

1 Oct. 26: Genesis 1-5

2

3 >Having never read the bible, I find several things confusing. I do not understand why God
4 punished Adam and Eve in the way he/she did. God created all creatures, including the serpent.
5 Why have something evil introduced among two people who are not aware of good and evil?
6 How responsible are they when they are reminiscent of innocent children. And it seems like the
7 basis for long standing gender inequality and gender roles has roots in the bible. They both
8 willingly ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and yet it seems Eve gets a much
9 harsher punishment. And from these punishments, we already have the shape of gender roles
10 that still exist today where the man is the "worker/breadwinner" and the woman is the
11 "homemaker/caretaker".

12 ¶So do certain societies then reflect what the bible says, or did these notions widely predate the
13 bible? And if they predate it, then where did they come from?

14

15 >I would like to respond to Genesis 2:24: "That is why a man leaves his father and mother and
16 attaches himself to his wife and the two become one." In many instances in the Bible male
17 chauvinists love to quote the Bible about how we are to be secondary to men. Here this quote
18 shows the opposite; that men, just as women, have to leave their family and "attach"
19 themselves to us. Love this quote because it's a huge role reversal. Even in weddings, women
20 are given away, here it shows that men are "given away."

21

22 >The creation story is the first story in the Bible and one that I feel gives the most controversy.
23 If taken literally then one must believe that God created the world in 7 days. Anyone who
24 believes in science will shun this belief. What if one believes in God and science? If one looks at
25 the text closely it is obvious that there are two creation stories which poses even more
26 problems. If one looks at the allegorically there becomes hundreds if not thousands of possible
27 interpretations. Even as one who believes in God, the creation story gives more questions than it
28 does answers. I'm looking forward to discussing this in class.

29

30 > And for genesis, for some reason the book that I have is missing the first half of the fist
31 paragraph of Genesis. Regardless, It has always interested me that God created everything, and
32 saw that it was good, but he created the snake, who tempted Eve and adam and had him
33 disobey his wishes. The snake gets punished as well, even though (I believe) the snake
34 represents the devil, which is the oposite of god and from what I understand, god has no
35 control over the devil. God punishes Adam, Eve and the snake immidiately after discovering
36 them, and seeks blame imidiately after discovering their disobedience.

37 ¶Another thing that intrests me, is how the very beginning of a religos book begins with
38 creation, then imidiately after creation punishment, and then murder. This book starts with the
39 beginning of man, then him betraying the will of go and then one of the original mans
40 descendents murdering each other. this would immidiately sugest to me than man is not good,

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41 and immediately full of sin from the very beginning, after being tricked by snake, have fallen
42 from good to bad. It has a rather skewed view on humanity, but that is just my point of view.
43 Humans are immediately committing crimes, even though god created them, and "saw that they
44 were good" and that they were created in Gods image, they immediately act out wrong.
45 ¶Genesis 5 is setting up Noah's lineage, and showing where he comes from, I believe it is
46 setting up the famous story of Noah's arc, and showing that he came from the original human
47 and from good birth. Almost everyone in his lineage is depicted as "walking with god" so his
48 ancestor were all pious and respectful and therefore he was worthy of the task that God gives
49 him of saving the animals. Also It shows that he has a long lived family, which could show that
50 god favors them and grants them with long lives

51

52 >I still don't understand this part (Genesis 9:

53 ¶ ²⁰ Noah, a man of the soil, proceeded [\[a\]](#) to plant a vineyard. ²¹ When he drank some of its
54 wine, he became drunk and lay uncovered inside his tent. ²² Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his
55 father's nakedness and told his two brothers outside. ²³ But Shem and Japheth took a garment
56 and laid it across their shoulders; then they walked in backward and covered their father's
57 nakedness. Their faces were turned the other way so that they would not see their father's
58 nakedness.)

59 ¶Does this imply homosexual intercourse?

60 ¶And I find the God rather capricious -- it is very hard for me to understand his intention.
61 (Why did He promise that He will not destroy all living creatures on Earth after the Flood?)

62

63 >All my life I've been Catholic, yet, before this week, I had never before read the bible. Sadly,
64 after reading Genesis 1-5, I'm slightly questioning my faith in my religion.

