

'Cry, The Beloved Country' a stage success

Alan Paton awoke to read enthusiastic reviews

Daily News Special Correspondent

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THE South African novelist, Alan Paton, awoke yesterday morning to read extremely cordial reviews by most of New York's dramatic critics of "Lost In The Stars," the stage adaptation of his novel "Cry, the Beloved Country."

◇ With but three exceptions the critiques were favourable to the point of enthusiasm, especially in the case of the more influential commentators such as those of the Times, the Herald-Tribune and the Sun. The trio of dissenters, although generally approving, felt that the play fell somewhat short of transferring the solemn beauty of the book to the stage.

In a breakfast table talk with Paton this morning I gathered the impression that the novelist had been obliged to adjust himself to changes not only in the spirit of the story, but in the plot and action. Yet he recognises that the novel and the drama are two very different forms of art and what was done in the stage presentation—by master hands in dramaturgy and musical composition—was all for the best.

SYMBOLICAL

Paton, however, said: "I feel it should be pointed out that South Africans who see the piece will be disturbed by the fact that it is treated symbolically from an impressionist standpoint rather than realistically. In other words, it is South Africa as seen through American and not South African eyes.

"I saw some 20 rehearsals and at first was greatly taken a-back, but eventually I found myself thinking directly in line with Maxwell Anderson, who wrote the script,

Kurt Weill, the composer, and Rouben Mamoulian, the director. In spite of this admission it was not difficult to detect in the Johannesburg author a vast inward exaltation over the success of his play.