IDENTITY IN THE EARLY FICTION OF ALAN PATON, 1922-1935

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ABSTRACT

The thesis represents an attempt, within the broad field of religion and literature and of identity studies, to read the early unpublished fiction of Alan Paton, dating from approximately 1922 (the end of his student days) to 1935 (when he became Principal of Diepkloof Reformatory). It is pointed out that research into the interrelationship of literature and religion, while well-established in a number of countries, is lagging in South Africa, and it is believed that the present thesis is the first full-length work of its kind, at least as far as South African literature in English is concerned.

The writer advances reasons for his explicitly religious and hermeneutic approach to questions of human identity, as found in Paton especially, and focuses these on two particular areas: narrative identity, as propounded in the later work of Paul Ricoeur, and relational identity (to the other human being and to the Other, God), as theorised by Emmanuel Levinas in his later writing. In order to contextualise the study in Africa and in South Africa, brief attention is accorded to writers such as Soyinka, Mbiti and Mbembe and to current debates regarding white identity in South Africa. To lend a sense of historical context, Paton's work is viewed against the backdrop of identity in colonial Natal. The overall approach adopted may be described as broadly, but critically, postmodernist.

Paton's earliest, fragmentary novel, 'Ship of Truth' (1922-1923) is read in some detail; his second, and only complete early novel, 'Brother Death' (1930), is commented on in as much detail as its frequently rambling nature warrants. A chapter on shorter fiction discusses his short story 'Little Barbee' (1928?), his short story 'Calvin Doone' (1930), his third novel, 'John Henry Dane' (1934), and a novel or novella, 'Secret for Seven' (1934). From all these readings it emerges that the Paton of his early fiction is markedly different from the Paton generally known: his concepts of human identity, of God and of religion, though earnest, are unformed and frequently ambivalent; his characterisation often stereotyped and wooden; his political views usually prejudiced and his stylistic and other techniques, though adequate in a young writer, highly repetitive.

Various suggestions are made for future research: into South African literature from a religious perspective, into other aspects of Paton's works, and so forth.

Key words: Alan Paton
South African literature
unpublished fiction
literature and religion
Christianity and religion
hermeneutics
identity studies

white identity
South African identity
narrative identity
relational identity

OPSOMMING

Hierdie proefskrif verteenwoordig 'n poging om die vroeë, ongepubliseerde fiksie van Alan Paton – dit wil sê van omstreeks 1922, toe hy afgestudeer het, tot 1935, toe hy die hoof van die Diepkloof-verbeteringsinrigting geword het – te ondersoek binne die raamwerk van godsdiens en die letterkunde en van identiteitstudies. Daar word daarop gewys dat navorsing oor die onderlinge verhouding tussen die letterkunde en godsdiens in 'n aantal lande goed gevestig is, maar nog nie in Suid-Afrika veel aandag gekry het nie. Die skrywer meen dat hierdie proefskrif die eerste volskaalse studie in sy soort is, ten minste wat Suid-Afrikaanse letterkunde in Engels betref.

Die navorser verduidelik sy uitdruklik religieuse en hermeneutiese benadering tot vraagstukke oor menslike identiteit, veral soos aangetref by Paton, en lê besondere klem op narratiewe identiteit, soos geponeer in die latere werk van Paul Ricoeur, en verhoudingsidentiteit (met die ander persoon en met die Ander, God), soos Emmanuel Levinas daaroor in sy latere werke teoretiseer. Ten einde die studie binne die konteks van Afrika en Suid-Afrika te plaas, word aandag ook aan skrywers uit Afrika gegee, soos Soyinka, Mbiti en Mbembe, en aan hedendaagse debatte oor die identiteit van witmense in Suid-Afrika. Ter wille van die historiese word Paton se werk teen die agtergrond van identiteit in koloniale Natal beskou. Die breë benadering van die skrywer kan as algemeen maar krities postmodernisties bestempel word.

Paton se vroegste, fragmentariese roman, 'Ship of Truth' (1922-1923), word redelik deeglik bespreek; sy tweede, en die enigste voltooide, vroeë roman, 'Brother Death' (1930), kry vanweë die wydlopige aard daarvan in minder besonderhede aandag. Een hoofstuk handel oor sy korter fiksie: sy kortverhale 'Little Barbee' (1928?) en 'Calvin Doone' (1930), sy derde roman, 'John Henry Dane' (1934), en 'n roman of novelle, 'Secret for Seven' (1934). Uit die lesings van hierdie werke word dit duidelik dat die Paton van sy vroegste fiksie iemand anders is as die Paton wat vandag bekend is: sy beskouing van menslike identiteit, van God en van godsdiens, al is dit diep en opreg, is nog ongevorm en dikwels ambivalent; sy karakteriserings dikwels gestereotipeer en styf; sy politieke menings gewoonlik bevooroordeeld, en sy stilistiese en ander tegnieke, hoewel aanvaarbaar vir 'n jong skrywer, uiters herhalend.

Enkele voorstelle vir toekomstige navorsing word gemaak: oor Suid-Afrikaanse letterkunde vanuit 'n godsdienstige perspektief, oor ander fasette van Paton se werk, en so meer.

Sleutelwoorde: Alan Paton
Suid-Afrikaanse letterkunde
ongepubliseerde fiksie
letterkunde en godsdiens
letterkunde en die Christendom

hermeneutiek
identiteitstudies
identiteit van witmense
Suid-Afrikaanse identiteit
narratiewe identiteit
verhoudingsidentiteit

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The Creator Spirit, from whom stems all human creativity.

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INTRODUCTION

Preliminary Remarks

The intention of the present writer is to record and reflect on unpublished fiction written by Alan Paton, in the light of current debates within three areas of concern which overlap at times: the general field of English studies at present; studies on identity, especially those in the domain of religion and literature; and South African studies. As with Alexander (1994:viii, 109) and perhaps Paton himself I do not regard the works, some of which are fragmentary, as publishable. Nonetheless it is my belief that a careful reading of them does justice to these hitherto almost unexplored works by one of South Africa's most well-known and important writers. They are not only interesting in themselves but also afford insights into his responses to the Natal society in which he wrote. Though they are very different from his later work, occasionally they do constitute its seedbed. Hence they deserve to be better known. It would seem to be logical that any study of Paton should begin with his earliest writing, yet with few exceptions most research has concentrated on his familiar published oeuvre,[1] though a gradual retrospective movement is becoming discernible, as in the publication of his poems in *Songs of Africa*, edited by Kohler (Paton, 1995) and the diary of the 1956 Kalahari expedition, edited by Wittenberg (Paton, 2005).

These works span the period between Paton's time at the Natal University College (1919-1922; Alexander, 1994:35-50) and his appointment at Diepkloof from July 1935 (Alexander, ibid.:124), hence stemming from a transitional phase in his career. The longer pieces of early fiction ('Ship of Truth', Paton, 1922-3; 'Brother Death', Paton, 1930a; 'John Henry Dane',[2] Paton, 1934b) afford a

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[1] Malaba's recent interesting study of Paton's actual ambivalence towards multiculturalism (2005), for instance, considers only the three published novels and *Debbie Go Home*.

[2] Not all the titles of his earliest fiction are Paton's own. 'Brother Death' is one which is indubitably his own final choice, but only after he rejected a number of other possibilities, and 'Ship of Truth' is pencilled in by him on the inside cover of the first MS. While the others should therefore technically be enclosed in square brackets, for simplicity I have elected to omit these and not to italicise them but rather to enclose them in quotation marks, since they do not refer to published works.

glimpse into the world of the Natal Midlands in the 1920s and 1930s so well described by Morrell (2001) and Thompson (1999),[3] indicating that Paton rarely ventures much criticism of this society, mostly accepting its norms of identity, and that he has not yet grounded himself in this country. The Natal region of South Africa long nurtured a sense of separate identity from the Union, its English-speaking inhabitants looking back to England as 'home' (Lambert, 2006:9-11). Hence it represents an important, because detached and ambivalent, perspective in discussions of South African identity, and Paton captures this standoffishness and other idiosyncrasies of Natalian, even merely Midlands, identity in some detail. The MS entitled 'Secret for Seven' (Paton, 1934d) seems to have been intended as a novel or novella rather than a short story, as I argue later, but also treats of uneasy and hypocritical local attitudes towards mixed-race identity.[4]

In addition, I suggest, a religiously-inclined conception of human identity as consisting in relationship with the other (in general, rather narrowly defined as the white male English-speakers of Natal and their families) and the Other, the divine,[5] does underpin many of Paton's characters, but is not always consistently pursued. One could argue that by bringing in some awareness of the spiritual Paton was attempting to transcend the extremely local (Natal Midlands) habitations and senses of identity evident in his characters. Nevertheless on the whole he does not succeed in enacting the writer's essential gesture, that of 'lifting out of a limited category something that reveals its full ... significance only when the writer's imagination has expanded it' (Gordimer, 1988:249). Instead, though he is not quite easy about 'the emotional and intellectual polarities ... the closed epistemological structures of South African oppression' (Ndebele,

[3] I am grateful to my colleague Professor John Lambert of the Department of History, University of South Africa, for drawing my attention to these two studies.

[4] It is probable that Paton was reacting to anxiety in white circles about racial purity, as exemplified for instance in Sarah Gertrude Millin's ambivalent and melodramatic portrayals of mixed-race people in *Dark Water* (1921) or *God's Stepchildren* (1924) (Rich, 1993:25 and 151).

[5] Though I am aware that some writers capitalise 'Other' in referring to the process by which human beings construct other people as their subjects, generally by projecting their own negative traits onto the last-mentioned, for clarity I employ the capital letter only when I refer to the divine, the wholly Other.

1989/1994:66-67), he hardly questions these decisively. I believe that it is incumbent on a critic of literature from this country to make this kind of failing plain; otherwise criticism does function in an ivory tower with no relation to social reality. Such is not my aim as a researcher.

Intriguingly, the two unpublished short stories ('Little Barbee', Paton, 1928[?]) and 'Calvin Doone' (Paton, 1930b) which are preserved in the Alan Paton Centre are set in Africa or the United States of America, perhaps implying that Paton was trying to broaden the scope of his understanding of identity slightly, but generally speaking they do not allow any room for identity to be perceived in terms of relation to the transcendent, in contrast to episodes in 'Ship of Truth', 'Brother Death' and Paton's later novels. The approach I have selected, out of numerous possibilities, is avowedly hermeneutic because it is appropriate for Alan Paton as an overtly religious writer and myself as a religious reader of literature, but obviously does not exclude any other interpretations. Indeed I would welcome debate on the issues I raise. In the rest of this chapter I contextualise the methods employed and in the following chapter, which more particularly concerns other aspects of the methodology I employ, I elaborate on my own hermeneutical approach and my involvement as a reader, particularly one of a religious persuasion.

As Griffin (2005c:1,2) points out, until the turn of the present century research methods were hardly discussed in English studies, a situation which is now altering rapidly. Hence it is now necessary for a researcher to make a selection from the 'vast array' available, usually opting for more than one method (ibid.:6), as in the present study where a combination of theories exploring the interrelation of religion and literature, concepts of identity, archival methods, autobiography, discourse analysis and textual analysis is consciously employed against the general backdrop of (South) African, postcolonial and postmodernist[6]

[6] For the purposes of this thesis I shall adopt a basic definition of postmodernism, itself a much contested term, as both a questioning of authority in the form of metanarratives and a welcoming

studies. Here too I have been obliged to be highly selective: it was evident that I could not cover the whole spectrum of, often competing, identity theories or theories of narrative. Gradually it became apparent that Ricoeur (e.g., 1991) and Levinas (e.g., 1993), standing in the hermeneutic tradition and leading proponents of narrative identity and relational identity respectively, were probably the most appropriate theorists for my purposes. Taking my cue both from Paton's own strong emphasis upon service to the other in the light of relationship to the Other (as, e.g., in a 1936 letter to Hofmeyr,[7] or in his close friend Railton Dent's view in the 1920s, quoted approvingly, that 'life must be used in the service of a cause greater than oneself', Paton, 1980:59), and from the well-known philosophy of *ubuntu/botho*, since I argue that in Africa it is essential to employ not only Western concepts but also African ones, I settled upon certain aspects of the work of Levinas and Ricoeur; traces of many other contemporary thinkers will also be discernible in my argument.

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of the resulting apparent fragmentation (cf. Barry, 1995:82-86). While it is sceptical, it allows and encourages different voices to speak, identifying those that are silenced. I find this useful in discussing texts which are not canonical but represent the early work of a writer who later became a pillar of the literary, if not the political, establishment. I allow postmodernism to include postcolonialism and the other 'posts.' For simplicity's sake I take postmodernism to be a single entity, though it is as diverse as any other collection of theories. Many critics in this country and elsewhere hold that postmodernism has run its course, e.g. De Kock (1996b:90), who maintains that even then it was 'well beyond its zenith' (although in 1996a he employs postmodernist sources fairly freely). In the 1990s a number of other South African academics engaged in a vigorous but inconclusive debate about the appropriateness (or not) of the various 'posts' and 'isms' (postcolonialism, poststructuralism, postmodernism, Marxism) to be found in local literary studies; e.g., Carusi (1989); Moran (1997); Sole (1997); Wade (1992). In North America and the United Kingdom, from different perspectives Cunningham (2002), Good (2001) and Zimmermann (2004) have expressed strong reservations about the practice of and the claims made by recent theory. From an African viewpoint Appiah (1992:140-157) questions postmodernism (and postcolonialism, for that matter), while Jasper (2004:112) points to the outdatedness of the term and its 'staid seniority' at present. My own position is that postmodernism and Christianity (or any other religion) are not incompatible (cf. the number of influential studies on the subject in recent years, e.g. Jasper, 2004; Vanhoozer, 2003; Ward (ed.) 1997; Ward, 2000, 2005a, 2005b) as long as each refrains from totalising claims and respects the other's contribution to the search for truth. My practice will indicate that I employ some postmodernist notions but disregard others.

[7] Influenced by his Diepkloof experience, he speaks of 'a philosophy ... that insists on cooperation as the essential mark of all fruitful human relationships, that in fact always insists that the other party in such a relationship is a person and not merely a native....For it is utterly impossible for a true democrat or a true Christian ... to enter into any other kind of relationship' (1936:1-2).

While the nature of the texts obviously called for an application of theory relating to narrative, again for the purposes of focus I chose to deploy in the main that aspect of the theory of novel-reading which relates to the narrator and the inferred author rather than all major theories or aspects of them.

Similarly, I needed to select fitting material from the many writers who have entered the dialogue between religion and literature, the numbers of whom are increasing rapidly. The sources which I do cite in this respect represent a small fraction of the total number of items published since 1975 or thereabouts. Most of these have appeared in the seventeen years since David Jasper (1989) published the first edition of his seminal *The Study of Literature and Religion: An Introduction*. An annotated bibliography of several hundred sources would have constituted a lengthy chapter on its own.[8] Consequently I have similarly limited the religion and literature sources I specifically use to a few suitable texts, mostly of recent vintage, while drawing on others for insights.

My intention is not, and can never be, to write the last word on Paton but rather to propose plausible readings of his surviving early fiction, being as self-reflexive and as comprehensive as possible (cf. Griffin, 2005c:8) within the scope of a doctoral thesis, my main aim being to make these texts better known and to read them within a consciously religious framework. Archives are necessarily incomplete (ibid.:8) and it is conceivable that some of Paton's missing MSS might be discovered in the Alan Paton Collection, the National English Literary Museum, or elsewhere. This might alter my conclusions slightly. For instance, the original texts of a number of speeches by Alan Paton were recently discovered in the APC by a Spanish researcher, Maria Martinez Lirola (2006). As Steedman

[8] Magee's bibliography (1983) of a decade of scholarship in the field, from 1973 to 1983, included over 150 items and covered seven pages in small print. Morey's contention that religion and literature studies had suffered a decline in the 1990s (1997:247) was barely accurate in 1997 and is certainly not applicable now. Nonetheless she makes an important point which is, regrettably, still largely true: that studies in the field are largely male-authored and that feminist issues are marginalised (ibid.:247, 255-264).

remarks, in the archive one has to operate with the knowledge of what is not there (2005:26) and this is indubitably the case with Paton's early fiction.

In order to offer a discussion approximating a 'thick' description, in the sense adapted by Clifford Geertz from Gilbert Ryle to refer to an interpretation of the context of key symbols and social discourse of a culture (1973/2000:20, 30; 2002),[9] I undertake an elementary form of discourse analysis, focusing simply on close reading of some sections of Paton's texts in sequence, on his language in use, while being aware that various kinds of such analysis exist (Griffin, 2005a:95; Jaworski and Coupland, 2000:3, 14-38; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002:1-4 and passim). I concur with Fairclough, who indicates that the analysis of texts should not be artificially isolated from an analysis of institutional and discursive practices within which texts are embedded (1995:9). He believes that detailed textual analysis will always strengthen any analysis of discourse (ibid.:187).[10] In fact, though Fairclough does not regard textual analysis as an end in itself, holding that it should lead to analysis of discursive practice, then to analysis of social practice and finally – and most importantly – to social change (ibid.), in reality most critical discourse analyses are in fact textual (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002:68, 90).

Here I am mindful that Foucault (*The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 1972:50-2, cited by Rose, 2005:79; cf. also Reddy, 2000:3 and Hall, 1997a:41-51) specified discourse as consisting of groups of statements which structure the way something is thought, and affect the way we act on the basis of that thinking. In other words, discourse comprises a particular knowledge about the world which shapes how the world is understood and how actions are carried out in it, articulated through all sorts of verbal and visual images and texts. Discourse is powerful because it produces human subjects (Rose, 2005:79, 80; Reddy,

[9] Cf. Clingman's view that fiction can open up a history of consciousness (1991:109) and Jacobs's (2003:29) that '[i]dentity... cannot be divorced from material factors and historical legacies.'

[10] De Kock observes pointedly that scholars and students are no longer very interested in doing close textual work (2007:18).

2000:3-4, 221). Consequently it is also a site of struggle over power (Griffin, 2005a:101; cf. Fairclough, 1995:1). As McNay observes, theorists of narrative and of post-structuralism share the presumption that identity is discursively constructed (2002:83; Steyn, 2001:186-187n4; Distiller and Steyn, 2004a:3). I adopt this social constructionist view in the present thesis, though I would suggest that the notion that the subject constructs her- or himself is an important corollary,[11] and, in line with Paton's own emphasis, I therefore regard human freewill as an important facet of identity, especially from a religious point of view. As McNay's article indicates throughout, the nature and source of identity are much debated. McNay adds that questions of narrative identity need to be discussed more consciously in terms of power relations (ibid.:91-3). In this respect I contend that the early Paton was not only shaped by the discourses of the Natal of his time, but also, on the whole, transmitted these, perpetuating the subjectivity constructed in the period. I shall therefore allude to some of the power relations evident in his unpublished fiction, though these are not my main focus.

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Rose identifies two main types of discourse analysis. The second is not primarily my concern in this thesis, since it is concerned with particular institutions, such as prisons, their practices, and their production of particular human subjects (Rose, 2005:83), although one could argue that the white English-speaking Natal male hegemony was itself an institution of a sort. However, the first is centrally concerned with language. Rose considers that since discourses are seen as socially produced rather than created by individuals, this type of discourse analysis is especially concerned with how specific views or accounts are constructed as real and truthful or natural through particular regimes of truth. Hence, she says, it is essential to read one's texts with great care for detail

[11] For Bauman identity can exist only as a project (1996:22-3). It is fair to mention that many of the theorists I refer to are men and, that, according to Fulkerson, many feminists are sceptical of recent postmodern theories of identity that do not attend to questions of power, conflict and desire (2003:110). For her social constructionism in itself should be differentiated from postmodernist accounts of the unsayable and unrepresentable, which to her better represent aspects of female identity (ibid.:117). Nevertheless her conclusion is that the subject is a relation or a set of relations (ibid.:118), which to my mind encompasses much of what I argue elsewhere.

regarding their assumptions (bearing one's own in mind): and with an awareness that what is excluded or made invisible may be crucial, a point with which I fully agree. The strengths of this method are its careful attention to images themselves, to what is not said, to the institutional or social site of a discourse and to contradictions (ibid.: 81, 82; cf. also Essien, 2000:51 who limits such analysis to analysis of dialogue as a facet of characterisation).

Consequently I sometimes note certain patterns in Paton's language use which reflect the functioning of ideology in his society (Griffin, 2005c:10). In this endeavour I am greatly assisted by Morrell (2001) and Thompson (1999), who usefully draw attention to some of these underlying ideologies. So as to convey the flavour of Paton's texts, to make their contents better known and to record some of the alterations in the MSS for posterity[12] I largely work through them consecutively, interweaving paraphrase, quotation and summary with commentary. The alternative might have been to produce an edition, suitably annotated, of Paton's early works, but it would have been extremely difficult to arrive at a *textus receptus* for 'Brother Death', at least, and the sense of his context and concerns would have been lost.

As with Jørgensen and Phillips (2002:69, cited in Griffin, 2005a:93) I regard any use of language as invested, not neutral: so too with Paton. In contrast with his purposes in his later fiction, Paton is not mainly concerned with commenting on society or effecting social change. Hence his discursive practice reproduces rather than restructures the existing order of discourse (cf. Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002:60-4, cited in Griffin, 2005a:94, 96). To a certain extent, therefore, I

[12] Through carefully stored under controlled climatic conditions and looked after by dedicated staff, some of the MSS are in a poor state and are threatening to disintegrate. Photocopies have been made of them but since these are in black and white many of the nuances conveyed by slight changes in ink colour, often indicating where Paton began a new section or rewrote wording later, or his use of different coloured crayons to score out material, are lost. These represent some of the few original Paton MSS left in South Africa and are therefore exceedingly valuable, not least because they are so early. I believe they need urgent attention to prevent their further deterioration, though I recognise that limited resources and the fact that the Alan Paton Centre is not, these days, focussed primarily on Paton may, most regrettably, hinder any attempt at conservation.

carry out some of the six steps of the critical discourse analysis described by Jørgensen and Phillips (2002:77-89 especially), since I: share with them an understanding that language and discourse practices are not neutral, contribute to the constitution of the world and are in turn affected by it; focus on actual language use; am conscious that language and culture – and my own practice – are historically situated; and am concerned with a critical examination of language, Paton's in this case. Consequently my close reading of certain features of his texts is intended to establish the meanings Paton seeks to impose on his world and, by implication, on his reader (Griffin, 2005a:97). My analysis is, as Griffin notes of all analyses, necessarily selective and partial, concentrating on certain textual features at the expense of others, influenced by my own purposes (ibid.:99). Though Belsey, in postmodern fashion, remarks that there cannot be a final signified: no one true meaning can ever come to light (2005:171-172) and I do not altogether dissent, with the reservation I mention later in this chapter, I would argue that there are certainly highly probable meanings which are indeed accessible. I consider that these are best arrived at through a detailed examination of Paton's actual wording and the choices he made in writing.

Hence at times I engage in a fairly full summary and discussion of the artefacts produced by Paton, informed by the research of scholars such as Morrell (Griffin, 2005c:11); at others, especially when Paton becomes wearyingly repetitive, I take the text as read. My close perusal of the text undoubtedly owes something to the New Critics and my earlier training as a medievalist but, I would hope, transcends the New Critical focus on the text as a complete, unproblematic artefact in splendid isolation from contextual, social and other factors.[13]

Such a method of textual analysis is in the end empirical, as Belsey rightly remarks (2005:157), adding that the way to use secondary sources is very sparingly indeed (ibid.:160). I largely agree, but have employed such sources as

[13] In saying this I am simplifying and generalising, but I have in mind a text such as the influential *Understanding Poetry* (Brooks and Warren, numerous editions, e.g. 1950 or 1976).

Morrell, Thompson and Kearney (2003) to set Paton's texts in their socio-political context: this is necessary since most of the MSS apparently accept the status quo as regards identity and politics, yet feel towards a conception of human identity that embraces the spiritual relationship with the other/Other and therefore calls into question the constricted Natalian construction of identity. Other readers are free to dissent. As Belsey observes, though the text exercises certain constraints one is not entirely at its mercy. The good analyst will be aware of the text's requirements but is free to deliberately refuse the position the text offers (ibid.:165). My own reaction to Paton's texts is to enquire into his emphasis upon relationship with the other/Other as constituting human identity, while interrogating the uncritical and simplistic perspective he often adopts; this comprises my response to Belsey's suggestion that the textual analyst address the questions posed by the text, asking, for instance: Where are its sympathies? Are there any surprises? (2005:170) Paton's sympathies are plain; surprises largely consist in his un-self-reflexive and uncritical attitudes and in the poor quality of some, though not all, of his early writing.

My work may also be situated in the context of current trends in theories of identity, particularly from religious perspectives, and in terms of contemporary debates in African and South African studies. These discussions may overlap with each other, of course, as is to be seen in the research presently being undertaken into questions of religion (Du Toit, ed. 2004) and of national and individual identity in post-apartheid South Africa: this thesis has been funded by one such project. I therefore make occasional use of J M Coetzee (1988) and Leon de Kock's work (2001, reprinted 2004) and of recent research into South African identity such as that by Devarakshanam (Betty) Govinden (2000) and Ashraf Jamal (2005), inter alia; and also of John Kearney's book *Representing Dissension: Riot, Rebellion and Resistance in the SA English Novel,* to show what Alan Paton was *not* doing.[14] The silences are expressive.

[14] He does not seem to be aware, for instance, of fiction by local authors such as Schreiner's *The Story of an African Farm* (1883), nor the contemporary *Turbott Wolfe* by Plomer (1925), Pauline

In this respect during the past decade or so the nature of South African literature and literary historiography, and whether such phenomena exist at all, have come under scrutiny (Chapman, 1996; De Kock, 2001; 2005a; 2005b; De Kock, et al. 2004; Lehmann, et al. 2000; Oliphant, 2003; 2004a; 2004b; Reckwitz, 1993; Smit, et al. 1996). Ten years ago De Kock was advocating 'the pursuit of smaller stories,' carrying out ethnographic as well as literary research, 'unmaking the larger narratives and splitting them into diverse and discontinuous local histories', before attempting such a project as a literary history of this country (De Kock, 1996b:87). More recently, Oliphant and De Kock have been questioning any claims of the existence of a national South African literature; the former points to the diversity in this country of peoples and languages, and therefore of literatures (2003; 2004b), noting that most surveys, even Chapman's which attempts to cover the entire field of southern African literatures, have been monolingual and privilege English (2003). In this sense the present thesis does the same; nonetheless even if there is no such thing as an entire edifice of South African literary studies as De Kock rather suspects (2005a; see also a number of the essays in Smit et al., e.g. Van Wyk Smith, 1996:74, 83), rightly preferring Gray's image of the archipelago (2005b:10) and the modern notion of the hypertext rather than a linear encyclopedia (2005b:12-13), it is important to undertake work that rests on detailed scrutiny. With a solid knowledge of smaller narratives, I argue, one can more confidently proceed to intertextual, hypertextual and transnational study (cf. De Kock, 2005b).

Smith's *The Little Karoo* (1925) and *The Beadle* (1926) nor Plaatje's *Mhudi* (1930), though as I point out he appears to take note of debates concerning miscegenation such as those popularised by Millin's *God's Stepchildren* (1924). In general Paton's early understanding of identity is slightly more penetrating than that of novelists of the time who took South African issues as their subject matter, but he is less aware politically than they. Relying on Kearney's research (2003) I selected five novels from his list for brief perusal: Mitford (1907); Paul (1909); Hardy (1912); Nicholls (1923); Attwell (1927). They may be summarised as evidencing a greater consciousness of South African settings and peoples, particularly black persons, than in Paton's early work, though exoticisation is frequently made use of for political or religious purposes: the former objectives are usually ambivalently racist and the latter sentimental.

The empirical nature of my research has been strongly influenced by Stephen Gray, whose *Southern African Literature: An Introduction* (1979) signalled a new and at the time controversial direction in studies of local literature by its detailed attention to context. In a lecture to the departments of languages at Potchefstroom University (now North-West University) in the late 70s Gray (n.d.) challenged researchers to undertake a synchronic study of all South African literary and cultural production, whether published or not, during a single year, taking note of the political and social environment at the same time. To the best of my knowledge this has never been done, but certainly more attention has been paid since the 1980s to the minutiae and the margins, as Coullie (2005:138) notes. An outstanding example is to be seen in Kearney's recent study. Researchers are also eventually beginning to show a greater interest in local MSS, whether literary or cultural, with which this country is richly-supplied in institutions such as the Alan Paton Centre and the National English Literary Museum. Yet a great deal of work remains to be done, not least in MS research. The present study makes a contribution in this regard.

Conspicuous by its almost total absence, with a few exceptions, is any research into literary production in South Africa which adopts a specifically religious point of departure, and it is hoped that this thesis will suggest a new direction while concentrating on some works of Paton which have ended up in the margins. His involvement in politics, his role as a South African writer and his strong Christian convictions have been much studied (e.g., Alexander, 1994; Callan, 1982; Foley, 1999; Medalie, 1998; Morphet, 1996; Ngwenya, 1997; Paasche, 1992; Schumann, 1999) but practically no studies have been carried out into his early work and the beginnings of these actions and perceptions: the careful creation of these roles and Paton's subject position or positions. Coullie might term this the interplay between factuality and fictionality (1991:1,3). Although the history of liberalism in South Africa and Paton's role in it has likewise been well documented (e.g., Iannone, 1997; Jordan, 1996; Rich, 1993; Vigne, 1997), not much is known of his earliest views. Similarly, only one local study has focused

specifically on his religious beliefs, and that only in very broad outline (Smith, 1987). Also, with the exceptions mentioned below, no attempt has been made to develop a religious approach to South African writing in English, nor has the question been answered whether this is possible or even desirable, though I have raised it myself once or twice (Levey, 1999; 2001a; 2001b). Paton's stature and the variety of his activities would seem to constitute a useful test-case to establish the viability of the project, which is reinforced by numerous and fruitful collaborations between people in the fields of religion, culture and writing elsewhere, as in Australia (Griffith, 1996; Griffith and Tulip, 1998; Scott, 1996a).

I therefore intend to make a contribution to what is a major interdisciplinary growth industry these days: the study of the mutual interaction of religion and literature. To my mind this is a fascinating, shadowy, dynamic world calling for a journey along and through the borders of human existence and of academic disciplines. Jasper observes that the task of studying religion and literature is carried out in the context of a journey and of change (1989:138) while Ward speaks of the thresholds which are academically fashionable, the ambivalence of the boundaries which it is the business of theology to transgress (2000:ix). In Paton's case, a generous leavening of political and humanitarian activism makes the journey still more interesting. Personally I prefer to use the term 'writing' rather than 'literature', to move away from the notion of the canon and of written texts. Paton's own wide range of endeavours supports this view. One might well argue that his life became a kind of text and was interpreted in terms of his own metaphors of the prophet and the pilgrim (see below).

My theoretical foundation may be described as broadly but critically postmodernist in that it will consider contrasts, contradictions, stresses and strains and the like in Paton, in the field of literature and writing in general, and in my own thought. Rather than discuss such issues from an external point of view, I intend, in a word used by Derrida early in his career, to examine them from the viewpoint of an 'inhabitant' (*Of Grammatology*, 1976:24, cited by Mills,

1996:122). This does not imply that I always concur with Derrida. By using this word I intend to convey that I am not detached from the material, but instead deeply involved with it. I quite openly own my own limitations and presuppositions: my whiteness, my maleness (and the power associated with both; cf. Ward, 2005b:78), my being on the other side of fifty, my consciousness that I am not neutral and that I don't want to be neutral. I experience both a tension and a fellow-feeling with postmodernism in the idea that one's presuppositions cannot be divorced from one's thought and practice. As Catherine Belsey puts it, 'No theoretical position can exist in isolation ... The independent universe of literature and the autonomy of criticism are illusory' (2002:29). Certain of my presuppositions would not be shared by some though not all postmodernists: my religious outlook on life, which causes me to believe that God, however one understands God, is at the centre of human existence, or my Anglicanism, which is of the type espoused by William Temple (1935) and Paton himself, though not necessarily at this early stage,[15] and much more recently by Rowan Williams (2000). Others, such as a questioning of critical practice and social systems, might be. An important area of contact at any rate is that religion has much to contribute to current debates about identity and something to learn, especially if it is held that the self is constituted through a meeting with what lies beyond it (Walton, 2000:13). Furthermore, to a large extent I consider my loyal opposition to the early Paton to display points of similarity with the postmodern awareness of the crisis of authority (Steyn, 2001:150, quoting Owens, *Beyond Recognition: Representation, Power and Culture*, 1992:166) and with the postcolonial countering of various imperialistic strategies (cf. Steyn, 2001:199n4).

[15] Having moved away from his Christadelphian roots, as a student Paton often worshipped in the Methodist church (Alexander, 1994:65; Smith, 1987:4-5) and experienced the strong evangelical influence of the Students' Christian Association (Alexander, 1994:40-41, 54). While at this early stage he was probably not aware of Anglican theology as such (Nuttall, 2004), his Christian friends' more holistic view of life began a change in him, running from religious belief into action (Alexander, 1994:40-41, 54). He had made friends with Neville Nuttall, an Anglican whose deep religious beliefs strongly influenced him, as early as 1921 (ibid.:42). After September 1925 he was encouraging Dorrie to worship in the Anglican church again (ibid.:78, 82). However, he was only confirmed as an Anglican on 10 December 1931 (ibid.:107).

In the thesis as such I look very briefly at contributions which aspects of the work of theorists such as Levinas and Ricoeur can make to the discussion, while recognising that applying the concepts of Western thinkers to an African / South African situation is not necessarily unproblematic: a point which Mbembe (2002a; 2002b; 2004) emphasises. Foucault's theories of power relations and in particular the relation between power, discourse and politics (Foucault, 1978) are useful in the case of one such as Paton who swam in a sea swept by powerful political and religious currents of various sorts, and who contributed his own kind of knowledge-making in his autobiographical and other writings (Coullie, 1991:19). Levinas has made profound contributions to understanding the interweaving of religion, culture and writing from the viewpoint of a people for whom all three practices have arisen out of an experience of oppression and exile. He presents a theological, almost a mystical, account of a transcendent Beyond which disrupts, while also providing the condition for, the logocentric (Ward, 1995:9), revealing itself as a Trace (Levinas, 1987; 1993; Marty, 1998:280). Ricoeur's understanding of narrative and identity will be drawn upon at times (Ricoeur, 1991; White, 1991). While each of these theorists operates within a Western and therefore limited post-Enlightenment paradigm, each does seem appropriate to Paton and the study of religion and literature in this country because their philosophies not only attempt to describe the world as they see it, but to change human perceptions and actions also, though not in the Marxist sense. In the 1920s and 1930s Paton was not yet an activist, but he certainly already believed in the power of religion to change people.

Religion and writing

The study of religion and writing is presently well-established in a number of countries, such as England and Scotland, some in Europe (such as Germany, France and Holland), the United States and Australia. Almost no studies have been undertaken in terms of South African writing, though, except for the occasional short study (Kuschke, 1982; Steenberg, 1973; Viljoen, 1992) or thesis

(Woeber, 2001)[16] and very little in terms of African authors in general, except where Islam and Muslim writers are sometimes discussed (Bangura, 2000; Harrow, ed., 1991; Newell, 2006) or where postcolonial studies are brought into play (Scott, 1996a and 1996b). Now and then studies on African writers and religion appear in contemporary topics of debate such as gender (Le Roux, 2005).

Though one might expect religion and writing to constitute a well-defined, coherent and harmonious sphere of interest, the field might perhaps be best described in Kort's wry words as a 'forum of disputation constituted by processes of many kinds' (1990b:577). The truth is, of course, that there are as many approaches as there are, not just religions, but individual practices of religion.

I should like to define religion for the purposes of this thesis in relatively traditional terms as that which attempts to tie, to link, to bind, human activities, even and especially the contradictory, together by an awareness of the

[16] Woeber has also published articles related to her thesis (e.g., 1995 and 1997) where a respectful but interrogatory discussion of the effects of religion on autobiographies by black South African writers is central; work by Hofmeyr (e.g., 2004a and 2004b) carefully researches the effects of religion on reading in South Africa, but without a specifically religious ethos; Van Vuuren, likewise a South African scholar, has published an article on Golding which is theologically sensitive and is very much in the 'Religion and Literature' tradition (2004), but its subject-matter is not South African. Marais (1997) has undertaken a study of J M Coetzee in Levinasian terms but focuses on aesthetics, respect for the other, the relation of ethics and politics and the autonomous subject in Levinas and Coetzee (1997:1, 17, 51, 59, 66), proceeding philosophically rather than religiously (cf., e.g., Marais' references to infinity, ibid.:62 and 64). In contrast, very thought-provoking is Ledbetter's study of desire in Coetzee's *Age of Iron*, which explores issues such as silence and pain in this novel from an explicitly religious perspective (1996:104-119, especially 108-109 and 117-118). Hamilton's article on suffering in *Dusklands* in my view studiously avoids any religious readings of a positive nature (2005), while Du Plooy and Ryan (2005:47) speak about compassion, forgiveness and the transcendence of pain and suffering in Morrison without admitting any metaphysical dimension. As far as I am aware one of the few local studies discussing religious aspects of South African literature is by a theologian, du Toit, who after a summary of various works by overseas writers depicting Jesus adduces an African example in Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat* (1997:819-830) and very briefly considers poems by two Afrikaans writers, Sheila Cussons and Breyten Breytenbach (ibid.:832-834). Another is a chapter by Opland (1997), which covers some of the same ground, making the valid point that English and Afrikaans writers were free to accept or reject Christianity (1997:300, 315) while for black [African] writers this religion was only part of a 'cultural complex imposed from without' (ibid.:315). Ridge has published a number of articles in this vein, e.g. on allusions to religion in Pauline Smith (1985/1992:128-132). Stuart's doctoral dissertation (1988) seems to be the only specifically theological study of Paton; it appeared in the United States.

transcendent. In so doing I explicitly wish to acknowledge that the other sense of 'bind', in terms of limiting, confining, is also all too often operative.[17] Such a consciousness of the paradoxical nature of religion is central to my own thought and is echoed in Paton's own sense of the unknowability of God and the enormous challenge of consistently practising his religion.

Generally speaking the validity of reading writing from a religious perspective is not much in debate these days, though in the past such critics as Jonathan Culler (1984) have spoken their minds rather freely. As arguments on both sides have become more reasoned, the acceptance of the methodology has become more widespread, even if there is sometimes uneasiness about overt expressions of faith (or of doubt, for that matter). The pertinence of an interdisciplinary approach to a matter that for better or worse has deeply influenced humankind and its writers is acknowledged, though one still finds annoying tendencies to reify or essentialise matters in certain religious readings of writing, or the programmatic application of pre-existing ideas to material.

For many years various Judeo-Christian approaches have dominated the scene, reflecting a wide range of theological and philosophical trends. More recently, the contributions of other religions have begun to surface, such as Buddhism or Islam or Aboriginal religion, but these are still in the minority. The imbalance is being redressed by the work of scholars such as Griffith, Scott and Tulip. Griffith (1996:203) cites Karen Armstrong's view (*A History of God: the 4000-year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, 1994) that Islam, Judaism and Eastern Orthodoxy seem to be more in touch with the emotional and imaginative domains than Western Christianity. I would argue that this may be true in the many areas of the Western Christian tradition which have been affected by Enlightenment paradigms, but should like to add that key doctrines of *both* Eastern and Western

[17] In this country and in Africa the close links between Christianity and the colonialist enterprise provide a particularly glaring example of such a sense; see the studies by the Comaroffs (e.g., 1991, 1997) and Maluleke (e.g., 1998).

Christianity such as creation and incarnation not only make a powerful emotional appeal, but are also incapable of being understood in a wholly rational sense: imagery and imagination do come into play.

Some Christian views have been fundamentalist, attempting for instance to derive explicit norms for reading and writing literature, such as morals, unity, depiction of characters or plot, from Scripture (Meeter, 1972). Many such perspectives have reacted sharply against contemporary literary theory because of its non-foundationalist premises and Derrida, as one might imagine, came in for particular opprobrium, though also for spirited defences (e.g., Walhout, 1985 and Underwood, 1986). The furore is dying down at present, with a number of books having demonstrated Derrida's and other leading postmodernist thinkers' actual interest in religion (e.g., Anidjar, 2002; Derrida and Vattimo, 1998; Ward, ed., 1997), even if they often exclude metaphysics as such. Conversely, it would be a mistake to suppose that Christianity and criticism are necessarily at loggerheads; mainstream critics of a Christian persuasion, apart from Eliot, Gardner and Lewis (see below), include not only previous mainstays such as Northrop Frye (1982) and Frank Kermode (1979),[18] but also Valentine Cunningham (2002), Professor of Poetry at Oxford.[19] Many leading British scholars in the field of religion and literature hold chairs at major universities, such as Glasgow (Jasper) and Manchester (Ward). However, it is true that several books are available which undertake to provide guidance for the conservative Christian reader (e.g., Barratt et al., 1995; Ryken, 1979; 2002; Walhout and Ryken, 1991) and that a number of earlier influential readings of literature, overtly Christian while not strictly fundamentalist, have employed broadly humanist, formalist or new critical methods (T S Eliot, 1935; Helen Gardner, 1983; C S Lewis, 1961), sometimes with little self-reflexivity as to political or other presuppositions.

[18] Still, at the age of ninety, regarded by one writer as the last of the great critics (Sutherland, 2006).

[19] Cunningham considers that in practice most theory boils down to 'temporarily useful lines of reading approach, utilities of interpretation, simple practices of criticism ..., mere matters of belief, of hunch even – ' (2002:15) and in principle I concur, though possibly he protests too much.

In the same general vein are readings which have attempted to measure literary works by Christian theological standards, e.g. Battenhouse (1969) on Shakespeare, or which have read the Bible or theology as literature (e.g. Alter, 1982), or conversely works of literature as susceptible to Christian readings. Sometimes these are sensible, as with readings of the uses of biblical imagery in Ngugi or Faulkner. Often they are appropriate, as with theological readings of Dostoyevsky or John Updike or Denise Levertov or Flannery O'Connor or Patrick White or Themba Msimang or D B Z Ntuli or Susan Howatch, all confessedly Christian writers. But unfortunately it is not uncommon for the critic to exhaust him- or herself in an irritable reaching after images of Christ (or conversely the anti-Christ) in all of modern literature (as Meeter, 1972).

More sophisticated and sympathetic are treatments of twentieth-century literature such as that by Etchells (1969) which examine its philosophical foundations and parallel these with Christian reflections on human existence, attempting to show how each can complement a reading of the literature concerned. Etchells' work, taking existentialism as its point of departure, offers a clear example of how, generally speaking, Christian treatments of literature, far from transcending the concerns of their day, are embedded in the dominant contemporary philosophy. In the same way, my own readings of Paton or other writers mirror my interest in how contemporary theories of identity may be useful in understanding these authors' works. Such an interest arises also out of the current post-apartheid South African climate, exhibiting various, often markedly self-conscious, claims to identity such as the formation of the Nativist Club and a large-scale re-evaluation of their identity by white people in particular. This latter phenomenon is discussed at length by Steyn (2001:passim), Distiller and Steyn (2004a:1-11), Wasserman and Jacobs (2003a:15-17), and Steyn (2003:235-245), who correctly points to 'the ideologically powerful space of whiteness' and its privilege (ibid.:235-236), which has been theorised as the norm (2001:162), and observes how postcolonial theorists remind one that in South Africa white identity has

depended largely on a bifurcation in which 'Africa' is split off from the 'European' (2003:236). Her conclusion that in fact there exist many 'whitenesses' (2001:xxx) is borne out by Paton's fiction. As I have noted, these enquiries have been prioritised and institutionalised by generous South African government grants for research in these areas but I am not sure that anyone has yet thought to offer a metacritical perspective on this phenomenon.[20] In any case, I consciously acknowledge these influences, which offer me both personal and intellectual challenges.

An obvious area of debate arises in discussion over the nature of 'Christian literature' and whether there is such a thing. Very often the issue is trivialised into assertions that Christian literature 'must' embody the idea of hope in Christ (Werkman, 1996), that it 'must' be moral (Walhout, 1998). At its worst, of course, the dogma is expressed in the form that Christians should read only explicitly Christian works by confessedly Christian writers; that is if they read anything other than the Scriptures, theology and devotional books at all. Generally speaking, however, sense prevails, with many recent 'Christian' novels simply not being worth reading (Terrell, 2006; Terrell, 2002 tartly points out that a narrow 'piety is not enough', arguing his case in convincing detail, especially on pp. 249-257; see also Kilby, 1969/2002: 277-278).

Considerations of the nature of language and of the creative process have often produced very fruitful debate and represent a major portion of present output (Edwards, 1984; 1988; 1990; Jasper, 1995; Mills, 1996; Ward, 1995; Wright, 1988). A number of these rely on various forms of pneumatology or trinitarian theology for their basic argument, as did one of the earlier major contemporary exponents of literature and religion studies, Dorothy L Sayers (1941). Especially interesting are the views of professional linguists such as Vande Kopple (1991) or Yallop, who holds that linguistic meaning is but one form of meaning

[20] Of numerous studies of 'South African white identity' per se one could instance Chipkin (2007, forthcoming) and L'Ange (2005).

(1994:294-295), thereby setting both logocentricity and the attacks on it in perspective.

Regularly being published are subtle readings of literature in terms of current theologies, philosophies and cultural thinkers (e.g., Edwards, opp. cit.; Ferretter, 2003; Fiddes, 1991 and 2000; Gearon, 1999; Jasper, opp. cit.; Kort, 1990a and 1990b; Ledbetter, 1996; Ong, 1977 and Ong, et al. 1995; Ruf, 1997; Tsuchiya, 1997; Vanhoozer, 1998; Ward, opp. cit; Wright, op. cit., etc). In a recent article Wright (2005) traces trends in the arena of religion and literature from modernism, represented by Nathan A. Scott and George Steiner, to postmodernism, as in Robert Detweiler, adopting Detweiler's view that the curatorial (roughly, the educational), hermeneutic and existential responsibilities of scholars in the field are still primary (2005:19). I do not disagree, but want to add that it is striking and perturbing that although many such readings are intellectually radical, not all of them evidence much political engagement with society. (One honourable exception is Gallagher, 1994, while the recent work of Ward, 2005a and 2005b, is moving in this direction.) It seems to me that many religious theorists of literature are thoroughly familiar with modern philosophical schools, but tend to operate in a rarefied vacuum remote from the mundane world.

Alan Paton

Such was not the case with Alan Paton. For instance, an incident I discussed in a 2001 paper (a reading which I correct below) demonstrates his familiarity with the current thought of his time, his vigorous application of it, but, interestingly, not his engagement with the politics of the period. In 1934 (or very early in 1935) he apparently gave a public lecture entitled 'God in Modern Thought' (1934a). The lucid style and content of his paper bear a slight resemblance to William Temple's Gifford Lectures, delivered in Glasgow in 1932-3 and 1933-4 and published in 1935 as *Nature, Man and God*, though a direct influence is not demonstrable. As with Temple, Paton argued for the immanence of God in the

world (Paton 1934a:3). He decried extreme behaviourism and insisted upon the existence and importance of human free will and choice (ibid.:5-9), asserting that '[r]eligion and human choice stand or fall together' (ibid.:6). Following McDougall (*Introduction to Social Psychology*) he champions purposivism, bringing the purposes of God into the equation (ibid.) and concludes, in terms which would probably be termed 'holistic' and 'foundationalist' today:

> We gain freedom, not by any intellectual distrust of our emotional endowment, but by recognition of their complememtary [sic] function, by the seeking of the truth, by the holding of the beautiful, by the striving for the good, by the worshipping of That which is beyond knowledge, which men call God (ibid.:9).

Bram Fischer may have been a member of Paton's audience and certainly borrowed the TS. On returning it, in an affectionately-expressed covering letter dated 20 February 1935 apologising for keeping the document so long (Fischer, 1935) he acknowledges that Paton had dealt with the topic 'carefully & reasonably', but regards the finish as 'not quite satisfactory', finding the reference to God insufficiently reflecting the 'realness & the essential reasonableness & yet the altogether beyond reason of the Father disclosed in the very humanness of the words of Jesus.' He avers that applied [dialectical] materialism is at the base of things and, ironically, given Paton's aversion to J B Watson, declares that the latter is a strong exponent of this philosophy and is exactly what it needed to make its position at all thinkable. Paton would undoubtedly have considered Fischer's views to be extremely limited, and limiting of human life.

It is also important to note that the talk, at least in TS form, embodies a number of Paton's characteristic weaknesses: a sureness, a certain self-consciousness, a complete lack of awareness of gender. A religious reading of Paton, I hold, should therefore bring out not only Paton's strengths and his attempt to live out a 'wholistic' vision of life, but also his weaknesses, all the while accepting the essentialness, to him, of the existence of God. Such was the motivation for his several careers in education, penal reform, political activity, writing and speaking.

In this respect one could explore the appropriateness of some of the key concerns of religion to the creation of Paton's identity as a prophet and pilgrim, his emphasis on the need that the nation be healed, his frequent expressions of the theme of hope, his view of historical process. One could see whether other writers share similar views, or whether he is a maverick. Or whether his views are typically those of a white Christian, whereas a black religious writer might have quite other purposes. Such case studies would contribute an intriguing perspective to South African studies of writing which has hitherto been neglected.

The present thesis essays one such attempt, keeping in mind that Alan Paton was a strongly self-conscious figure who deliberately cultivated particular perceptions of himself, creating a distinctive identity and clearing a well-defined space for his activities in the images of the pilgrim and the prophet.[21] Particularly in later years these were his favourite self-portraits, as signalled by the titles of the two volumes of his autobiography, *Towards the Mountain* and *Journey Continued* (Levey, 2001a and 2001b; Paton, 1980 and 1988). These titles also suggest the strong sense of directedness which Paton experienced throughout his life. His sense of identity as a Christian writer, deeply involved in South Africa, in politics, with other people, naturally leads to the questions of how he perceived the identity of himself and of other human beings in general, of when his consciousness developed and to what extent it was manifested in his earlier work, as well as to what extent it mirrors the concerns of other South African writers about identity. As de Kock has pointed out, there exist multiple constructions of identity in this country (2001:271; 2004:8), and 'writing - understood here as the efforts to establish an identity within the determinate socio-cultural habitus of "South Africa" - has been an extremely vexed occupation' (2001:272; 2004:8). De Kock employs the metaphor of the seam to suggest the ways in which South African writers, using the nib as a stitching

[21] Le Roux (2003:1), former rector of Edgewood College of Education and hence an official of the Natal Education Department, who had frequent contact with Paton in this capacity, indicates that he 'rather agree[s]' with this assessment, adducing one or two further examples of Paton's actions in this respect.

instrument, attempt to suture the incommensurate (2001:276; 2004:11). He argues that '[p]erhaps to be a "South African" writer in the full sense requires imaginative inhabitation of the seam as a deep symbolic structure' and points out that the white SAE canon – Pringle, Schreiner, Campbell, Smith, Butler, Paton – usually consists of writers 'who have been intensely preoccupied with cultural doubleness, either of the home (Britain) versus outpost (South Africa) kind or related to the tortured politics of Black and White and here and there' (2001:284; the list is extended in 2004:18).[22] Paton's early work on the whole bears out de Kock's contention by embodying its opposite, particularly as elaborated by Bethlehem's remark on an earlier version of de Kock's notion, that '[n]ational consciousness is very much a matter of seeming – of appearance – and of seaming – the quilting together of an authenticating and continuous historical narrative' (2000:143). Paton is not yet at the stage of realising that a seam exists and except in his later novel 'Brother Death' is nowhere near comprehending such a national consciousness. Hence the lack of a sense of national identity, and the correspondingly limited personal identities of his characters, are themselves telling.[23]

Obviously I contend that a Christian approach to the topic of identity (conceived in relational and narrative terms) in Paton's early work is appropriate, although many different readings of his fiction could be carried out, some of which might overlap. A few instances, inevitably sketchy, follow. One might read these works in terms of E M Forster's *Aspects of the Novel*, in terms of plot, setting, theme, and especially character. Also broadly within the humanist framework, one could perform a socio-political reading from a liberal humanist perspective, along the

[22] In a recent article De Kock revisits his metaphor of the seam (2005a), indicating that he is uncertain that it captures current literary conditions in South Africa and suggesting that there might be many seams and much diverse fabric (ibid.:81). However, the image of the single seam still does appear to capture the mood of much earlier English writing in this country, though at present De Kock is much less convinced about this (ibid.:71) and I still consider it to be a useful one for reading the earlier Paton.

[23] The debate surrounding the suppression of difference in the interests of a unitary 'South African' literature or identity continues, of course, and the 'mobility of selfhood and representation' which de Kock perceives in many writers such as Sol T Plaatje (2004:20) offers a useful contrast to the fairly fixed identities in Paton's earlier fiction.

lines of what John Kearney has recently undertaken in his study (2003). Or the novels could be interpreted from a more materialist position, in terms of conditions of oppression and seeds of revolution or their like. From the contemporary armoury one could draw weapons such as paradigmatic and syntagmatic patterning, focalisation (Cohan and Shires, 1988:52-68; 94-104) and so on. One could read these works as autobiographical and/or as containing the seeds of *Cry, the Beloved Country*, as Peter Alexander (1994) tends to do, with a certain amount of justification. It would be possible to deconstruct them and to show ways in which these texts contain contradictions or aporias (kinds of impasse, unresolvable issues). The novels could be interpreted in terms of their positioning in terms of the metropolitan and imperial centre and/or in terms of the way in which they exhibit relations of power, generally marginalising characters who are not white, English-speaking males. And so forth. It is certain, however, that none of these expositions is neutral, as Catherine Belsey commented (2002:4, 27).

I therefore freely admit that my approach to Paton is also not objective. I respond strongly to his religious convictions and to the power of his writing. He was a powerful writer, a consummate rhetorician and a devout one – as well as a flawed one. Hence I shall be foregrounding these issues in my own interpretation: it melds religion and aspects of other possible readings (such as some of those just mentioned), and though it is as necessarily provisional as any other reading, in postmodernist terms it has at least as much validity as they. In terms of such an explicitly religious critique I perceive not only deep commitment and remarkable skill on occasion, but also an earnest and sometimes forced 'writing in' of Christian ideas, and certain considerable and distinctive failings: a 'writing out' of the role of women, and even more so of the presence of black people, for example, and not much apparent awareness of the major events in the world outside the Natal Midlands, where Paton sets his three, perhaps four, early novels or parts of novels. Such events include the Natives Land Act of

1913, the strikes of 1913-14, the first World War (mentioned occasionally), the Bulhoek Massacre in 1921, the Rand Revolt (1922), the politics of Fusion between nationalists and the Labour Party in 1923, the Great Depression of 1929-31 (Davenport and Saunders, 2004:271-272; 283-28; 292; 317-323). The Bhambatha [Bhambada][24] Rebellion of 1906 (Davenport and Saunders, 2004:242) does feature in 'John Henry Dane', as mentioned below, but only to provide a melodramatic backdrop: it is not engaged with as a key incident in the ruthless and violent march of British colonialism.[25]

As Paton himself acknowledges, when he entered the Natal University College in March 1919, he knew almost nothing of the political events of the time (1980:55). He adds that Railton Dent's main concern for Africa was moral rather than political and that though they may have discussed the politics of race, this would not have been with an eye to reforming South African society politically (1980:61). Hence, when the so-called Bhambatha Rebellion of 1906, ruthlessly crushed by British colonial military forces (Lambert, 2006:17), is referred to in 'John Henry Dane', it takes on overtones of the 'swart gevaar'. As Foley has pointed out, Paton was not a liberal all his life (1998:64),[26] and perhaps the novels from this phase could be described as, at best, 'pre-liberal' in outlook.[27]

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[24] The latter is the preferred spelling according to Coan (2006:9) but I shall use the more commonly-known version.

[25] Chapman describes Pauline Smith's Aangenaam Valley as 'a refuge against time, change and history' (1996:189) and Paton's valleys, in his earlier narratives at least, exhibit many of the same characteristics, though they are not as claustrophobic.

[26] Paton's liberalism seems to have fluctuated and would furnish interesting material for further research. Even in 1951 (n.p. [1]) he could write to Sarah Gertrude Millin congratulating her on the second edition of *The People of South* Africa, calling it 'magnificent' and her 'greatest' work: dubious accolades in the light of her outright racism. As Coetzee indicates, her views altered little between 1920 and 1950 (1988:150) and there are distinct similarities between her anthropology and that of Nazism (ibid.:160-161).

[27] Cornwell comments that the liberal opponent of racial discrimination responds with anger and compassion, guilt, equivocation and alienation (1986/1992:79). At most the young Paton experiences the second-last of these reactions. Even the later, more liberal author of *Cry*, in the words of Van der Vlies, with which I can associate myself, avoids revolutionary polemic, providing emotional upliftment and suggesting a model for gradualist stewardship (2006:23). In Steyn's succinct terms one might describe the earlier Paton as 'the altruistic colonial' (2001:64-67); the later Paton, I would propose, oscillates between being both the moderately optimistic white who believes 'we can work it out' (ibid.:93-100) and the one who wishes to be a white, hybrid African

Paton's own self-preoccupation with religious doubt in 1923, occasioned by the behaviourism of J B Watson, which challenged his notion of self-identity (1980:75-6), and the severe typhoid which he contracted in 1934, might well have distracted him from social and political issues. But they did not stop him writing.

My explicitly religious approach

My specifically religious, but not dogmatic, method of reading Paton is adopted because I believe it is appropriate for a writer who was, perhaps self-consciously, Christian from early in his life. Regarding the explicitly religious approach I take: Bryan Magee, who read philosophy at Oxford and Yale, gaining a doctorate on Schopenhauer, and has published extensively on philosophy in general, maintains that 'one of the most important achievements of Kant's philosophy is that it demonstrates that permanently beyond the reach of human knowledge lies a realm of possibility such that, provided a statement is not self-contradictory, any assertion about what obtains in that realm is capable of being either true or untrue, and we humans have no way of knowing which' (1997:156).[28] Avowing

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(ibid.:127-147). But this is the subject of another thesis. One could also situate the early Paton in general within the ranks of the 'social Christians', in Elphick's terminology, who were disturbed by the living conditions of blacks and wished to ameliorate them (1997:347-369). Many were white paternalists such as CT Loram and Edgar Brookes (ibid.:358), whom Paton knew well and lauded in later years. Loram's *The Education of the South African Native* (1917) and Brookes's *The History of Native Policy in South Africa* (1924) are nearly contemporary with Paton's first fiction. These authors were Natalians and whether they influenced his early work directly could constitute a worthwhile topic for future research.

[28] Like Magee, my interest is more in Kant's trenchant demonstration of the limits of human reason than in his proving or disproving of the existence of God, his success or otherwise in this endeavour being a much debated issue (cf. Grier, 2004) which seems not to be resolvable given that after *A Critique of Pure Reason (CPR)* (1781; second edition 1787) he continued to philosophise and a text left incomplete at his death, known as the *Opus Postumum*, contains sections in which Kant continues to explore the relationship between the concept of God and our consciousness of being moral agents. Rossi (2005) argues that given the fragmentary nature of the manuscript, it is difficult to reach a conclusive judgment on the content and significance of Kant's last reflections on God and religion. Kant argues that we cannot have knowledge of any realm beyond the empirical (McCormick [n.d.]). As he puts it, '[t]here is nothing actually given to us, except a perception and the empirical progression from it to other possible perceptions' (Kant, 1787/1993:357 [B:521]. Hence his sense of the limitations of reason (Politis, 1993: xlviii-l). At the same time he makes it clear in the Preface to the second edition of *CPR* that 'I must, therefore, abolish *knowledge*, to make room for *faith* [emphasis in original]' (Kant, 1787/1993: 21 [B:xxix]). Deleuze (1963/1984), discussing the later *Critique of Judgment* (1790), paragraphs 87 and 88

that he is 'more straightforwardly agnostic than Kant is said to have been', and pointing out that 'In so far as I have an involuntary inclination towards one side, it is towards the opposite side from [Kant], against belief in God', Magee nevertheless adds,

> I have little intellectual patience with people who think they know that there is no God ... and no reality outside the empirical world. Some such atheistic humanism has been one of the characteristic outlooks of Western man [sic] since the Enlightenment, ... It is the prevailing outlook, I suppose, in most of the circles in which I have moved for most of my life. It lacks all sense of the mystery that surrounds and presses so hard on our lives; more often than not it denies its existence, and in doing so is factually wrong (1997: 157).

I would argue, therefore, that it is intellectually most unsatisfactory to study human beings and their cultural productions, such as writing, with a consciousness that does not allow for, even impatiently excludes, the non-material. This is a post-Enlightenment Western notion, held also by those scholars from other cultures who have been influenced by Western thought, but not by any means adhered to by many other cultures, and to claim worldwide or absolute validity for it is not only arrogant but contradicts the postmodernist assertion that truth is relative.[29]

Kort instances such tasks for the postmodernist scholar of literature and religion as assessments of the social and economic situation, of the interaction between the language of fragmentation and that of totalisation, and – which is germane to my own focus – 'a new assessment of self and identity in relation to social determinants and their colonizing effects, an assessment that will avoid the sharp

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(which Tomlinson and Habberjam consider as the keystone of Kant's 'critical arch', 1984:xv), similarly observes that as an object of knowledge, God is determinable only indirectly and analogically; but that as an object of belief he acquires an exclusively practical determination and reality. This and Kant's remark about abolishing knowledge so as to make room for faith represent my point of departure exactly.

[29] Mbembe (2004:4) puts this very sharply, arguing that the 'moral power' of both the Jewish (by which he largely refers to Levinas) and the African understandings of bondage, exile and death, and therefore of freedom, 'derives from their radical critique of the pagan ethos that has long served as the dark side of Western conceptions of absolute sovereignty as well as Western imperial ideology.' See also Ashcroft et al. 2006d:7 and 2006b:517 on the increasing importance being accorded to the sacred in postcolonial studies, partly in reaction to Western secularism.

and easy alternatives of "self" as a social product and "self" as a self- and world-constituting will' (1990b: 585). It is also important to note that Kort queries certain aspects of postmodern approaches to literature in the work of Robert Detweiler, and engages in an interesting dialogue with him (Kort, 1990a:193-198; Detweiler, 1990:317-320). I would subscribe to Kort's acceptance, but a critical one, of 'a postmodernist mode'.

The pertinence of an interdisciplinary approach to a matter that for better or worse has deeply influenced humankind and its writers (at the very least, even if the concept of God is merely a psychological projection or the result of a particular gene it is still powerful and pervasive), and that in its Judeo-Christian form is still solidly embedded in much Western discourse, is currently recognised, though as I noted earlier one still finds dismaying tendencies to reify or essentialise matters in certain religious readings of writing, or the programmatic application of pre-existing ideas to material. It is worth noting that non-Western thinkers are often quite comfortable with the notion of God and / or the transcendent, more comfortable than writers in the West. Two examples from Africa are Soyinka (1976) and Mbiti (1989), though it should be noted that they have drawn fire from African scholars such as Amuta (1989:38-41) who are schooled in some of the more radical forms of Western thought, such as Marxism in Amuta's case. Nevertheless, the uneasiness about religion which many contemporary Western critics exhibit should not be viewed as a universal phenomenon. Rather, literature and theology could more profitably be viewed as bearing a close but critical relation to each other (Scott, 1996b: 303).