65 ¶The passage portrays God as sexist and selfish; that's definitely not the God I grew up with.
66 ¶Sexism- Women did NOT simply rise from men! It is depressing to think that we are only
67 existent because we came from the ribcage of a man! Rather, we should have been created
68 equal. In a perfect world, this would have been so; instead, we live in a world full of
69 discrimination. God definitely messed up in this department.

70 ¶Selfishness: Why on earth would he punish all of mankind just because of the ignorance of
71 only two people?! According to this scripture, because of Adam and Eve, we all live a life of
72 servitude to God, maintaining the world through farming, childbirth, etc... Isn't God supposed
73 to be all-forgiving? If this were true, I'm sure he would have forgiven Adam and Eve; however,
74 I believe selfish intentions drove him to his terrible decision. Because he did not want to take
75 control of the world, we now have to fend for ourselves, leading to poverty, disease, and war.
76 Had God just taken other people, his future children, into consideration, none of these things
77 would be an issue.

78 ¶How aggravating it is to lose even the littlest bit of faith in your own God.

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83 **Genesis and "White Tiger"**

84

85 >Genesis 1 - 5: These chapters are well known among many people. It is the story of the
86 beginning of the world.

87 ¶The first chapter dwells on the difference and separation of light and darkness. This can be
88 immediately connected to the India of Light and the India of Darkness in *The White Tiger*. In the
89 novel, there are negative connotations with the division, but in these first chapters of the Bible,
90 we do not see negativity associated with the separation. Once God makes all the plant life and
91 animal life, it appears that earth is a massive jungle with animals just roaming about. In *The*
92 *White Tiger*, Balram describes the Indian people as animals and they are either in a zoo or a
93 jungle. This idea that people are animals debases the idea that humans are more intellectually
94 capable than animals. The Bible supports the common idea of humans being greater through
95 the role of Adam. Adam is made in the likeness of God and that, in itself, puts humans above
96 animals. Adam is also told to name each of the animals and, in a way, this makes him the
97 master of the animals. In chapters 3 and 4, we learn about sinning and God's wrath and
98 intolerance for sinners. Now the humans must forever work for their food. This idea that we
99 have to earn our 'bread' is also seen in the novel, but is grotesquely shown with the emaciated
100 bodies of Balram's father and brother.

101

102 >In the Genesis reading I saw more self-entrapment than slavery. Adam made himself and all
103 mankind a slave to the land, and Eve became a slave to Adam - "he will be your master". It is a
104 sharp contrast to our other readings of escaping slavery.

105 ¶In regards to the Sentiments I think they had good points and it was a cry for liberation much
106 like the ones we have heard already. It is like an innate part of the human spirit craves freedom.
107 It is a bold declaration for the manly world they lived in.

108 ¶The *White Tiger* got very dark very fast. It actually reminded me of the movie "Apocalypse
109 Now" as the scenes became more bizarre, mad, and dark. Although Balram is finally his own
110 master, he is never free of his family. He thinks of granny and water buffalos, and he is wary of
111 Dahram who understands the scenario and may grow bitter with age. Even with his family
112 dead he is still never free of them.

113

114 >I'm sorry I missed that. Here are my comments:

115 Imagery of light and darkness as in 'the white tiger'. The earth was formless and void(creates a
116 picture of doom) but when God brought light then creation began and everything was made
117 beautiful.Light symbolises beauty.

118 I also found it interesting that through pain, as in child birth, something beautiful is brought
119 forth. At times there has to be sacrifice on one's part for him to get something worthwhile. This
120 is extreme but Balram had to 'sacrifice' his family to attain his manhood and 'freedom'. That also
121 reminds me of FD and the struggle against slavery.

122

123 >I found the parallels between our readings thus far and Genesis to be difficult and easy to
124 perceive. However, I am most interested in the sense of Liberation or how Genesis is related to a
125 sense of Liberation.

126

127 >Genesis 1-5

128 -This is the most known part of the bible; the creation of the earth and mankind.

129 -Always find it interesting that God creates man in his image. Made Adam out of dust and Eve
130 from the rib of Adam.

131 -Always a question: why would God put the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the
132 garden in the first place?

133 -God places Adam in the Garden to till it and take care of it.

134 -Eve is seduced by the serpent, eats from the tree and gives Adam to eat as well because she
135 wants to be all knowing like God.

136 -Become aware of nudity, show that they are ashamed--loss of innocence.

