

Imaging Africa: Gorillas, Actors And Characters



Africa is defined in the popular imagination by images of wild animals, savage dancing, witchcraft, the Noble Savage, and the Great White Hunter. These images typify the majority of Western and even some South African film fare on Africa.

Although there was much negative representation in these films I will discuss how films set in Africa provided opportunities for black American actors to redefine the way that Africans are imaged in international cinema. I

conclude this essay with a discussion of the process of revitalisation of South African cinema after apartheid.

The study of post-apartheid cinema requires a revisionist history that brings us back to pre-apartheid periods, as argued by Isabel Balseiro and Ntongela Masilela (2003) in their book's title, *To Change Reels*. The reel that needs changing is the one that most of us were using until Masilela's New African Movement interventions (2000a/b;2003). This historical recovery has nothing to do with Afrocentricism, essentialism or African nationalisms. Rather, it involved the identification of neglected areas of analysis of how blacks themselves engaged, used and subverted film culture as South Africa lurched towards modernity at the turn of the century. Names already familiar to scholars in early South African history not surprisingly recur in this recovery, Solomon T. Plaatje being the most notable.

It is incorrect that *'modernity denies history, as the contrast with the past - a constantly changing entity - remains a necessary point of reference'* (Outhwaite 2003: 404). Similarly, Masilela's (2002b: 232) notion that *'consciousness of precedent has become very nearly the condition and definition of major artistic works'* calls for a reflection on past intellectual movements in South Africa for a democratic modernity after apartheid. He draws on Thelma Gutsche's (1972) assumption that film practice is one of the quintessential forms of modernity. However, there could be no such thing as a South African cinema under the modernist conditions of apartheid. This is where modernity's constant pull

towards the future comes into play (Outhwaite 2003). Simultaneous with the necessary break from white domination in film production, or a pull towards the future away from the conditions of apartheid, South Africans will need to re-acquire the 'consciousness of precedent', of the intellectual and cultural heritage of the New African Movement, such as is done in *Come See the Bioscope* (1997) which images Plaatjes's mobile distribution initiative in the teens of the century. The Movement's intellectual and cultural accomplishments in establishing a national culture in the context of modernity is a necessary point of reference for the African Renaissance to establish a national cinema in the context of the New South Africa (Masilela 2000b). Following Masilela (ibid.: 235), debates and practices that are of relevance within the New African Movement include:

1. the different structures of portrayal of Shaka in history by Thomas Mofolo and Mazisi Kunene across generic forms and in the context of nationalism and modernity;
2. the discussion and dialogue between Solomon T. Plaatje, H.I.E. Dhlomo, R.V. Selope Thema, H. Selby Msimang and Lewis Nkosi about the construction of the idea of the New African, concerning national identity and cultural identity;
3. the lessons facilitated by Charlotte Manye Maxeke and James Kwegyir Aggrey in making possible the connection between the New Negro modernity and New African modernity;
4. the discourse on the relationship between Marxism and modernity within the context of the Trotskyism of Ben Kies and I.B. Tabata and the Stalinism of Michael Harmel, Albert Nzula and Yusuf Mohammed Dadoo; and
5. the feminist political practices of Helen Joseph, Lilian Ngoyi, Phyllis Ntanatala and others.

In the building of a South African national cinema, therefore, it is imperative that South Africa's new phase of modernity does not deny history but seeks to situate South African film practice and film scholarship within African film history, where they naturally and historically belong, rather than in only European or Hollywood film history, as Eurocentrism and supremacy have attempted to impose them (Masilela 2000b: 236). This task of indigenisation is one that I have set myself for this book for, as Masilela argues:

Although the context of 1994 represents a political triumph, it is questionable whether it has been accomplished by commensurate intellectual and cultural achievements. Our present is the reverse mirror of the past of the New African Movement. In this light it is all the more necessary for the African Renaissance to

establish a dialectical connection between past and present (ibid.: 234).

Romancing Africa

Africa is considered in the popular imagination to be an undeveloped continent, a contemporary representation of humankind's 'past'. The continent has been an enormous source of mythical imagery since the birth of the film industry in 1885. The readable, engaging, and often irreverent Africa on film: *Beyond black and white*, by Kenneth Cameron (1994), charts and evaluates recurring patterns of such representation by American, British and some South African films. Amongst the recurring patterns are:

1. the presence (or more noticeably, the absence) of women, both black and white;
2. the recurrence of the Great White Hunter, a classless individual who often represents counter-racist tendencies;
3. Imperial Man, who represented British governing confidence during the colonial era;
4. the Good African, Imperial Man's trusting and doting servant; and
5. American self-aggrandisement via a male landscape. In these 'jungle movies' negative images of black women and race hatred are a speciality.

A key contributor to myths of Africa in both British and American fantasy films was the nineteenth century South African-based British novelist H. Rider Haggard. He exported bizarre descriptions of Africa and Africans, writing about volcanoes, treasures, hunter-heroes, demonic black witches, lost white civilisations, white goddesses, and so on. These images reappear in endless remakes of his books on film and television, and they are imported into other titles and media as well. Films like *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), now a Disneyland ride, for example, to some extent derive their imagery and characters from writers like Haggard. Contemporary images of Africa found in world cinema are thus inextricably linked to the nature of the encounter between early writers and this mysterious continent. Many such writers were based in South Africa during the late nineteenth century.

Another key historical influence on images of Africa came from the pen of American Edgar Rice Burroughs. Burroughs's twin sources for Tarzan were Haggard and Rudyard Kipling, writer of the famous *Jungle book* (Cameron 1994: 32). Tarzan is cast as a 'noble savage', an exemplar of an aristocratic British bloodline, in many early Tarzan films, and in the much more nuanced Greystoke:

The Legend of Tarzan Lord of the Apes (1984). The American interpretations eliminated Tarzan's aristocratic imperial origin and made him 'American'. As an American, Tarzan expresses white Americans' racial fear of blacks. The American Tarzan films are a depression-era fantasy, and those featuring Jane provide narratives of a stable couple in which the husband is stronger than the chaotic forces of life (ibid.: 43).

The role of monkeys and gorillas is also instructive in the Tarzan and other films. My experience in talking to primary school children at two schools in Indiana, Pennsylvania in March 1996, bears this out. One class of 10/11-year-olds had formed their impression of Africa with the help of PG-rated films such as *Congo* (1995), *Outbreak* (1995) and *Jumanji* (1995). Africa for them was a jungle inhabited by diseased gorillas and monkeys that threatened Americans' health! Once they had succeeded in obtaining an admission from me that monkeys indeed visited my garden in Durban, no explanations contradicting their stereotypes could repair the damage done. (I explained that Durban is sub-tropical, our gardens have wild bananas and other fruit and that monkeys were being displaced by massive urbanisation - no one looks out for monkey's rights!) My daughter, who started high school in Michigan in 1998, came up with the defensive analogy that '*squirrels are to East Lansing what monkeys are to Durban*', as we had previously only seen these small furry creatures as comic book characters. However, once she admitted the fact of monkeys in our garden, the moral high ground could not be retrieved, despite the analogy. Now that one theory on the origin of Aids is sourced to transmission between chimpanzees and humans, Africa again becomes associated in the United States (US) with incurable globalising pandemics. Muhammed Ali's '*Rumble in the jungle*' (where he fought George Foreman for the world heavyweight boxing title) owes its origins to the kinds of films set in Africa which shaped the early American imagination.

