

Notes to Accompany the *Mandela and De Klerk* Docudrama

Introduction

Guys: The information below goes together with the *Mandela and De Klerk* docudrama. Before I go on to define key terms, as well describe the main events, places, and dramatis personae of the struggle to end apartheid in South Africa that appear in the film, let me say one or two things about why this particular docudrama about that country is relevant to our class.

- First, the only solution to oppression on whatever basis (race, class, etc.) is democracy. But how does one go about creating a new democratic society? The best answer is compromise (compare, the struggle in Northern Ireland).
- Second, regardless of how much you may hate your enemy, at the end of the day you must still sit down and talk with your enemy. Why not do that from the beginning, instead of resorting to violence first? (Compare, the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.)
- Third, no oppression of an entire people by can last forever—especially by a minority—at some point they will rebel sufficiently strongly to eventually overthrow it (if necessary through violence).
- Fourth, the docudrama provides you with a glimpse of the dialectical relationship between “structure” and “agency” as one of the engines of history. (Note that the film shows us examples of both personal agency and social agency.)
- Fifth, revenge is not always sweet when hate is involved. Besides, revenge is for the uncivilized. The black people of South Africa have come to know this; hence their insistence that despite centuries of brutal oppression inflicted on them by whites, they would work toward building a multi-racial, non-racist society.
- Sixth, this docudrama clearly shows us that in a capitalist society, oppression does not end simply because you have gotten rid of one form of it. When you have solved the race problem, for example, you must still face the “class” problem. (Compare the residential area where Chris Hani lived with the townships where the black poor lived.)
- Seventh, I want you to see why Mandela, a black man, is one of the most highly respected African leaders (both inside and outside Africa). Thought experiment: can you think of any current political leader in the West who can hold a candle to his stature? <----By the way: what does this expression mean?
- O.K. Now on to descriptions/definitions of key figures and terms to help you understand the story in the docudrama better (arranged alphabetically). Note that you must read all entries to fully comprehend the information given in any single entry. (This is because I have tried to avoid repeating information from entry to entry.)

Before you go through these notes, a reminder: As I have stated in class before (and as common sense would suggest), anything written by me—such as these notes—I assign you should be considered as an extension of my class lectures; in other words, it takes precedence over anything else you have been asked to read. Enjoy!

Agency: A concept that denotes the ability to shape one’s destiny—but within limits imposed by history and circumstance—as a constitutive characteristic of a thinking being. Agency may operate at a group level as well (as in the idea of “historical agency.”) Note that social change, from our perspective, is considered to be an outcome of a dialectic in the agency/**structure** binary.

Afrikaans: The language of Afrikaners, also sometimes called Cape Dutch, that grew out of a combination of the Netherlandic language (Dutch) and the languages of the indigenous Africans living in the Cape region (mainly the Khoisan peoples), and African and Asian slaves and indentured labor. It had diverged sufficiently from Dutch by about the middle of the 18th century to become a distinct language in itself. To the African people, Afrikaans in time came to be associated with apartheid oppression, therefore they preferred to learn English instead. (The common use of English among Africans, as opposed to Afrikaans, was also, however, facilitated historically by English-speaking missionaries—the Afrikaners did not believe that black people had a soul to convert.) When in 1976 the Apartheid government mandated that the medium of instruction in black high schools no longer be English, but Afrikaans, it provoked a massive rebellion on the part of the kids, who by this time had also come under the influence of the South African version of the U.S. Black Power movement, known as the *Black Consciousness Movement*, led by Stephen Biko (who himself would be arrested and tortured to death by the South African police in 1977) that came to be known as the Soweto rebellion in which hundreds, mostly school children, were killed by the police and many hundreds more imprisoned and tortured. South Africa was never the same again following the rebellion; it would be the beginning of the end of Apartheid and white minority rule. (Very often, in modern history, students have been at the forefront of bring major change to society.)

Afrikaner: An ethnic category comprising descendants of **Boers**—the original European colonial settlers (mainly Dutch, French and Germans), who arrived at the Cape beginning in 1652 under the initial leadership of one, Jan Van Riebeeck, at the behest of his employers, the Dutch East India Company, to set up a shipping station for their ships enroute to and from the East. They would later migrate out of the Cape region shortly

after the British arrived to rule the Cape (in 1806) to form the autonomous states of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. (Incidentally, This term, as a self-conscious appellation, was already beginning to come into vogue by the beginning of the 1700s as the Afrikaners sought to distinguish themselves from the VOC officials and servants.) Along the way they would engage in frequent warfare with the African peoples they encountered. (Compare, the settlement of the West in the U.S. by European colonial settlers.) This migration (taking place roughly from mid-1830s to mid-1840s), prompted by dissatisfaction with British liberal policies, especially with their decision to free the slaves and abolish slavery in the Cape, came to be known as the *Great Trek*, has great symbolic significance in Afrikaner history. Afrikaners are also sometimes referred to as the *Boers* (Dutch word for peasant farmer). Note: The conflict with the British that led to the Great Trek would never completely abate; it would eventually develop into a full-scale war between them (1899-1902) known as the Anglo-Boer War or the South African War. During that war most of the U.S. public was on the side of the Boers, but the U.S. Administration and its allies took the side of the British. The Boers were defeated, but they would later emerge victorious through the ballot-box in 1948, by which time the British, through the 1909 South Africa Act, had facilitated the formation the following year of the now self-governing Union of South Africa (formed out of the original colonial settler states of Cape Colony, Natal, Transvaal, and Orange Free State). The constitution of this new country largely excluded the majority of the population, the Africans and other black peoples, from any form of political participation. It was as if they did not exist. Until 1994, when for the first time in its history South Africa would hold a nation-wide multi-racial national elections leading to the election of the majority black peoples to power (under the leadership of the ANC and Nelson Mandela), South Africa would remain a white minority ruled country.

Americans: In my classes this nationality refers to all the peoples who reside in the continents of North and South America. Reference to Americans who live in the United States is by the designation *U.S. Americans*.¹

ANC: Acronym for African National Congress, an African nationalist organization and political party, which originally began its life in 1912 as the South African Native National Congress with the initially limited objective of fighting for the retention of a modicum of voting rights that some sections of colored people (people of mixed racial descent) and Africans enjoyed in Cape Province. The organization changed its name to the African National Congress in 1923, by which time it had begun to expand its objectives to include resistance to racist segregation, so that by the 1940s and the early 1950s it was in the forefront of resisting Apartheid through moderate non-violent strategies. The more famous of these was the Campaign of Defiance against Unjust Laws of 1952 (organized jointly by the ANC with the South African Indian Congress and others) that included a public transportation boycott. (Compare, the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955 led by Martin Luther King, Jr.) In 1959, a small splinter group of ultra-nationalists broke away from the ANC to form the Pan African Congress (PAC) and it is as an indirect result of this event that Mandela, Sisulu, Kathrada and others would be given life imprisonment and be banished to a prison on the Robben Island. To explain: the PAC organized massive demonstrations against laws prohibiting freedom of movement for Africans (known as the "pass laws") in 1960, and one of these demonstrations (involving peaceful unarmed demonstrators) in a black township called Sharpeville became a police massacre in which scores were shot to death as they fled from the police. The Sharpeville Massacre, in turn, provoked the ANC, now an underground illegal organization following its banning in 1960, to form a unit the following year called *Umkhonto We Sizwe* ("Spear of the Nation") to commence armed resistance, mainly through sabotage activities, against apartheid given that as the Apartheid state increasingly tightened its grip on South African society, non-violent resistance was not only no longer possible, but it was a suicidal strategy, as demonstrated by the Sharpeville Massacre. In 1962, its leader Nelson Mandela (and other colleagues) were arrested and sentenced to five years in prison for their anti-apartheid activities. Those who had escaped arrest, such as Oliver Tambo, escaped from South Africa alto-

1. In 1820, the Mexican rabble-rousing cleric Servando Teresa de Mier, during a visit to Washington, D. C. wryly indicated this problem of nomenclature: "Since the Europeans believe that there is no other America than the one their nation possesses, an erroneous nomenclature has formed in each nation." He explained:

The English call their islands in the Caribbean Archipelago, our Indies or the West Indies; and for the English there is no other North America than the United States. All Spanish North America is to them South America, even though the largest part of the region is in the north. The people of the United States follow that usage and they are offended when we, in order to distinguish them, call them Anglo Americans. They wish to be the only Americans or North Americans even though neither name is totally appropriate. Americans of the United States is too long; in the end, they will have to be content with the name *guasintones*, from their capital Washington, ... just as they call us Mexicans, from the name of our capital. (From Rodríguez O [2000: 131])

On this subject, see also the article by Hanchard (1990).

gether to reconstitute the ANC in exile (with the assistance of countries such as the Soviet Union through the agency of ANC's ally, the Communist Party of South Africa, itself also a banned organization (1950) and in exile, as well as the host countries, such as Zambia and Tanzania). Following the 1976 Soweto Rebellion, which provoked a massive emigration of the young to neighboring countries where the ANC had over the years developed bases, led to the reemergence of the ANC as the preeminent anti-apartheid organization, inside and outside South Africa.