Scott (ibid.: 303-5) describes three main overlapping emphases in this field, of which the first is most prevalent in my work, though I acknowledge the importance of the others. Other taxonomies adopt a largely chronological perspective (Magee, 1983), with Kort (1990b) and Scott (1996b) focusing more on various philosophies and Barratt (1995) on doctrinal matters. Firstly, Scott

identifies a focus on literature as possessing theological or religious significance, which protests against a narrow literary criticism. Secondly, there is a critical stance towards Christianity's historical role in the colonialist enterprise. Finally and most recently, a recognition of religious pluralism has widened the debate to encompass other religions.

In line with Scott's first category and my own thinking, Fiddes argues that creative writing, because it is concerned with human experience, is occupied with themes that also occupy theology (1991:33). His own method is to set a writer's use of story and other methods side-by-side with those of the Christian tradition: not to arrive at a synthesis between them, but, following Gadamer *(Truth and Method*, 1975, pp. 269ff) to open their horizons to each other. Hence theologians could be influenced by the themes and techniques of imaginative writing, while Christian concepts could provide the reader with a perspective for interpretation of literary texts (1991:33-4). Reading from a Christian viewpoint could sensitise the reader to issues within the literary text. Fiddes is careful to add that this does not verify the Christian understanding of the world, but means that the reader is employing the skills of a literary critic consistent with her or his view of a general revelation of God in human art, yet treating both revelation and art equally.

This is the general method I propose to follow in this study, though I fully agree with Fiddes that one should beware of treating the arts as a happy hunting ground for Christian truths (1991:32) and am aware of the pitfalls. For instance, Griffith (1996:205) refers to the dangers of critics using theology to read the fiction of Patrick White, instead of allowing White to inform the theology. Hence my own reading arises from motifs already present and central in Paton. With Jasper (1995:145; cf. Gadamer, 1989:291-292 especially and Jasper, 2004:20-22), I recognise that a hermeneutic circle is inevitable and that what is important is not how one gets out of it but how one enters the circle: with violence, or with humour? More important still, I would maintain, is a sense of humility, not always

found in Christian literary critics or in Paton himself.

The sense of purpose which Paton held about his life as a journey toward the ultimate, yet rooted firmly in mundane reality, means that for him the narration of his own story as *sub specie aeternitas* (and by extension those of fellow South Africans) was central. This point leads to a consideration of the way in which he regarded his life as a narrative which was part of a greater narrative: a notion which accords well with the narrative pattern of biblical thought in general, as Alter (1982) shows. In a broader fashion Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative* (1984, 1985, 1988) wished to appeal to an overarching eschatological meaning of the events of the narrative of history. More relevantly for my topic, he also emphasised the importance of narrative for understanding the individual life (1991). Of course, by no means all theorists would agree with him. For instance, as Ward remarks, not only are both Foucault and the new historicists sceptical of narrative as an explanation of history, they are dubious 'about the ideology of narrative itself' (2000:77). Well-known is Jean-Francois Lyotard's questioning of grand narratives (Lyotard, 1984:xxix; Ward, 2000:51). Nonetheless, it is worth noting that Lyotard does not dismiss narrative altogether; that the accounts in which postmodern thinkers set forth their unease with narrative are still logically and narratively structured; and that, insofar as postmodernists claim to be querying older paradigms, they are implicitly setting a new reality, even if it is a pluralist, shifting one, in place of the old.[30]

Ricoeur's sense, taken up also by Hayden White (1991), that an understanding of history should be based in narrative accords importance to narrative in general. Even if the grand narrative is overthrown, some sort of meaning is still found in local narratives which continue to tell a story. It is not that stories cease to exist.

[30] Bauerschmidt points out acutely that the claim that all metanarratives have become incredible is itself an assertion about which one might ask, 'incredible to whom?' (1999:204) while Webster remarks that 'modern' and 'postmodern' are not statements of fact but themselves constructions (2003:220).

The attempt to order events in time by means of story remains fundamental to human existence. Again this is a major concern of Ricoeur, though one that has attracted criticism as I show later. Nonetheless, I not only find his valuing of narrative appealing but also consider it useful for a discussion of Paton's early fiction; however, since Ricoeur's argument was not sufficient in itself, as he admitted, Levinas offers a valuable complement.

My concern is on a much smaller scale than Ricoeur's as I focus on individual characters, and occasionally the narrator, in some unpublished fiction by a then almost unknown writer. In this thesis I shall not discuss certain other early writings by Paton, such as his essay on 'Religion, Freedom and Man ' (1934c), or his play 'Louis Botha' (1932-33), though I refer to the essay from time to time. Paton's several drafts of 'Louis Botha', although interesting from a political and polemical point of view and roughly contemporary with two of the draft novels, are not considered because of their complex textual history and the fact that the play is not a representational narrative as such.

Paton's characters are not merely simplistic, I believe, and offer much of interest for the reader. Just as Ricoeur himself recognised that his discussion of narrative still left aporias (a point I discuss in chapter 1), I suggest that the individuals and community in Paton's early fiction are especially intriguing in the light of Levinas's exploration of intersubjectivity, the self and the other. Strongly influenced by the divided self of German idealism, as developed by Heidegger in his consideration of the authentic and inauthentic possibilities of the self, Levinas adopted and adapted from Buber the notion of the twofold 'I', the notion of relational and transcendental encounter and the recognition that language is the setting within which alterity is traced (Ward, 2000:96-99; cf. also Freeman's comments, 2001:290, on these notions in the work of Bruner and Harré). The parallels with the idea of *ubuntu* are striking.

Similarly conscious of the transcendent, Paul Fiddes explores the four ways, in his opinion, by means of which literature reaches towards mystery (he does not allow for any case where writing does not point beyond itself): by correspondence, as in Langland's *Piers Plowman;* by offering an individual insight into the nature of truth, whether celestial as in Henry Vaughan's ring of Eternity, or mundane as in a 'realistic' novel of Hardy; by using symbol as a means of entrance to the real world, as in Yeats; or, as in contemporary writing, where works may be negative catalysts for reality, drawing attention to their own structure and methods and thereby forcing readers to recognise that such writings do not claim that they are the world (1991:15-18). This is useful, because I maintain that to some extent Paton's early novels do offer an insight into the truth of his understanding of the society of his time, though not explicitly or very consciously.

In undertaking this kind of reading of Paton I consciously want to acknowledge that I am working within a hermeneutical framework and that my readings of Paton are intended to foreground my own response to the texts. I employ postmodernist insights where appropriate, but my interpretations emphasise theory-as-practice rather than theory divorced from practice. Clearly, a reader schooled within a different tradition and with other purposes might well take another direction. I shall be keeping in mind that a number of possible Christian approaches could be taken. Finally I hope to suggest briefly some directions which the study of religion and literature could take in South Africa itself.

In considering what it means to read religiously I shall keep in mind, without necessarily referring to, a number of writers in the field of religion and writing, such as Detweiler (1983, 1989), Edwards (1984, 1988, 1990), Jasper (1989, 1995, etc) and Ward (1995, 2000, etc). An awareness of Anglican incarnational theology (Temple, 1935 and Williams, 2000) will form the basis of this discussion, but is not intended to be the exclusive approach. My rationale is partly that to my

mind the incarnation fruitfully encompasses a number of paradoxes relating to the concept of the self and therefore of identity.

The notion of the incarnation, God become human, is termed by Fiddes the central moment of the 'plot' of the Christian story (1991:47). As Ward avers, the incarnation is the key doctrine in theology which is concerned with representation (2000:45) and consequently, I would add, with identity. To me it, together with the doctrine of the creation, seems to be even more crucial than the doctrine of the Fall, which is much stressed by writers such as Michael Edwards (1984). I should like to add a comment: the fact that the Bible as we presently have it begins with creation and ends with a new creation is not a mere accident of the process of canonisation, but reflects a particular theological reflection upon history and chronology, setting it in the light of God's creative acts – which do not cease with creation – as a whole. In particular, the Bible deals continually with God's intentional presence in human history, whether incarnate in the technical sense or not, and the resulting significance of human identity, which stems both from relationship with God and with other human beings. Williams (2000) makes a similar point (see below).

To my mind, incarnation suggests not so much that the archetypal Christian self, that of Christ himself, is fixed and monolithic, but rather – in common with recent theorists of the self such as Charles Taylor (1989) – that it is multiple and complex, in process rather than in stasis. Fiddes points to the dialectical contrast in human life: people are both dust of the earth and image of God. They experience both glory and human limitations (1991:52, 54). This contrast, it seems to me, is sharpened in the figure of Christ, who is supremely both dust and image, both glorious and limited. The Fall, argues Fiddes (1991:54), is then the continuous outcome of the tension, but one that can be replaced by a new harmony. One could argue that the incarnation is a profoundly creative act of God, immersing Godhead deeply in the life of humanity. I would add that this

renewing is a continuous process, for though the life of Jesus was a single event, it is continued in the body (and bodies) of his followers. In fact, Fiddes observes that 'there is indeed no reason why the Creator should not go on being eternally creative' (1991:62). And for Ward the incarnation is fully realised when all human beings become part of Christ (2005a:106). In my view, the importance of the doctrine of incarnation is also that it links together the concepts of creation and fall and emphasises the relationality, not only of human beings and God, but also by extension of human beings and human beings. As Williams puts it,

> If it is only the life of God (however understood) that finally secures the possibility of a human community, if God is what makes sense of the hope for unlimited projects of communication,... then the Christian claim is that this sense is, practically and historically, given in Jesus. It is in active relation with him that the possibility of human community becomes actual ... (2000:93).

Mbiti's African reading of such a notion, well expressing the concept of *ubuntu/botho*, similarly holds that the individual does not and cannot exist alone (1989:106):[31]

> Just as God made the first man [sic], as God's man, so now man himself makes the individual who becomes the corporate or social man. It is a deeply religious transaction. Only in terms of other people does the individual become conscious of his own being, his own duties, his privileges and responsibilities towards himself and towards other people.... Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say: "I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am." This is a cardinal point in the understanding of the African view of man.

Though one might not wish to adopt a dark view of the Fall as predestined and doomed to be repeated in every human life, it is certainly true that, as Fiddes drily expresses it, 'the "original fact" is that all human beings do in practice fall into estrangement' (1991: 63). Fiddes's suggestion that the best writing imitates

[31]Freeman and Brockmeier, citing *The Greeks*, ed. Vernant (1995), hold that a similar phenomenon is evident in ancient Greek society (2001:78). And Taylor (1989:35) points out that even in the West '[o]ne is a self only among other selves'. While Menkiti develops Mbiti's point (2004:324-326 especially), Kaphagawani (2004:337-338,341) is less than convinced about such purely communalistic definitions of African personhood; cf. Mphahlele (1990:2) who pursues a middle road.

the Creator in being incarnational (1991: 233), in other words that it reflects the glory and the dust of being human, in my view therefore has much merit. It might be objected that such a reading simply states the obvious – that any good writing will encompass the poles inherent in the human experience – but such an objection too easily passes over the dimension of the transcendent or what Bryan Magee would call the mysterious, which need not necessarily be explicit. If a work apparently does not deal with the transcendent at all, then it may be fruitful to ask why.

I am mindful that Derrida's play on difference as both endlessly deferring meaning and being the only way of giving rise to it has been interpreted as an attack on any notion of being able to represent any kind of reality whatsoever (Vande Kopple, 1991:216); but I wish to point out with Ward (2000:xiv-xv; 10-17) that the tradition in which Derrida writes, the critical tradition, is only one of the traditions in Western philosophy. (I would add that the linguistic tools which are Derrida's main instrument are not the only ones available.)

An equally strong and compelling current is the hermeneutic, as found for instance in Ricoeur. While in the course of events it has also attracted much criticism, the hermeneutic method has not been definitively overturned, is unlikely to be, and on the contrary represents a major stream of enquiry. I take this matter slightly further in the following chapter. Probably the strongest critique of Ricoeur has emerged from the quarters of those who claim that his philosophy is foundationalist in nature, in other words that it believes that a deeper reality is determinable. This is quite true and is undoubtedly at the basis of religious thought in general; but one might answer that the definitive claim that reality is not determinable is logically open to the same objection.

Hence I read Paton's earliest fiction, which concerns itself with local situations in the mould of Hardy in contradistinction to the larger-scale narratives of his three

published novels, in the light of the above comments in order to see what kind of sense of identity was present in this part of his oeuvre. His serious illness, which cut short his novel 'John Henry Dane', may have curtailed his deepest exploration of identity and subconscious motivation to date, but it is clear that Paton was already practising that ability to write which makes *Cry, the Beloved Country* so powerful as a tool of protest though, in some respects, that novel does not delve as deeply into the problematics of individual identity as some of his earliest works. The main character there is not so much the separate characters, not even James Jarvis and Stephen Kumalo, as the beloved country itself, so that it is the identity of a fractured nation which is being reassembled by means of the surgeon's suture.

In chapter 1 I elaborate on further aspects of the methodology employed in this thesis with particular reference to matters of identity, discussing narrative, the narrator, narrative and relational identity, Ricoeur and Levinas amongst other matters. A chapter each is devoted to the longer surviving MSS: 'Ship of Truth' (1922-1923) in chapter 2 while 'Brother Death' (1930) is discussed in chapter 3. In the fourth chapter shorter MSS or fragments (difficult to date and consequently not taken along with the lengthier fiction, but written between 1928-1934, approximately) are considered. I reflect on the whole thesis and propose further directions for research in the conclusion.

CHAPTER 1
THEORIES OF IDENTITY

Preliminary remarks

In offering the following readings of the MSS of Alan Paton's three (or four, as I shall argue with respect to 'Secret for Seven') early novels or parts of novels together with other surviving short fiction I shall be interweaving a number of insights taken from narrative theory in general and from certain writers who have made important contributions to the art of reading religiously. Of necessity I have been very selective in both areas. Consequently I have chosen a limited number of theorists of narrative in general, rather than specialists, in order to provide an overview and to give some sense of the strong contrasts between and debate among them, as well as of certain areas where they do concur with each other. Guided by Paton's early experimentation with narrative fiction and his strong focus on awareness of and service to the other, even before his Toc H days from 1931 (Alexander, 1994:93-95), I read the identities he constructs through the eyes of Ricoeur and Levinas, who have explored narrative and relational identities at great depth, though their arguments are not without detractors. I shall be touching on merely a few aspects of their thought.

The self and identity

Debates over the nature of the self and identity constitute an enormous field, as Schipper (2002:43) remarks in a valuable article, and one needs to decide not only on definitions but on boundaries. Are the self and identity the same? Should the concept(s) be approached individually, collectively, etc? I find her answers appropriate, and shall apply them in my reading of the individual and collective identities depicted by Paton, for the purposes of this study taking self and (personal) identity as roughly the same but recognising a plurality of views.[32] As

[32] Taylor expresses this by remarking that one is a self only in relation to certain interlocutors, within 'webs of interlocution'. This situation gives rise to one's concept of identity, answering the question who I am by defining 'where I am speaking from and to whom.' For him the full definition of someone's identity 'thus involves not only his [sic] stand on moral and spiritual issues but also

Foster comments, the word 'identity' expresses a Cartesian view of an autonomous self, which is questioned by recent social theory, so that other meanings have come into play (1998:15; cf. Chapman, 2002:227). However, Paton would most likely have been aware of Descartes' arguments, as I consider below. Therefore I employ a concept of the self and identity which might have been familiar to him, while bringing more sophisticated notions to bear where they are called for.

For Foster, '[i]f identity is a representation of a dominant (or merely *widespread*) subject-position, then that identity must to some degree be linked to the lived experiences which hone and form that subjectivity in a specific time and place' (ibid.:282, Foster's emphasis; see also Govinden, 2000:33-34 and Gilroy, 2000:133). My exploration of the 'lived experiences' and subject-positions of Paton's characters should demonstrate that I find Foster's definition congenial.

Schipper helpfully suggests that all narratives reveal elements of the self of the author and his/her culture (ibid.:44; see also Clingman, 1991:108-109) and points out that identity can only be defined in relation to alterity, what is considered different (ibid.:46), adding that for her one's identity is related to the difference that is *perceived* by one (ibid.:47). Both one's social role and one's self play a part in this perception, she argues (ibid.:48), contending that the self depends on collective identity and is positively or negatively linked to it (ibid.:50). While all people divide the world into *us* and *them*, the important question to ask of African narratives is who the imagined insiders are, and who the constructed outsiders (ibid.:51). She notes that perspectives are unavoidable, but argues that they are reversible and changeable (ibid.:52), concluding that people in Africa, as elsewhere, construct and reconstruct self and identity all the time (ibid.:55). Oliphant also conveniently reminds one that differences, whether between languages, cultures or people, are always relational and approaches the issue of

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some reference to a defining community' (1989:36). Cf. also Gleason (2006:195) and Ward (2005b:77-78).

the existence of a South African literature and literary studies from this viewpoint (2003:252; Govinden, 2000:34 likewise uses identity and difference as two sides of the same coin; see also Fulkerson, 2003:118; Reddy, 2000:133n41 and Steyn, 2001:5, 14, etc, who succinctly notes: '"self" and "other" are co-created', ibid.:139).[33] Levinas' understanding of the relationality of identity, which both recognises difference and attempts to transcend it, provides an important gloss here, particularly in a country which exhibits a 'prevailing Manichean binarism', as Jamal expresses it (2005:8). Rather, Jamal suggests, we as South Africans should consider 'embracing the others of our selves' (the title of his second chapter, 2005:17-41). To my mind at times the early Paton is feeling his way towards this more inclusive gesture but has not yet enacted it (see note 2 above). Jamal, following De Kock, refers to the still unresolved cultural heterogeneity of this country (2005:146-162) and, after Albie Sachs ('Preparing Ourselves for Freedom', 1990), seeks a – in my view perhaps idealistic and Romantic – belief in 'the possibility of freedom and a liberated imagination that could shift the [South African] psychic axis away from continued enslavement' (Jamal, 2005:160). The young Paton, however, is not often aware of any culture other than his own, still less that it might be self-enslaved.

Since my purpose is to consider the kinds of identities (communal and individual) which Paton represented in his early fiction and the ways in which he did so, I contend that it is useful to undertake the project against a brief background of views on identity such as those advanced by Charles Taylor (1989); narrative identity such as those of Ricoeur (1991 and 1992 in particular); on narrative itself such as discussed by Abbott (2002), Cohan and Shires (1988), Gibson (1996)

[33] Govinden (2000:31) remarks that the question undergirding her own activities enquires: 'How is the Other being defined in order that the self might gain identity?' Relevant also is JanMohamed's argument that owing to their feeling of superiority, colonialists did not enter into the self-other dialectic essential for the formation of identity. Hence most colonial discourse operates at an emotive rather than an intersubjective level (1985:59-81, especially 63-65). Such a tendency, excluding the black other, is evident in Paton's early fiction and in other colonialist novels of approximately the same period, but I would suggest that Paton at least occasionally fumbles towards a consciousness of other identities than those in his own community, if not exactly a dialogue with them.

and Rimmon-Kenan (2002); and on relational identity such as those expressed by Levinas (1993 and 1996 in particular). Of the many writers who have published books concerning narrative from a religious point of view, I have consulted two: Paul Fiddes (1991 and 2000) and Frederick Ruf (1997).

I also take brief note of two local theorists' remarks about the identity of white South African writers, as discussed by J M Coetzee (1988) in terms of the pastoral and by De Kock (2001; reprinted in De Kock et al. 2004) in terms of the suture (though not in the Lacanian sense): the seam inhabited by such writers as they attempt to bring together the incommensurate cultural identities of this country. It should be noted though that *pace* Coetzee, Paton's rural landscapes are not always idealised,[34] although (white) characters are shown as being in close relationship with them and the farm comprises a major locus of their identity.[35] Likewise, at this early stage of his career Paton is only moderately aware of the cultural doubleness (partly English, partly South African) of which De Kock speaks. Mostly, he and his characters inhabit a very English space, with occasional nods in the direction of the actual South African situation. As I have

[34] For Coetzee pastoral in this country is essentially conservative and nostalgic (1988:4), closing its eyes to the other Africa which is alien and impenetrable (ibid.:7): I might add that Coetzee's own gaze, usually acute, seems decidedly Eurocentric here. Schreiner's antipastoral African farm, argues Coetzee, is consequently atypical of South African English (or Afrikaans) literature set on farms (ibid.:64-66); Smith's Harmonie is Edenic, but with a lurking serpent (ibid.:84); Paton's Kumalo and Jarvis nurture a 'fragile hope of preserving an Eden in the valley immune from the attractions of the great city' (ibid.:129). Van Wyk Smith considers that the trope of the farm in South African English writing is ambivalent; both Edenic and demonic (2001:23), and I would add that while Paton's early writing actually employs Edenic imagery frequently, there is sometimes a hint of a darker awareness: the farm as a site of conflict or at least of ambiguity. I concur with Van Wyk Smith that in Paton's later *Cry, the Beloved* Country and *Too Late the Phalarope* the farm is distinctly dichotomous (2001:21-22).

[35] Foster (1998 passim, e.g. 31-33), Govinden (2000:39) and Ballard (2004:51-54) note how place, specifically landscape, becomes an important dimension of identity, while Darian-Smith et al. in addition observe that power and concepts of space are interwoven (1996a:2-3). Similarly Moxnes adopts the view of place theory that human identity is located, developed, and sustained in place, which is not limited to the material; nor is place neutral (2003:2,6,8,9,12). Daymond expressively refers to the 'need to think of the self in space and to develop a sense of inner space' (1989:166), while Wittenberg (2005:passim) devotes an article to landscape in Paton. Ashcroft et al. (2006c:345) distinguish between place and landscape, the latter being in their view the product of a philosophy which separates the viewer from the landscape. Paton's early characters veer between identifying with the natural environment and gazing upon it. Even in his later fiction the countryside can be idyllic (e.g., 1953/1971:39). Not yet present in the 1920s is the parallel and contrast which he was later to draw between the beloved land of South Africa and the land prophesied by Isaiah (e.g., 1969:82 and 1981:27, 123).

indicated this Englishness is well brought out by two studies of civic and rural English identity in Natal by Thompson (1999) and Morrell (2001) respectively, discussed in more detail below. For a counterpoint I also adduce certain views on African identity which have been expressed by Mbembe (2002a; 2002b).

As Schipper and Mbembe intimate, competing models of identity and the self abound in Western and African thought. It is evident to me that these depend partly on the discipline from which the proponent stems. Many have written on the topic of identity; a few of their views I employ occasionally, such as those of Bruner (1991/2003), who is an eminent psychologist. Giddens (1991), an equally noted sociologist, observes that self-identity is 'something that has to be routinely created and sustained in the reflexive activities of the individual' (1991:52). Most Western critics or those influenced by the West would agree. Geertz (1973) is a renowned anthropologist, Schipper a well-established critic of African literature and Mbembe a leader in the field of African cultural/political studies. Holstein and Gubrium (2000), who have published a volume devoted to the construction of the self in postmodern times, hail from English studies and health sciences respectively. They hold that the self is constructed as much by itself as by society (cf. also Gilroy, who argues that identity is 'an ongoing process of self-making and social interaction', 2000:103; Ward, 2005b:77-78), though they acknowledge the tension between those who deny the existence of the self and those, like themselves, who reconceptualise it (2000:57). Their location of self-construction 'at the doorstep of the particular' (ibid.:231) echoes the nature of Paton's own storytelling. Brockmeier and Carbaugh (e.g. 2001:14) likewise research the self-constructedness of identity by means of narrative about oneself, while in the same volume Bruner explores the way in which autobiography and the novel construct not only self but culture (2001:35). From the field of psychotherapy volumes on narrative therapy are legion, with a wide-ranging one being that edited by Angus and McLeod (2004), containing essays by Bruner and many others. It will be self-evident that many philosophers, such as Ricoeur and Levinas, have also theorised these concepts extensively.

Another philosopher and political scientist who has done so and who certainly merits brief mention in any enquiry into identity is Charles Taylor, whose especial concern in *Sources of the Self* (1989) was the West's conception 'of what it is to be a human agent: the sense of inwardness, freedom, individuality, and being embedded in nature...' and to show how this identity affects Western philosophy and language (1989:ix; cf. ibid.:33). While partly agreeing with Habermas that the self is constituted through language he adds that Habermas cannot fit into his system the search for moral sources *outside* (Taylor's emphasis) the subject by employing languages which resonate *within* him or her, the grasping of an order which is inseparably indexed to a personal vision (ibid.:510). Taylor's views strongly affirm a Christian and ethical understanding (cf., e.g., 1989:4-5; 47; 516), and deplore a 'disengaged instrumentalism' (ibid.:499). He is aware of the tensions in the evolution of the modern identity, which results in 'a sense of self defined by the powers of disengaged reason as well as of the creative imagination, in the characteristically modern understandings of freedom and dignity and rights, in the ideals of self-fulfilment and expression, and in the demands of universal benevolence and justice' (ibid.:503). These notions echo much of Western liberalism in essence (an African perspective on identity might differ)[36] and would have been firmly adhered to by Paton later in life but, as I hope to demonstrate, are reflected by his earlier fiction only in part. Taylor himself has no quarrel with these understandings as such except for the drive towards self-fulfilment, where 'a total and fully consistent subjectivism would tend towards emptiness' (ibid.:507-508). He observes that Foucault contributed an 'understanding of the way in which high ethical and spiritual ideals are often interwoven with exclusions and relations of domination' (ibid.:518), to which feminist critique has also added, so that one has become aware of the fact that

[36] For instance, Lewis Nkosi (1965/1983:30-31) pointedly remarks that the 'African Personality' arises from the realisation by blacks of their subjugation by whites, when being defined negatively as non-whites. On becoming aware of this 'they began to define themselves *consciously* as other; that is to say, as Africans' [emphasis in original] (ibid.:31). With this one may compare the *un*conscious othering – and consequently unconscious construction of identity – to be found in the early (and even the later) Paton.

'the highest spiritual ideals and aspirations also threaten to lay the most crushing burdens on humankind' (ibid.:519). In the previous chapter I similarly referred to the way in which religion can entrap one. Taylor therefore advocates neither a 'stripped-down secular outlook, without any religious dimension or radical hope in history', nor a blinkered Christian self-sufficiency which does not 'recognize the appalling destruction wrought in history in the name of the faith' (ibid.:520; see also 521).

Paton's early work, though it too is ethical in import and does attempt to accord a religious dimension to the micro-history of the community and individuals on which he focuses, indeed evidences no such awareness of the dark side of Christianity except in 'Secret for Seven'. And while he writes from an awareness of modernist positions regarding the self, certainly after 1923 when he experienced his struggle with the behaviourist views of Watson,[37] I consider that in fact he hankers after the non-modern notion of a less complex (though not unitary) self, basing my views on Paton's dislike of much modern literature and his own comments (Alexander, 1994:45-46). I enlarge on this point below and in succeeding chapters.

Taylor argues strongly for a recovery of creativity, of 'vision and expressive power' (ibid.:22), concluding that present-day culture tends to stifle the spirit (ibid.:520). His views have occasioned much controversy, as may be seen from the essays in Tully (1994). The most relevant of these for my purposes is the chapter by Hjort, who rightly, in my opinion, considers that Taylor 'fails to recognise the ways in which literary practices are shaped by self-interest, social

[37] Of his episode of religious doubt in that year he writes that Watson challenged his notions of the self, of the possibility of its sovereignty, and therefore of the concept of using one's life, by conscious resolve, for the service of God and man [sic] (Paton, 1980:75-6). Paton's strong conviction of his responsibility in this respect finally made him reject the 'dogma' of behaviourism – *as an act of choice* (emphasis Paton's). He did not dispute the view that the self had come into being largely without the aid of the I. 'But now the self and the I were the same.' He concludes, 'Thus I rejected both determinism and indeterminism, and chose to believe in self-determination' (ibid.: 76). His fascinating view of the self in his later years could be investigated from many different points of view, but it does seem to derive from Cartesian and Freudian arguments with a firm emphasis upon human freewill and is certainly anticipated in his earlier work.

conflict and power' (Hjort, 1994:127). Like Taylor, Paton is regrettably unaware of these issues. In the last chapter of Tully Taylor replies to his critics and re-articulates his positions; his response to Hjort is, intriguingly, perhaps the least convincing and convinced (cf. Taylor, 1994:244). I would therefore maintain that he is not unlike Paton in this respect.

My own position

I observed earlier that many different readings of Paton's early fiction could be carried out: none would be neutral. As Belsey (2002:19) has it, criticism is concerned with the range of possible readings rather than the single all-embracing one. I should therefore briefly like to describe my own position in offering some possibilities, bearing in mind the necessity of being conscious of one's own perspective and the reasons why one reads as one does; a number of the contributors to Griffin (2005b), as well as Cohan and Shires (1988:23) and Rimmon-Kenan (2002:135) make this obvious point. I have acknowledged that my approach to Paton is an invested one, arguing for the value and validity of a religious, and specifically a Christian, approach to his early fiction. Furthermore, in some senses it is quite possibly anachronistic: I have found that I cannot read Paton's MSS without an awareness of his later fiction, particularly his most famous novel, and his strong commitment there to social and political change from a Christian, liberal perspective which engenders and arises from fairly definite notions of identity: that of characters, of narrator, of people and nation. In the early work these ideas are no more than nascent. I wish to recognise my own, though not slavish, attraction to the strengths, to my mind, of liberalism with its decided emphasis on the value of the individual, but a liberalism informed by a Christian understanding of human identity as encompassing an ethical and practical relationship to the other (including the community) and the Other, not merely a solipsistic individuality.

Apart from reading Paton himself, I consider that a study of the interrelation of writing and literature in this country from a religious point of view could be most

fruitful. Amongst many other things it could bring to bear the issues and metaphors in which religious discourse specialises (e.g., the journey, the quest). Though for the purposes of economy I shall, as mentioned earlier, concentrate mainly on narrative and relational identity, other matters would constitute fruitful areas for future research. I discuss these briefly in my concluding chapter.

Methodology

As indicated, I consciously adopt an approach which is hermeneutic, or in other words is interpretive, at times exegetical, in nature, while acknowledging the existence of competing, even hostile, approaches to narratives and texts.[38] Naturally hermeneutics, with its origins in the study of biblical texts, is attractive to Christian scholars in the religion/literature field (see, e.g., the study by Lundin et al., 1999, which discusses many positive aspects of hermeneutics, especially the implications of reader-response and speech-act theory, pp. 152-182 and 230-239 in particular; Jasper, 2004, offers an up-to-date account of hermeneutics from biblical texts to hyperreality, e.g. 134-136), but its methods are by no means confined to such critics. For instance, in terms of Nunning's systematisation of Herman (in Abbott, 2002:142), my method is in fact broadly similar to that of postclassical narratology in that: it is context-oriented; aware of the dynamics of the reading process (reading strategies, interpretive choices); shows a preference for holistic cultural interpretation and thick descriptions; emphasises application, thematic readings and ideologically-charged evaluations; focuses on ethical issues and dialogical negotiation of meanings; espouses an interpretive and evaluative paradigm; is historical and diachronic in orientation; concentrates on the particular effects of individual narratives; is an interdisciplinary project. My role as a reader as I conceive it is consequently to respond to, and therefore to construct, the text in a particular way which is both respectful of the original texts and which interrogates them (I would term this a hermeneutics both of faith and of suspicion; cf. Jasper, 2004:9-10), while being aware that these MSS also

[38] It is also appropriate for Paton, whose [published] writings, according to the abstract of a thesis by Stuart (1988), could be read specifically in terms of an incarnational hermeneutic.

interpellate me in a certain way, constructing me as a subject: a subjectivity which I cannot easily escape but of which I need to be conscious (cf. Rimmon-Kenan, 2002:118-129; Belsey, 2002:52-58). I enlarge slightly on the issue of interpellation later in this chapter with respect to discourse in Paton and in reading Paton.

In particular I shall strive to be aware of the following issues: Paton's employment of the classic realist fictional mode[39] (fiction which creates an illusion of reality; Belsey, 2002:47; cf. Cornwell, 1986/1992:79, 81) does, in Belsey's terms, following Althusser, constitute me, the reader, as the place from which the texts are most 'obviously' intelligible, the position of the subject in, and of, ideology (Belsey, 2002:52-3, 62). Thus, while I undertake a religiously-based reading this is at least partly a moderately sympathetic response to the underlying norms of Paton's early fiction. However, I can refuse or resist this interpellation, rejecting the 'obvious' perceptions of his society as non-contradictory by this author (cf. ibid.:50-51, 63), and consequently I do adopt a critical standpoint as well, while applauding Paton's occasional consciousness of disruptive elements in the community he describes. For instance, he does not necessarily present the individual as the free, unified, autonomous subjectivity identified by liberal humanism (ibid.:62).[40] This is entirely in accordance with the way in which the narrative process in classic realism disrupts the apparent consistency and continuity of the subject and of relationships between subjects (ibid.:69), although Paton seldom seems to have had any such subversion consciously in mind, so

[39] Although Rich identifies this as the dominant mode in South African English liberal writing until the 1960s (1993:120) Paton's early fiction cannot be said to be consciously or consistently liberal, as I note in my Introduction.

[40] Rich points out that the realist depiction of the individual was in essence initially that of an 'imperial self' which was symbolised by the lone individual, Robinson Crusoe (1993:121). But the onset of modernism in Britain at any rate caused writers such as Hardy to look inwards and pay closer attention to landscape. The 'counter-culture' of pastoralism, epitomised by *Tess of the Durbervilles* [sic], began to break down some of the assumptions of a cohesive English culture that until then had underlain the realist tradition (ibid.:122). Some such valorising of the pastoral, probably via Hardy, is obviously also attractive to Paton both in his early fiction and in *Cry, the Beloved Country*. The realism of the latter, argues Rich, is qualified by a deeper romantic nostalgia for 'one of the fairest valleys of Africa' (ibid.:125); an attitude which applies also to the valleys in the unpublished works.

that his texts cannot really be considered interrogative: far from disrupting the unity of the reader by discouraging identification with a unified subject of the narrative (cf. ibid.:84), they encourage such identification. The identity of his characters does, however, sometimes resemble the Lacanian dichotomy of the split subject, both unified and divided (cf. ibid.:78 and Ward, 2005a:134), probably on the basis of his study of Freud.

Another means of situating the broad method of this study would be partly in terms of Neuman's summary of differences among three approaches to research (1997:83): positivist (e.g. literary history), interpretive (e.g. hermeneutics, reception theory) and critical (e.g. feminism, new historicism).[41] My (interpretive) intention is indeed to understand and describe Paton's texts and their meaning and to show how the meaning of a text is generated and sustained; values (mine and the writer's) are likewise important (ibid.). However, I do not necessarily perceive the text as a unified, ahistorical, autonomous monument, and while I consider Paton's intentions to be significant (cf. Neuman, ibid.), I recognise that one cannot do much more than deduce the probable intentions of any author, Paton in this case, which I infer from the text and other information.

From a slightly different and more specific angle one might say that of Abbott's three ways to interpret narrative (2002:92), intentional, symptomatic and adaptive, mine comes closest to the first-mentioned, assuming wholeness in the sense that a single creative sensibility is seen as lying behind the narrative

[41] The broad category into which the present study fits could also be defined in other social scientific terms than Neuman's as phenomenological or qualitative (in that it is subjective and perceives reality as a function of the human imagination). As Collis and Hussey point out (2003:60) one of the major qualitative approaches is in fact the hermeneutic. On the other hand the ontological assumption of a positivistic or quantitative approach is that the world is objective and external to the researcher (Collis & Hussey, 2003:48). This would be inappropriate to the present study and to the field of writing in general. No doubt still other frameworks could be adduced, and as Collis and Hussey observe, most research projects are to be found on a continuum. My point is simply to demonstrate along with Griffin's volume (2005b) that numerous research methodologies are available, asking different questions and yielding different results, but not thereby inevitably inferior or superior to each other. Quite often they might even complement each other. Hence my approach freely draws from a number of ways of carrying out research.

(Abbott, 2002:95). Hence I employ the concept of the inferred author (following Abbott, ibid.:77-78, I prefer this to the notion of the implied author, for reasons which I further argue below): a unifying sensibility which for convenience' sake I usually term (the young Alan) 'Paton' or just 'the author' and which to my mind lies close to the narrating subject (Cohan and Shires, 1988:107), the extradiegetic narrator which Paton employs in 'Ship of Truth' and 'Brother Death', though not in 'John Henry Dane'. Hence in my readings I sometimes conflate the two. As Foley observes of the Principal in Paton's Diepkloof stories, 'the distinctions between autobiographical source, author, narrator and character become blurred' (2005:84). Hence, while I take note of Coullie's caution regarding autobiographical readings,[42] I suspect that a similar situation obtained much earlier in Paton's writing.

As a necessarily but consciously subjective reader I deduce identities, particularly those of the inferred author, the narrator (Abbott, 2002:65 remarks on the importance of our sense of the kind of character whose voice colours the story it narrates) and major characters, and meanings from his texts which to my mind are at least highly likely in terms of my knowledge of the Alan Paton who has been created by himself in his writings, especially his autobiographical writings, and represented by readers of his works and life such as Peter Alexander (1994), and which are also feasible in terms of the probable influences of his cultural context and Christian belief. I argue, with Abbott, that to interpret narrative is to bring out the complex embeddedness of a narrative's meanings in the culture from which it comes (Abbott, 2002:94; Chapman, 2002:226 likewise refers to Anderson's insight in *Imagined Communities*, 1983, that at bottom the power holding individuals together in the imagined national community is narrative), and hope to demonstrate something of this process. As Gibson

[42] Even fully autobiographical texts raise questions: the author can no longer be conceived of as the autonomous creator of his or her own identity. Language and culture determine the range of subject positions available to the author in his or her life experiences, as well as in the composition of textual identity (Coullie, 1991:3). Hence a merely autobiographical reading may raise as many questions as it offers solutions.

similarly remarks, decoding texts involves the location of narrative within a cultural and historical field of language practices (1996:113).

Undoubtedly other readers of Paton's early works might focus on different areas for investigation: in their opinion I might be underreading his writing. As Frank Kermode points out in *The Art of Telling* (1983:138, quoted in Abbott, 2002:79) it 'is not uncommon for large parts of a novel to go virtually unread'. Kermode also comments that the 'history of interpretations may be thought of as the history of exclusions, which enable us to seize upon this issue rather than on some other as central, and choose from the remaining mass only what seems most compliant' (*The Genesis of Secrecy*, 1979:20, quoted in Abbott, 2002:80).

It is also not impossible that, in my readerly desire for closure and certainty, I might overread, or read meanings into, the text (Abbott, 2002:82; cf. Abbott, 2002:174). The issue of closure will be discussed somewhat more fully below; suffice it here to embroider slightly on the way in which a narrative interpellates or addresses its reader. Like Rimmon-Kenan (2002) and Belsey (2002), Cohan and Shires (1988:149) argue that subjectivity is not a unified or transcendental psychological essence but a process. A narrative text also signifies readers' subjectivity *for* them. A narrative representation of subjectivity functions as a signifier with which a reader identifies. Explaining this point, Cohan and Shires indicate that a narrative places its reader in a field of desire which gives reading its sense of urgency, desiring closure (ibid.:153). Abbott and other theorists (see below) would call this the identification of the reader with aspects of the narrative, which impels her or him to read further. Certainly I am aware of this process being operative in my reading of the early Paton. All ideology, Althusser maintains, has the function of 'constituting' concrete individuals as subjects ('Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', 1971:171, cited in Cohan and Shires, 1988:136). Cohan and Shires use the word 'subject' to signify an individual 1) who performs an action; 2) who apprehends himself [sic] as an identifiable agent of action; and 3) who finds a signifier of that identity in

discourse, *I* as opposed to *you*. But 'subject', they note (ibid.), is also a term of passivity (in one's relation to law, to a monarch, to an experiment). Falling within the two poles of agency and passivity, *subjectivity* is the condition of being (a) subject. Ideology represents subjectivity as a state of continuous self-apprehension – of being an acting, thinking, feeling subject (an 'I') – in order to subject the individual to the meanings that perpetuate social structure. Althusser describes such subjectification as occurring through the ideological 'hailing' or interpellation of individuals as subjects (1971:174, cited in Cohan and Shires, 1988:136). In the present case I acknowledge my awareness of my own interpellation by Paton's early narratives – and of Paton's interpellation by his society.

Abbott notes that narratives by their nature are riddled with gaps which readers try to fill, making insertions as they go (2002:83-84). Any other reader may likewise import extratextual ideas or ignore textual issues. Iser, who wrote at length about the gaps in narrative, commented on the phenomenology of reading (1974:276-294), considering that: 'it is only through inevitable omissions that a story gains its dynamism', adding that '[O]ne text is potentially capable of several different realizations, and no reading can ever exhaust the full potential' (1974:280). Previously I made a similar point with respect to my own interpretation of Paton's earliest fiction. In order to respect Paton's texts, however, I shall endeavour to ensure that my readings flow out of the cultural and religious foundations of Paton's own life and that they also take account of the silences concerning identities, not only the attempts at describing them. In this respect a deconstructive argument such as that advanced by Gibson (1996) has the virtue of drawing attention to the fact that what is implied or omitted (not necessarily consciously) is as important as what is directly written; and that what is written may have other meanings than the conscious ones. I shall comment on some of these instances in Paton.

Gibson is perhaps typical of the unease concerning metaphysics and any belief that an art work could represent anything which is objectively real. He raises a number of pointed questions about classical and even postmodern narrative theory, which he views as mistakenly constructing the text as unitary and homogenous (1996:7, 71), concluding that it is time for postmodernism to think of issues such as mimesis and anti-mimesis together, as intertwined parts of a puzzle that will possibly never be solved. His own argument appears to end in uncertainty, which is deconstructively sound but logically unconvincing (ibid.:102-103). I therefore consider it justified to offer a discussion of Paton's representation of identities, both of the individual and the community, on the basis that he did intend to approximate what he perceived as reality. Hence I adopt a relatively conventional view of narrative while acknowledging the existence of such dissenting views as those of Gibson (1996), on which I briefly elaborate later.

In order to follow the development of Paton's own thought in each novel I shall, generally speaking, discuss the narratives sequentially, without recourse to attempts such as those of Barthes (*S/Z*, 1974:18-22) to segment the text into a network of interlinked codes, which I consider break the text up unnecessarily in a seemingly scientific manner. In fact, Barthes admits a certain artificiality and arbitrariness (ibid.:13-14). This is not to deny the value of establishing a sequence of and the connections between events (Barthes's proairetic code); noting character traits or those of places and objects (roughly, Barthes's semic code); observing the move towards closure, which is delayed by narrative suspense (his hermeneutic code); or the way in which texts referring to a body of cultural knowledge are quoted from (the referential code). Some of these notions will be helpful in reading Paton. For example, in the case of Paton's early fiction the Bible, Christian ideas and certain English writers by whom he was influenced constitute the main sources of conscious extratextual reference. More unconsciously, I suggest, he was affected by the norms of his society, so that on

the whole, although he is occasionally aware of the privilege conveyed by (the right sort of) difference he cannot be said to expose it consistently.

In the same way as I shall not employ, while respecting, Barthes's system of codes, I shall not undertake a semiotic reading of Paton, though Cohan and Shires (1988:20) argue that because narrative cannot be considered apart from language, post-Saussurrean theory (of language as system and discourse, as structure and play) therefore demands the revision of traditional notions about narrative. According to them, to start with, this theory calls for rigorous attention to narrative as a set of signs. I consider that, as with structural and poststructural approaches to texts, semiotics loses sight of the context and contents (in the sense of the deeper implications) of a text. But I do concur with Cohan and Shires (1988:142) that a text can be viewed as a site of struggle among various discourses. In the case of Paton the dominant discourse is largely that of the white English-speaking South African, but aspects of it are sometimes questioned, at least consciously, by Paton himself, who does not, however, generally evidence much awareness of the validity of other discourses.

I have briefly discussed the importance of narrative itself, in general, and for Paton in particular. In view of his later prolific output in many genres it is interesting that Paton, so early in his life, experimented with narrative as well as with poetry and plays. He certainly found the rurally-situated novels of Thomas Hardy and some of Dickens's output stimulating (textual evidence from the MSS has been mentioned and will be discussed later). One might therefore enquire whether Paton drew his conceptions of identity from these and other writers.

Though Paton mentions the 'Rogue Herries' novels of Hugh Walpole as having influenced him (unpublished letter to Edward Callan, undated [18-21 March 1966]: Alexander, 1994:109 and 1994:449n3; Callan, 1982:13), a perusal of the only two he might possibly have read by the time of 'Brother Death', *Rogue Herries* (1930) and *Judith Paris* (1931), intriguingly indicates almost no direct

influence. The name 'Borrowdale', the farm of Charles Maitland in 'Brother Death', is indeed found in the Lake District (Walpole, 1930 and 1931: maps on endpapers and passim), but no other names of persons or areas appear to have been appropriated. As with Paton, Walpole does depend on mists and other aspects of the landscape to convey atmosphere (1930:333, 532-3, etc; 1931:625, 745, etc) and the following beginning to *Rogue Herries* itself is not unlike Paton in its rhetorical evocation of territory and the rootedness of its 'strong' people in the ground:

> *Over this country, when the giant Eagle flings the shadow of his wing, the land is darkened. So compact is it that the wing covers all its extent in one pause of the flight…. there is no ground in the world more mysterious, no land at once so bare in its nakedness and so rich in its luxury, so warm with sun and so cold in pitiless rain, so gentle and pastoral, so wild and lonely; … and its strong people have their feet in the soil and are independent of all men* (Walpole, 1930:xi-xii; italics in original).

In addition a distinction between people stemming from urban and rural environments is occasionally made, to the advantage of the latter (e.g., with respect to Keswick, in Walpole, 1930:138), and Rogue Herries himself is portrayed as something of a recluse (ibid.:233), not unlike Cromwell in 'Brother Death', preferring the valley, the soil and his house to his fellow humans. Like Paton himself, as I shall argue later, Herries rather distrusts modernity (ibid.:479-480). In the second Rogue Herries novel there is an awareness of coming change, which almost achieves personification, rather as in 'Brother Death': some welcome it, others dread it (Walpole, 1931:640).

These similarities aside, it is noteworthy that in the two novels by Walpole which Paton thought had influenced his own early fiction, a much clearer sense of events and people in the wider world is evidenced by author and characters than in Paton's early narratives: for instance the figures of John Wesley, Joseph Priestley and Samuel Johnson (Walpole, 1930:541) and the American and French Revolutions are referred to (Walpole, 1931:96, 129) as is 'the dusky evil-stained face' of the Industrial Revolution in England itself (Walpole, 1930:255). They impinge strongly upon the identities of Walpole's narrator and characters,

but the South African analogues of these events barely affect those in Paton's early work.

Alexander hints that in order to achieve a sense of saga-like sweep Paton might have had John Galsworthy in mind (Alexander, 1994:49) but once again, apart from an awareness amongst some of Paton's wealthier characters of the significance of immovable property there seems to be no specific connection. Though 'Brother Death' does exhibit both a focus on a rural community and an almost epic scale, *The Man of Property*, as with the rest of *The Forsyte Saga*, concentrates relentlessly on matters of *urban* property and the power it imparts (Galsworthy, 1906/1976:passim); *In Chancery* describes how Soames [the man of property] speaks of the Transvaal and is roused to the principle of possession (Galsworthy, 1920/1976:248); generally, in fact, the characters in the Forsyte series are acutely conscious of current political events – and of how these might affect the value of their properties, art works and equities. In *To Let*, the third volume, the reader is told, in words not unlike those used to characterise John Henry Dane: 'Sensitive, imaginative, affectionate boys get a bad time at school, but Jon [the younger Jolyon Forsyte, a cousin of Soames] had instinctively kept his nature dark, and been but normally unhappy there' (Galsworthy, 1921/1976:421). A very cursory perusal of some of the rather numerous other 1920s and 1930s novels by Galsworthy and Walpole yields no further obvious links with Paton's unpublished fiction.

I argue consequently that while Paton might have had Galsworthy and Walpole in mind, this does not seem likely. Rather, for him, it was presumably important to experiment with the telling of the story of a farming community, perhaps over many generations, and for this the narrative form was obviously appropriate. This genre is certainly what Hardy (and Galsworthy in terms of urban families) had made use of.

In at least one respect Paton evidences another interesting similarity with Hardy: while the community is rural it is not always idealised. One may instance

Boldwood (in *Far from the Madding Crowd*, who is referred to by name in 'Brother Death', p. 266) and the Sotherans (in 'Ship of Truth') as examples of figures who disrupt the peaceful surface of the narratives involved. On the other hand, in another way Paton is very different from the early Hardy, at any rate. While his main subject is a small community, this community is not shown as sufficient to itself. In Paton's novels certain characters exhibit an awareness of relationship with God that is by no means present in Hardy and the other novelists. The narrative form, I suggest, allowed Paton to explore these various divine-human and human-human relations more fully, though not succesfully.

The narrator

An important relation and identity to consider is therefore that of Paton's narrator, who is, on the whole, extradiegetic, above the story, and heterodiegetic, not participating in the story (Genette, 1980:228-231; Rimmon-Kenan, 2002:95-96): not within the narrative, yet not objective towards it, aligning himself with certain characters and norms rather than others; not omniscient but possessing a certain perspective not afforded to the characters themselves. Occasionally the events are focalised through a particular individual but generally the narrator is also the focaliser (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002:75-79; cf. also Genette's revisiting of this term, 1988:74-75). Rimmon-Kenan points out that focalisation may possess psychological or cognitive components (ibid.:80) or emotive aspects (ibid.:81), but for my purposes the most important features of the focalising agent are the ideological ones: what Rimmon-Kenan terms the norms of the text (ibid.:82, 83).

As she shows (ibid.), in the simplest case – and this is true of Paton's early fiction – these 'norms' are presented through a single dominant perspective, that of the narrator-focaliser (cf. Horstkotte, 2005:27). Put differently, the ideology of the narrator-focaliser is usually taken as authoritative. The more complex cases of which Rimmon-Kenan makes mention do not apply to Paton's early works. No plurality of ideological positions whose validity is doubtful in principle is really offered to the reader here, though occasionally a character may represent an

ideological position not only through his (almost never 'her') way of seeing things, but also through explicit discussion of his ideology. The norms of Paton's narrator-focaliser generally are implicitly rather than explicitly expressed. Broadly speaking, they are those of a Christian who has close affinities with the white gentry, the farmers of the Natal Midlands, and yet occasionally questions their values. Generally speaking these norms are very close to those of the author as I infer him to be. Though I take note of Rimmon-Kenan's caveat that the implied author and narrator are not identical (cf. Iser, 1974:103), I believe there is a good case for seeing the narrator, of 'Ship of Truth' and 'Brother Death', as very similar to Paton. However, I prefer the term 'inferred author' because this places the responsibility for constructing him/her upon the reader, not the real author, as 'implied' suggests. As Booth (in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 1961:67 and elsewhere, cited in Rimmon-Kenan, 2002:87-88) remarks, the implied (inferred) author is the governing consciousness of a work as a whole, the source of the norms embodied in it. Rimmon-Kenan argues that if it is to be consistently distinguished from the real author and the narrator, the notion of the implied (inferred) author must be de-personalised and is best considered as a set of implicit norms rather than a speaker (2002:89); while I concur, in order to avoid awkwardness and for simplicity I shall usually refer to 'Paton' or variants.

Rimmon-Kenan defines the narrator minimally, as an agent which at the very least narrates or engages in some activity serving the needs of narration (2002:90). On the whole Paton's narrator in 'Ship of Truth' maintains a moderate degree of imperceptibility as described by Chatman (in *Story and Discourse*, 1978:220-252, cited in Rimmon-Kenan, 2002:97-100); hence, while he describes settings, identifies characters and provides temporal summaries, he mostly does not presume to define characters, provide reports of what characters did not think or say, or offer interpretations, judgements and generalisations. Paton seems content to allow the story to unfold with little overt comment. Hence, on the whole the tone is fortunately not a sermonising one and sometimes he deletes didactic passages altogether. The same cannot be said of 'Brother Death', while John

Henry Dane narrates his own story. The narrator, also as in Paton's literary models, is generally reliable (cf. Rimmon-Kenan, 2002:101-104), except for John Henry Dane himself; at least in the other early fiction no different perspective or value scheme is evident and no ironic discrepancy between narrator and the events or characters depicted appears to be present. Irony was not generally a technique which the young Paton employed in his fiction.

Narrative

In considering Paton's choice of the narrative form it is first of all useful to recall the various positions adopted concerning narrative: these may be positive, where narrative is viewed as important, even central, in human existence, or negative, where the importance of narrative is downplayed, questioned or rejected. Abbott proposes that the 'bare minimum' in defining narrative (2002:12) is that it is the representation of an event or series of events. He admits that this definition might be controversial. Nevertheless, he keeps to it because it is commonly used and because it describes at least the feeling we often have that story somehow pre-exists the narrative (2002:13,14). I adopt his view for the purposes of this thesis.

From a critical perspective McNay well sums up the cases for narrative advanced by Habermas, Ricoeur, Charles Taylor and others, acknowledging that narrative may be a powerful way for thinking through aspects of subjectivity and agency, but arguing persuasively that it cannot grasp the material aspects of gender oppression, rendering many of these invisible (McNay, 2002:86-89). This is certainly true of Paton's early work, at least. More positively, Abbott (2002:123) comments that one truism about narrative is that it is a way we have of knowing ourselves: we seem to be characters. In this sense an extreme position would hold that we can only know ourselves insofar as we are narrativised. More accurately, writes Abbott (ibid.), it is only through narrative that we know ourselves as active entities that operate through time. This would certainly appear to be a common human situation both in actual existence and in narrative as such, though it is perhaps not as universal as Abbott comes rather close to

suggesting. I incline to Abbott's views myself, but with reservations along the lines of those voiced by McNay. However, I also suggest that the religious import of narrative and the import of a narrative for its writer call for further investigation.

Though some readers of narrative from a religious point of view generally follow thinkers such as Ricoeur in maintaining that narrative is theologically important, for instance because narrative technique is central to the Bible's description of the relationship of God and humanity, other religious readers such as Ruf (1997:14) question this perspective. He points out that the word 'narrative' has become a catch-all. Hence one could easily come to see narrative as covering all written works that are not theoretical. Ruf sees as guilty of promoting this broad definition Bruner, Hauerwas and Ricoeur, the last-mentioned of whom in Ruf's opinion conflates narrative and drama (ibid.:105n3). Ruf contends that there are powerful arguments against the position that narrative *must* be a theological resource simply because we are essentially narrative creatures (ibid.:14). He concludes that narrative is a powerful and in many ways desirable way to construe the human self but that it 'comes with costs' (1997:15). Ruf therefore proposes a different focus, one on voice. In his opinion, studies of narrative with a religious interest tend to focus on three aspects as defining narrative: 1) interaction of character and action; 2) sequential time; 3) coherence and intelligibility (ibid.:1997:16). The first is my main concern, but also important to me from a Levinasian perspective are the interrelationships between characters.

For Ruf (ibid.) there are three essential elements in narrative: a voice; something narrated; and, of the greatest moment in studying the religious significance of narrative, the relationship between narrative voice and the narrated persons, events, etc. In his view this is usually an external relationship, magisterial. I hold that Paton's narrators are generally of this kind. Ruf's is, he acknowledges, a restrictive description of narrative; accordingly, not all writings, in his view, are narrative. He believes that any clarity in our thinking is ill served if we conflate narrative with analysis, as has been done in his view by Ricoeur and the other

two scholars. Among the principal benefits of narrative are usually said to be coherence and intelligibility (ibid.:17). Ruf does not disagree but points out that his own depiction of the triple character of narrative and his contention that lyric and drama are also narrative imply, firstly, that there are different sorts of coherence and intelligibility and, secondly, that all coherence and intelligibility are not equal (1997:19).

Though Ruf feels that some defenders of Ricoeur are mistaken (ibid.:34) he does acknowledge (ibid.:40) that in an impressive essay ('The Narrative Construction of Reality') one such follower of Ricoeur, Bruner (1991; reprinted 2003: this is the version I use here), explores ways in which narrative constructs reality. For Bruner it is narrative that is most useful in constructing and representing the rich and messy domain of human interaction (1991/2003:45). It is important to note Bruner's emphasis that narratives are a *version* of reality which achieves verisimilitude, governed by convention and narrative necessity rather than empirical verification and logic (ibid.). Investigating narrative further, he points to ten key features, of which I mention the most relevant: its duration in time; its embodiment in particularity; the sense of the characters' agency and intentionality; referentiality or verisimilitude rather than verifiability; normativeness, in that narratives presuppose norms; sensitivity to context; and narrative accrual (the way in which narratives cobble together various stories to make a whole) (ibid.:45-58). I shall have these characteristics in mind while discussing Paton, whose unpublished fiction they seem to fit well; for my purposes it is necessary to note that Bruner does not idealise narrative, but while according it much respect, also identifies many of its limitations.

Ruf's own view is that the paradigmatic narrator is the third person omniscient narrator, who in his view truly presents the magisterial voice which brings order to this domain (1997:59). As I have suggested, generally speaking, it is this kind of narrator which one finds in the early Paton. He constructs a world which, though it usually plays out in a pastoral setting, is obviously meant to convey

verisimilitude and contains characters and relationships which are sometimes complex yet ordered by the social norms which obtain.

Abbott's remarks about narrative (2002) also demonstrate that he views narrative favourably rather than sceptically. It is evident that he is strongly influenced by Ricoeur, whom I will discuss more fully below. Abbott's purposes, amongst others (2002:xi), are to consider how narrative acts upon us, and we on it, how it changes when the cultural context changes, and how it is found everywhere in the ordinary course of people's lives. He particularly stresses this last point, pointing out that we are all narrators. Narrative as he describes it is a human phenomenon that is found in all activities that involve the representation of events in time. However, Abbott notes (ibid.:xii) that all studies of narrative are controversial: there is not yet a consensus on any of the key issues; except perhaps, I would add, that narratives are to be found worldwide.

As Abbott observes (ibid.:1) narrative is present in almost all human discourse. Abbott's (2002:passim) open conviction that narrative has much significance chimes with Paton's extended efforts in this field, writing six longer fictional works (seven, if, as I argue later, 'John Henry Dane' and 'Secret for Seven' were intended to be full-length novels) and a number of short stories over a period of nearly sixty years (1922 – 1981).

Abbott notes that various explanations have been proposed for this pervasiveness of narrative, but the question remains: what does narrative do for us? (ibid.:3) He answers, à la Ricoeur, that the likeliest response is that narrative is the principal way in which our species organises its understanding of time. Putting it differently, Abbott comments that narrative gives us what could be called the shape of time. In his opinion Hayden White's remark in *The Content of the Form* (1987:215n, quoted in Abbott, 2002:11) that the word goes back to Sanskrit 'gna', a root term that means 'know', and that it comes to us through Latin words for both 'knowing' ('gnarus') and 'telling' ('narro'), captures the two

sides of narrative. But Abbott adds that narrative can also be used to keep us in darkness (2002:11); a point with which McNay would associate herself, as do I.

One might therefore profitably ask: what does narrative do for Paton? I would posit that for him it is consciously a way of using certain literary models, based in England, to try his hand as a writer; to explore the similarities and differences in analogous communities in Natal; also, in the light of his own understanding of God, to see how this might play out in human lives and identities: to see how God might irrupt into human time. (Hence my feeling, supported by the abstract of Stuart's research, 1988, that the incarnation is important in a religious reading of Paton.) Less consciously, but no less evidently to the reader, Paton 'keeps in darkness', by marginalising, women and black people. By 1966, as noted earlier, he was to tell Edward Callan that after 1928 he 'wrote two (or three, I cannot even remember!) novels of country life (white not black)...' (Alexander, 1994:109 and 449n3);[43] hence at least by that stage he had become aware of omitting black people from his narratives. Yet he was not equally conscious of exiling women to the margins, though they seldom play major roles in his early writing.

In his last chapter (2002:161), Abbott makes what he terms a foundational proposition about how we relate to narrative; that is, we all share common elements in this regard. He considers that insofar as we share in our own lives the larger conflicts of which these narrative conflicts are particular examples, we are moved by the narrative, drawn into it, and become alert to how these conflicts play out (2002:162). This, he argues, is an important form of thinking, whether or not the negotiation of conflicts is seen to be successful; in other words, in narrative our thinking is intimately related to the emotions aroused during our narrative journey. In terms of Paton's early work one could perhaps argue that

[43] In a letter to Leif Egeland, 15 May 1933 (PC1/1/15/2-2) Paton remarks that 'My third novel followed the second in the W.P.B., ...' (unnumbered [p.2]). This letter confirms that Paton attempted and discarded 'two or three novels' in his youth (Callan, 1982:2). Fortunately, for the present researcher at least, someone must have rescued the MSS or most of them. Even then, Anne Paton suspects that important documents may have been lost (1992:31).

his sympathetic reading of Hardy gave him the idea that it would be satisfying to record and explore the lives of similar communities in Natal. Certainly part of my interest in investigating Paton's unpublished fiction stems from my own double-sided recognition: firstly of similarities between the characters he described and those familiar to me as a reader of Hardy and an English-speaking South African, and secondly of the Christian foundation which he employs.

Aware that his views are not fashionable, Abbott comments on the rhetorical power of narrative to move us with deep feeling (2002:173) and the ancient function of narrative to give us sufficient understanding to make up our minds, providing not only information but also values (ibid.:174). To him reading evidently cannot be a neutral process. I would add that this is especially the case when one reads the works of a writer, such as Paton, who himself held strong convictions which become the norms of the text. Hence his narratives are not neutral accounts and cannot easily be read in a detached fashion.

Abbott (ibid.:174) also queries how true it is that narrative, by belonging to the world of language, acquires its meanings solely by the play of difference within that linguistic realm; that is, can one never test the truth of narrative by reality? Although Derrida famously maintained there was nothing outside the text, enquires Abbott, from what standpoint outside the text did he make that statement? In order to generalise about a language [and hence about reality – my comment] one would have to have some sense of what is not language [or reality – my comment]. Abbott remarks that none of these objections is a knockout blow to deconstructive critiques of narrative, but all of them carry weight (ibid.). Indubitably, however, Paton would have believed that he was reproducing the reality of his surroundings in writing consciously realistic novels and my arguments will assume this premise while drawing attention to some stresses and strains.

In order to reflect something of the other side of the debate, I here specifically note one or two further views of a strong proponent of a deconstructive approach to narrative and narratology, Andrew Gibson (1996). As he remarks, there is a certain scepticism current in postmodern aesthetics with respect to the adequacy of narrative to the event itself (1996:184). Gibson believes (ibid.:189) that there is a power and an urgency to the postmodern criticism of narrative; if a postmodern (Deleuzean) politics might seize on the indeterminability of the event and a postmodern (Levinasian) ethics might give priority to immediate responsiveness and constant responsibility, narrative would seem only to provide models running counter to both. However, I query Gibson's comment that narrative runs counter to a Levinasian ethics, again at least in Paton's case, where some major early characters evidence precisely some degree of responsiveness to and responsibility for others – or are criticised for not doing so.