In the late 1940s after he became a little too saggy to fit into a Tarzan loincloth without depressing popcorn sales among cinema audiences, the great Johnny Weismuller filled the twilight years of his acting career with a series of low budget adventure movies with titles like *Devil Goddess* and *Jungle Moon*, all built around a character called Jungle Jim. These modest epics are largely forgotten now, which is a pity because they were possibly the most cherishably terrible movies ever made ... My own favourite, called *Pygmy Island*, involved a lost tribe of white midgets and a strange but valiant fight against the spread of

communism. But the narrative possibilities were practically infinite since each Jungle Jim feature consisted in large measure of scenes taken from other, wholly unrelated adventure stories. Whatever footage was available – train crashes, volcanic eruptions, rhino charges, panic scenes involving large crowds of Japanese – would be snipped from the original and woven in Jungle Jim's wondrously accommodating story lines. From time to time the ever-more fleshy Weismuller would appear on a scene to wrestle the life out of a curiously rigid and unresisting crocodile or chase some cannibals into the woods, but these intrusions were generally brief and seldom entirely explained (Bryson 2002: 1-2).

Bill Bryson (ibid.: 2) thrusts the point home: *What is especially tragic about all of this is that I not only watched the movies with unaccountable devotion, but also was incredibly influenced by them. In fact, were it not for some scattered viewings of the 1952 classic, Bwana Devil, and a trip on a Jungle Safari Ride at Disneyland in 1961, my knowledge of African life, I regret to say, would be entirely dependent on Jungle Jim movies.*

The later Greystoke restores Tarzan's British lineage, while simultaneously revealing aristocratic viciousness, and Tarzan's escape from it, by returning to the wild, back to his gorilla family, and a social and environmental integrity long lost to the West. While Burroughs never set foot in Africa, Tarzan visited South Africa in a television series (1997) shot at Sol Kerzner's *Lost City*, part of the Sun City hotel, casino and entertainment complex that became infamous for boycott busting during the 1980s by international music celebrities who performed there. Black South African actors on a promotional television programme, which preceded the television series, insisted that '*this is the real Africa*'. Their PR came to mind when I visited the Disneyland feature of the Tarzan Tree House under attack from a gorilla, which in 2004 seemed to have replaced the more stable Swiss Family Robinson set. These actors thus undermined nearly a century of African criticism of the racist dimension of the bulk of the Tarzan genre. However, as Rob Gordon reminds a forum of documentary filmmakers, audiences do not always assume the imperialism of the director or characters as

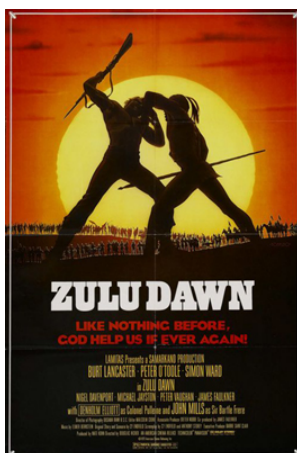
... the meaning of race (and of culture) is ultimately a matter of local grass-roots interpretation. The most striking example here is Rambo, a film which most of us would find offensively imperialistic. Yet it's a hit in Vietnam and among Australian Aborigines because they see Rambo as fulfilling important kinship obligations and fighting an obstinate bureaucracy. Rambo is currently the training film of choice for the sad child soldiers of Sierra Leone. So too, on the South African platteland

[‘countryside’] Tarzan was popular, not because it reinforced notions of white superiority (although it undoubtedly did) but because the audiences loved to find fault with the film’s representation of Africa. Let us always be aware that every production has unanticipated consequences (cited in Tomaselli 2001).

South Africa: Protecting its own

In 1995, cinema in South Africa was exactly one hundred years old. Early projection devices were frequented around the Johannesburg goldfields from 1895 onwards (Gutsche 1972). The first cinema newsreels were filmed at the front during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) by the British Warwickshire Company. Others simply fabricated the war scenes in England itself. The world’s longest-running weekly newsreel, African Mirror (1913-1984), was in the mid-1980s broadcast as history on national television. The first ever South African narrative film was *The Kimberley Diamond Robbery*, made in 1910.

Between 1916 and 1922, I.W. Schlesinger produced forty-three big-budget technically high-quality features. Schlesinger had arrived penniless on South African shores from America at the turn of the century and proceeded to build an international insurance empire from Johannesburg. In 1913, he consolidated total control over the South African entertainment industry – theatre, cinema, and later radio (Gutsche 1972). The cinematic themes and images chosen by Schlesinger were rooted in the ideological outlook of the period prevalent in European and Anglo-American culture. Haggard’s novels were a recurring source for film scripts, and continue to be so a century later.



Zuludawn

In Schlesinger’s own historical epics, Boer and Briton stood together under the flame of unity and civilisation against barbaric black hordes (e.g. *De Voortrekkers*

/ *Winning a Continent*, 1916 and *Symbol of Sacrifice*, 1918). Though *De Voortrekkers* was the model for the later American epic, *The Covered Wagon* (1923), it was the sheer magnitude of *Symbol of Sacrifice*, with its 25 000 Zulu warrior extras, that set early technical standards for this genre. Foreign productions such as *Zulu* (1966) and *Zulu Dawn* (1980), docu-dramas based on the British-Zulu Wars of 1879, followed *Symbol of Sacrifice*. These films continued the West's fascination with the Zulu, mythologised in the South African television series and US cable hit, *Shaka Zulu* (1986) (Tomaselli 2003; Shepperson and Tomaselli 2002).

Production declined after 1922 because, despite high technical standards, obtaining footholds in British and US markets proved difficult. However, unlike other countries, the South African film industry remained in local hands until 1956, when 20th Century Fox bought out most of Schlesinger's cinema interests, including the Killarney Films production house. In 1969 the South African-owned Ster Films bought Fox's South African holdings and retained near monopolistic control of the industry until the mid-1990s, when it sold its interests to another South African group, Primedia (cf. Tomaselli and Shepperson 2000). This unusual situation of very long periods of domestic ownership resulted in South African producers enjoying some leverage with the local distributors and exhibitors when it came to securing screen access for their films.

A thirty-year lull was broken in the early 1950s by Jamie Uys (of *The Gods Must be Crazy*, 1980; 1989 films) when he succeeded in attracting Afrikaner capital to establish independent production. In 1956 he represented a consortium of producers in persuading the government to provide a subsidy for the making of local films. This subsidy was modified through the years and continued until the late 1980s. The subsidy was paid against a percentage of box office income and deliberately favoured Afrikaans-language films over English. Later, in 1975, a specific subsidy was also introduced for films using black South African languages (Tomaselli 2000b; Murray 1992). The subsidy system was terminated at the end of the 1980s, and as was discussed in Chapter 3, a new system was introduced in 2004.