Apartheid: I am sure most of you have come across this word before, and certainly we have used it in this class. However, it has a very specific meaning and history behind it even though it is usually used today generically to refer to racist segregation of a society. This is an Afrikaans word meaning “apartness” that came to signify the juridically-based, racially defined neofascist socio-political order (that had its roots in the colonial era at a time when the European settler struggle to dispossess aboriginal Africans of both their land and labor, in the context of the globally determined emerging capitalist order, overrode all else) in which the concept of “whiteness” was foundational, and fashioned by the Afrikaner segment of the white polity following its accession to power in 1948 when their party, the National Party, won the all-white national elections. It is important to point out that apartheid was both a racist ideology (white versus black), and an ethnically defined ideology in which the Afrikaners sought to gain ascendance over the English segment of the white polity for both economic and cultural reasons. The specific guiding principles of the agenda of this new apartheid government are summarized best in a sentence or two by Kallaway (2002: 13): “They were keen to promote the interests of Afrikaner politics against English domination of economic, social and cultural life, against big business and its control by ‘alien forces of Anglo-Jewish capitalism,’ and against ‘black encroachment’ on ‘white interests.’ They were for the promotion of Afrikaner business and culture and the ‘salvation of ‘poor whites.’” In other words, and it is important to stress this, apartheid was at once an economic project and a political project—the two were intimately and dialectically related—that sought to promote Afrikaner supremacy in the first instance and white supremacy in the second. Apartheid was never meant to wish black people away, on the contrary it needed black people, but only as sources of cheap labor (and to this end it meant dominating and controlling them on the basis of that classic “separate-but-equal” ruse first perfected in the United States following the Supreme Court decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* 163 U.S. 537 [1896]). Ergo, to say that apartheid was a modernized form of serfdom is not to engage in cheap theatrical polemics, but to describe it as it really was designed (and came) to be. Building on existing racist legislation (such as the 1907 *Education Act No. 25*, and the 1913 *Natives Land Act*) and centuries old customary Jim Crow practices, various National Party-led governments systematically erected and perfected a highly oppressive, neofascist, racially segregated, super-exploitative, sociopolitical economic order that came to be called apartheid.² Initially, the system would rest on a base of three socially constructed races: Africans, Coloreds, and whites; but later, a fourth would be added: Indians (Afro-Asians). A little later, the system would be modified to fragment the African majority into its smaller ethnic components fictively rooted geographically in separate rural labor reservations (which would be first called Bantustans and later dignified with the label “homelands”) carved out of the measly 13% of land that had been allocated to Africans by the 1913 *Native Land Act* and its subsequent modification. (In other words, apartheid was also a form of colonialism—internal colonialism.) Of the numerous pieces of legislation that underpinned the system, among the more salient were: the 1949 *Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act*; the 1950 *Population Registration Act*; the 1950 *Group Areas Act*; the 1950 *Suppression of Communism Act*; the 1953 *Reservation of Separate Amenities Act*; the various internal security acts that not only proscribed any form of opposition to the apartheid system, but permitted imprisonment without trial; the various pass laws that severely curtailed the freedom of movement of Africans by requiring them to carry a pass at all times; and the 1959 *Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act*, which created the pseudo-sovereign internal African states just mentioned. (Note: the *Suppression of Communism Act* defined communism so broadly as to include any nationalist or antiapartheid activities by any one, communist or not.) It is also important to point out that the rise and longevity of apartheid as an ideology were also due, to a significant extent, to the fact that the ideology while seemingly at odds with the needs of capital, in reality suited the capitalist order quite well—that is until the accumulated weight of contradictions it spawned would grow to become a serious liability by the 1980s—in that it served to “purchase” the loyalty of white labor (with its electoral power to legitimate capitalist enterprise) in the inherent class struggle between labor and capital by facilitating the subjectification of objective class interests of labor at both levels: at the racial level of the white polity as a whole (through the concept of whiteness), and at the specific ethnic level of Afrikanerdom (through the concept of “Afrikanerism,” for want of a better word). At the same time, needless to say, it facilitated the super exploita-

2. Recall that some of the architects of this order were open admirers of Nazi Germany!

tion of land and labor that belonged to others, namely the aboriginal African majority. To those familiar with U.S. history, it would not be farfetched to draw parallels (leaving aside the obvious reversal of the black/white population ratios) with the Jim Crow era of the U.S. South in which Jim Crow was aimed at securing political/economic domination over both, in the first instance, blacks, and in the second instance, white northerners.³

Banning: The proscription of organizations—and, check this out, persons. Now you may ask, how can a person be “banned”? What this meant in practice was that banned persons were virtually under house arrest during specified hours, restricted to a particular locale, they had to report to the local police regularly at specified times, were isolated from family, friends and the media, and so on. (It was illegal, for example, for the media to talk to or quote a banned person. Another severe restriction was not being allowed to be in the company of more than one person at a time.) Remember, apartheid South Africa was a neo-fascist state. (Fascism refers to an ideology first practiced in Nazi Germany and Benito Mussolini’s Italy that combined jingoism, militarism, authoritarianism, racism and capitalism.) It was a *neo*-fascist state because it still allowed some democracy for a portion of the population: the white population. For the rest, the black population, however, it was racist domination and exploitation, involving at the margins of the system an endemic pattern of murders of political opponents inside and outside prison, assassinations of opponents in foreign countries, military incursions into neighboring countries, the imprisonment without trial and torture of thousands upon thousands of anti-apartheid activists (including children as young as seven!), unprovoked shooting of demonstrators, and so on. All this has been documented in a multivolume report issued by a commission of inquiry set up in 1995 by the then newly elected President Mandela under the leadership of Bishop Desmond Tutu called the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*.

Boer: Descendants of the first European settlers to arrive in South Africa (roughly during the period 1652 to 1707) who were predominantly Belgian, Dutch, German and **Huguenot**, and whose first language is **Afrikaans**. The word Boer in Dutch means farmer or husbandman. Note, that today the word has acquired a generally derogatory connotation and Afrikaners prefer not to be called by this term.

Boipatong Massacre: Boipatong is a township south of Johannesburg in the Vaal Triangle. Inkatha supporters attacked (on June 17, 1992) a squatter camp inhabited by, presumably, ANC supporters, killing more than 40 people, including many women and children. An independent investigation at that time revealed that the attackers had had the support of the police. The ANC accused the government of F. W. De Klerk of using the police and the army to engage in terrorist activities against ANC supporters, with the connivance of groups such as Inkatha. More recently, however (November 2000 ruling of the Amnesty Committee of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission), it has been suggested that Inkatha supporters had acted on their own and that the police were not involved.

Borders: See **Culture**

Botha, P. W. (Pieter Willem): A law student who did not finish his degree, Botha’s passionate love of politics ensured that this particular personal failure would be a minor handicap, if at all. Botha was born on January 12, 1916 in what was then the Orange Free State. Politically active even as a teenager, he would be elected to Parliament in 1948 as a candidate for the National Party when this right-wing (even in terms of white South African politics) Afrikaner party would sweep the whites-only elections, banishing the white liberal parties into political wilderness forever. After almost 20 years of active participation, beginning in 1961, as a government minister in various posts (public works, defense, etc.) he would assume the prime ministership in 1978 upon the resignation of B. J. Vorster. The timing could hardly have been auspicious, for the storm clouds that would herald the twilight of apartheid South Africa were already gathering fast (recall the Soweto rebellion two years prior, and the collapse of white-minority rule in the neighboring countries of Mozambique and Angola three years prior, and in Rhodesia two years later). It is unlikely that he or any one else would have foreseen that he too, despite his stubborn efforts to maintain an iron-grip on the apartheid ship of state—as the fury of the African people, led by the young, at enduring more than 300 years of unmitigated white racist oppression exploded beyond all control—would be made to follow in the footsteps of his prede-

3. See also Derrida and Kamuf (1985, 1986) for an insightful take on the word apartheid. It is also worth pointing out here that as in the case of Jim Crow U.S. South, apartheid came to have a highly corrupting influence throughout society, sparing no one. As Lyman (2002: 9) has so well put it:

Racial discrimination, when institutionalized, indeed made part of the national ethic, brings out the worst in all people. It attracts the most brutal into positions of authority and gives them an outlet for their brutality; it demeans the victims and forces them into servility to survive; it breeds anger, fear, and timidity on all sides, making efforts at reform tepid and violent by turns. In sum, it corrupts the entire society, oppressor and victim, liberal and conservative. So it was with apartheid.

cessor: he would end his office in ignominy by being forced to resign, on grounds of incompetence, by his own cabinet in 1989.

Cape: A geographic term that in the South African context has had various geographic designations depending upon historical context: hence it can refer to the settlement that was established at Table Bay by Jan van Riebeeck on behalf of the VOC that eventually grew to become today's modern Cape Town; or it can refer to the Cape of Good Hope (a promontory at the southern end of Cape Peninsula); or it can refer to Cape Colony (and later Cape Province), one of the administrative territories (of which Cape Town was its capital) that was the first European colony of the four colonies that eventually coalesced to become modern South Africa.

Cape Town: The legislative capital of South Africa, and administrative capital of Western Cape Province, that was founded by the first Dutch settlers (led by Jan van Riebeeck) in 1652. A geographic landmark that the city is famous for is, of course, Table Mountain. The city is located in the Cape peninsula north of Cape of Good Hope. By the way, the administrative capital of South Africa is Pretoria. All the three prisons Mandela was in are in or near Cape Town.

Capitalist Democracy: See **Democracy**

Civil Society: This term has probably as many definitions as the number of persons willing to define it; for our purposes this one will have to do: the collectivity of all voluntary institutions in a society that are constituted from outside the arenas of the family, the state, and the market place. In a democracy, civil society is its basic foundation (to put it bluntly: no civil society, no democracy). There is a dialectical relationship between civil society and democracy where one nourishes the other.⁴

Colored: An ethnic category in Southern Africa (a very rough equivalent to “mulatto” in the Americas) comprising persons *either* of mixed descent who emerged after the arrival of Europeans in that region—e.g., a person with a European father and a Xhosa mother, or an Asian slave father and a Khoisan mother, or a European father and an Asian slave mother, or a Colored father and a European mother, and so on—*or* persons of Khoisan or slave ancestry who took on the working-class version of the dominant white culture (including language) of their day, namely Afrikaner culture. Their predominant language is **Afrikaans**. An important subgroup among them were the Khoikhoi/Afrikaner descendants who were initially called the “Baastards,” or “Basters” but who later renamed themselves the *Griqua*. (Fleeing racist discrimination at the Cape to go on to impose their own brand of racism on the aboriginal Africans, they, for a time, had even managed to carve out their own territories: Griqualand East [in 1861, under the leadership of Adam Kok III], and Griqualand West [settled beginning in the late eighteenth century]. Both territories were eventually annexed by the British, the former in 1879, and the latter in 1871 when it was under the leadership of Nicolaas Waterboer.) Note that in the U.S. context this term was once reserved for **U.S. African Americans**.

Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986: This Act is referenced in the film, but not by name but by its principal provision: the imposition of economic sanctions by the United States on South Africa. It was signed into law by none other than Ronald Reagan (who had long resisted doing exactly this). Recall that earlier in the film Botha mentions Reagan (and Margaret Thatcher) as friends of South Africa. The Act was the work of Congress, prodded by the anti-apartheid activities of African Americans and others throughout the U.S. in the 1980s. The economic sanctions that were imposed on South Africa were limited and were more of a symbolic significance than anything else, except for an extension the following year (via the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1987) of an important provision of the Act that rescinded the exemption from double-taxation enjoyed by U.S. transnationals operating in South Africa. It increased the cost of doing business in South Africa—thereby accelerating the loss of foreign investment for that country. From the perspective of the Apartheid government, the Act was a serious psychological blow (and we can sense it in the film).

