

## A HOT DRY SEASON

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Emperor Philip of Spain- "Can I, a Christian, kill my own son?" The Grand Inquisitor- "The peace of the empire is worth a rebel's life." Don Carlo, Act III, Scene I. (G. Verdi)

Getting an audience in the United States to see a film with a sad ending is very difficult. If it is a political film it is almost impossible and getting such a movie financed and made in the United States is unheard of. Most movie goers, by 1989 knew about the mistreatment of Black Africans. They had plenty of time to find out because it began in 1948 when the Nationalist Party won the elections and rapidly instituted their anti-Black and anti-Asiatic "Colored" restrictions, called Apartheid. A film, CRY THE BELOVED COUNTRY, came out fifty years ago (1951, remade in 1995, after the Black majority took control of the government) and books, newspapers, radio, television and magazines have carried stories at all times so that most people knew of the progressively worsening conditions that the South African Government was imposing on the Black African population and that bad things were happening there. In Hollywood political films are considered box office poison. We can see how the film's distributors tried to deal with this presumed audience attitude, in the coming attractions, which we will now show.

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You could not tell from this trailer that this film is about the racial conflicts in South Africa. It makes the film look and sound like a case of righting some unspecified injustice. This did not work, the film was a financial failure and I never heard of it being on television.

Until 1995, the South African Police had a special division that dealt with enforcing the racial laws and ferreting out the opposition. It was called Special Branch and reminded me of "Special" German Army/SS Units called, "Einsatzgruppen," who murdered Jews in Russia and called what they did, "Special Actions." In *SCHINDLER'S LIST*, the murdering of the Jews of the Krakow Ghetto was an example of a "Special Action." The Special Branch fought all manifestations of what they decided was opposition to the state's racist policies. In this film the South African Government is embodied in Captain Stoltz (Jurgen Prochnow), an utterly immoral, black hating policeman and his immediate superior, Colonel Viljoen (Gerard Thoenes). They play good cop-bad cop. The Captain tortures and assassinates the opposition and the Colonel, in a reasoned, calm and beneficent voice denies it ever happened, was an understandable error, or if pressed, that, "These things happen," in the life and death struggle between Civilization (White) and Communists and Terrorists (Black).

Few films portrayed the vile nature of the forty years of the racist regime that was the then Republic of South Africa,

usually called the 'Afrikaans' Government. The segregationist Nationalist Party was elected to power in 1947 by a majority of the white voters, who were the only people allowed to vote. A heritage of British colonialism was the disenfranchisement all the voters who were not European and its belief in the inferiority of Blacks, Indians and other East Asians- Chinese, Indonesian Japanese, etc. The earliest phase of the oppression of the blacks was the subject of, CRY, THE BELOVED COUNTRY, but I cannot remember any other films on the subject until 1989 when two films were released, A DRY WHITE SEASON and A WORLD APART. A forth film, CRY FREEDOM, was released in 1987. It was about the police murder of Steven Biko and starred Denzel Washington as Biko.

A DRY WHITE SEASON sounds like the description of a wine, but it is a superb encapsulation of a racist fantasy, a country where the blacks don't officially exist, form any part of the body politic or have any of the rights of citizenship. It is also an fitting description of the geography of the area, a high plains desert for the most part, one that is finally 'free' but burdened by poverty. Years of economic boycotts have depreciated its agricultural products, particularly its wine which the TV series, RUMPOLE OF THE BAILEY, disparagingly referred to as, "South African Plonk".

A DRY WHITE SEASON shows the effects of Apartheid on two families, one white, one black. Benjamin de Toit, (Donald

Sutherland) is a high school history teacher who is initially shown to be just like all the other white middle class Afrikaans. His attractive house, in an immaculate all white suburb, is set amidst wonderfully green lawns with trees and shrubbery. He takes for granted that he can have a maid, a part time gardener, and the perks that come with being white. His school's black gardener, who is also his part time gardener, Gordon Gebene and his family live in a crowded, two room cinder block house in the isolated, segregated-all black township of Sowetto, a dilapidated area of unpaved streets, broken roads, not much garbage collection, hence ubiquitous trash and dust and nothing green. They live in poverty, such that de Toit pays Gordon's oldest son's school fees. The schools are, like everything else, racially segregated.