It was the government subsidy that resulted in films supportive of the military such as *Kaptein Caprivi* (1972), made while the South African Police (SAP) propped up the white Rhodesian regime. One of the sub-genres within these 'jeep operas' is what Cameron (1994: 145) calls the 'mercenary film', such as *Wild*

Geese (1977). These kinds of films reveal clear racism on the part of their directors, as a handful of usually ageing American and British actors playing mercenaries wipe out hundreds of pursuing blacks. The myth of the mercenary remained strong amongst older whites in Africa, rekindled by the idiotic exploits of French, English and South African has-beens in the late 1980s, early 1990s and 2004 with regard to their aborted attempts at coups d'état in the Comores Islands, Seychelles, Equatorial Guinea and elsewhere. These continuing escapades indicate a residual pattern of destabilisation of African countries during apartheid and the Cold War. Mercenaries, 'dogs of war', to use Frederick Forsyth's (1974) term, conducted the work of Imperial man in the twentieth century, taking on communism, barbarism and rescuing all manner of victims of the 'dark continent'. Where the Great White Hunters are a social and sexual ideal, as in *Out of Africa* (1985), the anachronistic young and old fools in Jeeps are nostalgic throwbacks to mythical cinematic times when a few white (and black) mercenaries armed with machine guns could control an entire continent. Indeed, one soldier/actor/mercenary, Simon Mann, arrested with sixty mercenaries in Zimbabwe in March 2004, had even played the role of a parachute regiment colonel in *Bloody Sunday* (2002), a re-enactment of the 1972 massacre of thirteen Northern Ireland demonstrators by British troops (Sunday Times, 14 March 2004: 6). Antoine Fuqua's film on African genocide turned into another mercenary-type film, owing to pressure from the film's star, action hero Bruce Willis, and the production studio, who were hoping to outdo their 2001 success, *Black Hawk Down* (2001). The result, *Tears of the Sun* (2003), is an action film with a humanitarian angle, resembling the American western. Bruce Willis plays a Navy SEAL sent to rescue a mission doctor - the female love interest (Monica Bellucci) - in Nigeria, which has come under military rule. After witnessing the brutality of the rebel forces, the hero undergoes a change of conscience and decides to help the villagers leave the mission station to the safety of a neighbouring country, thereby putting his own life at risk. The film once again portrays America as the world's saviour (Bruce Willis's character at one stage remarks that 'God already left Africa'), at a time in world history when US intervention in Iraq was a contentious subject.

Afrikaner concerns

While many subsidy-driven films were of appalling quality, rarely returning their costs, those made by Jamie Uys were always box office successes. In large measure, Uys's grasp of the rural Afrikaners' taste in humour benefited from the

relative lack of alternative sources of entertainment before the advent of television in South Africa in 1976. His comedic themes, which usually made fun of inter-ethnic rivalries, especially those between English-speakers and Afrikaners, consistently outperformed titles from Hollywood. Uys's studio, in fact, provided a training ground for young Afrikaans-speaking directors, scriptwriters and technicians, who later contributed to the development of the conflict-love genre. These films engaged social issues via genre structures, and are much less conspiratorial than commentators like Peter Davis (1996) would have us believe. Where international films on Africa and South Africa have tended to ignore women, the insider-outsider genre, wrapped up in a conflict-love plot, consistently depicted headstrong females. Cast as boeredogters ('farmers' daughters', daughters of the earth), these femmes fatales traumatically broke with the tradition and close social and community cohesion centred on 'the farm', 'family' and volk ('nation') as propagated by Rompel (1942a; 1942b). Rather, and with the directors' approval, they sought their uncertain futures in the sinful city populated by the victorious English enemy. The boeredogter's relocation heralded the onset of Afrikaner cultural modernity. The cities were where the real political and economic struggles between English and Afrikaner were occurring and where Afrikaner power was negotiating its ascendancy. The boeredogter indicated the strategic need for Afrikaner nationalists to secure their interests in this new ideological and economic battleground.

The boeredogter storylines captured the imaginations of the Afrikaner public and, more recently, the rise of South African actress Charlize Theron to Oscar-winning success can be likened to the plots of these earlier films. Theron, who apparently said in an early interview that she left South Africa when apartheid ended for fear of not being able to find a job as a white person, was raised on a smallholding on the outskirts of a working class part of the country. After a brief modelling stint, which included her baring her breasts for the editor of the South African edition of Playboy magazine, she moved to Hollywood with her mother, dropped her accent in favour of an American drawl, and worked her way to the top, ultimately gaining Oscar recognition for her performance in *Monster* (2003). Her Golden Globe award acceptance speech played on this romanticised rags-to-riches tale when she cried, '*I'm just a girl from a farm in South Africa!*' In her Oscar acceptance speech, Theron thanked 'everybody in South Africa' and promised to '[bring] this [the Oscar] home next week'. To many proud South Africans, this was a sign that she was acknowledging her cultural roots despite her American

accent. The media hype that surrounded her visit 'home' highlights the African inferiority complex when it comes to cultural production, where the ultimate measure of success is to 'make it overseas'. 'Making it overseas' is the equivalent of the boeredogter 'going to the city', a necessary though culturally alienating social trajectory in class struggle and personal emancipation from the tyranny of the Community. Theron, for example, travelled with an entourage, her itinerary was kept secret, and she was pressed for interviews by the media. South African Airways donated her and her entourage the first-class cabin, and both President Thabo Mbeki and former President Nelson Mandela met her in person to thank her for 'putting South Africa on the map'. Theron is now considered South Africa's most successful film export, thereby dislodging Jamie Uys. This is the fate that awaited the boeredogter in the earlier genre - success results in cultural distance, enculturation into an alien environment, and consorting with the enemy. Theron's achievement is secured at the expense of, but on behalf of, the group, Afrikaner culture and economy. Theron has adapted herself to suit Hollywood standards: even her dress and styling on Oscar night made deliberate reference to the Hollywood sirens of yesteryear, appealing to American femme fatale iconography. (However, in fairness, the local industry is perhaps not able to support many actors and actresses, especially those after big-budget box office success.)

Intercultural mediations

Intercultural conflict underpins many a South African film. For instance, the sympathetic treatment of the conflict between Roman-Dutch and African Customary Law is the theme of Uys's *Dingaka* (1964). Commentators such as Mtutuzeli Matshoba and John van Zyl recognised at the time of the film's release a cultural authenticity in the film (cited in Tomaselli 1988: 134). *Dingaka* (which means 'traditional healer') was the first South African film made in Panavision, and it introduced actor Ken Gampu to the world. The story begins in a remote and tropical African village where two men are publicly engaged in a stick fight. The resentful loser of the fight, Masaba, seeks the help of the village traditional healer, who tells him that in order to regain his stick-fighting prowess, he needs to eat the heart of a twin child. When a twin from the village disappears, father Ntuku (played by Gampu) sets out to find Masaba, who has fled to the city.

From here the plot revolves around Ntuku's experiences in the city: he is conned out of his money and forced to find work in the mines. Here he encounters and attacks his rival and is subsequently arrested. At this point the white male lead,

legal aid lawyer Davis (Stanley Baker), enters the plot. After failing to convince Ntuku to follow legal procedure and accept his professional services, Ntuku is imprisoned for again attacking Masaba (Paul Makgoba), this time in open court. Ntuku escapes from prison and Davis and his wife (Juliet Prowse) travel to his village to seek him out. At the village, Davis urges Ntuku to kill the sangoma ('traditional healer', played by John Sithebe), who is 'only a man'. Amid the sounds of thunder, Ntuku eventually does so, despite fearing the wrath of the gods, and peace is restored, 'proving that [Davis's] white-European rationalism was correct: the "witchdoctor" is only a man, and he has no magical power' (Cameron 1994: 125).

