Cry, the beloved country, by alan paton essay

CRY, THE BELOVED COUNTRY, BY ALAN PATONChapter 1The opening chapter, which is almost a prose poem, introduces us to two adjacent country sides near the South African village of Ixopo—country sides which represent the two worlds of the novel.

Rich damp matted grass on the upland is an indication of the well-tended ground of a well-to-do white farmer. Desolate red soil in the valley, eroded and over-grazed and burned by many fires, is the context of the poor Africans living nearby. So poor has the soil become that most black people have moved away. The drama of the novel grows out of the co-existence of these two South Africas. In many parts of the novel, too, there is an underlying sense that a good use of the soil is related to the health of human society. Chapter 2We are introduced to the Reverend Stephen Kumalo, the novel's main character.

He is the priest of the impoverished parish at Ndotsheni, near Ixopo. A child brings from the storekeeper a letter from Johannesburg. A letter is something rare and momentous, and Stephen and his wife open it with trepidation: his brother John, his younger sister Gertrude, and, most important, their only child, Absalom, have all gone to the big city, and none of them has returned. The letter is from a fellow priest, Theophilus Msimangu, who says that Gertrude is " very sick"; he asks Stephen to come to Johannesburg quickly.

Stephen does not know Msimangu and he has never been to Johannesburg. But, after moments of tension in which the pain of their son's absence flows to the surface, Stephen decides, partly prompted by his wife, that he must go at once. They scrape together what little money they have; much of it

had been saved for the day—clearly never to occur—when Absalom would return home and go to high school. " All roads lead to Johannesburg." Stephen prays in his church and prepares for the long train journey.

His wife endures it all, suffering in silence. Chapter 3Stephen waits for the little train that…