de Toit, unlike Erin Brokovich, has no white support except his adolescent son, a woman reporter, played by Susan Sarandon and his realistic but tired, worn out, cynical and sarcastic lawyer, McKenzie, wonderfully portrayed by Marlon Brando. I think this headline cast-Marlon Brando, Susan Sarandon, Michael Gambon and Jurgen Prochnow did this film because of their opposition to Racism. McKenzie can continue to remain alive in this racist country because he recognizes the limits beyond which he cannot go, as de Toit does not. McKenzie knows and accepts that he is powerless. He says, "When I win a case they change the law." To judge from A WORLD APART, the police then rearrest

his client under the new law. No film about Apartheid South Africa yet tells the story of the Black Underground or the White underground that fought against the racist government. It was small but it existed and books have been coming out, RIVONIA'S CHILDREN and two biographies of Nelson Mandela. I think the reasons that new films have yet been made about the White resistance movement was that most were Communists and Stalin Solzhenitsyn and the Gulog have given Communism a bad name.

The South African whites learned about repression from the fascists and communists, the latter whom they professed to be their mortal enemies. There was considerable sympathy for Hitler in South Africa before World War II amongst the Afrikaans population but I do not know of any studies on the direct influence of Nazism on the National Party.

When I was in Southern Africa in 2000, in all five countries (Republic of South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe) radio, television and newspapers carried stories from the previous days testimony before the, "Truth and Reconciliation Commission's" hearings. All the descriptions were worse then any of the horrors portrayed by this film, just as any of the films Hollywood made about the barbarity of the German's during World War II were only approximations of actual crimes. Or, to take matters closer to home, films about the civil rights struggles of the 1960's by African-Americans and some whites in the South, were travesties of the true historical events. (A

notable exception was MURDER IN MISSISSIPPI which unsparingly told the story of the murders of Andrew Goodman, Richard Schwerner and Richard Chaney. It was seen once on NBC Television and was financed by a British regional television network and European banks.

To keep film audiences from walking out, demanding their money back and telling all their friends not to see the film, disgusting things must be toned down. Also, theater owners decide what they will show. Their own feelings and their impressions of their audiences, even though they may be projections, have a determinant role.

This film raises issues of idealism and its price. de Toit seems masochistic, relinquishing his possessions, livelihood, friends, social environment and ultimately his family out of principal. Idealism is not something that Psychoanalysts have directly studied. The authors of this film portray the consequences of idealism but only give us snippets of information, insufficient to understand Ben de Toit. We are shown that he is not an automatic racist, This allows the white audience to identify with his character, not easy to do because many of his characteristics are unsympathetic. He is masochistic, obtuse, passive and a parody of a bleeding heart. It is easier to identify with Lawyer McKenzie. Ordinarily I would assume that an idealist would see the ultimate consequences of a course of action but the framers of the Declaration of

Independence had no military plan, as if they thought (hoped, fantasied, wished) that the entire situation could be settled by debate in the House of Commons. An exception to this can be seen in the film about the Irish revolutionary, MICHAEL COLLINS. The Irish resistance had a political and military program.

No one, white or black, could, in 1976, when the fictional events in this film took place or 1989, when this film was made, have predicted that the African National Congress would be the government of the Republic of South Africa five years later. de Toit is presented as a decent, apolitical and idealistic person whom the audience, seeing themselves as decent people, would identify and empathize with. It is the story of a brave man who did what his conscience dictated but that conscience was also driven by guilt. He says if he had done more earlier these murders would not have happened, another tactic to get the audience on his side. This is not evident on a personal level but is a global assessment. In retrospective theory, if South African's Apartheid system had been resisted from the beginning, then these murders would not have occurred. A DRY WHITE SEASON is propaganda. It is meant to inspire the audience to behave as de Toit tells himself he should have and judge him as he judges himself.