The film is severely criticised by Davis (1996) for its unrealistic and overly stylised portrayal of African village life, which glosses over the realities of apartheid inequalities as they were experienced in everyday life. He objects to the film's racially patronising and binaristic depictions of African people and their spiritual beliefs (in particular the stereotypically 'evil' sangoma), which reveal 'a syncretising of apartheid's delusions' (ibid.: 66). He points to Uys's Nationalist political leanings, and the apartheid legislation that was being enacted at the time, to further his point. During the 1960s, the apartheid government developed a scheme to replace the traditional leaders in the tribal homelands with appointed Bantu Authorities, 'puppets who would dance on the government's strings' (ibid.: 67). For Davis, this suggests that 'what is being played out in Uys's melodrama of African life is very much an unconscious metaphor for what was happening over the broader landscape of South Africa - the overthrow of not only the traditional but the popular leadership of the African people' (ibid.: 68).

While the film does have the mandatory African travelogue feel in places, as required by the US market, it offered a thematic breakthrough at the time with regard to the portrayal of the African encounter with Western tenets of justice, and also in terms of depicting an interracial friendship. The white layer, the bearer of Roman-Dutch Law, is by no means Imperial Man, and the black character, Ntuku, is no-one's dotting servant. While 'white justice' rules, 'black justice' is revealed as being less impersonal. As Van Zyl concludes in his review in *The Chronicle*: *'This is the stuff of Nordic sagas, and all credit is due to Jamie Uys and Ken Gampu for pulling it off. It hardly matters that an "impression" of an African tribe was created which can be faulted by ethnologists'*.

Cinematic treatments of the San (or Bushmen) have indicated a different encounter with white South Africans to that of the Zulu, or with regard to

traditional law. The remote, unforgiving Bushmen in *Lost in the Desert* (1971) are very unlike the endearing characters Uys constructed in his *Gods Must Be Crazy* pseudo-documentaries (cf. Tomaselli 2006). In propaganda movies, men, the patriarchal stalwarts, are well served by their submissive women. In the conflict-love genre they betray their men. In Uys's films they are either absent or bemused by the anxiety and ineptness with which suitors interact with them. While foreign anti-apartheid critics have not always been kind to Uys's few international releases, especially *Dingaka* and the first two *Gods Must Be Crazy* films, they did provoke discussion about race and racism of a kind which also left its mark on debates in South Africa (Davis 1996; Blythe 1986). More relevantly, these films were negotiating ways of approaching intercultural relations at a time when racial conflict had hardened into the intractable binary frame which characterises much of Davis's analysis.

In contrast to the kind of politically correct critique that characterised attacks on the two *Gods Must Be Crazy* films, Cameron (1994: 155) argues that these titles reject the more pervasive stereotypes of jungle, savage dancing and witchcraft which typify the majority of Western film fare on Africa. *The Gods Must be Crazy* (1980), in theme, narrative structure and comedic device is very similar to Uys's earlier films in which people of colour hardly featured at all. He basically repeated the story he made of himself and his family in his first amateur film, *Daar Doer in die Bosveld* ('Far Away in the Bushveld' - 1951), and embroidered it in each retitled and more technically sophisticated reincarnation in a different environment over the period of his forty-year career.

Key to the Uys idiosyncratic intertext is the lead male Afrikaner character's awkwardness with women, inter-ethnic Afrikaner-English rivalry, and a preference for pastoralism. Uys, as an interpreter of Afrikaner foibles and social anxiety, thus inaugurated a set of peculiarly South African themes. These drew on Buster Keaton's films, where machines seem to have minds of their own and engage in all kinds of bizarre, uncontrollable and unpredictable behaviours. Machines are products of modernity, itself a mystery to ruralites. Uys sensitively highlighted Afrikaner anxiety of entering into modernity through using these machines (vehicles, winches, etc.) as metaphors for social and cultural insecurity. Pastoralism was held to be the protector of pure Afrikaner identity in the face of uncertainty brought about by massive industrialisation where 'self conscious' machines could herald the destruction of traditional societies. Uys's use of machines as Keaton-type comedic devices subverted via slapstick the previously

dominant images of die Boer ('farmer'/Afrikaner), created by Afrikaners of themselves in their propagandistic amateur feature films of the 1930s and 1940s.

People defining themselves as Afrikaners are known for a certain austerity. Uys's early cinema offered the first light-hearted self-depreciating cultural moment after the severity of the historical processes this group is historically known for, as it attempted to be humorous rather than overtly ideological in its approach. His self-depreciating humour was continued in the 1990s by Afrikaner comedian Leon Schuster whose racial politics shift as fast as does the political landscape in films like *Oh Shucks, Here Comes Untag* (1990), *Sweet 'n Short* (1991), *Panic Mechanic* (1997), *Mr Bones* (2001) and *Mama Jack* (2005). All these films, from a variety of directors, interrogate white Afrikaner fears about a Mandela 'black government' and white loss of political control. Slapstick and, increasingly with Schuster, a narratively developed Candid Camera genre, denotes one trajectory in post-apartheid cinema (cf. Steyn 2003). A clear introspection and engagement of South African themes such as in *Chikin Biznis* (1998), *Shooting Bokke* (2003), and *E'skia Mphahlele* (2003) accounts for another more culturally serious post-apartheid trajectory.

Another film in the Schuster-type genre, written by Mfundi Vundla and directed by David Lister, is *Soweto Green* (1996) with John Kani playing the returned exile. *There's a Zulu on my Stoep* (1993), written by and starring Schuster, was one of the few in the genre that effectively interrogated racial issues via blackface casting and identity exchange. A promising start, where the returned black exile (John Matshikiza) switches identities with his early white boyhood friend to outwit their friends whose car they have stolen, degenerates into over-the-top slapstick chaos. Slapstick heaven also mars the conclusion of *Soweto Green*. Is it possible that this idiotic chaos was a metaphor for political times to come?

International African actors and voices

Films set in Africa provided opportunities for black American actors such as Paul Robeson, Sidney Poitier, James Earl Jones, Denzel Washington, Danny Glover and Morgan Freeman, to redefine the way that Africans are imaged in international cinema. Cameron (1994: 182) mentions the later films of Robeson especially, who brought dignity to his roles, and created spaces for African female characters to emerge in their own right. South African singer Miriam Makeba, for example, shot to international fame in *Lionel Rogosin's Come Back Africa* (1959) (cf. Balseiro 2003). Another vehicle to an international career for a South African was

Zoltan Korda's *Cry the Beloved Country* (1951), based on Alan Paton's novel. Lionel Ngakane made his name as a supporting actor alongside the lead played by Poitier (cf. Ngakane 1997). The contribution of Michael and Zoltan Korda to the British image of Africa was less racist than contemporary American representations, and Zoltan's break with Empire stereotypes of both British and blacks in *Cry the Beloved Country* challenged the industry internationally to rethink its representations of Africans in cinema. Davis (1996: 2), however, notes the deep influence of imperialist literature on Zoltan Korda who later made *Sanders of the River* (1935), *Elephant Boy* (1937) and *Four Feathers* (1939), 'all of them celebrating heavily romanticised aspects of white rule'. However, as Hees (1996: 178) observes:

This may be true, but Zoltan Korda also directed and himself produced *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1951), a version of Paton's novel totally lacking the sentimentality of Darrell Roodt's more recent version; the other films mentioned were produced by his brother, Alexander Korda. I am not making a point here about the factual content of Davis's book, but rather expressing a concern about its tendency to present material in a way that reduces racial issues to white exploitation of victimized blacks.

