

Examining Style

Cry, the Beloved Country

What is “Style?”

- “The way in which a literary work is written, the devices the author uses to express his or her thoughts and convey the work’s subject matter.”
- One of the ways in which to investigate “style” is to look at **diction**, **imagery**, and **rhetorical devices**.

Diction in *Cry, the Beloved Country*

1. For this activity, you will need 3 different colored writing utensils/highlighters.
2. Read chapter one of *Cry, the Beloved Country*. Just read it, don't do anything.
3. Read it again, this time highlight in one of your colors all of the words that "stand out." You may not know *why* these words stand out to you, but you just know that they do.

There is a **lovely** road that **runs** from Ixopo into the hills. These hills are grass-covered and **rolling**, and they are **lovely** beyond any **singing** of it. The road **climbs** seven miles into them, to Carisbooke; and from there, if there is no mist, you look down on one of the fairest valleys of Africa. About you there is grass and bracken and you may hear the forlorn crying of the titihoya, one of the birds of the veld. Below you is the valley of the Umzimkulu, on its **journey** from the Drakensberg to the sea; and beyond and behind the river, great hill after great hill; and beyond and behind them, the mountains of Ingeli and East Griqualand.

The grass is rich and matted, you cannot see the soil. It **holds** the rain and the mist, and they **seep** into the ground, **feeding** the streams in every kloof. It is well-tended, and not too many cattle feed upon it; not too many fires burn it, laying bare the soil. Stand **unshod** upon it, for the ground is **holy**, being even as it came from the **Creator**. Keep it, guard it, care for it, for it keeps men, guards men, cares for men. Destroy it and man is destroyed.

Where you stand the grass is rich and matted, you cannot see the soil. But the rich green hills **break down**. They fall to the valley below, and falling, change their nature. For they **grow red** and **bare**; they cannot hold the rain and mist, and the streams are **dry** in the kloofs. Too many cattle feed upon the grass, and too many fires have **burned** it. Stand shod upon it, for it is **coarse** and **sharp**, and the **stones cut** under the feet. It is not kept, or guarded, or cared for, it no longer keeps men, guards men, cares for men. The titihoya does not cry here any more.

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

Examining & Identifying Diction

First Two Paragraphs

- lovely
- runs
- rolling
- lovely
- singing
- climbs
- journey
- holds
- seep
- feeding
- unshod
- holy
- Creator

Last Two Paragraphs

- breakdown
- grow red
- bare
- dry
- burned
- coarse
- sharp
- stones cut
- desolate
- dead streams
- red blood
- scratch
- old

Examining & Identifying **Diction**

1. Closely examine the words that you highlighted. Don't pay any attention to anything else in the passage. What is the degree of difficulty of these words? How are the words arranged? Are they grouped in a complicated manner or very simplistic? What are these words *suggesting* to you? Jot down what you think and **DON'T WORRY ABOUT BEING WRONG.**
2. Try to identify one word that would encompass all of these words. You might need to look at the first two paragraphs for one word and then look at the last two paragraphs for another word.

Imagery in *Cry, the Beloved Country*

1. Again, read chapter one of *Cry, the Beloved Country*. And again, just read it, don't do anything.
2. Read it again, this time highlight in one of your other colors all of the phrases that convey a visual picture. **Imagery** will deal with one of the five senses or employ figures of speech in vivid innovative way (simile, personification)

There is a lovely road that runs from Ixopo into the hills. These hills are grass-covered and rolling, and they are lovely beyond any singing of it. The road climbs seven miles into them, to Carisbooke; and from there, **if there is no mist, you look down on one of the fairest valleys of Africa.** About you there is grass and bracken and you may **hear the forlorn crying of the titihoya,** one of the birds of the veld. Below you is the valley of the Umzimkulu, **on its journey from the Drakensberg** to the sea; and beyond and behind the river, great hill after great hill; and beyond and behind them, the mountains of Ingeli and East Griqualand.

The grass is rich and matted, you cannot see the soil. **It holds the rain and the mist,** and they seep into the ground, **feeding the streams in every kloof.** It is well-tended, and not too many cattle feed upon it; not too many fires burn it, laying bare the soil. Stand unshod upon it, for the ground is holy, being even as it came from the Creator. Keep it, guard it, care for it, for it keeps men, guards men, cares for men. Destroy it and man is destroyed.