Gibson also cites arguments for the defence of narrative (1996:192-209), holding however that a postmodern theory of narrative might want to break any identification of narrative with closure and control, to search out and prize all those points at which any complete identification becomes impossible: to liberate narrative as event, and the event within narrative. To me, however, it is not clear that narrative and the event actually need this kind of liberation, at least where Paton is concerned. While he describes the lives of human beings existing within *chronos*, normal human time, within a fairly restrictive and parochial Natalian society, he does at least allow for the possibility of an irruption into his characters' lives of divine activity and cosmic time, *aion* (cf. Gibson, 1996:179, 209), which means that they are not totally circumscribed.

Cohan and Shires (1988:1), not unlike Abbott, consider that narratives are significant and require close study because stories structure the meanings by which a culture lives. This is not untrue, as has already been acknowledged, but requires further qualification in that it is characteristic of many writers to depart from or question the master-narratives of their society, however much these

'stories' may be in the background of their works. As Rimmon-Kenan points out in her 'afterthoughts' (2002:134) to the second edition of her book, by now we have learnt from Hayden White that there are always competing narratives; hence, as I have attempted to demonstrate, there are competing narratologies. Thus the early Paton, who certainly accepted most of the 'stories' of his culture concerning social and behavioural norms, for example, also queries their normativity through creating certain characters who do not necessarily accept all of these norms and offer different stories or explanations, some based in an explicitly religious point of view.

Rimmon-Kenan (2002:147) observes, like Abbott but perhaps laying herself open to critique by Ruf, that narration is in no way restricted to literature. In order to make sense of experiences, people consciously or unconsciously, audibly or inaudibly, tell stories to themselves as well as others. In the same way, in his early novels one may see Paton as experimenting with his gifts as a writer; as making sense of, by narrating, the society in which he lived; and as exploring ways in which that society could be transcended. As one might expect, his answers are largely religious in nature.

Narrative identity

In this regard Paul Ricoeur is the thinker who has probably written most extensively about narrative and narrative identity; his arguments have been both applauded and decried. To me it appears, however, that his views are inadequate in themselves and that he did recognise their limitations. Below I therefore summarise a few of the points Ricoeur makes about identity, narrative and time in his important late essay 'Narrative and Identity' (Ricoeur, 1991:188ff), making brief reference to his 1986 Gifford Lectures (Ricoeur, 1992) as well. I do so in the awareness that not all critics, even those sympathetic to Ricoeur and hermeneutics, valorise narrative as much as he does, and that the essay and lectures do not represent all that Ricoeur has written on the subject, though they do reflect his later views. I briefly relate his discussion to my reading of Paton.

Ricoeur states (1991:188) that his aim in *Time and Narrative* was to examine more closely the concept of narrative identity. At the end of *Time and Narrative III* he had formed the hypothesis that the constitution of narrative identity, whether of individual or community, was the sought-after site of the fusion between narrative and fiction. There he asked whether human lives do not become more readily intelligible when they are interpreted in the light of the stories that people tell about them.

Ricoeur admits that what was missing from this intuitive grasp of personal identity was a clear grasp of what is at stake in the very question of identity when it is applied to persons or to communities. After the publication of volume III of *Time and Narrative*, he was convinced that a stronger defence could be mounted. He points out that the conceptual framework of volume III rests on the fundamental distinction drawn between the two main uses of the concept of identity: as sameness (Latin *idem*, English *same*, German *gleich*) and as selfhood (Latin *ipse*, English *self*, German *Selbst*), and argues strongly that selfhood is not sameness. Many confusions, in his view, arise from this (ibid.:189).

For him identity as *sameness* is a numerical concept taking various senses, two of which are relevant: uninterrupted continuity – change through time – from which the final sense arises: permanence in time. He observes that it is with this last sense that the real difficulties begin, because it is difficult not to assign this permanence to some immutable substance, as Aristotle did. The problem is that *selfhood*, the self, appears to cover the same space of meaning. But it does not, as the difference in their contraries implies: the contrary of numerical identity is plurality; the contrary of permanent identity is diversity. Identity as uniqueness does not thematically imply time, which is not the case with identity as permanence (1991:189).

Moving to link the issue of identity more closely with the concept of narrative,

Ricoeur asks: How does self/hood connect with sameness? He answers that one can begin to unfold the concept of selfhood by considering the nature of the question to which self constitutes a response, or range of responses (ibid.:191).

Before he marks the point at which the self intersects with the same, Ricoeur insists on the ontological break which separates *idem* and *ipse*. Adducing Heidegger, he argues that the break between self (*ipse*) and same (*idem*) ultimately expresses the intersection of the self with the same at one precise point: permanence in time (ibid.).

Ricoeur proceeds to argue that the problem which concerns him now arises precisely from this intersection: the question of permanence in time. His thesis, he contends, is consequently double: firstly, that most of the difficulties which afflict contemporary discussion bearing on personal identity result from the confusion between the two interpretations of such permanence (selfhood versus sameness); secondly, that the concept of narrative identity offers a solution to the aporias of personal identity.

Supporting this argument (1991:195), Ricoeur takes a detour through literary forms of narrative, particularly those of fiction. There, he maintains, the question of identity is deliberately set forth as what is at stake in narrative. According to his thesis, narrative constructs the durable properties of a character, what one could call his [sic] narrative identity, by constructing the kind of dynamic identity found in the plot which creates the character's identity. So it is first of all in plot that one looks for mediation between permanence and change before it can be carried over to character. He concludes that the advantage of this detour is that it provides a model of discordant concordance on which it is possible to construct the narrative identity of the character (ibid.).

Ricoeur points out that this suggestion is not without repercussions at the level of the application of literature to life, so that in his view, narrative mediation

underlines this remarkable aspect of self-knowledge: that is, one's self-interpretation (ibid.:198). In this respect one might remark that many characters in the early Paton except for Dr Trollip and Jarvis, late in 'Brother Death', and John Henry Dane, do not exhibit a capacity for self-reflexivity though Ricoeur insists that the question itself: 'who am I?' cannot be effaced (ibid.:199) Occasionally Paton's early characters grope their way towards such a question, but the most self-conscious – yet isolated – is John Henry Dane, in one of his later works. One wonders whether Paton would have explored the paradox more deeply if typhoid had not supervened.

Ricoeur is struggling, openly, with an issue that is almost certainly insoluble at a rational level. Hence one is obliged to have recourse to other levels of explanation of human identity, such as metaphor and – in his case – narrative. To my mind the concept of narrative identity does not quite offer a solution to the aporia of personal identity as he claims (ibid.:192), but it is a useful way of exploring the issue of persistence in time. Hayden White, from a vantage point prior to the completion of *Time and Narrative*, also considering Ricoeur's tackling of 'the enigma of being-in-time' (White, 1982/1991:142), advances his well-known concept of emplotment as that of according meaning to events by configuring them in such a way as to represent symbolically the aporetic nature of the human experience of time (ibid.:144). He asserts therefore that for Ricoeur narrative discourse is as much 'performative' as 'constative', using the early terminology of Austin (ibid.:150). I would regard this as a 'strong' view of narrative with which I can associate myself insofar as Paton, for instance, both reflects the Natal Midlands society and brings a version of it into being, and frequently marks the passage of time.

On the other hand David Wood (1991a:4 - 5) considers that since Ricoeur admits the limitations of narrative these limits mean that beyond a certain point there is unintelligibility, contradiction, aporia, and I see Wood's point while not concurring fully with his negative interpretation. To my mind, Wood's strictures do not detract

from Ricoeur's fundamental sense that narrative and identity are inextricably linked, nor from Ricoeur's acknowledgment that there is a mystery in these issues which is not necessarily explicable.

Deliberately arguing philosophically rather than theologically, Ricoeur does not bring the divine into the equation of identity, and, in this essay at least, he focuses on the individual to the exclusion of his or her relationship with other individuals. These are gaps which could be remedied by a broader understanding of identity in terms of relationship with God and with other human beings. I would hold that Levinas provides one such possibility, as Ricoeur himself might well acknowledge. Ricoeur's earlier Gifford Lectures in 1986, published as *Oneself as Another* in 1992, considered the issue of relationships to some extent, but not as fully or as rigorously as Levinas. His argument in the lecture on 'Personal Identity and Narrative Identity' in some respects is not dissimilar to that in the 1991 essay just discussed. He clarifies that character 'is the self under the appearances of sameness' (Ricoeur, 1992a:128). In 'The Self and Narrative Identity' he emphasises ethics (Ricoeur, 1992c:152). In another essay cites Levinas, *Otherwise than Being* (1974:180), concerning the meaning of the concept of accountability in terms of responsibility: both 'counting on' and 'being accountable for' another (Ricoeur, 1992b:165). In a footnote to the same essay, 'The Self and the Ethical Aim' (Ricoeur, 1992b:189n24) he touches on his debt to Levinas, expressed more fully in the tenth lecture, 'What Ontology in View?' There, emphasising the fundamental nature of the dialectic between selfhood and otherness, he speaks of 'the work of otherness at the heart of selfhood' (Ricoeur, 1992d:317-318) and points out in words reminiscent of Levinas that '[t]he very definition of ethics that we have proposed – living well with and for others in just institutions – cannot be conceived without the project of living well being affected by solicitude; both that which is exerted and that which is received' (ibid.:330). Nevertheless he does not concur with Levinas that conscience regarding the other stems only from the otherness of other people, arguing that internal being, rather than external others, constitutes the structure

of selfhood (ibid.:354). However, I suggest that Paton attempts to show some of his characters becoming most fully themselves in relation to the other/Other and expresses a critique of some who refuse this invitation, though his narrative tends to be superficial; and I consider that this aspect of relationship is well discussed by Levinas.[44]

Therefore I consider that various implications of a religious reading in terms of *relational* identity, and a religious approach to the topic of identity formation in Paton, are germane. As suggested earlier, these include attentiveness to voices – and silences – in a text, to marginality and marginalisation, to geographical space, especially in South Africa, to temporality, to closure (or the lack of it) and above all to the portrayal of human relationships (see Levey, 2001b and 2004). While some of these aspects represent common features of much postmodern discussion of narrative and other forms of writing, others do not. In particular, relationality amongst characters, and between characters and the transcendent, is an issue somewhat neglected by narratologists and other commentators but which is central to religious thought and important in Paton's early work. As Elaine Graham (1996:223) points out, the decisive impact of gender's being perceived as a form of social relations is suggestive of a model of human nature as profoundly relational: a point to my mind reinforced by the essays in Walton and Hass (2000), particularly by Hass (2000). Such a model resounds with other perspectives that emphasise such an identity as thoroughly compatible with a Trinitarian model of God where identity, difference and a relationship between them simultaneously co-inhere (Graham, 1996:223). For instance, Cunningham (2003:198) emphasises Trinitarian theology's insistence that a 'person' is not an autonomous centre of consciousness, nor a private entity; 'rather, persons are

[44] Davenport (2000:344-347) discusses the tension between Levinas's thought and Ricoeur's, arguing that the former's central claim that the self is completely passive in its original relation to others causes difficulties (ibid.:332) and that a balance needs to be more carefully maintained to avoid too inward an approach (ibid.:362), but is largely sympathetic to Levinas's originality and profundity (cf., e.g., ibid.:332, 342). Ward is somewhat critical of Levinas's one-way (i.e. non-reciprocal) understanding of the relationship to the other, who need not respond to the invitation (2005a:79) but in my view reciprocity is not the reason one enters into relationship. Ward does acknowledge this in his following discussion of Abraham (ibid.:80).

necessarily woven into the lives of other persons'; Ford (2003:284) makes a very similar point, focusing more on the Holy Spirit; Temple (1911:xiii) grounds his course of lectures, on human personality, in the personality of God. I am obviously of the same mind as Graham, Hass, Cunningham, Ford and Temple but consider that nonetheless, one need not turn to the doctrine of the Trinity for an understanding of the relational nature of human identity; a profound exploration is to be found in a writer such as Levinas. At the same time, Levinas's conception of embodiment as a site for responsibility to the other displays intriguing parallels with the Incarnation in its Christian sense (Ford, 2003:284; cf. Webster, 2003:233; Young, 2004:98, 100 and 107n15).

Relational identity

In an African context it is particularly relevant that, in a work such as *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas presents a critique of the whole of Western civilisation, which he sees as dominated by the spirit of Greek philosophy. Western thought and practice in his view are marked by a striving for totalisation. Many African thinkers might agree. Against Western totalitarianism, Levinas maintains that the human and the divine Other cannot be reduced to a totality of which they would only be elements. The 'Other' is in the first place the other human being I encounter; later the word also stands for God (Peperzak's 'Preface' to Levinas, 1996:x; cf. also Leonard, 2000:137). Far from repressing alterity Levinas' ethics is based on difference; the other calls one beyond oneself, calls one into being (cf. Walton, 2000:12).

According to Peperzak (1996.:xiii) 'Substitution' is the essay which Levinas later heavily revised to make it the core of his *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence* (tr. 1981), a core to which all interpretations of his work should refer (ibid.:xiii) though in this essay his early use of the terms *Autre*, *autre*, *Autrui* and *autrui* is not always consistent (ibid.:xiv). 'Substitution' (1968) offers a re-examination of the Western philosophical concept of identity, which Levinas associated with self-coincidence, self-possession and sovereignty (Bernasconi,

1996b:79). Here one may note a link, both a parallel and a tension, with Paton: this concept of the self is probably similar to the one he would have been familiar with from early on, both in terms of his undergraduate training at the Natal University College and his postgraduate studies, and maintained steadfastly until his old age. In 1923, as noted earlier, he was much perturbed by J B Watson's behaviourism, which appeared to him to deny the self its freedom to choose (Alexander, 1994:65); his talk on 'God in Modern Thought, with reference to Psychology' (probably 1934, since Bram Fischer's letter is dated 20 February 1935; I list it as 1934a) is subtitled 'or more accurately -- with reference to Psychology, Religion, and Human choice [sic]' (1934a:1) and is strongly opposed to determinism, as is the probably contemporary 'Religion, Freedom and Man' (1934c).[45] Nearly fifty years later, in *Towards the Mountain*, writing of his struggles with lust, he twice remarks that if one gives in to it 'the self has lost its sovereignty' (1980:43). Later he adds that the Oxford Group's insistence on yielding sovereignty over one's self (1980:121) and its inexorability of purpose (ibid.:122) alarmed him.

Paton's early fiction likewise sometimes explores the consequences of free will in his characters' lives, though not altogether consistently. I shall consider whether those of his characters who accept responsibility for the other are the ones to which he is most sympathetic. Levinas puts this well in 'Substitution', at least in translation: 'The oneself is a responsibility for the freedom of others' (1968/1996:87). He adds, 'Being takes on a meaning ... not because there exists among thinking beings a being pursuing ends, a being thereby structured as an Ego. There is abandonment, obsession, responsibility, and a Self because the trace of the Infinite ... is inscribed in proximity' (ibid.:91). The 'proximity' of the

[45] Intriguingly, William Temple in his lectures on 'Rights and Duties: Determinism and Individuality' and 'The Will and its Freedom' asserted a similar standpoint. These were published with others as *The Nature of Personality* (1911). A direct influence on Paton cannot be demonstrated and nothing by Temple is listed in Paton's bibliography for this talk or that of 'Religion, Freedom and Man' [='Religion and My Generation'] (PC1/3/5/4) but the issue was evidently a live one in intellectual circles at the time. 'Religion, Freedom and Man' critiques behaviourism in terms practically identical to those in 'God in Modern Thought', e.g. on pp. 64 and 73.

other and thereby of the Other is a term characteristic of Levinas, as Smith points out in the translator's introduction to *Outside the Subject* (Levinas, 1993:xviii-xix; cf. Levinas's preface, ibid.:1 and his essay 'Martin Buber, Gabriel Marcel and Philosophy', ibid.:21). Levinas conceives of a responsibility to which one is elected and by which one finds oneself answerable for everything and everyone, even for one's persecutors (ibid.:79). In 'God and Philosophy' he makes similar points (ibid.:143,148), here and elsewhere emphasising one's infinite obligation to the other person (cf. Hand, 1989:v). According to Levinas this bespeaks both the religious significance of interhuman relations and conversely, the accomplishment of the relation-to-God in the approach of one person to another, addressed as *Thou,* in the Meeting between the *I* and the *Thou,* arguing that the relation is reciprocity itself (Levinas, 1993:21-22). In the title essay for *Outside the Subject*, written for that volume and representative of his late thinking, he adds that the thinking person is exposed to the loneliness of the face of the other and hence to the categorical imperative of assuming responsibility for that misery (ibid.:158).[46]

Ricoeur would not agree that taking up such responsibility is necessary for selfhood, as I indicated earlier; Paton would probably have answered that one could freely choose or reject that responsibility but that one could not ignore it. To some extent, though on the whole ham-handedly, his early fiction does appear to reflect the significance, for identity, of an awareness of one's responsibility for the other.

One should consequently ask: who then for Paton is the other? I noted earlier that Paton's sense of identity as a Christian writer, deeply involved in South Africa, in politics, with other people, naturally raises the questions of how he

[46] Not dissimilar is Caputo's Foucauldian hermeneutics of response and redress, along with which he proposes a therapeutics of 'healing gestures' (Caputo, 'Deconstruction, Hermeneutics, Phenomenology, Continental Philosophy of Religion', 1993:234, quoted in Du Plooy and Ryan, 2005:25; see also Du Plooy and Ryan, 2005:40). In contrast, Bauman suggests that postmodern life strategies place human autonomy in opposition to responsibility for the other (1996:33). Paton, I think, steers a middle course.

perceived the identity of the other and of the Other, of when this consciousness developed and to what extent it was manifested in his earlier work, as well as to what extent it mirrors the concerns of other South African writers about identity. As I shall attempt to show during my discussion of the works themselves, the short answer is that all these facets of identity are only just beginning to emerge in the Paton of the 1920s and 1930s. Although obviously one could pursue many different avenues at varying levels of sophistication, my focus will fall mainly on his description of the identities of the narrator, the characters and the white, English-speaking, relatively well-off Natalian community to which they belong, not taking much responsibility for others and not overly aware of the Other. On the whole it will become clear that Paton generally conforms with his society's values, but occasionally allows small spaces for alterity. I shall be exploring some of De Kock's 'multiple constructions of identity' in this country (2001:271), bearing in mind Kort's 'new assessment of self and identity ... that will avoid the sharp and easy alternatives of "self" as a social product and "self" as a self- and world-constituting will' (1990b:585) and adopting Belsey's succinct definition of the (postmodern) human being as '[u]nfixed, unsatisfied, ... not a unity, not autonomous, but a process, perpetually in construction, perpetually contradictory, perpetually open to change' (2002:132).

The self and the subject

The self is important to the present inquiry for several reasons, not least because, as Ruf (1997:9) remarks, religious thought is carried on in terms of personality, a point made by William James (*The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 1985:387). Ruf asserts (1997:10) that voices in genres present us with models for the self. As he acknowledges, this is not a simple matter, because the self is itself complex. The view of genres he urges centres on the nature of voice in each (ibid.:22), so that, in his view, genre becomes a paradigm of personhood, principally displaying the nature of the self, the character of one's surroundings, and the nature of one's relationship to those surroundings (ibid.:23). He remarks that a more critical examination is needed, of exactly how

narrative shapes its readers (ibid.:29), and argues that narrative generally possesses a single voice (the narrator's) which comprehends more than the characters, which is somewhat detached and emphasises the solitary (ibid.:30). Consequently, he avers, the reader also tends to see himself [sic] as similarly magisterial and detached (ibid.:31). This is certainly the experience of the present reader of the early Paton. However, as with many other postmodern critics the focus in Ruf falls largely on the individual rather than the individual in relationship with others.

Though, as suggested in the previous chapter, Paton's characters are especially intriguing in the light of Levinas's exploration of intersubjectivity, the self and the other, one may ask, with Rimmon-Kenan (2002:31), whether character is dead, in terms of Barthes's declaration that character is obsolescent (*S/Z*, 1974:95; cited in Rimmon-Kenan, 2002:29) and in the light of postmodern questioning of not only the stability but also the unity of the self (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002:30). Rimmon-Kenan observes that structuralists can hardly accommodate character within their theories. Where they do, in mimetic theories characters equal people, but in semiotic theories they dissolve into textuality (ibid.:33). She suggests that it is possible to see characters simultaneously as persons and as part of a design (ibid.:33). It is also feasible, in her view, to see character and action as interdependent, not primary to each other (ibid.:35). Her conclusion, which seems reasonable to me, is that in story character is a construct, put together by the reader (ibid.:36), just as the inferred (for her the implied) author is a construct developed by the reader. Consequently, my readings of Paton's characters will flow out of my own construction of them in the light of what I know of his thought.

In this respect Mbembe (2002b:1) remarks that until recently, our understanding of the human person was based on the traditional humanistic assumptions of Cartesian philosophy, an understanding which I have suggested would have been recognisable to Paton though he might not have fully agreed. The subject was the product of the division of mind and body and the individual existed prior

to history. Even more appropriate for a discussion of identity in Paton's early work, therefore, are the critics of Cartesianism which privileged a definition of the subject as equivalent to autonomous agency, self-knowledge and experience (Mbembe, 2002b:1) because, as I have intimated, Paton's view seems to encompass some elements of Cartesianism as well as of other notions of identity. Paton's characters are indubitably shown to consider themselves as autonomous agents (*if* they are white men from the ruling class), and a few of them demonstrate the capacity for self-reflexivity. However, they are also strongly determined by their society and culture, and are not as autonomous as they (or Paton) might have thought. Those characters who resist this social constructedness often do so on the grounds of Christian conviction, but even this belief can be argued to be a socially-determined phenomenon. The point is, however, that for Paton it was more than this, and Kort's plea for a middle course between opposing theories of the self is appropriate here.

In Mbembe's view (2002b:2), invoking Fraser's *Identity without Selfhood* (1999), analyses of subjecthood and selfhood relied on certain core categories of Western identity such as boundedness, self-mastery, self-realisation and self-exploration,. While psychoanalysis has posited an unbridgeable divide between the conscious and the unconsciousness and has shown that without access to the unconscious the conscious is irrevocably split, the limits of borderlines such as subject/object, interiority/exteriority, self and other have been challenged and the instability of the psyche has been recognised by feminist, queer, race and postcolonial theorists (ibid.). Paton also demonstrates a sense, not very explicit, that some of his characters possess hidden depths, and while he does not show their identity as shifting or unstable, he does suggest the converse: that some of his most steady and consistent characters are grounded in a faith in God and are also conscious of their fellow human beings. This does not mean that they are portrayed as perfect, or that Paton was aware of all the implications of his representation of their identity which one might notice today.

In recent years, as Mbembe comments (ibid.), many analysts inspired by poststructuralist and postmodernist insights have argued that the subject and the self are produced through a matrix of power relations. Abbott (2002:51) likewise points out that if with its immense rhetorical resources narrative is an instrument of power, it is often about power as well. In almost every narrative there is a conflict in which power is at stake, so that one might say that narrative takes its structure from conflict. Insofar as Paton's largely white, male, upper-class characters take their identity from the positions of power which they occupy, this Foucauldian approach is also appropriate.

Today, adds Mbembe (2000b:2), the view prevails that indeed the subject is in many ways nothing more than a fiction and that it is above all the representations of the self as an expressive subject that require explanation. Within this framework, the subject is understood not as an entity but as fractured, multiple, shifting and changing, repeatedly produced through performativity, in the language of Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'* (1993). More radically, the subject is a series of flows/energies and capacities that do not congeal to form a bounded identity (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia,* 1988), cited in Mbembe, 2002:2).

From a religious perspective Ruf (1997: 91) describes Mark Taylor's similar notion of a postmodern self. Taylor criticises the proper theological subject: the solitary self, whose self-consciousness assumes the form of an individual I that defines itself by opposition to and transcendence of other isolated subjects. From a Levinasian (and Patonesque) viewpoint I would identify with Taylor's critique of the solitary subject. Taylor proposes a postmodern decentred self that is situated in the midst of complex and constantly changing relations (Ruf, 1997:91n37, citing *Erring: A Postmodern A/theology*, 1984:130, 135). Taylor seems to be emphasising relations with other people and forces, but, in Ruf's view, his theory also seems to call for the 'entanglement' of voices within the self (ibid.:91). Ruf adds (ibid.:97) that more specifically, the ordering accomplished by literature

involves several of the usual deconstructionist targets: the self with a single centre controlling and unifying all aspects; the thorough intelligibility of that self and its fundamental health and integrity. He concludes (ibid.:100-101) that a multiplicity of selves is the ordinary state and that the situation seems parallel to William James's observation that we have as many selves as there are people who know us (citing *The Principles of Psychology*, in *The Works of William James*, 1981:281; cf. Strauss, 2004: 571-572 regarding the numerous social identities the human being may assume). Genres themselves result in fragmentation exacerbated by the fact that most actual works are mixtures. Such a view of genre, remarks Ruf, fits with a long religious tradition, that the ideas and experiences most valuable to us are paradoxically those that most disturb and undermine us. It would appear to me that Paton, writing in, but generally critical of, a modernist milieu,[47] was certainly aware of the possibility of a twofold self: but while certain of his characters seem fundamentally whole and centred (owing to religious faith or conversion: usually clergymen), this is not necessarily true of those whose identity he explores more deeply.

In place of the earlier essentialism, notes Mbembe, [Western] critical attention has been shifted to the practice of being enabled by the various techniques through which individuals set themselves standards of conduct, and seek to transform themselves in their singular being (2002b:2). This process where one conforms to the ideology of one's society, reminiscent of Althusser's concept of

[47]As indicated by his metafictional comment on 'some modern novelists', 'John Henry Dane', p. 39, his lack of respect for the Georgians and the early Modernists, whose verse he parodied on occasion, and his preference for de la Mare and the early Yeats (Alexander, 1994:45); also his enthusiasm for Keats, Browning, Housman and Masefield, as in 'Ship of Truth' and in some of his letters to Pearse, e.g. 3 Jan 1922 (photocopies in Alan Paton Collection, PC 64/1/1/1) (pp. 2-3) and 22 April 1923, PC64/1/1/7 (pp. 1-2)). Neville Nuttall's diary helpfully records that on Thursday 14 April 1923 Alan and he talked of de la Mare (Nuttall, 2001:14); on May 9 1923 of Browning and Tennyson (ibid.:16) and on June 12 1923 of Keats again (ibid.:22). In *Towards the Mountain* Paton (1980:63) records a list of writers, mostly Romantics and Victorians, which he recalls reading together with Dent. Wittenberg considers that Paton was a lifelong admirer of Campbell's modernist verse (2004:225n35). However, in a talk on 'Roy Campbell – S. A. Poet and Deserter' (PC1/9/9/3/1) which seems to have been drafted at about the time of 'Flowering Rifle' (1939), Paton declares that 'except for occasional bursts, it is not poetry' (n.d.:32) and considers 'Mithraic Emblems' (1936) irritating (ibid.:23). Paton's impressive knowledge of modern thought, as in his 'Religion, Freedom and Man' (1934c) and 'God in Modern Thought' (1934a), by no means implies his acquiescence with it.

interpellation, is certainly discernible in Paton's major characters. According to Mbembe, in contrast African philosophy has been more preoccupied with a critique of the 'false' universality of Western reason and the refutation of Western racial discourses that have produced the African subject as a non- or subhuman or as an object or property (2000b:2). He asks whether in the current heterogeneous African context selfhood and subjecthood can still be interpreted as merely sites on which broader institutional and political forces are inscribed, and whether it is possible to offer an account of agency without returning to a notion of a transcendental subject and the dualism of self/other/community (2000b:3). In posing these questions Mbembe's familiarity with and questioning of Western thought regarding identity is patent. Nor is he alone in his misgivings, as for instance the articles by Menkiti and Kaphagawani in Wiredu (2004) indicate: they remind one of the vibrancy and cogency of a different tradition to that of the West, which should not be ignored.[48]

Although the effect of an ideology is to provide an assurance of the continuity or stability of the subject (this is certainly true of characters in the early Paton, whether they are 'stabilised' by the Midlands settler ideology (see Morrell, below), Christianity or both), the subject, according to Althusser, actually grasps himself from across a full range of ideologically conflicting discourses, where in this sense the term 'discourse' denotes more than language practices in general (Cohan and Shires, 1988:139). In Paton the dominant discourse propagated by white (male) society largely determines the identity of the characters belonging to

[48] In a provocative article Mbembe takes up the difficulties of determining the conditions under which the African subject could attain full selfhood. The main African schools of thought, the instrumentalist (by which he means Marxist) and nativist currents, exhibit major weaknesses, in his opinion, and have reached a dead end. Most interestingly for my purposes, he suggests that the Jewish model of reflection on suffering, contingency and finitude could profitably have been made use of (2002a:240-2; 259-262). He shows that dominant African discourses on the self developed within a racist paradigm and are varied in nature (ibid.:256-263) and declares that African identity does not exist as a single substance, being, rather, constituted in varying forms through a series of practices of the self (ibid.:272), a term deriving from Foucault (*Technologies of the Self*, 1988). Hence the proposed workshop to explore the issue of such practices, on which I have not been able to find any further information. At any rate it is evident that the African debate over the self and identity, which Mbembe also tends to regard as a single concept, is as variegated as the Western. Kaphagawani's article (2004) makes this clear, though it is limited to Akan, Yoruba and Bantu concepts of personhood.

it, but is in part questioned by the characters who profess religious faith. Any conflicting discourses, such as might be expressed by the black populace or by women, are in fact ignored and thus nullified. As indicated in the previous chapter, for Foucault, discourse is more than simply the general domain of all statements (*The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 1972:80, cited in ibid.). Rather, discourse is an individualisable group of statements recognisable as a group because they are all part of the same discursive formation (1972:117, cited in ibid.). Though there is a plurality of discourses at any one time, a single discourse is limited by the historical and social conditions in which it is practised (Cohan and Shires, 1988:140). In Paton it is the largely hidden discourse of white English identity which fulfils this role. This further confirms my notion that in reading the early Paton I need to relate his early work not only to the society but also, and especially, to the discourses which form its background and constitute its subjects.

Identity in colonial Natal

To this end I draw at length on Morrell's study (2001) of settler masculinity in colonial Natal from 1880-1920, which also contains a section on feminine identities, though Paton's work in certain respects exhibits slightly different constructions of identity. However, I accept and make use of Morrell's point, itself taken from writers such as Bob Connell (e.g., *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics*, 1987; *Masculinities*, 1995), that masculinity, and indeed identity as such, is largely constructed socially (Morrell, 2001:9, 10, 12; see also Morrell, 2005:84). It is clear that Paton's writing largely mirrors, rather than questions, the thought and mores of the Midlands farmers, and accepts their own construction of their identity, though unlike the findings of Morrell's study his narratives do not much reflect the importance of institutions such as the game of rugby and only sometimes that of farmers' associations / agricultural societies. Morrell considers that the State as such exerted no influence on the development of the construction of identity in this rural region, which is borne out by Paton's early novels. As Thompson indicates, symbols and rituals of state played a large

part in developing a consciousness of 'British' civic identity in urban areas, thereby sustaining the settler state (1999:2-3), but apart from the flag controversy these have no role in Paton's early work, which is steadfastly centred in rural Natal.

In keeping with his Christian beliefs, and in contrast to Morrell (who specifically acknowledges the importance of the church but, oddly, has consciously omitted it from his study; 2001:274), Paton places much emphasis upon the importance of the awareness of the transcendent, and upon a muscular Christian idealism, as central to a proper understanding of true (white male) identity. These emphases are focalised through the viewpoints of major male characters such as those of the farmer Jenkinson and the doctor/priest Deasland in 'Ship of Truth'. On the whole, (white) women merely serve to reinforce the male's concept of himself and behave in socially acceptable fashion, while black people are largely absent, except in marginal and stereotyped ways.[49]

In most ways, the society described by Paton reflects the unapologetic white supremacist system which had grown up in Natal (Morrell, 2001:6). Shula Marks, as quoted by Morrell (ibid.:7), writes of the: 'tightly knit nature of white Natal, the free mingling of officials and settlers, of farmers, shopkeepers, and artisans [which] led to a high degree of uniformity and conformity of opinion on most issues, and to stereotypes being formed of the other racial groups' (Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion: The 1906-8 Disturbances in Natal*, 1970:10). This statement applies reasonably well to the society depicted by Paton, except that his communities of villagers and farmers are distinct from each other, though interdependent, and he does occasionally attempt to describe and to approve certain individuals who escape from or question this uniformity, though their queries can hardly be described as a consistent resistance, in Connell's (2002) terms: Jenkinson, Deasland and Dr Trollip in 'Ship of Truth', for example. The

[49] Bhabha's identification of the stereotype as the primary strategy of colonialist discourse, which depends on fixed images of the positive and the negative, is pertinent here (1983:18), as is February's comment that the stereotype facilitates the holding of power (1984/1992:315).

first two of these characters espouse a religious approach to existence, which allows them to question social norms and roles. Nevertheless they are conformist in certain ways, especially as regards their construction of the black other.

As Morrell comments, no system can ever be totally inclusive, and indeed it is an argument of postmodernism that every inclusive system requires for its success an 'other', who/which is not included (2001:11). He adds that hegemonic masculinity is always constructed in relation to various subordinated masculinities as well as in relation to women (2001:12, quoting Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics*, 1987:183).[50] In the Midlands between the 1880s and the 1920s, this hegemony resided in the concept of settler masculinity as being identical to that of the Midlands gentry, which was class- and race-specific and powerfully moulded by the colonial context (Morrell, 2001:13, 14).

Morrell argues (2001:16, 17) that class and gender identity is confirmed and affirmed, for instance by constant participation in pastimes (such as sports and farmer's associations); but as I have commented, this means of constructing identity is not particularly evident in Paton's early novels. It certainly is true that, as in Morrell's description of most Midlands men (2001:18), many of Paton's male figures are shown as living unquestioningly in a society where their race and gender gave them power and prestige, and as drawing on the ideology of domesticity which located women in the home, but a few – especially those with a religious awareness – do query the norms of their society.

[50] In *Gender*, published later than Morrell's study, Connell revisits his earlier studies *Gender and Power* and *Which Way is Up?* (1983), the first of which was used by Morrell, in the light of more recent research (2002:viii) He clarifies that while one cannot think of womanhood or manhood as fixed by nature, neither should one think of these as simply imposed from outside, by social norms or pressure from authorities. People construct *themselves* as masculine or feminine (ibid.:4). In terms of power relations Connell more strongly emphasises Foucault's view (*Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the* Prison, 1977) that power is widely dispersed, especially operating discursively, which raises the crucial question of resistance to power (2002:59): something that does not constitute part of the make-up of most of Paton's characters, John Henry Dane being the main exception. This refinement of Connell's views does not substantially alter Morrell's argument but does suggest a slightly different way of reading identity in Paton which I shall employ where I deem it appropriate, as in 'John Henry Dane'.

Not many of Paton's characters, nor the narrator, however, make mention of the constant and immediate presence of black people, which Morrell sees as part of the consciousness of Midlands society (2001:25, 26). On the whole the black populace are noticeably relegated to the least desirable areas of Paton's unfortunately and ironically named Kaffirlands Valley, in which 'Ship of Truth' (1922-1923) takes place. (As in *Cry, the Beloved Country*, on the whole the *whites* actually literally occupy the high ground. The irony is picked up in the later novel, but seems to escape Paton here.) In fact, one might say that black people are constructed as non-existing. Where black figures do appear in Paton's early work, they are referred to impersonally, as the unpredictable, the other, or at the very most paternalistically, exactly as in Morrell's Midlands (2001:205).[51] White men who do not belong to the dominant class are similarly marginalised by their community in Paton and their conceptions of identity rejected, though not necessarily by the narrator. What Morrell terms an 'internal hierarchy' (2001:38) is certainly found in Paton's novels as in the Midlands, giving the lie to the notion of a cohesive community which the Midlands gentry deliberately created in schools (Morrell, 2001:49), in sports such as rugby, polo and hunting (ibid.:78, 81), in clubs and other voluntary societies (ibid.:107, 139), in militaristic activities (ibid.:139) and farmers' / agricultural associations (ibid.:176).

In Paton's 'Ship of Truth', interestingly, only the schools are accorded any major role, and they are certainly viewed as important to the community, though most of them are boarding schools and are geographically located outside the Valley. ('Brother Death' accords a slightly more important part to the farmers' association.) Thompson acerbically notes that the use of education for social control was 'appreciated' in Natal (1999:104 and 117n74). Likewise Belsey comments that the central ideological state apparatus in capitalism is the educational system (2002:54). Both of these observations are relevant for

[51] Coetzee's sharp comment that 'Blindness to the colour black is built into South African pastoral' (1988:5) is pertinent.

Paton's work. There is a resentful awareness in the young boy, Michael Shearer, of the class distinction between public and private schools. 'John Henry Dane' (1934b) is placed largely in the school setting, and combines this with an unease on Dane's part about the militarism associated with the 'Bhambatha Rebellion' and the First World War. His father and two of his brothers treat him with the utmost contempt partly because of this, and partly because he is puny and has a weak leg: he is very different from the masculine stereotype they idolise. Here it is useful to note that Natal was obsessed with military matters and proportionally sent more men than any other province to fight in the First World War (Morrell, 2001:141; Thompson, 1999:15-19). As Morrell points out using Connell's term (after Gramsci), this is a socially constructed, hegemonic masculinity (2001:44) which is taken to be (and presents itself as) the masculine essence. It silences other masculinities and prevents a critical exploration of itself.

Particularly important in this regard is the change, exemplified in the regimes of the schools, from Victorian ideas of earnestness and the like to Spartan toughness, expressed in the notion of 'muscular Christianity' (Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School: the Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology*, 1981, and *Making Imperial Mentalities: Socialisation and British Imperialism*, 1990, as cited by Morrell, 2001:52). Paton was undoubtedly influenced by this ideology, as Morrell specifically points out (2001:270-271), and Deasland, who embodies this version of Christianity though not its harshness, is in many ways the idealised but blinkered hero of 'Ship of Truth'. As Morrell adds (2001:52), closely allied to this muscularity was the concept of what it meant to be a 'gentleman'. The first head of Hilton, Revd Newnham, remarked that his greatest desire was that Hilton boys should be synonymous with 'gentlemen' in the very best sense of the word, honest and upright and true as steel (Nuttall, *Lift Up your Hearts: The Story of Hilton College, 1872-1972*, 1971:6, as quoted by Morrell, 2001:52, 53). Where it is used in Paton this loaded term conveys similar overtones.

Apart from the role of the public institutions, Morrell (2001:213) stresses the importance of the family for group identity in the Midlands, partly because it gave men power but also because it could provide women with security and opportunity, where it did not actually oppress them (ibid.:216). He argues that women were not always dominated by men and that women acquired, protested, were enslaved by a range of feminine identities in the same way as men display and are located in a range of different masculinities (ibid.:222-223). Paton's portraits of family interrelationships are detailed and occasionally display a Levinasian consciousness of the importance of the other. On the whole, however, women play a distinctly subordinate role outside the families he writes about: they may organise their family, especially socially (cf. Morrell, 2001:228) and control their household (yet in Paton usually from behind the scenes), but are largely invisible elsewhere. This is true even of a strong and independent figure such as Dorothy Westacres in 'Ship of Truth'. She exactly fits the characteristics found by Morrell in his interview with Nancy Ogilvie concerning the latter's education in the Pietermaritzburg of the early 1900s: sexual equality was emphasised, marching and sports were stressed, and there was a robust and energetic attitude to life (Ogilvie interview 1992, in Morrell, 2001:223).[52] Nevertheless one might remark that this construction of schoolgirl identity is premised on the similar identity accorded to schoolboys: it is a feminised version of masculinity, in other words. Ryan, reflecting on her own experience even in the 1960s, neatly encapsulates this philosophy: 'We were soldiers in skirts' (2004:34). Hence Dorothy is criticised by her mother for being too tornboyish. However, the norms upheld by Mrs Westacres are not those of the narrator, who distances himself from her. One may argue that he approves of women like Dorothy – in their place. For Paton, the place women should occupy is either in the household, with marriage being the first prize, or in socially respectable teaching and nursing (Morrell, 2001:227-228). Though Paton's women characters also reflect something of the heterogeneity described by Morrell,

[52] While Thompson (1999:105) argues that girls' schools escaped the curse of the cultic status of sport because hockey was their main game and sport was subordinated to intellectual development this is not quite borne out by Morrell's findings or Paton's early fiction.

however, emerging from differing class backgrounds, for instance (ibid.:233), there is an aspiration to the status of 'lady' as in the actual Midlands (Morrell, 2001:272). Mrs Westacres of 'Ship of Truth', for example, is enviously nicknamed 'the Duchess' by her less wealthy and snobbish neighbours.

Bearing a considerable similarity to Paton's representation of the identity of those *outside* this tightly constructed society is Morrell's description of what he terms the forgotten and excluded, the misfits, the unfortunate, the eccentric, the Radicals (in the political sense), the offspring of interracial relationships (2001:254-259). The society described in Paton's unpublished novels contains representatives of all these categories; though quite often they are compassionately described by the narrator it is evident that to most of the dominant characters such marginalised figures are indeed outside the pale, in the technical sense of this expression.[53] More important, though, are those who *purposefully* place themselves outside their community, usually on the basis of some principle, such as Deasland in 'Ship of Truth', who is dedicated to uplifting black people on the basis of his Christian commitment. I discuss some implications of this standpoint and of his peers' reactions to him in chapter 2 below. In chapter 3 I take up Paton's own striking use of the term 'Radical' in 'Brother Death'. Similarly, in 'John Henry Dane', the sensitivity of the protagonist is one of the reasons why he is isolated from his father and two of his elder brothers, but since these three men are represented as being hard, even cruel, in nature one may take it that their exercise of masculinity, though in keeping with the concept of masculinity created for themselves by Midlands farmers, is disapproved of by Paton. Similarly he appears sympathetic to Dane's construction of himself as different from three of his four male relatives, which is in accord with Connell's later argument (2002:4).

Morrell's argument that the development of settler masculinity was a key aspect of settler identity as a whole is borne out by the portrayal of such identity and

[53] It is actually used thus by Paton in 'Brother Death', MS 3: PC1/3/2/3 (1930a:241).

masculinity in Paton's early novels. Morrell further contends, as alluded to above, that this masculinity was hegemonic, that it prescribed norms for the whole of colonial society, ordering and excluding as it did so. One certainly perceives signs of this dominant masculine sway in the early Paton.

For Morrell masculinity was never static, never including all men, or all of a man, so that it might be a contradictory experience for an individual (2001:271). This is not altogether true of Paton's male characters, most of whom never question their role, nor perceive any anomalies in it. The few who do dissent from the hegemony often do so for personal and/or religious reasons. One could argue, therefore, that Paton portrays the identity of the fictional community very much in terms of the construction of male identity current in the Midlands of his time, and in fact to some extent is influenced by it, but that he also questions its complete validity by creating men with a religious sensibility, such as Deasland and Jenkinson in 'Ship of Truth', who at times partly transcend these norms. He attempts to show their deepest identity as deriving from their religious convictions rather than from social values, little realising, I think, how the latter control both him and his characters. Hence I would argue that certainly for Paton some of his characters draw their identity not only from the milieu and setting in which he placed them, but also from their relationship (or lack of it) with each other, and sometimes from God and his purpose, as they perceive it, for their lives. One might instance Michael Shearer and Deasland in 'Ship of Truth' and, eventually, Jarvis in 'Brother Death', but John Henry Dane in the eponymous novel has developed no real relationship with any other/Other by the time its composition is interrupted by the typhoid episode, nor does it seem likely that Paton intended him to grow beyond his self-absorption. Consequently the identities of only a few of the author's figures may be said to reach towards closure – as is true of the works themselves.

Closure

At the end of Paton's own life he could look back on it and interpret it in narrative form as a journey towards the mountain of God: a journey with a purpose (Paton, 1988). In a sense he also imbues his characters with purpose but, interestingly, does not close 'Ship of Truth' with any finality: the novel just stops. 'John Henry Dane' and 'Secret for Seven' are barely begun. And while 'Brother Death' is decisively concluded and dated, this ending departs somewhat from the one planned. Such a conclusion, and the lack of conclusions, are markedly different from the very deliberate endings to *Cry, the Beloved Country, Too Late the Phalarope* (where the narrator wishes that 'men would have turned to the holy task of pardon, that the body of the Lord might not be wounded twice, and virtue come of all our offences' (Paton, 1953/1971:200), *Ah, but Your Land is Beautiful* (where the narrator remarks 'I was thinking of our new Prime Minister and of the golden age that lies before our country' and concludes with the poem, 'Black man, we are going to shut you off/.../We mean nothing evil towards you' (Paton, 1981:270-271) and in Paton's two volumes of autobiography. This difference points to the provisional nature of Paton's early fiction and portrayal of identity. Interestingly, therefore, though he writes within the classic realist mode, his early texts as we have them do not obey the logic of this mode, the movement towards closure (cf. Belsey, 2002:75).

Abbott (2002:52, 57) remarks that we expect stories to end, but that closure does not have to come at the end of a narrative; in fact it does not have to come at all. Hence (ibid.:53) closure can refer to more than the resolution of a story's central conflict. It also has to do with a broad range of expectations and uncertainties that arise. Closure is therefore best understood as something we look for in narrative and that authors satisfy (but not too soon) or frustrate. Narrative is marked by its lack of closure, which creates suspense. Barthes's narrative codes, according to Abbott (ibid.), illuminate this phenomenon: especially the proairetic code – to do with expectations and actions – and the hermeneutic code – to do with questions and answers. Expectations can be fulfilled or violated (ibid.:55),

while at the level of questions we expect enlightenment (ibid.:56). While the promise of closure has great rhetorical power in narrative, some readers can find closure where others cannot (ibid.:60). At the level of questions, closure is the end of narrative conflict.

Certain writers aim at a particular kind of closure. For my purposes, it is interesting to note Abbott's remark (2002:60) that Trollope and Defoe explicitly affirmed much the same thing when they wrote that they aimed to teach lessons in their novels. Paton made no such explicit claim for his early writings, although the titles 'Ship of Truth', 'Brother Death' and the subtitle of his most famous novel, 'A Story of Comfort in Desolation', suggest an overt purpose there. Other writers, as Abbott comments (ibid.), eschew any such didactic objective: they see authorially imposed closure as a threat to the kind of thinking which narrative can assist. He instances D H Lawrence's amusing comment that if one tries to nail a novel down with a didactic purpose, the novel gets up and walks away with the nail.

Abbott considers (2002:172) that for Derrida closure at the level of questions never arrives. For another deconstructionist, J Hillis Miller (*Reading Narrative Discourse*, 1998), the number of productive interpretations with both credibility and urgency are relatively few (ibid.:173). But Miller and others would also argue that an awareness of the necessary openness of narrative, its lack of closure, far from being morally nihilistic, is the basis for any ethics of reading: ethical because it not only rests in an acknowledgment of what Abbott terms the semantic porosity of all communication but also since it prevents the appropriation of a text to one monolithic meaning. It liberates readers to exercise their creative reading power (ibid.). In the same way I trust that the present reading of Paton will stimulate other readers to investigate his little-known texts and offer their own interpretations. Abbott wryly remarks of his own views, 'This is beginning to sound good' (ibid.), but adds that he will end without coming to closure on closure. Despite his lack of enthusiasm for deconstruction, he points

out that narrative is always and forever full of gaps that we must fill and that closure, however much narrative may seem to invite it, is finally something only we can confirm, and only if we choose to do so (ibid.:174); one might contrast Fiddes (2000), who, following Kermode's *The Sense of an Ending*, devotes his book entirely to the theological significance of the endings of literary works, largely ignoring the reader's role. I largely see eye to eye with Abbott on this issue, but consider that in the single ending to his longer early fiction which we possess today Paton explicitly invites the reader to reach certain conclusions. A reader schooled in recent notions of post-structuralism or deconstruction might reach other conclusions from Paton or myself.

In the succeeding chapters, which consist of detailed readings of the Paton MSS, I draw on the above points.

CHAPTER 2

'SHIP OF TRUTH'

Book 1: PC1/3/1/1

[Book 2 missing]

Book 3: PC1/3/1/2

Preliminary remarks

Paton's earliest novel seems to be 'Ship of Truth' (1922-1923?).[54] It was apparently written in three exercise books, the second of which has unfortunately disappeared: Peter Alexander (2001), Jewel Koopman (2001), Jonathan Paton (2002) and Anne Paton (per Koopman, 2004) had no knowledge of its possible whereabouts. From the remaining two books it is possible, however, to deduce the general trend of Paton's thoughts and the novel becomes an intriguing embodiment of the favourite postmodernist term 'aporia' or impasse! I shall first make some general comments and then proceed to a more detailed reading, concluding by reflecting on some of the theory deployed. I consider that such a procedure is warranted by the importance of this novel, being in all probability Paton's first sally into longer fiction.

Background

PC1/3/1/1 (Book 1; pp 1-7 blank, text on pp. 8-90)

PC1/3/1/2 (Book 3; listed as 2 in the APC catalogue; pp. 191-281)

This novel was probably begun before and possibly continued during a time of

[54]These dates are approximate; marginal notes in the MSS, referring to dates between 'Oct 1922 on p. 41, and 'Dec '25' [i.e. 1925; written over Jan], p. 263, I suspect refer to narrative time rather than actual dates of composition, because at the bottom of p. 263 there is another marginal note, 'born July 1925', which must refer to a character in the novel, probably the Jenkinsons' child Bruce who had just been born. Koopman (2007) concurs with this assessment. Nevertheless there is no good reason to posit any different dates for these MSS, particularly since internal evidence relates to the NUC milieu rather than that of Ixopo or Maritzburg College. The state of the pages and covers of the jotters also suggests an earlier rather than later date. In 'Brother Death' the narrative and compositional chronologies coincide (see chapter 3), a situation which probably obtains here as well.

some religious doubts and struggle (Alexander, 1994:65). Though Alexander observes that the protagonist of 'Ship of Truth' (hereafter referred to as 'Ship'), Michael Shearer, is very much like Alan Paton (1994:49), the likeness is not complete.[55] Paton was a student at Natal University College at the time, and SRC President in 1923 (Paton, 1980:70-72). Paton's wrestling with the religious doubts which had been occasioned by his study of the behaviourist J B Watson is not self-evident in this novel. Instead a somewhat shallow understanding and application of Christian ideas, as well as an acceptance of many societal norms, are more noticeable. At the time he was moving away from the Christadelphians under the influence of the Students' Christian Association (Alexander, 1994:54) but had not yet been confirmed as an Anglican.

Alexander (1994:50) describes the novel as a Forsyte-like saga of a group of rural families, and lauds Paton's skill in dealing with such a large cast, though in parts he contends that the novel is rather shapeless. He praises vivid sections concerning the Sotheran family, who own a brothel, and mentions as interesting (but in my view considerably paternalistic) reflections on the condition of the Africans and what can be done to improve their lives. Paton's answer, according to Alexander, seemed to be that they should be converted to Christianity and that this seminal change would be followed by better farming methods. Alexander (ibid.) therefore argues that one can detect in passages like this one the germ of *Cry, the Beloved Country*. By the end of the MS, which breaks off before the novel is concluded, Michael's intention is to devote his life to missionary work and African advancement. In reality Paton had not much enjoyed a stint invigilating exams at a black mission school and in fact advised Reg Pearse not to work in the black school system (Alexander, 1994:68).

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[55] One can see why Alexander tends to interpret Paton's texts autobiographically and I am often of the same mind; but while J M Coetzee (1992:3, 17), for instance, makes the commonplace point that all writing is in a sense autobiographical, Coullie's caveat (1991:3), referred to earlier, that a merely autobiographical reading may raise as many questions as it offers solutions, is timely.

On the whole I concur with Alexander's estimate of 'Ship'. It is sometimes argued that one's first novel reflects one's personality, and I see no reason to doubt this assertion here. The novel possesses a picaresque quality and a strong sense of the environment ('Ship', p. 9). Relationships between siblings are described acutely (p. 24). A well-delineated contrast is drawn between the openness of the Shearers and the hiddenness of Dirk and the other Sotherans (pp. 9-10). One of the ambivalent figures of the novel, the drunken Hartley Ussher, is shown to exhibit human weakness that demonstrated he was not evil (p. 56). A normative character, Jenkinson, has an extramarital affair. And so on. In other words, the sense of identity in this novel is quite strongly focused in place, some understanding of the complexity of people's personalities, and in relationships. As was usual with his early work, Paton makes no reference to it in *Towards the Mountain*. It is probable that, at the age of 77, his juvenilia were inconsequential to him.

Book 1 [apparently not Paton's numbering; in a different hand][56]

Pages 1 to 7 of Book 1 of the MS are left blank and chapter **2** (for ease of reference I have indicated chapter/section numbers in bold) begins on page 8 (in blue ink, sometimes black, though ink colours do vary; changes are often made in a different colour, indicating later revision; I note these from time to time). It is clear that Paton intended to write a preparatory section but did not do so. Hence the novel begins *in medias res* and one is immediately introduced to a character named Jenkinson, the Shearers' farmstead, 'Politique', and Michael Shearer, '[a] tall dark boy of sixteen [written over fifteen in the MS; same ink] years, changed already into the open shirt and khaki shorts of the farm, that showed in the dim light his long clean limbs, hairless and brown' ('Ship', p. 8). One may notice here the explicitly pastoral setting of the novel and its English feel; also explicit is the narrator's emphasis on the physical appearance and youthfulness of the boy.

[56] Paton is already calculating MS and printed wordage; on the inside cover he estimates 9 words to a line, 34 lines to a page and therefore 290 words to a page and reckons that one page of his MS equals 9/10 of a book page. Hence I suspect that he did initially intend this novel for publication.

The brief succeeding dialogue does make a concession to the South African milieu in the boy's use of the word 'man' and introduces the 'ship of truth' of the title (not yet identified as such), the canoe which Jenkinson has adroitly named 'Dorothy', after Michael Shearer's secret passion. While the description is relatively superficial, the fact that Michael flushes red suggests that Paton is intending to hint at greater depths in his character, and alerts the reader to a likely complication of plot. These are respectable achievements for a writer of nineteen or so and the title of the novel certainly hints at an allegorical significance for the narrative, which is not in fact developed.

However, at this stage the representation of identity remains on the surface. When Jenkinson ('Jenks' to the boy) and Michael reach the house, Margaret Shearer, '[a] little woman, with a thin face' is busy at the stove and Michael's sisters Naomi and Jean are pouring out to their mother 'the news that school-girls love to relate' (p. 9). The simplistic gender stereotyping here is typical of the novel and strikes the first note of the relative marginalisation of women.[57] Entirely absent are members of the black populace, even as hewers of wood and the like. The community is limited mostly to a few English-speakers and its identity is not markedly different from that one might find in some of Hardy's or Dickens's novels. The setting and characters are often similarly though purely externally described, in such passages as 'the ruddy light of the flames fell on young and eager faces, on the warm smiling faces of them that had borne them, on the red beaming face of Jenkinson as he watched them.' (ibid.) Reminiscent of Hardy and perhaps Wordsworth in its sense of the landscape and its impingement on the characters is the following passage:

> About him the air was keen & fresh,.... Near at hand the Touws River tumbled over its stones in the gloom, & afar the ['~~chattering~~'] frogs croaked in their multitudes in the vleis of the Kaffirlands, ['~~for all~~'] like the glittering of innumerable stars in an unseen sky.

[57] Moxnes indicates that place is frequently gendered (2003:16) and that family and household are cultural constructions, often serving as metaphors for the larger community or society itself. Hence these groups reflect ideological constructions (ibid.:29) and consequently it is significant that identity in Paton's early novels is frequently linked either to domestic places or to the natural surroundings.

> Before him the great hills of the Kaffirlands, behind him the Tops of the Touws River ['~~showed~~'] loomed dim & gigantic into the overcast sky; the man on the horse [Jenkinson], ... splashing through the drifts, bared his head to the wind, & rode back to his wife at Valleysweet. (p. 10.)[58]

Motifs are present here which recur throughout this novel and much of Paton's earliest fiction: for instance, a Romantic sense of the person's oneness with the natural environment, which is at once vast (the hills, which do not merely appear, but loom) and parochial/local (the tumbling brook).[59] The landscape is largely English in inspiration, as in the farm name 'Valleysweet', but concessions to the South African or, more accurately, the Natalian setting are found in the name of the river, the colonial and racist (one wonders how unconscious) appellation of the territory as 'the Kaffirlands' and the word 'vleis'. As very often in the early novels, frogs form part of the backdrop; later, trees (especially wind in the trees) and birds, particularly doves, fukwes, hadedahs and titihoyas, and flowers fulfil the same function. The effect is to domesticate the environment and often (exemplifying the so-called pathetic fallacy) to comment on a character's state of mind.

The emendations on the MS show that, clearly, the young writer is feeling his way towards more precise expression. No doubt influenced by his models in Hardy and the like, he allows his characters to take some of their identity from their awareness of their surroundings, though without Wordsworth's sense of

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[58] In transcriptions I generally indicate Paton's more significant deletions by striking them out, unless I wish to make a further point. If they are not important I simply omit them. Otherwise I record or comment on alterations by employing square brackets. On the whole I record his punctuation unless this leads to unwieldiness in the larger sentence.

[59] As in *Cry, the Beloved* Country, the 'classical colonial prospect scene' or survey of the surrounding landscape from a position of elevation (Wittenberg, 2004:179-180) is in 'Ship of Death' later accorded a more negative aspect. Wittenberg argues that in *Cry* Paton's sublime juxtaposes beauty and terror (ibid.:181) and I would add that the germ of this ambivalence, though undeveloped, may be seen in the present novel. For Wittenberg Paton's writing exhibits two distinct aesthetic modes: the earlier, focused on detail and the recitation of verse, is shaped by his exposure to Romantic literature and the later is grander and more expansive, inspired, Wittenberg suggests, by Paton's falling in love with Dorrie in the late 1920s and their excursions in the surrounding hills. But even this later perception evokes delight rather than the delight combined with imagined fear and traumatic loss which constitute the sublime (2004:183-184). To my mind both in Paton's earlier novels and in *Cry* the landscape indeed constitutes an important feature of his characters' sense of identity.

pantheism. Place and identity are closely linked.[60] Though, technically speaking, the narrator himself is extradiegetic and therefore outside the novel proper, the scene is focalised through the consciousness of Jenkinson, increasing the sense of the oneness of human being and nature.

Similar descriptions are found of the farming communities in 'Brother Death' and 'John Henry Dane', though those in 'Brother Death' occupy a broader canvas and are populated by a more varied group of inhabitants. Even so, women are relegated to minor roles and black people are practically invisible. Despite these flaws, it is notable that in all three novels Paton takes some trouble to depict family and social relationships and to explore the necessity of interdependence amongst small farming communities if one is to survive. It would almost seem as though he was anticipating Levinas's emphasis on intersubjectivity and ethical consciousness of the other. Certainly Paton's novels may be read in this light.

In the background at first, in the two Books of 'Ship of Truth' as we have it today and occasionally more explicitly in 'Brother Death', is also a consciousness of human relatedness to divine presence, the 'Other', as Levinas would have it. Quite often this is obtrusive, but not always. Nevertheless it seems to be a necessary constituent of Paton's understanding of human identity. Likewise, his consciousness of the importance of narrative in establishing identity is evident in the sometimes excessive detail with which he tells his characters' stories and plans his novels.

On his way home Jenkinson passes another rider whom he recognises even in the dark: he knows that the latter's wide-brimmed hat and scarf would cover his head and face (p. 10). The negative connotations surrounding this person, Dirk Sotheran, who does not look at Jenkinson as he answers his greeting, are borne

[60] As noted earlier, valuable studies on the relation between place and religion in literature have been undertaken by Griffith and Tulip (1998); studies more relevant to this country include that on liminal places, landscape and white Identity in South Africa, by Foster (1998) and those on landscape in Paton by Wittenberg (2004; 2005). Callan comments correctly that Paton is one of those writers who display 'a strong sense of place' (1982:5).

out by the reader's later discovery that the Sotheran family are social isolates, even outcasts, owing to Dirk's cruel and dominant nature and the fact that they run a brothel.

The dependence of the farmers on the elements is emphasised by Dirk's explanation that he had been down at the boats because the weather was too fresh for rain, and only those farmers further up the valley could plough (ibid.). He adds that Hartley Ussher could also plough, 'if he felt like it.' (pp. 10-11) The silence which follows this remark suggests a further tension between the two men and between them and Ussher. It is later made clear that Ussher is a ne'er-do-well: like the Shearers, the Sotherans and Jenkinson, he is another of the stock characters with which Paton populates his early novels. Identity seems to be born either from conformity or from non-conformity, which isolates one as a rebel. A further sense of strain is engendered by Jenkinson's enquiry after Peggy, Dirk's sister: he could immediately feel the boy's coldness (p. 11.) As Dirk's muffled figure rides away, Jenkinson watches him thoughtfully, reflecting on his hidden face (ibid.)

When Jenkinson arrives home, he apologises to his wife, Alice, for being late. Her resigned voice troubles him, he senses her unspoken reproach, and sinks down into his chair 'with a feeling of fatigue' (p. 12). In five MS pages Paton has introduced one to a number of characters and to several possible plot complications. At this stage fairly simplistic polarities of light / darkness and hiddenness / openness are discernible in these figures.

In the MS the rest of page 12 (beginning chapter **3**) and the following unnumbered page are deleted (in the same ink). The MS resumes with a new beginning to chapter 3 and a new page 12 in which Michael, supplied with a large picnic packed for him by his mother, sets off after breakfast to row up the river with Jenkinson and paddles over to see Jørgensen, the ferryman, who speaks to Michael 'in the slow rich voice that Michael had never heard hurried or perturbed'

(p. 12; again a Hardyesque touch, inserted in darker ink and small script to the right of the sentence) and enquires whether 'Dorothy' is named after Dorothy Westacres (p. 13). To this Michael answers 'with magnificent unconcern' that Jenks had named her' (ibid.)

At this moment, before Jørgensen can probe further, Jenkinson appears, laden with cooking utensils. Jørgensen comments, 'All cluttered up, too. That man'll never grow old.' Michael's hero-worship of Jenks is evident in the narrator's remark that the boy is not sure whether to take this as a compliment or not: 'He himself talked of Jenkinson in tones of deep admiration, ...'. (ibid.) It is useful to remember that Paton himself was most likely only nineteen at this stage and that there is probably much of himself in Michael, so that there is not a great deal of distance between his own identity and that of his boy protagonist. One recalls Paton's own hero-worship of Railton Dent, his fellow-student and a formative influence on him (Alexander, 1994:38-40).

As the two canoeists set off, the sun pours down 'a pleasant warmth' and the river-trees are alive with birds (p. 14). Once again the environment is English and domesticated (cf., e.g., Hardy, 1874/1975:177-178; 198-199) and the only moment of unease occurs when the Westacres's car, its passengers waving, crosses the bridge as they pass underneath. Michael does not wave back: 'For one thing he did not know Dorothy Westacres, & for another he did not speak to Tom or Richard [her brothers], who were St. George's boys & rather superior, & who had both suffered ignominious defeat at the hands of the best fighter at Atherton Grammar School.' (ibid.) Clearly, identity is bound up with class consciousness and physical prowess, and this theme is taken up at other points in the novel, such as on the following page. Jenkinson sympathetically enquires whether Michael is still in love and when the boy nods, suggests that he accompany him to the Westacres's farm (which Paton had evidently not yet

named, since a blank is left in the MS at this point; p. 15).[61] When Michael declines, saying 'Ikona', a muted South African allusion, on his previous grounds (Paton deems it necessary to repeat the allusions to class and wealth), Jenkinson comments that, 'I'd get Dorothy to come out on the river with us, but I'm afraid the Duchess [the telling nickname given by the community to Dorothy's mother] wouldn't be too keen.' (ibid.) Michael dismisses the possibility as fantastic, though he had daydreamed about it and about rescuing Dorothy from all sorts of situations (ibid.).