Conjuncture of Fortuitously Propitious Historical Factors: A concept that seeks to explain major social transformations—of the order that can change societies permanently—by positing that they are as much a product of chance and circumstance as directed human endeavors (in the shape of “social movements,” broadly understood). In other words, such transformations are always an outcome of a fortuitous relationship between agency and “historical structures” (the latter being understood, in this instance, as major historical factors, be they natural or human, that originate outside the dictates of the agency in question and therefore are bereft of intentionality, that is, in terms of the transformations).⁵

4. An introductory text worth looking at that explores this concept in its various manifestations is the anthology edited by Glasius, Lewis, and Seckinelgin (2004).

5. In this course, an example of this agency-structure binary at play is the case of the collapse of the Portuguese colonial empire in Southern Africa and the transformation of the consciousness of young blacks in South Africa; another is the emergence of the U.S. civil rights movement and the Second World War; or still another is the development of early economic relations between South Africa and the United States and the geographic position of the Cape.

Corporeal democracy: See **Democracy**

Culture: The different cumulative adaptive responses of human societies to their different physical (natural) environment that is the product, in the first instance, of a dialectic between agency and structure. It is not race but culture that makes us “different” (but what that means, of course, is that contrary to what racists claim, culture is a learned phenomenon, and not a biological artifact.) Two points to note here about cultures: First, as I have explained many times, cultures are almost never entirely self-generated; they always include cross-cultural fertilizations through border-crossings. And when it comes to “civilizations” (which are simply complex cultures) there is absolutely (repeat absolutely) no way that a civilization can arise without cross-cultural infusions or border-crossings (implication: no human diversity, no civilization). In other words, the idea of a “western” civilization, to give one example, is not only a bogus idea, but it is also a racist idea! (Think about this: if we went far back in time when human societies were still forming, it is quite possible that we would find evidence of humans borrowing elements from animal “cultures”—e.g. cultures of apes—as they developed their own human cultures [now, how about them apples!]). Second, the fuzzy zone that marks off one culture from another can be termed as a cultural border. In a truly democratic society that encompasses many cultures the objective of democracy in such a society includes the twin-goals of acceptance of cultural borders, and facilitation of border-crossings as essential to democracy, progress, and the quality of life.

Contradictions: unintended and usually unforeseen oppositional outcomes in a social system that threaten its survival—unless they are resolved by fundamentally transforming it—and which are rooted within the operational parameters of the system. It may be noted that contradictions first usually come to light *as contradictions* through scholarly analysis whereas they are incorrectly manifest to the architects of the system as merely disruptive symptoms (e.g. crises) of “imbalances” in the system which can be dealt with by simply fine-tuning the system (e.g. reforms—rather than fundamentally transforming it).

De Klerk, F. W. (Frederick Willem): Another law student, but who, like Mandela, did finish his law degree and go on to establish his own successful law firm, would enter national politics in 1972 when as a National Party candidate he won a seat in parliament. Born on March 18, 1936, in Johannesburg, De Klerk’s family background was saturated with politics (his father Jan, for instance, had been the head of the Transvaal National Party, and a minister in the 1954-58 government of J. G. Strydom). Given this pedigree and his own legal and political talents, he would be selected by Botha for a place in his cabinet—he would serve in various posts for the next ten years, beginning in 1979. In the same year that he connived with his fellow cabinet colleagues to force the resignation of Botha from the presidency, De Klerk had won the election for the leader of the National Party. He would formally become president upon the mandate of Parliament on September 14 (in which year, guys?). By the time he became president, secret talks with Mandela had already been underway, and his release a foregone conclusion, except for the actual date. It would come the following year, accompanied by the release of other important political prisoners, and a few days later (February 20, 1990), the unbanning of all political parties—including the Communist Party of South Africa on the left, and the neo-Nazi parties (like Terreblanche’s AWB) on the right. Between 1991 and 1994 when the first multi-racial national elections were held in which the ANC won with a landslide, De Klerk’s government undertook a series of negotiations with the ANC for a new political order based on universal suffrage against a backdrop of considerable internecine violence among black people involving, among others, ANC and Inkatha supporters. Sadly, and to the horror of many inside and outside South Africa, it proved to be the required catalyst to speed up the negotiations and break the various impasses that arose. Following ANC’s electoral victory in 1994, De Klerk for a short time served as the second deputy president in the government of national unity that Mandela established. In 1997, De Klerk retired from active politics. From the film we can sense that De Klerk was essentially a backroom wheeler and dealer, and a pragmatist rather than an ideologue (unlike his wife Marike). What we are not shown in the film, however, is the real power behind the throne in De Klerk’s rapid move toward dismantling apartheid, the Afrikaner-Broederbond—a South African secret society of male members of the Afrikaner establishment (whose membership is by invitation only and secret) founded in 1918 in the wake of the defeat of the Afrikaners in the Boer War, for the purpose of countering the power of the English-speaking white establishment.

Guys: a question to ponder: why did De Klerk deserve to share with Mandela the 1993 Nobel Prize for Peace? Or did he?)

De Klerk, Marike: Unlike her husband, De Klerk’s spouse did not share her husband’s view, by the time he took over the presidency of South Africa, that the “writing on the wall” was clear: the days of white minority rule would soon be over. The De Klerk’s divorced in 1998 after a 39-year marriage, allowing De Klerk to marry Elita Georgiadis (a love-interest of some four years standing). Marike died in early December 2001; she was brutally murdered in her apartment in Cape Town (motive of the murderer not surmisable). South Africa remains a violent country to this day; in the year that she died some 21,000 people were murdered.

Democracy: Democracy, in its true sense, has two related halves: the *procedural* and the *corporeal* (or substantive, meaning the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness) where the former is the means to the latter. In a *capitalist democracy* the tendency is to emphasize the procedural at the expense of the corporeal, for obvious reasons. However, one without the other simply reduces democracy to a well-meaning but empty slogan. The first half refers to the institutional processes of voting, elections, term-limits, legislative representation, and so on. This narrowly defined understanding of democracy can be labeled as procedural democracy. Democracy, however, also has a broader substantive meaning (second half), as captured, for example, by the preamble to the U.S. Declaration of Independence. To quote the key paragraph: “WE hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all [Persons] are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.” (Of course, even as one turns to that document, one cannot help but imagine how great that document could have really been if only its architects had at the same time not refused to consider other peoples, such as the enslaved African Americans and the Aboriginal Americans, worthy of these same rights; instead they even went on to label the latter as “merciless Indian Savages,” and made them the source of one more grievance among the many listed by the document against the British Crown.) It is important, guys, to note that both kinds of democracy are essential for a society to function as a democratic society because both procedural democracy and substantive democracy are dialectically intertwined—one without the other renders both a sham. Of course, as implied here, the very idea of democracy in a capitalist society is problematic. The issue is not only one of the inherent contradictions of capitalist production where the nature of exploitation is rarely if ever transparent, but even within the confines of a narrower definition, in the context of capitalist societies, of what corporeal democracy implies (one that leaves the basic parameters of the capitalist order unchallenged) the relatively more simpler and accessible matter of making the apparatus of procedural democracy (elections, legislation, etc.) responsive to the agenda of the objective interests of the mass of the citizenry—one associated with a decent quality of life for all commensurate with the economic resources of the country, of which such markers as reasonable access to jobs, adequate remuneration, affordable and meaningful health insurance, quality education, safe neighborhoods, and so on, are axiomatic—is constantly (and often flagrantly) subjected to subversion by capital and its allies. In my classes, I also talk about *personal* democracy, by which I mean interpersonal relations among individuals in a society that are governed by the principle of equality of opportunity for respect, acceptance, and non-discrimination, regardless of age, class, color, ethnicity, gender, and other similar social structural markers.

Dialectic: This is a concept often associated with philosophy, but it is not that philosophical meaning of the word that is of direct relevance here. Rather, its use in this course is more generic in the sense that it denotes the process where two seemingly unrelated factors impinge on one another *cyclically* such as to permanently render the fate of each, to be in the hands of the other. For example: factor A impacts factor B in such a way as to alter factor B, and thereby enhance its capacity to influence factor A, which in turn is altered, enhancing its capacity to continue influencing factor B. Factor B then is further altered, enhancing its capacity to continue impinging on factor A—and so the cycle continues.

Euro-South Africans. People of European ancestry, but excluding the Colored peoples—generally used interchangeably with “Europeans” in my classes in terms of the South African context. (See also **Coloreds**.)

Fascism: A political ideology that first arose in Nazi Germany, and Benito Mussolini’s Italy that combined jingoism, militarism, authoritarianism, virulent ethnicism/racism, and capitalism into one ideological package.

Frontline States: Name acquired by a loose grouping of independent countries in Southern Africa who shared the legitimate view that they were in the “frontline” of the struggle against apartheid South Africa. They met regularly to exchange notes and coordinate policy; their membership included Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Goldberg, Dennis: An engineer by profession, he was born in Cape Town in 1933. He was a leading member of the Congress of Democrats (a white organization allied to the ANC). Goldberg was not taken to Robben Island with his codefendants since he was considered white; instead, he was taken to Pretoria Central Prison where white political prisoners were incarcerated. He served 22 years of his sentence before he was released.

Hani, Chris: At the time of his assassination (which had been preceded by several other assassination attempts on him by South African security agents while he was in exile) Hani was the general secretary of the South African Communist Party (took up the office in 1991 from the ailing Joe Slovo; he had joined the party in 1961) and a member of the national executive committee of the ANC. His popularity (especially among young blacks) rested not only on his charisma, but his intimate involvement with ANC’s guerrilla campaign as one of its top leaders. Hani (full name Martin Thembisile Hani) was born on June 28, 1942 in Cofimvaba in the rural Transkei. His

original ambition had been to become a priest, but his father, a migrant worker in the mines, wished otherwise. In the same year that he graduated with a BA in Latin and English (Fort Hare, 1961), he also joined Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK—the military wing of the ANC), having been a member of the ANC since 1957. The following year he was forced to go into exile with a number of other members of MK fearing imminent arrest. His years abroad until his official return with other ANC and SACP leaders in 1990 were spent on building ANC's capacity to wage a guerilla campaign, in the course of which, it appears, he did see some action in the Zimbabwean liberation struggle in the late 1960s.