Very little has been written on the contribution of actors in South African cinema. Ken Gampu, who starred in *Dingaka*, gets a brief but long overdue mention from Cameron (1994: 124) as a great performer. Gampu's interpretation of the roles into which both South African and international directors had cast him generally lifted the tenor of the films in which he acted. In contrast is Richard Rowntree's *Shaft in Africa* (1973), with its blaxploitation characters in which Africa was merely a convenient backdrop to American storylines. Such was the popular impact of the Shaft films in South Africa, however, that a beer label and some shops briefly named themselves thus.

Even less has been written on female South African film directors and actors, some of whom have also doubled up as directors. Entries in The feminist companion guide to cinema including Katinka Heyns, Helen Nogueira and Elaine Proctor are offered by Ruth Teer-Tomaselli and Wendy Annecke (1990). Heyns, directed by Jan Rautenbach, played particularly significant roles in Afrikaans cinema that critically interrogated Afrikaner bigotry and political expediency (e.g. *Wild Season*, 1968; *Katrina*, 1969; *Jannie Totsiens*, 1970 and *Pappalap*, 1971). Heyns later directed films that continued this thematic analysis in *Fiela se Kind* ('Fiela's Child') (1987), and *Paljas* ('Clown') (1997).

Cinema as the voice of the people is much younger than cinema the institution. That voice was facilitated by producers located elsewhere in films like *Cry the Beloved Country* and the clandestinely shot, chilling docu-drama *Come Back Africa*, which reveals the brutality of apartheid's structural violence in the psychological breakdown of its central protagonist Zacharia (Zachariah Mgabi) (cf. Balseiro 2003; Beittel 2003). Later, Euzhan Palcy's *A Dry White Season* (1989, based on the novel by Andre Brink) and Richard Attenborough's *Cry Freedom* (1987, based on the friendship between journalist Donald Woods and slain black activist Steve Biko) were the first films to bring the horrors of apartheid repression to the big screen and cinema audiences on a mass scale not previously achieved.

These international and other productions employed South African actors such as Zakes Mokae, amongst others. Lionel Ngakane made his mark as a director with the British-made, award-winning *Jemina and Johnny* (1966), a short cinematic statement on non-racialism, which followed his documentary on apartheid, *Vukani Awake* (1964). Ngakane served as technical consultant on *A Dry White Season*. Ngakane, who died in late 2003, however declined an invitation from producer Anant Singh to act in the Darrell Roodt remake of *Cry the Beloved Country* (1995) due to other commitments. Ngakane's influence on African cinema through his involvement with the Pan African Federation of Filmmakers (FEPACI) (while he was in exile) that occurred after finishing the Korda film was significant. This pan-African work was recognised in 1997 when Ngakane was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the University of Natal. He had earlier been awarded a lifetime Achievement Award by the M-Net Film Awards on which he was also a consultant for its New Directions short film series.

Between 1956 and 1978 genre films (especially in Afrikaans) earned higher returns than did imported Hollywood fare. Exceptions which interrogated apartheid exposed white South Africans to new critical styles. Amongst these was the unique expressionism of Rautenbach's *Jannie Totsiens*, in which a psychiatric asylum inhabited by white inmates is an allegory for apartheid. A thin, comedic neo-realism is found in Donald Swanson's *African Jim* (1949) and *Magic Garden* (1961), both of which emphasise black characters and stories in urban settings. The more obviously bleak neo-realist style of Athol Fugard and Ross Devenish is evident in *Boesman and Lena* (1973), *The Guest* (1978) and *Marigolds in August* (1980). These are films with tortured characters, whose angst is perhaps of a more existential origin than of apartheid. Fugard's last film, *Road to Mecca*

(1992), directed by Peter Michel, is his best yet. Its swirling camera which focuses on interpersonal relationships between an old, eccentric, secluded white artist and her hostile small-town conservative Afrikaner community (based on Helen Martin of 'the owl house' fame, Nieu Bethesda), reveals the inner Fugard, a solitary artist also alienated from the society in which he then lived.

The first domestic black-made film was theatre director Gibson Kente's *How Long (must we suffer ...?)* (1976). It was shot in the Eastern Cape during the Soweto uprising. *How Long* was briefly shown in the Transkei Bantustan. The whereabouts of the print are unknown. Other films made by whites and aimed at blacks tended to be appallingly inept, exploitative and patronising, such as *Joe Bullet* (1974), which kicked off the South African blaxploitation genre. This marginalised sector of the industry literally consisted of butchers, bakers and candlestick makers. It emerged in 1974, milked the government subsidy pot dry, and collapsed at the end of the 1980s (Murray 1992; Gavshon 1983; Tomaselli 1988).

However, black director and actor Simon Sabela, employed by Heyns Films, injected a degree of cultural integrity into the films he made, such as *U-Deliwe* (1975). It was only towards the end of the 1980s when it became known that Heyns Films had been secretly infiltrated, Nazi-style, by the apartheid government, which was responsible for funding Sabela's films, though this was not known by him. The contradictions are clear – even state-sponsored films had a degree of integrity of content, in contrast to the blatantly opportunistic racism of many of those privately financed low-budget films made by some whites for the 'black' market, and funded via post-release subsidy claims made by their makers. Such films sometimes consumed less than a weekend in production time.

Emergent anti-apartheid cinema

White South Africa, observes Cameron (1994), tends to see itself as a reflection of white American values; hence the obsession with Theron and to a lesser extent Arnold Vosloo, star of *The Mummy* (1999; 2001) films. Breaking with these values indicates to Cameron a maturing of South African cinema as seen particularly in the post-1986 anti-apartheid films directed by Roodt such as *Place of Weeping* (1986), *Jobman* (1989), *City of Blood* (1986), *Sarafina* (1993) and the *Cry the Beloved Country* remake starring James Earl Jones. Anant Singh, a South African of Indian extraction, produced these films, and many others. His activities extend to the US, one of his most technically sophisticated being *The Mangler* (1994),

based on a Stephen King novel.

The years following 1986 saw the sustained development of a domestic anti-apartheid cinema financed by capital looking for tax breaks and international markets, mainly driven by Singh's financing. Simultaneous with this emergent oppositional trend, Canon Films responded with a new wave of Haggard's explorer titles like *King Solomon's Mines* (1985) and *Alan Quartermain* (1987), before eventually going out of business (see Yule 1987). The 1980s saw host to over 800 foreign-made films in South Africa during this time, all pursuing loopholes in South African tax law. South Africa offered relatively cheap, but highly sophisticated technical labour, which was a deciding factor in the use of South African locations and facilities. Ninjas in the Third World, voodoo killings, psychotics and other themes also emerged from South African directors during this time (Taylor 1992).