The two work steadily up the river: the pastoral quality of the surrounding country is not only dwelt on but also further strongly emphasised by Jenkinson suddenly quoting from 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree':

> I will arise & go now, for always night & day
> I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore; ... . (p. 16.)

Michael's eyes 'shine' – a common reaction – and he caps the quotation from Yeats:

> I will arise & go now, & go to Innisfree,
> And a small cabin build there, of clay & wattles made. (ibid.)

Michael wonders why the lines move one: 'they're so simple.' Jenkinson remarks

[61] On p. 73, verso, a rough list of characters and farms however assigns the name 'Emoyeni' to this farm. As Wittenberg points out in discussing 'Secret for Seven' (2004:185; 2005:16), this term is Zulu for 'High Place', to my mind a name significantly fixated on by Paton: it is not only the name accorded to the farmstead in both these early works *and* in 'John Henry Dane' but also, of course, denominates James Jarvis's farm. Apart from the obvious geographical symbolism, to my mind it is noteworthy that the same phrase is also often used in the Bible (e.g., Dt 12:2; I Kgs 12-14) to denote sites of pagan worship and, I would posit, Paton's choice therefore suggests a critique of the owners of these farms, who are affluent and perhaps make an idol of their wealth. Certainly their identity is entangled with that of their farms. Wittenberg demonstrates how high-lying territory can function as a signifier of colonial power (2004:7) and applies this in the case of the Jarvis farm (2004:8), arguing however that it is figured as a benign space (ibid.:186). Discussing *Prester John* Rich also writes of 'different geographical regions' in which the highveld and cities were considered the abode of whites and the lower areas that of Africans (1993:16). Buchan's story 'Grove of Ashtaroth' (Wittenberg, 2004:148-155), with its high-situated pagan shrine near the site of the new colonial mansion, probably also owes much to the Biblical sources, although Wittenberg does not make this point. In his earlier fiction, though Paton apparently opts for simplistic polarities of place and identity, he does occasionally hint at a darker implication, as in the Biblical echoes here.

that sometimes at sunset, with the wind blowing softly in the trees, and the fukwe singing, 'Its [sic] gets me here. Makes me feel queer, like a kind of homesickness. For what I couldn't say. It's beauty. You remember Masefield –

> "I have seen dawn & sunset on moors & windy hills
> Coming in solemn beauty ...'". (pp. 16-17.)

Michael's 'fervent' reply to this literary excursus is, 'It's great.' (ibid.) Once again one may note the excessive emphasis upon aesthetic qualities, both of landscape and of poetry: the quotations and the emotive reactions of the speakers reveal much about the sources from which the two speakers draw their sense of identity. A further detour into literature, by way of Shakespeare and Tennyson, was (happily) deleted by Paton, but is replaced by a discussion (p. 16, verso; in darker ink) about the relative merits of Masefield, championed by Michael, versus Brooke, Yeats and Hardy, nominated by Jenkinson, but turned down by Michael, who observes, 'I don't know. He [Masefield] seems greater to me. I read in some book the other day that T. S. Eliot was the greatest modern poet.' To this Jenkinson answers, 'Blessed if I can see that. I find him a bit dry. He hasn't got Masefield's lilt.

> '"I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely seas and the sky."' (ibid.)

Noticeable here are Paton's own uncritical enthusiasm for some of the most admired poets of the time, his assumption that not only Michael but also Jenkinson would have read them, and the evident approval, by the authoritative voice of Jenkinson, of Masefield's lyrical qualities, to the detriment of Eliot's 'dryness'. (One wonders if Paton was referring to *The Wasteland*, which would have been published in the year he apparently began writing 'Ship of Truth'; cf. Alexander, 1994:46.) The sense of identity as far as the characters are concerned continues to be English – indeed, explicitly derived from non-modernist, in contrast to modernist, English literature as such – and pastoral in nature.

When Michael and Jenkinson reach their destination, the former chatters incessantly, pouring out thoughts 'coloured with the egoism & the certainty of youth, that knows every thing [sic] but the little that it knows.' (p. 18.) The role of the narrator is important here: detached from and superior to the scene, 'omniscient', offering wise (and broad) generalisations about a character who, ironically, is not very different from the author, or at least the inferred author. The depiction of identity is again derivative, superficial and general.

After lunch the two men stretch out lazily and read and talk for two hours (ibid.): in terms of Paton's conception of their identity it is taken for granted that this is a luxury which they can evidently afford; one could add that it would not have been made possible without the behind-the-scenes labours of their women and black staff.

As the sun sets, Jenkinson recites suitable poetry (p. 19) and is moved by the lines he had spoken. The boy, lost in dreaming (as often), sighs, 'It's been a great day, Jenks.' The latter's reply affords a number of key clues to the inferred author's own values and is hence worth quoting in full and discussing in detail:

> 'After a day like this I go back to be a better man, a better husband, a better farmer. And you go back to be a better scholar, a better son, ["a better brother" inserted above line]. That's what days are for. If I hadn't that faith, I don't know what I'd do. If I thought that I ploughed & sowed & reaped & played tennis ["& ate meals" inserted above line], just to pass away the time till the day comes for me to die, I'd go mad, Michael.' (ibid.)

Worth noting here are the emphases upon the 'natural' importance of familial relationships, the given, stereotypical roles of farmer and scholar, and – for the first time in this novel – a sense of mundane human identity as being set in perspective by something beyond it. At this stage the transcendent does not at first seem strongly focused, since the connotations of the word 'faith' are not necessarily religious here, but the way has been opened for a representation of human existence as being framed by something more than itself. The point is

made clearer in the next paragraph: Jenkinson's eyes are 'alive, with a spiritual fire akin to the vigorous ruddiness of his physical well-being.' (ibid.) Here, the physical and spiritual are brought into close alignment. Michael himself hardly understands his friend's words, but admires him and egocentrically aspires 'to become a man like his friend, only greater.' (ibid.) Clearly, both physical and spiritual values are central to Paton's conception of masculine identity. One might compare the physical description of Hartley [sometimes Harvey] Ussher, who gives Michael a lift home (p. 20).

Emphasis is laid on Ussher's wealth and idleness (he cannot imagine canoeing in such hot weather). They pass the gate to the Sotherans' farm, 'Perhaps', where there is a flash of white dresses and laughter is audible. Ussher lets out a whoop to the girls 'like a village lout', while Michael stares 'rigidly before him, with a strong expression of disgust ... .' (ibid.) In a worldly-wise manner, Ussher advises Michael, 'Damn fast pair ... Take my tip & cut 'em out.' (ibid.) Angrily, Michael looks at the 'full wet lips & the weak face of his companion;' (p. 21) and changes the subject, asking about Ussher's farm, 'Driespruit' (the Afrikaans name another minor concession to the South African setting). Ussher immediately steps into the role of 'the man of the land', a peer of the Westacres and others in terms of a key signifier of identity: 'their nearness to the soil.' (ibid.) He complains about the 'sweet f.a.' he is offered for his wattles and 'these damn Yids' who offer 'six bob a bag' for mealies (ibid.). The roughness and overt racism of the language are not shared by either the author or Michael, however, who, as he opens the gate to 'Politique', feels ashamed of the 'counterfeit interest' he had shown 'in the doings of the dull-witted owner of Driespruit.' (p. 22.) His sense of superiority to Ussher, as with his feeling of inferiority to the Westacres's, again evidences a keen class consciousness, with the Shearers being placed squarely in the middle stratum.

Upon Michael's entering his home, his father and siblings mockingly address him as 'Admiral' and enact a charade of the day's boating. Michael blushes, and with

sudden roughness he pushes his small brother, Arthur, aside (ibid.), but is immediately acutely ashamed of his action (p. 23). At bed-time, Michael kneels down and repents before God 'as he could not have done before his family. A better scholar, a better son, a better brother. He would be that tomorrow. Sufficient unto the day was the bitterness thereof.' (p. 24) Noteworthy is the first explicit reference to Michael's religion, in the context of his own failings, which are realistically represented but to which he appears to react excessively in terms of shame and bitterness, and his internalisation of Jenkinson's norms, desiring to play his own roles 'better'. The combination of a degree of individualisation and an identity which is socially constructed is apparent.

Chapter **5** of the novel recounts Sunday churchgoing, which is treated as simply part of the social fabric, lacking any religious meaning; the road is scented with orchard blossoms and the reader introduced to minor characters who might equally have inhabited the pages of (for instance) *Under the Greenwood Tree,* such as the Wilsons, who 'gave exquisite teas' on their secluded farm (p. 24.) It is recorded that sometimes Michael 'hated' the Westacres's aloofness, 'their money & their cars, the hatbands of St. George's & St. Winifred's. They were the things that sundered them from the Shearers, ... making his own adoration of Dorothy Westacres a dim unreality...' (p. 25.) The narrator adds, 'the ["comparative" inserted above the line] poverty of Politique had filled him with a desire to grow rich & well-known, so that he could move in the ["best" inserted above the line] circles of ["the" inserted above the line] Kaffirlands without shame or embarrassment.' (ibid.) Focalised through the eyes of Michael is not only an awareness of the identity into which he is socialised, but a desire to transcend it.[62] The added adjectives show the author's attempt to define Michael's consciousness more precisely, but this does not denote approval of the trend of Michael's thoughts. In fact, it is immediately made clear that the reason why he had only partly yielded to this ambition was the doing of Jenkinson, 'who had

[62] Morrell (2001:passim, e.g. 13-16) shows how keenly conscious the Natal settlers were of class. James Jarvis and Mainwaring (in *Ah, but Your Land is Beautiful* (Paton 1981:9-10)) are the lineal descendants of the Westacres's.

opened his eyes to the ["meaning of the" inserted above the line] faded blue suit & the horse-carriage of Politique.' (p. 26.) The latter observes, 'These things don't count, my son. If a man's a gentleman,[63] that's all that matters. Live up to your ideals, & you have something that money can't buy ... I'm not preaching, Michael. It's a law of nature.' (ibid.) While the inferred author thus hints that wealth does not count in the formation of one's identity, gentlemanliness and achieved ideals evidently do. Such ideals are undoubtedly those of the English rural middle class, particularly as described in Paton's literary models and adopted in Natal: thriftiness, honesty, gentlemanliness, a work ethic and the like, and it is notable that they are naturalised so unquestioningly. Nevertheless, the thought of Dorothy makes it hard for Michael to accept this homespun philosophy (ibid.).

In the churchyard the Westacres's are shown chatting to their social peers and Prescott, the owner of 'Fort Kaffirlands', invites Michael to play cricket on the following day, to his pleasure (p. 27). Naturally he hopes for a century, with the Westacres's watching (p. 28). Inside the church Mr Esmond, the padre, nervously addresses the stained window in memory of the youth who 'never came back from the war.' (p. 27) This is the only, glancing, reference in this novel to the Great War, which had ended a mere four years before Paton probably began the MS. It points up the bucolic and isolated nature of the community.

On Sundays the Shearers dine with the Jenkinsons, and Michael walks to the farmstead by way of the fishpond, ringed by silver oaks (a replacement for the more prosaic initial word 'gums'), which enclose the place 'in a cathedral-like solemnity; & it was for this purpose, Michael knew, that ... Jenkinson used it.' (p. 28.) It is suggested that the latter's religious practice, central to his identity, is not simply pantheistic but finds simple expression in natural surroundings, away from the starchy conformity of the village church.

[63] A distinctly loaded term, as discussed previously.

The next day (at the start of chapter **6**) Michael prepares for the match, his lack of prowess at cricket being discussed by Naomi (pp. 30-31). The good-natured sibling rivalry, and the brief batting practice held by Michael and Arthur (pp. 31-32), continue to reinforce the cosiness of the setting. This feeling is, however, disrupted when Jenkinson announces that Tom Westacres is coming with them and Naomi remarks that it is a pity he is coming on his own. When Michael angrily asks why (p. 33), Naomi quotes: 'Awake, beloved, 'tis my voice that's calling,' (p. 34) which is evidently part of a poem that Michael had written for Dorothy and which Naomi had discovered. Embarrassed, he decides that he must find a box with a padlock for his 'compositions' (ibid.).

Important to notice here is the callow, derivative nature of Michael's verse. At this point the narrator appears somewhat distant from the boy and one may deduce that he does not identify with Michael's immature view of himself. The picture created is that of a physically strong yet imaginative, sensitive and intelligent boy. Leaving aside the question of the similarity of Paton and Michael, it is evident that Paton approves of the kind of person whom Michael is. It is therefore important that the latter is placed at the centre of the novel. In like vein, when the team is found to be a person short, Jenkinson announces, to murmurs of admiration, that he has asked Deasland to play (chapter **7;** in black ink, p. 35): Principal of the St. Luke's Training School: 'doctor, teacher, & parson all in one, & an old blue on top of it; a man who might have played for England, but chose instead to educate the heathen["s"] in the reserves – a man who might have lent his strength to the Kaffirlands team ["more often" inserted above line], but was always – selfishly, some said – too busy up at St. Luke's.' (ibid.) The explicit and emphasised norms of identity here are those of the muscular Christian (Mangan, 1981; 1990)[64] whom Paton admires throughout his career as a writer. Interesting are the values of some members of the community, who deem cricket as more

[64] Van der Veer (2006:535) calls this, not without reason, an imperial Christianity and, drawing on G Griffiths, 'Mixed Messages: Imperial Adventures and Missionary Tales' (2004), identifies its site with that of the public school and the novel, according precisely with Paton's evoking of this concept.

important than the education of the heathen, a point of view which, I would argue, is focalised through their eyes. If this is the case quite a strong criticism of them exists.

Deasland and Michael talk briefly while donning their pads, to Michael's delight (ibid.). Deasland indicates that he is still waiting for Michael to visit St. Luke's. Later it will emerge that Deasland is hoping to involve him in the work there. On the bench Michael listens 'with a kind of awe to the familiarity of great men who called each other by their surnames.' (p. 36) Dorothy appears and Michael realises that it is one thing to dream of double centuries but 'another to find himself out on the field, rather lonely & out of things.' (p. 37.) When he moves off on an errand, Westacres enquires of Deasland who he is, and Deasland replies, 'Shearer's youngster, ... One of the finest families in the district.' (ibid.) The reinforcement by Deasland of the explicit norms of identity as rooted in the Shearer family, and the social distance between them and the Westacres's, is marked.

When Deasland, who modestly declares that he is out of practice, goes in to bat, the schoolboys watch him with admiration: 'the parson-blue who ruled over the station of St. Luke's, but who fortunately was a gentleman & could handle a bat like an expert.' (p. 38.) The repeated ideas here – the parson/sportsman/authority-figure/gentleman – hardly need further comment.[65]

Michael scores a mere seven runs himself (p. 39) and when the innings is closed a massive lunch, 'an array of food the like of which is seen only in the country,' (p. 40) follows, the menu itemised in much detail. The bounty of the countryside, if only as far as this well-to-do community is concerned, is celebrated. After the meal Michael takes a catch, and is rewarded by Dorothy's 'Well caught, Sir' (ibid.). He feels this to be '[a]nother infinitesimal to be added to the series that

[65] The notion of the 'gentleman' is often found in contemporary novels, such as Mitford (n.d. [1907]:45), where the magistrate's clerk calls his superior by this term.

might one day achieve a measure of finiteness.' (ibid.) This is the second occasion on which Paton has had Michael apply mathematical imagery to the slow progress of his relationship with Dorothy. Perhaps it reflects Paton's own interest in the subject of mathematics; it certainly implies that Michael is frustrated and has difficulty in conceiving of his tenuous connection with Dorothy in larger terms. At any rate the effect is to underscore his immaturity.

Chapter **8** sees the end of the school holidays, with the older children returning to boarding school; Jørgensen, an expert at teasing, tells his younger passengers, who remain, that the local schoolmistress, Miss Winters, had bought a new, knotted stick (p. 41). Though Jean Shearer is scornful, he does not notice the 'dark trouble' in Peggy Sotheran's face at this remark (p. 41). As the children walk down to the village, Dirk Sotheran, with his face mostly hidden by his scarf, gallops down the road, charges his horse down the steep bank and into the river. The ferryman is disturbed by his brief glimpse of the boy's livid face (pp. 41-42). Peggy stops dead, and her brother asks her, 'Did Anna [the eldest daughter] hide ["~~thrash~~"] you today?' (ibid.) Peggy denies this but he pulls down one of her stockings and sees the angry weals. He blasphemes, and Peggy explains that she had been beaten because she had bumped into Anna in the passage (ibid.). As they return home, Dirk asks her why she is crying and she replies, 'I'm afraid.' On further questioning she admits, 'Of father.' (p. 43.)

It is hardly necessary to remark that the pastoral setting suddenly evidences a more threatening side: Alexander's adjective 'powerful' (1994:72-73) sums up the effect of the episode. Important, to my mind, is the close attention to family dynamics. While the characters and the family are relatively stereotyped, the relationships between the members are portrayed as complex. The ominous trend continues in Dirk's words, 'From this day I am boss at Perhaps, ... From this day no one will lay a stick to you.' (ibid.) His father eyes them malevolently but Dirk orders Anna to bring some hot water: though she contemptuously refuses (ibid.) Rose, her younger sister, hurries to comply, also drawing Anna's

contempt (p. 44). 'The white-haired aristocrat of Perhaps' says pleasantly to Anna, 'Get my sjambok.' He adds, 'I'll thrash that boy till he can't stand.' Anna quickly obeys but blushes when her father rebukes her for beating his children without his permission.

Dirk asks Peggy whether she still wants to attend school and when she listlessly says, 'I'll stay at home', tells her to bring her books and read while he works (ibid.). He instructs her to wait for him by the willows and when she in terror asks him what he is going to do, he replies, 'I'm telling them they're not to touch you again. I'm boss here' (p. 45), reassuring her that the situation is now going to be different.

When Sotheran hears that Dirk has sent Peggy to the fields he is 'transformed into a demon' and attacks Dirk with the sjambok. Dirk tears it from his father and commands him to get back: he obeys (ibid.) Dirk forces Anna, who fights like an animal, to her knees (ibid.) and, 'besserk [sic] with rage', strikes his father several times (p. 46). Turning to Anna, 'he crooned, in a quiet ["singing" inserted above the line] voice' that fills her with terror, 'Did you hide Peggy?' She swears she did not; 'And again that pitiless impersonal stroke. Dirk stood over her smiling.' When Anna does admit her action, Dirk strikes her 'with a flavouring of passion.' 'Will you again? he asks 'gently.' (ibid.) Though she again swears she will not, he strikes her again, and repeats his question: the narrator comments that it is superfluous, 'intended merely as a prelude to that ugly fall of the whip.' (ibid.) Dirk leaves Anna grovelling and tells his father, 'evilly': 'I'm boss here .. Do you hear?' (p. 47.) When both have assented, he declares that 'when Peggy is about, there will be no swearing in this house' and tells his father malevolently, 'I know what this house is.' 'A demon of cruelty' causes Dirk to lash his father again, asking him and his two sisters if they know what this house is. He accuses them, 'You're waiting for Peggy to get a little older ... And then all the swines of the dorp will come. Is that so?' (ibid.) He strikes Anna yet again: 'It was the language of the Sotheran household, ... the only language that he knew.' (p. 48.)

Prominent in this episode are the excessive violence and cruelty in Dirk, which call into question his seeming morality and protectiveness towards his younger sister. His ruthless exercise of power and the images of bestiality reinforce the general atmosphere. The effect on the reader is to undercut the moral norms of the community/inferred author, though this can hardly have been the intention. Paton is here clearly straining towards a representation of Dirk's identity – that of a marginalised figure in a marginalised household – as more complex than that of the run-of-the-mill rural person, in which the writer succeeds in hinting at the depths of the unconscious, but achieves a most ambiguous result. The metaphor of the demon is employed twice, not only drawing attention to the dark side of Dirk's nature but also reminiscent of the serpent in the Garden of Eden.[66]

The focus of Chapter **9** shifts to Hartley Ussher, of whom rumour has it that he now went to 'Perhaps', and sometimes goes home to sleep, and sometimes not (p. 48). He is seen more frequently in the village, 'foolishly drunk,...' (ibid.) The narrator comments disapprovingly that the Usshers 'had once been amongst the cream of Kaffirlands society; & the Sotherans – that strange unhealthy home in the fresh hills of the valley, was no place for an Ussher.' (ibid.) The implied pairing of health (of mind as well as of body) with class and social status draws attention once again to the norms of identity held by the author. Mrs Ussher seeks Jenkinson's help concerning her son, reminding one of the normative authority 'Jenks' is accorded by many; he is dubious of success, though he had once been successful in solving another, easier, matter of Callaghan's wayward son, but promises to try (pp. 48-49). In a quintessentially English gesture he presses a cup of tea upon Mrs Ussher (p. 49). The social stereotyping is evident.

Jenkinson walks up to a knoll from where he can observe 'Perhaps' and wonders whether Wilson (that farm's owner) would put an end to the Sotheran tenancy (ibid.). This is the first indication that the Sotherans do not own their farm. The

[66] Bearing out Van Wyk Smith's contention (2001:23).

implication that property ownership and general trustworthiness are linked is unstated and probably unconscious on Paton's part, but obvious to the reader. Jenkinson pities Peggy's fate if she were cast on the streets of some town (p. 50). Below him spreads the great valley of the Kaffirlands with its rolling hills. 'The road to the South [i.e. the coast] wound its tortuous way, up to a country of peace & quietness. The vastness of it moved him with its beauty. ... And in this world of loveliness Hartley Ussher made his mother unhappy, & old Sotheran sold his daughters, or knew that they sold themselves.' (ibid.) Again the scene is focalised through Jenkinson, who is struck by its beauty and peace, in implied contrast to the regions further south, but also in explicit counterpoint to the behaviour of Ussher and Sotheran. While the vista is pastoral, it is not idealised; there is perhaps a further suggestion of the Garden of Eden in Jenkinson's mind too. Certainly the author seems consciously to avoid too simplistic a representation of human identity. At the same time there is something of a fascination with sexuality which may be unconscious on Paton's part, though he does allow characters such as Jenkinson to be aware of the attractiveness of some women.

Jenkinson approaches 'Tiny' Gough, the huge local barman, about Ussher's drunkenness, to no apparent effect (pp. 50-51). When he mentions that Ussher has started visiting Sotheran's, Gough is unconcerned: 'I've met him there.' (p. 52.) The parallels between alcohol, sexuality and the lower class are muted but unmistakable.

Jenkinson then visits Mr Esmond and explains the situation. The latter responds, 'An unpleasant task, ... If these people looked on me as their shepherd – ah, yes. The trouble is that Mrs. Ussher does look on me as a shepherd. And Hartley Ussher doesn't. Dear me.' (ibid.) This speech well conveys his ineffectuality and illustrates that not all the ministers in Paton's early work fit the picture of the muscular Christian. Though the latter image is evidently preferred by the author (one reads that Jenkinson views 'the nervous scholar preparing himself for battle'

with compunction, and wishes 'that Esmond had a little fire'; ibid.), as with the identities of many other characters the narrator is able to suggest the complexity of the human being within certain parameters which are entirely middle-class and English in origin. Jenkinson advises Esmond not to confront Ussher directly but to wait until he sees him in the village (p. 53); Esmond agrees gratefully, admitting that he is 'singularly lacking in the wisdom of the serpent.' (ibid.) Jenkinson's heart warms to 'the ...shepherd of unwilling sheep.' (ibid.) Jenkinson reassures the padre that if he sees the boy first he will speak to him, and feels that the task might be easier than he thought. The images of the serpent and the sheep reinforce the explicitly Edenic quality of the setting.

As he moves away Jenkinson notices Jørgensen on his bench (p. 54). People are 'extraordinarily kind to him, as is the way of the countryside;' (ibid.; a generalisation which is demonstrably undermined by the Sotherans, at least) but he is also not quite part of the community: 'a strange fellow, the ferryman.' (p. 53.) He has a roomful of books 'of the kind that is read only by professors ...' (ibid.) and many speculated why he was the ferryman: perhaps he was 'an atheist, ..., an ex-professor, warped by some misadventure in love, ...' (ibid.) These theories tell one more about the community and its values than about their subject. The narrator does not identify himself with these speculations except to observe that Jørgensen's suffering is to be read in his knotted hands and that if any man knew much about him, it was Deasland (p. 54); Jenkinson's thought swings to Deasland but is cut short by the sight of Ussher crossing the river. Seizing his chance he tells Ussher, 'You're getting lazy. The whole district's talking about it.' (p. 55.) Ussher is actually pleased by this accusation. He requests Jenkinson to prove his point by giving him one name and the latter eventually mentions Ivy Prescott (ibid.). Ussher asks again who else had spoken about him but Jenkinson parries the query: 'People don't miss much in the valley.' (p. 56) This increases the boy's 'elation, a human weakness that showed that the boy was not evil.' (ibid.) Jenkinson's sensing this allows him to probe more deeply: 'They say harder things than that' (ibid.). When Ussher enquires

what is said, Jenkinson tells him that 'it's a great pity to see you drunk in the village street.' (ibid.) To his astonishment, Ussher responds hotly: 'It was not a weak look.' (ibid.) Ussher adds that the girls, especially Ivy, have also been blind drunk at the Bachelor's Ball.

Jenkinson walks on uneasily, feeling that this setback is the end of his mission (pp. 56-57). At Sotheran's gate he makes an attempt to be cheerful and says that he is going to turn back. Out of the blue, Ussher declares, 'I'm cutting it out ... Old Tiny Gough gave me a lecture this morning.' (ibid.) For Jenkinson the sun shines suddenly bright and he holds out his hand: 'Shake on it,' (p. 57) He returns home chastened, grateful to Gough and relieved that he had misjudged Ussher, who is not such a fool as he had looked (pp. 57-58). He heads towards the silver oaks with their peace. The chapter ends with the comment, '[h]e had a great need of faith.' (p. 58.) The remark appears to be the narrator's, but it certainly captures Jenkinson's consciousness of a transcendent power which has solved the current issue and will be needed in the future. It is also undeniable that to the present reader this power possesses the characteristics of a *deus ex machina*, arranging fortuitous meetings, dramatic changes of heart and benevolent natural surroundings.

In the following chapter (**10**) Jenkinson's wife berates him because people come to him with their troubles and he is too soft: '[w]hy can't they look after their own affairs?' (p. 58.) She adds, 'Surely we've enough of our own?' (ibid.) and instances the bond needing to be paid off, evidently because of her husband's loans to people such as the Pratts, who cannot repay them (p. 59). His wife's criticism distresses him, as can be seen in his filling his pipe with a trembling hand (p. 60). He explains that he cannot say no, not because he is a saint, but because he is made that way; he would rather have money troubles than a son like Hartley Ussher, and in any case he and his wife are better off than 'John ... & Margaret [Shearer] & her faded dresses' (pp. 60-61). His wife's whispered reply indicates the actual root of her unhappiness: 'They've children.' (p. 61.) In a

banal response he comforts her and relieves the tension by joking, at which she smiles: 'We'll have to call ours Michael ... I wonder what it means. Overdue, probably.'

When he steps out into the rain it is 'a benison on his face, a drink for thirsty lands.' (p. 62.) In a typically empathetic image the river seems to run more vigorously and the air is filled with the cries of plaintive birds (ibid.) Jørgensen meets him and asks him to keep an eye on Peggy Sotheran, who is experiencing difficulty at home. Jenkinson thoughtfully drifts downstream: his wife is not keen on having a Sotheran at her house (ibid.). 'Devil take the Sotherans, ... Why can't they shoot or poison or do something to each other?' he says good-humouredly to himself (p. 64). While Jenkinson is perhaps cast in the mould of a saint and the representation of his identity is on the whole stereotypical, the distance he can gain from himself – his own self-reflexivity – and the tension between him and his wife do offer a slightly different perspective and keep the portrayal of him from being merely simplistic. Particularly important for the present study in terms of Levinas is the fact that Jenkinson's identity is so strongly focused in terms of positive relationship to other characters, but not so much towards his wife, and that though he is so clearly positioned as the key consciousness of the novel the narrator is not uncritical of him.

Chapter **11** opens with a time shift from spring to summer (ibid.). (A marginal note in pencil records the date 'Dec 1922'.) The narrator describes the unpredictable rainstorms in a self-consciously biblical fashion, drawing on the image of the cloud small as a man's hand [I Kings 19:44] and mentioning a steady downpour lasting three days and three nights (ibid.). Paton evidently experienced difficulty with this paragraph: not only is some rewriting discernible, but after labouring the point about the heavy storms and rushing streams he remarks that sometimes a storm passed as quickly as it came, leaving 'the fields below with thirst unslaked under a burning sun.' (ibid.) The germ of the later contrast in *Cry, the Beloved Country* between the parched valleys and the rich

heights is evident here. Still more significant for my present purposes is the fact that though the landscape is not over-idealised the pastoral is nonetheless emphasised, as is the steady passing of time which affects nature and human beings alike.

The children are at home [from school] again; men work the fields, 'giving their lives that their name may be handed down to the generations following,... .' (ibid.) This theme of generativity, as Erikson (1963) would term it, is still more fully developed in 'Brother Death', but even here the consciousness of time is more than merely local: human activities are shown to have a larger purpose.

Michael, in Naomi's elder-sisterly view, lives in Jenkinson's pocket. The two friends share, but rarely communicate to others, 'an uncritical prodigal wonder' at the beauty of old things and of the valley; the cries of the titihoya inspire the older man to recite for the hundredth time,[67] 'Hear about the graves of the martyrs the peewees crying, / And hear no more at all,' (p. 64), with a catch in his voice that only Michael ever heard (p. 65). Michael would echo Jenkinson's words, 'feeling the gnawing of the dumbness that catches at every man's heart when he feels beauty & cannot prison it in any words.' (ibid.) The clumsily expressed Romantic aesthetic here points up the often tedious emphasis on the loveliness of the pastoral environment. To make sure the reader notices the moral, the narrator adds, in a sentence much reconstructed in different-coloured (black) ink, '[s]o the world of the Kaffirlands became for Jenkinson & the boy an abiding place of beauty, where the dances of the Sotherans and the foul brawlings of Callaghan's bar had no place at all.' (ibid.)

In this setting the two friends discuss schooling and university, which is pending for Michael. He remarks that Naomi wants to become a nurse: '"That's a great profession," said Jenkinson, warming to one of his favourite themes. "Nursing &

[67] From one of Paton's favourite, Romantically-inclined, poems, Robert Louis Stevenson's 'To S R Crockett: On Receiving a Dedication' (Paton, 1980:5).

motherhood. And for a man, the ministry & teaching & doctoring.'" (p. 66.) It hardly needs remarking that these professions are key signifiers of male and female identity in this novel, especially when Jenkinson thus refers to them.

On cue, Michael indicates that he would like to be a doctor: Deasland had told him he wanted to start a hospital at St. Luke's. 'I feel that would be a big job.' (ibid.) Jenkinson rejoins, 'A great job. And Deasland's a great fellow. ... But here he is, teaching in the locations. It beats me, Michael. I couldn't have done it.' (ibid.) Michael, however, avers loyally, 'You could.' He suggests they go up to St. Luke's one day and Jenkinson assents. It is interesting that Jenkinson feels Deasland has cast away a promising career in politics or a similar occupation (ibid.); like the white community, Jenkinson implicitly queries the importance of education for black people. Yet Michael's perhaps idealistic viewpoint differs, interrogating his friend's view slightly.

Knowing of the boy's lovelornness, Jenkinson speaks sympathetically about his own desire twenty years earlier to marry Sheila Callaghan, who would not have him because he was 'an old sobersides.' (p. 67.) This is a fairly accurate self-assessment, one feels, knowing him to be a serious person and keenly aware of others' troubles. Laughing, he declares it was all for the best, but Michael remains despondent.

He is equally unenthusiastic about Jenkinson's invitation (to tea) of Peggy Sotheran, whom they meet at this point. When the older man asks her about her school report she looks at him with troubled eyes, saying: 'It's good, Mr. Jenkinson.' (p. 68.) Noticing her distress, Jenkinson remarks to Michael, 'My heart's sore for that child,' (p. 69) but the latter merely grunts. Jenkinson is obliged to ask him twice what is going on before he will reply, 'I don't care much about the Sotherans, that's all.' (ibid.) This produces a constrained silence and – for the first time in this novel – when Jenkinson speaks he is 'hardly friendly.' (ibid.) He says, 'You've a lot to learn.' Here one notes not only the older man's

sensitivity to people around him, but also his intolerance of a lack of such feeling in others. The ethical imperative overrides even his close relationship with Michael and perturbs that with Alice, his wife. A Levinasian reading might hold that he draws his identity from others who are more distant from him.

It is clear from the MS that Paton struggled with integrating this dissonant note into the narrative: the scene which immediately follows describes a tennis party at the Westacres's (the last half of p. 69), but has been cancelled in black ink and placed after an insertion on p. 68, verso, which records an apology from Jenkinson: 'I'm sorry I spoke to you as I did... . I meant what I said. You've a lot to learn. But if I'd said it quietly, it might have gone home to you. Because I said it angrily, you lost sight of the truth of it, and thought only of my anger. I'm sorry, Michael' (p. 68, verso). His emotional intelligence, though perhaps overstated, is unusual in a man of his class and stature and it is still more remarkable coming from a writer less than twenty years of age, although it is evidently an afterthought. Jenkinson's apology leads to a lessening of the tension, but he still advises Michael never to be too proud to apologise, especially in their own relationship. They shake hands on this bargain, indicating by this means, though stereotypically, the value they place on their friendship (ibid.).

An unnumbered page (verso of p. 69, in black ink) continues the description of the tennis party, emphasising more strongly than the original the exclusivity and snobbery of the Westacres's and Michael's feelings of inferiority. The 'Duchess' is said to rule over her homestead and her husband, the 'Duke': he, in language significant for its explicit reference to a wealthy English pastoral setting and certainly a reference to Housman,[68] whom one might term the poet laureate of such an environment and who consciously harks back to the past, contrasting it with the early deaths of young men, is said to be 'Richard Westacres, gentleman farmer of Shropshire, England,' (p. 70.) However, owing to the negative portrayal

[68] In numerous places Paton acknowledges the strong influence of Housman (e.g. 1923:2 and 1980:63-64). *A Shropshire Lad* (1896) is set in a half-imaginary, strongly nostalgic and upper-class milieu (Housman Society, 2007; Brass, 2001:49)

of the Westacres's here and elsewhere in the novel, one may argue that the allusion is not necessarily complimentary. This impression is reinforced by the scolding which Dorothy receives for coming up the steps two at a time (ibid.). Dr Trollip's response is unashamedly masculine: that she is beautiful, that he wishes he were forty years younger, and that 'the sight of all these youngsters gives me a queer pain somewhere. In the heart, popular saying would have it. But it's not in the heart, of course. Where is it?' (p. 71.) Dorothy suggests the appendix and when her mother appears to be shocked, asserts that this is just a pose (p. 72). The doctor complains, though not very convincingly, that Dorothy has ruined 'a very agreeable train of thought.' It is evident that Dorothy's liveliness is meant to counterpoint the Westacres's stuffiness; it is equally obvious that the doctor finds her physically attractive, though he expresses this response euphemistically in terms such as 'the freshness & the cleanness of sixteen.' (ibid.) He tells her not to 'grow sedate & give yourself airs' and remarks to her mother that it is 'nonsense' to want her to grow up (ibid.). Slightly embarrassed by his 'lecture', he walks down into the garden, where he complains to Westacres: 'What d'you bring me here for, fifty-six & doddering, to see all these youngsters rollicking about? It's a damn fine sight. There's none finer, but it upsets me. Phaugh!' (ibid.) The issue for the doctor is clearly not primarily their relative ages, however: he adds, 'Remind me that we are men of property,[69] & haven't lived for nothing.' (p. 73.)

To this reader it would seem that Dr Trollip's tediously rambling thoughts are intended to pivot on this last point, and it is notable that Westacres refuses to answer him. In fact, when the doctor remarks that 'a man does not believe anything but what he wants to. That's why I believe in reincarnation; ... because I want to come back here, ... & fall in love with Dorothy & Sheila & Ivy.' (p. 73.), Westacres's response is one of discomfort (ibid.). To me this suggests a reluctance to probe beneath the surface, as the doctor is disconcertingly doing in a fashion reminiscent of Jenkinson's greater depths. One can argue that the inferred author disapproves of Westacres's evasiveness. This theory is

[69] Probably a glancing reference to Galsworthy's novel (1906).

supported by Westacres's parrying of the question, somewhat rewritten, to the effect that he does not think very much (ibid.) It would appear that Paton was trying hard to find the exact words to convey the farmer's response.

Dr Trollip's testy rejoinder in itself indicates that he is irritated by Westacres's attitude and it might appear that this is also the stand taken by the author. However, there is an unexpected twist which also carries important implications for the novel's exploration of interrelatedness and identity, and I therefore quote from Trollip's speech in some detail. He snaps,

> 'You're a Tory ... & Tories don't think; ... Your name will go on. That's what you live for. You're guardian of everything that your grandfather stood for, & you hope your grandsons will stand for it too. But they won't.'

Up to this point it seems that Trollip is stating a relatively liberal view, critical of Westacres's investment in conservative values. But he immediately adds,

> 'Deasland's educated niggers will infest this countryside before then [originally "them"]. ... It's a good Westacres that'll stand the storm. Our own storm, too. Why the devil didn't Deasland marry a decent girl, & take up schoolmastering or politics or something? He'd have been a great figure by now. Instead of that he lives in a place that'd drive me mad, & goes on laying up a store of trouble for our children's children.' (pp. 73-74.)

Westacres's reaction is to comment ('evenly', which hints at controlled emotion), 'Deasland's a gentleman.' (p. 74.) Trollip answers,

> 'He's not a gentleman. He's a saint. No gentleman would do his job. His job cuts at the very roots of the system which produces gentlemen. He's a damned Radical, & a Radical saint is the most dangerous man alive. They ought to be killed young.' (ibid.)

In an obvious attempt to change the subject, his host's only comment is, 'Here are the roses.' (ibid.)

A number of points emerge from this fascinating dialogue. The inferred author appears to concur both with Trollip's query as to the purpose of existence and his impatience with Westacres's unquestioning acceptance of the status quo, because these are values also found in Jenkinson. Paton does not offer an

outright critique of Trollip's overt racism, uttered in a prophetic fashion which adumbrates the famous ending of *Cry, the Beloved Country*. Certainly Trollip's words cause Westacres to feel discomfort, which he expresses in his defence of Deasland as a 'gentleman'. But his argument is sharply dismissed by Trollip, who – not in jest – declares Deasland to be a dangerous Radical.

As mentioned earlier, the designation 'gentleman' has a particular resonance; furthermore, on occasion figures marginalised by society do occur in the early Paton, though not yet in this novel. As important, though, are those who *purposefully* place themselves outside their community, sometimes on the basis of some principle, such as Deasland in 'Ship of Truth', who is dedicated to uplifting black people on the basis of his Christian commitment. Though this attitude would rightly be perceived as paternalistic today, it brings him into deep disfavour with influential members of the Kaffirlands community, such as Dr Trollip. One may very instructively compare the doctor's appellation of Deasland as a 'Radical' with the authentic contemporary case recorded by Morrell (2001:258): that of Ralph Tatham, a member of a powerful Midlands family, who became increasingly involved in Radical politics. In the words of an indubitable member of the Establishment, a senior police officer, he became 'Anti-British' and professed to be 'a revolutionist and a republican'. The police officer damningly thought Tatham an 'inconsequential and shallow man, without deep thinking power' and 'not altogether of sound mind' (Morrell 2001:266n11, quoting a letter by the Deputy Commissioner of the CID, Transvaal, to his counterpart in the South African Police, Transvaal, 25 April 1918).

Such criticism, prejudicially linking political non-conformity and a weak intellect, is not levelled at Deasland by Trollip, but it is specifically recorded that other members of the community were enraged with Deasland over his efforts. This view is not shared by the narrator, who implies that Deasland's labours are wholly laudable.The fact that Westacres deliberately turns attention to his roses suggests that he finds the criticism of Deasland, though not the racism,

disturbing. The kind of identity imparted to Westacres by the narrator, it would seem, is one which approves of idealism, is not interested in politics and is insensitive to racism. One may infer that the author does not concur with Westacres, but also, given the approval of Deasland through Jenkinson, that he does not acquiesce in Trollip's views either. The following event provides an interesting gloss upon this possibility. (Page numbering from p. 75 in darker ink.)

News that Harold Vane, a minor character who was to be married, has been killed in an air crash (p. 77) causes Mrs Westacres to wonder whether the doctor had experienced a premonition of the disaster: 'He seemed very strange today.' Her husband smiles and remarks, 'He's often like that. He's not a bad fellow, Trollip.' (ibid.) To this Mrs Westacres rejoins, 'He's very crude.' Mr Westacres does not directly respond; however, to her further cutting remark that a particular neighbour seemed 'so common', he replies 'I once thought that was a cardinal sin.' (p. 78.) It appears that he does not share his wife's class-consciousness and is tolerant of the doctor's views, though not necessarily concurring.

Jenkinson arrives and announces that he is taking Harold's bereaved fiancée, Hilda, and father to Durban (p. 80). 'He's a good fellow,' now comments Mrs Westacres approvingly, adding however, 'He's awfully rough, with no polish at all,' (ibid.). These words, though not unexpected from her, rather undermine her approbation. A telling comment, which is assigned to no speaker and could therefore possibly be that of the narrator but is more reminiscent of Mrs Westacres's awareness of social status, follows: 'After all, Jenkinson's father-in-law was General Bruce-Carrington of Springflats.' (ibid.)

The scene immediately switches to Jenkinson's telling his wife of the arrangements he has just made. She responds 'dully' that she will pack his case, and he is once again aware that he had forgotten that charity begins at home (ibid.). This awareness, focalised through Jenkinson, induces the reader to be critical of him since the former seems more conscious of community ties than of

close family relationships. One is brought to share the inferred author's critique of the fact that Jenkinson feels more responsible for the 'other' in the community, not quite as close to him, than for the 'other' in his spouse.

On his return he and Michael set out for St Luke's (chapter **14**; p. 81). As they enter the location its bare countryside and yawning dongas are emphasised, in contrast to the 'green rolling country' of the white-owned farms. Jenkinson observes, 'Overstocking, ... Deasland's fighting a losing battle over that. These people won't give up their stock; it's money to them.' (ibid.) The social and economic gap between the black and white farmers is emphasised in the distant gaze which Jenkinson brings to bear here[70] and his construction of the former as others: others for whom, moreover, he, for once, clearly does not feel responsible.

Michael turns the conversation to Hilda's loss and Jenkinson's eyes are 'troubled' (p. 82). He comments, 'We feel for her, poor child, but that doesn't help her to forget, or stop us from enjoying ourselves.' (ibid.) Michael acutely observes, 'Like as if we were all shut up in compartments of our own.' (ibid.) His response throws the Western individualistic self into relief. Though Jenkinson agrees, he – perhaps thinking of the pain of his wife Alice – evades the subject, responding in platitudes, 'I suppose the world was made that way. And as God made it that way, it must be the best way. Come on, let's be cheerful.' (ibid.)

As they approach St Luke's it constitutes the 'sole greenness in the arid miles of the locations.' (ibid.) Jenkinson recalls that when Deasland arrived the local farmers 'hated him. ... But he didn't turn a hair.' (p. 83.) Yet when Deasland's medical expertise saved two white people's lives, Jenkinson reports, this attitude altered.

[70] Precisely embodying what Spurr (1993:15) terms 'the convention of the commanding view' and evidencing a blithe unawareness of the environmental consequences of the colonialist incursion. See Ashcroft et al. (2006a:491).

Michael, however, poses a thoughtful question which shows that reactions to Deasland are still hostile: 'Does he really help the natives?' adding quickly, 'Of course he does, but I mean – what people say.' (ibid.) Jenkinson says 'stoutly' (perhaps connoting some internal debate) that Deasland is doing 'a great job.... After all, you & I are Christians; it means something to us. And if it does mean something, & if it helps us, then we should help these poor devils.' (ibid.) One may note here the paternalism of Jenkinson's attitude and his unconvincing logic based apparently on a sense of duty rather than on any deep-felt emotion. Michael, again obviously reflecting the common opinion, points out, 'But some people say they're happier as they are.' (ibid.)

Jenkinson responds, again in remote and Eurocentric vein, though it is evident that the author intends him to suggest a holistic and fruitful mission at St Luke's,

> 'Wait till you see what they do here. It's not all school & church, like some people think. You get Deasland talking, about this boy & that boy, who've started working on their own amongst their people. Look at the huts round here, for example. They're tidy pieces of work. These people have learnt to plough deep, & sow properly, ... Wait till you meet some of these old native ministers. Really good fellows, they are.' (pp. 83-84.)

Deasland comes out to meet them from the house 'under the shadow of the imposing church that dominated the square of the settlement.' (p. 84.) While this description is certainly meant to suggest the beneficent presence of Christianity, to a twenty-first century reader it is tonally most ambiguous, as is the introduction which follows of the two visitors to some of Deasland's staff, who are all white, and the indication that many black babies are named after Deasland, presumably as a paternalistic benefactor. Through Michael's eyes one sees that Deasland stands 'head & shoulders above them [the staff]' and the reader shares the boy's thought, 'what a company to live amongst.' (ibid.) He is impressed by their quietness and can hardly imagine any of them becoming frantic for any reason (pp. 84-85). Michael's sense of the staff's single-mindedness and seriousness of purpose is undercut for the reader, however, by Deasland's frivolous remark that other names than his own are coming into fashion: he is going to baptise an

infant who is to be called Barry Crane Gumede, '[b]ut his mother calls it "Bally Clane".' (p. 85) There is no indication that the narrator is conscious of any irony stemming from Deasland's mockery of his congregant's English pronunciation here (a mockery repeated by Crane, the school principal, who comments that the name 'Marjorie' is also popular, but pronounced 'Ma-jólie'), nor from Crane's advice to 'Take your smelling salts' (p. 86) when Deasland takes his visitors on his hospital round. Deasland simply laughs, 'It's not as bad as that,' (ibid.).

As the party nears the church the more detailed depiction of the building and of the people praying there is also distinctly ambivalent in its effect. Three alterations in the MS, and the ungrammatical phrase 'and at the the three stained glass windows' (ibid.), suggest that Paton experienced some difficulty in writing precisely enough at this point. The intention is clearly to portray an edifice which is impressive, natural and perhaps reminiscent of Jenkinson's cathedral of silver oaks. It is a lofty building of brick, unplastered, giving it 'a look of coolness & peace.' (ibid.) Its roof beams are uncut trunks ['~~beams~~'] of pine, polished till they shine in 'the half light'; the windows, in a rather conscious literary allusion, cast a 'dim religious light'[71] (ibid.).

The sense of normative, transcendent serenity being aimed at by the narrator is entirely undermined (for the reader) by Michael's thoughts. He, 'with the picture of the raw, blanketed pagans of the location in his mind,' (ibid.) wonders 'what might be passing in those primitive minds, what prayers were spoken from those primitive hearts.' (pp. 86-87.) That these debasing ideas (cf. Spurr, 1993:77) are not simply those of Michael himself, nor even only of the Midlands community, and are not questioned by the narrator, is evident in Deasland's next words: 'We believe in prayer... . To slip in here ... helps many of these people. It keeps them in touch with a reality that is otherwise utterly remote from their tradition;' [it is striking that the following words, which could have reflected poorly on narrator

[71] Milton, *Il Penseroso*, l. 160 (Trapp et al. 1973:1217). Quite possibly Paton was thinking of the parallel in this poem between a natural sylvan grove (ll. 131-154) and a human 'studious cloister' (ll. 156-166) (ibid.).

and author, 'keeps them from temptation, the temptation to slip back into the worship of', have been deleted in the same ink] (p. 87.) Michael, 'under the sway of this quiet man, ["believed it" deleted, in the same ink] did not question it.' (ibid.) There is no suggestion that the reader should question Deasland's authority or his othering of 'these people' either.

In the hospital, Deasland hints that he hopes Michael will one day become their doctor but Michael indicates that he has not yet made up his mind (ibid.). Deasland observes, to the boy's pleasure, 'Whatever you be, it'll be worth being.' The party passes the workshops on its way back; Jenkinson enquires whether the men there will be able to carry on this work when they leave (pp. 87-88). Deasland's lengthy response (pp. 88-89) is thought-provoking, for though it reflects the understandable need of the mission to market its products, it also mirrors the ingrained paternalism and racism of the time. Spoken as it is by a figure who embodies a manly Christianity, it clearly reflects Paton's own construction of and identification with the identity of such a person. The black others are viewed with compassion, but at a distance. Relationship with them is for the sake of their upliftment rather than for their own sake.

Deasland remarks that:

> 'Until these people finally change over to a new way of life, keeping good stock & less of it, ... there will be very few openings for our products.... Of course your [Jenkinson's] people in the Kaffirlands think we are causing the change, ... But that's only half the truth. We are convinced the change must come, an inevitable result of a backward population adjacent to a progressive one.... Just imagine these thousands of people farming as you do. It opens up countless opportunities for mechanics, carpenters, builders, & so on.' (p. 88.)

To this speech Jenkinson merely observes, 'You're sure of it.' (ibid.) Deasland's eyes smoulder, to Michael's surprise at his intensity, and he launches into the second half of his monologue, which one may interpret as normative for Paton also, because Jenkinson is not shown as responding negatively and it may be taken that the last-mentioned concurs; though the reaction focalised partly

through Michael is cast in the glow of hero-worship and should be taken with a little salt as being naïve, it is also uncritical of the thoughts expressed.

Deasland declares, in full paternalistic flight,

> 'I believe in the uplifting force of Christianity among these people, Jenks. But not only in the dim light of a church. Out here, man, in the fields & on the hills. ... Whether the Christianity of our modern world is real or not, it is the source of our moral values. We don't want these people to pray twenty-four hours a day. We want them to be able to build & carpenter & plough, we want them to know how to buy & sell. ... You farmers sometimes accuse us of cutting at the very roots of your existence. I wonder you don't see that we are labouring to maintain all that you stand for. Education is the helping of the native to share your culture & your tradition & to understand & venerate your laws; leave him alone, with his blankets & his sunshine, & he becomes a drag on your advancement & a menace to your prosperity.' (p. 89.)

As already observed, the only response to this appalling utterance in the text[72] is presented partly through Michael, who sees himself as the doctor of St Luke's, 'giving his life to preserve for ["ungrateful white" inserted; "white" in black ink] men a heritage they themselves hardly understood.' This viewpoint, which is not a direct quotation of words uttered by Michael, however represents not only Michael's point of view but also that of the author/narrator, particularly when the insertion is considered. There is certainly an ironic stance towards the 'glow of righteousness' which Michael feels as he imagines 'little Michael Gumedes' running about 'while their guardian & benefactor wore out body & soul in the service of them' and towards his fantasy that 'it would be a great thing to be a man like Deasland – ... a great man like Deasland, only greater.' (ibid.) But Michael's construction of Deasland as 'great' is not apparently questioned and is indeed emphasised by the text as a whole.

The following chapter, **14**, occupies only a page before the MS breaks off at the end of Book I. It establishes John Shearer as being one of the few farmers in the Kaffirlands to own his farm fully, resolutely refusing to mortgage it for the

[72] The sentiments are disturbingly like those in the 1929 poem 'No Responsibility Accepted', where it is suggested that both whites and blacks may end up lying in the sun, watching their toes lift one by one (Paton, 1995:140). I am not convinced that this poem is purely satirical.

purposes of purchasing a car or paying school bills (pp. 89-90). His thriftiness and dedication to his family are lauded and seen as normative, and it is clear that Michael is going to follow this selfless path, for when he is not at Jenkinson's, he takes 'his father's place at the tractor' [p. 90; the sentence is much rewritten in black ink as well as blue, indicating Paton's attempt to convey this idea exactly].

Book 3

This Book begins on p. 191 in the middle of a sentence. George Prescott, another farmer, and Jenkinson are collecting funds for a new church, and the present padre, Durham, is introduced. Though Book 2 is missing, one can take up the slack with almost no pause. Much of the discussion centres on how much money different people have pledged or could afford to pledge for the project. The omniscient narrator records that Prescott and Jenkinson each consider that the other could have given more (p. 192). Their critical awareness of each other's financial worth reminds one that the community from which they hail is close-knit yet experiences tensions, and that its focus falls upon money rather than religion. At the Prescotts' farm, 'Fort Kaffirlands', Mrs Prescott, who is terminally ill, greets Mr Durham, apologising for not having been able to take part in his welcome. She asks them all to sit down and requests her daughter, Ivy, to tell 'Scotchman', clearly one of the domestic staff, to bring the tea (p. 194). Both the typically English politeness, even in the face of grave illness, and the effectively anonymous (even his name is colonised) and thus marginalised black staff member strike jarring notes in the situation, where Prescott is said to be on the verge of tears at his wife's condition.

The conversation which Mrs Prescott now conducts with Durham, although it is conventional, introduces a more sober note. In answer to her query about how he finds the Kaffirlands, he replies that it is a friendly and beautiful place. He values the sincerity and the fact that 'all men are welcome in their neighbours' houses.' (p. 195) She smiles at him – an ambivalent response, connoting both warmth and perhaps a sense of his naivety – and points out that 'squabbles' and 'enmities' do

exist. He answers, 'I don't say you're not human,...But you're more honest ... when men work with the soil, they do seem to be cleaner, less restless, less concerned with the things that don't count.' (ibid.) Her reply, 'You idealise us,' is important because it introduces a questioning of the pastoral ideal by a person who, though she is herself in some respects idealised, is also down to earth. She is the perfect hostess, keeping her guests talking while her husband recovers himself, and her fortitude is admired by Jenkinson, 'moralist that he was' (p. 196). This comment, the narrator's, in many ways sums up the representation of the identity of Jenkinson.

Durham also marvels at Mrs Prescott, 'his mind pregnant with sermons;' (ibid.) Significantly, he correctly guesses that she does not come from the area (p. 197). Hence hers is a voice from a wider world than the Kaffirlands. Not incidentally, she is one of the few women in this novel who possess anything of a personality; she rebukes her daughter for flirting with Jenkinson, though she expresses this circumlocutiously as wishing that Ivy would behave more respectfully to him (pp. 196-197).

Jenkinson returns home, the presence of the mist in the whispering trees creating a world of eeriness, mystery and enchantment to the beauty of which he responds strongly (pp. 197-198).[73] As on other occasions, his identity takes its shape from the surroundings. It is again suggested, a little simplistically, that his sensitivity to the natural environment, though not explicitly Christian, is a positive feature of his personality.

Jørgensen is waiting for him and a remarkable conversation ensues. The boatman offers five pounds towards the church, and Jenkinson is overcome by curiosity as to the reason why. The original answer, deleted, was: 'It is a thing of

[73] Mist, grass and bracken would be leitmotivs throughout Paton's writing, sustaining his own identification with the pastoral. He associated them with his courtship of Dorrie (Paton, 1969:19, 112; cf. 38, 82, 86) and, according to Anne, expressed the wish that a piece of bracken would be placed in his hands when he lay dying (Anne Paton, 1992:52).

beauty in which men believe,...For them it may be true.' (p. 198) The revised response takes the exchange deeper. 'It is your building ... And I am one of you.' (ibid.) Jenkinson points out that it is also God's building but the boatman repeats his words (ibid.). He is unusually communicative and Jenkinson, knowing as others did that there are 'depths unplumbed in the ferryman', takes the opportunity to fathom them (p. 199). 'Why do you help us to put up a building that you'll never use?' (ibid.)

Jørgensen explains that he has been in 'your church' but on his own; not to pray but rather to think about man, about humanity: 'If one ["is to" inserted] think fully about man, one must think also about the church that he has built.' (ibid.) Jenkinson observes, 'I thought you would have nothing to do with it.' The answer is, 'I hate nothing that is man's. That is my religion, if you wish.' When Jenkinson irreverently asks what it is called, the malicious response is, 'It ["is" inserted] called by many names. Positivism, for one, [sic] You've read Comte...?' (ibid.) Jenkinson admits he has not.

He is relieved when his guest leaves: 'a hard man to entertain; he believed in the Church & he didn't believe... It was clever, no doubt, but so pointless, so – so utterly remote from – well, from everything.' (p. 200.) Jenkinson's bafflement is effectively conveyed by the tortuous syntax here. In contrast, on his way home Jørgensen 'repented of his sins; it was a poor game after all to perplex a decent fellow like the owner of Valleysweet.' (ibid.) The reference to 'sins' is not religious in import, but one certainly sees another side to Jørgensen, whose complexity has been hinted at but who exhibits something of a conscience as well as a sense of superiority. Also, the passage, focalised through Jørgensen, who is not part of the community, affords an interesting perspective on the farmer as 'decent' and easily perplexed. The reader has more insight into the latter, knowing him to be a profounder person than Jørgensen perhaps realises. And in spite of the gap, one has the sense of a mutually respectful relationality. Most significant of all, perhaps, is Jørgensen's firm assertion, 'I am one of you.' A

common humanity, Paton seems to be suggesting, transcends artificial bounds of identity.

One is not necessarily asked to adopt the boatman's views concerning Jenkinson, but they are fairly accurate from a superficial point of view. This passage and the preceding few pages of Book 3 do suggest that the writer is opening up possibilities (in regard to Jørgensen) which have hitherto been latent and allowing a voice slightly critical of the community, in the person of Mrs Prescott, to speak. While it is clear that Paton does not approve of Positivism per se (one may recall this philosophy's critical stance towards religion), neither does he merely accept the community's norms.

Chapter **28** of the novel is dated in the margin 'March 1923 Easter?' by Paton's own hand in pencil, the question mark again suggesting narrative rather than actual time (p. 200). The beginning describes how Michael's letters to Jenkinson were 'carefully preserved' by their recipient. A maturation of identity is evident. Over the years, one is told, Michael's handwriting had become firmer and the themes had changed,

> from the artless rhapsodies on nature & friendship & 'playing the game' to the less intimate, more individual outpourings of the poet & reformer; rebellion stalked abroad clothed in the respectable orthodoxy of a secluded home, radicalism breathed contempt of tradition in fiery but respectable terms, & the egotistical dreams of adolescent youth were all of selflessness & renunciation. (ibid.)

These comments, couched in an unashamedly declamatory style, are amended from a deleted section, on the whole emphasising the rhetorical effect still further. The stance of the narrator is distant and indulgent; Michael is shown as growing up in stereotypical ways, rebellion and radicalism (the connotations of this term have already been commented on) are safely contained and a careful balance between egotism and selflessness is preserved. In the background the stereotypes of the gentleman and the (cautious) reformer are lurking.

Michael's letters have altered in another way: they talk much less about Dorothy and much more about the new English master at Atherton School, Becker (p. 201). He is impressed by Becker's knowledge of books, writing to Jenkinson, evoking jealousy in the latter, that Becker 'doesn't think so highly of Masefield as we do.' (p. 201.) Jenkinson nevertheless lovingly recites a few lines to himself that bring out 'all the latent beauty in his poet: 'Twilight it is, & the far woods are dim, and the rooks cry & call ....' (pp. 201-202; numbering now in pencil) Tears come to his eyes and he quotes another passage from Masefield that reflects his 'lonely and troubled' state of mind. His wife, Alice, is evidently staying with Ruth Carrington, her sister (p. 203). Appropriately, his great house creaks 'lonelily' to his mood, and the pines outside murmur. 'Strangely moved', he looks out of the window; the tops loom black and sombre; that morning he had heard the 'long mournful call' of the fukwe, 'more beautiful than any other on earth.' (p. 202) The young writer greatly overdoes the description of the resonance of the environment with Jenkinson's feelings, but the point is that Jenkinson does not want to lose Michael (p. 203). This could be construed in Levinasian terms as a possessing of the other rather than a true relating to him.

Focalised through Jenkinson one observes his fear that, try as he may to keep up, he will be left behind and that Michael will speak to him as Jørgensen does, 'in a language that had no meaning.' (ibid.) Clearly unable to face this possibility, he reads Masefield's 'Ballad of Sir Bors' and takes courage from 'that choice rough spirit.' (ibid.) 'Masefield's all right,' he asserts more confidently. 'Beauty!' he exclaims, twice, and is satisfied with the word. It encompasses the fukwes' calls, the mist, the wind, the self-sacrifice of 'Politique', the 'amazing courage' of Mrs Prescott and (no surprise to the present reader) it was Masefield's favourite word (pp. 203-204). Paton has Jenkinson quote yet another Masefield poem, ending with the lines 'the loveliest things of beauty God ever has showed to me, / Are her voice ... & the dear red curve of her lips.' (p. 204.) With these words in mind he slowly becomes aware that he is thinking of the beauty of Ruth Carrington. He stands up determinedly then, and tells himself, 'play the game.' (p. 204)

The various strong feelings experienced by Jenkinson at this point – burgeoning jealousy, possessiveness, loneliness, desire for Ruth Carrington – are, importantly, largely damped down by his having recourse to clichés strongly associated with English culture, as in Masefield's verse and the tired exhortation (used often by Michael) to play the game. As with Jørgensen, Paton is showing the reader certain darker aspects of Jenkinson which Jenkinson finds it difficult to acknowledge, immured in an English identity as he is. There appears to be an implicit critique of 'Englishness' here which is not, however, taken much further. Jørgensen, a Scandinavian, seems to be more in touch with his own feelings of shame at perplexing Jenkinson so.

Jenkinson's gloomy emotions and his inability to deal with them are short-lived. The same evening Pratt rings him, announcing that he has inherited some money and intends to repay fifty pounds (pp. 204-205). He thanks Jenkinson for his forbearance, employing the colonialist's standard, and racist, term of approbation: 'You're a white man, and – '. Jenkinson is embarrassed and interrupts him, but is very pleased. Even so, Jenkinson can only express himself in exceptionally clichéd terms: 'God's in his heaven.' (p. 205) He shuts the door noisily on the sighing of the trees, which now no longer reflects his mood, and goes to his room singing to himself.

Chapter **29** acts as an interlude. It opens with a laboured and derivative description of the Kaffirlands in winter (pp. 206-207; numbering in blue ink). The mist comes and goes, more often in the valley than on the Tops (though some contradictions and inconsistencies are apparent in the writing). The main point is that while 'veld & field & orchard sleep & rest', 'man loves & hates & fears, conquers & is conquered, ... now & forever.' (p. 207; numbering in cerise crayon) The rhetoric here, I would suggest, is a clumsy attempt to situate human life against the turning of the seasons and the backdrop of eternity, but the generality and artificiality of the writing is unconvincing. As often, the mist ineptly connotes the parallel ambiguity both of human nature and of nature herself.

A number of more specific vignettes follow. They are focalised on the whole, I propose, through the perceptions of the community, though occasionally the narrator makes a comment. The effect is to create a sense of a corporate personality and identity.