Hegemony: Very simply, in my classes, I imply by this term to mean the unwanted domination of one by another—e.g. as in a racist society, or in a patriarchal society, or a colonial society, and so on. However, hegemony can occur at many levels in many different ways, and in fact it is possible that victims of hegemony may not even know that they are victims of it (especially in cases of ideological hegemony—of which capitalism, as an ideology, is a good example). But how is ideological hegemony imposed? Very simply, through the process of socialization. When you march to the beat of your own drummer then you have taken the step in the right direction toward freedom from the hegemony of others.)

Homelands: “Self-governing” areas of territory, during the apartheid era, for Afro-South Africans (dubbed initially as “bantustans,” but later called “Black Homelands,” and later still “Black States” and arguably similar in principle and provenance to U.S. First American reservations in the United States) legislatively carved out of the countryside, on the basis of SAAG-designated ethnicity, by means of the 1959 *Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act*. In order to deflect international criticism on one hand, and on the other to diffuse black opposition to apartheid (against the backdrop of an ever increasing reliance on black labor), SAAG, under the leadership of Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd, came up with what it thought was the ingenious concept of ethnically-based “self-government” for Afro-South Africans—geographically rooted in the rural Afro-South African reserves (known as “native reserves”) that had been established through the 1913 *Natives Land Act* and which could trace their origins to the time of the British colonial period—where through the subsequent 1970 *Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act* all Afro-South Africans were stripped of their South African citizenship and instead made “citizens” of the reserves. A total of ten ethnic groups were identified and allocated their own homelands which for the most part were not only economically non-viable but politically too they were nothing more than a charade in self-government given the absence of meaningful political power (even in those homelands that had been granted “independence,” namely, Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, and Ciskei).⁶ In reality, all that the homelands project achieved was that by means of this divide-and-rule strategy they helped to further institutionalize the use of the reserves as black labor reservoirs; they were neither recognized by most Afro-South Africans, other than the traditional non-democratically appointed authorities that “governed” them, nor by the international community. It may be noted that the homelands project also abolished the meager indirect representation in parliament Afro-South Africans had had (before the *Self-Government Act* was enacted they had been allowed to elect to the Senate four *white* representatives on the basis of a system of electoral colleges). As one would expect, with the abolition of apartheid the homelands system was also scrapped.

Ideology: Throughout this course, unless indicated otherwise, this term is used to mean a “style of thought” or a system of ideas and concepts *which may or may not be cogent and correct*, but which color world views and shape behavior. The term, therefore, is used in the Parsonian neutral sense (that is, as an internally consistent cognitive system). Consequently, it must be distinguished from the Marxian usage of the term (the antithesis of “true” political consciousness), as well as the positivist usage (the antithesis of “true” social science).

Indians: In the African context the term refers to peoples designated in this course as **Afro-Asians**. In the U.S. context it refers to peoples designated in this course as **U.S. First Americans**.

Inkatha Freedom Party

An ethnic based cultural organization founded by Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi, hereditary tribal chief of the Zulu people, in 1975 in KwaZulu, a “homeland” for the Zulus during the apartheid era, that would be transformed by him into a political party in 1994 in order to take part in the multi-racial elections. Although Buthelezi claimed to be an arch opponent of apartheid, the fact that the apartheid government tolerated him throughout the period when other anti-apartheid leaders and organizations had been banned, speaks volumes. Certainly these organizations came to see him as nothing more than a creature of apartheid, even though at one time in his younger days he had been a member of the ANC. In the waning days of apartheid, conflict between supporters of Inkatha and other anti-apartheid organizations (especially the ANC) were frequent, fierce and chillingly

6. The ten homelands, with their ethnic affiliation, were Bophuthatswana (Tswana), Ciskei (Xhosa), Gazankulu (Machangana-Tsonga), KwaNdebele (Southern Ndebele), KwaNgwane (Swazi), KwaZulu (Zulu), Lebowa (North Soto), Transkei (like the Ciskei also Xhosa), QwaQwa (South Sotho), and Venda (Vhacenda). For more on the homelands see Omond (1985)

bloody—aided and abetted by the apartheid government—as Buthelezi tried to jostle for a political stake in a new South Africa beyond that of leadership of a discredited ethnic homeland.

Guys: a question to ponder: politically, why is the continued presence of the Inkatha Freedom Party important for South Africa?

Jim Crow: A phrase that refers to the racial segregation that had existed de facto in the United States prior to the Civil War (primarily brought about as a result of the massive immigration of the European working class and peasantry to the United States in the early 1800s) that became de jure, mostly in the South, following the abolition of slavery. This juridically-based form of segregation arose with the return of the former confederate governments to power (effected through the use of terror—see Nieman [1991]) in the post-Reconstruction era, in spite of the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments to the U.S. constitution that had firmly established the civil and human rights of African Americans. The power of an alliance of white agrarian and urban capitalist classes in the U.S. South bent on restoring as many features of the old slave order as possible, operating through such terrorist groups as the Ku Klux Klan, was such that not only did they systematically and brutally disenfranchise African Americans (and other blacks), but managed to create a political and legal environment in which the U.S. Supreme Court reversed the legislative intent of the amendments—by means of a ruling in an infamous case called *Plessey v. Ferguson* (1896) that came up with the bogus doctrine of “separate but equal.” (This doctrine would not be overturned until a ruling in another Supreme Court case, *Brown v. Board of Education* [1954]). However, like its counterpart, apartheid, Jim Crow evolved to be more than simply racial segregation; it was a neo-fascist political order, a proto-totalitarian system in which the civil and human rights of those whites who opposed racial segregation (albeit a tiny minority) were also wiped out. The term Jim Crow itself is said to originate from a song sung by an enslaved African American owned by a Mr. Crow and overheard and later popularized (beginning in 1828 in Louisville) by Daddy Rice (Thomas Dartmouth Rice) through the medium of black minstrel shows—comedic song and dance routines performed by whites in blackface based on highly demeaning negative stereotypes of African Americans. The song’s refrain went:

Wheel about and turn about

And do jis so,

Ebry time I wheel about

I jump Jim Crow

Johannesburg: South Africa’s industrial and financial capital and which owes its birth to the discovery of gold. It is home to the “capital” of South Africa’s black people, Soweto. Soweto was the segregated township that did not even merit a name under apartheid (the name is an acronym).

Kathrada, Ahmed Mohammed: His character in the film asks incredulously, “Soft targets? Do you mean women and children?” The ANC had made a decision very early on, when *Umkonto We Sizwe* was formed, not to target civilians in their guerrilla campaigns on moral grounds. Kathrada, the son of Indian Muslim immigrants, was born on August 21, 1919 in Schweizer Reineke, a small town 240 miles from Johannesburg. He became involved in the political activities of the Transvaal Indian Congress from the age of 12 and was first sentenced to prison as a result of these activities at the age of 17 (he lied about his age to the police). As he grew older, his political activities expanded to a wider national level so that on more than one occasion he would be placed under banning orders. More significantly, however, three times, in 1955, in the Treason Trials of 1956-61, and the Rivonia Trial of 1963-64 he would be tried together with Mandela, Sisulu and others, and with them he was eventually given life imprisonment and banished to Robben Island. He was freed with Sisulu and others from Polsmoor in 1989. In 1991 he was elected to the national executive committee of the ANC and became head of its Public Relations department. Kathrada, it ought to be noted, is among the many anti-apartheid activists to emerge from the South African East Indian community—quite out of proportion, in terms of their numbers, to the community’s small percentage of the total population (about 3%). One possible explanation for this was the presence within the community’s intelligentsia of a political tradition that combined in a unique amalgam the influences of Gandhism, Marxism, and African and East Indian nationalism (and for some, Islam).

Law of Historical Irreversibility: A natural law that postulates the impossibility, for logistical reasons alone, of restoring the rights that ensue from the **Natural Law of Prior Claim** on the improbable assumption that there was agreement by all concerned on restoration of these rights in the first place. (A perfect example is the circumstance of the Aboriginal Americans *vis-à-vis* the European settler and African slave descendants today in the Americas.)

Mandela, Nelson: Mandela was born on July 18, 1918 (in Umtata, in the then Cape of Good Hope). His father, Henry Mandela, was the chief of the Tembu, a Xhosa-speaking people. In a country where higher education op-

portunities for black people were few, this privileged background allowed him to eventually graduate from the English-speaking University of Witwatersrand to become a practicing lawyer by establishing South Africa's first African law firm, in partnership with Oliver Tambo, in 1952. Some years earlier, in 1944, he had joined the ANC, becoming one of its leaders in 1949. As a flamboyant man who loved fancy clothes, women and fast cars, and given his privileged background and high educated status (there were relatively few African professionals in his day), it is perhaps surprising that he became a very active and militant ANC member, since he had so much to lose. Anyhow, as a rising star within the ranks of the ANC leadership he had the opportunity to travel abroad in 1961 (following his acquittal in the infamous Treason Trials of 1956-61) to be wined and dined by a number of African leaders (such as Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, and Leopold Senghor of Senegal), as well as leaders of the Labor and Liberal parties in England. On his way home, he stopped over in Ethiopia for a few months to undergo rudimentary training in guerilla warfare. However, only a few days after his return he was already sitting in jail, he was arrested on August 5, 1962, charged with illegal political activity and leaving the country without a passport. While he was still on Robben Island serving a five-year prison sentence, he was brought back for trial in 1963 on another more serious charge, of plotting to overthrow the apartheid State by armed rebellion (treason). At that trial, which came to be known as the Rivonia Trial, Mandela (together with others) was sentenced to life imprisonment on June 12, 1964. From 1964 to 1984 Mandela and his colleagues spent their years at the notorious maximum security prison on Robben Island. In April 1984 they were transferred to Pollsmoor Maximum Security Prison in Cape Town for fear that their presence on Robben Island was helping to further politicize other younger political prisoners pouring into the prison in the aftermath of the Soweto Rebellion. Following a medical operation, Mandela was separated from his colleagues, and moved to more comfortable surroundings at Victor Verster prison near Paarl. He would not gain freedom until February 11, 1990. In 1991 he was elected to the presidency of the now unbanned ANC, and three years later, with the overwhelming election victory of the ANC, he would become the first black president of South Africa. He stepped down from the presidency of the ANC in 1997 (to be replaced by Thabo Mbeki), and of South Africa, in 1999. He is no longer involved with active politics. For their efforts in bringing about a relatively peaceful transition to a new democratic South Africa, Mandela and De Klerk shared the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize.

