that possibilities to save the nation are still immense provided that human nature and society mutate toward rational thinking of brotherhood centered on social understanding. He also brings in the plot another white character Father Vincent who officiates in a prison the marriage of the black convict Absalom and the girl he has impregnated before he got arrested.

However, the plot climax occurs with James Jarvis. James is the father of late Arthur Jarvis who was murdered by Absalom and his friends during a house robbery. This white brave father possesses

exceptionally humane qualities that few people in the world may have. He makes difference from the ordinary. He accepts to understand and cooperate with Reverend Stephen Kumalo, the father of the assassin of his son Arthur Jarvis. When the *Umfundisi* confesses the crime committed by his son Absalom to James Jarvis, "It was my son that killed your son," the *umnumzana* James Jarvis reassures him, "I have heard you...There is no anger in me" (p.181). Paton creates an antithesis that surprises the reader. A free and fair understanding of the kind is not familiar in a society mined by racial conflicts. Forgiveness triumphs over an irrational hatred that is shaking the nation. To achieve "the beloved country" or simply "the beloved nation" that Paton romances in the beginning and that he mourns later, one must repress one's painful experiences and rise with a sense of rebirth featured by an inclusive love and generosity to raise and sustain the falling walls of the nation.

For the first time in life, while attending church service for his murdered son Arthur, James Jarvis shakes hands with a black person:

The service in the Parkwold Church was over, and the church had been too small for all who wanted to come. White people, black people, coloured people, Indians—it was the first time that Jarvis and his wife had sat in a church with people who were not white. The Bishop himself had spoken, words that pained and uplifted. And the Bishop too had said that men did not understand this riddle, why a young man so full of promise was cut off in his youth, why a woman was widowed and children were orphaned, why a country was bereft of one who might have served it greatly...he spoke in a language of beauty, and Jarvis listened for a while without pain, under the spell of the words. And the Bishop said that here had been a life devoted to South Africa, of intelligence and courage, of love that cast out fear, so that the pride welled up in the heart, pride in the stranger who had been his son. [1, p.148]

James Jarvis avoids extending the wrongs committed by Absalom to his father Stephen Kumalo. Despite the loss of his son Arthur, he reassures Reverend Kumalo that he should not worry about the crime committed by Absalom. James is sure that Pastor Kumalo neither sent nor advised his son to commit the irreparable. He is sure that Kumalo has no responsibility in the crime. Paton reveals that falsity and moral hollowness are personal vices that should not be extended in any way whatsoever to avoid the incrimination of the innocent. Additionally, the writer reveals that the victimization of an individual upon racial belonging is a crime beyond a reasonable point. He demonstrates that there is no inherent connection between an individual's reasoning and the color of his skin; since the physical cannot command the mental in a world of human rationality, such a relation cannot exist. Paton advises the South Africans, irrespective of colour, to transcend all the socio-cultural misconceptions which sow trouble that results into the disintegration of the society. As an altruist thinker, he preaches forgiveness, brotherhood, unity, and mutual understanding. Social and moral transformation is the prime he wishes the community to champion for. In the past, James Jarvis used to have a shadowy opinion about the black community. But now, he is the pioneer of change, the militant of peace, and the advocator of tolerance to understand the *Other*.

Out of Christian and liberal thought that characterized Paton, Eugene Risi notes that "Paton in particular always insisted that noble goals could only be attained through noble means" [5, p.4, Quoted Ngwenya, 1997, p.52).

Cry, the Beloved Country was published in 1948, only three months prior to the official institutionalization of Apartheid as the nation's political line upon which the country's affairs in terms of the political organization had to rely. Though the book was released few months before official recognition of the segregationist law, racial tensions were rampant in many parts of the nation. But the cities and urban centers were more polarized than the rural areas. Paton's "beloved country" was already bleeding. He believed that a corrupt mindset rooted in political egoism, social rejection, and cultural marginalization should be banned to reach a holistic civilized society.

Paton makes constructs of a society that would be thought of as a dream in the period the novel was written (1948). Yet his dreams became realistic with the fall of Apartheid in 1990 when the black spirit was freed from bondage it had been forced in for over a period of three centuries.

5. Conclusion

Paton's cry in his elegiac novel *Cry, the Beloved Country* is an appeal to a re-examination of the socio-cultural values that have been washed away to establish a world of terror marked of anarchy, immorality, and hollowness. He condemns racial marginalization and the massive urban migrations that have turned out the "lovely" nation [1, p.3]—the "beloved country"—into a jungle. Paton indicates that the idealization of *Race* and *City* is the principal mistake and great enemy of a nation. He reveals that the belief in racial superiority is an erroneous conception that can prompt a fall of society and the ruin of an individual's expectations to achieve success. Racial belonging and societal affiliation are attributes that every human being inherits accidentally since birth in a given community. Hence, the writer insinuates that the victimization of a person upon the color of the skin is absurd. He is angered by the permanent violence and brutality that polarize life at home and decries the white man's folly despite that he himself is one. The unfounded monopoly of the nation's wealth into which blacks are trapped engenders chaos and social degeneration where both the whites and the blacks inevitably lose.

Regrettably, in his mournful cry against the decaying nation, Paton suggests that the crimes committed by the blacks are, in some cases, the result of the white man's abuses that drive part of the young black population to migrate to cities in the hope to find ways to survive the acute poverty they are running. They escape to town; once there, the urban life corrupts them; they turn into feared rascals that sow chaos making life quite unbearable. Paton sends an apologetic message to the black community. The three gangsters—Absalom Kumalo, Matthew Kumalo, and Johannes Pafuri—who plot robbery against Arthur Jarvis, an act into which he is murdered—epitomize the descent of the black society into crime as city life does not permit them to meet the dreams they had before they left the rural home—Ndotsheni, Ixopo. While they idealize urban life as an answer to the economic distress they experience, they are rather trapped. It is this town life that destroys their prospect: Absalom is sentenced to the death penalty for a crime he actually committed. The city life does not improve the life of the downtrodden blacks. It obliterates their hopes, and the misty existence built on illusions jeopardizes the common good for both the black and the white. As long as the black is penned into an inglorious cage, the white can never aspire to achieve complete humanity.

Paton insinuates that race has no space to assign an individual's value in society. His position in a given community and in a nation should be evidenced by a sense of morality, human dignity, social integrity,

and a holistic understanding to reunite with the *Other*, to consider the *Other's* worth, and constantly ponder that the *Other* also needs to be socially and culturally recognized.

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