

WORKSHEET 3. *The Grapes of Wrath*, Chapter 14

Name: _____
 Teacher: _____

Date: _____
 Grade: _____

***The Grapes of Wrath*, Chapter 14, excerpt**

The two men squat on their hams and the women and children listen. Here is the node, you who hate change and fear revolution. Keep these two squatting men apart; make them hate, fear, suspect each other. Here is the anlage of the thing you fear. This is the zygote. For here “I lost my land” is changed; a cell is split and from its splitting grows the thing you hate—“We lost *our* land.” The danger is here, for two men are not as lonely and perplexed as one ... This is the beginning—from ‘I’ to ‘we.’

Questions regarding Steinbeck’s choice of words in each line:

“Two men squat on their hams and the women and children listen.”

- What actions does Steinbeck have the two men doing in line one?
- How does the author convey the attitude of the women and children? Do you think they are they a captive audience or a willing audience? Why?
- If you were to supply the words the men are saying—what would you have the men say in this excerpt?
- Other observations about line one?

“Here is the node, you who hate change and revolution.”

- Define *node*. Discuss how Steinbeck uses this word in this context (meaning a point at which lines or pathways intersect or branch; a central or connecting point).
- Who is this “you”? To whom is Steinbeck speaking?
- Why does he use the word ‘hate’ instead of another word?
- What “change” and “revolution” is being hated?
- What might be another word to describe the emotion here instead of hate? Try substituting the word “fear”—does that have the same meaning?

“Keep the two squatting men apart....” make them hate, fear, suspect each other.”

- Note the significance of this line. Why does the original “squatting” posture appear to be one of uniting rather than dividing the two men? How does Steinbeck change the image dramatically by adding the word “apart”

- Consider how the meaning of the photograph and narrative would change if the two men had been pictured as standing?
- Why does Steinbeck use the words “hate, fear, suspect”?

“Here is the anlage of the thing you fear. This is the zygote.”

- Define “*anlage*.” (See footnote to Chapter 14: “The first stage in the development of an organism.”)
- What is there to “fear?”
- Define “*zygote*.” (See footnote to Chapter 14: “An organism developing from a living cell.”)
- What is this ‘organism’ developing from cell formation?
- Discuss why Steinbeck selected those words with a scientific context to describe a human situation? How is the biological word syntax significant to this situation?
- What is the fear associated with such a growing cluster of embryonic cells?

“For here ‘I lost my land’ is changed; a cell is split and from its splitting grows the thing you hate—‘We lost *our* land.’”

- Discuss the significance of this line in the novel.
- Steinbeck is introducing a shift: from “*I* lost my land” to “*We* lost *our* land. Discuss difference between “my” and “our” in respect to property.
- What is Steinbeck trying to accomplish by introducing an analogy to “a cell is split”
- What “grows” from this splitting cell—does it multiply itself?
- Who is the “you” being addressed here? What is it the “you” who hates?

“The danger is here, for two men are not as lonely and perplexed as one... This is the beginning—from “I” to “we.””

- Why is this “two men” such a dangerous concept— not to mention frightening and revolutionary?
- Why aren’t two men in difficulty not as lonely and perplexed as one man?
- Discuss the concept of the group and the power in number. What is an antonym to “lonely?” What is the antonym of “perplexed”?
- How can people find strength and clarity through sharing difficulty?

- Does Steinbeck adequately prepare the reader and make the soil of his novel ready to plant this seed of ‘I’ to ‘we’ in Chapter 14?
- Discuss how the concept “I” to “We” becomes a major force for the rest of Steinbeck’s novel.