

Mit patel: the birth of a nation

[Law](#), [Justice](#)



The movie starts with the quote “ Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that his justice cannot sleep forever”. This quote foretells the viewer that this movie is about religion and authority. The title of the film itself tells us that this movie is about hope, justice, and new tomorrow. The main character in this movie is Nat Turner played by Nate Parker, he also directed the movie. First half of the movie shows the lifestyle of slaves living in Virginia. Movie is about love, family, religion, power, freedom. First scene in the movie starts off with childhood of Nat Turner. It seems to me that he is dreaming about the scene where group of them are gathered around a fire and chanting something in another language. Her mother brings him there and we see that Nat Turner have three dots on his chest, which symbolizes that he is unique and special, chosen by god to lead this people and show that the path to freedom and better future.

There is one scene in there which shows slave holders holding two slaves in tiny, isolated, dark cabin in the barn because they are refusing to work. The camera angle was not straight in that scene it was diagonal indicating how narrow the room was. Slave holder is trying to feed one of the slaves, but he refuses to eat so slave holder knocks out all his teeth with hammer. I knew that something bad is about to happen, because when Sam Turner walked in the room, he made an expression of smelling something bad and soon as I heard noises of tools when slave holder went back out to get the hammer, I knew it. But the guy never screams of anything as if he didn't even feel any pain. Just like, when Nat Turner was getting lashed for baptizing a white man, he did not make a single noise. He seemed to become detached from the reality as he was seeing an angel who was watching over him. The guy

who was refusing to eat must have detached from the reality in order to not feel pain. After Nat Turner is lashed, sun sets and it is dark, you see that there were candles outside of the slave quarters symbolizing unity among slaves, and it is source of strength for Nat Turner. The next morning, Sam Turner comes to see Nat Turner, you can see Nat Turner standing there like a mountain even though he is exhausted and in much pain after that beating, displaying sense of power as if nothing can break him, he seems more determined than ever.

There is a scene where Sam and Nat Turner is playing hide and seek. After they are done playing Nat Turner takes the book that is on swinging chair and you can see that he is reading it at night. At that time slaves were not allowed to educate themselves. That is why when Mrs. Turner was talking to Nat Turner's mom, she said " I will whoop him good next time I see him," she was afraid of her son's life. When child version of Nat Turner was inside the house in the room full of books, as he reached for the book in the bookshelf, Mrs. Turner stopped him, saying his people won't understand. You can see the boundary set up like this throughout the movie. It is space and power relation in a sense that bookshelf is filled with knowledge which gives a person power if they have that knowledge, but Nat Turner is denied access to the space that is the bookshelf thus denying him the power. Whites did not want blacks to get educated, so that they can preserve the power that they have over them. You can see that Sam Turner is taking Nat Turner on different plantations to preach to slaves about obeying and serving their masters. Slave owners are manipulating the meaning of bible in order to control them and make them more abiding. Slave owners are making slaves

think that God wants you to serve your master and that is the way to heaven. So, changing the way that the Bible is represented and understood by the slaves gives slave holders power over them. There is a scene where Nat Turner's wife is getting water from outside, and three white men approach her, asking for the pass because she is ten paces from the tree line. So, because she crossed the boundary that was set, it gave those three men power over her.

Throughout the movie, you can see Sam Turner trying to live up to his father. He was trying to exhibit power to the society. He invites people from the society, does a fancy dinner, music and everything, trying to show his success and power. On the same night, Sam Turner sends his servant to slaves' quarters to get one's wife for the party. He didn't seem like he wanted to do that, but he was afraid of going out of norm by having feelings for the slaves. Sam Turner seems powerful in space where no other white man is present and powerless among his fellow friends from society. From the point when Sam and Nat Turner go to the first plantation for preaching, and receiving money for doing that, he felt that it was wrong you can see the discomfort that he feels. From that point on he starts drinking so much indicating his uneasiness and trying to relieve himself from the feeling of being powerless against the society.

Towards the climax of the movie, in a scene when Nat Turner's grandmother dies. He is reading a Bible, a specific part of it which says "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass".

Camera shows this page from bible indicating that Nat Turner has found new meaning from the bible and believes that god chose him to lead these people to freedom. This part of the bible gives him power and all the other slaves to rebel against the injustice that their slave owners have done to them. At the same time there is music playing in the background in different language which is rising in tempo suggesting things are heating up.