One learns that Hilda Trollip is engaged, the plane tragedy forgotten; that one character is on his last legs (some glad, some vindictive, some wishing they could repay his generosity); Dirk Sotheran and his sister (Peggy) are rarely seen, though in the next line the narrator remarks that she is seen every morning on her way to school (ibid.). She has 'dark frightened eyes' and is the subject of village gossip. Some, who would help her, find that her brother makes this hard to do. Mrs Prescott is still alive, 'outstaying her time on earth.' (p. 208) The Duchess still rules, or is allowed to rule, Kaffirlands society and holds her parties for the children of the best people; of Dorothy it is asked, 'how many hearts will she break when she is loosed on society?' (ibid.) Hartley Ussher is quiet for a while; he gets drunk but seems to be working hard too: 'some say that Durham had made him steady down, but no one knows.' (pp. 208-209.) The general view is: that Durham is 'a good chap' (p. 209.) More people attend church and the new church will soon be constructed.

As for the Shearers and various other families, they are still alive. 'At least no one has heard that they are dead.' (ibid.) The somewhat dismissive and facetious tone here is probably intended to direct the reader's attention away from the families to their children, who are the real focus of this chapter. They are said to be growing up: Michael Shearer is six foot at least, 'a tiger at his books.' The social consensus is: 'A good family, those Shearers.' (ibid.)

The interlude ends with a return to rhetoric: 'Winter in the Kaffirlands.' The sun 'floods with gentle warmth fields & pastures all asleep. But youth is awake & alive, ... in a world with no great joy & no great sorrow, no great hate or love or fear; nothing happens to children.' (ibid.) The few specific details do not detract from the sense of timelessness, of pastoral tranquillity, engendered by this

interlude. Yet the ending is ambivalent, for love, fear and sorrow do play a role even in this community and the 'nothing happens' is patently false. It is difficult to decide whose voice is heard here: is it the narrator's, introducing an unusual note of irony? Or, as I think more likely, is it the voice of the community, perhaps indulging in wishful thinking? In either case the effect created still resembles that of the Garden of Eden: a species of 'infinite / False peace' (Plomer, 'A Transvaal Morning', 1973:34) reigns. Elsewhere in the novel from this point there is an increasing emphasis upon time passing and inexorable change taking place, which recalls Ricoeur and White's argument that narrative deals with the human experience of time. Yet a quarter of a century is still to pass before Paton's most famous novel will publicly warn white readers against such complacency as found here.

In Chapter **30** George Prescott's wife dies (p. 210; numbering in blue ink). A marginal annotation (in cerise crayon) furnishes the date 'November 1923'. The farmers who attend the funeral, as in Robert Frost's contemporary poem 'Out, Out - ' (Frost, 1921:50-51), hurry away, 'for the rains were late, & crops must be sown.' However Jenkinson, deeply stirred (the ink changes to black at this point), instead goes for a walk up to the fields that border 'Perhaps', where he finds Peggy Sotheran. 'How's Masefield, Peggy?' he asks her. Her face lights: 'I think it's lovely.' (p. 211.) Jenkinson, delighted, quotes a few lines on death, explaining that he has just come from Mrs Prescott's funeral. He remarks that he wishes he could write a poem at such a time: 'I feel it enough.' (ibid.) Peggy tells him that he could; he is clever. But Jenkinson denies this, saying instead that Michael is, and the latter will [write a poem] one day (ibid.). When Peggy is silent Jenkinson changes the subject; one learns that she is sixteen and is due to leave school the following month, and that she is studying Dickens and Tennyson (p. 212). Jenkinson introduces Masefield into the conversation and she agrees that he is 'one of the greatest.' (ibid.) Via Shakespeare, Lewis Carroll, Kipling, Swift, Cervantes and a number of other writers they arrive at Peggy's favourite, *Water Babies* [sic] (p. 213).

Although this destination seems utterly bathetic the writer has a particular didactic purpose in mind: Peggy enquires why little Tom left his black skin on the river bank and Jenkinson replies unwillingly that this means that he had died, adding: 'But that didn't matter. Life only started for the poor little chap then.' (ibid.) He adds, 'I think life does begin then, ... Look at Mrs. Prescott. I don't believe she's finished, dead for ever, ... If it were true, what use would anything be ... ?' (p. 214.) His words spellbind Peggy, who just nods her head. These are merely conventional religious sentiments with a slight apparent flavouring of liberalism, taken perhaps from Kingsley's own socially-conscious text (cf. Britannica Online, 2006), though in fact a white skin is taken as normative.

Paton does not explore the questions raised but has Jenkinson suddenly change the topic to Peggy's growing up. She clearly does not relish the prospect which the farmer raises of her marrying and having children; she would rather keep fowls (ibid.). Jenkinson replies, 'That'll be great, ... Working with the soil, there's nothing like it.' (ibid.) Describing the outdoor life, he quotes George Borrow[74] (ibid.) As the girl leaves he wonders 'why his word-painting of sun & moon & furrowed fields should hold more beauty than the things themselves;' (p. 215.) He decides that he will learn to feel them more intensely, talk less about them. 'Perhaps Alice made it hard, he admitted; she had been a little difficult these last few days.' (ibid.)

It is clear from this rather contrived sequence that Jenkinson is being cast in the mould of the inarticulate and sometimes insensitive but believing, deeply-feeling and well-read farmer. The representation of his identity is not convincing, and Paton again quickly introduces a turn in the plot: Ivy Prescott now approaches Jenkinson in the field and offers to donate some of the money which she had recently inherited, from her mother, to the church fund: a hundred pounds for a window or 'something definite.' (ibid.) Jenkinson is amazed by this new Ivy, but hides his reaction. As they walk back he points to the valley; 'There's nothing like that anywhere, ... something solid & everlasting, that never changes.' (p. 216.)

[74] On whom Neville Nuttall was to complete a thesis in 1924; Nuttall (2001:43).

On cue, Ivy answers, 'Like you.' (ibid.) To this Jenkinson does not respond. She thanks him for his friendship the past few months and when she gets into his car he holds her hand 'in a strong comforting grip.' (ibid.)

The stereotyping of Jenkinson is obvious and is pointed up by his wife's indifference (a word repeated twice, in the text and in an addition on p. 215, verso) to his talk with Ivy. Of the proposed window she observes that it would be a more fitting memorial if Ivy learnt to behave herself (p. 217), and when Jenkinson defends her Alice comments with a trace of asperity, 'She's an empty-headed little flirt.' He realises that Alice has been jealous of his visits to the Prescotts and goes to his room. The chapter has offered few surprises except in the generosity of Ivy, but has confirmed the tension between Jenkinson and his wife, showing that his empathy with others is directed outward rather than inward.

The start of chapter **31** deals generally with 'more of the Kaffirlands children growing up;' (ibid.; on p. 218 the ink colour changes to blue), bantering with each other about school-leaving results, sport and future plans. A considerable class-consciousness is evident in this particular group, who are all white and English-speaking. A statement by Victor Trollip, who is intending to study law, is tellingly revised in the MS. He says to a friend, 'If you thrash an aborigine [altered from "a nigg [sic]", in the same ink], Tom, send for me.' (p. 219.) Trollip is portrayed as arrogant and the remark Paton was originally about to assign to him was evidently censored as too crude, not necessarily for its racism but because the replacement term 'aborigine' is more high-falutin.

It becomes clear that Dorothy had not entered for the school-leaving exams and regrets this (itself an important social indicator of the marginalised status of many women). Trollip exhorts her, 'There's Michael Shearer, our [altered from "your"] dark romantic rival. One hears he's good for a first. My hat, the lower classes [altered from "plebeians"] will crow!' (ibid.) Ivy, 'a little angrily', declares that Trollip is a snob (ibid.) and adds, 'There's nothing low-class about the Shearers.'

(pp. 219-220) Trollip, uncomfortable, amends his words (ibid.). Yet the consciousness of 'us' and 'them' remains, and when Jenkinson drives past the young people, Trollip refers to him as 'Builder of churches & comforter of little children!' (ibid.) He follows this sarcastic remark with an address to the hills: 'They're great, ... How puny we are, we men, with our fleeting fears...' (ibid.), and leaves (pp. 220-221), quickly changing the subject when he sees Ivy Prescott's tears (in a deleted version she is angry as well). The reader is told that he is ashamed of his remark concerning Jenkinson and of having hurt Ivy (p. 221). This passage appears hastily written and is not internally consistent, but one may note the emphasis on the maturing children (becoming aware in callow fashion of their identity in their own right), and on their prejudices.

This focus remains in the next paragraph, which describes Dorothy Westacres. Some consider her beautiful, but, in a sentence which could reflect the community's viewpoint, 'whether she was or was not, there was no carriage more assured in the ... Kaffirlands, no body of flesh & blood more ["perfectly" begun and then deleted] arrogantly fashioned.' (ibid.) The alteration in the MS makes it plain that arrogance is intended to be seen as one of her defining characteristics. Her physical features, 'the broad shoulders & deep bosom of ["~~the~~"] her forbears, & white flawless limbs that never seemed to redden or brown ...' (ibid.) are next dwelt on, reminding one inescapably of her Englishness, but her most important attribute continues to be her 'erect stately carriage' (p. 222). Paton's dwelling on this feature is monotonous, but the point is that it is associated with the way she rules 'unquestioning & unquestioned.' (ibid.) As a result Michael becomes more and more conscious of her remoteness from him and dreams of her, poet-like (an image also used in a heavy-handed fashion) (ibid.). Though his immaturity plays a role, class differences remain the underlying issue as regards identity.

Dr Trollip arrives to collect his son and daughter and once again launches into a tirade, now concerning the fact that 'There's no initiation, eh?' (p. 223.) Westacres does not seem to understand and the doctor elaborates:

> yesterday we hid everything from them, today we don't tell them, because we know that they know. In one day they are grown. Henry James & his awkward age! Pah! We don't recognise any awkward age, we make 'em men & women overnight ... Yesterday we kept 'em sheltered from all our vileness, our adulteries, ... ; today they don't need any shelter, ... Some of 'em are going to be shocked, some of 'em are going to shock us, eh? (ibid.)

Westacres unwillingly agrees and in a loaded phrase, the doctor mocks Westacres: 'You're still a Conservative' (ibid.) and explains his use of this word at length, in much the same terms he used previously. He tells his host that though the latter believes in a landed aristocracy,

> 'such a thing can never be in this of all countries. Deasland is seeing to that. He's more honest, at least; he sees that these niggers must absorb or be absorbed by our society, & he's accelerating the process. But it means the end of these youngsters of ours. It seems damnable ... [b]ut that wasn't my point. It's the growing up of these youngsters that saddens me.' (p. 224.)

Westacres responds that he does not see much point in the doctor's 'lamentation': 'They must grow up.... It's your having to lose them that worries you.' (ibid.; emphasis in original.) The doctor concurs and the two men discuss their other children (pp. 224-225). While this passage is repetitive it does emphasise the inevitable (and to the doctor at least, unwelcome) passage of time. Social change is admitted to constitute part of this process, but is also not welcome, preferably to be delayed. The Kaffirlands society is indeed perceived as conservative in the doctor's sense, holding onto its white identity as long as possible, its racism blatantly expressed by one of its leading members.

That Dr Trollip is actually deeply unsettled by his thoughts is demonstrated by his irritation when his son Victor addresses him, 'Well, sire, ... we move at thy behest.' (p. 225.) Furthermore, Dr Trollip is enraged when Victor, instructed to put on his coat, turns to his friends and exhorts them, 'Cast not your pearls before swine.' (p. 226.) The doctor demands, in almost a scream, that Victor stop this, which illustrates another side to Dr Trollip and suggests his own sense of insecurity at the changing situation. His son attempts to remain nonchalant, but is in fact ashamed and angry (ibid.). The narrator focalises the description of Victor's emotions and there is a sense of distance from the scene, and

particularly the Trollips, so that while no overt opinion about them is expressed[75] it is made clear that the narrator does not associate himself with them or their responses, of disquiet at changing circumstances on the doctor's part and of immature arrogance and superficiality on the part of his son. It is worth noting that they are central to their respective age groups in the community and may be taken as expressing its own sense of a threatened identity.

A marginal note (in the same ink) dates chapter **32** in December 1923 (ibid.). George Prescott's picnic is held as usual on Boxing Day, as his wife would have wanted. Jenkinson remarks to Michael that this was quite right (p. 227); 'old Moshesh' [the heir to the throne of the Basotho] asked his guardian what medicine he needed to build up a great nation and was told 'there is no medicine but the medicine of the heart.' (p. 228.) The boy's eyes shine (again) and he repeats the saying, as does Jenkinson also. As if this were not enough, they each 'rolled the words over their tongues, savouring them,.. .' (ibid.) It is quite plain that the writer intends the reader to take note of these sentiments, which are appropriated, taken over (cf. Spurr, 1993:28) as 'native wisdom' (ibid.).

When Michael announces that he is about to visit Ruth Carrington, the two agree that she is beautiful. Michael wonders if she notices him looking at her face and his friend replies, 'Why shouldn't she? I do it myself.' (ibid.) To Jenkinson's question, 'what about the girl herself ... ?' Michael answers (the fourth time this phrase is used), 'She's fine, ... She knows the medicine of the heart.' (ibid.) Probably Paton mainly intends to suggest a romantic impulse in Michael (and in Jenkinson) but the effect on the reader is that the value of emotions and of 'native wisdom' is foregrounded (ibid.), though in stilted fashion. It is as if Paton is attempting, not very skilfully, to impart another dimension to the identity of his two main male characters than that of the stereotyped Natal Midlands variety.

Jenkinson struggles to find a word to describe Ruth: she reminds him, not very originally but, in line with his close links to the pastoral, of some 'deep sheltered

[75] Later one reads that Michael considers Victor as seemingly spineless (p. 257), which one may take as representing the inferred author's view.

lake, ...' (ibid.). Eventually he arrives at the adjective '[t]ranquil' (p. 229). Michael, unconvinced, puts forward the word 'serene' and adduces Rupert Brooke's lines about the men killed in war, who gave up 'that serene, that men call age' (ibid.). Jenkinson remarks that they are both fine words, quotes three lines from Masefield and 'slily' asks what Becker would think of them, confident that Michael is still as much his friend as ever (p. 230). Michael simply replies that Becker does not run Masefield down but that the teacher thinks there are better men; he (Michael) wants to keep his mind open. When Jenkinson maintains that he is still Masefield's man and too old to change, Michael demurs. One may note the literary clichés in the passage together with Jenkinson's habitual struggle to express himself, and the hint of Michael's growing independence.

After a silence Michael comments that he is sorry Dorothy has left school, adding miserably, 'She's grown up now.' (ibid.) His friend replies, 'So are you.' (ibid.) But Michael still experiences a large gulf, and when Jenkinson suggests he talk to her (p. 231) Michael responds that he cannot, but adds that he is applying for a Rhodes scholarship, and if he is awarded it, he will be able to speak to her.

To Jenkinson's enquiry whether he still intends studying medicine, Michael replies that he now wants to read for a degree in literature and will then carry out Deasland's job, as a teacher at the school. His hero-worship of Deasland is still patent, although the focus has altered. Likewise, his callowness regarding Dorothy, and the social divide between them, are evident. The 'Rhodes' is perceived as a means of reinforcing, perhaps even constructing, his identity as a socially valuable human being. Unremarked upon, and probably unconscious on the part of the narrator, are the scholarship's close links with British imperialism.

On the way to visit Ruth and Alice, Jenkinson informs Michael that Hartley Ussher has a 'jolly fine girl' and is 'working like two men' (p. 232): the result of Jenkinson's intervention. The existing tension between Jenkinson and his wife is further manifested in her disapproval of the picnic's being held, the silence

between them and her dislike of Mrs Ussher being invited to 'Valleysweet' (pp. 232-233; the chapter number **33** is deleted in the same blue ink).

When chapter 33 does begin on the next page, Jenkinson enters his 'cathedral'. It is clear that he is more at home with the nature to which he escapes, and with which he has a symbiotic relationship, than with certain people, particularly his wife. His loneliness is palpable, not least in his envy of those who experience warm, intimate worlds; 'a thing that Valleysweet was not. God knows, he had tried to fashion it.' (p. 233.) He steels himself to face his impotence, stemming from 'the cold aloofness, physical & spiritual, of his wife' (p. 234). Still more painful than his physical desire is his own hunger for children, and he kneels and prays for a child, briefly feeling a little at peace but finding the meal with Mrs Ussher taxing (ibid.). She is grateful for the change in her son and unaware of the tension at the table, but the others are keenly conscious of it. Focalised through Jenkinson is his sense that in his own home he is a stranger (p. 235; the concept is mentioned twice): consequently his father-in-law is the only person who could put him at ease in his wife's company (ibid.). One may again note here the generativity spoken of by Erikson (1963): the implication both in his work and in this novel being that no person's identity is complete without children. In addition, family relationships, or the lack of them, are emphasised. The reader is led to experience sympathy for Jenkinson; yet his over-sensitivity to the needs of others (in the Levinasian sense as well) has been shown earlier to have alienated his wife, the 'other' most dependent upon him. Fortunately Paton does not moralise upon this point, but he develops it in a different way which is nearly as predictable.

The fraught meal comes to an end, and Jenkinson's wife and Mrs Ussher soon retire to bed. He and Ruth are left alone. She reminds him of their talk a year previously (p. 236), which must have occurred in Book 2. He is reluctant to remember, but she pursues the subject. When she comments on his unhappiness, tears come to his eyes. She tells him that she had thought of him 'as a man who might suffer any sorrow, ... but who would never be hurt by it..'

(ibid.) 'You're not like that now.' (pp. 236-237.) Jenkinson replies, 'I am like that. But not here.' (p. 237)

Ruth indicates to Jenkinson that she had thought of him as Galahad, but he rejects the comparison. A deleted section (in the same ink), likewise gauche and overwritten, has him drawing a comparison with Sir Bors and Ruth stating that she understood Lancelot better. The MS resumes with an insertion where she repeats her remark about Jenkinson's unhappiness (ibid.) He eventually admits that he had married Alice because he was sorry for her (p. 238.) Ruth declares, 'You were. Dad knew that. It worried him. He knew you were too good for that.' (ibid.) She tells him, 'That wasn't all that we knew' (ibid.). To his question, 'So you knew that too?', she says, 'I knew.' (Emphasis in original.) His response is, 'It was true.' Ruth replies, 'It was always true. From the first time. At the dance in Atherton.' (ibid.) This uninspired dialogue clearly refers to an incident in Book 2, and is not at all improved by the following piece of rhetoric: 'His chastity, her chastity, ["~~stood~~"] flamed between them like naked swords. But her eyes were blind.' She nevertheless makes the now inevitable statement, 'I loved you. ... I love you.' (ibid.)

They embrace hungrily, whispering clichéd words to each other (pp. 238-239), but Jenkinson thinks of his friendship with Michael and is troubled as well as aroused; Ruth senses this tension and they arrange to meet in town. The issue of the physical consummation of their love here is dealt with very obliquely indeed, but it is made clear that Jenkinson is repentant (p. 241); he assures Ruth, in an inserted section, that he will pray for her (p. 240, verso). In her room, the reader is told, Ruth relives, minute by minute, the consummation of her seven years (p. 242), which is undoubtedly a conscious inversion of the Biblical narrative of Jacob's seven-year wait for Rachel, although Jacob was eventually obliged to wait twice as long (Genesis 29). One empathises, like the narrator I would suggest, with the individuals concerned. They are, simply, treated as very human. That Jenkinson dismisses Ruth's idealistic view of him as Galahad

further emphasises his humanness. In his makeup he is indeed perceived as closer to Lancelot, the greatest of all knights but not the most sinless.

The marked biblical echoes and religious language (after the encounter Jenkinson purposely reads Matthew 5 – on committing adultery simply by looking lustfully at a woman – finding the words hard but praying that 'the Man of all men' might understand, p. 241) imply that in his representation of the identity of his characters the inferred author is attempting to portray not only their physicality and their need of relationship but also their religious belief. Likewise, the reference to the quintessential English legend of King Arthur[76] sets them firmly in the English milieu. However, a major development in the plot is about to take place.

This scene and the following one are also overplayed, I would argue. In chapter **34** (in a darker blue ink) Jenkinson suddenly comes face to face with his wife, who, in a reversal of her normal habits, has been waiting up for him (p. 242). She has not witnessed anything occurring between him and Ruth, it is clear. Wistfully she tells him that she had thought he would never come; she had been sick, and adds: 'Robert, it's coming true.' (ibid.) Jenkinson realises that she is pregnant and holds her quivering (p. 243; numbering in pencil). He looks out into the darkness of the room, but it is not of their child that he is thinking. He plays 'make-believe' with her, caressing her with 'false hands' (ibid.). She explains that she had also wanted to tell Ruth, and Jenkinson smiles grimly (p. 244). One gathers that there is no end to Alice's talking, and eventually he falls asleep, only to be wakened by Alice and then to experience insomnia later: in a rhetorical flourish, one is told that 'Robert Jenkinson, who had dreamed always of children, found it hard to think of the child that was to be when he thought of the woman that was.' (ibid.) One is struck by the chasm in the relationship between the Jenkinsons here. The irony is as clumsy as the syntax.

[76] Probably Tennyson's version, possibly Masefield's, rather than Malory's; cf. Paton (1980:38-39). Paton's copy of Tennyson's works is signed 'Alan S Paton, Xmas 1921' (Koopman, 2005).

The next morning he is heavy with sleep (p. 245). In the east the sky is red and quiet with 'pregnancy and expectation.' (ibid.) One recalls how Paton employs this image elsewhere, most notably at the end of *Cry, the Beloved Country.* In the present text it is used both ironically and to accentuate Jenkinson's awareness of the natural environment. One is reminded that at times such a scene would have exalted his spirit; '[b]ut today it had no meaning for him.' His wife remarks that she is going to tell Ruth and he feels sickness rather than sorrow. Yet when Alice returns her face is radiant and she describes how Ruth had cried and cried and cried (ibid.). Jenkinson longs to comfort Ruth, 'but that was over, he supposed. He felt a sudden desire to weep himself, childishly, bewilderedly.' (p. 246.) To accentuate the irony, the narrator has Alice comment that he and Ruth make a fine pair, with Ruth 'sitting on her bed, for all the world like you.' (ibid.)

Ruth has told Alice that she needs to leave, ostensibly to take care of their father, and Jenkinson suggests to Alice that they should drive her to him. Alice, however, replies that she just wants to stay and dream (pp. 246-247). She admits that she has been horrible to Jenkinson and he agrees frankly (p. 247). He does ask her two things: not to fret over things that do not matter, and, 'with a touch of hardness', 'Don't worry about money & getting your pound of flesh. Be glad if I want to help somebody.' (p. 248.) She eventually acknowledges, 'I deserve that,' and promises this too. Yet he reminds her of the injustices to Peggy Sotheran, Mrs Ussher and Pratt (which must have been perpetrated in Book 2). Alice humbly indicates that she had deliberately meant to commit these too. From a Levinasian viewpoint it is striking that up to this point Alice has rejected, obviously very harshly, Jenkinson's awareness of the other and that this has alienated him, with his strong ethical values, from her.

The reconciliation between them, expressed in light conversation about the long-awaited child (pp. 248-249), occurs extremely rapidly; also, when Jenkinson returns before lunch, his heart is not as heavy as it had been: 'Ruth Carrington was to be forgotten; they had both decided that.' (p. 249.) The sudden about-turns on all sides are most unconvincing and the impression created is that,

having engineered the situation, Paton wants to escape from it as quickly as possible. It is as if he perceives identity as inhering in stable family relationships rather than in extramarital love affairs, however deeply felt.

The following chapter (**35**) returns to Michael, who is worrying about his matric results (pp. 252-253). A meeting with Hartley Ussher indicates that the latter has ceased drinking and is still working hard: as he puts it: 'You can't be running about the countryside all the time. The farm goes to the devil & your blasted niggers sit about & do damn all.' (p. 252.) When Michael comments favourably on the new situation (ignoring the racist slur), Ussher flushes with pleasure and his eyes shine (ibid.). As suggested earlier, these responses to praise in Paton's early work remind one of his immaturity as a writer. I would argue that the identity of his characters is consciously seen by him as inhering in their relationships with their environment, temporality, themselves (in the case of Jenkinson and, to a lesser extent, Michael: the only two self-reflexive characters in the novel), the other (the neighbour in the biblical sense) and the Other. Less consciously, however, Paton's characters in this first novel are on the whole typical of Natal Midlands settler society, hardly questioning it consciously, and exhibit stock responses the banality of which Paton was probably not aware.

The exchange between Ussher and Michael continues, on the level of Hartley's new love relationship (pp. 252-254). It is light-hearted banter, with Michael being both delighted with and vaguely ashamed of the ease with which he can pull Hartley's leg (p. 254). Evidently he still perceives himself as superior in many ways, as the next sequence demonstrates.

As Michael nears his home, one is reminded, in rather hackneyed terms, of the landscape: darkness is falling fast on the great valley, the fukwe flutes solemnly, and so forth. Deletions suggest that Paton once again felt it important to attempt to represent the interweaving of character and environment as precisely as possible (p. 254). The final wording reads: 'A darkness not of beauty to be adored in utter abasement, but of beauty that ministered to himself, as though it

were beautiful because he, Michael Shearer, hurried through it tirelessly, clean & alive & growing, with a mind more alert, more alive, than any of the Westacres or the Callaghans possessed.' (ibid.) The passage continues in this tortuous vein, the perspective shifting from Michael's to a narrator who remarks pompously, 'But age feels more humbly,' (p. 255.) One learns that the natural sounds around Michael fill him with

> the pleasure that is half pain, ... the eternal vacillating ecstasy of the poet, superbly & egoistically conscious that he is not as other men, yet wishing meanly & afraid that he was even as they, with no eye for vision, no revolt against bondage, no call to leadership. In the dark of that night, ... were the seeds of conflict sown. For the first time in his life, perhaps, mood [sic] came upon him without tangible cause; and the boy was dimly conscious of some fear, ... But it lasted hardly at all; nothing happens to children. (ibid.)

This part of the novel is confused. It takes one from the intimate, almost symbiotic relationship which Michael enjoys with the environment and his awareness of himself as alive and vital, through the narrator's sweeping comment on the nature of the poet to the boy's sudden, inexplicable mood of fear, which is immediately, though not persuasively, negated by the repeated comment that nothing happens to children. As already noted this philosophy is patently false. However, what is perhaps most marked here, as increasingly in the third Book of the novel, is the sense that time is suddenly encroaching on what has been an almost idyllic existence, particularly for Michael. One also wonders whether Paton was expressing something of a sense of his approaching adulthood. Human identity is certainly perceived as contingent upon *chronos.*

To reinforce the impression of the ending of Michael's childhood, Michael hears from Naomi and Arthur that he has gained a first in matric; his mother embraces him with a passion that frightens him a little and his father shakes his hand (p. 256). He finds this thrilling; it gives him a sense of power and makes him feel a little afraid (ibid.). He would have preferred to walk alone down the road and to have dreamed; '[b]ut it was selfish, too selfish.' (p. 257) His inner turmoil is well expressed by the mingled emotions here: the desire to escape and the need to be responsible towards others seem equally compelling, but the latter is stronger.

A remarkably concentrated family scene follows, where father and mother sit close together, and Michael's siblings watch him reading the examination results in the newspaper, while the soup boils away, etcetera (p. 258). The intimate family relationship here is only broken by a congratulatory phone call from Jenkinson (ibid.) This is followed by other calls and eventually by one from Victor Trollip, who has also obtained a first and clearly deems Michael now worthy of his company, to the latter's surprise: 'we need each other.' He asks Michael what he is intending to study: 'Pedagogy?' (pp. 259-260.) When Michael replies that he is going to try for a Rhodes scholarship Victor congratulates him and, the reader is told, is genuinely delighted that Michael is wishing to study English (p. 260).

Naomi asks if the caller was Dorothy (ibid.). Michael blushes, as does Naomi, so that Arthur mocks them for looking like turkeys (p. 261). When she hears that it was Trollip who had phoned she is sceptical (ibid.), but John Shearer quietly remarks, 'If the boy wants to know Michael, by all means let Michael go there. Let the boy come here. It means he's learning sense. Are you going to stop that, Naomi?' (p. 262) The narrator comments: 'The gentleness [deleted but reinstated] of his rebukes, so few & far between, were [sic] the unfailing weapons of John Shearer.' (ibid.) The norms of the novel in terms of male identity are made explicit here, as well as in Naomi's words: 'Poor old Dad, ... worrying about his growing family.' She adds, 'quickly, seriously', 'It's because you trust us that we're so happy,' (ibid.).

The response from her father and the family to this remark is noteworthy: there is dead silence at the table, and 'not for the life of him could John Shearer prevent the two tears that ["~~gathered, collected~~"] welled up in his eyes, till they gathered mass & rolled down his cheeks.' (ibid.) Acceptance of the other, gentleness in rebuke, worry about one's offspring, trust, tears (evidently not quite welcome) constitute the key signifiers of identity here. Michael breaks the tension by telling his brother, 'I'll teach you to turkey me,' (ibid.) but far from diverting attention away from John Shearer's tears this action simply foregrounds them.

When Michael has settled the matter of the 'turkey insult', he takes down the *Oxford Dictionary* which Mr Becker had given him and looks up the word 'pedagogy' (p. 263). That Michael does not know the word is difficult to believe, but the act contrasts his relative lack of sophistication – and that of his family – with the worldly wisdom of Victor Trollip.

By the beginning of chapter **36** a year has passed. (A marginal note in the same blue ink records the date as Dec [written over Jan] '25.) In sweeping terms the narrator records that it had been a year of 'droughts and floods' and other antitheses (p. 263). Death has struck a number of families, but children have also been born or are on the way. Weddings or engagements have taken place: Ruth Carrington is engaged to the new doctor, while Ivy Prescott owns her own car and drives like a madman: she and Naomi see no more of each other because 'their roads lie far apart.' (p. 264.) Dorothy Westacres 'rules her society like a queen' and breaks hearts that are soon mended. Michael Shearer plays cricket for Natal and, it is said, will soon play rugby for Natal too (ibid.). Notable here is the sense of a broad canvas on which generalities jostle with a few cameos; yet, though apparently extensive, the scope of the picture is actually limited to upper-class English-speaking Natalians to whom farming and sport are equally important. It is perhaps as well that (in the same blue ink) Paton deleted a paragraph which extends the panorama and its generalised nature still further (pp. 264-265). Even so, the inexorable movement of time is apparent.

During this year the Jenkinsons' child, Bruce Michael, has been born (a marginal note on p. 263 records the date as July '25) and is the 'new master at Valleysweet.' (p. 265.) Sparing moments from their busy lives to write letters to each other, Jenkinson and Michael emphasise the continuing importance of their friendship, and the former hopes that Michael might perhaps be to his son what Jenkinson had been to him (ibid.).

Further drawing attention to the passage of time, Michael, Robin Downing and Victor Trollip return to the valley, one wearing a Springbok athletic [sic] blazer,

one a Natal cricket blazer, and Trollip – in an intriguing vignette which is greatly reminiscent of Paton himself – fresh from having routed the Maritzburg Debating Society (p. 266; cf. Alexander, 1994:58). In the dicky seat of the car he recites aloud his most effective passages.

The trend of Trollip's thoughts is also most interesting. 'This Science for which you claim so much, gentlemen, has involved us in an economic system that none of us understand.' He had claimed, to applause, that his audience was likely to blow itself and its creation to utter destruction (ibid.). He added: 'You, gentlemen, are like men building without an architect.' (ibid.) Developing this point, he had remarked: 'No earthly genius could ... find form in your formlessness. Break it down... .' (p. 267.) To an interjection from the floor, 'We will never break it down,' he retorts,

> 'You will never need to. It is broken already. Men are without food in a world of scientific agriculture; your knowledge keeps children hungry, & sets man fighting against man in ways that grow more & more horrible. And beauty is lost sight of; all that is warm & human & understandable is fouled by your psychology & murdered by your discovery.' (ibid.)

Downing and Michael notice Trollip repeating the words of his speech to himself, and Michael suggests that the latter will go far. In the context one may take this as approval by the writer of the sentiments Trollip has expressed, at least here. A number of issues seem particularly important: the limitations of 'Science', the image of building an edifice without an architect being noteworthy here; the resulting injustices; the ensuing loss of a sense of beauty; the 'fouling' by psychology of all that is warm and human. In one sense Trollip is like his father, raising awkward questions about matters often taken for granted; in another way one sees Paton himself, a nascent scientist yet conscious of the dangers of scientism; exhibiting a strong ethical awareness; emphasising the importance of what is warm and human; reacting with disgust against the psychology of his time, almost certainly the behaviourism of J B Watson. Trollip's speech foreshadows ideas in Paton's later texts, 'God in Modern Thought' (1934a) and 'Religion, Freedom and Man' (1934c). In similar fashion certain major characters

in this first novel sometimes query the norms of their society, valorising ethics and humanity and disapproving of all that might detract from these values.

As the boys speed over the Atherton countryside its pastoral nature is once again stressed: warm sunlight, red roofs, trees (p. 268). Michael drinks the view in eagerly, and something within him stirs 'inarticulately.' (ibid.) This Wordsworthian vagueness is immediately replaced by the more focused (and practical) thought that his friendship with Trollip and Downing might open doors that had been shut; 'might bring him nearer to the cold queenly beauty of the Kaffirlands [Dorothy].' We are told that he wants to make his blazer a Springbok one; 'not for his own glory ["of course" inserted] but because it was in keeping with his great ideal of retiring selflessly into the seclusion of St. Luke's – as Deasland had done before him.' (ibid.) While the words are Michael's one may detect an irony which stems from the narrator. The humour is not directed at Deasland but rather, as previously, at Michael's naivety. It also implies that the narrator considers himself to be less naïve than Michael.

Michael wants to walk home, likewise immaturely hoping that Dorothy might see him (pp. 269-271). At the bridge one of the most important exchanges in the novel insofar as the construction of identity is concerned takes place: Trollip declaims, 'here is the bridge. In one minute you will be in the Cape; in one minute you will leave behind the narrow provincialism of Natal, with its Imperialistic narrowness. You will be in a province renowned for its liberalism, its enfranchised natives, ... Isn't it terrible, Shearer, living in Natal?' (p. 270.)

Though this speech is probably meant to reflect something of the debates at the Natal University College, one should not necessarily take Trollip's words at face value, as is indicated by Michael's serious rejoinder, 'Considering that my views are a damned sight more liberal than yours – .' (ibid.) which is quickly interrupted by Trollip. The brand of liberalism here propounded, one should recall, is a strongly paternalistic and patriarchal one. Trollip's interjection – even more oratorical in tone – reminds Michael, 'You are a disciple of the worthy Deasland.

... A follower of the worthy Jenkinson. I'm referring to the real Natal; Durban with its flag-wagging, & its parish pump politics.' (ibid.)

The newly worldly-wise Trollip is critical not only of the parochialism of the province, but even of the politics of the local metropolis. It is clear that he regards Deasland and Jenkinson, not necessarily favourably, as different from the average Natalian. As if to corroborate this point, Robin Downing 'growl[s]', connoting irritation and mirroring many views of the time, 'Natal's all right. ... She was a fool ever to go into Union.' (ibid.) Trollip responds, 'You're a typical overseas Englishman,' adding, 'Michael is a ["typical" deleted, in the same blue ink] noble South African, prepared to swallow any insult & submit to any oppression for the sake of a unity that doesn't exist.' (ibid.) Michael does not rise to this bait, simply remarking, 'It will exist.' (p. 271.) In something of an about-face, Trollip tells him 'sincerely', 'I believe you, ... It's chaps like you that make it possible. It's chaps like Robin & our friend van der Westhuizen that make it difficult.' (ibid.)

A number of aspects of identity are represented here: though Trollip's words are more rhetorical than heartfelt, they do reflect the tension in Natal between supporters of Union and its opponents; between the 'liberal' Cape and narrow-minded Natal; and between the 'overseas Englishman' and the 'noble' – *not* the typical – South African embodied in Michael, who is portrayed, in the only words uttered by Trollip awarded the accolade of 'sincere', as idealistic but perhaps more able to contribute to future unity than the displaced Englishman and the Afrikaner. It is important to note that Michael is linked with the 'worthy' two older men, who merit the approval of the inferred author and reflect many of his values, and superfluous to mention that black people and women do not feature in the discourse.

Jenkinson and Alice, displaying a new warmth towards each other, show Bruce off to Michael, who does not share their enthusiasm for their son and soon heads home (ibid.). The tops of the hills are yet again hidden by the 'veils of the mists'

and 'the stream of [Michael's] childhood babbled over its stones.' (p. 272.) This idyllic picture is slightly disturbed by the fact that Dirk Sotheran, leaning on his gate, does not greet Michael, but the darker moment is fleeting: as the latter crosses the last drift to 'Politique', 'in that moment the fukwe called solemnly, slowly, the brown priest from its sanctuary, chanting its litany,... .' (ibid.) The religious language neutralises the discord and reinforces the rustic peace which is so important for characters such as Michael and Jenkinson, and by extension Paton too. It is as if the irruption of the larger world with its politics and tension is put to one side.

Chapter **37** continues to foreground Michael's Romantic vision of the landscape but offers another, much more practical, perspective as well. On his way to visit Harry Prescott, he climbs into the mists; the titihoyas call desolately and while he had once been afraid of them, these things now fill him 'with wild exaltation' and he declaims poetry which he would have liked to have written himself, except that 'titihoyas' would be 'a hard [word] to get into verse' (pp. 273-274). In particular he declaims a certain line (again from Stevenson's poem 'To S R Crockett') about dying, 'And hear no more at all', nine times into the mist. To his dismay he is unexpectedly greeted by Prescott, who, invisible, had been listening to him 'pour[ing] out his soul'. Michael weakly explains, 'I've been reciting, ... you don't know what it's like to be back in the mist.' (p. 274.) To this Harry rejoins 'briefly', 'It's a damn nuisance,' from the farmer's point of view (p. 275).

He taxes Michael with being 'a town chap,' an accusation which Michael rebuts, declaring that he is returning to Touws River. Harry scoffs at him: 'Don't be a fool.' Harry's pragmatism provides another perspective on the representation of identity in this novel. While the characters within it necessarily live close to the soil, not all of them are as enamoured of it as Michael is. His outlook is again shown to be romanticised and simplistic. The next exchange results from Michael's remark that he is going to St Luke's, which Harry clearly also feels to be unrealistic: 'What, converting niggers?' (ibid.) Michael responds 'angrily': 'You ought to know I've a bit of sense,' which silences Harry (ibid.), who 'had for so

long taken his lead from his friend that he stood even now a little in awe of him.' (ibid.) However, Harry cannot comprehend this desire. Wishing to avoid further conflict, he wishes Michael 'good luck', but adds, 'you're damn well wasting yourself.' (p. 276.) He expresses the same sentiments about Deasland, saying that his Dad holds the same opinion too; both young men become angry and Harry quickly changes the subject (ibid.).

The gap between their viewpoints is apparent here, with Harry's no-nonsense practicality being set off against Michael's paternalistic idealism. It is evident that those holding the former view are in the majority. However, one may argue that the narrator sides with Michael. Yet, while Michael is idealistic, he is not idealised, because it is hinted that he is ambivalent about converting black people. Moreover, he is arrogant: at tea Harry's father asks whether girls go to the same 'lessons' and Michael not only takes offence at being teased about girls but thinks it 'colossal ignorance' to refer to lectures as lessons (ibid.). Though pressed to stay to lunch, he leaves in irritation when Mr Prescott remarks, 'I hear Dorothy Westacres is very jealous,' (p. 277) He explains to his family, who are surprised to see him back so soon, that Harry senior had got on his nerves (p. 278).

Naomi tells him – drawing out the suspense somewhat – that Dorothy had invited him to tennis (ibid.) but Michael says he does not wish to attend, until he hears that Naomi is also going (p. 279). She declares that she personally does not care about the Westacres's: 'You know my views on snobbery.' (ibid.) Her brother 'frankly' admits that his views on snobbery have changed: 'I thought Downing & Trollip were snobs.' (ibid.) When Naomi 'innocently' remarks, 'I thought so too,' he laughs: 'You're really too clever.' (ibid.) The implication of this exchange is perhaps that Michael's principles are elastic when he has the chance of seeing Dorothy close up. The overall perspective in the novel is certainly that the Westacres are indeed snobs, placed at the apex of the society described and well aware of their status.

Interestingly, the possibilities, for the plot, of the invitation to tennis are not developed. At the beginning of the next chapter (**38**) some time seems to have elapsed: 'Valleysweet is a happy place now.' (p. 280.) One is provided with a picture of the Jenkinsons playing with their child, and is told that when Ruth Carrington was married in May, Jenkinson, awed by her beauty, finds himself 'trembling uncontrollably.' (ibid.) But she does not turn to look at him, and the comment is made, 'It was as if a page, unbelievably sacred and impossible, had been closed for ever.' (ibid.)

Though the narrative mode is omniscient, the comment appears to focalise the perceptions of both Jenkinson and Ruth. This reading is supported by the reassuring pressure of her fingers on his unsteady arm when he kisses her farewell at the reception, and by the remark that, though he then goes to see his child, 'his eyes were lost in dreaming, & his soul was restless with yearning & ["~~sadness~~"] renunciation & bitter human jealousy. And now it was over.' (ibid.) The implication is that Jenkinson is proud of his child; but not happy. Yet his probity, his position as one of the major centres of moral consciousness in the novel, means that events could not have turned out otherwise. Paton's attitude seems to be ambivalent: having established the real love between Ruth and Jenkinson, he dismisses it quickly when Alice falls pregnant, only to recall it here and to emphasise it in his choice of the word 'renunciation' over 'sadness'. Perhaps he simply wishes to capture the complexity of Jenkinson's character: almost saintly in selflessness, yet bitter and jealous. In their last encounter, in fact, Ruth proves herself the stronger and more controlled person.

Paton moves away rapidly from this evocation of deep feeling. In the last scene he wrote (though clearly nowhere near the ending of the novel), he turns to describe the winter days passing by 'in all their glory' and the hills 'bathed in a sunlight that has no peer in all the countries of the world.' (p. 281.) Men revel in the warmth and birds fly above 'the magic of sleeping ["~~fields~~"] pastures ..., where the haystacks stood English-like in quietness & peace.' The idyllic note, and its un-African source, is unambiguous, especially in the selection of the word

'pastures' and the nostalgic allusion to England, and is over-emphasised by the remark, 'A time for rest & stillness'. The vivid colours of the leonotis, kaffirboom, bignonia and bougainvillea, which 'cascade' down from the tops of the trees, restore an African ambience, but almost as an afterthought.

Only one thing disturbs the Edenic quality of the landscape: the patent cleaner salesmen who are amazed at the gardens they will 'profane with their mundane merchandise.' (ibid.) In a sense, however, the setting still rules supreme: the loves, hates and doings of the people who inhabit it are subsumed into the natural environment. Ripples there may be, but for most of the upper-class whites there is no major upheaval. Their sense of identity is one with 'their' surroundings, and vice versa. Certain characters – Jenkinson, Michael, Deasland, and to an ambivalent degree the two male Trollips – disturb the pastoral tranquillity, but not to a large extent.

It is clear that Paton was already practising that ability to write which makes *Cry, the Beloved Country* so powerful as a tool of protest though, in some respects, it does not delve as deeply into the problematics of individual identity as some of his earliest works. The main character there is not so much the separate characters, not even James Jarvis and Stephen Kumalo, as the beloved country itself, so that it is the identity of a fractured nation which is being reassembled by means of the surgeon's suture.

Conclusion

In terms of the discussion in the previous chapters I have undertaken a hermeneutic reading of Paton's first novel which is not neutral and is necessarily limited. It foregrounds certain values and concentrates largely on characters, their relationships with each other and the natural and social environment, particularly as perceived through the eyes of the focaliser, who is a construct of the inferred author, the young Alan Paton. His wrestling with the behaviourism of J B Watson, which challenged his notion of self-identity (Paton, 1980:75-6) does

not seriously perturb the surface of this book, but a tension is nevertheless sometimes apparent as an underwater current. Hence J M Coetzee's reading of white writing in terms of the ambiguity of the pastoral (1988) is partly borne out by this text at least, while De Kock's (2001; 2004) notion of the suture or cultural doubleness (partly English, partly South African) is sometimes applicable. Mostly Paton and his characters dwell in an English environment, with minimal references to the actual South African situation, though he may be described as writing in terms of classic realism, providing a version of reality as he sees it (Bruner, 1991/2003:45), almost a performative result as White would have it (1982/1991:142). Hence temporal duration is carefully noted in 'Ship' (cf. Ricoeur, 1991b:195); many contextual details are given; and the social expectation that religion should not disturb the conventions of society is occasionally overturned, especially by Deasland who holds certain other, religious and idealistic, norms while hewing to the paternalist line (cf. Bruner, 1991/2003:45-58). I have briefly touched on certain features of the text as they reflect the discourse of the community described, following the lead of Fairclough, who defines critical discourse analysis as a way of studying language in relation to power and ideology. He remarks that a range of properties of texts can be potentially ideological, including features of vocabulary and metaphors, presuppositions, generic structure and style (1995:1-2), adding that he understands textual analysis necessarily to involve analysis of the form or organisation of texts (ibid.:188). Hence I have sometimes noted a few recurring items within the narrative form which this particular text is given. Matters of novelistic structure, power relations, class analyses and the like have not been dealt with to any extent and would make for intriguing further studies.

As noted earlier, Thompson (1999) and Morrell (2001) have usefully discussed aspects of urban and rural English identity in Natal, drawing attention to the said ruling discourse. In particular, differences of class, largely focused through the schooling system, have emerged. With a few significant exceptions the social discourse is naturalised, accepted by narrator and characters, though certain stresses are apparent (cf. Rose, 2005:81,82). The socio-economic situation is

largely affluent, with less wealthy figures such as the Shearers nonetheless embodying the 'Protestant' values of thrift and hard work and Jenkinson that of generosity towards others, often to the detriment of those close to him and the disapproval of the narrator-cum-inferred author. The family is shown as pivotal to the communal identity (cf. Morrell, 2001:213), with few figures outside it.

Difference is, generally speaking, frowned upon, particularly if it is 'Radical' or differently-coloured, and most inhabitants of 'Ship' are not especially self-reflexive (cf. Giddens, 1991:52). Self-fulfilment for men is to be found in terms of their exercise of agency (Jenkinson and Deasland especially), prowess in farming, sport and, for a select few, in intellectual achievement and, sometimes, religion (Deasland embodies all of these); but for women almost no non-domestic forms of identity exist unless they wield social power, as with Mrs Westacres and to a rather lesser extent Dorothy, or sexual influence, as with Ruth. The black majority is represented by a few depersonalised figures on the extreme outer periphery, entirely lacking identity. Encounters with the transcendent as well as other human beings do impinge on the actions and relationships of a few characters, but not to any great depth.

Implicit in my approach are certain kinds of reading strategies and interpretive choices. I concentrate on the particular effect of one narrative which interpellates one particular reader, attempting to be conscious of my own response to this invitation. Hence while I consider Paton's intentions to be important (cf. Neuman, 1997:83), I recognise that I have not been able to do much more than deduce the probable intentions of any author, Paton in this case, which I infer from the text and other information. In fact it is not at all clear that he had any specific aims in mind when writing this novel, except to try his hand as a writer of fiction with some kind of religious content. Though the title hints at a quasi-allegorical significance for the narrative, this possibility is not explored at all in the two

Books which have survived, and in fact there is no reference to any 'ship of truth' in the third Book.[77]

The same amnesia regarding its title is also discernible in 'Brother Death,' as will be demonstrated below. While the later novel does end decisively (but not in terms of Paton's original plan for the book and the epigraph referring to Brother Death from *The Roadmender*), 'Ship of Truth' merely comes to a stop. Hence the reader's desire for closure to which Cohan and Shires refer (1988:153) is simply not satisfied. All three of Paton's early novels exhibit the gaps spoken of by Abbott (2002:83-84) and constitute a challenge to the reader. I have not attempted to fill in every gap, but have concerned myself with identities – and silences concerning them. In regard to the question of identity, I have been mindful of Kort's remark that a religious reading of literature in a postmodernist framework could encompass 'a new assessment of self and identity in relation to social determinants and their colonizing effects, an assessment that will avoid the sharp and easy alternatives of "self" as a social product and "self" as a self- and world-constituting will' (1990b: 585). I would posit that characters in 'Ship' on the whole are 'colonised' by social constructions, including religious ones, although the narrator, himself a member of that society, occasionally has them question their milieu and display occasional self-reflexivity or self-making.

Since I concur with Rimmon-Kenan (2002:134) and with Cohan and Shires (1988:142) that a text can be viewed as a site of struggle among various discourses, so that there are competing narratives and narratologies, I have endeavoured to show that in the case of Paton the dominant identity and culture are largely that of the white upper-class English-speaking South African, but that certain features of it are sometimes questioned by central, normative characters or the omniscient, magisterial narrator (cf. Ruf, 1997:59), and therefore

[77] Callan notes the presence of an allegory of the Pilgrim Way in 'all' of Paton's [published] literary work (1982:3). It would appear as though this tendency had emerged earlier in Paton's work, though it is less marked here. Certainly it accords a greater significance to the identity of his characters than the straightforwardly mundane.

presumably by the inferred author himself. Many are not, however. Here I have adopted Rimmon-Kenan's view that the focaliser (usually the narrator in the early Paton) voices the norms of the text (2002:82, 83), which are largely those just mentioned. Although much contemporary theory, particularly Bakhtinian, does pluralise the voice in literary texts, I consider that the 'other voices' in Paton's early novels, while present, are barely allowed to speak. One might say that the struggle is somewhat one-sided.

Hence in 'Ship of Truth', I consider, Paton offers a construction of reality from the perspective of a white male Natalian that is occasionally questioned, but not extensively. Abbott's (2002:11) observation, influenced by Hayden White, that narrative can encompass not only both knowing and telling but also a keeping in darkness, is pertinent here to the silenced voices already alluded to.

While Paton describes the lives of human beings existing within *chronos*, within a fairly restrictive and parochial Natalian society, he does at least allow for the possibility of an irruption into his characters' lives of divine activity and cosmic time, *aion* (contrast Gibson, 1996:179), which means that they are not totally circumscribed. Nonetheless this is not fully worked out in any of the early works of fiction and tends to be superficial.

Previously I argued that various implications of a religious reading in terms of identity, and a Christian approach to the topic of identity formation in Paton, are germane: attentiveness to voices – and silences – in a text, to marginality and marginalisation, to geographical space, especially in South Africa, to temporality, to closure (or the lack of it) and to the portrayal of human-human and human-divine relationships (see Levey 2001 and 2004). To my mind relationality amongst characters, and between characters and the transcendent, is central to identity in religious thought, as Levinas would certainly argue, and important in Paton's early work. My discussion has attempted to bring out some of these features.

The young Alan Paton's first novel, though inexpertly, does move towards a depiction of human identities that is heavily influenced by literary models and prevailing notions of Englishness, at least as the latter were held in Natal. A modern reader may perceive these identities as determined by their interrelationships, especially in terms of power relations and of what is not said; a certain degree of psychological complexity; social expectations (Belsey, 2002:69). I suggest that, unlike some realist fiction, Paton's early works cannot really be considered interrogative: far from disrupting the unity of the reader by discouraging identification with a unified subject of the narrative (cf. ibid.:84), they encourage such identification. Deasland, Trollip and Jenkinson, immediately recognisable stereotypes, are cases in point. The identity of the latter two does, however, occasionally resemble that of the split subject (cf. ibid.:78), quite probably on the basis of Paton's reading of Freud.

A certain awareness of the transcendent and of the other/Other is fostered, but not particularly consistently. Characters are, I suggest, fashioned more profoundly by their community and natural, largely pastoral environment than by any deep spiritual awareness.

Paton's second novel in many respects echoes the first, exhibiting largely similar concerns and methods, and in my opinion hardly progresses in its exploration of human identity. A discussion of certain key aspects follows.

CHAPTER 3
'BROTHER DEATH'

MS 1: PC1/3/2/1 (pp. 1-60, some on Maritzburg College notepaper; 119-182 on obverse)
MS 2: PC1/3/2/2 (pp. 61-96; 97-118 on obverse)
MS 3: PC1/3/2/3 (pp. 183-268; 269-349 on obverse)
MS 4: PC1/3/2/4 (pp. 350-436; 437-531 on obverse)
MS 5: PC1/3/2/5 (pp. 532-716, some on Maritzburg College notepaper)

Preliminary remarks

While this manuscript is important for its reflection of Paton's writing and thought in the early 1930s and is the only complete unpublished novel of his extant, I consider that it is in general a less successful work than 'Ship of Truth' and that in many ways it replays the themes, storyline, techniques and ideas of 'Ship', with its scope being no wider. I also maintain that with certain exceptions the portrayal of identity is less focused. I shall discuss the beginning and ending of 'Brother Death' in relative detail owing to the novel's significance in Paton's oeuvre and in terms of my desire to offer a 'thick' description of his conception of identity: this I regard as non-modern in the sense that, on the whole, his characters, narrator and what one can infer about him either retreat into the past or at best have difficulty coming to terms with the Natal of the 1930's. The middle sections will be summarised and briefly commented on since the novel is little-known, in order to introduce it to a slightly wider audience and contextualise the points I make.

The last page conveniently bears the date 18 May 1930 (p. 716; Alexander, 1994:449n4). In terms of Paton's own life at this time he had been introduced to Toc H, which attracted him because of its emphasis on service and relative unconcern with religious dogma, in the late 1920s (Paton, 1980:105-6). While his branch of Toc H had invited Loudon Hamilton in 1929 or 1930 to talk about the

Oxford Group, which demanded absolute purity and absolute honesty (1980:119), and although he was attracted by Hamilton, as I have observed he ultimately decided not to join the group because of its inexorability of purpose: he was not yet ready to yield the sovereignty of his self to the Holy Spirit, as he disarmingly puts it (1980:121-2). This was a time of sustained creative output in Paton's life: for instance, in 1932 Paton began his play 'Louis Botha', sending it to Hofmeyr for his approval in 1933 (Alexander, 1994:110).

'Brother Death' is an immense novel totalling 716 pp, though some pages are cut out and discarded or deleted in situ. Paton obviously experienced difficulty with the narrative, which was often composed or altered in different coloured inks. Occasionally the MS has been edited in pen by someone with a small, fairly neat hand (e.g., pp. 20, 103) and also in pencil by Neville Nuttall (e.g., p. 152). Its complexity and a general sense of disorganisation, or at least of an *ad hoc* process of composition despite some attempts at planning, is further underlined by notes for Afrikaans and Maths classes, Rugby fixtures, poems and notes on insects and by the fact that when Paton, initially writing on the recto only, had finished the five exercise books, he turned them over and continued on the verso, upside down, but not consistently proceeding in reverse from the fifth book to the first. Presumably in order to guide himself and any readers of the MS, he later numbered every page, usually in cerise or blue crayon; it is probable that he did so with an eye to its being typed (hence the editorial comments by other readers), but uncertain that he intended to have it published.

Paton also found it difficult to settle on a title for the novel, as discussed below, and while he eventually drew the final version, 'Brother Death', the novel's epigraph and a proposed last sentence from *The Roadmender* (Fairless, 1902),[78] at the end of the MS he partly departs from this wording, which would have constituted quite an effective ending. The quasi-allegorical implications of the title

[78] A popular (and rather sentimental) semi-devotional novel by Michael Fairless (pen-name of Margaret Fairless Barber; Fairless, 1902), to which Dent had introduced Paton (Paton, 1980:63).

are abandoned and one is left with the distinct suspicion that Paton had simply tired of writing this novel. The plot offers a number of possibilities, and Paton planned others which were never realised, but on the whole the work would have benefited by being shortened greatly. Nonetheless, certain interesting notions of identity do emerge and there is a moderately consistent characterisation of major characters such as Cromwell and Jarvis.

In Alexander's view (1994:109) the book's inspiration is reflected mainly in its very 'English' place names, 'Garth Place' and 'Borrowdale' for instance. But while Paton himself referred to the 'Rogue Herries' novels as a source in a letter to Edward Callan in March 1966 (Alexander, 1994:449n3) I suspect he was mistaken, as I argued earlier. Some names, according to Alexander, were drawn from Walpole's glamorised Lake District; the only such case from this series of novels seems to be 'Borrowdale' itself. While names of farms in the Natal Midlands are largely English in origin, so that this fact by itself does not indicate that the novel is derivative, I concur with Alexander that it is not particularly original. The setting is strictly local. At one point in the novel 'Ixopo' is crossed out, and Atherton, the name of the main setting of the novel, substituted (p. 293). Paton himself records that at this period he was a Natalian first, and a South African second (1980:82). It is certainly possible to detect what de Kock might term a doubleness, and what I will term a tripleness, in the sense of identity in this novel: Athertonian / 'Midlandian' / Natalian, and only then South African; while this sense applies to narrator and characters alike there is an occasional consciousness of larger events than in 'Ship', for instance the South African War (p. 59), but this conflict is figured in distant and heroic terms.

Paton began by sketching the characters for himself (Alexander, 1994:109); at times he laid out aspects of the plot in point form: as I have shown, Paton did this in much of his early work, often checking names and chronologies, wordage and page lengths. On the verso of p. 210 of MS 3 there is such a plot summary, from which Paton did nevertheless depart: I comment more fully below. In Alexander's

view the plot consists of a series of set-pieces: court cases, a suicide, a marriage (1994:110) and he argues (ibid.) that the novel is formulaic and episodic. I concur with all these points. He considers that Paton was right not to try to publish it, but as I have suggested I believe that Paton was still experimenting with his talents as a writer and may not have intended to do so.

Alexander implies that the novel is insufficiently grounded in South Africa, maintaining that concessions to the African setting include appearances by both 'Dutch' and 'natives'. There is certainly a core of truth in this remark and one can occasionally feel the writer's nib at work in the seam, attempting to stitch together opposites from a middle position, but Paton's commentary, as I remarked briefly above, is sometimes less superficial than Alexander believes. For instance, on the whole the narrator displays sympathy with Afrikaners (e.g. on p. 129) even though the anxiety of the English over the Flag Bill is equally empathetically portrayed.[79]

An intriguing character, in Alexander's view, is the farmer named Jarvis. Though Alexander, taking his cue from one of Paton's character sketches, records that Jarvis is described as profane and of great good nature (1994:109), in fact Jarvis's good humour is described in the novel itself as a mask (p. 335). As hinted at by these proposed character sketches, written for easy reference on the left-hand third of the first few pages, the remaining two thirds being torn out, presumably for ease of access,[80] Paton had some idea of how he wanted to portray the inhabitants of Ixopo/Atherton and in the novel itself sometimes developed such hints further. Hence, while Alexander (1994:109) describes the main actors as being transplanted Walpole stock characters, personages such as Maitland, who makes an important speech tolerant of racial difference (p. 134), are not mere caricatures.

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[79]Though the matter seems exceptionally trivial seventy-five years later, Maake's comment that '[f]lags and national anthems are an inscription of the self on the landscape' (1996:145) appositely underlines the actual issues of identity which were operative.

[80] In order to be able to identify these pages, I have numbered them [A], [B], etc, though they are not separately numbered in the MS.

Nor are political and religious issues lightly dismissed. White families who have 'coloured' relatives and reject them are looked at askance (pp. 144, 147), while the term 'coolie' for an Indian person and attitudes to other races (pp. 147, 8) are heatedly discussed by Esther Jarvis and Krige, the more conservative Afrikaans local doctor. Hence one may argue that an attempt is made to locate particular identities and issues within the local framework, though on the whole the results are not always successful.

A number of key religious debates also occur in the novel. One character, Macnab, had intended to become a missionary doctor because the man Christ had seized his imagination but becomes bitter against God (p. 229), eventually realising that he cannot escape from Him (pp. 230-1). Montague Legh, an Anglican priest, returns to Atherton, where he had grown up, and asks awkward questions of his flock regarding their inconsistency of faith and practice (p. 331); hence they see religion alive in his words and in his actions: 'his job and his life were one' (p. 332). The Catholic priest, Father Hugo, is another such figure. As with their predecessor Deasland the notion of a manly Christianity is evident, but I should add that frequently the debates about religion do not arise naturally out of the text, seeming somewhat contrived.

Issues of politics and economics also surface, in my opinion, very infrequently. Almost no awareness of the effects of the Great Depression is evident, for instance. It would be interesting to compare this book with Paton's *Ah, but your Land is Beautiful* (1981), which exhibits a greater complexity of setting and cast and is more assured in its handling of them. In his last novel Paton's lyrical descriptions of the loveliness of rural Natal are counterpointed by the sardonic portrayal of the actual inhabitants of South Africa. None of the groups he depicts, whether Afrikaner, black, or English liberal, escapes his sharp eye. *Land* is sometimes thought not to have been successful, but Paton's telling of the story from the differing viewpoints of the main characters does capture the intricacy of

the social system and of the identity of the individuals within it. While I believe that 'Brother Death' also attempts to mirror the complexity of a society and its inhabitants, the focus of the earlier work is much narrower. Hence its representation of social and individual identity cannot be said to be at all sophisticated, though its plot is more developed than that of *Land*. Apart from the clergymen in both early novels, similarities exist between Jenkinson and Cromwell, the Westacres's and the Carltons, and in the relationships between Jenkinson and Hartley Ussher in the earlier novel and Cromwell and Jeff Baxter in the later, in which the older men attempt to redeem the younger from their drinking.

To my mind it is useful to begin any discussion of identity in this novel by first taking into account some of Paton's own notes and reminders, which, not being meant for any audience, most likely reflect his actual conscious intentions.

MS 1 [PC 1/3/2/1] seems to have been entitled 'Atherton-under-Mist' initially, in the ink which Paton used at first. Later, in the cerise crayon he employed to number some pages and effect later emendations such as the deletion of pages, he writes in large letters 'Brother Death', followed in normal size script by 'Atherton-under-Mist', and a quotation from *The Roadmender*: 'I thought I heard Brother Death stir in the shadow. He is a strong angel & of great pity.' This epigraph seems to have provided him with the inspiration for the present novel, which in essence concerns a long-drawn-out feud between the two contrastingly portrayed brothers-in-law, Cromwell and Jarvis, their gradual reconciliation and the eventual death of Jarvis.

Later I suspect that Paton felt the work to be getting out of hand, for on the verso of page 210 he lists a number of points which I discuss below. They do not appear to form part of Paton's initial plan, which as I indicated is sketched out on pages [A] to [D], including the verso of some of these pages, in the form of lengthy lists of some sixteen farmers and/or their associated farms, characters

whose traits are summarised in a line or two, and one or two major events. Paton's focus upon farm settings and characters suggests that, as with 'Ship', identities were conceived of narrowly, in terms of the farming community and setting with which Paton was familiar and in terms of stock ideas. Some of these are implemented in the course of the novel. Below I introduce some of the more important and revealing characters.

Anthony Cromwell, one of the two main protagonists, is clearly intended to be a figure of some complexity. He is described as (lineation in the original)[81]

> *'hating "life"';*
> *'simple, hard, generous ["yet thrifty" added above the line]';*
> *'blunt and short';*
> *'In many ways intolerant*
> *eg Dutch –*
> *natives – ' (p. [A])*

Paton's own intentions, unmediated by any narrator, are patent: the older Cromwell (his son will be introduced next) draws his identity largely from such values as simplicity, toughness (both of stature and personality), mingled generosity and thriftiness, and intolerance of other races than his own. There is a hint that Paton disapproves of the last-mentioned disposition. Most of these features chime with those well discussed by Morrell. Hence in many respects Cromwell is a typical English farmer with a veneer of Natalian superiority. His son, Tony, is on the other hand described as somewhat different: *'inheriting from his mother other things than love of the soil' and 'Pleasant, cheerful, but not an "Anthony Cromwell"'.* (ibid.) This description suggests both a possible tension between father and son but also between the ideal, the love of the soil, and the reality, that the son, though more likeable, does not take after his father. These are severe comments in view of Paton's upholding of the pastoral ideal.