Where you stand the grass is rich and matted, you cannot see the soil. But the rich green hills break down. They fall to the valley below, and falling, change their nature. For they grow red and bare; they cannot hold the rain and mist, and the streams are dry in the kloofs. Too many cattle feed upon the grass, and too many fires have burned it. Stand shod upon it, for it is coarse and sharp, and the stones cut under the feet. It is not kept, or guarded, or cared for, it no longer keeps men, guards men, cares for men. **The titihoya does not cry here any more.**

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

Examining & Identifying Imagery

First Two Paragraphs

- "if there is no mist, you look down on one of the fairest valleys of Africa."
- "you may hear the forlorn crying of the titihoya."
- "on its journey from Drakensburg to the sea;"
- "it holds the rain and the mist,"
- "feeding streams in every kloof."

Last Two Paragraphs

- "The titihoya does not cry hear any more."
- "the earth has torn away like flesh."
- "lightening flashes."

Examining & Identifying Imagery

1. Closely examine the phrases that you highlighted. Don't pay any attention to anything else in the passage. What are these phrases *suggesting* to you? How do they coincide with what you said about **diction**?
2. Start trying to make some connections concerning **diction** and **imagery**. Try to jot down some guesses as to what the author is suggesting with his choice of **diction** and **imagery**.

Rhetorical Devices in *Cry, the Beloved Country*

1. Ok, you know the drill, read chapter one of *Cry, the Beloved Country*. And as before, just read it, don't do anything.
2. Read it again, this time highlight in your remaining color all of the phrases that contain some sort of **rhetorical device**. Consider things like alliteration, polysyndeton, asyndeton, metaphor, anaphora, epanalepsis, epistrophe, apposition, etc. 😊

There is a lovely road that runs from Ixopo into the hills. These hills are grass-covered and rolling, and they are lovely beyond any singing of it. The road climbs seven miles into them, to Carisbooke; and from there, if there is no mist, you look down on one of the fairest valleys of Africa. About you there is grass and bracken and you may hear the forlorn crying of the titihoya, **one of the birds of the veld**. Below you is the valley of the Umzimkulu, on its journey from the Drakensberg to the sea; and **beyond and behind the river, great hill after great hill; and beyond and behind them**, the mountains of Ingeli and East Griqualand.

The grass is rich and matted, you cannot see the soil. It holds the rain and the mist, and they seep into the ground, feeding the streams in every kloof. It is well-tended, and **not too many cattle feed upon it; not too many fires burn it**, laying bare the soil. Stand unshod upon it, for the ground is holy, being even as it came from the Creator. **Keep it, guard it, care for it, for it keeps men, guards men, cares for men. Destroy it and man is destroyed.**

Where you stand the grass is rich and matted, you cannot see the soil. But the rich green hills break down. They fall to the valley below, and falling, change their nature. For they grow red and bare; they cannot hold the rain and mist, and the streams are dry in the kloofs. **Too many cattle feed upon the grass, and too many fires have burned it**. Stand shod upon it, for it is coarse and sharp, and the stones cut under the feet. It is not kept, or guarded, or cared for, it no longer keeps men, guards men, cares for men. The titihoya does not cry here any more.

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

Examining & Identifying Rhetorical Devices

First Two Paragraphs

- “one of the birds of the veld.”
- ‘beyond and behind the river, great hill after great hill; and beyond and behind them,’
- “not too many cattle feed upon it; not too many fires have burned it.”
- “Keep it, guard it, care for it, for it keeps men, guards men, cares for men.”
- Destroy it and man is destroyed.”

Last Two Paragraphs

- “Too many cattle feed upon the grass, and too many fires have burned it.”
- “It is not kept, or guarded, or cared for, it no longer keeps men, guards men, cares for men.”
- “The lightning flashes over them, the clouds pour down upon them, the dead streams come to life, full of the red blood.”
- “The men are away, the young men and girls are away.”

Examining & Identifying Rhetorical Devices

1. Closely examine the sentences and phrases that you highlighted. Don't pay any attention to anything else in the passage. What emotional response are these sentences and phrases eliciting from you? How do they coincide with what you said about **diction** and **imagery**?
2. Now, begin putting all of this together. Write a thesis statement about how Paton's style (his use of **diction**, **imagery** and **rhetorical devices**) reflects the narrator's attitude towards the two different lands described. How does Paton's style connect to the theme of the novel? Write a thesis statement connecting Paton's style and the novel's theme.