137 -Adam "knows" Eve, conceive Abel and Cain. Cain kills Abel out of jealousy and is punished by
138 God.

139 -Cain gets a wife and their family is created.

140 -Description of the generations of Adam. They all live to old age, impossible in reality.

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142

143 **More on "White Tiger:**

144 >Comments from a Liberationist:

145 Balram's "rite of passage" is interesting because it truly does not involve sexuality and
146 manhood as defined by it—Balram is only interested in money and what money can do for him,
147 how it can free him. The golden hair he so treasures and seeks more of represents this wealth,
148 but it can only be bought with "real" money, and eventually is revealed to be fake. This
149 experience reveals to Balram that true wealth cannot be bought in India. The rich man simply
150 has it and the poor simply does not. Thus Balram must steal money from his master. Later he
151 sees the golden hair, the representation of the system he has defied, as sickening, and "doesn't
152 trust the TV or the big outdoor posters of white women."

153 ¶Dharam's arrival surprised me very much, but he wasn't the imposition that I expected he
154 would be, coming from Balram's grandmother. He seemed to help out, not bother Balram at all,
155 and Balram does not exploit him. Dharam almost seems like a son to him, though without the
156 oppression of women and other family, a chance to teach make him the English-speaking man
157 that Balram wanted to be. The strange thing is that later, Dharam appears to basically blackmail
158 Balram—perhaps only for ice cream, but he still has certain information, and as Balram said,
159 even the men you pay off can turn you in one day.

160 ¶Balram handles the car accident much better than the Mongoose and Ashok, but as Balram
161 says, he is not their master, but their boss, and he respects that relationship, unlike Ashok, who
162 treated him as family to make him feel safe. Balram seems very gracious with his employee and

163 with the dead boy's family, but he also has the police on his side, so his "pleasant" manner
164 comes from a feeling of safety—he "cannot be found."

165
166 >I thought it was ironic that the drivers called Balram a servant who was "loyal to the
167 last"(p.156). I see this as irony because it is Balram who is, at heart, the most disloyal of all the
168 drivers. He kills his master and steals a large sum of his master's money, I'm sure that those
169 drivers are still just drivers, that they are cosily occupying space on the lower rungs of society.
170 Balram goes on to say that this idea of the Rooster Coop is preserved and enforced by itself, that
171 servants must keep other servants from becoming innovators, experiments, or entrepreneurs
172 (p166). If we inspect the above mentioned scenario with this in mind, it would seem as though
173 servants reinforce and preserve this Rooster Coop in denying their condition, almost living in
174 this illusion that they are better than they are. This could explain the lack of motivation for
175 having aspirations of moving up in society or acting on such aspirations.

176 ¶It is interesting that so much emphasis is put on loyalty in the Darkness, that being in the Light
177 was to be disloyal. The pious and ardent of faith were condemned to suffer a difficult life for
178 which death could only absolve while the immoral and opportunists enjoyed an easy life, filled
179 with trivialities. I think the concept of reincarnation is fascinating, i wonder what it could mean
180 in this context. If the Dark people die, live a good life, and become reincarnated, do they then
181 become greedy landlords and corrupt politicians? Is moving up socially similiar to ascending
182 spiritually? I mean, the caste system is a part of the Hindu religion, so then is moving up in
183 caste a spiritual ascension? please excuse my ignorance on the subject.

184

185 >While I'll be giving a debate about it on Thursday, The question of Balram's justification is
186 what particularly interests me. What I feel like is at stake here, is a fundamental truth that
187 governs us all. A truth so vile and twisted that it's hard to fully wrap one's head around. The
188 murder of Mr. Ashok goes beyond "good v. evil" and "right v. wrong": It sheds light on the
189 fallacies of how human society works. While the precise wording and page number escapes me,
190 I recall a line in the novel where Balram compares his plight to that of Mr. Premier, stating
191 something along the lines of: "How many people must have died so that you can live the life
192 you live?" What I believe Balram is getting at, is the notion that for one to be successful, the
193 'other' must be unsuccessful. We, as a select privileged class of people, often times lose sight of
194 the fact that our success is made possible by the labor and 'unsuccess' of others. The ideas of
195 'drive' and 'opportunity' come up often as key ingredients to becoming successful - and while
196 'drive' can often be a conscious step forward, opportunity is not guaranteed. In fact,
197 opportunity presents itself far less often then most of us would care to believe. Balram is simply
198 acting on an opportunity that has happened to present itself: In this respect, he is not different
199 than Mr. Ashok, Mr. Premier, or anyone else who has found success. This might serve as an
200 explanation for why Mr. Ashok's murder isn't conducted out of contempt or hatred: Balram is
201 guided by the same principles that once compelled his master to almost frame him for a crime
202 he didn't commit. We can talk about right and wrong all day, but who's to say that any of us, if
203 put in Balram's shoes, would act any differently?