[81] I indicate contents of the MS which are obviously not intended to form part of the narrative in italics.

In contrast, one almost immediately encounters the portraits of Fenton, *'gross, lazy, good for nothing'* (p. [A]),

Jarvis of Windy Hill,

Profane, etc –
Cheerful, of great good nature –
Strikes cancer –
Wasted life –'

and of his son Douglas Jarvis, even more revealingly described as a

Typical farmer –
Not too brainy (both on p. [B]).

On p. [B], verso, one comes across Esther Jarvis, daughter of the elder Jarvis. A number of other names and incidents of plot follow, such as the court case between Jarvis and Cromwell; Cromwell visiting Jarvis when he hears of the latter's cancer (*'Cromwell now an old man – Jarvis pities him – '* (p. [C], verso); Forsyth, a *'successful farmer' and 'leading light'*, Tommy Dixon, described in exactly the same words; Frank Carlton, a snob, and Sheila Carlton, *'[t]alented, cold'* (p. [D]). Regrettably, the elaboration of many of these personalities and events in the novel itself remains on the same superficial level: generally, the various polarities (intelligence versus lack of brainpower, the simplicity of most village inhabitants and farmers versus the snobbery of some, industry versus laziness, tolerance versus intolerance and success versus the lack of it) control plot and characters alike and afford an invaluable insight into Paton's own values and conception of identity. Nonetheless Paton does essay a number of slightly more searching forays, which will be considered in situ below. That he was, or became, aware of the limitations of his original schema is suggested by the remarkable unnumbered title page of MS 5 (PC1/3/2/5), which contains the following notes to himself:

Bigger part for Krige
More of Maitland?
More of village humour?
Objective treatment of Jarvis?
Less realism?
Cromwell – to be kept on pedestal? Include marked passages.

Some implications, I would suggest, include a consciousness of the very limited scope of his canvas: hence the bigger role for Krige, the new, Afrikaans, doctor; for Maitland, who is more intellectual and slightly more liberally-minded than most; for village humour, as a planned, but not implemented, corrective to the staidness and gravity of much of the book. While Paton's desiring a more objective treatment of [the older] Jarvis suggests something of an unintended identification with the latter, his intention to keep Cromwell on a pedestal likewise demonstrates that some of the norms of the book are vested in Cromwell, apart from the fact that Cromwell's aloofness is necessary to the plot.[82]

On the verso of page 210 is to be found the further series of notes about events, chronology and possible titles which implies that Paton had not yet made up his mind regarding the final direction of this novel:

Atherton under Mist [as on the title page of MS 1 – twice]
Brother Death
Ten [written over 9] Yrs at Atherton
Decade of Atherton
Sons of the Soil
Brothers-in-Law
Peace after Storm.

[82] The isolation of the narrator in *Too Late the Phalarope* (Paton 1955/1971:9) is a more effective instance of the same technique.

Clearly these notes indicate that Paton considered as important, but had not really decided between, the local setting of Atherton/Ixopo itself, the time span occupied by the events, the closeness of the families to the land, the central, turbulent relationship of Jarvis and Cromwell, and their eventual reconciliation.

These are all constituents of Paton's conception of identity, in my view, which are already found in 'Ship', and which will recur in Paton's later fiction, most obviously in *Cry, the Beloved Country.* While they might seem to be largely secular in nature, it is important to note that in fact Cromwell is later described as a believing Christian (p. 109, etc); even more noteworthy is the quotation (the source of which I have been unable to identify) at the top of the same page (p. 210, verso): *'... Gain freedom only by a gesture of faith that seems a betrayal of reason; a building of one's greatest cathedral on a foundation unknown & unseen.'* It would appear that at least by this stage in the novel, Paton was contemplating factoring into it the implications of the debate on freedom, faith and reason which he was to develop more fully in his unfinished MS 'Religion, Freedom and Man' [= 'Religion and my Generation'] (Paton, 1934c) and his talk on 'God in Modern Thought' (Paton, 1934a).

It is fair to point out, though, that in fact he did not investigate these issues much more fully in the present novel and that, in my estimation, there is little development, if any, from the consideration of the same matters in 'Ship'. Hence, while such a debate does lead directly into questions of human identity, Paton either could not or did not wish to develop it further here. Indeed, on the whole he allows the representation of his characters to lie even more on the surface than in his earlier novel. While, on the same interesting page, he plans for Jarvis to make amends, inter alia, to Anthony [Cromwell], his wife, Maitland, *'But not to James F[orsyth]'*, some of these aspects of the plot are not fully explored, so that the impetus towards reconciliation does not constitute the only aspect of the novel. Even the proposed last sentence, also to be found on the same page (and not in fact used as it stands), is not quite accurate in import: *'In their room Krige*

& his wife & child are asleep; in his room Richard Jarvis is asleep, & will not wake again. Brother Death was always for him an angel of great mercy.' During the narrative Jarvis had previously dreaded death, but in the last pages of the novel he has become slightly more accepting of his fate and is not suffering physically to any real degree. Still, one could argue that the direction and focus of the novel, like that of *Everyman*, does fall on making a good ending and on demonstrating that death should be seen as the person's brother rather than enemy: constituting her or his identity rather than annihilating it. In this sense the novel does attempt to make a profound religious point, but I would contend that its actual embodiment, its 'sentence', falls well short of the 'matere' itself.

Even when one does encounter significant insights into human identity, on the whole these are scattered and their effect diffused rather than consistent and concentrated. I suspect that Paton, definitely influenced by Hardy, and possibly by the pre-1930 novels of Walpole (as discussed earlier, the first 'Rogue Herries' novel was only published in 1930) and Galsworthy, was concerned rather with emulating them than undertaking anything more subtle. He was capable of prodigious feats of good writing, as one may observe from his rapid completion of *Cry, the Beloved Country*, but that novel is more constant in effect than 'Brother Death', which he undoubtedly wrote while he was at Maritzburg College (from 1928; Alexander, 1994:89ff) owing to his use of the College letterhead to begin and end his novel! However, on the whole it is the influence of Ixopo which is more discernible. The task might have occupied a time-span of some two and a half years at most.

Book I [Paton's own numbering][83]

I commence with a detailed consideration of the first few chapters of the work, which encompass elements of plot, identity and the like to be found throughout 'Brother Death'. The novel starts unpropitiously, with Paton beginning it in the exercise book now labelled PC1/3/2/1, deleting the material but then copying it with some emendation onto nine pages of Maritzburg College notepaper which he numbers from p. 1 onwards, and returning to the exercise book at p. 10. He appears to have made at least three attempts to get underway, doing so in each case by introducing Anthony Cromwell of 'Garth Place', farmer; the trees drip, mirroring Cromwell's mood; the light of the Crown, one of the local pubs, strives to pierce 'the white darkness' (p. 1).[84]

When Cromwell rides past the other inn, the Globe, his face is grim at the noise from there (p. 2). Although the omniscient narrator comments here, the focaliser is Cromwell; he perceives the wealth of the nearby farms being drunk, 'loosening ... tongues to God knows what lies & dirtiness.' (p. 3.) The moralistic sentiments and the stock responses evoked, not least by the English (notably more imperialist than in the real Ixopo) names of the pubs are by no means an advance on those in 'Ship'. Neither is the sexist remark about his wife made by the next person to be introduced, Ole Hansen. Like his predecessor Jørgensen, Hansen appears to have been created to act as a foil to the farming community, the description of which is strongly stereotyped, as the portrayal of Cromwell suggests; both Scandinavians are also likewise cast in a stereotypical mould. One may sum up the representation of the identity of these first two characters as at best wooden.

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[83] Book and chapter numbers are in bold, with the latter being struck through where Paton renumbered chapters, a frequent occurrence. Four seem to have disappeared from Book 1. Interesting deletions in the text are retained and struck through, but many others are omitted.

[84] Paton speaks of the summer mists that enveloped Ixopo, when (in the 1920s) the only two lights, those of the Offsaddle and the Plough, were haloed by the mist (1980:85).

Matters are not much improved by Cromwell's finding a stranger, lost in the mist, who happens to be the new partner of the village doctor, Dr Macnab (pp. 5-6), nor by the arrival of a letter from Cromwell's son, Tony, whom his father fondly (but mistakenly) regards as the third Anthony Cromwell to be master of Garth Place (pp. 7-9). Fortuitous events and the sense of generativity noticed earlier in 'Ship' further reinforce the stereotyping of plot and identity.

With a rhetorical flourish which he was later to use more skilfully in *Cry...*, Paton exactly repeats the beginning of the novel in starting off chapter **2(ii)**, on the first page of the exercise book (p. 10 of the MS),[85] except that he now describes Richard Jarvis of 'Windy Hill', farmer, as enjoying Spring, the unusually good rains and farming itself. Jarvis is on his way to fetch his daughter, Esther, whom he views fondly as a chip of [sic] the old block, not like her late mother, also Esther (Cromwell's sister), except sometimes cold and stand-offish. Perhaps, thinks Jarvis, she acquired this manner from 'the Carltons of Arnold's Hill, with their damned superiority, the snobs.' (p. 10.) It is as if Paton is replaying the events of 'Ship'. Identity inheres once again in closeness to the land, bedecked in mist; simplistic class-based tensions between down-to-earth farmers and snobs, who constitute an interdependent though often divided community; in a strong sense of morality focused on the evils of drink, seen also in the character of Jeff Baxter, on whom some of the plot pivots and who is introduced on p. 11; and in an Englishness thoroughly isolated from the South African reality. Although the new doctor, Krige, is Afrikaans, he barely disrupts the communal identity, either now or later.

After Jarvis's inhibited wife dies, one is told, he and Cromwell move apart; the narrator remarks that Richard Jarvis of 'Windy Hill', red-faced and jolly, was slowly re-born. He goes drinking at the Globe and Crown (p. 14), which, in the light of Cromwell's earlier attitude to them, is a severe indictment of him.

[85] The ink colour changes to blue here.

Chapter **3 (~~iii~~)** in its preamble further echoes the rhetoric of the earlier beginnings, but with a slight difference. Charles Maitland of 'Borrowdale', once a scholar and not a farmer, but now both, stands on the stoep of his homestead in the sheltering gums. To the right of him, one is told, lies 'Windy Hill'; six miles away are the trees that surround the home of Anthony Cromwell, imparting to the horizon in the soft light of the grey skies a look of England. The eternal mists, it need hardly be remarked, make their presence felt (p. 15). The attitudes of the inferred author, especially as regards identity, are evident: the valorisation of Maitland's dual calling, his difference from Cromwell's bluffness, the hearkening back to English landscapes, the lofty location of the wealthy farms. And a critique of the community is also focalised through Maitland's ruminations on his boyhood: who would have known that he, unaware of 'the great barriers of class and caste', would become 'the fine gentleman & ... scholar; & earn his reputation – among some at least – as a supercilious snob, merely because his tastes were not Athertonian?' (pp. 16-17.)

One senses that Paton is feeling his way towards a slightly wider perspective on identity than that of either the Oxford don or the Athertonian, the latter of which he clearly sees as extremely parochial. In chapter 4 **(~~ii~~ i)** one of the villagers discusses the new doctor: 'a Dutchman too, but a Western Province forward, which went a good way to["wards" inserted] counterbalancing his nationality, straight out from England, where he perhaps had revised his politics' (p. 19). National identity is perceived as inhering in being Afrikaans- or English-speaking rather than South African, while sporting prowess, the correct (Natalian) politics and England are, as usual, upheld, by the villagers at least, as the ideal norm.

At Esther Jarvis's homecoming (from Europe) the domestic worker, 'Stephen, grown old in the service, stood to receive his mistress with ["un" written over "ill"] concealed delight.' (p. 21.) His subservience is not questioned and it, and the narrator's acceptance of the status quo, is in fact reinforced by 'Stephen's' reply to Jarvis, who at least is able to speak Zulu, that he had not arranged the flowers:

'No, baas. The wife of baas Anthony came here this morning.' (ibid.) Critique of this revealing speech is entirely absent.

Esther's brother jokingly claims that porridge and pork chops are on the dinner menu; 'And putu & maas, if you've any space left.' (ibid.). It is important here to take note of the mockery of a black person's staple diet, and the narrator's lack of comment: the statement not so much locates the speaker (and inferred author) in a South African setting as distances him from it. From a similar viewpoint, Jarvis had been worried that Esther would find Windy Hill a poor place after Europe (p. 23). Likewise, at the beginning of chapter 5 **(~~II ii~~; 5 reinstated)** Fenton, holding forth in the Globe to an audience which includes Krige, proclaims, 'It's a perfectly damnable country.' (p. 25) He adds, 'If we were all bloody Dutchmen ... we'd be all right.' (p. 27) Krige stiffens. Rosser, evidently the target of affirmative action, since he had been passed over for promotion, asserts that '[w]ith this damn Government, unless you're a van Rooyen or a van-something, you're no bloody good.' Fenton coarsely concurs (p. 27).

Though Krige is angered by these parochial sentiments, he keeps quiet for the moment. It should be noted that they are uttered by characters who are strongly disapproved of by the narrator, so that while Paton reflects village conceptions of 'true' identity – not one that is South African in essence – he detaches himself from them. In context, Krige's silence connotes his inner strength, a positive trait. Rosser however continues, expressing an extreme prejudice towards Afrikaners of any kind, including Smuts. In the light of Thompson and Morrell's studies (1999 and 2001) one may assume that these were in fact common preconceptions of the time, even though Smuts was by most (white English-speakers') standards moderate. Hence I would contend that on the one hand Paton is sharply critical of certain narrow-minded norms of identity, but on the other blind to the racism and classism discernible in 'Stephen's' submissive speech and actions.

Fenton suddenly becomes aware of the stranger and observes that he looks 'like a Dutchman'. Krige resists the impulse to punch him and confirms hotly that he is (p. 28.) James Forsyth – later to be established as one of the moral centres of the novel – apologises for Fenton's rudeness and invites Krige to stay with him (p. 29). The barman, ham-handedly, remarks, 'I was over in France ... I tell you, son, we had some Dutchmen, too. Fight? As good as the best of us.' (p. 30) Krige has to smile at this well-meant but patronising comment.

In his room his thoughts return to the man he had met riding through the mist. Lonely, he feels that this Anthony Cromwell was a man to whom he could flee when in trouble. He remembers the farm of his childhood (p. 30), among vines and wheat, where his father ploughed under the shadow of the mountains, sometimes bursting into a tirade against the Englishman. Sharing Krige's thoughts, one is struck by the telling reflection, 'But what race could speak of another as these Englishmen did? And make one feel they were the gods of the earth? Down there in the Cape, over in England, he had known many an Englishman; but these English of Natal were more English than England itself.' (p. 31.)

Again, I believe, in the evident empathy for Krige,[86] Paton is expressing a critique of the concept of identity in the 'last outpost' of the British Empire. Those who are hospitable and friendly to Krige are not the hoi polloi, but the successful farmers, who are intended to transcend the narrower views, but nevertheless embody them to a degree. Chapter **6 ~~(II–iii)~~** points out explicitly that the villagers of Atherton comprise a transient population and that a real, though hazy, barrier exists between them and the farmers (p. 32). The narrator comments that it is very unusual 'in our civilisation' to find anything but 'conventional regard' between men who are older than fifty; yet this is found in the 'select' group of farmers which includes Cromwell, James Forsyth and others (ibid.). The MS

[86] Paton records that his sympathy for the Afrikaner cause was very strong during the decade from 1928 onwards (1980:118).

originally also mentions Long Tom Farquharson in this group, but, significantly, his name is deleted. Later it is recorded that he has 'gone native' and has 'half-caste' relatives.[87] Further barriers, of race as well as class, have been erected but are, once more, merely accepted by the narrator and, it would seem, reinforced by Paton himself. Relationship with the 'other', it would appear, is entered into only if he or she is not too different from oneself.

In references to the South African war, the narrator indicates that these elite farmers had known Atherton when it was little more than a laager, and had fought together in the Siege [of Mafeking/Mafikeng] (p. 33). In terms of a relational understanding of identity it is evident that a very strong sense of community exists between the farmers, though this will later be strained when the feud between Cromwell and Jarvis occurs. The villagers comprise a less consistent community, but certain characters, such as Fenton and Rosser, constitute its key personages and are generally present at gatherings; it is worth noting that they are invariably targets of the narrator's and therefore the inferred author's disapprobation. On the whole, however, women are not part of these communities, while black communities – the great majority of the actual population – are even more absent than in 'Ship'.

At the Atherton Show (as indicated earlier, such shows were important events for cementing the communal identity of the white Natalian; Morrell, 2001:198-211) the farmers' camaraderie, as the narrator remarks, is especially noticeable (ibid.). The villagers feel excluded and in a telling observation the narrator suggests that they may be jealous that they were shut off from the world of the soil (p. 34); he adds drily that in the temple of Bacchus all such barriers vanished, but some did not worship there at all, like Anthony Cromwell (p. 35).

[87] Morrell (2001:260) holds that interracial liaisons of a permanent nature, though not encouraged, were in fact initially not as strongly condemned as casual affairs. If he is correct the views held by Paton's characters, and not interrogated by him, are consequently even harder than the average.

In chapter **7 (~~III iv~~)** Krige discovers that the thin, tired, shaky old man he had met in the pub was his senior partner, Dr Macnab. As they discuss the medical practice a cheerless drizzle appropriately falls. He drives up to Garth Place, with its dripping pines evoking his own love of trees (pp. 36-38). The frame of reference is still pastoral, expressed in clichéd terms; the identities quite sharply defined and separate, except that an inherent closeness to nature or the artificiality of alcohol dissolves some boundaries.

Krige, arriving at Garth Place, is struck by its beauty and realises that Cromwell loves the same things he does (p. 39). From the height he can see hills in the distance, which he recognises must lie in his home province, the Cape (ibid.). His consequently feeling slightly more at home is reinforced by a conversation about the gardens with Anthony's wife, Josephine. A page between p. 44 and p. 45 has been cut out, suggesting that Paton was not satisfied with it; certainly what remains has little to recommend it except for the sense that an appreciation of the natural is somehow the key to human identity.

Krige observes to Josephine that she is inspiring him to do wonders in Atherton (p. 46). She responds that the village needs it, adding that she is not of country stock and had not fancied herself as a farmer's wife at all. Likewise, she indicates that their son, Tony, does not wish to be a farmer; but that Anthony had not yet realised this. This comment leads to an uncomfortable silence which is deepened by her remark that her neighbour on the left is Jeff Baxter, who drinks 'Terribly.' (pp. 46-47). Krige likes Cromwell for his hugeness and strength despite his silence (traits continuously emphasised throughout the book) and looks forward to his next visit (pp. 48-9).

In chapter **8 (~~12~~)** Dr Macnab invites six friends to dinner, so that Krige can meet them. The latter is pleased that Forsyth and Jarvis – members of the farming elite – are invited; significantly, Cromwell is not, however, since Macnab does not know him (pp. 50-52), owing to Cromwell's not frequenting the pubs. Macnab

addresses Tom, the 'cookboy', in a kind of pidgin English: 'I want big dinner Friday night. Six bosses.' He holds up six fingers. Tom suggests he serve 'Spallagus.' ... 'Mushlooms.' ... 'Gleen peas.' (pp. 52-53.) The insulting caricature inherent in this dialogue points up 'Tom's' existence on the margins of power and identity.

Chapter **9 (~~13~~)** describes the dinner as relatively successful: from the comments of the farmers on Garth Place (pp. 54-56) it is clear that the aesthetics of the farm are unimportant to them, but that Maitland takes a different view, as he continues to do later, expressing principled and slightly more liberal views. Hence, although the farming community possesses a close-knit identity, tensions between its members are evident, though certain personalities transcend its circumscribed confines.

As in 'Ship', matters of property are all-important to Macnab's guests. Maitland gravely notes the possibility that the owner of Arlington (Jeff Baxter) may soon lose his farm (p. 57), to which Forsyth responds bitterly that Baxter's drinking is 'a damnable shame' and in a revealingly deleted coda, adds: 'He's not worth one kaffir!'[88] Jarvis, a hard drinker himself, defends Baxter warmly (ibid.). When the party comes to an end, Krige is invited by both Dixon and Maitland to visit them (p. 58).

The norms of behaviour propagated by the narrator are well to the fore: hard work, careful handling of property, dedicated farming, sober living, hospitality. Less conscious are the accompanying racism and the tightly-knit sense of communal identity that excludes all who are not white, English-speaking farmers. When the visitors leave, Dixon 'complacently' remarks of Krige: 'Decent fellow for a Dutchman,' but Jarvis's 'sage comment' is: 'Scratch a Dutchman & find a Boer War,' (p. 59). The sense of English superiority detested by Krige is all too evident

[88] Paton probably considered this remark too racist, especially issuing from the mouth of Forsyth, who as I have indicated is supposed to embody some of the novel's norms.

here and, while an implicit critique is probably present in the adverb applied to Dixon's comment, Jarvis's is approved of by the narrator because it recognises the larger issue of (white) identity in the South Africa of the 1920s and 1930s and the accompanying tensions. Consequently, the bucolic world of 'Ship' is replaced by an environment still centred on the pastoral but fractionally more perturbed by wider events.

The following chapter, **10 (~~14~~)** witnesses a meeting between Cromwell and his neighbour Jeff Baxter, who admits that he is in debt to Jarvis (pp. 60-61).[89] Cromwell offers to take over the debt on condition that Baxter does not borrow further, sells his new car, gives up polo and leaves the pubs (pp. 62-64). 'That's the biggest condition.' Baxter temporises that he will think about these and departs (p. 64). Cromwell looks after him, with 'a vast pity' (p. 65) in his heart, and adds that the more revealing matters of the agreement (sc. Baxter's drunkenness) can form a special contract.

Baxter, much relieved, goes home, feeling that Cromwell had struck off the bonds that fettered him to Jarvis and that greater bondage [to alcohol]. At Arlington he works as he has not done for years and is missed at the Globe. Yet he still creeps drunkenly to bed and damns Cromwell for the 'swindling Jew' that he is (pp. 65-66). Baxter's pejorative language and enslavement to alcohol warn one that Cromwell's solution may not be successful. Its lack of subtlety is entirely typical of Cromwell and, one suspects, of most other farmers, excepting the scholarly Maitland. The unsophisticated moralism, condemning drunkenness and debt, is in its turn entirely characteristic of the earlier Paton although one may perceive a certain critique of the more obvious signifiers of upper-class identity, such as possession of polo ponies.

When Cromwell approaches Jarvis regarding the bond the latter holds over Arlington he is sworn at (chapter **11 (~~15~~)**). The narrator remarks portentously,

[89] At this point Paton switches to MS 2 PC1/3/2/2: pp. 61-96; 97-117 on the obverse.

'Thus began the feud between Garth Place & Windy Hill.' (p. 67.) Jarvis, saying nothing of the bond, criticises his brother-in-law in the Globe and in the village, and people infer 'that Cromwell, hard as ever, had young Baxter in his clutches, with an envious eye on the rich acres of Arlington.' (pp. 67-68.) In other words, Paton has arrived at the crux of the issue of identity, which is bound up with wealth and ambition: the straightness of Cromwell and the deviousness of Jarvis are contrasted and it is demonstrated that the former is not accurately perceived by others, not least because he keeps aloof from the pubs. It is clearly shown that the communal identity is intolerant of difference.

Some days later Baxter tells Cromwell that Jarvis is threatening to break them both [financially], but Cromwell challenges him to make 'Arlington' the crack farm in the district instead, offering his aid (pp. 69-70). When Maitland also informs Cromwell of the local rumours, Cromwell answers that he cannot explain why Baxter is retiring from public life (p. 71) and receives a hostile reception from Jarvis when he rings that night; it is not altogether convincing that Cromwell is taken aback by this reaction (p. 72). The fact that he attempts to conceal his anger is more congruent with the image of him as powerful but the trembling of his hands (p. 73) betrays him to Josephine. In portraying both aspects of Cromwell's personality, the strong and the sensitive, Paton is perhaps trying to add complexity to his character, but the depiction is largely on a superficial and conventional level.

Fenton, Rosser and others make the most of the story regarding Cromwell's supposed hold over Baxter (chapter **12 (~~16~~),** pp. 73-74) – unless Forsyth is present. The narrator observes, 'Ignorant themselves of their motives, they punished Cromwell for his sin of aloofness.' (p. 74) This statement, I would argue, reflects some of the key issues with regard to identity. The narrator himself is magisterial and detached, passing judgment on Fenton and his cronies in terms of a psychoanalytical understanding of the unconscious. Consciously they condemn Cromwell for his remoteness from their society, which constitutes

a refusal to accept their own norms of identity since the more solitary person is an oddity in the Natal society of the time; yet unconsciously, it is hinted, they are aware of Cromwell's condemnation of their own lifestyle. It is clear that the sympathy of the narrator, and of Paton, lies with Cromwell's setting himself apart from the baser values of Fenton and his ilk, but that not all of Cromwell's own peers like him for this. An instance follows almost immediately.

When Baxter's ponies are auctioned, Cromwell sees Baxter weeping for them (probably connoting an instability of personality) and purchases them, competing against Jarvis, but allows Jarvis to take the last horse when the latter offers twenty guineas. The narrator records that onlookers wonder whether Cromwell is mad or if this is part of the supposed scheme to gain ownership of 'Arlington'. Certainly this has not added to his popularity (pp. 75-80). In fact, Cromwell intends to return them to Baxter. We are told how he is still drinking, and hiding from Cromwell, but is faced with the frightening picture which Cromwell has depicted of his being even more enslaved to alcohol than Macnab (chapter **13** **~~(17)~~**, pp. 81-85). The stern yet compassionate actions of Cromwell reinforce his position as the moral centre of the novel. With regard to Baxter, I would argue, he does live out a Levinasian response to the other's need; but is not sensitive to that of many others.

When Baxter's ponies are unexpectedly returned (chapter **14** **~~(18)~~**), his black assistant asks him why he is not asleep (p. 87). Baxter responds, 'Tom ["Paul" on p. 85], you old black-bird, you son of evil, what has happened?' Question marks in the margins imply that someone was not certain about the tenor of this response. Certainly it suggests the oppression blatant in the relationship between Baxter and 'Tom / Paul'; the fact that the latter's (English) name is not settled upon by Paton emphasises his lack of identity still further.

Baxter is puzzled by Cromwell's action, but grateful (ibid.). The mists have disappeared, connoting, though unsubtly, a new clarity in Baxter's own thinking.

Notably for one's perception of Cromwell, he considers that though Cromwell was thought of as relentless, whatever his plan was, it would be just. A great peace falls on him and he experiences 'a sense of communion with the earth that had borne him & his forbears [sic] ...[and] turned him to inarticulate prayer to a God he had long forgotten, vowing that he would hold his contact with Cromwell sacred.' Impulsively, he smashes his bottles (p. 88). This is a poorly written and clichéd passage but is evidently intended to call attention to Cromwell's moral stature again, as well as to Baxter's regained closeness to the soil. It is perhaps more remarkable for containing the first explicit reference to the presence of God in this novel, but one that is rather forced.

Cromwell now explains that he had bought the ponies as a business transaction. The money will help to pay Baxter's debts; he can buy the animals back one by one. Cromwell invites Baxter to Garth Place for the company. Baxter reacts naively that he is now not frightened of Cromwell, which lightens the latter's heart (pp. 89-91).[90] Once again the treatment of characters and their relationship is superficial. As suggested in Paton's letter to Callan quoted by Alexander (1994:109), in reality the writer had no profound intentions in mind, but was dashing off a novel; as a result identities are not explored, simply sketched, and 'Brother Death' is much more English in feel than South African.

An attempt to break away from this pattern is perhaps discernible in chapter **15 (~~19~~)**, where one reads that Krige is establishing himself as a good doctor; but equally important is the detail focalised through the eyes of unspecified members of the community that he 'spoke English like an Englishman, & behaved with a more than passable imitation of the behaviour of a gentleman' (p. 91.) The shallowness of these criteria and their similarity to those in 'Ship' needs little comment except that they offer a critique, probably conscious on Paton's part, of those concerned.

[90] A page between 89 and 90 is excised.

When Krige visits the Carltons, by invitation, in his eyes their farm is pleasant but he prefers Cromwell's, which is that of an artist (p. 93): it is evident where the sympathies of the writer lie. Carlton introduces Krige to his daughter Sheila, 'the cold beauty of Atherton'. Krige is conscious of the family's 'splendid isolation' and considers that the room, though beautifully furnished, is unhomely and cold (p. 94). The latest *Punch* and *Quarterly Review* announce their superiority, so that Paton is here revisiting the Westacres's in his earlier novel. The collocation of 'cold', 'isolation', 'unhomely' and 'superiority' offers a similarly strong critique by Paton of the attitudes of those who, like Cromwell, do not identify with their peers, but for the wrong reasons. Certainly at this point Paton is viewing excessive Englishness critically.

To draw attention to this criticism, the narrator allows one to see with Krige his memory of the Olifant's River[91] mountains, his old home, the portraits of Hertzog and Kruger. At this juncture these markers of identity, not those of the Carltons, are normative. When Mrs Carlton asks him whether he likes Atherton, Krige's usually fluent English deserts him. His lame response is that 'It's quite good,' accompanied by a feeling that 'he had said something ["terribly un-English," inserted] terribly plebeian.' True to English form, the Carltons show nothing of what they think but in his distress Krige can hear 'their unspoken criticism.' While the comment is that of the omniscient narrator's, the focaliser is Krige. The double perspective here lays a stress on Krige's unpleasant experience of the English norms of identity; the addition of the qualifier 'un-English' to the sentence creates a parallelism with 'plebeian' which reinforces the inferiority felt by the doctor (p. 95). It is important to observe that though one is experiencing his subjective emotions, these correlate with the attitude of the narrator, which is dismissive of the superiority of the Carltons and their Englishness, as of the Westacres's in the previous novel. As with the 'Duchess', the Carltons' own perception of their identity is called into question. Even more important, this stance of superiority is attested to in reality by the research of Morrell.

[91] Paton uses both the English and the Afrikaans spellings, which I therefore reproduce.

One is told that Krige had met people like this previously, who cherished an idea of superiority unfounded in fact. '[N]o Dutchman from the farms under the mountains will grant greatness to those whom they he cannot understand.' (p. 96.) This very general narratorial comment praises Krige's lack of understanding rather than condescending to it. On a wider scale, one may note that the inferred author's preference for a direct and down-to-earth sense of identity is identical to that in his earlier novel. As if reinforcing this theme, Chapter **16 (~~20~~)** describes how Jarvis requests a lift home from Krige (p. 97). He and Jarvis's daughter Esther, who is overtly described as 'a tall pleasant girl with no affectation',[92] take an immediate liking to each other (p. 99). The narrator comments slyly that the girls find the new doctor attractive, with his dark suit, good looks, established rugby reputation and a growing medical one (ibid.). The syntax suggests that the first three qualities mentioned are the most important in their eyes.

When Krige leaves he mentally compares Sheila Carlton and Esther Jarvis, to the latter's advantage (p. 100); the inferred author's preference needs no comment. In two further thoughts Krige reflects on the uncrossable gulf between the Olifantsrivier Mountains and the exclusive domain of 'Arnold's Hill', wondering why men whom he liked, Jarvis and Cromwell, must live in such bitter antagonism. Once again, I suggest, Krige focalises the author's views of concepts of identity which, first on the national and then on the individual plane, simply shut out 'the other'. Paton reinforces this point by showing the reader, in chapter **17 (~~21~~),** that Esther disapproves strongly of the new enmity, suspecting rather that Jeff Baxter is actually in safe hands (p. 101) and clashing openly with her father regarding his attitude and other actions (p. 102).

She still visits 'Garth Place', often seeing Baxter there and in his attitude perceiving no signs of bondage but rather happiness. Hence she is disturbed to

[92] A number of the early character sketches are not adhered to: she was initially described as selfish and a bit above village life (p. [B], verso). Her lack of airs is obviously meant to be seen as a positive feature of her personality.

hear that her father intends to sue her uncle for defamation of character (p. 103). In banal language and actions, she confronts him, stamping her foot and declaring that she wishes she had never come home (pp. 104-105). Her remark, 'Its all so horrible, so unchristian', like the Sunday churchgoing, evidences a merely conventional notion of religious identity, which Jarvis rejects angrily (p. 105). Desiring to hurt her, he snaps, 'If you like, go and like [sic: live?] at Garth Place.' (pp. 105-106) She turns away and one is told that 'with the soil of the earth on his hands, ... [Jarvis feels] ashamed & unclean.' Then he looks over to 'Garth Place', says aloud, 'I'll break you, damn you,' and immediately realises this is a foolish remark (p. 106). The sentiments remain trite and the parallel between 'close to the soil' and 'clean' is too obvious, but the momentary self-reflexivity of Jarvis offers a brief insight into his identity.

The pending suit hangs over Cromwell for a week (chapter **18 (~~22~~)**), and then he puts the matter from his mind (ibid.), the implication being that his farming is more important to him. In another vignette the background to the quarrel is described, in which Jarvis is challenged by Maitland and Forsyth (pp. 107-111) and is portrayed as sneering about Cromwell's refusing to listen to gossip ('He's a holy man'; p. 109) and irascible. In terms of the plot it is worth noting that Farquharson, who as I have pointed out is later condescendingly described by the narrator as going native, had carried the tale of Cromwell's unusual bluntness about Jarvis to the latter (ibid.). The inescapable link between tale-bearer and racial unsoundness condemns the inferred author, who several times comes down heavily upon Long Tom.

During the case Cromwell simply admits his remark and pays the fifty pounds damages immediately (pp. 111-112, chapter **19 (~~23~~)).** Robbed of his victory, Jarvis is left only with the option of drinking away the money that, the narrator remarks, Cromwell had paid for a much lesser offence (pp. 112-113). Almost certainly unconsciously, Paton is imparting to his narrator an undeniably moralistic personality. It is noteworthy that the sense of relationship with God

(and with other human beings, in Levinas's terms) as constituting human identity which will be more fully present in *Cry, the Beloved Country* and *Too Late the Phalarope* and was even evident in 'Ship' has not yet been developed at this point in the novel, and never fully emerges. Consequently, recourse is had to various stereotypes.

Identity inheres in local relationships of community and family, as may be seen in the next episode, chapter **20 (~~24~~)**, where Cromwell, forgetting the case, walks with Tony through his lands. It is clear that these constitute the driving force of his life. He shares with his son things he tells no-one else, with a fire that alarms the latter (p. 113). Tony learns that his mother had been afraid to tell his father that he was not a farmer at heart: a fear which he comes to share (pp. 113-114). The narrator remarks that this created the first barrier between the two men, encouraging deception in a relationship that had been ['near the' inserted] ideal (p. 114). The passage is overwritten and simplistic but does exemplify the importance Paton attaches to relational identity, while the insertion suggests that he is attempting to tone down too idealistic a narrative. The magisterial voice observes that it was high time Tony broke the news to his father that architecture, the Cathedral of Learning of Pittsburgh,[93] Groote Schuur, a Durban ['villa' inserted][94] moved him more than the farm (pp. 114-115). Evidently Paton is attempting both to impart a more complex identity to Tony than to his father, and to root the scene more firmly in the South African environment, but without much success.[95]

In another episode (chapter **21 (~~25~~)**) Jarvis successfully sues Hansen, largely because he is Cromwell's friend, over an allegedly damaged wagon (p. 118).[96] Hansen hereafter spits contemptuously when he hears of or sees Jarvis, who is

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[93] Then under construction (1928?-1935), partly as an antidote to the Great Depression (University of Pittsburgh, n.d.)

[94] A note at the bottom, in a very neat hand, remarks correctly: 'anti-climax. Cut first, & replace with S. African subject: Union Buildings?'

[95] 10 omitted pages, out of sequence here, are mostly used much later in the novel.

[96] The narrative returns to MS 1.

angered because Hansen is no petty figure in the village, and 'his action carried weight' (p. 119). Not unlike Jørgensen, Hansen is neither a farmer nor a local inhabitant of the village, and is used to express a different perspective from theirs. I would argue that by so doing Paton is again endeavouring to introduce greater complexity into the situation, but also unsuccessfully. In the following episode one returns to simplistic polarities in the fact that Cromwell's family still visits Jarvis (pp. 121-122): Tony and his siblings love their uncle, who is one of them, 'gay & irresponsible' (p. 122), while Cromwell is 'quiet & solemn ... but remote' (p. 121). Clearly the narrator's approval lies mainly with Cromwell; in the context of Jarvis's shallow bonhomie his remoteness can hardly be perceived in an entirely negative light.

The succeeding 'cut' (chapter **22 (~~26~~)**) shows Krige enjoying the countryside and its hospitality (p. 124). Political issues are dealt with good-naturedly and certain farmers, 'Englishmen born & bred', speak to him 'encouragingly about the soundness of the Dutch government', though it is hinted, in a tortuous sentence, that expediency might be a factor in their remarks (ibid.) But from people in Atherton itself he keeps shyly aloof: even from the Afrikaners. Pointedly, the narrator asserts that with the exception of the younger folk to whom the past wars and misunderstandings were unreal, to the other English-speaking inhabitants the Dutch people were a race apart (p. 125). In a view assigned to no particular focaliser, and therefore arguably shared by the narrator and the English-speakers alike, it is observed that, '[f]or the most part railwaymen & policemen & clerks, they [the "Dutch"] had no part in the making heritage of the land; they clung to themselves,...'. This dismissive and inaccurate understanding of the 'other' is immediately reinforced by the comment that even Krige's own hopes of identifying himself with his fellows were frustrated by their own attitude to him: deference, shyness, even some suspicion of his learning and his Englishness. The barrier of class also plays its part, as the narrator remarks distantly: 'the inevitable detachment of the professional man from the interests & outlook of the artisan.' (ibid.) However, he hastens to add that Krige is not a

snob; 'his own simple God-fearing parents' would have been ill at ease with the Carltons (pp. 125-126).

Alterity is gradually introducing itself into the narrative stance regarding identity, and in general Paton is commendably attempting to introduce greater intricacy into characters, relationships and events. For instance, at Windy Hill Krige finds himself very much at home, partly owing to Jarvis's conviviality which, possibly because of his loneliness, does not repel him – but partly because Esther likes him (p. 126), which is an intriguing complication of plot. In addition, this pleasant situation is about to be disrupted by 'the menacing cloud of the South African Flag Bill' (p. 127), one of the few indications in this novel of larger issues, though to the twenty-first century reader utterly bathetic (see note 79 above).

The initial perspective in chapter 23 **(~~27~~)** is most probably that of the English-speaking community, and the narrator first apparently sides with them. However, he then records that 'the Dutch people ... saw ... a new Flag that would not remind them of ... the inexorable hand of Britain, ... closing greedily upon the lands for which they had fought & died' (p. 128.) While the passage is excessively declamatory and bears the marks of rewriting, its focalisation through the Afrikaners suggests a sympathy with them, a critique of imperialism, which also slightly broadens the novel's conception of identity. A similar tone is discernible when Krige, 'the victim of his own imaginings, seeing Natal now again as he had first seen it, a country of men sublimely & cruelly conscious of their own divine selection', eventually visits Charles Maitland (p. 129). One could argue a double perspective on identity here: Krige's reinforced view of the superior attitude of Natalians, and the narrator's empathetic concept of him as the victim of his own prejudices, which indeed are shown to be not without foundation.

Maitland is delighted to see Krige, confiding that he is fond of the local people, but wishes sometimes they would share his interests in culture (p. 130). After

some remarks on the Carltons indicating that he likes Carlton but strongly disapproves of Sheila, he suggests, 'Cheer up, doctor. Atherton's only a microcosm of the macrocosm.' (p. 133) This image is applied more than once to Atherton by Paton, and indeed it is true that Atherton mirrors many aspects of the wider Natalian society at the time; in another way it certainly represents a very insular corner of a narrow-minded province.

When Krige indicates that he wants to talk about Atherton Maitland's manner changes since he guesses that the issue is the Flag Bill (p. 133). He is sympathetic and sees no reason why different opinions should not be held. Noticing that Krige feels sensitive about the matter he adds in a phrase reminiscent of Levinas, according value to the 'other', that he understands 'the pain of being different....' (p. 134) He asks, proleptically alluding to a turn later in the plot, 'Do you tell me that old Cameron, old Macnab for that matter, don't yearn for the things they've chucked away? ... . They're victims of the conflict between the real & the ideal, with minds divided ... . I tell you, Krige, [Macnab's thoughts] torment him, day & night....' (p. 135). To some extent here one may see Paton somewhat superficially exploring varying, sometimes clashing, features of identity: English / Afrikaans, intellectual / farmer, idealist and realist. A divided mind appears to be less desirable than single-mindedness. It should be noted that though Paton has extended the scope of his concepts slightly to include Krige, he never makes a similar attempt to explore the mind of a black person, his portrayal of whom remains entirely on the surface. And of all the women in his early fiction, he only explores Esther's character, and that to a very limited extent.

Krige and Maitland continue their debate over the Flag Bill, with the latter asking for time to accept the idea and Krige arguing that the Union Jack spells domination (pp. 136-138). Eventually Krige concedes that their children will accept both flags and will be better citizens, '[n]ot because they themselves will

be better, but because their chances will be better.' (p. 138) Noticeable here is the notion that a united [white] South Africa will lead to a brighter future.

Maitland indicates that he does not disagree entirely, but is putting the case of others. 'And I,' responds Krige soberly, 'am putting the case of my father and his friends.' He explains, 'I am one of the children ... I believe in the Commonwealth of Nations. My love for England & English people is a thing I could never explain to my father.....' (pp. 138-139) One should note that Krige's positive feelings towards the English in general (and, perversely, to the remains of the Empire in the Commonwealth) do not necessarily extend to the local English-speakers, so that to some degree Paton is acknowledging a divided consciousness in his character. Such a split in identity is also found in Maitland, who confesses that he has always seen both sides of a situation. To Krige's remark, 'I believe you're a Nationalist,' Maitland replies, inconsistently, 'I am. With a difference.' (p. 139) He invites Krige to '[c]ome down to the milking, & see our native problem. Beside it the Flag Bill is small beer.' (pp. 139-140) It is ironic that in his evident desire to widen the spectrum of political reference, Paton further marginalises the majority of the population, reducing them to an alienating cliché and in so doing robbing them of any selfhood.

In the following chapter, **24 (~~28~~)** the narrator pompously reiterates the concerns raised by the Flag Bill: freedom from British domination and the threat of civil war being central (pp. 141-142). At the village protest meeting Jarvis and Forsyth clash over the issue, Jarvis expressing a strong anti-Nationalist opinion, though the moderates prevail (pp. 142-143). Krige withdraws from Atherton and begins to wonder if he is hypersensitive (p. 145; chapter **25 (~~29~~)**). Again the narrator remarks, *ex cathedra*, that there are few men with insight enough to know whether a barrier has been set up because of fear or because of active dislike; hence some of the Athertonians presume that Krige is standing on his dignity, though most do not (p. 145). The Bill is obviously made use of by Paton to indicate the riven identity crises of many whites at the time.

The following episode continues with such issues and is also notable for affording an insight into Esther Jarvis's state of mind, but it appears that at the end Paton retreats from the further implications.

She is one of the few to whom Krige's state of mind is noticeable; she suspects the cause and invites him over. Her view is important for its broader outlook and explicit critique of the local debate: 'I used to be rather narrow myself, ... But the Continent altered all that."' Krige concurs (p. 146). Esther comments: 'One feels rather sorry for these people [the local English-speakers]': her father is extremely paranoid about the intentions of the new government. To this Krige replies laughingly that his people are just as suspicious, but he is sure the feeling will die out (pp. 146-147)

Paton now introduces a new issue of South African identity into the novel; though it is an obvious one, it is the first time he has mentioned it in his early fiction. Esther continues, treading on dangerous ground, 'There's some people who'll never change; to them a Dutchman is always a Dutchman. ... You know I went to hear Sastri [in the context evidently an Indian speaker] lecture; .... I can quite imagine Dad coming home from one of those lectures, or Tommy Dixon or Tom Farquharson, after listening to something absolutely over their heads, & saying solemnly, "A damn clever coolie, that fellow." Isn't it quite horrible?' (pp. 147-148).

Krige responds dubiously that this is another matter entirely, to Esther's amazement, and he makes the lame excuse, 'Remember I'm a Dutchman,'. Esther finishes her cup silently, which causes Krige some discomfort, and expresses her anger and disappointment. Embarrassed, he asserts, 'Your views are ahead of the times,' (p. 149), angering her still further but continuing to insist, 'Colour's a different problem,' (ibid.): when Esther demurs he admiringly acknowledges that she has surprised him: 'I honestly didn't suspect you of any

thoughts more serious than tennis & dancing.' She replies 'witheringly' (ibid.), 'And to your amazement you find that I'm streets ahead of yourself.' (pp. 149-150). 'In theory,' Krige admits, feeling irritated at her bluntness (p. 150). She continues mocking him and he leaves angrily. Esther sits where he had left her, 'not a little amused as well as amazed at this unexpected lapse to the flippancy of her tomboyish youth' (ibid.). Yet the matter of racist appellations as determining the identity of the other was, and is, a major one in this country; and Esther's consideration of herself as flippant, though it refers mainly to her mockery of Krige, undermines the validity of the point she is emphatically making. To a twenty-first-century reader her anger at Krige's strong prejudice towards women and the differently-coloured other is completely appropriate, but her self-critique casts her back to the margins, so that Paton seems to retreat from crossing this particular boundary.

The narrator now reports melodramatically (chapter **26** ~~**(30)**~~) that though undercurrents still remained, a 'sense of heartfelt relief for a calamity averted' swept the whole of the South African countryside when the Flag question was settled (p. 151): 'the country looked forward to a continuance of its then prevailing prosperity.' (ibid.) Strongly evident is the nostalgia for a pastoral ideal identified by J M Coetzee (1988) in many white English-speaking writers; so strong, in fact, that the realities of the Great Depression and the existence of the impoverished black population are brushed aside in these grandiose remarks.

Krige gladly emerges from his isolation (p. 151), but avoids social contact with Esther and others. The advent of the football season[97] brings him into the open as one who had once represented Western Province (p. 152) and finally breaks down the last barriers, so that he is eventually (but patronisingly, it should be noted) accorded 'the appellation of a decent Dutchman.' (p. 153) As Morrell has pointed out, sporting prowess was a key ingredient of the social construction of

[97] Whether it is rugby, the chronology and other details are questioned in various marginal notes in pen and pencil and in three different hands: Paton's in dark blue ink, Neville Nuttall's (the pencilled comment is initialled NN) and the neater one in light blue ink.

(white) identity at the time. Here it transcends other barriers. Krige and Esther, who admires his skill, are reconciled (ibid.).

Yet this tranquil scene is disrupted by Krige's catching a disturbing glimpse of Sheila Carlton, cool and aloof. When he comments Esther responds: 'I'd like to shake her.' (p. 154.) She adds that when Sheila does not feel like noticing one, 'She just doesn't see one. Silly ass.' (p. 155) Such apparently mild and conventional remarks are inconsistent with Esther's relatively strong personality and with the increasingly evil role which Sheila is given, but in context do convey quite a sharp disapprobation – not least because Sheila denies any relationality with other human beings, as Levinas might comment.

Paton now proceeds to a scene rather exaggerated where a healthy Jeff Baxter is proudly observing his fields (p. 155; chapter **27 (~~31~~)**), at night thanking God for Cromwell. (A marginal question mark raises a valid doubt about the worth of this passage.) A similarly superficial and moralistic portrayal of Christian identity is found in the boy's turning to religion (pp. 155-156), which is much rewritten. He unfavourably compares the smoke in the Globe with natural phenomena such as the stamp of the beasts (p. 157). He feels he is a new man and mixes only with Cromwell's friends (pp. 157-158). Popular opinion is inclined to consider that Cromwell had been misjudged. Yet 'Jarvis was a lovable human, Cromwell an austere figure on a horse' (pp. 159-160). The antitheses leave one in no doubt that the inferred author values religion, nature and austerity as markers of identity, critiquing those who do not appreciate these things, though the religion is actually superficial only.

Also shallow is the glancing reference to 'bad times ... & falling markets,' (p. 156) which, as a marginal note in neat handwriting comments, is at variance with the general prosperity mentioned five pages earlier. The focus of the plot and of identity remains inward, largely unaffected by greater events.

Tony eventually writes to his father about his future plans and Cromwell reads the letter in silence, his wife feeling much pity for him (pp. 160-161). He admits that while he will not hinder Tony the news is a blow (p. 162). Nevertheless he intends to see Bassett (presumably his accountant) as soon as possible (p.163).[98] Josephine suggests they ask Jeff Baxter to take care of the farm while they are away.

Almost as an afterthought, Cromwell admits that he would not have offered Baxter help if the latter had not done so first (p. 164). When Josephine asks him soberly whether he does not think that God had sent Baxter to him, Cromwell agrees. Again the hand of God is viewed as transcending the barriers set by alcohol and Cromwell's reserve: a Levinasian perspective might have offered a critique of these events.

Throughout the evening Cromwell looks into the fire for something that is not there (p .164). In bed he draws Josephine close to him and hesitantly asks, 'Could we –...– could we have another child, ...?' She indicates tearfully that she is willing, but they both admit the risks to her (p. 165). One may note the struggle in Cromwell between his desire for a child who will inherit his farm (a crucial factor in his self-concept), and the medical danger to his wife. The former is triumphant, but at great cost.

When Cromwell makes the financial arrangements (chapter **28 (~~32~~)**), the narrator records that Tony experiences a sense of the tremendous depths in his father (p. 165), admitting to his mother, 'I don't know Dad yet.' (p. 166) She explains, however, that Cromwell is really feeling the blow (p. 167). Though Tony becomes sober, once in Mr Bassett's office he forgets everything but the future (p. 168). It seems evident that Paton is trying to present Cromwell as a more rounded character, but, I would argue, unsuccessfully. The description of the relationship between father and son is also stilted.

[98] Marginal notes by a neat hand, another than Nuttall's or Paton's, query the time scheme.

Chapter **33** (the numbering is left unaltered) opens with a remark concerning 'the gossip-mills of Atherton.' (ibid.) and offers a general overview of various incidents in the village. A strong class-consciousness is evident. The Fentons' parlous financial state is suggested by the remark that no-one will sell to them except for cash (pp. 169-170). Laura, his wife, had once been the belle of Spring Flats, but Fenton had been dropped by his own class after his marriage (p. 170), she had withdrawn socially and is abused by Fenton. From a magisterial perspective the narrator merely considers this to be 'One of life's tragedies, about which ... nothing perhaps can be done.' (ibid.) Mrs Rosser is another such person. The narrator's own identity is again distant, dismissive, refusing relationship with an 'other' of this sort and with the townsfolk. Rosser himself is portrayed as a good golfer and batsman, able to use his fists, which earn for him a certain respect, and as a mass of unhealthy flesh, gigantic as Cromwell and Forsyth (p. 171). Here the comparison emphasises, rather than diminishes, the difference between Rosser and the others, between health and unhealth, while the reliance upon physical prowess for establishing one's identity is also patent.

The narrator remarks coyly that 'there was other food for gossip; but Krige was no scandal-monger' (ibid.). The effect is to draw the reader into a kind of conspiracy with Krige, blurring boundaries between reader and character. Late one night Krige's car breaks down and he sees a man, whom he is certain is Jeff Baxter, walking into the trees at Garth Place. A little later he sees the figure of a woman in white, 'flitting like a ghost through the trees,' whom he cannot see clearly, but thinks is Sheila Carlton. He is fearful for Baxter, but also jealous, and wonders how the latter could hold any charm for that aloof 'goddess'. His internal questions, 'Was it a love affair, or a portent of evil ... ?' (p. 172) and '[w]as that girl capable of evil, ...?' (p. 173) to him have no certain answer, but the imagery and repetition make it clear that Paton intends the reader to answer in the affirmative. As a plot device for increasing suspense this is inept, but for the present reader at any rate the association with the serpent in the Garden of Eden

is inescapable. The world of this later novel is not as idyllic as that in the earlier book since a more specific threat is posed to hitherto fairly stable notions of identity.

Krige does not mention anything of his suspicions to Maitland and Esther (pp. 173-4; chapter **30 (34)**). He might have done so to Cromwell, but did not think that this would help; he is ashamed of his own feelings of jealousy, and furthermore Macnab is dying (p. 174). The overtones of gathering doom are crudely orchestrated but one does gain a sense of the helplessness of the individual in the face of larger forces which is reinforced by Krige's preoccupation with the Sheila – Jeff conundrum. Only when Maitland mentions it, does Krige take note of Macnab's 'desperate unhappiness' and 'realise the magnitude of the spiritual struggle...' or rather notices, the narrator adds in a recast passage, 'a soul in prison yearning for a freedom it once had known.' (ibid.) Krige would have liked to speak about the rendezvous between Baxter and Sheila, but feels 'powerless in the presence of elemental forces of good and evil.' (p. 175). While it would be tempting to attempt to read profound religious insights into the portrayal of these characters, especially since Paton seems to be aiming to reinforce a religious dimension that has hitherto been largely absent, a sense of melodrama and further overtones of the Garden of Eden represent the only result.

Any brief respite from his angst Krige experiences only at 'Windy Hill' with Jarvis and Esther (pp. 175-176). He hears nothing of the rumours about him (and Esther, presumably), to which Jarvis attaches no significance because Krige's calls are frequent but very brief, and intellectual rather than romantic in nature. In addition, through Jarvis's eyes one perceives that though Krige is a good doctor and a good fellow he is 'a Dutchman, & Richard had no Dutchmen in his line of ancestry, & no liking for it.' (p. 176.) Though Paton does endeavour to broaden the picture by recording another set of Jarvis's thoughts regarding Long Tom Farquharson, who is explicitly courting Esther, the overall result is to foreground the sense of English superiority which Krige so detests: Long Tom 'was English

enough, but that brood of [mixed-race] cousins of his that lived along the valley sides below Atherton! It was a difficult problem; and these two fellows with their disadvantages were keeping the rest of Atherton out of the way.' (p. 176) In the light of the dislike for Jarvis evidenced by the narrator one may assume that the latter, and the inferred author behind him, is critical of these racist views, which again summon up stereotypes concerning identity that were common in the Natal of the 1920s and 1930s.

In what appears to be a further attempt to add complexity to the person of Krige, we are told that he is actually not in love with Esther but is afraid of what he feels for Sheila (pp. 176-177). It is delicately hinted that the attraction is sexual in nature: '[i]t was something he had endeavoured to keep from ever attaining any mastery in his mind, a bondage from which, once enslaved, a man hardly ever escaped.' (p. 178) The repetitive imagery of entrapment reinforces the feeling of an increasing threat to both Krige and Baxter.

In the new year Tony starts on his career (ibid.; chapter **31 (~~35~~)**). Cromwell hopes that the farm might lure him back but does not rely on this and sets aside enough money to send Tony to London and New York. Josephine guesses something of this desire but knows that it would be as easy to tear Anthony away from the smell of earth as to turn his son from the goal he had set himself. The inner strength – and the stubbornness – of both men is obvious, placing them both in a certain mould of masculine identity. Josephine herself is nearer to Anthony than ever (ibid.) and it is claimed that because he is sparing of words rather than secretive there is no barrier between them – he is simply not aware of the depth of her understanding (pp. 178-179). Nevertheless, as a reader one may remark that a barrier has been set up by Cromwell's self-containment, rendering him a good farmer sensitive to nature, perhaps, but one unable to relate well to any other human being.

He continues listlessly working in a scene which is consciously pastoral in nature, perhaps a little more stooped, etcetera (pp. 179-180). Over at 'Windy Hill' Jarvis, aware of the significance of Tony's attitude as far as Cromwell is concerned, smiles 'softly' to himself (p. 180); the adverb points up the contrast between him and his brother-in-law which constitutes a major part of their identity. Jarvis asks Esther why she continues to stay on the farm and to her reply that it is her home, he responds, 'It's not good enough for you, ... I think we must get on your nerves sometimes, Esther. We country bumpkins – '. Though she refuses to listen (p. 181), there is truth in Jarvis's statement, even if it is ill-meant with regard to Cromwell, because it does illustrate the divide between the rural community and the wider world which Esther has experienced. When she observes that her father's conflict with her uncle irritates her (p. 182), Jarvis responds in annoyance that Cromwell has set all his friends against him; only Long Tom and Rosser and Fenton still call (p. 182). 'And you wanted me to marry [Tom],' she responds. Jarvis is taken aback and 'unconvincingly'[99] disagrees. Noticeable here are Jarvis's own consciousness of class and his preference for Long Tom, even with his tarbrushed family, over Krige. In view of the inferred author's critique of Jarvis it is quite clear that Paton is continuing his interrogation of narrow conceptions of identity, as the following clash between father and daughter indicates.[100]

Jarvis's contempt towards 'half-castes', equating Forbes's 'dago blood' (p. 183) and Forsyth's 'Dutch blood', and his attitude towards Krige and Cromwell, draw Esther's anger. She snaps that Cromwell is a gentleman (pp 183-4). Esther, I would argue, is here expressing one of the key norms of the novel. This scene is histrionic but, I contend, is intended to illustrate the damage caused to people and relationships by too stereotyped a consciousness of identity.

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[99] The editor with a neat hand rightly takes exception to the many adverbs, almost always in this form, which Paton uses. Certainly their effect is more often one of a generalised, superficial identity than of a particularised one.

[100] For reasons of space I discuss the rest of the novel, which is repetitive, much more briefly, being guided by Paton's own dissatisfaction with it. Where a new point arises I shall expand. MS 3: PC1/3/2/3 begins here.

In chapter **33 (~~37~~)** drought and the Great Depression, severely affecting Baxter's mood. are glancingly alluded to (pp. 193-7). Krige reflects on how welcoming Atherton has been to him, which has

> strengthened his admiration ... for English things... So many of his countrymen longed for the day when they would kick the dust of its streets off their feet. It was inevitable, men like Maitland & Cromwell & Jarvis would have won for themselves a place under the shadow of the Olifant's River Mountains, & in the hearts of its people. Men like Fenton & Rosser & Farquharson would have cursed the day they first set eyes on it, & made their way to a more congenial countryside (pp.198-199).

Unmistakable are positive and negative signifiers of identity such as a valuing or detesting of the mountains, with England remaining normative even for Krige.

When Krige visits Baxter the latter is much depressed, an emotion intensified after a meeting with Sheila, to which he reluctantly admits on being questioned (p. 208). Krige is dismayed, but on his own account as much as Baxter's (pp. 210-211). Krige's attempt at making relational connection, in Levinasian terms, is rebuffed and ambivalent at best since he is also physically attracted by Sheila, though he attempts to resist his fantasies. This sequence of events is poorly written, with stereotypes of identity such as the temptress, the innocent victim and the upright physician crowding in.

Probably conscious of this weakness, Paton moves quickly to describing the final collapse of Macnab, whose old servant 'Tom' worships him (pp. 212-214), as a plethora of religious images indicate (pp. 215-6). Jarvis's own fear of death is evoked in parallels with Macnab (pp. 218-9).

The two doctors eat a 'last supper' together (p. 225) and Macnab makes what is effectively a confession to Krige regarding his prowess in medical research, his resulting pride (pp. 225-9) and bitterness at being obliged to fulfil his obligations as a missionary in Africa, where his wife does not believe in his work. The Hound of Heaven pursues him unremittingly (pp. 229-232). As an interim comment it should be observed that a decided moralism pervades this narrative;

pride, hypocrisy and issues of lesser morality such as drinking in secret, obtrusive religious imagery and a menacing concept of God as Francis Thompson's Hound (1941; repeated on pp. 231-234), appear to rule Paton's own view of Macnab's (and God's) identity.

Macnab's wife left him for Carlton and bore a child, Sheila. The old doctor warns Krige that he cannot love Sheila, and in conclusion prays, offering a benediction (pp. 234-6). Though Macnab is figured as saint and priest at his end, these identities are imposed upon him rather than forming part of his very being. I suspect that Paton is attempting to allow God some kind of role, rather than that He forms part of the structure of the novel. Furthermore, Macnab's withdrawal into himself and into his muddled understanding of God emphasises his rejection of human relationships other than the dubious ones encouraged by alcohol.

Book II[101]

The second book once again evidences Paton fleeing from the intensity of the particular, opening with a panoramic sweep, offering a communal viewpoint, around the Atherton churchyard and the memories it contains (p. 237). Individuals are all forgotten (p. 238): more important are the hills of the Wolds (ibid.) Even the Carltons will leave and be forgotten (pp. 237-239), with 'Garth Place' and 'Borrowdale' perhaps being held by strangers. The community rejects the more obviously mixed-race Farquharsons and Forbes's (pp. 239-241) who are 'beyond the pale.' (p. 241; emphasis in original).

When a letter from Tony arrives announcing his emigration and engagement, his parents are unable to share their distress and loneliness with each other (pp. 248-251). Cromwell dismisses his newly-employed manager, Cantrell, for sexually harassing Jean; Jarvis immediately offers the latter a job (pp. 252-5) and begins to hold numerous parties (pp. 256-9).

[101] MS 3; pp. 183-268; pp. 269-349 on obverse.

At this point Sheila returns from England, troubling both Baxter and Krige, in different ways (pp. 260-3). In a remarkable and specific parallel, which greatly illuminates Paton's conception of identity, the reader is informed that Jeff reminded Krige 'of *Boldwood*; this strange entanglement with Sheila Carlton was *a Wessex tale, fit rather for the gloomy moors & lonely farms, than for the sunny hills of Atherton.*' (italics mine) (p. 266) Paton seems to be making clear that such a tortured identity and relationship are not usual in this environment, yet he does appear to be desiring to probe more deeply, while apologising for introducing a discordant note. In Hardy (1874/1975:171) Boldwood is described as a person with hidden and dangerous passions that are only rarely discernible on the surface but perturb the otherwise relatively tranquil setting. It is made clear that Atherton likewise does not wish to know of unpleasant matters or mixed-race inhabitants (p. 267). While as a physician Krige does actually hear some of the hidden stories, on the whole he is grateful that 'his friends are 'contented citizens of earth, with sane untroubled minds over which no tragedy hovered depressingly.' (pp. 268-269) His emotion is patently ill-founded, and the irony that Boldwood, with his sudden violence, was also a citizen of earth seems to escape him, not to mention Paton. Both the community and individuals within it therefore display a kind of split identity.

Paton makes use of a discussion between Maitland and Krige regarding Baxter to introduce issues of theodicy (pp. 270-5). In the present reader's opinion the result is not convincing, though clearly Paton is once more striving to accord a place to the deity, and greater depth to the sense of individual and human identity held by the two men.