To heighten the audience's interest, this film is a detective story, de Toit, Sarandon, Mckenzie and their many black investigators and witnesses have to go on a voyage of discovery

to reveal to the audience what really happened and attempt to bring the culprits to justice. Gambon, Proscow and most of the whites in the film, in opposing their efforts, create in the audience tension, interest, concern and empathy. While de Toit fails in the courts, he has further educated himself and the audience about the true nature of the Apartheid Society. The audience is kept simultaneously involved in a detective story and an evolving story of the injustices of the repressive system and of the complicit white tribe and asks themselves what would they do in such a situation? The Black Africans are as involved de Toit is, seen through the black audience in the courtroom scene, who express themselves when they see a chance of confronting the repressive regime, but their help involves them in greater danger from the Special Branch, they are always the ones whom the police beat.

That hatred of blacks, and the extremes to which the Special Branch would go were documented every day that I was in Africa in 1999. The newspapers carried stories from the previous days testimony before the "Truth and Reconciliation" Commission's hearings. The testimony of that particular day was about how two high school students, a boy and a girl, after being beaten and tortured were forced to drink Thallium laced water. They endured extraordinarily wrenching gastro-intestinal symptoms but were not dying fast enough for their impatient torturers, who then became murderers. They shot and buried them. The police had to take

the court to the spot where they buried the bodies, which were then dug up in front of the court and audience and the remains autopsied. Thallium is a metallic element. It does not biodegrade. It was found in the two bodies. The exhumations unearthed many other bodies in a common grave, just as the exhumation the three Civil Rights unearthed unknown black bodies. As I was seeing the videotape this came to mind.

This film is designed to explain to a presumed unknowing audience, what the Afrikaans Government was really like, "Behind the headlines," encouraging the audience to be sympathetic to the Black Africans and seeing them as heroes and so antagonistic to the white South Africans that they will see them as evil criminals. It shows the blacks as noble, principled, long suffering and on the side of Justice while most of the whites are, at best, complicit in a racist tyranny.

We can see from this film that there were a lot of Black South African Policemen. The best explanation of this to date that I have come across is in Nelson Mandela's Autobiography. He viewed those black supporters of oppression as people who had given up hope for an equal state. He thought they were depressed. They thus joined those whom they felt would always prevail. The Black policemen in this picture were not there because there was a shortage of white actors in Zimbabwe to play policeman. It was historically accurate. Mandela's supposition allows me to speculate psychoanalytically that the black

policemen were identifying with the whites and their violence against blacks was an expression of anger at a introjected object that they were externalizing. The introjected object could also have been a white.

The historic context of this film was the Afrikaans Government's adaption of a policy during the 1970's, of teaching Black's only Afrikaans instead of English in the public school system. English is the universal language of most of southern Africa. It was what the Black Africans wanted to learn so they could have successful lives and, if the European experience during World War II is relevant, to listen to the overseas programs of the BBC, Radio Moscow, neighboring states and the Voice of America, all of which accurately reported events in South Africa. Also, English is the common language in an area where there are more than fifty languages in six surrounding countries. Also, English was the language of their white supporters.

They students were seen by the Afrikaans Government as waging war against the Government of South Africa and paid the price of enemies, as shown in this film. Foreign reporters were regularly expelled for reporting on these demonstrations as Sarandon's character was. Interesting enough, when I was in South Africa I never heard Black Africans not speaking Afrikaans when they were addressed in Afrikaans.

In psychoanalytic terms these protests were the son's

attacking the unjust father, the State and the State's punishing "it's" rebellious sons and daughters. It seems perverse to describe this battle in Oedipal terms but in order to understand the intense emotions behind the actual events, I think this is a valid, if over arching generalization which is portrayed in the conflicts of the individuals in the film.

The first question I asked myself were why the White South Africans were so involved in such an irrational project as to imagine that 3 million whites could defeat 26 million blacks? And, after the horrors of Nazi racism, why they wanted to continue their cultures' centuries old racial stereotypes. The film tries to explain that, and includes what I consider irrational justifications. First, historically, the earliest permanent white settlers of the Cape Colony were Dutch. The Portuguese had been there first but their presence disappeared by the seventeenth century. The Dutch had to capitulate to the British, just as they had to capitulate to the British in New York in 1664. The Cape became a British colony. The Dutch settlers hated British rule and during the 19th century they migrated North where they fought many wars with the tribes of the north whom they defeated.<sup>1</sup> The Northern lands were not yet the homelands of the black tribes, it was a case of the tribes especially the Zulus, aggressively expanding South as the Boers

