

Alan Paton's Style

Directions: Answer the following questions about style in relation to *Cry, the Beloved Country*.

1. What is style as applied to a literary work?
2. Turn to chapter 2. How does Alan Paton punctuate dialogue? What does that punctuation do for the story?
3. Notice the relative formality of the child's speech and actions. What does it reveal about the Zulu people living in Ndotsheni?
4. What does Paton's use of actual place names and some Afrikaans and Zulu words do for the story?
5. Go back to chapter 1 to reread paragraphs 1 and 2. Now turn to chapter 18, the beginning of book 2, to read paragraphs 1 and 2. What is obviously true of these two passages?
6. Read on in chapter 18 to see who is viewing the scene this time. What does this repetition with a new observer do for the novel?

7. Critics have at times noted the poetic qualities of the passages referred to above.
 - a. List at least five images that could be considered poetic.
 - b. List three of the phrases that are made up of parallel words joined by *and*. What poetic characteristic do you detect?
 - c. What might the author be saying by using such a poetic setting in contrast with the novel's events?
 - d. What mood do these passages create?
 - e. What kind of story might one anticipate from these descriptions?
8. A very sad poem is found in chapter 9, beginning, "Have you a room to let?" List at least three poetic features of that short section.
9. A prose-poem is found toward the end of chapter 9. It is made up of three paragraphs, each beginning with "Shanty Town is up overnight." What poetic characteristic often used by Walt Whitman is found in this passage?
10. Even in those passages that are strictly prose, Paton writes with great conciseness what he wishes to say. One example is found in chapter 5, paragraph 2. It begins, "So they all talked of the sickness of the land." List at least three details about the African situation that you learn from this short summary paragraph.