

Crucified Peoples Strange Fruit

*Southern trees bear a strange fruit
Blood on the leaves, blood at the root
Black bodies swinging in the Southern breeze
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees
Pastoral scene of the gallant South
The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth
Scent of magnolia sweet and fresh
Then the sudden smell of burning flesh
Here is a fruit for the crows to pluck
For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck
For the sun to rot, for the tree to drop
Here is a strange and bitter crop.*



Black Liberation Theology



- Developed in response to two phenomena:
 - Malcolm X's view that Christianity was a "white man's religion"
 - Southern white Christianity's support for slavery and Jim Crow segregation laws
- July 31, 1966: National Committee of Negro Churchmen published their "Black Power Statement," urging a more aggressive approach to combating racism using the Bible
- James Cone
 - the dominant culture has corrupted Christianity
 - God is not on the side of the oppressor, but of the oppressed
 - Justice and liberation (the exodus meme) are reconstructed as self-definition, self-affirmation and self-determination for blacks

The Lynching Tree Cheap Grace and Costly Grace

- Cheap grace
 - Cross as decoration
 - Non-offensive religious object
 - A symbol of holiness
- Costly grace
 - Seeing through the superficial piety to the ugliness of oppression
 - And acting sometimes against our own interests to redress it
 - For Americans, this means seeing the lynching tree when they see the cross

The Lynching Tree

Cone's Connection of it to the Cross

- Both public spectacles
- Both reserved for low-status criminals, reinforcing or performing their powerlessness
- Both are deaths involving torture
- The cross and lynching tree need each other as we reconstruct the symbol
 - The cross redeems the lynching tree and its victims
 - The lynching tree frees the cross from false piety

Class 9a
 Jesus in Film



The Affordances of Film

Visual Rhetoric: How Films Communicate

- Plot & Character
- Image and Movement
 - Mise-en-scène (set/location, costumes, lighting, actors, blocking)
 - Framing and reframing (camera movement – continuous and discontinuous)
 - Length of shot (degree of zoom)
 - Editing (how scenes are connected by juxtaposition or visual cues)
 - Optical effects
- Sound (dialogue, sound effects, music)
- Analysis: The Baptism Scene

The Infancy Narratives

Film Analysis: Pasolini

- How is the divine or sacred rendered by the plotting, characterization, lighting, blocking, framing, camera movement, and length of shot?
 - *The Gospel according to Saint Matthew* (Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1964)

The Sermon on the Mount

Film Analysis: Zeffirelli & Pasolini

- How is reverence conveyed by the plotting, characterization, lighting, blocking, framing, camera movement, and length of shot?
 - *Jesus of Nazareth* (Dir. Franco Zeffirelli, 1977)
 - *The Gospel according to Saint Matthew* (Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1964)