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<sup>1</sup> Morris, Donald R.. *The Washing of the Spears*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1965

moved north. The British were also moving north and collided with the southward advancing tribes. This is portrayed in ZULU, the story of the Battle of Roark's Drift. This is one of the most famous battles of the British Army, when 150 British troopers defended an indefensible position, killing more the 2000 of the 4000 attacking Zulus. This picture is frequently shown on South African Satellite television. These wars, mentioned in the school room scene, and this schoolroom scene is also in A WORLD APART, were the start of the organized anti-black, racist tradition. Then the Boers fought against the imperialist British who wanted to incorporate their Independent country, Orange Free State, into their empire, particularly after gold and diamonds were discovered near Johannesburg. This episode of African history was recently portrayed in a PBS Film, RHODES AND BARNABY. After fighting and loosing a four year war against the British Empire, the Boar War, 1898-1902<sup>2,3</sup> they also hated the English. This mutual hatred is portrayed in the film, BREAKER MORANT. Thus the Boers remained a reclusive white minority with a different religion, Huguenot or Dutch Reformed, largely living in the Northern part of the country.

The film makers have made the audience aware that the Gebene's are a family of ordinary people who want to stay out of

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<sup>2</sup> Morris, Donald R. The Washing of the Spears, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1965

<sup>3</sup> The Boer War

harm's way but for the younger son this is impossible. He wants to protest the dead end education that the racist state wants him to have. "They want us to be messenger boys, mine boys." "Or gardeners, like me," his father says with some anger, resenting the truth. This is the instance where this good son is revolting against his good father. It is the combination of adolescent rebellion and political reality. Jonathan wants to be the lawyer that his father could not be in the apartheid system. He disobey's his father and does participate in a demonstration against Apartheid and is punished by the most powerful father figure, the State, which consciously perceives the students as disobedient children who must be punished. Unconsciously they are perceived as revolting against the father, wanting to take his penis. As Blacks, they are the objects of the whites paranoid projected fantasies. The son is arrested and tortured for information about the "ringleaders," but in these mass demonstrations there are no 'leaders' because everyone thinks of themselves as a leader. The people at the front of the demonstration who raise their voices loudest are voicing what everyone believes. In the Kent State shootings in 1968 there were no leaders either among the students or the National Guardsmen. In such demonstrations, everyone has similar sentiments.<sup>4</sup> In torturing Jonathan they go too far, they lose control of their anger. They have murdered him and must hide the

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<sup>4</sup> Freud, S. Group Psychology Standard Edition

corpse which is now evidence of their criminality by not telling the family where he is buried.

Many Whites, both inside and outside south Africa, were predisposed to believe the Afrikaans Government's versions of events. John Ashcroft, our present Attorney General as a Congressman voted against releasing Nelson Mandela from jail. People like Ashcroft believed the Black opposition were all Communists. Those predisposed bigots continued to support the Apartheid regimes till the end, wanting to believe, like the South African whites, that there was no true widespread black opposition, it was all outside, "Reds." The anti Blacks also believe that every newly independent third world nation will become another Cuba. I think it is a racist conceit.

The police cover up fails because there are Black Africans everywhere, in the police, the hospital system and bystanders. The father finds out, "Too much." So they arrest and torture him to find out, "Who the leaders are." The Police are unable to break out of their stereotyped beliefs about the blacks. I think the whites thought the blacks were not human, but animals. At the end of the trial scene, in a powerful and understated remark, McKenzie establishes the white projection, it was the police who behaved like animals. Such was their bigotry that they could never believe that Gordon Gabene wanted his son's body for a proper burial, "These people are different." Well "Those people," are no different from the American People in their need

to reclaim the bodies of dead soldiers. The essence of the new film, BLACK HAWK DOWN is that the bodies of the dead Army men have to be retrieved at almost any cost, including the deaths of other soldiers. And the United States Government has been trying to retrieve American bodies from the jungles of Vietnam for about 25 years, and the effort is ongoing. In psychoanalytic terms, the dead are hypercathected. For reasons of time I will not go into that.