Multiracial teams have made films such as *Mapantsula* (1988) and *Hijack Stories* (2002), both directed by Oliver Schmitz, *Ramadan Suleman's Fools* (1997), *Wa Luruli's Chikin Biznis* (1998) and Les Blair's *Jump the Gun* (1996). Productions like these have for the first time given South Africa a sustained and sophisticated examination of the full spectrum of South African history and everyday life. These examinations include:

1. Historical dramas, for example Boer prisoners held by the British during the Anglo-Boer War in Dirk de Villiers's *Arende* ('The Earth', 1994), cut into a feature from the SABC-television series, and Manie van Rensburg's *The Native who Caused all the Trouble* (1989). Also see *De Voortrekkers/Winning a Continent* (1916), *Bloodriver* (1989), *Zulu Dawn* (1980), amongst others;
2. Films depicting the liberal opposition to apartheid that occurred in the 1960s, for example, Sven Persson's *Land Apart* (1974), *Broer Matie* (1984), Chris Menges' *A World Apart* (1988), Roodt's 1995 remake of *Cry the Beloved Country*, *Cry Freedom* and *A Dry White Season*;
3. The psychological impact on white South Africans of the wars waged against South Africa's neighbours, for example Roodt's *The Stick* (1987) and urban violence in *City of Blood*. These are films about pathology as normality. Opposed to the psychological analysis offered by these films were the jeep operas like *Kaptein Caprivi*, *Grenbasis 13* (1979) and the two *Boetie Gaan Border Toe* (1987; 1988) films directed by Regardt van den Bergh;
4. The popular anti-apartheid struggle of the 1980s was imaged in *Mapantsula*, *Sarafina*, *Place of Weeping*, *Bopha* (1993), the BBC's *Dark City* (1989) and scores

of documentaries. *Land Apart*, which predicted the Soweto uprising of June 1976, provided a benchmark for anti-apartheid documentaries made within South Africa. Nana Mahamo's *Last Grave at Dimbaza* (1973), shown clandestinely throughout South Africa during the 1970s, offered South Africans a very different, indirect address style of documentary. The 1980s in particular saw many more, for example, Jurgen Schadeberg's *Have You Seen Drum Recently?* (1988) recreated the energetic days of Drum magazine of the 1950s. Many others have contributed to a growing movement of critical and historically sensitive film and video makers;

5. Comedic films critical of white racial attitudes and experiences, for example, *Taxi to Soweto* (1991), *Soweto Green*, *Panic Mechanic* and *There's a Zulu on my Stoep*;

6. Both the historical origins and the contemporary effects of apartheid are found in *Procter's Friends* (1994), Heyns's *Fiela se Kind*, and Van Rensburg's *The Fourth Reich* (1990), constituted into a cinema release from the four-part television series. Andrew Worsdale's *Shot Down* (1990) reveals the inner turmoil of South Africans of various races as a consequence of apartheid (see Savage 1989b).

Signposts towards post-apartheid cinema

The future of South African cinema was established in the 1920s. A short film, directed by Lance Gewer, *Come See the Bioscope* (1997), based on Plaatje's endeavours to bring the visual technologies of modernity to black South Africans, signposts this post-apartheid revisionist aim. The film is set in 1924, by which stage Plaatje, founding member of the New African Movement and first secretary of the African National Congress (ANC), was already a well-educated and well-travelled politician, historian and author. After returning from his travels, Plaatje toured the country for several years using sponsored equipment (a Ford motor car, a generator and film projector) to educate people in both towns and rural areas about the New Negroes in the US and the unfolding political situation in South Africa (Masilela 2003). Just as Plaatje pioneered mobile cinema distribution, so have many filmmakers since, ranging from the producers of features 'made for blacks', through HIV educational movies such as the STEPS for the Future series, to Roodt's *Yesterday* (2004). Development of audiences is a major project of the Film Resource Unit based in Johannesburg.

Come See the Bioscope depicts Plaatje (Ernest Ndlovu) as an inspiring leader and educator who takes on the role of 'the bioscope man' in order 'to show people a

world they do not know'. Plaatje appreciated early on the powerful role that cinema could play in propagating and shaping beliefs: he protested outside the Johannesburg Town Hall at the showing of *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), asking why such an anti-black film, banned in some parts of the US, could be shown in South Africa (Masilela 2003: 21). Although the film itself could be criticised for being a somewhat sentimental portrayal, it is a well-made account of how an influential black leader overcame political obstacles and distribution constraints in order to expose black people to cinema, and in so doing educate them about their situation in relation to American developments. *Come See the Bioscope* brings to life a significant and previously neglected episode in South Africa's cinema history.

Most documentary crews working in the Plaatje vein work with subjects and sources as ends in themselves, rather than as means to ends. Everyone, prostitutes, street children, gangsters, people with AIDS, villagers, torture victims, experts and others, are all revealed to have personalities, identities and feelings. They are seen to have hopes, fears and disappointments. I call these encounter videos - 'being there' - we learn what it is like to be a victim, a social actor, a survivor. We also learn, mainly via the video makers, what it is like to be an activist, a facilitator, an advocate, like Plaatje. Videos can be empowering - for their subjects, their communities and their producers. The STEPS For the Future series on AIDS videos for example, are gut-wrenching and disturbing visual sociologies of the ordinary. As sociologies, experiential, personal, visual, they are also explanatory, theoretical, methodological, and are compelling studies in and of themselves. They are innovative both in terms of form and practice, taking intertextuality to new heights. The 'actors' are sometimes the HIV/AIDS educational facilitators, and are recognised as such by audiences to whom they are screening their films.

Infrastructural developments

Part of the revitalisation of South African cinema since the late 1990s was the establishment of the National Film and Video Foundation in 1998. This body arose out of an industry-wide consultative process, which brought all sectors of the film and video industry into productive if often tense discussions over the post-apartheid structure of the film and video industries (cf. Tomaselli and Shepperson 2000; Botha 2003). The Foundation, administered by the Department of Arts and Culture, Science and Technology, allocates development grants for training, production and audience development purposes. The Foundation is responsible to

a board of governors drawn from the film and video industry and civil society. This initiative encourages state and private financing partnerships with regard to production projects.

In South Africa, unlike in other African countries where broadcasting is part of the civil service, the film and television industries have always been closely integrated. This relationship therefore provides a much greater set of financing and market opportunities to South African filmmakers than is available in the rest of Africa. The impact of television, therefore, also needs to be assessed in relation to the development of South African cinema in a companion study.

Taking advantage of the relatively economic production cost structures of television, the public-service South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), the commercial subscription broadcaster M-Net, and the commercial free-to-air channel, e-TV, all encourage, develop and market the work of South Africa's fiction filmmakers and documentary and short film producers. All three companies invest directly in production of feature films, and all kinds of innovative projects emerged in the 1990s from within the film and television industries as a whole. With Jeremy Nathan's *Africa Dreaming* project of 1997, and his subsequent *DV8* projects, the SABC combined with commercial entertainment giant Primedia, the Film Resource Unit, and other sponsors to produce a series of short features for broadcast. The SABC project placed South African filmmakers within the broader context of African cinema's rich history. Thus, the first batch of films under the Africa Dreaming rubric all dealt with the theme of love, and combined female South African director Palesa ka Letlaka-Nkosi's *Mamalambo*, with Namibian Richard Pakleppa's *The Homecoming*, Mozambican Joao Ribeiro's *The Gaze of the Stars*, The Last Picture from Zimbabwean Farai Sevenzo, *The White and the Black* by Senegalese Joseph Gai Ramaka and *So Be It* by Abderrahmane Sissako, from Tunisia.

