Cry, the Beloved Country

Book I Packet

**Before You Read**

**Historical Context/Setting**

Using your research from your group project or a Chromebook for additional research, answer the following questions:

\*What probably began the Afrikaners’ sense of being threatened by the black man? (You may want to research the Bantu for this.)

\*How and why did apartheid become the law of the land?

**As You Read: Annotation Focus**

 \*We will be examining the role of fear in the novel. As you read, circle/highlight/underline/etc. each

time you see the words “fear” or “afraid.” That’s all. We’ll come back to this!

\*This is a novel full of contrasts. As you read, make notes when contrasting ideas/feelings, characters,

settings, and other images appear.

**Setting**

Chapter 1

1. Re-read the first two paragraphs. List three adjectives that you could use to describe the Umzimkulu Valley.
2. How has the valley changed over the course of this brief chapter?

Chapter 4

1. Read the first five paragraphs of Chapter 4. Compare the soil of the great valley of the Umkomaas in Chapter 4 to the Umzimkulu Valley of Chapter 1.
2. Notice that the first reference to Afrikaans is that it is “ language that he [Stephen Kumalo] had never yet heard spoken” (45). What does that say about the place from which Stephen comes?
3. What industry is carried on in the part of the land where Stephen first hears Afrikaans spoken? What is his first impression of this industry?
4. By the end of chapter 4, what is Kumalo’s initial impression of Johannesburg?
5. Find specific examples that show what Stephen Kumalo’s experiences and reactions reveal about the racial situation and white supremacy in South Africa. List at least five (and include page numbers).

**Style**

Before you read

 \*What is style as applied to a literary work?

Chapter 1

1. The novel possesses clear poetic qualities. List at least three images in chapter 1 that could be considered poetic.
2. What mood do these passages create?
3. What kind of story might one anticipate from these descriptions?

Chapter 2

1. How does Paton punctuate dialogue? What does that punctuation do for the story?
2. Notice the formality of the child’s speech and actions. What does it reveal about the people of Ndotsheni?
3. What does Paton’s use of actual place names and some Afrikaan and Zulu words do for the story?

Chapter 5

1. Even in the strictly prose passages, Paton writes with great conciseness. One example is found on page 22, where it begins, “So they all talked of the sickness of the land.” List at least three details about the African situation that you can learn from this short paragraph.

Chapter 9

1. This chapter begins with a sad poem. List at least three poetic features of the short section that begins with “--Have you a room to let?”.
2. A prose-poem is found toward the end of the chapter (page 57). It is made up of three paragraphs, each beginning with “Shanty Town is up overnight.” What poetic characteristic is found in this passage?

**Point of View**

1. Whose viewpoint predominates in Book I?
2. What is this person’s vocation? How might his vocation impact his perception?
3. State at least two advantages of using this character’s point of view.
4. List African social and economic conditions that become clear to the reader through his eyes.
5. Chapter 9 and the first part of chapter 12 depart from the point of view that predominates in the rest of Book I. What is the impact of this departure?

**Conflict**

\*What are the five basic conflicts found in literature?

1. Which of these conflicts can be found in Book I? Within whom is each found? Which conflict appears to be the most important?

**Characterization**

For each of the following characters, explain how s/he is characterized by the author. What are his/her dominant traits? How does each represent a different facet of the black South African experience? Offer specific evidence from the text for each. \*\*Tip: here’s where you might also note how some characters connect to their names.

Stephen Kumalo

Theophilus Msimangu

John Kumalo

Gertrude