From this intense scene Paton hastens away, describing the cycle of the seasons (pp. 276-9), the fear of Josephine and Cromwell (pp. 279-281) caused by her pregnancy (somewhat obviously paralleled by the new life of the burgeoning spring), the deepened closeness between Josephine and her family (not unlike that of the Shearers in 'Ship'), and the ribaldry in the Globe (pp. 286-

90) over this event, which evokes a brawl that is paralleled by another later. The midwife, Sister Rose, enquires when Krige is going to marry, but he points out seriously, to her shock, that his family 'wouldn't fancy an English girl for a daughter-in-law' and adds, 'No more than Anthony Cromwell would fancy a Dutch girl for a daughter-in-law' (pp. 290-7; quotations on p. 296). In secret he still desires Sheila, that 'thing of evil' (pp. 298-302): in this section simplistic polarities are heavily drawn on (e.g., pp. 302-304) and the image of Atherton as a microcosm (p. 305) is used again, later repeated (e.g., p. 673).

When the confinement leads to the inevitable death of both mother and child Krige and Sister Rose take refuge in the idea of mystery (pp. 306-309): it is the second occasion (cf. p. 243) that Paton has referred to the inexplicable as regards human existence and Krige's second utterance of the word 'mystery' (cf. p. 59).[102] During the funeral the words 'earth to earth' evoke Jarvis's fear of death (p. 314), acting proleptically for what is to come.

In the characteristically episodic style one has come to expect from Paton, he now proceeds from a situation of powerful emotions to a scene (chapter 12) notable for its ambiguity of tone, where in a considerably rephrased passage

> Father Hugo [the Catholic priest], the ruler of the community of St Michael's ..., has built to the glory of God a church... There the half-castes ... worship beneath a [inserted: "lofty"] grey slate roof ... great beams of yellowwood, sawn from hoary old giants that stood in the forests of the Kaffirlands long before van Riebeek [sic] landed at the Cape... what Nature has achieved in a thousand years, ... has [been] undone in as many minutes.' (p. 319)

The offensive labelling of the mixed-race community by the whites is, as usual, simply accepted: the church may be beautiful and the sound of its bells carries far, but it also represents the destruction by human beings of ancient trees, and the term 'ruler', though it may hark back to the notion of the muscular Christian,

[102] I should add that Magee's use (1997) of the concept functions at a more profound level than the escapist version here.

disturbingly connotes the hegemony of the white priest over his 'coloured' flock, so that the scene reprises that of St Luke's and Deasland in 'Ship'.

Nevertheless Hugo's role and that of his church is evidently meant to be perceived in a positive light and explicitly suggests the importance of interrelationship and a sense of the transcendental in forming human identity. At 'Jailer' Ford's request the priest pays a visit to Jarvis regarding his negative influence on the younger Fords, posing the question, 'Will God forgive you?' (pp. 320-324). This query strongly affects Jarvis, who attempts to rationalise it away (pp. 324-330). The narrator drily comments that the church had not yet finished with Jarvis, who is subsequently visited by Legh as well (pp. 330-335). Though Jarvis makes excuses, Legh also challenges him, inducing anger in his host (pp. 336--341). Both priests' emphasis on choosing to take responsibility for the other (who is white-skinned, however), and in so doing to take responsibility before God, is, it seems to me, of a piece with Paton's (and Levinas's) accent on human identity as encompassing one's freewill to choose relationship at both levels. This concept represents a small advance on that of Deasland, which does not progress this far.

In line with many other episodes, Paton retreats from this intense scene to a description of autumn becoming winter again (chapter **14**), laying stress on the associated sensory experiences (pp. 341-2). Though Cromwell confronts Jeff about his drinking (pp. 344-9) he lets go completely; Legh cannot assist, owing to his sudden and implausible illness (pp. 350-2).[103]

After the auction of the Carltons' farm (not hitherto mentioned) Krige, Cromwell and Maitland attend a gymkhana (pp. 353-8). Here Baxter speaks a few words to Sheila, turns away with a face full of suffering and drives up a nearby hill at a dangerous speed, narrowly missing Jarvis. The three men give chase but Baxter is killed when his car somersaults over the cliff (pp. 359-363). Cromwell is

[103] MS 4 (PC1/3/2/4) begins here.

grieved (pp. 364) but Jarvis accuses him and Maitland of being murderers (pp. 366-7). I suggest that, following Levinas, one could read these reactions in terms of accepting and refusing identity-in-relationship respectively.

Winding up Baxter's affairs and burning papers related to his dealings with Jeff, Cromwell discovers the letter from Jarvis's lawyers that had caused Baxter to seek help, demanding twenty pounds interest (pp. 371-372). Cromwell realises that Jarvis had lied and contemptuously throws it into the fire too. A revealing passage focalised through him indicates that '[he] had always regarded his brother-in-law as a fool, hardly crediting him with sufficient intelligence to think him a knave. But he had been wrong, it seemed.' (p. 373)

The point is made that Cromwell is arrogant and judgmental, not simply aloof. On the whole he only entertains close relationships with 'others' who fit his own frame of reference. Indeed he considers that while he can understand nature, people are beyond him (p. 374). His inability to understand human relationships is borne out by his first snubbing, then welcoming, Douglas and Jean when they respectively wish to be married (pp. 375-80).

In chapter **16** [sic] one is suddenly returned to the wreck of Baxter's car (pp. 381-4). A marginal note in the small hand rightly enquires: 'shouldn't this have come earlier?' (ibid.) and possibly Paton did intend this section to become chapter 16.

Esther eventually expresses her anger in a letter to her father (pp. 388-389) and one is taken reasonably deeply into his various internal emotions as he tries to compose a reply, including wistfulness and marked jingoism towards Afrikaners (pp. 389-394). In the end he writes back to her that she can do what she likes, responding even more sharply to Douglas about his proposed marriage to Jean (chapter **20**; pp. 394-7). He cannot find words to express his emotions when Krige and Esther become engaged but also experiences self-pity and loneliness, in spite of his parties (pp. 398-401), realising how many enemies he has made

(pp. 401-403). In my view Paton is deliberately showing that Jarvis is belatedly realising something of his need for the other, but Cromwell never reaches this point.

When Rosser and a friend are also killed in a car accident (chapter **21**; p. 403) Mrs Rosser receives help not from the village but from Toc H, and from Jarvis and Cromwell as well: the two men meet in the alleyway and Cromwell stands back for Jarvis, an act which touches him by its 'gallantry' (pp. 404-7). English politeness, gentlemanliness and chivalry meet in this word, I would suggest.

Jarvis eventually visits Legh, not quite sure why he does so. A striking observation, focalised by the community itself, records:

> The man had come like a breath of sweet air into Atherton; but the pace had been too hot for him. Atherton needed such a sight of saving that it was too much for a one-man job. So Padre Legh lay on his bed, as worn-out as any man could be, they said. A man was a damned fool to work like that..., wearing himself out helping people that didn't want help. It was a sad job, the Church (pp. 407-408).

The corporate consciousness of Atherton obviously does not comprehend Legh's calling, contemptuously dismissing it and regarding itself as too taxing for any single person to tackle. In this novel it is rare to experience such a glimpse of a collective identity from the inside, but this passage does suggest the complexity of the communal persona, its irreligiousness and its resistance to any change.

Feeling diffident about his visit to Legh, Jarvis initially turns back, reflecting in one of Paton's favourite metaphors that only the men of the land – the farmers – were Atherton itself (pp. 408-410). The status of the farmers, the upper and dominant class, needs no comment. Others are by comparison impermanent and make no lasting impression on the area. When he does see Legh (chapter **22**), the priest becomes 'alarmingly evangelical' (p. 412), in biblical language strongly emphasising Jarvis's need for right relationships and greatly unsettling him so that he is relieved to reach the matter-of-fact world again (pp. 410-7). Such a

negative response is implicitly critiqued by the narrator. Yet when Jarvis walks up to Esther and Douglas's cottage he hears her playing and singing, is moved to tears (p. 416, verso), curses himself for his 'womanish folly' and returns down the hill (p. 418), retreating from real relationship again, even with himself it should be added. Neither does he attend Jean and Douglas's marriage (pp. 418-421).

Hesketh, calling on his tenant, Mrs Rosser, observes that she had not attended the wedding; she retorts that she had not been invited. His response well captures the identities of the community's different groups, 'It's a farmers' day ... Only the best people invited.' (p. 422) As if to reinforce this comment she, seen through the eyes of the community, is flashily dressed, receiving many surreptitious male visitors such as Cantrell and Fenton (pp. 423-424).

Mirroring the community's and almost certainly Paton's resistance to it, it is observed that Change stalks down the main street (chapter **24**; p. 426). In this respect Cromwell, obsessed by the idea that there is no one to follow him at 'Garth Place' (p. 426), asks Irene Law to marry him though he is not in love with her; his loneliness is much stressed (pp. 427-431). When she replies 'I think not' (p. 434) he puts a 'business proposition' to Mrs Rosser with the same end in view (pp. 437-9). His sudden marriage to her, the narrator records, injures not only himself but his friends (chapter 26; p. 441). Coarse jokes in the pub regarding the marriage lead Forsyth to assault Fenton and others, and to suffer a fatal stroke (p. 447), the narrator's stance towards this implausible event, as towards Cromwell's peculiar actions, being remote. It is as if he wishes to dissociate himself from these situations. Irene calls Cromwell about the news and says she would have done what he wanted (p. 448), to which he responds, 'Is that all, Irene?' He puts down the receiver with a grim face: his isolation, even in his new marriage, is complete.

Once again hurrying away from an intense scene, Paton now describes Krige and Esther's visit to his parents (chapter **27**; p. 449). The skies over their farm

are cloudless, in contrast to the 'drastic [inserted in margin: "climatic"] changes' of Atherton. One suspects that Paton is not in fact referring only to the weather here. The visit is a success, with all parties attempting to transcend cultural and linguistic barriers, and the couple return determined to marry as soon as possible, only to discover that in their three weeks away 'Change had been at work' (p. 450). The continued personification again connotes a resistance on the part of the author to what is, after all, a normal process. It is as if change hinders identity rather than creates it.

However, when the couple return to the village Krige feels at home again. He reflects that '[h]ere was ... a Natal unknown & suspect among his own people, giving him a queer catch at his heart...' (p. 452) Rather long-windedly, Paton catches the alteration in Krige's own sense of identity as he feels part of the local community at last, but also reflects the slowly-growing national consciousness in South Africa: one, however, from which other races than the whites are altogether excluded. Indeed when Long Tom 'goes native' he horrifies and saddens his fellows and is so isolated that he might as well have been dead. It is remarked, '[a]nd it was better so; such acts as his were acts of betrayal, making real to men the ultimate & insoluble problem of South Africa' (pp. 454-455). These damning attitudes (shared, I would suggest by the narrator and community alike) are propounded in spite of the eccentric but more liberal critique of racist attitudes by a writer such as Roy Campbell in *Voorslag* (1926/1985:18-19).[104] Worse, it is made clear that 'barriers have grown overnight that will never come down; [Farquharson's] grandchildren & his greatgrandchildren [the products of miscegenation] ... may come back, some of them, to a world that has nearly forgotten ...[the mixed blood].' (p. 456) Such a forgetting may be incomplete. 'Yet

[104] As suggested previously, Paton does not evidence any awareness of *Voorslag* or other local writers (1926); at this stage he might have known of the early work of Campbell (for instance, *The Flaming Terrapin* (1924), *The Wayzgoose* (1928) and *Adamastor* (1930)), and presumably that of Plomer (for example, *Turbott Wolfe* (1925)) but displays even less of a tendency to question the Establishment. Van der Post's *In a Province* with whose liberal humanist views the later Paton would have felt at home was only published in 1934 (for all these see Chapman, 1996:178-185).

who can foretell even that, in a country where the line that cuts between white & black wavers & is here & there dim & faint, even now.' (pp. 456-457)

Though the narrator attempts to acknowledge the reality and hypocrisy of miscegenation in the present and to take the long view that one day it may be accepted, his tone is dubious, black people are dismissed in racist terms and the effect is that any fluidity of identity is placed out of the question. The following passage, squeezed in as an afterthought, makes this clear: 'There is talk that the police will arrest Long Tom under the new [1927] Immorality Bill; but those who know the history of Atherton say that the thing is best left alone.' (p. 457) The narrator appears to share this communal view entirely.

Once again Paton hastily, I consider, returns to a different scene (chapter **28**) where Cromwell's proposition is 'a little too business-like' for his wife. After her friends visit her and are not welcome (their lower class being a major factor) the final rupture occurs and she leaves him (pp. 467-475), mocking him for being 'a perfect gentleman.' (p. 473)

Summing up this extraordinary and largely unnecessary development in the plot, it is clear that issues of class and of landed property still rule matters of identity; one sees Cromwell in an unfavourable light which is different from his aloofness. Mere Englishness, even of the superior, 'gentlemanly' variety, is not sufficient to rescue, or to excuse, the denial of relationship with the other.

When Legh leaves to recuperate at the coast (chapter **30**), in a remarkable credo the narrator records that he

> believed implicitly in the saving of the soul ... an unqualified surrender to God. He believed in a second confirmation for those who understood at last clearly the implications of the first. To be with him was to find oneself hungering after the peace & cleanness of a consecrated life, to find burning up in one's heart the flames of ideals that had flickered fitfully for years;... (p. 477)

These values might mirror Paton's own beliefs (and the probable influence of the Oxford Group) since they are expressed by a person normatively embodying the quintessence of Christian identity and are not questioned in any way. Paton's doubts about surrendering sovereignty over his self appear to have diminished, but it is worth noting that he also offers another perspective: Jarvis, who has taken to visiting the priest, muses on 'the undoubted magnetism of the frail man... in ["the face of" inserted] whose illusions one almost prayed & believed.' (p. 478) This is the voice of rationalism and pragmatism, offering a fairly effective contrast with Legh's spirituality and quite consistent with Jarvis's character.

In Legh's last talk with Jarvis he once again challenges him to set relationships right (pp. 483-6), leaving Jarvis in turmoil (pp. 484-8). His strong resistance to true relationality is embodied in the episode of the Road Board which convenes to consider the rerouting of the Hogsback road (where the fatal accidents had occurred) (chapter **31**; pp. 488-499): Jarvis and his cronies propose that the road run through 'Garth Place', while Maitland suggests that it pass through one of Jarvis's properties. He adds coolly that if it were not quite out of order he would suggest that Jarvis's plan had not been 'animated solely by a desire to help the community.' (p. 495) When Jarvis demands an apology from the chairman for these insinuations, Maitland replies suavely, "I didn't make them ... I said that I would make them, if they were in order.' (ibid.)[105] The meeting seems trivial but of course the issue is one of control over territory, with its implications for a person's identity, and of Jarvis's continuing unwillingness to engage in relationship with his brother-in-law. The debate highlights the tension between the individual and the communal identities.

Book III

Chapter **1** opens with Jarvis's hearing that he has cancer of the throat (p. 500), causing him to begin the process of reconciliation which he has so far

[105] One is irresistibly reminded of the 'brains of a grasshopper' incident when Paton was a student, where he bested a debating opponent by using an identical tactic (Alexander, 1994:58). The boundary separating the identity of Paton and his characters remains tenuous.

successfully rejected. He visits Esther, Douglas and Jean for this purpose (pp. 503-8), asserting that he will fight the disease: indeed, until the end of the novel he alternates fitfully between courage, mostly in the daytime (especially at dawn), and fear. The considerable difficulty which this section of the novel gave Paton may be seen in his excision of pages 511-521 and the intriguing upside-down marginal query [almost certainly in Paton's hand, addressed to another reader] at the bottom of p. 525 that *'In creating the atmosphere of Atherton, many things not germane have been introd? [sic]. May they stay?'* This question underlines the excessive detail and laboured plot of the novel but demonstrates that the creation of 'atmosphere' was important to the author, not least because it often connotes his characters' sense of self.

After a few minor scenes the novel continues[106] after the interesting series of notes on its first page already mentioned:

> *Bigger part for Krige - (in Books 2 & 3)*
> *Marriage with Mrs Rosser -*
> *More of Maitland? -*
> *More of village humour -*
> *Objective treatment of Jarvis? - (influence of death only) -*
> *Less realism? -*
> *Cantrell?*
> *Cromwell to be kept on pedestal? Include marked passages -*

In addition to my comments earlier, to my mind these notes convey Paton's attempts at planning and self-reflexivity, but also imply the differentiation he means to sustain between his two main male characters; in particular, he seems to be concerned that his portrayal of Jarvis is too subjective. He obviously intends to depict the two, especially Cromwell, in stereotypical terms but does not appear conscious of the extent of this. Intriguingly, he seems to feel that the novel is too realistic, which suggests a possible desire to introduce more symbolism.

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[106] In MS 5 (PC1/3/2/5).

Amongst other reminiscences (pp. 532-6) Jarvis recalls a comment by someone who had left Atherton that, 'You farmers are the only ones that don't change... you're sufficient unto yourselves ...We may come & we may go, but you go on forever – like the hills.' (p. 537) As elsewhere, the identity of the farmers is explicitly perceived as permanent, inward-looking and inhering in their land. Others evidence no such stability.

In this vein, Jarvis recalls some new schoolmaster, Mandy or Mundy, who had visited Windy Hill, making a number of disturbing (and, importantly, modernist) statements about emotions being 'states of what-d'you-call it' (p. 538); the narrator certainly appears to sympathise with Jarvis's irritation towards new ideas.

Jarvis also sets matters right with Hansen (pp. 539-544), and receives a visit from Legh (pp. 546-7), now being able to meet the priest's frank gaze without embarrassment. While this suggests that Jarvis is once more being persuaded of the importance of healthy relationships with others, an attempt to be reconciled with Cromwell fails owing to the latter's harsh and contemptuous stance and Jarvis's consequent anger (pp. 549-555), though when he admits his failure to Maitland he attempts to be humorous (p. 559).

Death now calls for General Scott-Massingham, evoking an exaggerated nostalgia for 'the old days of pioneering & war & romance.' (chapter **5**; p. 565) Jarvis takes part in the funeral procession. His very presence is regarded by his peers as a sign of his courage, but he does so because the General 'had inspired him... with an abiding loyalty and affection.' (p. 566) Bearing Levinas in mind, I would argue that a certain kind of relational identity informs the figure of Jarvis here, but in my view one related to the past and the mythical rather than the present and the mundane.

As Jarvis surrenders to his illness, such obvious issues are raised as the purpose of existence (p. 567), religion and service to humanity, and the yielding of one's life to the service of others (pp. 568-9). He writes to Legh of these matters (pp. 570-1) and receives a frank answer: that he (Jarvis) has not finished with Cromwell yet (pp. 571-2). Still sceptical, he feels it is Mundy's word against Legh's and remains fearful at night (pp. 572-5). The flowers he places on Josephine's grave are discovered by Cromwell (p. 579).

When Jarvis returns from his farewell trip around the valley, Jean feels that apart from his physical deterioration, he has experienced a spiritual conflict (p. 582). [Much of pp. 584-600 is deleted or pasted over.] When Jarvis persuades Krige to admit that his end is near he is distressed and prays in the church, arising with determination, yet is still sceptical towards God (chapter **7**; pp. 583-5). He alters his will to make over some of his farms to his children and asks his attorney if there are needy people to whom he can donate money (pp. 585-586). But when the lawyer, Hesketh, suggests he pay off Fenton's debts Jarvis temporises (p. 587 [over deleted page]): clearly his reaching out to the other only takes him so far! He is unable to enact the requirement for achieving deep human identity perceived by Levinas.

Jarvis continues to be preoccupied by nightly fear and continuing questions about the purpose of life (pp. 588-589). As a result, he decides to attend an early morning service with Esther. The dawn is fresh and bracing, a favourite conceit of Paton's which again unsubtly conveys the new kind of identity towards which Jarvis is feeling his way (chapter **8 [renumbered]**; p. 594). As Jarvis had mischievously hoped, the worshippers are indeed surprised to see him and the scene is redolent of the village church in Mellstock (Hardy, 1903/1964:passim, e.g. 44-45). Much quotation from the *Book of Common Prayer*, largely the introduction to Communion and the words of invitation, 'Come unto me all ye that travail' (1662/1928:34 and 36), indicates its encouraging effect on Jarvis, who almost seems to be persuaded in spite of himself (pp. 596-598). Paton appears

to feel the need to underline the effect of Jarvis's conversion, and therefore has him read in his (prayer-)book a message from his mother, dated Easter 1890: 'Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.' (p. 598 [pasted over deleted page]).[107]

Afterwards Jarvis is impatient to visit Cromwell and their reconciliation eventually takes place, with Cromwell confessing his own failings (pp.606-610; these pages are heavily emended). Jarvis experiences pity for his brother-in-law (pp. 615-616 [pasted over deleted page]).

In a leading question, Jarvis asks Maitland what he had thought of Legh. Maitland smiles, and in a most interesting response says, 'A saint,... And a man, too.' (p. 617) The collocation of saintliness and manliness – with the former quality being prioritised by the syntax – is worth noting. Paton's difficulty in composing this section is again indicated by many excisions, deletions and other alterations.

Jarvis's visit to Farquharson is a failure (chapter **10**; p. 620). He curses himself for giving way to a 'damned delusion' and undertaking a wild goose chase after 'a damned white kaffir' (p. 621): no overt criticism of the racism is offered by the narrator, though one could argue that Jarvis's lack of peace, even with himself, possibly implies a degree of irrationality. Jarvis's scepticism and exaggerated fears of a last horrible encounter with death return (pp. 631-634). To him even the living death (once again, one may assume that this is the prejudiced perspective of both Jarvis and the white community) of the socially-isolated Farquharson, the silence of Cromwell, the bestiality of Fenton, seem suddenly trivial besides his own suffering (pp. 634-635). He is terrified by the 'hellish delusion' which had impelled him to help these men (p. 635) but when dawn

[107] Jarvis's age, like that of Cromwell (and Dr Trollip in 'Ship'), is fifty-six. If he was given the prayer-book at his confirmation, usually at the age of sixteen, this implies that he was born in about 1874 and makes the time of the story exactly contemporaneous with the period when Paton was writing.

comes he forgets his fears (p. 636). The succeeding passage is deleted, after which it is recorded that Jarvis remembers the exceptionally clichéd refrain, 'Pack up your troubles in your old kit-bag, & smile, smile, smile.' (p. 638) He once again determines not to allow death to spoil what is left of his life. The irony is that Paton probably intends this repeated vacillation between hope or faith and cynicism or despair to represent a profound exploration of Jarvis's character, but the technique is one-dimensional and the effect on the reader wearying.

As observed previously, a rough sketch of various aspects of the plot adds to the general sense of a lack of planning and of focus, except for that on the relationship between the two brothers-in-law:

[Insert at left bottom of p. 638, small]
12. Krige's wedding –
13. Jarvis goes to Atherton –
13. Cromwell's visits – CROMWELL & JARVIS
14. {Atherton's views of it all –
{Author's [Anthony's?]views of Atherton –
15. Go to Fenton
16. Go to Cantrell
13 ~~17~~ Jarvis winds up affairs –
16 ~~18~~ Cassidy comes to Jarvis –
13 ~~19~~. Twins for Jean. – Jarvis's scheme
16 ~~20~~. CROMWELL & JARVIS
17 ~~21~~. Death of Jarvis –

On page 640 (chapter **11** [renumbered several times]) Paton has deleted Jarvis's reflections that if he had suddenly been healed he would still have walked the path of faith but it would have been harder to do so. To some extent, therefore, Paton seems to be editing out excessively moralistic and preachy material; much remains, though. I suggest that it is highly likely that both the moralism and the doubt, disguised as Jarvis's, are Paton's own. Consequently the line between the identity of Paton, his narrator and his characters is very slight.

The wedding of Esther and Krige evokes various stereotypes (pp. 641-2) but adds two most significant markers of identity, focalised through the eyes of Jarvis but undoubtedly conveying some of Paton's own views. Firstly, Krige is waiting for father and daughter in 'his stiff collar without which a Dutchman would have felt but half-dressed.' Jarvis perceives him, in quintessentially English terms of approval, as a 'good fellow, quiet & sound & reliable,' and reflects that it was 'strange how his whole attitude to the Dutch people had changed, now that his daughter was about to marry one of them.' (pp. 641-2): he recalls that there was nothing he could have desired less at one time, but now the nationality of the couple seems of little importance.

In the second place, Jarvis considers that the children of the marriage will be true South Africans, with none of the prejudice and narrowness that had afflicted their grandfathers. Flag Bills and secession would mean nothing to them but, he hopes, they will 'always look upon England as a great country, the place of their mother's ancestors, a nation of whose record any man might be proud.' (p. 642)

At this point one may clearly observe Paton at work in the seam, stitching together two differing pieces of cloth and favouring the new garment, but recognising the contribution of all the materials. Regrettably, though, his conception of a new South Africanness, relatively advanced for its time, excludes other races entirely. And an imperialistic England still serves as a touchstone of identity.

With pride Jarvis watches the couple, 'children of the soil.' Betraying the superiority he feels regarding many of his fellow farmers, he observes, 'Both of them had had damned good educations; they didn't wear old hats, & chew straws. ... they were children of the soil, for all that; it showed in their ruddy cheeks, & the straight way they held themselves.' (p. 643).

Once again, owing to the repetition, it would appear that Paton agrees with Jarvis's ideology regarding educated people of the soil. Hence a more complex but still stereotyped notion of true identity is emerging here: (white) South African, rooted in the ground, educated, physically fit, yet also much influenced by Englishness. It bears out the arguments of both de Kock (2001) and Coetzee (1988). Paton might almost be describing himself, and certainly the canvas is being prepared for the portrait of the later Jarvis in *Cry, the Beloved Country*.

In a rhetorical touch the bride is referred to as Mrs Krige of Atherton (p. 644): a deliberate echo of the introductions accorded to the farmers in Book 1, who are thereby linked intimately to their farms, from which much of their identity stems. Paton probably intended to emphasise the contrast between Esther's former life as the daughter of a farmer and her new status as the wife of a professional man, not as closely linked to the land, but the undeniable effect is that her identity is merged with those of the village and of her husband; in short, she loses it.

Jarvis's volatile identity is suggested by his mischievousness and restlessness (pp. 645-8). The fact that young Harveson has drunk too freely sounds a discordant note (pp. 649-650) but Jarvis resists the impulse to be vicious (p. 650) though inwardly he is sharply critical (p. 651).

A picture of his English forebears' farm, which he has never seen, reminds one that his English ancestry, though remote in reality, and the activity of farming continue to act as cornerstones of Jarvis's concept of self (p. 652) while a letter from Legh advises him to forget himself in the needs of others, adding 'I don't think you're finished with Anthony yet' (p. 653) These Levinasian sentiments are not shared by Jarvis, who, in an inserted passage, purses his lips. He is not sure he cares for Legh's ["too" further inserted] personal style.

When the Kriges return from honeymoon, Jarvis moves to Atherton. A great physical change – not for the first time – is accompanied by gentleness (chapter

12; pp. 656-8). Cromwell is his most frequent visitor (p. 659) and the narrator draws attention to the difference in their silences: Jarvis is at peace but Cromwell broods on his loneliness and hurts; his 'life had long been over' (p. 660). Paton himself lingers too long on this latter point, I consider.

After Jean's twins arrive Jarvis, without consulting anyone, gives them their names and plans their future: the eldest Richard, the younger 'Anthony Cromwell Jarvis', to take over 'Garth Place' in due course (chapter **13** [renumbered from 14], pp. 668-9). Cromwell is moved 'by the one shaft of sympathy that had power to reach him' and dare not speak (pp. 668-669), but eventually shakes hands with Jarvis. Property and quasi-contractual agreements expressed in the proper English manner and power over others remain central features of both farmers' identity, but Jarvis's new insistence upon relationship has eventually penetrated to Cromwell's core, it seems. Likewise, to Jarvis it is important to have helped Cromwell (p. 674).

Jarvis is unsuccessful at converting Fenton, who is contemptuous (pp. 674-677), but Cassidy admits that Jarvis has in fact reached him spiritually (p. 679). Guilty about his parties and not unrelentless himself, Jarvis similarly decides to speak to young Harveson (pp. 681-2) who is extremely resentful about the infringement of his autonomy (one might compare Jarvis's irritation at Legh's repeated transgressions of this Western boundary of identity: a boundary critiqued by Levinas, one should recall). Legh's outspokenness (pp. 683-4) not only enrages but upsets Jarvis. In the margin a note by Paton reads: *'R's contrition realises his self-esteem – Not to worry what men say' (p. 685).*[108] Hence the issue of one's

[108] Paton has inserted another reminder to himself in the margin of page 680, suggesting his intention to portray greater depths in Jarvis's character and to link the latter's death with the new season, which he does not in fact do:

> *15.*
> *Richard & twins –*
> *young Harveson –*
> *Richard angry –*
> *Deep contrition –*
> *Anthony C. – 16.*

own concept of self was indeed on the author's mind. The implication is that until this point, in fact, Jarvis has been too keenly aware of what others say about him, conforming his identity to theirs, at least in the terms discussed by Morrell. It is quite clear that Paton is continuing to strive towards depicting Jarvis's transcendence, through right relationships, of all that is earthly – the true goal of human identity, Paton and Levinas would probably argue – but tritely and repetitively. Quite a lot of sentimental material is deleted (e.g., pp. 685-694) but some is not: Jarvis's listening to the doves, his deep humility of spirit (pp. 691-2), his gentleness (pp. 693-4).

Strafford the policeman now pays the visit for which Jarvis had hoped, because in his upper-class English sociolect, 'Strafford was a good fellow.' (p. 694)[109] [At this point Paton also returns to writing some pages on Maritzburg College paper.] The conversation between the two men is interesting, for they talk, or rather Strafford does at length, of 'the restlessness of the locations,' amongst other matters (p. 695). In a recollection of the extreme narrowness of the concept of

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Back to a lonely Garth Place –
Mists & spring –
Death of Jarvis 17.

[109] In the margin Paton writes notes about Jarvis's visitors; the one-dimensionality of his planning and his fixation on the environment are evident, though at least here he deletes yet another reference to the mists:

Strafford – roses
Mrs. Trickett – jelly
~~Cassidy – milk~~
Ole Hansen – Vagon [sc. wagon] for twins
Harveson –
Douglas –
Legh –

17 [ringed]
Describe Atherton –
~~Mist~~
Green hills – etc –
Charles calls –
Cassidy talk[?]
Anthony calls
Sits on stoep at G.P.
R. J. dies –
End-

identity held by most whites, the black other is shunted altogether to the margins, depersonalised and dehumanised in a cliché which would still be current fifty years later. The author makes no comment, presumably indicating his acceptance.

Paton briskly proceeds to tie up loose ends: Hansen arrives with toy wagons for the twins (p. 698); Krige announces that the hospital he had hoped for is being built at last (p. 702). He wishes to see it established before he leaves, because he will not be able to achieve what he wants to at Atherton, where he has lived for ten years (p. 702). He pointedly remarks that this is a long time. Jarvis says proudly, in pure upper-class English style, 'You played the game by Atherton,' but, significantly, the narrator observes that Krige does not answer. In his lack of response one may perhaps read a realisation that Atherton is too limited a sphere in which to function and that 'playing the game', especially as this is such a solidly English concept, is by no means sufficient to constitute one's identity.

The next day Jarvis is awake early, and observes an unabashedly idyllic, English, domesticated and unoriginal landscape: a quiet street, doves, unbelievably green hills, a wreath of smoke curling from the chimney of the Globe (chapter **16** ~~17~~; p. 703). He and Maitland reminisce about the past when they had ridden horses to school, or on the way to fight the Boers, or had brought their children into the laager at Atherton courthouse during the days of the [Bhambatha] rebellion (p. 704).[110] The othering of all that is not English, and the sense of the remoteness of these events, which are more important to the men than the uncertain present, needs little comment.

In the early afternoon the mists hang low on the hills. Cassidy announces that he is 'chucking the pub' (p. 706) partly because the fates of Baxter, Rosser and others have troubled him. 'If there's a hell, & I'm not too sure there isn't, those poor devils have gone there.' (ibid.)

[110] The situation in terms of which Paton will begin 'John Henry Dane'; see the following chapter.

Jarvis does not at first answer the implied question (p. 707; [Maritzburg College notepaper]) but then acknowledges that he is not sure whether he believes in hell – to Cassidy's disappointment, since he had heard that Jarvis has changed and 'learnt a bit lately.' Jarvis agrees that he has indeed been reconciled with Hansen and Cromwell. Cassidy perseveres: what had changed him? (p. 708) Jarvis insists, though Cassidy is not persuaded, 'Death woke me up, ... God did the rest.' (ibid.)

Cassidy remains perplexed: 'You only started to live when you knew you were going to die.' (ibid.) Jarvis admits that he has left it nearly too late, but Cassidy is insistent that he wishes to find out how Jarvis has done what he has, and in answer to Jarvis's question 'Why?' adds, 'Because it's worth doing.' (p. 709). Behind Cassidy's probing one may certainly detect the values of the inferred author, especially where the issue of right relationships (both vertical and horizontal) as forming part of human identity is concerned.

Cromwell turns up at the gate [a whole section on his loneliness deleted] and the two brothers-in-law conduct a stilted conversation (p. 710). Jarvis watches him, a man 'whom Fate[111] had pursued relentlessly & beaten at last.' Cromwell seems 'one of the fellowship of mist & trees & silence; a good man, but not one of the fellowship of men.' (pp. 710-711 [renumbered from 710A]). He, Jarvis, recognises that though he is surrounded by people, Cromwell is alone just because 'some gift of speech, some trick of carelessness, had been denied him.' (p. 711)

Jarvis's doubt, for example concerning hell, remains to the end, but that he has indeed changed there is no doubt. In terms of Levinas's notions of identity-in-relationship it is important that both Cassidy and Jarvis have at last realised and

[111] The parallels between (the Hound of) God and Fate interestingly illuminate Jarvis's state of mind, and behind it that of the inferred author, I would propose.

acted on their responsibility for their fellow human beings, while Cromwell never quite transcends his self-containment. He remains trapped in his own being and in his symbiotic relationship with nature, never quite descending to ordinary human 'carelessness'. At the same time it is reasonable to point out that none of these apotheoses is very convincing and that the numerous emendations, deletions of pages and insertions of others imply that Paton suspected the same.

Cromwell rides away [a marginal insertion in a neat hand suggests that Paton repeat the earlier description of him ten years earlier], with no sound but the melancholy drip of the mist. He is so lost in reverie (ibid.) that he is shocked to arrive at his own gate and remember that Josephine is no longer there (p. 712 [~~710B~~]). One is reminded that he had never been a person to weep; he simply waits now for the physical sign of a spiritual death. The farming cycle continues, but posed through him is the question, 'to what end?' The hadedahs still call desolately and no wife, no children occupy his farm. Repetitively, Cromwell reflects that Garth Place might have been home to a stranger who would have felled the trees and planted crops (ibid.), destroying 'this sanctuary of dimness & peace.' (p. 713 & 714 ~~710C~~)

As he walks into the house his steps echo hollowly down the long passages (ibid.). The page is not filled, ending in the middle, with the sentence being continued on page 715 (Maritzburg College notepaper): Cromwell gazes into a blind sea of mist, an image too obviously connoting his own lack of vision. Down in Atherton, hidden, there are homes, cheerful places in a world which is, to Cromwell, one of great darkness. He feels a great pity for Jarvis, facing so terrible a death, with such wonderful courage, yet kept awake by his fears (ibid). But Paton is to add an unusual note of irony: [New paragraph symbol and 'But down in Atherton' inserted:] 'Richard Jarvis of Windy Hill [is] asleep, & would not wake again. Death, that had been so kindly an angel to him, had done him the greatest last great kindness.' (pp. 715-716) The imagery is similar, but not identical, to that in the quotation from *The Roadmender*, 'I thought I heard

Brother Death stir in the shadow. He is a strong angel & of great pity' and the proposed last sentence, *'In their room Krige & his wife & child are asleep; in his room Richard Jarvis is asleep, & will not wake again. Brother Death was always for him an angel of great mercy.'* However, Paton evades the reality of Jarvis's fears and death solves the riddle of human identity a little too neatly.

Cromwell, unknowing of Jarvis's passing, rises wearily and looks out 'into the inscrutable world of mist. Somewhere above were moon & stars, lost in the white darkness. There was no knowing what the dawn might bring.' (p. 716) Here Paton employs one of his signature techniques, repetition, returning the novel to its beginning in 'the white darkness' (p. 1).

The MS ends with the inscription:

> *P.M.Burg*
> *18/5/30 (ibid.)*

In these last few pages the notion of Death as a brother is more implicit than explicit and one has the sense of Paton simply drawing the novel eventually to a close, with relief one suspects. The image of the dawn, which Paton was later to use so powerfully, here and in *Cry* connotes uncertainty rather than hope, as does the all-pervasive image of the mist which he considered including in his novel's title, and with which he begins and concludes the novel. Only three (white) characters have not been subsumed into the general reconciliation that takes place towards the end of the novel: Farquharson, Fenton and Cromwell. Their continuing isolation is at least consistent since none of them adheres to the community's norms. More importantly, they all share a lack of purpose in life.

One could argue that the communal identity remains practically intact except for these three men. It is barely changed, being still a typical English farming community in essence, uneasily incorporating in its midst the village of Atherton

and closed to all that is other, especially the Afrikaner and the black person. Hence it is not insignificant that the novel ends with the self-sufficient Cromwell; though he has altered somewhat, he will not change any further. The rhetorical 'spiritual death' which Paton assigns to him is logically appropriate. Theologically it is evident that his Christian faith has not, in fact, redeemed him from himself; nor has death extended any brotherliness to him. God, exceedingly closely related to Fate, has receded into the background, being superseded by a slightly more kindly death.

To answer Cromwell's vague query, in fact the morning will simply bring news of Jarvis's death, and life will continue. Forces of change, ranging from the political (Union, the Flag Bill, Boer-Brit tension) to the economic (the Great Depression) which have occasionally been referred to, have in fact hardly affected the cocooned whites. Black people play no part whatsoever in any foreseeable future. The concepts of identity, both communal and individual, are similarly circumscribed and perhaps the oxymoron 'white darkness' well sums up the first and final effect of the novel: the truth of human identity is impenetrable to most of its characters, though many of them such as Maitland and Cromwell do strive towards comprehending it; yet the one who has experienced it the most clearly is dead.

Conclusion

In the foregoing discussion I have at times read against the grain of Paton's text, looking for other meanings than the obvious (cf. Gibson, 1996) and attempting to keep my own assumptions and Paton's, especially regarding what is real and truthful and natural, in view (Rose, 2005:81-83). Occasionally I have pointed to blatant instances of exclusion or invisibility.

While Paton was indubitably aiming for verisimilitude, in Bruner's terms (1991/2003:45-58), hence emphasising such matters as duration in time, the characters' agency and intentionality (greatly diluted by the image of God as

Fate), and various norms such as hard work or soberness (in every sense), he has paid little attention to context (ibid.), certainly less than in 'Ship'. However, if the inferred author of 'Brother Death' is read from a Levinasian viewpoint he does seem to judge some of his characters in terms of their relationship to others and the Other.

One might also read the novel in the light of Fiddes's image of human beings as both dust of the earth and image of God (1991:52, 54). In terms of such a view it is noteworthy that the 'dust' predominates in Paton's portrayal here. God rarely indwells his creatures, except for Hugo and Legh, and then only in a somewhat ambivalent fashion. In this novel the deity is, literally, dogged and often threatening. Jarvis's conversion is forced by the supposedly kindly advent of death, acting as a kind of surrogate for God.

If one considers Ruf's view that studies of narrative from a religious point of view tend to focus on three aspects, interaction of character and action, sequential time and coherence and intelligibility (1997:16) it is clear that Paton's novel fares best as regards the second facet: the first is often strained and the third non-existent, though one might perhaps charitably perceive 'Brother Death' as work-in-progress. Certainly the narrator is magisterial (cf. ibid.), acting more like a chess-player, placing human pieces, than a creator of human beings defined by their believable relationships to each other. A great many other readings could be carried out but I believe that my point has been adequately made.

The following chapter of this thesis will consider issues surrounding the portrayal of identity in the remaining unpublished short fiction by Alan Paton.

CHAPTER 4

SHORTER EARLY WORKS OF FICTION: 'LITTLE BARBEE', 'JOHN HENRY DANE', 'CALVIN DOONE' AND 'SECRET FOR SEVEN'

Preliminary remarks

In this chapter I consider those of the said works which seem to have survived. It is difficult to date them precisely and consequently I have not grouped them with the two novels already discussed, although I offer a rough chronological sequence. As one would expect, the conceptualisation of (male) identity in general is similar to that in Paton's other early fiction, and women and black people – where they appear – are equally depersonalised.

'Little Barbee'

MS PC1/3/4/9

According to Koopman (2006), this MS was received from Mrs Anne Paton after the descriptive list of the holdings of the Alan Paton Centre was compiled.

It comprises a short story in pencil on small pages, emendations also in pencil; in blue ink on the last page the date '1928?' appears in Paton's hand. If he is correct the MS is the earliest in this sequence. As with 'Calvin Doone' this is one of the very few stories in which Paton describes a non-South African setting and characters, perhaps experimenting with broader notions of setting and identity.

A small village in the Wild West of the USA, Butler's Post, hears with mixed feelings of the advent of 'Little' Barbee because it is a relatively quiet and crime-free settlement where Mrs Butler rules one of the saloons. Stories are rife about the terrible Barbee brothers who are lightning-fast on the draw, but on the other hand it is said that in heavy snow both had rescued a trapper's wife and her two children (p. 1). Little Barbee is discussed in the saloon but Mrs Butler suggests sharply that perhaps he is very different from his reputation (p. 2). When he arrives unobtrusively the inhabitants tend to agree. He is neither taciturn nor jovial, but possesses something of a solid strength. One man, Simmons, who

had been afraid of him, in fact takes to dropping round several times a week (ibid.).

* * * * [Four stars in the MS indicate the passing of time.]

Subsequently a rich gold reef is found (p. 2). As a result the saloon grows more crowded, and good men become worried. Shots are exchanged between 'Red' Macfarlane, a swaggering giant, and a drunk. No-one is killed, but Mrs Butler, another mother and the children leave for Ghent, the next large village; Butler seeks Little Barbee's advice as to the situation (p. 3).

The tension is increased when men from Macfarlane's camp help themselves to some of Little Barbee's saplings. On returning the next day for more trees they find that the famous 'BB' sign has been erected; they initially retreat, but Macfarlane lurches out drunk and uproots it, emptying Simmons's borehole, filling it with refuse (ibid.).

The climax arrives when Little Barbee quietly strolls into the saloon. Many had been uneasy about him because he had hardly reacted although his friend Butler had suffered insult after insult (ibid.), while Macfarlane and his arrogant overlord, O'Halloran, terrorised the settlement, rarely paying for anything (p. 4). In the community's eyes no-one was more evil than O'Halloran, a giant with receding gorilla-like forehead, even faster at the draw than Macfarlane. But he is not in the saloon at this point. The atmosphere is tense when Little Barbee sits down, but Macfarlane is initially unaware of him. When he notices the silence he turns and bows ironically. Little Barbee addresses him very politely, then rises and speaks a little more quickly, pointing out that his trees have been stolen; his sign, which has always been treated with respect, has been pulled down (ibid.) He begins to utter a warning but his opponent swears at him, 'you son of – ' (p. 5).

The narrator comments in a generalised fashion that though in the careless language of the wilds there is little courtesy, there is one phrase that no man can ever stand. With a peculiar mixture of deadly anger and pleading Barbee begs him, 'Red, not that, not that.' But the insult is repeated. At the 'deafening report of guns' Macfarlane falls back howling, only his hands injured, and is carried out to complete silence. Barbee is as white as a sheet and, the narrator observes, had one looked close enough one would have seen his hands trembling (ibid.)

Little Barbee remarks wearily, 'Boys, ... you think that's some play. I tell you I hate it like hell. If you want trees or water or food, come & ask.... The rule out here is Shoot, but I've got rid of that rule. That is, except – that thing – that thing that Red said.' Blushing, he adds: 'You see, boys, Big Barbee ["& I" added] kind of worshipped our mother.' With assumed jauntiness he explains that he is sending a message to his lawyer from Ghent to 'sort of adjust' his boundaries (ibid.).

* * * *

Two days later Simmons rides over to Barbee's. He finds him apparently guarding his borehole (ibid.) but then sees that Barbee's chest is nearly blown away (pp. 6-7).

* * * *

The same day a trim little person, the lawyer, arrives, permitting himself a smile when he hears how Little Barbee had acted after the insult, and produces the photo of a woman from Little Barbee's pocket. Handing it to Butler, he indicates, 'That was his mother.' (p. 7)

That night O'Halloran is 'in one of the moods of Hell itself'. Before long he finds the lawyer (p. 8) and contends that Little Barbee had got what he deserved. 'Good on Red, I say, beating Barbee on the draw.' However, the lawyer asserts

that the murderer had not been Red. The man who shot Barbee had killed him like a dog. Though O'Halloran disagrees the lawyer maintains that the only person who could have beaten Little Barbee on the draw was his brother (ibid.) O'Halloran rises: 'you say I lie, you son – '. Again a deafening report is heard and O'Halloran falls back dead. A superstitious fear falls on the crowd while the lawyer requests Butler to fetch his horse (ibid.).

When he mounts, Butler whispers in awe, 'do men from your part always shoot for a woman like that?' (p. 9) The horseman smiles. 'You see, she was my mother too.' ~~His voice broke suddenly into a sob. 'Bury him,' he said. And wheeling his mount, he rode slowly on the road to Ghent.'~~ (ibid.)

This brief and potentially effective narrative is intriguing because it illustrates Paton stepping outside the bounds of Natalian and South African identity set in his other early fiction. Types who are not unrelated to other male characters are drawn upon (giants both tough and sensitive, or outright villains). While the women apparently exist once more on the periphery, with the capable and sensible Mrs Butler fleeing possible trouble, the figure of the Barbees' mother, idealised as it is, in fact provides the motive force for the plot. Particularly remarkable is the person of the lawyer, who neatly inverts the other male stereotypes. Paton halts the narrative before it becomes too sentimental so that one is left with the image of the other Barbee brother's smile, thereby transcending his own loss.

'Calvin Doone'

PC1/3/2/5 (see below)

This short story is placed at the beginning of the same MS as the obverse (pp. 620-716) of MS V of 'Brother Death' (PC1/3/2/5), written in the same ink, and therefore probably also dates from 1930. It is chiefly notable for the exoticisation of Africa and its figuration of the eponymous character: initially, it seems, very

much in the mould of the male personalities of Paton's previous fiction, but, like 'Little Barbee', with an effective twist at the end.

One reads that for twenty years Calvin Doone had carried on a quiet and respectable small-town business in the United States, living in a backwater cottage, eating frugally and reading books on exploration. Even had his fellow-citizens realised the breadth of his geographical knowledge they would not have appreciated it, though they knew he could tell them how to send a parcel to a missionary in Kano (p. 1).[112] His ultimate dream is to lead an expedition to the Mountains of the Moon.[113] Every cent he saves is banked for this purpose. He imagines the 'treacherous swamps & slippery rocks' while all around him 'roar the waters that come ceaselessly from the everlasting snows.' (p. 2) Twenty years previously he had decided on this particular expedition. But when he was twenty-eight his mother had unexpectedly died young, diminishing his capital. He began saving again, with less enthusiasm, but the education of his cousin, left on his hands as an orphan (p. 3), constituted a further setback, as did a financial crash which affected his savings when he was thirty-five (pp. 3-4). Though his dream again became as indistinct as the mountains 'with their restless veil of mist & cloud,' (p. 4) at forty he is able to take his first tangible steps: he makes contact with 'Hope, the one man in Africa whom the natives would follow into the treacherous snows & forests & chasms' of the area, and issues him with instructions (ibid.): the syntax implies that the local people are not also men, that

[112] True to form, Paton inserts the following calculation of wordage in the margin: 170 per p. 11 pages 1900 (emphasis in original). Pagination by Jewel Koopman.

[113] This destination perfectly embodies Wittenberg's finding that 'As the story of the discovery and conquest of the Ruwenzori shows, mountains, especially snow-covered white peaks in the midst of tropical heat, are sites for intense European desire and are thus endowed with sublime value that can be understood as a spatialisation of racial difference.' (2004:7) In Chapter 2 of his thesis he discusses African mountains and the sublime at length (2004:64-114), observing that in his volume *In Darkest Africa* the explorer Stanley had identified the Ruwenzori with Ptolemy's fabled Mountains of the Moon (ibid.:80-82), not only located centrally in Africa but therefore related to the origin of Western geography, the colonialist myth concerning the sources of the Nile and the Mediterranean roots of Western civilisation (ibid.:83, 87). Paton was therefore drawing on a well-established imperialistic mythology of identity and conquest of territory in this story, many years before his Kalahari expedition.

they do not know the topography and that the white person provides the lead which they would otherwise not follow.

II

In this chapter [there is no chapter I] George Hope is introduced: an American, thrown by fate into a job under the mountains, who greatly wishes to return home. Calvin Doone's letter appears to make this possible: As Hope tells his friends, 'Some rich guy from the States [Doone] wants me to ... fix the safari.' (pp. 5-6) Hope sees the possibility of escape at last: 'from this forsaken land, ... its fevers & its forests, its living death.' (p. 6) Noticeable here is the disjunction between the perceptions of these two admittedly cardboard characters: they both exoticise Africa, but while Hope denigrates it Doone romanticises it. Behind both figures is that of the narrator, who identifies himself with neither view; the end of the story makes this quite clear.

Hope organises supplies within a week, his thoughts far away in the town where he was born; the white men of the station understand his preoccupation, signifying their own lack of rootedness in Africa. One asks Hope if he has heard from his 'millionaire' and raises doubts about the project, shared by others, which Hope denies with a fanatical gleam in his eyes, avoiding his friends more and more (pp. 6-9). The postmaster, Sates, establishes that no such person has arrived by boat, and his friends hesitate whether to inform Hope, sending an enquiry by cable first. The answering cable indicates that Doone has gone bankrupt (pp. 8-9). Sates is left with the unenviable task of imparting this news. Hope arrives jauntily at the post office, but dark rings under his eyes and his pallor belie this optimistic stance. Sates avoids direct contact with him, laying the two cables on the counter, averting his eyes and disappearing into the telegraph room. When he returns Hope has departed; none of his friends sees him again. Only that evening does Sates realise that the ninety pounds he had accidentally left on the counter have vanished too (p. 9).

III

The narrator remarks that another man might have changed his mind before boarding the boat at [a space is left for the name]; but not Hope. Another might have cooled down during the long voyage [to the United States], but he disembarks with his purpose unaltered; back in Africa he is wanted for theft by merchants and the Post Office (p. 11 [actually 10]).

For him it is rather a shock to emerge into the main street [no details are provided, but presumably in the United States] and see almost opposite him the premises of 'Calvin Doone': 'neat, but not opulent.' (ibid.) He asks for Mr Doone and a young man greets him courteously, confirming that he is indeed Mr Calvin Doone. Hope aims carefully so that there will be no mistake; and as carefully shoots himself. The narrator comments, 'It was as well that he did so; for what would have been his state of mind when he had found that the Calvin Doone ["for whom" inserted] he was searching ~~for~~ lives apart from men [inserted: "in the great sombre building at Harpersfield"], one case among many others, ready to babble incoherently to anyone who cares to visit him, about the Mountains of the Moon.' (p. 12).

This narrative is largely remarkable for its departure from norms of masculine identity which it has initially not questioned, but as with the previous story upends at its conclusion where both Doone and Hope are shown to have been, or have become, insane. Like 'Little Barbee' it concerns Americans rather than Natalians. I would suggest that Paton is not altogether unsuccessfully attempting to broaden his scope as a writer, but the parameters of identity remain fairly narrow. In particular, Africa and her people are accorded an ambivalent glamour at best, though it is clear that since both white men are mentally unbalanced their antithetical views of Africa are consequently questionable.

'John Henry Dane'
PC 1/3/4/1

This narrative (Paton, 1934b) is written in faded blue ink in the same small green exercise book as an essay on 'Convalescence', which replaces section V of the proposed novel, some thoughts on 'Beer', and three poems (in black ink): 'There's no way carved yet,' 'Life was bitter...', both dated Park Rynie 25/9/34, and 'Higher Physics' / 'The New Physics', no date, but published in the *Natal University College Magazine* in 1934 (Paton, 1995:161); hence the novel itself may be dated to this year (cf. Alexander, 1994:117). 1934 was eventful for Paton: he completed the first part of his MEd early in the year; he must have been writing 'John Henry Dane' at approximately the same time, since in April he contracted the typhoid which appears to have cut this novel short; at some point he was probably working on 'God in Modern Thought' (1934a) and 'Religion, Freedom and Man' (= 'Religion and my Generation', Paton, 1934c; cf. Alexander, 1994:115), while 'Secret for Seven' (1934d) seems to have been composed during his recuperation from the illness.

'John Henry Dane' (untitled and unfinished, but given this title by Peter Alexander, ibid., after its main character, the narrator) is situated largely in the school setting, the social and political significance of which, in Natal, has already been discussed. The description of this environment is accompanied by an unease on John's part about the militarism associated with the 'Bhambatha Rebellion' and the First World War. His father and two of his elder brothers treat him with the utmost contempt partly because of this attitude and partly because he is very different from the masculine stereotype they idolise. Here Natal's obsession with matters military and the extensive involvement of Natalians in the First World War (Morrell, 2001:141) are pertinent. As Morrell points out, this is a socially constructed, hegemonic masculinity (2001:44) which is taken to be (and presents itself as) the masculine essence. It silences other masculinities and prevents a critical exploration of itself. However, 'John Henry Dane' to some

extent challenges this view. In the novel, the sensitivity of the protagonist is one of the reasons why he is shunned by three of his male relatives, but since these men are represented as being hard, even cruel, in nature one may take it that their exercise of masculinity, though in keeping with the concept of masculinity constructed for themselves by Natalians, is interrogated by the author. To a limited degree John offers a kind of resistance to the power exercised by them (cf. Connell, 2002:59).

Alexander suggests that the fragment is the most directly autobiographical of Paton's early novels in nature (1994:117) and adduces certain parallels: John describes his prowess at school, and the shame he experiences when his mother sends a hot snack, borne by a domestic helper, to school (pp. 33-34).[114] The narrator rejects the food and drink, which are consumed greedily by the other boys. Such an event actually occurred in Paton's school days and is recorded in both *Towards the Mountain* (Paton, 1980:23-24) and in the short story 'The Gift' (Alexander, ibid.).

John is born prematurely, with a misshapen leg, during the Bhambatha Rebellion of 1906 (pp. 6, 8-9). Paton was only three when the rebellion took place, but according to Alexander (ibid.) drew on his sister Dorrie's memories of it: she was eight at the time. Tellingly the narrator remarks, 'I was ... born in fear' (p. 8). In context the fear can be read as applying mainly to the general emotion experienced by whites at the time, but it imparts a negative aspect to John's sense of self and that of the white communal identity.

Another parallel, in Alexander's view (1994:25), is that John is tormented by his older brother Richard, even as in real life Paton was often thrashed by his younger brother Atholl, until he developed superior muscles. Also, though Alexander does not mention this explicitly, another link with Paton's own life is the fact that John's father does not like him and wishes he had never been born,

[114] The page numbers have been inserted in pencil and are not in Paton's own hand.

because of his physical weakness. The most intriguing scenes, however, in terms of Paton's later career, are perhaps the narrator's remark that his two companions, Willie Squires and Jannie van Tonder, were underdogs, and that on this foundation their friendship was built (p. 31), and the fact that the novel is set in Ixopo (pp. 1, 2, etc). Hence certain links with Paton's own environment, interests and career are discernible. The configuration of identity is much the same as that in Paton's earlier works of fiction.

In keeping with his timid personality John wets himself on his first day at school (p. 13), but he records that 'this was no Dr. Squeers school'. The reference to *Nicholas Nickleby* reminds one of Paton's considerable debt to Dickens (Paton, 1980:26, 61), not least since many of the later writer's characters share in the variety, but also the one-dimensionality, of Dickens's figures. John is rapidly promoted to higher classes. At the end of the year he takes home the Standard 1 prize: exactly as when Paton's poem was placed first in the Eisteddfod (Alexander 1994:48), John's 'father said never a word' (p. 14) though in later years Paton does record that both his parents were pleased when he came top of Standard I himself (1980:24).

John is a person very different from his strapping brothers, a child imaginative and intense, who took every chance to 'escape from the world of the Danes into one of [his] own' (p. 22). One of the masters at the school describes him as 'unhealthy' (p. 33), in context almost certainly meaning effeminate and with gay inclinations, but John compensates by imagining, it seems, that he ends up in command on the parade ground (pp. 13-14). His given names, John Henry, are Anglicisations of those of Paton's close associate in the political realm, Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr, whom he had met in 1927 and whose influence he was assiduously courting by 1934 (Alexander 1994:99, 122-124). It is tempting to think that this choice was deliberate but it is more likely that it was unconscious.

John's imagination and a desire to impress his friends lead him to invent stories of his clockwork train at the Danes' farm, which 'wound in & out of gorges & under waterfalls & precipices' (p. 32), but his fabrication is exposed, leading him to become yet more solitary. One of the main reasons he rejects the hot toast and tea his mother sends is his fear of standing out from the crowd (p. 34).

When John's brother Charles and his favourite, protective brother Harold are called up, the parting on the station platform, and particularly the warm greeting Harold gives his undemonstrative father, are carefully described (pp. 37-39). The narrator inserts a fascinating metafictional passage (discussed below). Unfortunately, according to a note by Jewel Koopman, '[I]t could have been at this point that Alan Paton became ill with enteric fever, and therefore did not continue with the novel. It appears as if he had meant to continue, and later changed his mind' (pencilled note, photocopy, p. 41). Instead of the proposed chapter V, the essay 'Convalescence' immediately follows.

A rough plan in black ink, somewhat reworked, at the end of the exercise book affords a useful idea of Paton's intentions. The identity of the protagonist is described in terms of external events (the 'Rebellion' and the First World War), but also as regards his academic leanings (matriculation, university life, teaching) and his eventual settling down as a farmer. Notably, the plot was to have encompassed John undertaking such masculine exploits as shooting and riding during his varsity days and also undergoing more internal events such as a 'change in myself' and 'inner turmoil', but these are unfortunately not realised. Nonetheless they do indicate that the author intended his character's self-concept to alter; while this embraces a constructed masculinity, it also evidences a softer, more studious dimension and inner change, though the novel as envisaged apparently leaves the narrator a farmer, in other words still ensconced in the main figuration of identity found in the Paton of the 1920s and 1930s:

1. *1906* *0 4 7 11 14 38*[115]
8 12 15 19 22 46[116]

2. *1906 – 14* *Early life – ~~The war – Harold & Cha~~*

3. *1914* *The war – Harold & Charles go –*
11 15 18 22 25 49

4. *1917* *Ride to Bulwer – Richard ~~David~~ goes – My own fears*
12 16 19 23 26 50

5. *1918* *~~David~~ Richard killed – Charles marries –*
~~15 19 26 29~~
~~1919 Harold~~
13 17 ~~20~~ 24 27 51

6. *1919* *Harold married – My visit to Imhlamvini*
15 19 26 29 53

7. *1921* *My second visit to Imhlamvini – Murder of Tom Cotton*
16 20 27 30 54

8. *1922* *Matric – Father agrees to proposals of future. – ~~Richard~~ David to Lufafa farm*
20 24 31 34 58
~~19 23 30 33 57~~

9. *1922~~3~~-26* *Varsity life – Shooting & riding – Change in myself –*
27 28 35 38 64[117]
~~Richard's~~ David's marriage

10. *1926~~7~~-~~9~~30* *Teaching – Nostalgia – Inner turmoil – Decision – Father's joy.*
25 29 36 39 63
– Imhlamvini farm bought –

11. *193~~0~~1* *A year at home – Dreams – Death of my father –*
26 30 37 40 ~~61~~

12. *1932~~31~~* *In the Inhlamvini – Farming*

13. *1934* *In the Inhlamvini – The house – Conclusion (unnumbered page of MS)*

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[115] As previously, I italicise passages which are not intended to form part of the narrative.
[116] These figures would appear to be page numbers, but the present MS ends at p. 41.
[117] Some of these numbers in the outlines of chapters 9-11 are overwritten; for clarity I have recorded only the later versions.

Chap: I [sic]

The novel is narrated in the first person; the impressions recorded by Dane, both of himself and of surrounding events, are therefore consciously intended by the author to be subjective in nature and it is not necessary to presume the narrator to be reliable, especially as he is possessed of a vivid imagination. Indeed, certain events before the narrator's birth and those in his infancy are told from hearsay, further distancing the events from him. Paton seems not to have been concerned with the logical inconsistencies which arise.

Paton was evidently unsure of the exact date of the 'Rebellion' and self-consciously, I would suggest, echoes the beginning of 'Brother Death':

> In of 1906, [some deletions] the Zulus went into rebellion, & the unrest spread to Natal. On th my father, Charles Dane, farmer of 'High Place' [a portentous name, as discussed earlier], ... had news that the rebels were in the hills on the far side of the Umkomaas, & were menacing the villages of Byrne & Richmond. On the same day a messenger came from Ixopo, from Colonel White of the Border Mounted Rifles,[118] summoning Major Charles Dane at once to the village, & advising the farmers of the district to follow him, as it was feared that the natives in the Lufafa Valley would join the rebellion (p. 1).

The otherness of black people immediately constitutes a threat to the stability of the white community, and is figured in loaded terms such as 'rebellion' (with its cognates repeated to make the point) and 'unrest'. The narrator's father, like the farmers of 'Brother Death', is closely associated not only with the name of his farm in particular, signifying the interweaving of his territory and his identity, but also with the colonial military forces: the title of the regiment itself (in both fact and fiction) reminds one that it polices the frontier between so-called civilisation and uncolonised chaos.

The narrator's mother is seven months pregnant (with him). Many other families take the road to Ixopo and the party eat lunch with friends, though John's father does not wish to stop and scans the northern tops anxiously (p. 2). A

[118] The name of an actual regiment based in Ixopo (Morrell, 2001:149).

[heliographic] message flashed from the farm 'Borrowdale'[119] reports intense activity below but nothing concerted; as if likewise from a great height and with Western eyes the narrator records that the message described much 'dancing & palavering, with each group round its own kraal.' (p. 3) It is remarked that this is not surprising, for the natives of the Lufafa [Valley] are not Zulus, nor conscious of unity. The only reason for fear would emerge if the more organised rebels beyond the Umkomaas gathered 'these excited groups into a flood tide that would sweep over the tops to Ixopo.' (ibid.) The imperial gaze in the form of surveillance, as discussed by David Spurr (1993:27), is obvious. However, Major Dane observes only the reassuring flash from 'Borrowdale' (ibid.).

With a brief nod to the South African setting, John's father 'outspan[s] on a vacant erf' in Ixopo and a supper is made with mealie-meal and other ingredients (p. 4). The boys fall asleep, but at 10 pm they are roused by their uncle, who tells them [inaccurately] that the rebels are at 'Borrowdale' and that all have been ordered within the walls of the Court House. The two older boys are allowed to move amongst the adults and listen with awe to their tales of pioneer Natal (p. 5). Evident here is the idealisation of the almost mythical past, from which the male identities take their lustre (as with the General in 'Brother Death'). Unfortunately the women are equally, and more prejudicially, typecast, as is to become evident.