M-Net, a South African-based multinational pay television corporation, initiated an annual New Directions competition for directors and scriptwriters in the early 1990s. In the first half of each calendar year, the company solicits proposals from first-time directors and writers. Proposals are scrutinised by a panel of experienced professionals, which included Lionel Ngakane, and through a process of mentored refinement six proposals are selected for production. The final products emerge from a further refinement session, in the form of thirty-minute dramas broadcast on selected M-Net channels. One project was later remade into a cinema feature, *Chikin Biznis*. The script was written by Mtutuzeli Matshoba,

produced by Richard Green of New Directions, and directed by Ntshaveni Wa Luruli. The plot revolves around Sipho (Fats Bookholane), a retired office worker, who sells live chickens on the street in Soweto. He gets up to all kinds of tricks and crosses swords with everyone in his path. *Chikin Biznis* is not a political film. The freedom of the transition to democracy offered filmmakers an opportunity to make films about ordinary people engaged in everyday ordinary activities.

Another M-Net initiative was its annual All Africa Film Awards, an event first held in October 1995, following its earlier Awards, which only considered South African fare. Films from everywhere but South Africa were nominated in every category for the 1995 awards. The following year, the Cape Town ceremony saw one partial South African production, *Jump the Gun*, funded by Britain's Channel 4 and directed by an Englishman, Les Blair, receive awards for best leading actor (Lionel Newton) best sound (Simon Rice), and best English language film. In 1997, an Egyptian film, *Destiny* (1997), piped the South African-made *Paljas*. The Awards showcased a range of producers, directors and products (even if only once a year) and brought the diversity of African cinema home to an audience which mostly watched sport and anything M-Net contracts from a variety of Hollywood sources. The Awards were discontinued in 2000.

Yesterday / tomorrow

The technical golden age of South African cinema epics occurred between 1916 and 1922. The period of sheer quantity at thirty films a year occurred between 1962 and 1980, the heyday of apartheid. However, the South African industry's political and aesthetic coming of age was signalled by a sustained movement towards historical interrogation that began in 1986. The mid-1990s saw the next phase facilitated by the new democratically elected government, which for the first time created a development strategy for the wider development of the industry as a whole, from grassroots video to international co-production. The new millennium has already seen the production of top quality local films and promises to be an exciting time for South African cinema. The local film industry is growing, owing to the regular filming of foreign productions in Cape Town and Durban where production costs are comparatively low. In April 2004 the government's Department of Trade and Industry announced plans to provide financial incentives to increase foreign investment, to encourage the production of local content and boost job creation. In 2004, ten years after the country's first democratic election, South African audiences were able to see the first full-length Zulu feature film with English subtitles. The film *Yesterday* tells the story of a

mother who confronts her recently diagnosed HIV status in rural KwaZulu-Natal. The aptly-titled *Forgiveness* (2004), gives a compelling fictional account of an ex-policeman, granted amnesty at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), who approaches the family of the man he murdered in the name of apartheid for their forgiveness. The film highlights the moral issues raised in post-apartheid South Africa.

As someone privileged to have consulted for the government on its post-apartheid cinema and video development strategy, I see the fruition of my life's work in these infrastructural developments, in that film and video are being developed as growth sectors within the broader economy, but in ways that are democratically inclusive rather than racially and sectorially exclusive. Within just a few years the fruits were clear to see: aesthetically, in terms of themes, and in terms of the infusion of refreshing new talent into both the television and cinema sectors. The role of new film schools and university courses, of course, played a key role in such developments.

However, as Jeanne Prinsloo argued in 1996, filmmaking in post-apartheid South Africa faces particular context-specific challenges. Following the demise of apartheid there was a renewed understanding of nationhood as a potentially unifying force in South African society. In this 'renarration of nations' (1996: 34), the discourse of the anti-apartheid struggle is frequently invoked in attempts to constitute 'the rainbow nation'. However, this reconciliation discourse often 'speaks to a condition as not yet achieved' (ibid.: 47). In reality, apartheid has left its mark on the South African film industry. Therefore, Third Cinema aspirations need to be viewed against the infrastructural and institutional challenges that exist, such as unequal economic power relations, inadequate non-urban and black township distribution networks and competition from cheaper (American) entertainment options (Prinsloo 1996). Prinsloo contends that at the discursive level, there is a need to balance celebratory reconciliation discourses with more critical engagements with the process of transformation, while at the same time resisting the pressure to always be politically correct. South African films need to draw on a range of narratives and a plurality of meanings.

Keyan G. Tomaselli – Encountering Modernity – Twentieth Century South African Cinemas

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A book describing the history of South African cinemas can never be about cinemas only, for the subject will always be intimately intertwined with its context, in this case 20th century South Africa.

Keyan Tomaselli, one of the founders of cultural studies in SA, explores in this book how South African cinemas and films have been decidedly shaped by the country's history. In turn, films have inspired their makers and audiences to understand, and come to terms with, the complex phenomenon of modernity.

Discussing film theory, narratives, audiences and key South African films and filmmakers, Tomaselli aptly demonstrates that the time has come to adapt a more 'African' view on African cinemas, since western theories and models cannot automatically be applied to an African context.

Far from shying away from the personal, Tomaselli gives a conscientious and telling account of how his own experiences as a film maker, a cultural studies scholar, and a South African, have inevitably influenced his academic viewpoints and analysis.

About the author:

Prof. Keyan Tomaselli (Culture, Communication and Media Studies Department, University of KwaZulu-Natal) previously worked in the film industry and was co-writer of the White Paper on Film. His seminal books include *The Cinema of Apartheid* and *Appropriating Images* (1996). His interests are political economy, African cinema and visual anthropology.

**A. Ellian, G. Mollier & B. Rijpkema
(Red.) ~ De strijd om de**

democratie. Essays over democratische zelfverdediging



Ills. Joseph Sassoon
Semah

‘De strijd om de democratie’ bevat elf essays, geschreven vanuit een politiek en rechtsfilosofisch perspectief. De democratie en democratische rechtsstaat staan in de hele wereld onder druk. De trias politica wordt ondergraven. In bijna alle Europese landen groeien extreemrechtse en populistische partijen en ‘salafistische groeperingen’ die de democratische rechtsstaat ondermijnen. Waar ligt de grens in zelfverdediging van de democratie als het ernstig wordt bedreigd?

Centraal staat dan ook de weerbaarheid van de democratie, en hoe we ons juridisch kunnen verhouden tot groepen die zich niet houden aan de regels van de rechtsstaat. In het boek wordt een aantal rechtvaardigingen gepresenteerd wanneer mag worden ingrepen. Juridische procedures zijn echter niet voldoende, er moet tevens sprake zijn van een democratische gezindheid, hetgeen voortdurende oefening vereist. Ook worden de EU argumenten aangedragen om zich te bemoeien met de democratische rechtsstaat in de lidstaten. Ze liggen vooral in haar eigen voortbestaan en in het gegeven van een sterk geïntegreerde Europese constitutionele orde, want een aantasting van de nationale constitutionele orde is ook een aantasting van de Europese constitutionele orde. Een weerbare democratie kan ook gevolgen hebben voor

de godsdienstvrijheid voor zover het salafistische (en islamitische) organisaties betreft.

