Oct. 26: Genesis 1-5

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

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

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

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

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

Another thing that intrests me, is how the very beginning of a religous book begins with creation, then imidiately after creation punishment, and then murder. This book starts with the beginning of man, then him betraying the will of go and then one of the original mans descendents murdering each other. this would immediately sugest to me than man is not good,
and immediately full of sin from the very beginning, after being tricked by snake, have fallen
from good to bad. It has a rather skewed view on humanity, but that is just my point of view.
Humans are immediately committing crimes, even though god created them, and "saw that they
were good" and that they were created in Gods image, they imidiately act out wrong.

Genesis 5 is setting up Noah's linneage, and showing where he comes from, I believe it is
setting up the famous story of Noah's arc, and showing that he came from the original human
and from good birth. Almost everyone in his linneage is depicted as "walking with god" so his
ancestor were all pious and respectful and therefore he was worthy of the task that God gives
him of saving the animals. Also It shows that he has a long lived family, which could show that
god favors them and grants them with long lives

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

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

- Does this imply homosexual intercourse?

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

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

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

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

- How aggravating it is to lose even the littlest bit of faith in your own God.
Genesis and “White Tiger”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

October 26, 2010
>I found the parallels between our readings thus far and Genesis to be difficult and easy to perceive. However, I am most interested in the sense of Liberation or how Genesis is related to a sense of Liberation.

>Genesis 1-5

-This is the most known part of the bible; the creation of the earth and mankind.
-Always find it interesting that God creates man in his image. Made Adam out of dust and Eve from the rib of Adam.
-Always a question: why would God put the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden in the first place?
-God places Adam in the Garden to till it and take care of it.
-Eve is seduced by the serpent, eats from the tree and gives Adam to eat as well because she wants to be all knowing like God.
-Become aware of nudity, show that they are ashamed—loss of innocence.
-Adam "knows" Eve, conceive Abel and Cain. Cain kills Abel out of jealousy and is punished by God.
-Cain gets a wife and their family is created.
-Description of the generations of Adam. They all live to old age, impossible in reality.

More on “White Tiger:

>Comments from a Liberationist:

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

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

Balram handles the car accident much better than the Mongoose and Ashok, but as Balram says, he is not their master, but their boss, and he respects that relationship, unlike Ashok, who treated him as family to make him feel safe. Balram seems very gracious with his employee and
with the dead boy’s family, but he also has the police on his side, so his “pleasant” manner comes from a feeling of safety—he “cannot be found.”

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

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

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

¶Here are my comments.

**Manhood.**

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

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

**Imagery.**

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

**Question:**

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

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

¶Another point that was unexpected for me was the arrival of his nephew. I would have thought that the arrival of the nephew would have changed Balram’s plans. His grandmother forced Balram to take care of him as penance for not sending money back to his family. Balram gets angry, but then takes the boy under his wing and uses his living with him to his advantage. The boy’s arrival is supposed to hinder Balram, but instead Balram takes it as a sign to move, and he begins to move so he cant get to a better life.
You need a good commentary to work from. We cannot begin to address all of the mysteries that come with the text. Copies of the assigned edition (older edition, but with the same translation, notes, and essays) are available in Frost: 


**Terms:**

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

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

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

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