Shortly before midnight the men on the northern wall begin firing into the dark. It is theatrically recorded that 'From outside came the sounds of cries & screams, ... of running feet, a heavy drumming ~~pounding~~ of the earth that sounded ominous & menacing...' (p. 6). These perceptions reflect the panicky Natal view of the 'Rebellion', which resulted amongst other matters in demands for stricter racial segregation (Morrell, 2001:160). The women scream and faint and are as panic-stricken as their children. Colonel White's stentorian voice is lost in the pandemonium, during which John is born prematurely to a terrified mother. His

[119] The name, recycled from 'Brother Death' and the Lake District, once more implies a generalised perception of local identity rather than a specific one on Paton's part.

father kisses his mother and himself and calls him John Henry Dane, 'for he never wasted time, & had a liking for simple names.' (pp. 6-7)

At midnight the firing stops. After a few minutes 'a reproachful ["Zulu" inserted] voice' is heard: 'Weh Majosi! and why do you kill your servants?' The black person's voice, almost silent in Paton's early work, here merely expresses a docile acquiescence in thus being owned and domesticated. The tension is relieved by laughter. 'Majosi, in English Colonel White,' opens the gates. 'Come, you scoundrel,' he shouts, 'we shall not shoot you. How many are killed?' 'None, Majosi. But we are all afraid.' (ibid.)

Laughing, about thirty or forty 'boys' [sic] troop in, who, in John's sarcastic words, 'had apparently decided that country life without their masters was unhealthy.' (p. 8) The parallel with John's being termed 'unhealthy' by his schoolmaster is probably deliberate, questioning both usages of the word and thereby their speakers. The only casualties are three dead oxen, a poor reflection on the general competency of the soldiers. The signaller from 'Borrowdale' reports that his lamp had merely gone out and could not be relit; hence the flashing had stopped.

John now elaborates that he 'was a puny child, born in fear,' with a gammy leg (pp. 8-9), into a family later called the Great Danes: all six-footers, except him.[120] The 'swart gevaar' rules their lives (Morrell, 2001:passim, e.g. 139) except insofar as the submissive, tamed blacks are concerned; the others are despatched to the margins of alterity. An orientalist stereotyping rules supreme.

Perhaps recollecting the dictates of logic, Paton has John make no apology for telling the story of the day before he was born. He had never realised that his

[120] In marginal calculations (in a darker ink) Paton precisely works out wordage and chapter and book lengths, estimating the final product to be 26496 words and 133 [MS] pages in length, suggesting that he did not have a lengthy novel in mind. It is therefore just possible that he did continue the narrative in another place.

mother could not forgive herself that he was not one of the Great Danes. And he now knows that his father wishes he had died (p. 9). Masculinity, of the British and military variety, functions yet again as the normative signifier of identity.

Chap. II – [sic]

John explains that he has chosen to set down the events of the first eight years of his life but points out that he was told much of what he records (p. 10). In terms of logic his mother would have constituted his main source and his notions would have been filtered through her terror. On the whole his memories are vague, but he clearly remembers the first drive to school. His father, in utterly conventional English upper-class fashion, 'firmly believed in boarding-school at an early age.' (ibid.)[121]

But John had played with children who spoke no English at all, only Zulu, and he records his terror on that day (pp. 10-11). His elder brothers, Richard and David, were still at home and would later proceed to St George's Preparatory in Maritzburg. He, six years old, timid, small and lame, was obliged to face a strange world quite alone but does not weep in spite of a hammering heart. After his mother had taken him to see the headmaster her eyes were wet and his father remarked that it was the first time she had 'done <u>that</u> [emphasis in text].' (p. 11) When she recalled that John did not cry, his father said gruffly, 'Good for him'. 'All the others cried,' she reminded him, but her husband merely grunted (ibid.).

Again, antithetical notions of the behaviour appropriate to certain kinds of identity are discernible, conventional masculinity and femininity being the most obvious; but it is clear that John is figured as a child apart in every way.

As mentioned above, his first day at school is a nightmare. He is sent to Class (ii) rather than Class (i) because his mother had taught him basic skills but becomes

[121] As did Paton himself, though Jonathan detested boarding school (Alexander, 1994:176).

lost in simple sums and fearfully wonders if he has heard Miss Rivers, the teacher, aright; the simile which compares him to 'a nervous woman [...deletion] in a strange town' (p. 12) again makes use of extremely narrow views of gendered behaviour. His teacher rounds on him, he disgraces himself and is sent from the classroom, from where he slinks into the office of the motherly matron (p. 13).

He makes it clear that this was no Dickensian school (p. 14) because twelve years later he meets Miss Rivers again and perceives her as a dull and conscientious woman. And later still, he writes, he 'was destined to send many of my persecutors sweating up & down the parade ground on a hot & dusty day.' (pp. 13-14) It is not clear whether this episode is pure fantasy, at which John excels; certainly it is not provided for in Paton's outline. However, it is intriguing that John also briefly adopts a militarist persona.

John's intelligence soon causes him to be placed in Standard I. He would have been promoted further, but his mother decides against this. Though his father is silent regarding his prize, John's second-eldest and favourite brother, Harold, pats him on the back (p. 14). Harold fits perfectly into the private school mould and its version of masculinity, as captain of St George's, a 'great comforting [written over "heroic"] figure', with a bedroom full of caps & scarves & photos of teams cf. Morrell, 2001:81). Just as conventional is John's eldest brother, Charles, who is twenty, working the lower end of the farm and as silent as John's father (pp. 14-15). Richard and David never taunt him openly before his father, who demands courtesy and never catches the drift of their teasing. John records that his father always said what he meant (p. 15).

Out of their father's sight the other brothers are thoughtlessly cruel. John's short leg, his games of make-believe and of talking to himself provide a rich source of amusement for them. Yet he can ride a horse better than any of his family (pp. 15-16). Nevertheless he keeps very much to himself and plays at being an armed

ranger, liking best of all to be caught in the mists and pretending to guide lost travellers; but one day his brothers catch him doing so and mock him viciously (pp. 17-18). Richard asks him where he lives and when John, through a gap in the mists, indicates High Place, Richard forces him, in a strongly racist gesture, to look at the kraals instead. He whips his brother, to the unease of David (p. 19). No overt comment on the blatant intermingling of racism and macho violence is made, however.

Knowing the topography of the wattle plantation better, John successfully escapes into it and discards his accoutrements, indeed now hating them as he does his brothers (p. 20).

III [sic]

For safety's sake, John heads for the kitchen where he knows he will find his mother (conventionally baking scones) and enjoys the comfort there (ibid.).

The narrator pauses and explains, laboriously and repetitively, that he has never written anything previously; at present he is telling the story of a child of seven, though he is a man of twenty-eight (pp. 20-21). At this later age he realises that he had taken every chance to escape from the world of the Danes, though his home life was not continually unhappy. He hated his brother Richard, even murderously (p. 22), though (in an insertion on p. 21, verso) the latter was the apple of his father's eye. Contained here but as an afterthought, I would argue, is a certain degree of criticism of the values held by the family head, since Richard is a brutal bully. This model of identity is to be interrogated further.

Returning to the earlier scene, the narrator describes how he enters the dining-room that evening under the protection of Harold (p. 23). Part of the way through the meal Richard starts mocking John, asking his father if he had ever known anyone to become lost on his farm, and explaining that they had met just such a person that day. His father, literal-minded, is puzzled, earnestly considering the

question (pp. 23-26) but Harold intervenes, saying that he has found an old pot, dozens of fag-ends and a school magazine in a nearby cave, which revelation alarms Richard (p. 26). Harold declares conclusively that the identity of this person will probably always remain a mystery and instructs Richard to 'Push off.' His mother, catching on to the real situation (as pages 29-30 indicate), scolds Richard for telling stories that his father takes so seriously, 'Just because he's so straight – ' (p. 28). Harold comments to his mother that 'Father must be as dense as a doornail.' (p. 30) Her reply, that she will be happy if all her sons grow up 'as straight – & as dense – as their father,' (ibid.) clearly identifies the limits of the typically English value of 'straightness', especially insofar as it determines identity. Though Richard immediately waylays John and twists his arm, 'physical pain is soon over' (ibid.), as the narrator comments. I suggest that Paton is again hinting that physical norms of identity are not necessarily as important as others.

IV

John's next three years at Ixopo School are triumphal indoors and less and less eventful elsewhere. He experiences the thrill of leadership when his two friends believe everything he tells them about his wonderful outdoor train-set at home (p. 32). But more sceptical boys, their suspicions aroused by Willie's further elaborations, expose John's fantasies (pp. 32-33). These experiences make John more cautious of all friendship: it is at this point that he sneaks off alone and is accused of unhealthiness by one of the masters. The connotations are lost on the boy, who feels alive and well and leaves the master's office thinking that it is 'a dirty place.' (p. 33) Only long after does he understand the real meaning. The effect is that the repressed sexuality embodied in the master is found wanting as a determinant of identity.

Differences of intellect, physique and the capacity to be sensitive and to imagine set John apart from his largely English peers and his family. Though the comparison is not developed, I would suggest that, through the character of John, Paton might have been intending to focus a critique of this social milieu, in

which violence and sexuality are not quite repressed and superficial norms such as straightness, equivalent to the English norms of decency and honesty, prevail.

John refuses his mother's 'gift' (pp. 33-34) mainly because he does not wish to be singled out; less understandable is his acceptance, rather than questioning, of the prejudiced language ('nigger') and attitudes of his peers. It is interesting, then, that the older narrator regards this as the 'most incomprehensible' situation of his life (p. 35), which might refer not only to his reaction to the food but also his lack of response to his schoolmates' perceptions. The plot sketch makes no provision for a more open racial consciousness, however.

When John is eight the Great War breaks out and the two Ahrens boys, being German, are made to suffer for their identity (p. 35). Again, such othering is simply taken for granted by author and narrator, as part of the English identity of the time. The narrator remarks that 'our elders' were surprised by the war: 'It was as though a warfare that was continually being waged – like Cowboys versus Redskins – had suddenly come to their notice' (insert on page 34, verso). Alterity, and Englishness, are here naturalised as normal.

Charles and Harold are called up to 'German West' and Richard and David see much more of 'the heroes' than John does (p. 36). Harold bids farewell to the members of his family in appropriate fashion, kissing his father, at which the family is thrilled rather than ashamed, because of his six-foot handsomeness and strength, and his father is moved to moist eyes, about which he is embarrassed (pp. 37-39). Standard markers of identity still hold sway.

Paton now causes his narrator to insert a remarkable metafictional passage, fairly extensively reworked in the same ink, which suggests a strong awareness of, and a distinct aversion to, contemporary techniques of narration:

> It is the habit of ["some of" inserted] our modern ~~novelists~~ story-tellers to heighten their drama by anticipating the future. [Squeezed in: "(In these chapters I have sometimes

> yielded to the same insidious temptation.)"] They would write here, ~~simply~~ in a short stark sentence –
>
> And they never came back.
>
> It is art, they would argue....But it is false art. It belongs to their story neither in time or place. It strikes a false note;... And here it would be doubly false; for they both came back. And if I too seem to be anticipating the future, it is not to heighten drama, but to clear the ground before an amateur biographer, who feels already that his journey grows tediously long (pp. 39-40).

The linear, chronological model of narration preferred here is, certainly, ostensibly that of the 28-year-old autobiographer, whose imaginative and artistic nature leads him to seek the truth, but also causes him to turn away from 'modern' techniques. It is tempting to identify Paton with his own narrator, as Alexander partly does, and it is clear that Paton was not altogether easy with modern concepts of narrative and identity, but John is indubitably differentiated from standard masculine figurations of identity in ways in which Paton was not. Hence John and, I would contend, Paton behind him, is something of a paradox: not fitting into these moulds, even rejecting them, yet subtly and powerfully influenced by them: they still remain the touchstones of identity. John is too conscious of his difference to be comfortable with it, and yet still envies his brothers in certain ways.

The remaining section of the novel deals mainly with the suitably masculine prowess of Richard at sport; as John enviously remarks, 'at the age of ten a boy would willingly be struck a moron in exchange for a team photo to hang upon his walls.' (p. 40) (The proposed chapter V is deleted in the same faded blue ink as the rest of the novel.) If Paton had been able to carry out his plans he might have constructed a John less stereotyped and more complex, because not as externally portrayed, than the other male figures in his early fiction; one wonders whether God and religion would have featured in the narrative at all.

'Secret for Seven'

MS: PC1/3/4/6

This fragment is written in foolscap-sized pages apparently removed from an exercise book. The faded blue ink appears identical to that in the 'John Henry Dane' MS, and it is likely that it also dates from Paton's days at Park Rynie (Alexander, 1994:119). Once again Paton provides a sketchy outline of the plot (inserted at the top of p. 1; numbering Paton's own), which together with its having reached page 8[122] only part of the way through 'Childhood' suggests that the piece was meant to be longer than the short story which Alexander considers it to be (ibid.):

> *Childhood*
> *Maidenhood*
> *Womanhood.*

At least three features accord this incomplete piece interest: it is set in upper-class circles in Natal; it focuses on a woman as the main character; and it concerns issues of racial identity and difference. Paton employs one of his favourite, though monotonous, rhetorical devices, repetition with variation, to introduce the two families involved. The effect, as elsewhere, is to accord them an identity that is typecast rather than individual.

~~1.~~[123]

The reader is informed that Mary Massingham[124] came 'of good family, the Massinghams of Umzimkulu.' Her parents indeed display the right colonial and territorial credentials, as do others in Paton's early fiction: her father was a major

[122] Jewel Koopman's numbering.
[123] The numbering and scoring-out of sections are Paton's own.
[124] A name probably borrowed by Paton from the author of *Great Victorians* (1932), which he used in the preparation of 'Religion, Freedom and Man': the name of the pioneer General in 'Brother Death' and also the surname of the police captain in *Too Late the Phalarope* (Paton, 1953/1971:22). I would argue that such a usage reinforces the stereotypical identity of the name's bearers in all three works of fiction.

turned farmer, her mother a colonel's daughter. They and their children knew other senior officers and their families, played polo, drank whisky and subscribed to *Punch* and *Tatler* and *Country Life*: 'these were the comforts of exile.' (p. 1) Home, it is clear, is still England, while Natal is an outpost of Empire occupied by the military.

In Paton's standard repetitive rhetoric, one is told that Charles Draper also came of a family from Umzimkulu. His father was a carpenter turned farmer, his mother 'a dark-skinned woman about whose descent kindly tongues did not enquire.' English reserve, suspicion and racism are in full play, one might observe. His parents also knew various officers and their families, whom they met at dances and agricultural shows and tennis. But most of them could not afford to play polo and drank beer. Draper read *Outspan* and *The Natal Mercury* (cheaper local publications, of course) and, strangely, preferred 'dry books.' (ibid.)

The narrator comments, echoing the communal viewpoint, that it is 'regrettable that [Draper] & Mary Massingham should fall in love,' and even more that they should insist on marriage. Mrs Massingham, knowing disaster when she meets it, sets herself to preparing a wedding suited to this unfortunate occasion, quiet and respectable (ibid.). Her husband, 'for whom the world of family relationships was ... far more dangerous than Afghanistan,' kisses his daughter and wishes Mr Draper good luck (pp. 1-2). He is therefore figured very much as many of Paton's male characters are: accustomed to battle and other 'manly' pursuits such as farming but ill at ease where relationships are concerned. The Massinghams do not attempt to bring the couple into their own world; nor do the younger people expect this (p. 2): the class boundaries are impermeable.

Draper takes his wife to his farm, Emoyeni, on the mountain of the same name, 'a land of mists & bracken, & the [inserted: "desolate"] crying of the titihoya.' (ibid.) Wittenberg's valuable gloss was discussed earlier, and one is also

reminded of the beginning of *Cry, the Beloved Country*, while the insertion indicates the writer's attempt to deepen the note of gloom.

When Mary becomes pregnant, her mother visits her more often; again in one of Paton's most common conceits, they sit on the verandah looking down on the valley below, at a different world where the natives live in their reserves, without mist, bracken and titihoyas; the earth is red, thorn trees and aloes flourish in a hot country 'where colours were more vivid & sounds more loud.' (ibid.) The panorama is specifically described as 'A world apart,' since the mists cut off white from black. But their different environments, interestingly, initially favour blacks above whites. While the latter reside in 'swirling mist' and concomitant indistinct perceptions, below are 'clearness & stars, & the cries of natives..., & lights here & there, ... singing, & stars.' (ibid.), as well as the Mission run by the White Sisters of the Anglican[125] Church, who teach black children, heal black bodies and pray to God (pp. 2-3; the rest of page 3 is crossed out in the same ink and a revision is inserted on the verso of p. 2).

Mary Draper gives birth to a little [inserted: 'black'] daughter, far darker than her father, with straight black hair and features which are 'European rather than native' (page 2, verso). When Draper is called in, his wife has already seen her child. Sister St Francis shuts her eyes and prays, and Dr Fenton[126] cannot think of anything to say; except, to himself, 'once in a hundred years'. In this terrible moment, one learns, Draper is obliged to make up his mind. He explains to his wife's parents that it would be best not to see the child. Mrs Massingham asks if there is something wrong. 'Very wrong,' Draper says, his bluntly racist attitude unquestioned by the narrator. 'She's black.' He repeats this information (it is noteworthy that in the revision there is more emphasis on the unfortunate nature of this pigmentation). Massingham, significantly simply termed 'the soldier', his

[125] Identified as Catholic by Alexander (1994:120) and Wittenberg (2004:185). The point may seem minor and may appear to stem from Paton's commitment to the Anglican Church, but in fact the sisters fall under strong criticism for their lies and hypocrisy, this being one of the few occasions in his early fiction where Christianity is not viewed favourably.
[126] Another re-used name, with the same effect as discussed earlier.

role clearly being more important than his own identity, asserts himself: they will tell enquirers that it was a false alarm. His wife is bewildered, but accepts his decree. Her husband is – in the negative sense – 'extraordinarily moved.'

Two days later Mary parts with her daughter, the family giving out that the child had died (ibid.). Dr Fenton helps to spread this story (p. 2, verso-p. 4). Sister St Francis takes the child to the Convent: the Drapers are afraid to have any more children (p. 4). Only seven people, the Drapers, the Massinghams, the doctor, the Sister and the Mother Superior share the secret. Ending the introductory section of the story with another favourite metaphor, Paton writes that the mist descends on the mountain, 'shutting off, as it had always done, one world from the other.' (ibid.)

Childhood[127]

1.

The scene now shifts to the convent, where every area displays its picture of Madonna and child and reminds one of God. All thoughts are of him, his work and his children. The cross is displayed everywhere. The narrator remarks that 'in this place of peace,' (ibid.) a number of young children play on the grass (p. 4). White visitors think of them simply as children, 'forgetting for a moment their colour,' (p. 5). The phrase 'for a moment' clearly identifies the deep rootedness of racial prejudice, the barrier which is only rarely breached and then only at great cost to one's personality and identity. Paton is about to make this fate more explicit.

Margaret Mbata is one such child, but, focalising the collective white view, a strange one with straight hair and puzzling features. Evidently she fits into no prior mould of identity. A visitor quizzes Sister St Francis about her hair and the

[127] Paton's own headings and numbering.

sister reprimands the child for forgetting her kerchief. The questioner is clearly suspicious, all the more so because the sister has spoken English to the child, who is only four (ibid.). When Dr Fenton arrives the sister is relieved, telling him that he has rescued her from an awkward situation (p. 6). He asks pointedly, 'Don't you think [Margaret's] too much with you, & too little with her own?' to which the sister replies: 'Frankly, I don't know', wondering why he asks for the child whenever he comes. An intriguing exchange follows. I quote extensively because of the issues that are raised by the actual text.

When the doctor asserts, 'Damn it ... didn't I bring her into the world?' (ibid.), Sr St Francis retorts: 'Which world?' to which he replies evasively and reverses the question, 'But what world you're bringing her into, that's a different question.' She enquires when he is going to speak to the Mother Superior about the child's future, but Fenton is reluctant to do so because in his view Mother thinks only in terms of souls. In a well-used image, connoting lack of vision, he observes: 'She's like the mist. She fogs a plain day.' Though Sr St Francis laughs, she asks whether he thinks the sisters are making a mistake. He suggests, 'Make her a nurse, ... But you'll <u>have</u> [emphasis in original] to keep her with you.... Otherwise she'll be the loneliest creature in Africa.' (ibid.) He warms to his subject. 'Even now there are natives who have nothing in common with their own people. But they at least have some of their own kind to talk to & marry. But she'll have no one. You see, she's not a native.' (pp. 6-7) The isolation wrought by miscegenation is exactly like that undergone by Farquharson and Forbes in 'Brother Death', but the implication is also that such a person has no identity she can call her own. Even the indigenous people are othered in the phrase 'their own kind'.

When his interlocutor enquires, 'So we should make her one [a "native"]?' (p. 7) Fenton answers, '... Either leave her to those of her own colour, or keep her to yourselves. For other natives there are alternatives to the hut. For her only one,

& that's your Convent. But I don't know – it may be too late now to do the first.' (ibid.)

Sr St Francis contends: 'But we never tried to do the second. Listen, Doctor. We'll put her into school, & she'll leave them all far behind. We didn't set out to teach her English. She just learnt it. All the children call me "Seester." She calls me "Sister."... How can we help that?' The doctor points out that at an earlier stage this could have been done by giving her to 'some woman in the location.... [n]ot now.' He adds, '...you could have, if it hadn't been for your Mother... You suggested it.' (ibid.) In these speeches the deadly equation of blackness with lack of intelligence, the mispronunciation of English as identifying a black person and the potential black foster mother's lack of any identity go wholly unremarked, but in my view Paton is, for once, employing a sharp irony: for instance, it is very clear that the convent is by no means a place of peace.

The nun replies that she had made the suggestion [to take Margaret into the convent] with her head, not her heart. She points out that the Mother Superior says that God knows, at which rather escapist opinion the doctor grunts. The sister indicates that she agrees with her superior and laughs outright at him: 'Oh man of little faith.' (ibid.) He responds that his faith is satisfactory but he still has to think of his patients, even if God does know. Sister St Francis observes, 'We're not fatalists,' and when Fenton responds provocatively she indicates, 'We don't do nothing, ... All things seem to point to the fact that God knows. She talks English without being taught it, her mind, her thoughts, her manners, learnt I know, but learnt as a ~~European~~ white child learns them.... She's European inside.' (pp. 7-8)

She agrees with Fenton's comment, 'That's not strange.' (p. 8) and adds the extremely racist remark, toned down slightly in the final MS but nonetheless unnervingly anticipating the constrictions imposed by Dr Verwoerd and Bantu Education: 'But what if we had sent her to the location, if all the things learnt

hadn't fitted the person learning them? That might have been a tragedy.' (ibid.) [emphasis in original] The doctor observes that this is why he is glad the issue is the sisters' business, not his.

When he discovers that Margaret has been sent to her room for not wearing her kerchief, he declares this act to be nonsense: she will not remember to do so until she knows why. He challenges the sister: 'If you get her wearing kerchiefs & doing other strange things because she's different, & yet never knowing why, you'll hurt her. Condemning her to live in a strange way, in a darkness, not understanding.' (ibid.) In his view, sending children to their room is bad; doing so because they do not wear kerchiefs is worse; but thus punishing them because they do not understand 'is probably the sin against the Holy Ghost!' Sr St Francis is not shocked, however, and the doctor remarks, 'That's why I like you,... This afternoon I shall be the saviour of little children.' (ibid.)

At this interesting point the MS ends, with no indication of further developments apart from the sketch at the beginning. It seems likely, though, that Paton intended it to be a novel or novella, since he has written eight pages and has barely begun the exploration of Maria's childhood. Nonetheless a critique of institutional religion and of its hypocrisy seems apparent and the focus falls on the intellectual capacity to understand (and to speak proper English) as constituting the key factor of human identity. While the author does appear to be embarking on an exploration of an identity located between the poles of black and white, such an identity leads not only to anxiety, but also to downright rejection of the person thus typified: at least by the characters in the piece. Difference, it is apparent, leads to rejection, to closed identities, rather than relationship. If an ironic stance is indeed being adopted by narrator and author then Paton may eventually be moving away from simplistic presentations of identity, via the memorable but often stereotyped characters and relationships in *Cry, the Beloved Country* to the complex portrayal of Tante Sophie and her relationships with her family, community and God in *Too Late the Phalarope*.

Conclusion

These short pieces differ from the longer early fiction in a number of ways. In terms of narrative identity, while stereotypes exist, particularly regarding the identity of white men and of the only black woman to be named (by an English / Scottish saint's name, so that her person is immediately appropriated), they are occasionally called into question. In John Henry Dane the narrator, for once, tells his own story. Elements of unreliability and of extreme self-awareness suggest that the tale could have been an unusual one, if perceived in terms of the early Paton. In the two short stories, at least, Paton evidences a fairly acute awareness of the demands of this form of narrative, especially as regards closure, ending them moderately effectively, while his planning of the two longer pieces, though not carried out, in my view indicates an attempt to provide for a more complex narrative identity and process of maturation.

The works are mostly too short to evaluate the degree to which Paton intended to explore the significance of relationships, except that for the Barbee brothers their mother was unusually important. As he exists for the reader, though, John Henry Dane appears almost completely self-absorbed, though he idolises his kinder brother Harold and seeks his mother's protection. From Paton's sketch of the plot I would posit that he intended that John remain detached from the dominant masculine identities of his male relatives and never develops into a rounded human being, which would affirm my hypothesis regarding the significance of relational identity. Most intriguingly, God is absent from these shorter narratives, except for 'Secret for Seven'. But his role there is ambiguous, as I consider further in the final chapter, where I shall briefly take note of the implications of the surviving MSS as regards the notions of identity present in Paton's fiction at this early point in his career.

CONCLUSION

Reflection on findings and methodology

To indulge in a Patonesque pun, my approach in this study has been a consciously partial one: my investment in the work of Paton is sympathetic and I subscribe to a criticism that respects both writing and religion and to scholarship that is rooted in recent South African reality. In the other sense of 'partial' this study is incomplete and ongoing. In other words, my hope is that it has arrived at a beginning and not an end.

At least two important findings have emerged: Levinas's thought is certainly valuable since Paton does emphasise that it is necessary for human identity to accept the invitation of the other and of the transcendent, but Ricoeur's, while useful, is not always applicable. More striking, perhaps, is that the texts themselves have not borne out my original hypothesis, based on Paton's published writing and my initial assumption that the unpublished texts were the later Paton in embryo. Here one meets up with an author who is actually sufficiently different from the later Paton as to make it quite understandable why he initially disposed of the MSS in the 'W.P.B.', losing (or destroying?) the second book of 'Ship' entirely, and at best treating these MSS as practically forgotten juvenilia in later years. Similarities with the better-known Paton include his religious commitment, not infrequently emerging in didacticism, his love of the rural landscapes of Natal and his empathy with its people, discernible especially in *Cry, the Beloved Country* and *Ah, but your Land is Beautiful.* I also argue, however, that Paton's early experimentation with matters of narration and identity reaches its peak not in these novels, but in *Too Late the Phalarope.*

My hermeneutic, in the sense of interpretive and evaluative, reading of sequences in the early narratives by Paton has attempted to take note of cultural context, at times offering a thick description of his milieu, emphasising thematic

readings, ideology and certain ethical issues amongst other matters and consequently interrogating the texts and their author where necessary. My response has frequently turned out to be that of a critical reader (cf. Cornwell, 2005:51-52), drawn by Paton's early endeavours to experiment with writing fiction, to create characters and plots not unlike those in literary forerunners such as Hardy and to mirror his Christian beliefs. But I have equally often reacted against his political, religious and writerly naivety. This has engendered in me a certain awareness of the dynamics of my own reading process, where, as it were, the texts interpellated me, invited me to be a reader sympathetic to the community and religion they describe but in fact I have frequently ended up resistant (cf. Abbott, 2002:142; Rimmon-Kenan, 2002:118-129; Belsey, 2002:52-58).

As a critical reader, then, I am struck by Paton's earnest attempts to incorporate Christianity into much of his early fiction, and not altogether surprised to discover that he did not succeed particularly well. Here I have adopted an approach that is intentional (cf. Abbott, 2002:92, 95 and Neuman, 1997:83), basing this not only on what Paton actually wrote, but also on Paton's own intentions, helpfully conveyed in plans and character sketches. It quickly became plain that he was by no means fully engaged with the realities of the South African situation, being unaware of (or blind to) the effects of colonialism, exploitation or colour prejudice, and not much concerned with most larger political issues. The identities of his characters are similarly extremely restricted, rarely venturing beyond strict limits. At the same time I do consider that Paton allows a certain degree of agency to his more powerful white male figures, and on the evidence of John Henry Dane I would suggest that he was about to venture into a much more interior exploration of identity than previously: an investigation not continued in *Cry, the Beloved Country* nor in *Ah, but your Land is Beautiful*, but one which reaches its culmination in *Too Late the Phalarope*.

During this study I have attempted to keep in mind Rose's comments (2005:81-83) about the type of discourse analysis I engage in, which is especially concerned with how specific views or accounts are constructed as real and truthful or natural, and consequently I have aimed to read Paton's texts with some care for detail regarding their assumptions (bearing my own in mind), and with an awareness that contradictions and what is excluded or made invisible may be essential, a point with which I have strongly identified myself.

Generally I have therefore offered critical comment on some repeated aspects of Paton's language usage and patterns of thought which show how he naturalised the ruling discourse of his society. Some more obvious ones, in no particular order, all of which have a bearing on his conceptions of identity, include: the names of farms, especially 'High Place' and variants, foregrounding command of territory and possession of property; collocations of adjectives, such as 'cold, unhomely' (the Carltons), or nouns, like 'saint, gentleman, gallantry' (Cromwell, Macnab); every imaginable manner of stereotype; the notion of the microcosm (Atherton, the Kaffirlands and other valleys); of the closely-knit (or conversely dysfunctional) family; religious imagery, usually superficial; scenes related to pubs and drunkenness; a tamed but sometimes ambivalent environment, mostly idealised and English in essence, sympathetic to characters' feelings and featuring all sorts of birds, cooperative mists and trees, but with an underlying darker note on occasion; an often acute reference to time, especially the dawn and the seasons; a dialectic between ephemerality and permanence; allusions to literature, the more quintessentially English and non-modern the better; references to stock English ideas; classist and racist discourses; etcetera. Along with these, a certain amount of resistance sometimes emerges, but not with the force of the primary aspects of Paton's language use.

For me the most memorable phrase, well summing up Paton's attempts to write about human identity, is that of 'white darkness'. It embodies his frequently antithetical way of thinking and style of writing and suggests a certain

impenetrability of human nature despite laudable attempts to depict it. Nonetheless my analysis has been one of an elementary nature, little concerned with the many other dimensions discourse analysis might take into account (cf. Jaworski and Coupland, 2000:3, 7-9, 12-13 and passim), and more sophisticated discussions of, for instance, patterns and turn-taking in dialogue, or the relative space accorded to certain characters, situations or points of view, could no doubt be undertaken.

In drawing attention to some of the many silences and failures of awareness in the early Paton I have been guided by Kort's sense that the contemporary researcher into literature and religion could offer a new assessment of self and identity that lies between the alternatives of 'self' as a social product and 'self' as constructed by the individual (1990:585). As regards the other two tasks mentioned by Kort I have said little about the social and economic situation in Paton's early fiction beyond observing that he hardly criticises it, while of the interaction between 'the language of fragmentation and that of totalisation' I have pointed out simply that his usage of English mainly reproduces the dominant ideologies of early twentieth-century Natal. Just occasionally a more questioning note can be heard, but it is usually not sustained. Hence at this stage in his life Paton has by no means assumed the mantle of the prophet and his views are as insular as 'the last outpost' itself.

In the thesis I have therefore interrogatively read Paton in terms of his probable intentions. He is quite aware of particularity and context (Bruner, 2003:45-58; Abbott, 2002:92-95; 142; Neuman, 1997:83), especially as it relates to the agricultural context and the passing of time, the latter aspect of narrative being emphasised by Bruner (ibid.), Ricoeur (1991:195), Abbott (2002:123) and White (1991:144). 'Ship of Truth' and 'Brother Death', at least, seem to exemplify White's 'emplotment': according meaning to events by configuring them in such a way as to represent symbolically the aporetic nature of the human experience of time (1991:144). Remaining aware of my own response to Paton as far as

possible, I have interpreted him thematically, ideologically and ethically with occasional interdisciplinary forays into theology (Abbott, ibid.:142). I have also drawn attention to certain mismatches between Paton's outward Christian beliefs and intentions, as far as these can be deduced, and his actual exemplification of them in his early fiction. As a result this body of texts does embody a struggle amongst various discourses (Cohan and Shires, 1988:142). While Paton was conscious of Boer/Brit tension and that between Christians and the more secularly-minded, he seems to have been largely blind to the other discourses, such as those involving the gender oppression of women (McNay, 2002:86-9) and the wholesale oppression of other races. In my reading, his narrators do indeed convey the norms of the text, which are Paton's own (cf. Rimmon-Kenan, 2002:82, 83): missionary zeal and generally uncritical appropriation of the supremacist discourse as regards (English) white identity discerned by Shula Marks being the most obvious.

Both of these 'norms' encompass implications with respect to narrative and relational identity. I maintain that Paton's early fiction reflects aspects of both of these types of identity, whether individual or communal in nature, but that it does so unreflexively and inconsistently. To my mind the application of certain views of identity adopted by religious philosophers such as Ricoeur and Levinas, within an overall social constructionist paradigm informed by the research of Thompson and Morrell, has produced interesting results. Later in this chapter I shall reflect briefly on the implications of the two Continental writers' later thought as regards his early endeavours to deal with human identity, having made preliminary comments in this regard both in chapter 1 and in the body of the thesis.

Before I turn to the more general theory I should like to comment on the specific implications of the portrayal of certain identities in Paton's earliest fiction overall.

Identities in the early Paton: the narrator

Paton is undoubtedly exploring the possibilities offered by narrative as a genre, but none of his projects has been very successful, whether in terms of plot or in terms of the creation of identity. One might begin with the narrator himself, who is usually a figure of authority, detached from the events yet didactic at times and scarcely distinguishable from the dominant white men whose stories he tells: in other words, he is mostly powerful and quite unaware of being so. In this regard, of course, he is similar to the young Paton as far as we know him through various sources. Apart from the narrator of 'John Henry Dane', this figure is authoritative and so are his norms (cf. Rimmon-Kenan, 2002:82,83), especially as regards sexuality, masculinity and femininity, 'Christian' (or 'non-Christian') behaviour and an Englishness which keeps the other at arm's distance. That Paton does not allow most of his narrators any self-questioning (except for the too self-conscious John) and permits very little irony itself implies the one-dimensionality of his conception of identity at the time.

The two short stories 'Little Barbee' (1928?) and 'Calvin Doone' (1930) evidence a similarly magisterial narrator but, refreshingly, in the earlier story 'Big' Barbee reverses the reader's expectations, turning out to be not a muscular cowboy but a small and dapper attorney, though extremely fast at the draw. Hence he embodies a dual concept of masculinity, one embodying skill rather than brawn, though ultimately dealing death in conventionally masculine terms. The second narrative, also offering a pleasantly different perspective, features white American men who are not necessarily the free, autonomous selves of Western thought: instead, Hope and Calvin Doone (senior) are without doubt mentally unbalanced. The only narrator who is not omniscient, John Henry Dane, though consciously different from his society, like 'Big' Barbee depending on his wits, nonetheless hankers after certain aspects of masculinity, such as authority on the parade ground, and tells one that he can indeed ride a horse better than his male relatives. His personality makes him the least reliable narrator, though, so one is free to doubt this claim. The narrator of 'Secret for Seven', while

omniscient and extradiegetic, appears strongly critical of the social mores ruling the lives not only of the white characters, but even more importantly of 'Margaret Mbata'. In these last two pieces I consider that Paton is beginning to break away from stereotypical identities of tale-teller and character – and in 'Secret for Seven' of the deity – but unfortunately without progressing very far.

Identities in the early Paton: characters

I would suggest that in his fiction of the 1920s and 1930s Paton has not yet consistently evolved the religious approaches towards identity which he would later deploy, to my mind most effectively in *Too Late the Phalarope*. Sometimes any religious note is altogether absent, such as in 'Little Barbee', 'Calvin Doone' or 'John Henry Dane'; on occasion there is a sharp questioning of institutional religion, as in 'Secret for Seven'; figures who embody a manly religion, for instance three of the priests in 'Ship of Truth' and 'Brother Death' (excluding Esmond), are clearly intended to be normative, yet their identity is largely stereotyped; other Christians, such as Cromwell, are little affected by their religion; Jarvis's conversion stems from a serious illness and strong pressure by the clergy as much as from inner conviction; women and differently-coloured characters are given little, but usually no, identity of their own.

It would appear to me that Paton was operating in terms of a concept of the self and identity which saw them as very similar to each other. Paton does not always present his individuals as the free, unified, autonomous subjectivity of liberal humanism. He is partly aware of and sometimes represents their contingent identity with respect to their own inner drives, God and other human beings, I suggest, but is not conscious of how he himself has taken over standard contemporary Natalian notions of identity. As I have indicated on several occasions, his characters are largely un-self-reflexive and draw their identity as much from their roles inside (or outside) their society as from any capacity for self-perception. Hence, with the notable exception of John Henry Dane, they cannot really be said to be involved in constructing their own identities. From my

perspective their roles instead certainly seem to be those constructed by the Natalian society for such types as the communities of farm and village themselves, almost corporate characters in their own right; the person who does not obey social norms for one or other reason; the farmer; the inhabitant of the village; the villain; the (generally) strong-minded and strong-bodied cleric; the woman who may be almost entirely domestically-bound, who is sometimes snobbishly superior or who literally embodies an ambiguous (often negative) sexuality; the black individual who is altogether written out of the equation; and so forth. To Paton's credit he does at least endeavour to impart some differentiation to these stereotypes, portraying various personalities and tensions amongst the farmers, attempting to indicate shades of complexity in figures such as Dirk Sotheran and Hartley Ussher on the one hand or Jenkinson, Jarvis and Cromwell on the other, and occasionally according a moment of individualism to one or two women characters, but to his discredit he does not consistently query the social norms themselves. Characters who do offer a different interpretation of their society, often religiously founded, certainly exist but are not particularly effective in their 'prophetic' role.

Where his characters are concerned Paton is evidently influenced by the realistic fictional mode found in some of Hardy's novels and like his predecessor does occasionally hint at greater subconscious depths in his characters, but rarely takes these further. Here his reading of Dickens possibly led him to creating characters who are relatively one-dimensional, presented in terms of exterior features rather than internal drives and not exhibiting William James's multiplicity of selves. Where he does endeavour to take one inside a character's mind, as with Jarvis, the result is noticeably stilted. He essays few other such attempts in his other earlier fiction except for occasional forays into the subconscious motivations of Dirk Sotheran and John Henry Dane, who reveals his own stream-of-consciousness but in laboured fashion.

Paton's fervent acceptance of the Christian faith translates into a frequently artificial attempt to have a number of characters embody it, but he does not pursue the implications, such as the emotional, social and political dimensions of Christianity, nor does he really engage with profound religious and emotional issues such as suffering or forgiveness. These are far more effectively explored in *Cry, the Beloved Country* and in *Too Late the Phalarope*.

He also accepts, though less fervently and with occasional misgivings, the white-dominated society of the Natal Midlands, sometimes indicating a slight querying of the norms of the white Natalian hegemony by figures who stand to some extent outside it, such as the two Scandinavians, Dirk Sotheran, Cromwell, Farquharson, two of the three physicians, the three 'manly' priests and John Henry Dane. Their otherness hardly constitutes much of an effective challenge to their society, though.

Of these Cromwell and the clergy are practising Christians but only Legh offers any really prophetic challenge to his society, discomfiting it by proclaiming truth: this is of a theological rather than a socially-conscious nature, however. Cromwell's moralistic and usually misanthropic nature causes him to be disliked by many of his peers, though he does reach out to Baxter. Jørgensen and Hansen, by virtue of not being English and by being independent-minded, embody a slightly different perspective, as does Krige. Nonetheless their view remains that of white males in a patriarchal society. Dr Trollip voices proto-existentialist concerns but in the end takes refuge in a conservative worldview and in being a man of property. The third doctor, Macnab, one might almost say is actually consumed by his society, falling in with its norms of heavy drinking, though his conscience raises a feeble voice at his end.

Farquharson, though initially a member of society as one of the drinkers in the bar and a hanger-on of Jarvis and company, eventually casts himself out utterly by 'going native'. It is implied that this is far worse an action than mere

drunkenness, bestiality or womanising. Nor does the narrator interrogate the social reaction to his deed. Long Tom's not abiding by his society's racial values simply sets him apart in a particularly final manner.

Dirk Sotheran is potentially one of the most intriguing characters since he keeps himself apart deliberately, embodying the Natalian underbelly of violence and sexuality, ambivalently protecting his oppressed sister Peggy. These traits are also to be found in other people on the margins of society, such as Cantrell, Fenton and Rosser. Those more central to it, such as Jenkinson and Cromwell, often find their sexuality uncomfortable to live with. Jenkinson has an affair which disturbs his conscience; Cromwell's unreasoning desire for a son to follow him leads to the death of his wife and a very peculiar relationship with the two other women he hopes will bear him an heir. Forsyth, presented as one closely associated with Cromwell and therefore as a normative figure, nonetheless violently assaults Cromwell's enemies in the pub and dies dramatically of a resulting stroke. Maitland, potentially different owing to his dual identity as farmer and scholar and his occasionally more liberal views, in the end agrees that he is a Nationalist with a difference, finally taking a less central role.

Like Dirk but for entirely different reasons, John Henry Dane is a most interesting character who sets himself apart from his society, questioning many of its hard masculine values but at the cost of rejection by his father and two of his male siblings. His otherness finds expression in introspection and a less exteriorly-directed nature. While Paton's sketch of the plot does indicate that his protagonist ends up as a farmer, consequently in a stereotypical role, I do wonder whether this might not have become Paton's most mature early novel. It suggests that he was possibly moving towards a conception of human identity which, to my mind, is at its most profound in the figure of Tante Sophie.

In a Levinasian sense it does seem to me that Paton's characters who accept responsibility for the other do appear to be the ones to which he is most

sympathetic, but often their portrayal is only on the surface. Here I am thinking of characters such as the three members of the clergy where, I suspect, Paton endeavours to embody an incarnational perspective (God vigorously active in and through human beings, making relationships between God and people, and people and other people possible) but without being able to realise this in an individual fashion. One could easily substitute one priest for another. While Paton tries to take the reader inside the mind of one such as Jarvis, who in a certain sense eventually vacillates between very human poles of doubt and faith, dust and light, and does finally accept responsibility for the other, the process of his growth is not convincingly depicted, as I have pointed out, and in the end death conveniently resolves the difficulty.

Identities in the early Paton: community

On the other hand I do contend that Paton is quite strongly conscious of the link between his characters' identity and their relationships with others, especially their community. This may be deduced from his emphasis upon strong family relationships, with the Shearers in 'Ship of Truth' faring best in this respect, and upon the interdependent farming and village communities in his two longer early novels. On the whole the characters are shown to be formed by their communities (village and farming, each with an underclass), which sometimes take on a communal identity or personality of their own. These communities' norms, usually strongly oriented to the white English Natalian status quo, are generally accepted rather than questioned. A few characters, such as Cromwell, step outside these boundaries for reasons of principles or personality. Others, such as Farquharson, are placed outside of white society owing to ingrained racial prejudice. Still others (Jarvis comes to mind) are apparently central to their communities but in fact their relationships are shown to be superficial, of the 'hail fellow well met' variety. A few, such as two of the doctors, Trollip and Krige, stand out from the villagers and farmers whom they serve, displaying somewhat different norms. White upper-class men on the whole are powerful, exercising a considerable degree of agency in their society, unless they are hindered by

alcohol abuse (Baxter) or mental instability (Hope and Calvin Doone). Many 'whitenesses', in Steyn's terms (2001:xxx), exist in Paton's fiction, but there is almost no sense of interaction between them, often owing to class, and none between whiteness and any other colour, though the men of the cloth transcend social and racial boundaries to a limited degree.

It could be argued that the part played by Christianity is to some extent socially determined. Here, though, I would contend that while Paton's depiction of religion is often naïve and not well-integrated into the plot or the characters, he does recognise that the community itself is irreligious and therefore in his terms does not possess a complete understanding of identity. He would certainly hold that it is only when characters possess, or come to possess, some kind of religious faith that they begin to relate to the other, in the shape of another human being, and the Other. But I consider that a disparity exists between Paton's intention to create characters affected and made whole by their belief and what he actually achieves. This is most obvious, but also most simplistic, in Jarvis's conversion. Jenkinson, a believing Christian, often does try to reach out to others, for example assisting them financially, in terms of his faith, but neglects his closest other, his wife. Cromwell, also a believer, seems little altered by his religion; though he does assist Baxter in his time of need he is contemptuous of many other people. Yet Paton is actually very critical of Cromwell's praxis, as is shown both in Jarvis's pity towards Cromwell and in Cromwell's deep isolation, even from the few friends who still constitute his community, at the end of the novel. To take a leaf out of Levinas's book, one might say that on the whole Cromwell refuses the imperative invitation of the other and the Other to relationship *and* that, importantly, Paton wishes to make it quite explicit that he does. I expand slightly on the appropriateness of Levinas below.

Identities in the early Paton: God

I have commented on the others who are present in Paton's early fiction: to my way of thinking a religious approach to his work has indeed been most useful.

Consequently, who is the Other who emerges? Paton's concept of ultimate identity is most alarmingly and unforgettably that of the Hound of Heaven. God in 'Ship of Truth' is moderately benevolent but is inactive apart from undergirding the generosity of Jenkinson (towards others than his spouse) and the missionary endeavours of Deasland. In 'Brother Death', however, God is distinctly threatening, though Paton cannot have intended this. As noted, the gentler Death acts as God's surrogate. God's presence is again inescapable in 'Secret for Seven', where everything in every room of every building and the cross at the end of every avenue (Paton, 1934d:4) in the garden is 'a reminder of God': everything external, that is, since God is by no means present in the hearts of the hypocritical Christians in the story. As I have suggested, one wonders whether Paton was voicing a doubt concerning God and Christianity in this narrative; quite probably J B Watson had exerted an influence in this respect.

God is not to be found in 'Little Barbee', 'Calvin Doone' and 'John Henry Dane' at all, which in fact comes as a relief to the present reader, since as I have shown, when God does make an appearance in the other texts, the deity is presented in superficial, sometimes ambivalent, terms (e.g., not only benevolent as in 'Ship', but also as akin to Fate, the Hound of God, or the God of the colonising Christians in other narratives): this once more constitutes a perspective that I doubt was intended by Paton.

Recapitulation

Previously in this thesis I have acknowledged my own standpoint as a Christian of a liberal political (and theological) persuasion, so that I read Paton through those spectacles and believe that literature has not only theological (Scott, 1996b:303-5) but also social (Gallagher, 1994) import. Like him I write from a position of relative power, altered these days from the white male's almost complete dominance in the 1920s and 1930s, but still considerable. Hence I have felt it important to point up Paton's own unawareness of his personal and political situation (cf. Schipper, 2000:44) and his too easy falling in with Natalian

norms though occasionally he allows a variant note to be heard and seems to be feeling towards a more inclusive sensibility. As a result he is at this stage far from writing prophetically, or even wanting to do so – and his fiction, had it been published, would have affirmed rather than questioned the oppressive status quo. Hence I believe that I have partly rewritten the received understanding of Paton.

This is not to suggest that his writing is not at times rhetorically powerful or that he does not express some truths (as Fiddes, 1991:15-18): I consider that he makes a deliberate attempt at representing the complexity of human beings, their being both dust and image of God (ibid.:52, 54), somewhere between the free, unified, autonomous subject of liberal humanism (Belsey, 2002:62) and the split subject of Freud and Lacan (ibid.:78). I also believe that in particular he has laid hold of the notion of an incarnational Christianity, if one is to go by the persons of the three manly priests. These do live out a conscious relationship with God and to some extent with other human beings. Legh in particular is something of a Christ-figure.

More unconsciously, though, Paton expresses other truths evident to the reader but not to him. I have already mentioned the concept of God which seems to be dominant. As a further instance, the same clerics and other characters reflect his own assumption of the superiority of Christianity. Father Hugo perhaps transcends racial and class differences most fully but the Anglican priests, to say nothing of almost all other characters, are much more limited in their understanding, mirroring Paton's own uneasiness at the different other, I would propose. The constricted identities of his characters are paralleled by the confines of the 'Kaffirlands' Valley, the cosiness and (imposed) Englishness of which entirely seem to satisfy him.

I am virtually certain that Paton was unaware of these issues, which reaffirms my point concerning his unconscious othering and consequently his, and his

characters', unconscious construction of identity: in terms of sameness rather than difference, in Ricoeur's terms. Paton's characters fit into roles predetermined by their/his society, though he does attempt to show some of them as exercising a degree of agency and freewill. Hence I consider that Kort's understanding of identity as lying somewhere between the extremes of social product and self-construction is applicable here. Paton seems to be operating in terms of the latter concept, but is in fact constrained by the former. It is as if he realises that his characters ought to be complex but lacks the means to make them so.

Narrative and relational identity: a conclusion

In terms of narrative identity as perceived by Ricoeur, I would suggest that for Paton's earliest fiction time and sameness are the most appropriate of Ricoeur's elements, since sameness and selfhood intersect in time (1991:189, 191). Ricoeur's remark that character 'is the self under the appearance of sameness' (1992a:128) is apposite here. In one sense, Paton's early characters evidence little personal growth: they not only appear the same but remain the same throughout. In addition, rephrasing Ricoeur slightly, to me it is striking that Paton's characters' sense of their selfhood is based on their relative sameness with other members of their community. Difference, where it exists, is generally speaking a threat to their identity. The passage of time, often as seen in the seasons, is often very precisely noted by Paton as impinging on his characters' sense of themselves. However, as *individuals* they are dispensable: every new generation (especially that of the farmers) succeeds another, forgetting the previous one but carrying on its predecessors' identity rather than evolving its own. The disruptions caused by the exceptions, such as Tony Cromwell, are keenly felt. Hence the mediation between permanence and change, the discordant concordance of which Ricoeur speaks (1991:195), is particularly evident in Paton's characters. Permanence is what matters; change is disturbing. Nonetheless some of Paton's characters do embody the ethics of accountability

and responsibility which Ricoeur describes (1992c:152; 1992b:165). But as far as Paton is concerned I would differ from Ricoeur's view (1991:198) that narrative mediation underlines the remarkable aspect of human self-knowledge, i.e. one's self-interpretation, since very few characters, mainly at times Trollip and Jarvis and more continually John Henry Dane, exhibit much capacity for self-reflexivity. As I noted previously, only occasionally do Paton's early characters grope their way towards the question of the 'I' which Ricoeur thinks so important. It is rather as if they do not need to, since their community and their roles provide the framework they depend on. After all, they are not black or Afrikaans; consequently they can – and do – exclude these others almost completely.

Though, as I have mentioned, Ricoeur and Levinas differ somewhat in their view of (human) otherness, the former does write of the work of otherness at the heart of selfhood (1992d:317-318) even though he does not regard response to the other as the only constituent of human identity. But Levinas' ethics is consciously based on difference: the other invites one beyond oneself, calls one into being (Walton 2000:12) and Paton does seem to censure those who refuse this call, the obvious examples being Dirk Sotheran, Cromwell most starkly, Jarvis (until his conversion), John Henry Dane and the inhabitants of 'Secret for Seven'. Certain figures do hear the invitation of the other, such as Jenkinson and the three main clergymen, and they are generally lauded for this response, though it is evidently limited to whites only. Paton is acutely conscious of the importance of relationship with God and with other human beings (at least ones of the same colour, in which case he would part company with African thinkers who lay stress upon the community of all human beings), and I would suggest that this stems from three factors: partly from his Christian view of the incarnation, which enables and encompasses both types of relationship; partly from an idealised view of the family; and partly from his models in Hardy and in the Midlands in reality, where the exigencies of rural living require an interdependence between people. Yet as I have attempted to show, his actual portrayal of such relationships and identities frequently falls short of what it could have been. While

theoretically Paton would have agreed with Levinas that turning towards the proximity of the other is crucial for one's own identity formation, in practice the nearness of the other – especially the other who is different – seems to engender, at best, an ambivalence in him. Likewise, he would have in principle welcomed the proximity of the divine Other, but in fact the deity is often ambiguously portrayed though I doubt Paton would have realised this. Consequently, unlike Levinas Paton turns away from difference at this stage in his career.

To my mind Paton's early experiments with narrative and identity achieve their most powerful results not in *Cry, the Beloved Country*, effective though that novel often is, but in *Too Late the Phalarope*, to which I now turn briefly, focusing only on a few matters: the character of the protagonist, Pieter van Vlaanderen, his aunt, the narrator, Tante Sophie, and her understanding of God. The novel is a potent meditation upon sin and forgiveness ('the holy task of pardon'; 1953/1971:200), and the sin of not forgiving: much of its force derives from Tante Sophie, who is neither a sentimentalised nor a superficially presented character, but who carries within herself a comprehension and acceptance of the complexity in human existence. As one might expect, her first name is not randomly chosen. From the first sentence of the novel she is aware of the necessity of human relationship, because she herself is so set apart owing to her disfigurement: 'Perhaps I could have saved him, with only a word,... But I never spoke them.' (1953/1971:7, 9). As a person who is different she well understands difference.

She describes how Pieter was always two people, with strange things in his mind that no one knew or understood (ibid.:8). This dichotomy in his personality is kept in view consistently throughout the novel, with much greater insight into emotions and motives than in either Paton's earliest fiction or *Cry, the Beloved Country*. One is taken quite far into Van Vlaanderen's wrestling with himself.

But Tante Sophie also understands herself well and is greatly conscious of God's call to relationship: her comprehension of herself and of God is a broad and deep one, leading her to view the judgement of God as far more compassionate than that of human beings (ibid.). She does not claim to know God's voice as well as John of Patmos did, but she does dare to claim a knowledge of some voice (ibid.:9). Hence she acts as an authoritative narrator, but not a magisterial one. Though she describes Van Vlaanderen as acting paternalistically towards the black people she does not identify with this image of him, nor with what she recognises as the colonialist 'subjugation' of the indigenous inhabitants, who, as elsewhere in Paton, dwell in the reserves down below (ibid.:21).

The tragedy of Van Vlaanderen, as with Farquharson, is obviously his being cast out by his community, which refuses humanity and thus human relationship altogether. But Paton makes it clear that in so doing, the community also refuses relationship with God. Yet Tante Sophie will not judge them in any sense: 'I cannot judge, for where is the end of the judging?' (ibid.:149) This is so even when her brother Jakob, Pieter's father, ejects her from his house: in a profound irony the last words of the passage that he reads from the psalm (not the psalm's actual last words, it should be made clear), concerning the man who does not remember to show mercy (Ps 109 v 16; ibid.:187), in fact refer to himself (Jakob), not to the person who is apparently condemned in the psalm. The words are actually taken out of context, for the psalm, when read as a whole, is a cry for help from a speaker who is needy.

Her brother is destroyed as a result of his hardness, dying alone (ibid.:198-199). But although Tante Sophie remains an outcast, she expresses a profound grief for the man who breaks 'the iron law', her relatives alone on their farm and the community, which is too prone to be arrogant in the face of God's mercy (ibid.:200). Here a God who is immanent rather than imposed and a narrator who is compassionate and mature, seeking though not always finding relationships with the other and the Other, are counterpoised against a community that

isolates and destroys. Social, political and religious evil are not negated or wished away, but neither are they accepted. Accountability for the other is found in a wisdom that takes both human and transcendent factors into account, seeing God and human identity as inextricably interwoven.

The future

The contributions of Paton to South African writing and history are manifold, not only in the literary sense, but also in the political and social arenas. While this thesis has pointed to certain contradictions, conflicts and blind spots in his early fiction, it has not engaged in a full-blown postmodernist interpretation of him, for reasons mentioned in the first two chapters. My own reading is obviously incomplete, but, I trust, will stimulate further reading of all of his work, not only the canonical material. To my mind an overtly religious approach has been fruitful in the case of the present narratives, casting a particular light on the identities of their inhabitants in terms of their relationships with other humans and the transcendent.

My sense is that much research could still be undertaken into Paton, especially as regards the 'smaller stories' of his life and thought, and that one might proceed along many other avenues than that of identity. I see several different types of research potentially emerging: my own continued work in Paton; others' research into him, perhaps along lines hinted at earlier and elaborated below; the study of literature and religion in South Africa; a heightened pursuit of the particular not only in terms of Paton himself, but also with respect to the study of his and other writers' lesser-known MSS, correspondence and the like. It would be fascinating to investigate still further the extent of his liberalism in the light of his correspondence with Sarah Gertrude Millin, his sense of whiteness, his relationships with C T Loram and Edgar Brookes. One might ask why the narrative genre drew him strongly at periods in his life. The rest of Paton's oeuvre could be examined, not only for its own intrinsic interest, but for its religious

dimensions, both positive and negative, and also in terms of his interpretation by his readers (cf. Cowling, 2005:81-92 who has studied his reception in the United States). In particular, Paton's poetry has to my mind suffered neglect, though *Songs of Africa* makes it much more accessible. Many of his short stories, such as 'Piet van der Merwe Goes to Heaven' (Gardner, 1975:116-117), have received less attention than they merit. Stephen Gray's forthcoming Penguin edition of all Paton's short narratives is to be welcomed, for it will make them much more accessible.

Together with the specifically religious readings which I advocate and which could be extended, perhaps making use of different religious tools,[128] one could examine Paton's ambivalent (and honest) feelings about Christian doctrine;[129] his often dismissive attitude towards women; his work for the stage, such as in the several versions of 'Louis Botha' and for musical theatre in particular; the interplay between the public (or the 'received') and the private (or the 'actual') Paton; his plentiful speeches[130] and articles on a wide variety of subjects; his numerous letters, which throw a very interesting light on his relationships with fellow writers and other correspondents, and so forth. Stephen Gray's stimulating

[128] The titles of the two parts of his autobiography, *Towards the Mountain* (1980) and *Journey Continued* (1988), indicate that Alan Paton saw his life in terms of a particular metaphor, viewing his career as an allegory of the Christian way (Alexander, 1994:394): the mountain of which Paton was thinking is of course the holy mountain of God, and the journey is his life's pilgrimage towards that place, which ended in 1988. One might fruitfully explore these and other images; could consider the issue of suffering in all his work; and so on.

[129] Throughout his life he would often wrestle honestly with some doctrines, such as the resurrection of the dead and heaven, observing 'My religion has never held a great place for dogma' (1980:274-5). In his important paper 'The Nature and Ground of Christian Hope Today' he confessed, 'I am unable to comprehend the doctrine of the Trinity.' (Paton, 1975:286) One might add, though, that he certainly is not the only Christian unable to grasp this doctrine fully, and that nowhere does Paton say that he rejects it.

While he says little about Jesus Christ as God, he often refers lovingly to him as his Lord and he does express a profound reverence for the Holy Spirit, for his work in creation, in society and amongst human beings.

Commenting on the confirmation prayer, which he asserts that he used all his life, 'Defend, O Lord, this Your Child with Your heavenly grace, that I may continue Yours for ever; and daily increase in Your Holy Spirit, more and more, until I come unto Your everlasting kingdom', he adds, 'Just how far I have increased in the Holy Spirit is a question I would not like to go into too deeply.' (1980:124)

[130] Maria Martinez Lirola is presently researching these in terms of a stylistics perspective (Martinez Lirola, 2006). This is a valuable approach since Paton's rhetorical style in all his writing was highly distinctive.

notion of examining everything that was produced in a specific year, for example 1934 as an especially productive one for Paton, could be acted upon. Comparative research could be carried out: an obvious study could be one between *Cry, the Beloved Country* and Peter Abrahams's *Mine Boy*.

Along with and possibly as a consequence of this, more general studies into South(ern) African literature, transnationalism and the like obviously need to be undertaken: one such approach could be to heed Cornwell's argument (2005:51-52) for a revitalised humanism that rejects essentialism and imperialism and advances the cause of social justice by producing critical readers, fostering an objective self-awareness of the extent to which values and beliefs are historically and ideologically positioned. To Cornwell, such an awareness is necessary if we are to recognise the otherness of others, in Levinas's terms. It will be manifest that I have associated myself with Cornwell, but that, being critical of liberal humanism by itself, I emphasise the religious dimension as well.

Further research of a broader nature might follow the following lines, some of which I have occasionally touched on in the foregoing study:

- The religious interpretation of any writing, especially in South Africa where the influence of Christianity is ambivalent, could be problematised.

- The undertaking of a study of the historical development of religious influences on South African writing, which in this country would probably have been Christian: I am thinking of positive or negative reflections of, reactions to, and/or rejections of such factors.

- Studies of individual writers whose work reflects religious influences (such as traces of Buddhism in the Fugards and in Breyten Breytenbach, or of African traditional religion in Zakes Mda).

- The relevance or otherwise of western theories of epistemology and historical process together with the contributions of (South) African thinkers regarding culture and religion, such as those of Maluleke, Mbiti, Mbembe and Soyinka.

- The nature and applicability of the prophetic, in the sense of truth-telling rather than in the sense of predicting the future.

- Relations of power, for example between the impoverished and the wealthy, the strong and the weak, the politically powerful and the marginalised.

- Issues concerning illness, incarnation, the body and (dis)embodiment. These are particularly urgent in the era of HIV/AIDS.

- Liminality and the crossing/transgressing of borders, and in this regard issues of otherness, perhaps especially with respect to sexuality.

- The notion of hope. Are alternatives which are not merely wishful offered? Is despair combated or merely recognised?

- Silencing, silence(s). Which peoples or persons are not allowed to speak? When is their voice faint, or negated by other influences?

- Humour, laughter, celebration, satire, carnival. A consciousness of these is too often lacking amongst religious readers of literature.

- Questions of territory, both geographical and psychological. In a 1999 article I drew attention to the importance of these (Levey, 1999).

- The interlinking of the religious and the political; or the lack of any connection between them.

- Experiences of liberation and salvation, of imprisonment and freedom, of wrongdoing and forgiveness, and the cultural / religious systems which define these.

- The role of the religious writer concerning poverty, illness, suffering and the question of healing, whether individual or societal (e.g., taking up Gramsci's metaphor of morbid symptoms, 1971:276).

The foregoing thesis will have indicated that many of the above issues do not in fact feature in Paton's early fiction, or if they do they are found at a subliminal level. On the other hand, his later, more politically aware and more mature writing does engage with some of these matters, such as the geographical inequities in the country, the silenced majority (*Cry, the Beloved Country*, *Ah, but your Land is Beautiful*), the impossibility of separating the religious from the political (cf., e.g., his papers in *Knocking on the Door*), the prophetic task of the writer (most of his published work), the necessity for a deep forgiveness (*Too Late the Phalarope*).

It is my hope that this study will add to the redefining of Paton that seems to be getting underway and is certainly needed. Different perspectives on him than the still common extremes of adulation or condemnation will, I am convinced, enrich the reading of one of this country's most prolific and well-known authors, situating him more fully as a South African, and African, writer. In this way the present thesis should enhance not only the academic study of writing, but also foster the wider applicability of the matters with which writing and Christianity concerns itself, not least those of identity.

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