Guys: a question to ponder: how did the long imprisonment of Mandela help the country of South Africa in the long run? Or did it?

Mandela, Winnie (premarital name: Winifred Nomzamo): Born in Pondoland in the Transkei in the mid-1930s, her fame would come to rest on her marriage to Mandela (in 1958, as his second wife)—they had met two years earlier when she became involved with his political activities. (During the prolonged Treason Trials of 1956-61, Mandela divorced his first wife to marry Winnie, despite the large age gap between the two.) In the years that Mandela was in prison, Winnie, as a political activist in her own right, and as the spouse of one of the most important political prisoners in South Africa (if not the world), came to face constant harassment from the police, including being placed under banning orders, and even spending time in prison (1969-1970). For a long time she was the heroine of the anti-apartheid movement, until it began to become clear around the mid-1980s to many, especially those in the ANC, that her politically reckless behavior, motivated by fame and ambition, was becoming a liability. The kidnapping and murder of a fourteen year old boy by the chief of her bodyguard (who came to be known as the “Mandela Football Club”) proved to be the first major step toward political anonymity. Even though she did come to hold a post in Mandela's government as the deputy minister of arts, culture, science and technology, following her election as president of the ANC's Women's League, she was eventually expelled by Mandela because of her continued courting of controversy with her attacks on the new government, among other things. The Mandelas separated in 1992 after her infidelity came to light; they divorced in 1996.

Marginality: Refers to pushing people to the “margins” of society by means of prejudice and discrimination (with the result that they fall to the bottom of society in terms of economic and political power). Marginality, obviously, is the anti-thesis of democracy.

Natural Law of Prior Claim: A universal law in the Aristotelian sense derived from the condition of being human (in contrast to the sources of *positive law*) that postulates that those who have occupied a particular territory before all others are naturally entitled to that territory; consequently, they have prior claims over it against all interlopers. The concept of citizenship by birth, for instance, derives its legitimacy from this law. As may be surmised, the abrogation of this law is only possible under conditions of violence. The profound and sobering implications of this law can be deduced from the following thought experiment: What if, tomorrow, Native Americans were to acquire the power sufficient to propel them to the headship (in all senses of the word, political, military, etc.) of the Americas? How would citizenship of the present descendants of all those who have migrated into the Americas over the centuries, literally at the point of the gun, be now defined? A taste of the answer—however repugnant it may be to all those who believe in the desirability of a multicultural democracy in that country, and

anywhere else for that matter—is to be found today in the ongoing events in Zimbabwe (Will South Africa be next?) where the moral claims to citizenship by its white residents have been proven to have rested all along on armed political power that slipped out of their hands with independence in the 1980s. In other words, regardless of how one wishes to prevaricate on this matter: citizenship in lands that were colonized by Europeans, *where the original inhabitants are still present today*, ultimately resides in monopoly over power, and not moral claims. (See also the counterpart of this law, the **Law of Historical Irreversibility**.)

Necklacing: The horrifying lynching of fellow Africans suspected (but never of course proven guilty) of being police informers and spies by mobs in African townships like Soweto. It involved placing a car tire (the “necklace”) over the victim and then setting it ablaze until the victim was burned to death while onlookers stood by. This awful barbaric response, never condoned by the ANC, was a desperate response to the equally barbaric, brutal and illegal underground war (involving murders, imprisonment, torture, etc.) that the South African security police waged against anti-apartheid activists in the segregated African townships.

Neocolonialism: A variant of **imperialism**, referring to the imperialism of a former colonial power *following* the granting of nominal political independence to its colony.

Neofascism: In my classes refers to a juridically determined political system in which a dominating group enjoys many freedoms and privileges associated with democratic societies, but against the backdrop of a dominated group subjected to many burdens and disabilities characteristic of a fascist political system—that is a system based on a virulent fusion of authoritarianism, militarism, jingoism, patriarchy, and regimented capitalism. The demarcation between the dominated and the dominant usually resting on race or ethnicity or class. Since this term is used in my classes with reference to apartheid-era South Africa (as well as the U.S. South of the Jim Crow era), a word or two about that. Because, on one hand, the South African state possessed almost all the features of a fascist state—especially when viewed from the perspective of the historical experiences of blacks—and yet, on the other hand, because there was democracy and respect for the rule of law (to a significant extent) in respect of the Euro-South African minority, the designation of the apartheid state as a neofascist state is appropriate. Given the total dependence of the Euro-South African capitalists on black labor meant that a “Final Solution” in the Nazi style (in respect of the Jews) to the “black problem” (i.e., genocide) could not be on the agenda. At the same time, considering that increasingly, by the late 1980s, almost all urban black youths were by definition “political activists,” the fascist Chilean solution (adopted by the military thugs in Augusto Pinochet's Chile following the U.S.-inspired and supported military coup in 1973)—of simply slaughtering the political activists in their thousands—was also not possible without provoking widespread international condemnation and retaliatory action.⁷ Under these circumstances, the political strategy that was called for in organizing opposition to this neofascist state was one that judiciously combined the use of both nonviolent resistant strategies and violent (guerrilla warfare) strategies.⁸ This is the strategy that the ANC for example came to adopt and with eventual success: beginning with the 1990 de Klerk “WOW” speech and the subsequent freeing of Nelson Mandela on February 11, 1990, South Africa would begin groping its way toward a nonracist democratic order.

Ne imperialism: a subtler variant of **imperialism** characteristic of the late twentieth century and beyond in which the U.S. role looms large and where such U.S. foreign policy projects as the so-called “war on terror” are symptomatic.

Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika: The national anthem of South Africa (sung at several points in the film). Composed originally in Xhosa in 1897 by Enoch Sontonga, a music loving teacher at a Methodist mission school in Johannesburg, with stanzas added later at various times by others, it, in time, became a popular hymn in African churches and at political meetings. On April 20, 1994 the hymn together with the existing national anthem, the *Call of South Africa*, were declared national anthems of the postapartheid South Africa. Two years later, a combined but shortened version of both anthems became the new national anthem. A few of verses of the original English translation version of *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika* (God Bless Africa) go like this:

Lord, bless Africa;
May her horn rise high up;
Hear Thou our prayers And bless us.

Chorus

Descend, O Spirit,
Descend, O Holy Spirit.

7. The motion picture, *Missing* provides a hint of what a “Chilean” fascist solution looks like from the perspective of the victims.

8. See Wolpe 1988 for a further discussion of these issues.

Bless our chiefs
May they remember their Creator.
Fear Him and revere Him,
That He may bless them.

Bless the public men,
Bless also the youth
That they may carry the land with patience
and that Thou mayst bless them.

Nonviolent civil disobedience: A strategy for political change, but one that should not be confused with a “pacifist strategy.” That is, it is not a “do-nothing” strategy. As Gandhi practiced it in South Africa (and later India) and Martin Luther King, Jr. in the United States the nonviolent civil disobedience strategy involves creative resistance to tyranny (sit-ins, boycotts, demonstrations, petitions, and so on) that stops short of using violence, even in the face of the violence of the enemy. The strategy is to appeal to the conscience of the oppressor by refusing to answer the oppressor’s violence with one own’s violence, but all the time refusing to submit to the unjust laws of the oppressor.

Pass: A form of internal “passport” that Afro-South Africans had to carry at all times on their person when living and working outside their ‘homelands,’ that is in “white’ South Africa, under the totalitarian pass law system established by SAAG. Its purpose was to control their movement for both economic and political reasons. Failure to produce the pass when asked by the police usually meant arrest, a fine, and sometimes imprisonment. A deportation order (to one’s supposed “homeland”) would also follow if the pass lacked an appropriate permit. In any given year the number of persons arrested under the pass laws numbered in the tens of hundreds if not thousands. It should be noted that the pass was not an original SAAG invention, as with so many other features of apartheid, it borrowed the concept from a practice established in earlier times by both the Dutch colonists and the British.

Personal Democracy: See **Democracy.**

Political consciousness: A concept that refers to a state of mind characterized by an unending desire to acquire knowledge and information about society against the background of specific ideational and methodological approaches, of which these four are central: (1) civilization; (2) objectivity; (3) truth; and (4) the status quo. (1) *Civilization.* A politically conscious person recognizes that civilization has two dimensions to it: the moral, and the material; and it is the former that is of paramount importance. By moral civilization I mean the attainment of civilized attitudes and behavior vis a vis other human beings, and other forms of life on this planet. Central to moral civilization is the attitude and behavior that is motivated by concrete efforts to respond to the question: What can I do, in terms of my personal attitudes and behavior toward all life forms (beginning with my immediate family and then extending outward to my relatives, friends, community, other communities, society, other societies and other planetary life forms, etc.) to make this planet a better place for them to live in? Underlying this question would be such positive behavioral things as altruism, love, morality, humanity, magnanimity, forgiveness, charitability, amicability, open-mindedness, justiciability, and so on. (2) *Objectivity.* Conservatives like to talk about being “objective,” but the quest for “objectivity” as normally understood is inherently chimerical. The problem was raised by, among others, Gunnar Myrdal (1969) two decades ago. He framed it thus:

The ethos of social science is the search for “objective” truth . The most fundamental methodological problems facing the social scientist are therefore, what is objectivity, and how can the student attain objectivity in trying to find out the facts and the causal relationships between facts? How can a biased view be avoided? More specifically, how can the student of social problems liberate himself from [a] the powerful heritage of earlier writings in his field of inquiry, ordinarily containing normative and teleological notions inherited from past generations and founded upon the metaphysical moral philosophies of natural law and utilitarianism from which all our social and economic theories have branched off; [b] the influences of the entire cultural, social, economic, and political milieu of the society where he lives, works, and earns his living and his status; and [c] the influence stemming from his own personality, as molded not only by traditions and environment but also by his individual history, constitution and inclinations? (1969:3-4.)