The Afrikaans' believed in their paranoias. They always asked the wrong questions and when they get a truth that they don't want to hear, they did not believe it. They are constantly seeking out these "Leaders" so that South Africa can return to what it was before, As Suzette, de Toit's daughter says, "I want every thing back to normal, I want things to be the way they were." She is indifferent to the way "things were" for the Black and Asian people in "her" Apartheid country. Most whites didn't think through to logical outcomes. Things can only become normal if everybody is equal. Then it is to everybody's self interest to defend the status quo because it benefits all.

The police are enraged when, despite all their torturing and killing no one can name the leaders, and in their rage they kill more innocent people. There was a kind of Paranoia which the white populace as well as the police shared. Bigotry and prejudice, George Orwell said, were beyond understanding because it is irrational and analysis only works when the matter at hand

is rational. The Psychoanalytic understanding of prejudice has been limited by the lack of suitable patients. I only know of two papers about a Racist who was in analysis, both by the Psychoanalyst William Terry, M.D. The analysand terminated treatment a few months after he started, so nothing was discovered about the unconscious determinants of his psychology.

The courts were better at ferreting out the truth, which is why the trial is so important. The film makers have McKenzie astutely emphasize its educational value to de Toit which, because the audience has identified with Donald Southerland, allows them to be learning as he is. It exposes the truth of the murder of Gordon Gebene, the murderous police and the total dishonesty of the Judicial system, to de Toit and the audience, as McKenzie earlier claimed. In this trial the audience becomes the jury. **B**oth sides present their evidence. It is a great scene between two consummate actors. To de Toit and the audience only one conclusion is possible. The state is guilty of the murder of two innocent people and is incapable of absolving itself of the guilt of those murders. On this matter rational people can agree. This is the moment of catharsis for the audience.

Paraphrasing a New Yorker<sup>5</sup> article, "Looking at photographs of famous strangers makes us feel close to these strangers in a

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<sup>5</sup> Franklin, Nancy On Television, The New Yorker, July 12, 1999 pp.81

way that was impossible before photographs existed. Seeing actors in films convinces people at some deep and unspoken level, that they are-almost-personal friends of the famous people on the screen." This being so, audiences take on the ideas and emotions of the actor, and if de Toit is the anti-racist protagonist of a film, the film makers hope to convince the audience to be the same way, exploiting the identification.

The trial scene also evokes, among knowledgeable people memories of the inquest over the death of Steven Biko while in Police custody. This was portrayed in Richard Attenburgh's film, CRY FREEDOM. Many of the police's explanations about the death, actually murder, of Steven Biko were as bad as Capt. Stoltz's explanations.

The United States has its own experiences with Apartheid. It existed in the American south for over 350 years but we became hyper aware of it during the Civil Rights years. It is still an attitude in the South but is unfashionable to voice. I saw it in 1999 when the majority of voters of Mississippi voted to retain their Confederate flag as the state flag. In Mississippi in 1963, the white Southerners so wanted to believe that, "Their Nigras," were contented with their lot and would not have been protesting if it wasn't for, "Outside agitators stirring them up." So they killed at least six Northern Whites for registering African American voters. And uncounted numbers of African Americans. In disinterring the bodies of three Civil Rights

Workers, many black bodies were discovered at the same grave site. Projecting blame in this way is a culturally sanctioned defense against a punishing superego. The whites are denying their roles and responsibilities for the black's cultural and economic circumstances, escaping from their own guilt feelings by projecting the "badness" onto the victims and, "Outsiders." In this film this irrational white viewpoint is presented at length and reiterated so the audience can plainly see its irrationality.

It undermines any sympathy the audience might have for the whites. The only whites that the audience should identify with are the whites who take the side of the blacks. In particular, the boys and girls in the audience are meant to identify with both Jonathans as well as the girl students, the men with de Toit, Gebene and Mckenzie and the women with Mrs. Gebene and the Susan Sarendon.