204

205 > At the beginning Balram was my hero. I kind of pitied him but at the end I don't at all because
206 He became exactly like his previous 'oppressors'. It is like a freed slave becoming a slave owner
207 himself!

208 ¶Here are my comments.

209 Manhood.

210 Balram talks about this theme that we mentioned in the last class discussion. It seems like it is
211 all about getting to the top of p. 273

212 ...Haven't I succeeded in the struggle that every poor man here should be making? ...killed
213 someone ... on their way to the top..All I wanted was a chance to be a man.

214 Imagery.

215 He compares the Muslim who read him the poem to a person who flew on a carpet from Mecca.
216 That reminded me of Alladin and the jinn who granted him his wishes. Poem was an eye
217 opener to him. He realised how to be 'free' through the inspiration of the poem. It made him
218 realise that the door has always been open but he was looking for the key.

219 Question:

220 What is the significance of personifying the city and the pavements? He says that he 'listens' to
221 them.

222

223 >The ending of The White Tiger Did not truly surprises me. It was obvious from the beginning
224 that he was going to kill Mr. Ashok, and escape punishment. However, the way he killed Mr.
225 Ashok was very interesting to me. He described his killing him as a more violent way of how he
226 played with his father as a child. It seemed like the killing of Ashok could represent the killing
227 of his father's image, or powerlessness to him, and him freeing himself from what happened to
228 his father.

229 ¶Another point that was unexpected for me was the arrival of his nephew. I would have
230 thought that the arrival of the nephew would have changed Balram's plans. His grandmother
231 forced Balram to take care of him as penance for not sending money back to his family. Balram
232 gets angry, but then takes the boy under his wing and uses his living with him to his advantage.
233 The boy's arrival is supposed to hinder Balram, but instead Balram takes it as a sign to move,
234 and he begins to move so he cant get to a better life.

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Bible

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247 You need a good commentary to work from. We cannot begin to address all of the mysteries
248 that come with the text. Copies of the assigned edition (older edition, but with the same
249 translation, notes, and essays) are available in Frost:

250 *The Oxford study Bible* : Revised English Bible, with the Apocrypha / edited by M. Jack Suggs, et
251 ak, New York : Oxford University Press, 1992.

252 **BS192.16.A1 1992 .N48** (2 copies on reserve; 2 left to be checked out).

253

254 **Terms:**

255 **Theodicy:** From the Greek *theos* (god) and *dikē* (justice); a modern term (coined in 1711):
256 “defense of God’s goodness and omnipotence in view of the existence of evil” (Merriam-
257 Webster).

258 **Felix culpa** (Latin for “fortunate fall”): An idea from Christian theology, starting with
259 Augustine of Hippo (354-430 CE), that God allows evil to happen in order to bring great good.
260 With the fall, it would not have been possible for Jesus (“the new Adam”) to redeem mankind.
261 A secular interpretation is that it is better for Adam and Eve to have the knowledge of good and
262 evil, whatever the price, rather than to live in ignorant bliss; with the fall, man’s opportunity for
263 self-creation starts. The idea finds thematic support, never explicitly labeled or formulated, in
264 the Torah in the notion that the Isrealites needed the forty years in the desert to form into a
265 nation.

266

267 **Satan/devil:** See the index in the *Oxford Study Bible*. The serpent in Genesis 2 may distantly
268 recall other monsters and dragons. See *Leviathan* and *Rahab* in the index.

269

270 **Afterlife:** See the index under *Sheol*, *Ben-hinnom*, *Hades*, *Hell*. “Heaven” in the Hebrew Bible
271 refers to the sky (“the heavens”); it is often described as the abode of the LORD, or used as a
272 metaphor for His transcendence. As a place for the afterlife of believers, in our readings we start
273 encountering the term in Matthew 5.12 and 6.20.