The answer to his question, as he himself, implied is that objectivity is impossible in the social sciences in the sense in which conservatives (also referred to as positivists) advocate. Consequently, any study of any phenomenon or “object” in the social sciences will invariably be colored (not necessarily consciously) by the researcher’s own subconscious proclivities, and manifest at the level of choice of questions asked, choice of

data collected and examined, choice of methods used, and so on. There is, however, another problem too: all work in the social sciences, even that which purports to be for the sake of the advancement of basic knowledge alone, is ultimately (and if not directly at least indirectly) programmatic. That is, all studies in the social sciences contain within them a mission—whether articulated or not—relating to the ultimate value or purpose of the study: which is to either preserve or change the status quo; this also has a bearing on “objectivity” in the social sciences. (Some, such as Kuhn [1970], have gone so far as to say that even in the natural sciences there is no such thing as “objective” science.) However, guys, I must also emphasize here that the position that “objective” social science does not exist is not to say that anything goes; that anything any one says about any thing is all valid. Rather, it is to say that the quest for knowledge must adhere to the principle of critical thinking, which I define as a mode of thinking that is characterized by such principles as these:

- a fiery passion for truth;
- a profound belief in the value of honest research;
- patience and open-mindedness to take seriously the views of others;
- a deep sense of commitment to the acquisition of knowledge and information on a variety of issues, both, personal as well as public;
- uncompromising honesty in confronting personal biases, prejudices, stereotypes, etc.;
- possession of limitless curiosity regarding all kinds of subject matter;
- A willingness to confront, where necessary, accepted theories, concepts, modes of thinking, worldviews, etc. in the service of advancing knowledge; and
- a refusal to make judgments that are not based on reasoned reflection.

(3) *Truth.* A person who is politically conscious is a person who seeks the truth in relation to society as a whole with the objective of understanding how that society can become a better society for all its members in terms of social justice, economic progress, environmental safety, and so on. What kind of truth? It is truth relating to how the status quo has come about and how it is maintained—that is who benefits from it and who suffers from it. This task requires one to be fully conversant with all historical processes that explain the status quo, which in turn requires him or her to be multi-disciplinary in approach given the multi-dimensional nature of all human existence. For, in the words of that brilliant intellectual, Paul A. Baran, “the seemingly autonomous, disparate, and disjointed morsels of social existence under capitalism—literature, art, politics, the economic order, science, the cultural and psychic condition of people—can all be understood (and influenced) only if they are clearly visualized as parts of the comprehensive totality of the historical process.” (1961:12-13) Since no society is perfect in terms of social justice, human advancement, and general human happiness, the politically conscious person is of necessity continuously questioning the status quo and striving for its perfection. Consequently he/she is by definition an insurrectionist, a revolutionary (but whose weapons are pens and whose ammunition are words) because he/she does not wish to permit the beneficiaries of the status quo (the rich and the powerful) from obfuscating the truth: that the status quo, especially in capitalist societies, benefits primarily the rich and the powerful and that it has evolved to this end through human agency and not some supernatural being or even just “nature.” This point was best presented by Barrington Moore, Jr. in his magnum opus some thirty years ago:

[A]ny simple straightforward truth about political institutions or events is bound to have polemical consequences. It will damage some group interests. In any society the dominant groups are the ones with the most to hide about the way society works. Very often therefore truthful analyses are bound to have a critical ring, to seem like exposures rather than objective statements, as the term is conventionally used.... For all students of human society, sympathy with the victims of historical processes and skepticism about the victors' claims provide essential safeguards against being taken in by the dominant mythology (1966:523).

It follows from this that even in those instances where an unjust order has been overthrown and a new just order is being constructed, the task of those who are politically conscious is not over. The new order will still have imperfections. Hence as long as human societies remain imperfect the job of the politically conscious is a permanent one. To put it differently: a politically conscious person is someone who is essentially, to use Baran's words: “a social critic, a person whose concern is to identify, to analyze, and in this way to help overcome the obstacles barring the way to the attainment of a better, more humane, and more rational social order. As such he/[she] becomes the conscience of society and the spokes[person] of such progressive forces as it contains in any given period of history. And as such he/[she] is inevitably considered a “troublemaker” and a “nuisance” by the ruling class seeking to preserve the status quo.” (1961:17) (4) Status quo. A politically conscious person is never satisfied with the status quo. Or to put the matter differently: a politi-

cally conscious person is not a political conservative; that is he/she shuns the ideology of political conservatism.

Procedural democracy: See **Democracy**

Rivonia Trial: The Rivonia Trial that led to life-imprisonment for Mandela, Sisulu and others, arose as a result of a police raid (involving a tip from a CIA infiltrator, Gerard Ludi) on the secret headquarters of *Umkonto We Sizwe*, the Lilliesleaf Farm, located on the outskirts of an affluent suburb of Johannesburg called Rivonia.⁹ The raid had unearthed a small cache of arms and other ordnance, together with incriminating documents. The 28-acre farm was owned by the Communist Party of South Africa which had purchased it a year after the ANC had been banned in 1960. Among those arrested were a number of South African Jews and East Indians including, Lionel Bernstein, Dennis Goldberg, Arthur Goldreich (who had pretended to be the owner of the farm), Bob Hepple, James Kantor, Ahmed Kathrada, Moosa Moolla, A. Jassat, and Harold Wolpe. Interestingly, except for Bernstein, Goldberg and Kathrada, the others were able to escape by various means prior to or during the trial, and fled the country. (Another arrestee who escaped during the trial was Walter Mkwayi, but he was re-arrested a year later, and served his life-sentence on Robben Island with the others.) The conclusion of the trial saw life-imprisonment being pronounced by Judge Quartus de Wet on eight of the nine remaining defendants (one, Bernstein, was acquitted, but rearrested and placed on bail, but he fled from South Africa too). Besides Goldberg, Kathrada, Mandela, and Sisulu, they were Govan Mbeki, Raymond Mhlaba, Elias Motsoaledi, and Andrew Mlangeni. The government prosecutor was Dr. Percy Yutar (ironically, from the perspective of the Jewish defendants, a South African Jew). Under South African law, treason was punishable by death, so why were those found guilty given life instead? Due to world-wide protests, which forced the prosecution to seek life-imprisonment rather than the death sentence they had originally wished for. During the trial, among the more memorable of Mandela's long four-hour speech (delivered on April 20), were these oft-quoted lines:

During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.

Guys, question to ponder: were the South African Jews (considered “white” in apartheid South Africa) and other whites who actively opposed apartheid, “traitors” to the white race?

Robben Island: This is a roughly five-square mile island some six miles off the coast of Cape Town in Table Bay that has been used at various times, ever since the arrival of the Dutch colonial settlers at the Cape, primarily as a place for imprisonment or exile of prisoners, mentally disabled, leprosy sufferers, and so on. The name of the island is an anglicization of the Afrikaans name for it, *Robbeneiland* (meaning seal island). From around 1965 to 1991 the island served as a maximum security prison housing mainly black prisoners, and it became infamous among black people as a place where the task of the jailors was to break the spirit of political prisoners by means of a regimen of harsh treatment. (There is a mind-numbing scene in the film that speaks to this.) In the years following the Soweto Rebellion, however, the prison island also became a status symbol for potential young political prisoners. They began to designate the island as “Mandela University.” The mere presence of Mandela, Sisulu and others on Robben Island was enhancing the politicization of the young. In 1997, Robben Island ceased to be a prison and it was converted into a museum. The United Nations, in 1999, placed it on the list of *World Heritage sites*. (Guys, what is a “World Heritage site?”)

Settler-colonialism: A variant of **colonialism**, referring to colonization that entailed settlement by colonial populations. Such settlement was usually, but not always, permanent—compare the colonization experiences of Kenya and South Africa.

Sisulu, Walter: Sisulu was born on May 18, 1912 in Qutubeni in the Transkei. In terms of South African racial terminology he was a *colored*, that is, a person of mixed parentage (his mother was a black domestic servant [Alice Sisulu] and his father a white civil servant [Albert Victor Dickinson]). He was raised by his mother. His interest in politics was initially awakened by Garveyism—imported into South Africa by, among others, Clement Kadalie, a trade union leader—and consummated by joining the ANC in 1940 and subsequently founding, together with Mandela and others, the ANC Youth League in 1944. As a member of the league, he was afforded the opportunity to travel fairly widely abroad in the 1940s and 50s. He was one of the ANC defendants in the Rivonia Trial, and together with them sentenced to life imprisonment. He was also among the 156 who were tried in the mara-

⁹ Ludi claims in a BBC documentary, *Nelson Mandela: Accused #1* (2004), that the CIA was forced to provide the information it had on Mandela's movements to the South African security service because it had arrested one of their spies (inadvertently) in Durban but would not let him go. They used their info on Mandela as a bargaining chip to obtain the release of their operative.

thon 1956-61 Treason Trials. Two years following his release on October 15, 1989 (together with Kathrada and others), he was elected the deputy president of the ANC. He died on May 6, 2003.

State: Denotes a socio-political, spatially bounded entity at the center of which is to be found a formally organized central political authority. The “state” is both an abstract as well as a concrete entity. In its concrete manifestation, the state is readily visible via its various apparatuses, e.g., the bureaucracy, the army, etc. that together constitute what is known as the “government.” This term should not be confused with the term “state” as used to denote a fragment of a federal political system; e.g., as in “New York state, Michigan state,” etc., in the United States.

Structure: The historically-rooted institutionalized and seemingly “natural” relationships that systemically bind a whole together, but whose construction, while the prerogative of those with a monopoly over power and to which the powerless are in thrall, is often transparent to neither with the passage of time once it is completed. This definition draws on the *structuralism* of Louis Althusser and the concept of *structuration* first articulated by Anthony Giddens.¹⁰ At the simplest level, structure can be considered as a metaphor for those *relatively* enduring aspects of society that allows it to retain some degree of functional coherence akin to the structure of, say, a building (the walls, roof, and foundation). At a social level, generally speaking, structure and agency has a dialectical relationship: meaning one shapes the other. At the individual level, structures of society constrict individual agency. Note, structures are not always human-made. The climatic environment is an example of a structure too. (See also social structure.)