As a heroic character de Toit can never desist from his investigation because the audience through his son, would lose faith and dis-identify with his idealistic character if he did that. They would become unhappy with themselves, sensing it a loss of their own idealism. He would no longer be the indefatigable, heroic and the moral figure that the audience wants/needs him to be. The audience needs the reassurance of their own personal worth.

de Toit is initially shown to be an ordinary man so that the audience can easily identify with him but gradually he becomes

heroic as he meets the challenges thrown at him. The film makers hope the audiences can be carried along on the initial impetus. I do not think it works in this film as well as it works with Marlon Brando. Even when McKenzie tells him to give up he refuses to do so. McKenzie says he will represent him only to show him what has become of the rule of law when race is involved. McKenzie is willing to teach the teacher. It is, of course, to show the audience, who see everything through de Toit's eyes, how the legal system has been totally destroyed, "Justice in South Africa is mis- applied when applied to race." After the inquest, de Toit says, "I (like the audience) have been, "Too naive too long. I was blind to the world." Almost all the whites in the film have not wanted to see what was as plain,, "As the nose on your face."<sup>6</sup>

The first half of the film educates the audience, through de Toit's eyes, about the nature of the Apartheid State, where "Justice is a charade". The second half is about the consequence of pursuing that nonexistent Justice, when many people didn't want to see or know and got angry at those who did. So, in short order he loses his wife, daughter and all other members of his family with the lone exception of his son, who like his father, sees the wrongs in the two murders. The staff of his school turn against them. He is fired from his job and his son expelled. This film

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<sup>6</sup> Orwell, George, Title of Volume IV, In front of your Nose, London, Secker & Warburg 1968.

reminded me of Ibsen's, AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE, where the doctor fights against the prevailing ethos, because it is self serving. There is hypocrisy in Apartheid's society's unwillingness to see their profiting from exploitation of African Blacks and Asiatics.

All the blacks in the film, with some exceptions, are on de Toit's side when they see that he is on their side.<sup>7</sup>

Mrs. de Toit voices many of the pro Apartheid sentiments, "The blacks will do the same to us," (both a rationalization and a paranoid projection). "Its like a war. Maybe terrible things are being done. We have to survive. You have to chose sides," to which her husband responds, "We have to chose the truth. It's as simple as that." His teacher colleagues say, "Its a question of loyalty to your group. Your a disgrace to your people." In a society that does not want to know the truth, de Toit sees how difficult it is to warn white people about a totalitarian state because race is involved. He says to his wife, "I went along with them. I believed their lies." As she leaves she calls him "Kaffir (derogatory term for Black African) lover, Communist, traitor," which is what white segregationists called white anti segregationists.

When I visited South Africa in 2000 I was depressed by the fortress like atmosphere of the cities where each house had a

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<sup>7</sup>A sidelight on this film is that Janet Salzman, the woman who portrays Mrs. de Toit, is the daughter of Janet Salsman, who was the leader of the Opposition in the South African Parliament during the Apartheid years.

barbed wire topped wall, heavy gates and other security devices. There is now much crime perpetrated by blacks. It reminded me of what Leon Trotsky said to the French Ambassador to the Soviet Union after the Revolution. The Ambassador was complaining about of all the lawlessness. Trotsky said, "A revolution is always distinguished by impoliteness, probably because the ruling classes did not take the trouble in good season to teach the people fine manners."<sup>8</sup> This was one of the costs of racism, keeping the Black African's out. I was reminded of this when Mrs. de Toit says, "I don't want Gordon's ghost in my house." These white people could not escape the knowledge of, "The terrible things," they were doing to the Black Africans. It was somewhere in their minds and they always attempted to escape their consequent guilt.

There is one instance in the film where his wife reveals a sexual fantasy, "You looked like lovers," when anyone can see he is innocently trying to console a bereaved widow. This is a stereotype, essentially saying that any affection toward a black woman is explainable only because it is sexual.

Despite de Toit's isolation and persecution, his son remains steadfast in his loyalty, devotion and affection for his father. He has a moral sense, "I know it's wrong. Don't stop Pa. I don't want you to give up." (The importance of a moral sense in normal Adolescent development was expounded both by Anna Freud and Peter

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<sup>8</sup>Muller. Herbert J. The Uses of the Past, The New American Library. New York, 1954, pp. 323

Blos.) In two scenes in the film de Toit and his son are making a rocking horse for his grandson. To me it seemed as if, metaphorically and iconographically, they were making a Trojan Horse to bring down the racist society around them so that his son and grandson could live in a better country. At one point he tells Suzette, his daughter that the rocking horse will not be ready for his grandson's birthday, foretelling that he will not be able to give his grandson a just society before he dies.