Substantive Democracy: See **Democracy**

Tambo, Oliver: President of the ANC from 1969 to 1990, and the partner of Mandela in their law firm they had established in 1952. He was born in Mbizana in eastern Mpondoland to subsistence farmers on October 27, 1917. He became fully active in the ANC by cofounding with Mandela, Sissulu, and others, the youth wing of the organization, the ANC Youth League, in 1944. Thereafter, he would steadily rise in the ranks of the ANC concurrently with Mandela and Sissulu, among others. Following the banning of the ANC on March 23, 1960, he was sent abroad to help set up the headquarters of the ANC in exile in a number of countries, including Zambia, where he would spend most of his life, until the unbanning of the ANC. He returned to South Africa on December 13, 1990 with other exiled ANC leaders. Due to ill-health, however, he gave up his position as ANC president to Mandela in 1991; he died of a stroke two years later on April 24, 1993. (In the film *Mandela visits his grave*.)

Techno-financialism: A term I have coined in my classes, for want of a better word, to refer to the ongoing phase in the evolution of global corporate capital that is characterized by a level of globalization unprecedented in human history—in terms of geographic magnitude and operational intensity—driven by corporate capital’s ability to harness two primary factors of production: computerized information technology, and the ability to move across national boundaries at the speed of light (literally) gargantuan self-generated financial resources that dwarf the annual national budgets of the majority of the world’s nations.

Terreblanche, Eugene: Leader of a neo-Nazi white supremacist group, the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (Afrikaner Resistance Movement – AWB), that achieved some media prominence for their oppositional activities against the dismantling of apartheid. Known more for his flamboyant gestures (e.g. riding to court on horseback) and buffoonery than for coherence in aims and strategy, Terreblanche has always been, in reality, a sideshow in South African politics. The AWB is now no longer operational; however, other right-wing neo-Nazi racist groups continue to exist in South Africa—often with links to other similar organizations in Europe, the U.S., Australia, and so on, and sporadically active in criminality and violence. (Interestingly, it has been reported in the South African media that among those involved with the AWB was Steven Hatfield—the U.S. scientist from Maryland erroneously fingered by the FBI for the post-9/11 anthrax attacks.)

Terrorism: note that this term is defined here in the context of the pre-9/11 era (that is, before the onset of the current ongoing so-called “war on terror” which has clearly added a relatively new gloss to the definition of terrorism). In the pre-9/11 context, then: the term even in that period was clearly fraught with much disagreement; for, one person’s terrorist is another’s freedom-fighter. Wilkinson (1973) suggests a compromise: to label the terrorist activities of the state as “repressive terrorism” and the terrorism of those attempting to overthrow the state as “revolutionary terrorism.” In making this distinction the purpose is to get beyond the issue of who has legitimacy in using the weapon of terror and instead concentrate on what terrorism is and the role it plays in politics. Terrorism to start with is a political activity, not a criminal activity, in the sense that the object is a political goal (either to overthrow the state or to repress those trying to overthrow the state). As a means to a goal and not an end in itself it is clearly a tactic or a strategy. This strategy is to create among opponents (or supporters of the opponent) a pervasive climate of fear with the hope that the opponent will give in. Among the elements that go to-

10. See, for instance, Althusser (1972), and Giddens (1986).

ward creating this climate of fear three are of central significance: (a) the victims are always civilians (if the victims are soldiers or guerrillas then clearly it is not terrorism but war). (b) Violence is an integral part of terrorism where its use (regardless of the form it takes: rape, murder, torture, bombings, and so on) will be indiscriminate, arbitrary and unpredictable. (c) It follows from (a) and (b) that terrorism does not subscribe to any “rules of war” nor is it circumscribed by moral restraints of any kind. Whether used by the state or by revolutionaries the fact that terrorism involves victimization of those not equipped to defend themselves, i.e., civilians, terrorism as a strategy for achieving political goals must be condemned. Neither the state (which usually employs terrorism via the agency of hired thugs (right wing death squads in El Salvador and in South Africa are prime examples) nor the guerrillas have a right to subject civilians to violence and death, however just their cause may be. This is one situation where means clearly do not justify ends.¹¹ In fact a very legitimate argument can be advanced along the lines that those whose consciences have become immune to the death and suffering of their victims caused by their terrorist activities are very likely to use terror as a weapon of choice once they have achieved power whenever they run into opposition—regardless of whether the opposition stems from within or without their own ranks and regardless of whether it occurs via lawful channels. Two examples to support this point: the reign of terror unleashed by Stalin in the Soviet Union in the 1930s and the reign of terror inflicted on the Cambodian people during the period 1975–78 by the Pol Pot regime (these blood-thirsty thugs would later be named, characteristically, as “freedom fighters” by the Reagan Administration following their ousting from power with assistance from the Vietnamese in 1978.)¹² In both cases, the terror eventually spread to their own ranks consuming their own. (Though it is possible that the widespread use of children by the Pol Pot regime to do its dirty work probably further aggravated the situation given that children are less likely to comprehend the value of human life than adults.) Bristol (1972: 2–3) in a brilliant essay on the Gandhian strategy of nonviolence makes the same point with a slightly different nuance:

One of the most insidious results of participation in the use of violence is that, no matter how noble their motives, how great their courage, and how deep the sacrifices they make, violence does produce a change in those who employ it.... So often when hatred, distortion, torture, murder, destruction are used to bring down a ruthless and inhuman tyranny that avowedly needs bringing down, it is discovered that the terror and ruthlessness of the old tyranny reappear in a new guise. All too frequently, in human experience, wars of liberation have been fought with lofty courage and high idealism only to result tragically and ironically in the rebirth of tyranny with new tyrants in charge.

Does terrorism work, however? It depends upon the situation and the nature of the enemy. Hence “repressive terrorism” of the Chilean fascist junta seems to have worked in eliminating the opposition to all intents and purposes, whereas in El Salvador it has not entirely succeeded. In South Africa repressive terrorism succeeded in the short run but the 1990 de Klerk “WOW” (“writing on the wall”) speech showed that it ultimately failed. In the Middle East and Northern Ireland “revolutionary terrorism” seems to have achieved little for the Palestine Liberation Organization and the same was true for the Irish Republican Army respectively. In the first case (as happened in the second case) peace is most likely to come as a result of largely political factors involving outside pressures from key benefactors to reach a negotiated settlement where the cost of not reaching such a settlement is rendered much higher than doing otherwise for all parties.¹³ One other point: terrorism should not be confused with guerrilla warfare which also uses violence, except that it is targeted exclusively against the military, it obeys the “rules of war” and it is not above moral constraints in how far it can go with violence. Examples of such guerrilla war include that fought by Fidel Castro and Ernesto “Che” Guevara in Cuba against the corrupt U.S.-supported regime of Fulgencio Batista in late 1950s and the liberation wars in the former Portuguese territories in Africa (see below). One cautionary note about the issue of revolutionary violence: there is today a general dis-

11. There is, however, one exception: when the target of terrorists is not people but property. Since terrorism is usually the weapon of the weak, great mileage may be achieved by revolutionaries if their terrorist activity is restricted to destroying capitalist property—which in capitalist systems is less expendable than people’s lives. The ANC had claimed that its terrorist activities were so targeted, yet awful “mistakes” were made where innocent civilians were killed (see TRC 1999).

12. The motion picture *Killing Fields* provides a glimpse of the widespread terror that the Pol Pot regime unleashed on its own people in the name of “socialism.” Millions upon millions would perish in this self-created Cambodian holocaust that in its barbarity and magnitude would come close to the Jewish Holocaust in Nazi Germany. And the world would simply stand and watch, as in the case of the Jewish Holocaust—not even the self-proclaimed champions of civilization, freedom, democracy, etc. would see fit to lift a single finger to assist the Cambodian civilians. Only an invasion by Vietnam in 1978, for other reasons, would put an end to the carnage. Although Pol Pot himself was never brought to account for his crimes (having died in April 1998—possibly as a result of suicide), some of his lieutenants were arrested and brought before the long-delayed U.N. organized genocide tribunal that commenced proceedings in Phnom Penh on November 20, 2007.

13. Hence, in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict peace will only come when the Israeli state is subjected to credible international sanctions and the simultaneous suspension all U.S. aid, regardless of the form it takes, to that country.

taste in the West for revolutionary violence everywhere.¹⁴ Yet while on the surface this may appear laudatory on closer examination it reveals plain hypocrisy. To begin with a general amnesia clouds the issue: Westerners tend to forget that the historical foundations of Western democracy itself rests solidly on violent revolutionary upheavals: the Puritan Revolution (the English Civil War), the French Revolution and the War of Independence and the Civil War in the United States. (Even the whites in South Africa have their history of revolutionary violence: the Boer War.) More importantly, opposition to revolutionary violence conceals a pernicious hidden agenda arising out of a deliberate tendency for the beneficiaries of the status quo—the rich and the powerful—to equate, in the words of Barrington Moore (1967: 505) “the violence of those who resist oppression with the violence of the oppressors,” and thereby promulgate the falsehood that “gradual and piecemeal reform has demonstrated its superiority over violent revolution as a way to advance human freedom.” Even a cursory examination of history indicates that while violent resistance against oppression by the oppressed has generally been met with universal condemnation, the violence of the status quo has gone unchallenged, even when it has been demonstrably greater in magnitude than the revolutionary violence that rose to challenge it. Take for instance the case of the French Revolution: the number who actually perished at the hands of the revolutionaries (estimated to be about 40,000) were far fewer than those who died as a result of the injustices of the *ancien regime*. Consequently, as Moore (1967: 104) so rightly reminds us with reference to this fact: “to dwell on the horrors of revolutionary violence while forgetting that of ‘normal’ times is merely partisan hypocrisy.” There is one other point that must be noted on this issue: violence need not necessarily always imply blood-shed. Violence can also take the form of unjust juridical constraints: a case in point is the entire panoply of laws that made up the apartheid system. Hence the denial of human rights is surely violence. Clearly then there is more to it than meets the eye when politicians in the West decry revolutionary violence: their agenda has little to do with morality; rather it has more to do with the preservation of the status quo upon which rests their hegemonic power. Having said this, however, it should also be pointed out that revolutionary violence, if one can go by the histories of some of the communist nations, e.g., the Soviet Union, China, and Cambodia, is also heavily tainted with the blood of the innocent: the people at the bottom, the peasantry, who were victims of the old order yet again found themselves re-victimized by the new order. In fact, the rivers of blood of the innocent have, at times, run very deep in these societies.