Suzette betrays her father to Captain Stoltz, giving him what she thinks are the affidavits her father has collected about the murder of Mr. Gabene. When she kisses her father it is the Judas Iscariot kiss, knowing he had betrayed Christ to his enemies. Christ, like de Toit, a Christ like figure, knows. His death also relates to the crucifixion. He sacrifices himself for the truth which he has pursued throughout the film. When she does this she is denying an Oedipal attachment which the audience responds to with a gasp because she has broken an Oedipal taboo. She has renounced her father for an other father, the state in the form of Capt Stoltz. Her punishment will be everlasting guilt. de Toit is crying because he knows what she is about to do. de Toit's son had earlier convinced him that his daughter was a police informer because he remembered that it was Suzette who had seen them preparing a secret compartment in the shed which the police subsequently blew up.

de Toit is so sure that she will betray him that he has

incorporated it into his deception plan. His son will carry the actual affidavits to the opposition newspaper, The Rand Daily Mail, while the police are misled by his Christ like self sacrificing death. In this film it is the two white women who are the traitors to the family. They reminded me of how in Stalin's Russia and Hitler's Germany family members were encouraged to denounce family members. de Toit also recognizes something about his totalitarian society, that behind the white attitude of believing that the Special Branch is protecting them is their own fear of the Special Branch. He realizes this when he is questioning the white coroner who preformed the autopsy on Gordon.

The coroner cannot say whether or not he actually preformed an autopsy! de Toit senses that the doctor wants to tell the truth but it is only as he leaves that he has the realization that the doctor is fearful that the cruelty he saw will be visited on him if he does not support the police's version. The coroner is so frightened of the Special Branch that he cannot permit himself to say whether he actually saw the body of Gordon Gebene. Which is why de Toit's last note to Captain Stoltz says, "Until everyone is free no one is free."

de Toit has taken the audience on a journey through the underside of Apartheid, and has educated us about it. The capstone of his knowledge is when Capt. Stoltz says to him, "You have no rights." He and the audience then know that everything and everyone will be sacrificed to the edifice of Apartheid. This

is what Grand Inquisitors always say. This is one price of maintaining racism by force. The murder of Capt. Stoltz is another price of racism, a harvest which I fear may only be beginning in South Africa where more than 500 white farmers have been murdered in the last six years.

In the first scene between McKenzie and de Toit, McKenzie talks about his flowers which he has been trying to maintain in his office. They have, in return for his efforts, given him an allergy, "Like a faithless mistress on whom one lavishes attention." The flowers have betrayed him and now cause him pain.

This vignette becomes a metaphor: the plants are a metaphor for South Africa and the society it could be-with cultivation instead of the sick poisonous society it is. McKenzie tries to do to his country what he tries to do with his plants, and it has made him physically ill and compromised his morale. But like de Toit, he has no thought of stopping his two cultivations. This is also a cautionary tale to de Toit. If he tries to cultivate a good and decent society not only will he suffer but also he will cause others to suffer.

This film was meant to advocate for a cause. It is propaganda, seeking to convince the audience that South Africa was a racist state. It aims to stimulate an audience to consider what is happening in South Africa and presumably act according. It does not ask them to do anything specific, which I think it ought to have done. It forces the audience to recognize their passivity

as if they were Africans. If it had ended saying, "Boycott everything made in South Africa, try to pressure your government to take measures against South Africa," it would have left the audience in a better frame of mind. A minority of American college and university recognized and was active in pressuring their universities to divest themselves of all investments in South African securities. Now I look around and realized that the African resistance had won largely through its own efforts, like the fictional de Toit, it refused to give up. The first President of the reborn South Africa was elected by a majority of the citizens of South Africa. Straight from 27 years in jail on Robbings Island. The Island is currently the number one tourist attraction of Capetown. There is a fantasied contact with Nelson Mandela by looking into his cell. It is now some sort of icon, a place of pilgrimage. Decency had won by a combination of forces. Armed force, world opprobrium and boycott, the independence of all the surrounding states and the South African's realization that no matter how many battles the Apartheid state won, they would never wipe out the opposition.

It is not likely that this 1989 film had much effect and the film makers seemed to have realized that, but as de Toit said, if you can convince one person...