Theory: A systematic ideational construction—made of properly defined concepts and logically interconnected propositions—that is at once verifiable (in the immediate sense of being consistent with known facts and available evidence) and provisional (capable of revision), and that is built via the dialectic of a humanist (speculative, creative, etc.) and scientific (measurement, predictive power, etc.) method.

Tutu, Desmond Bishop: In the film we see him in spliced news clips addressing a large crowd in London and later casting his vote in the first-ever multi-racial national elections. Tutu was born on October 7, 1931 in Klerksdorp. His ambition was to become a doctor, but unable to afford medical education he became a teacher, and later a cleric when he was ordained a parish priest of the Anglican Church in 1961. Using his moral authority, and advocating non-violent strategies of resistance to apartheid, Tutu, an articulate man, would become in time a prominent South African cleric. In 1978 he assumed the post of the general secretary of the South African Council of Churches, and several years later, in 1985, he acquired the distinction of becoming the first black bishop of Johannesburg. (In apartheid South Africa this was a major achievement.) A year later, he achieved a similar distinction when he was elected as the first black archbishop of Cape Town. Among his other achievements include receiving the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1984, and his appointment by Mandela as the head of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*—a commission of inquiry set up to investigate human rights abuses during the apartheid era, and whose mandate included the controversial device of amnesty from prosecution for those who confessed and repented for their crimes.

West: In general, for purposes of this course, this term refers to white publics living in the Euro-North American (and Australasian) ecumene collectively. However, when the term is used in specific reference to criticism of Western policies toward apartheid South Africa specifically, and Southern Africa generally, the Scandinavian countries must be excluded. Why? Because they, for the most part, had fairly progressive antiapartheid policies unmatched by, for example, the United States, or Britain, or Germany, or France, or Australia.¹⁵

Whiteness: Guys: In order to define this term let me begin by asking you to consider the following two quotes first: The first is by Etherington (1989: 286-87) and it is part of his account of relations between the

14. Though it appears that in the 1980s this distaste withered away in the case of the Reagan Administration when it began funding counter-revolutionary movements (e.g., in Nicaragua and Angola).

15. This is a comparative statement; it is not that the Scandinavian countries were completely untainted by apartheid (especially as a result of economic links with South Africa). See, for example, Bangura (2004) and Haldal (1996).

European settlers and missionaries in the colony of Natal (that would later become part of South Africa and which today is called KwaZulu-Natal) in the nineteenth-century.

[A] settler complaint was that... missionaries attempted to convert people who were not capable of becoming true Christians. According to a Methodist district superintendent, the major reason why settlers would not contribute to missions was “skepticism as to the converting power of the gospel upon the native population.” A candidate for the Legislative Council once told an election rally that a “corps of police officers could do more to civilize the Kaffirs, than all the missionaries in the Colony.” Lieutenant-Governor Pine reinforced local prejudice by telling the Methodists that experience had taught him “the extreme difficulty of really converting savage nations to a knowledge of our religion...” It was as though the settlers unconsciously feared that Christian Africans would have a more powerful claim to equal rights than an uneducated population devoted to their ancient beliefs. (Emphasis added.)

This second quote is from Ostler (2004: 17-18) who seeks to explain the ideological premises of the dispossession of the U.S. Native Americans in the U.S. West following the acquisition of the Louisiana Territory from the French in 1803 (as if it was theirs to sell in the first place).

Though many men and women who “settled” western frontiers became virulent Indian haters and advocated extermination, most theorists offered assimilation as an alternative. Assimilation resolved the contradiction between a commitment to dispossession with its implications of genocide on the one hand, and Enlightenment and Christian principles of the common humanity of all people on the other... Yet the basic premise of assimilation, that Indian ways of life were inferior, was linked to increasingly systematized theories of racial classification and hierarchy that tended to reinforce ontological thinking about race... American elites eventually tried to resolve the contradiction between imperialism and humanitarianism through the idea that whereas rare individuals might become “civilized,” Indians were an inferior race that was inevitably destined to vanish. Although Americans knew at a practical level that Indians controlled a significant proportion of North America, on an ideological level they conceived of the entire continent as empty.

O.K. So, what is my point? It is impossible for the psyche of a people to remain completely unaffected by their unprincipled and violent abrogation of the rights (that is those subsumed by the Natural Law of Prior Claim) of other peoples over a period spanning centuries and on a scale that is simply unfathomable by the human mind—most especially when those so victimized continue to live among the interlopers. It is not surprising then that the denouement of such shameful markers in the history of the colonization of the United States and South Africa as the enslavement of Africans and Asians (in South Africa—1650s–1830s) and First Americans and Africans (in the United States—1500s–1863/1865); the Hundred Year War (1799–1879); the aftermath of the Louisiana Purchase (1803); the Trail of Tears (1838); and Wounded Knee (1890), on the ideological plane has been the development among the descendants of the European settlers of what may be described as the hegemony of the ideology of “whiteness.” United in their common history—that transcends class, gender, ethnicity, religion, and any other social structural division one may care to identify—of gross criminality (in terms of crimes against humanity), a perverse racist sense developed among them of entitlement to human and natural resources, before all other peoples, on the basis of nothing more than their skin pigmentation. Fortified by the power to continue across centuries, all the way to the present, to inflict hegemony upon others (and contrary to the logical expectation of feelings of remorse, the quest to seek forgiveness, the magnanimity to consider restitution, and so on, befitting a people that have never ceased to trumpet to this day their membership of a supposedly superior civilization) the descendants of the European colonial settlers elevated the notion of whiteness as signifying entitlement to privilege to one of Darwinian naturalness (or in the case of those of a religious mind a God-given right).

While the literature on the subject of the hegemony of whiteness is burgeoning, a brief foray into its principal characteristics is all we can afford here.¹⁶ There are seven central elements around which the ideology of whiteness is organized:

¹⁶ Guys, in case you are wondering: no, this concept is not my invention. If you want to learn more, the following sources should provide an ample purchase on the concept of whiteness as an ideological construct, and its varied uses in practice: Allen (1994–1997), Delgado and Stefancic (1997), Dyer (1997), Frankenberg (1993, 1997), Goldstein (2006), Hill (1997), Ignatiev (1995), Lewis (2004), Lipsitz (2006), Lopez (2005), McKoy (2001), Roediger (1999, 2006), Steyn (2001), Sullivan (2006), Vera and Gordon (2003). To have a hint of the complexity of the subject-matter that the concept of whiteness seeks to address, one would do well to also look at Franks (2000), Stovall (2003), Walker (2005), and Yancy (2005). See also the brief intellectual biography by Wing (2007) of Harry Chang whose work laid the groundwork for “whiteness studies,” and what is termed “critical race theory” (an application of whiteness studies to the study of law). The importance of imagery in the development of the ideology of whiteness is a topic that is ably explored by Pieterse (1992)—you are strongly encouraged to look at that work—while Blight (2002) provides us with a critical analysis of the role of one of the most culturally determinative events of U.S. history, the U.S. Civil War, in the emergence of the ideology of whiteness in the United States. The role of whiteness in today’s South Africa is considered by Blaser (2008).

- a pervasive and stupefying ahistoricism;
- the deep illusion that whiteness is an immutable biologically determined concept, rather than one of contingency (exemplified by the profound inability to clearly and consistently define who a “white” person is across time and space);
- the fallacy that whiteness equals civilizational superiority (a Eurocentrist hubris);
- the preposterous belief that whiteness is a synonym for humanness;
- the notion of whiteness as “property”
- the belief that possession of this property entitles one to privileges that others without this property are not entitled to;
- and the idea that what constitutes knowledge is a prerogative that belongs only to those who possess this property (and therefore, even describing and questioning whiteness, its practice, its historical antecedents, and so on is akin to dabbling in superstition).

But of what relevance is the concept of whiteness to the subject matter of our class? Simple: as I have explained quite a few times, we cannot comprehend the functions of racism in this society without understanding this concept. The reason is that “whiteness” has become the ideational element in the ideational/structural dialectical binary that not only underwrites the material basis of the prosperity of the peasant/proletarian European interlopers and their descendants to this day, but also helps to shape the character of the relations that currently exist between whites and blacks in South Africa (and the the U.S. too). There is however, one fly in the ointment in the analysis so presented: A question arises that is not so easily dispensed with: Exactly how does whiteness interact with the overall process of accumulation that in the last instance is the driving force of all capitalist orders? Very briefly: whiteness within the working-classes of European ancestry serves as an ideological vehicle for the subjectification of the objective and the objectification of the subjective in the domain of class-relations, which in the end benefits capital. This explains, for instance, why in the United States cross-racial working class alliances have been notoriously difficult to organize or sustain, permitting capital almost unfettered access to political power. It also explains, to turn to a wholly different time-period, why most of the poor whites in the slave-holding South (who could not afford to own slaves) supported the plantation aristocracy in maintaining the slave order—so much so that when that order came under severe threat they en masse took up arms in its defense (reference here is of course to the U.S. Civil War).

A close reading of the foregoing, to sum up, should lead to this conclusion: whiteness performs a contradictory role. It is, at once, a source of privilege, and a source of oppression for the working classes of European ancestry; similarly, for capital whiteness serves to undermine accumulation as well as enhance it. In other words, like all ideologies whiteness is an inherently contingent cultural artifact in its practice; it all depends on the level and specificity of the analysis one undertakes, and the place and time-period in question, to comprehend the contradictory role of whiteness, today—as well as in the past.

In one sense the policy of affirmative action has always existed in this country from the very beginning of European colonial settlement, in the shape of legalized racist and sexist discriminatory practices that gave preference to whites in general, and white males in particular, in all areas of the economy, politics, and society (from employment to voting rights). In other words, white racism and sexism has always been another name for illegitimate “affirmative action”—in support of whiteness and patriarchy. Yet, when legitimate affirmative action policies were instituted beginning in the 1960s in order to help rectify the historically rooted injustices of racism and sexism, considerable opposition among whites (even among liberals—including, ironically, white females) to this policy emerged.

Viva: A Portuguese word, etymologically of Italian roots, meaning “long live” (hence the slogans, “Viva ANC,” “Viva Mandela,” etc.) borrowed by black South Africans from the *relatively* successful African liberation struggles of the 1960s and early 1970s against Portuguese colonialism in the neighboring countries of Mozambique and Angola.