Het eerste deel gaat vooral in op de essentie, de grondslagen van de democratie; het tweede deel behandelt de Europese dimensie van een weerbare democratie en het derde deel is gewijd aan de verhouding tussen de vrijheid van godsdienst en het concept van een weerbare democratie.

Bastiaan Rijpkema, docent rechtswetenschap in Leiden, is auteur van het eerste hoofdstuk *'Democratie als zelfcorrectie revisited'*; een aanvulling op zijn eerder in 2015 verschenen en vaak in de andere essays aangehaalde publicatie *'Weerbare democratie. De grenzen van democratische tolerantie'*. Rijpkema baseert zich op de staatsrechtkenner George van den Bergh wiens oratie over antidemocratische partijen uit 1936 vanwege de actualiteit in 2014 opnieuw werd uitgegeven. Van den Bergh beschouwt het vermogen tot zelfcorrectie als het wezen van de democratie. Ook Rijpkema's uitgangspunt is dat de democratie niet zozeer wordt gevormd door meerderheidsbesluitvorming, maar met name door haar vermogen tot zelfcorrectie: alle besluiten zijn tijdelijk, behalve het besluit om de democratie zelf af te schaffen (als gevolg van een vaak sluipend proces). Het is het enige definitieve besluit in een democratie, en tegen dat onherroepelijke besluit mogen/moeten democratieën zich verzetten. Hij onderscheidt de formele democratie (meerderheidsbesluit), de materiële democratie (meerderheidsbeslissingen plus aantal grondrechten) en vooral dus de democratie als zelfcorrectie.

Om het begrip zelfcorrectie handen en voeten te geven, analyseert hij het Europees Hof voor de Rechten van de Mens (EHRM) en het Duitse Bundesverfassungsgericht, die het begrip democratie concretiseren. Op basis daarvan komt Rijpkema met drie beginselen die het zelfcorrigerende vermogen van de democratie dragen: evaluatie, politieke concurrentie en de vrijheid van meningsuiting.

Zelfcorrectie blijft mogelijk, aldus Rijpkema, zolang deze principes zijn gewaarborgd. Partijen die een of meerdere van die beginselen bedreigen komen in aanmerking voor een verbod. Bij democratie als zelfverdediger is het de wetgever die de beginselen aan de rechter meegeeft én de beginselen worden beperkt tot het strikt noodzakelijke voor democratische zelfcorrectie, aldus Rijpkema. Het uitsluiten van politieke partijen is slechts gerechtvaardigd als zij de democratie in haar geheel aantasten, de grens ligt niet bij het aantasten van

onderdelen.

Hij verzet zich tegen de opvatting dat de 'moderne uitdagers van de democratische rechtsstaat zich niet richten tegen de democratie, maar tegen de rechtsstaat'. Rijkema is overigens niet blind voor antirechtstatelijke partijen, maar vindt niet dat ze moeten worden verboden.

De EU als supranationale organisatie heeft er belang bij om haar lidstaten democratisch te houden alhoewel elke inmenging zal worden gezien als een aantasting van de nationale soevereiniteit. Ze kunnen wel ingrijpen op basis van art.7 (VEU) van het Verdrag van Lissabon. Maar, aldus Rijkema, art.7 VEU en de opmaat er naartoe middels het Rule of Framework (sinds 2014) zijn weinig gedifferentieerd, de sanctiemogelijkheden zijn relatief onevenwichtig, en ook lijkt de politieke wil klein om dergelijke stappen te zetten. De EC heeft echter onlangs voor het eerst de art.7 VEU procedure gestart tegen Polen vanwege de dreigende politisering van de rechtsstaat. Rijkema sluit af met de woorden dat de verdediging van de democratie uiteindelijk afhankelijk is van de mensen die haar instituties bevolken.

Patrick van Schie ondersteunt in zijn essay '*Democratie moet leven*' het 'zelfcorrectiecriterium' van Rijkema, maar heeft twijfels over de mogelijkheid om dit juridisch vorm te geven. Leeft het idee van een democratie wel genoeg in de samenleving en zijn mensen wel bereid om de democratie daadwerkelijk te verdedigen? Het leren van democratisch burgerschap is daarom van groot belang. *Gelijn Molier* beoordeelt in zijn essay '*Drie typen van weerbare democratie*' (Radbach, Hong en Rijkema) op hun consistentie en de mogelijkheid voor minderheden een meerderheid te kunnen worden. Bart Verheyen analyseert de vaak aangehaalde Franse politieke denker Claude Lefort, in wiens werk het wezen van de democratie als politiek regime centraal staat. Ook voor hem geldt dat in een democratie een meerderheid nooit zijn wil kan opleggen. 'Onbepaaldheid is een constructief principe van de democratie en dat vereist het respecteren van pluraliteit, en daarmee mensenrechten'.

Jasper Doomen heeft in zijn essay '*Het antidemocratische karakter van 'militante democratie'*' met name theoretische bezwaren tegen de weerbare democratie.

Afshin Ellian meldt in zijn essay '*L'Amour de la démocratie versus de dictatuur van de rechtsstaat: de weerbaarheid van de democratie zelf*' dat de weerbaarheid van de democratie niet kan worden afgeleid uit de rechtsstaat, ook niet uit de staat, maar uit de democratie zelf. De uiterste afgrond van de democratie is het totalitarisme. Lefort speelt hierbij een belangrijke rol die als kenmerk van de

democratie het onderscheid tussen macht, kennis en recht aangeeft, die bij een totalitair systeem juist in de staat samenvallen. Voor Lefort is de moderne democratie een historische samenleving die in haar vorm de onbepaaldheid toelaat en bewaart. Niets is eeuwig. De essentie van de democratie ligt niet expliciet in haar vermogen tot zelfcorrectie, maar vooral 'in de kracht van haar openheid, onbepaaldheid en tijdelijkheid.' Het huidige westerse populisme ziet Ellian als een voortbrengsel en uitdrukking van de democratie. Zij kaarten, aldus Ellian, 'een aantal serieuze problemen aan, zoals het islamisme, immigratie, burgerschap in de multiculturele samenleving, de mondiale economische betrekkingen en het verlies van eigen identiteit'. Voor Ellian is de democratie een riskante eventualiteit. De weerbare democratie vanuit de democratie zelf is het correctieve vermogen van de democratie.



In deel II analyseert *Leonard Besselink* in '*Europese democratie - uitdaging en opdracht*' het vraagstuk wanneer het rechtvaardig is dat de EU 'weerbare democratiemaatregelen' neemt ter bescherming van de democratie in de lidstaten. *Rick Lawson* gaat in op de vraag hoe de EU, de Raad van Europa, en het Europees Hof voor de Rechten van de Mens, moeten reageren op de opkomst van 'illiberale democratieën' zoals Polen en Hongarije. Zijn zij in staat een effectief rechtsstaat- en mensenrechtenbeleid te voeren? Dat is vooral afhankelijk van 'de politieke wil en bereidheid van politici om in Europees verband op te treden als de

situatie daarom vraagt. "Als wordt aanvaardt dat staten zich eenzijdig terugtrekken op het gebied van de rechtsstaat, dan tast dat niet alleen het morele zelfbeeld van Europa aan, maar ook de geloofwaardigheid van de hele Europese samenwerking. Voor de Unie is dat bedreigender dan de Brexit-crisis", aldus Lawson in zijn essay 'Pourquoi mourir pour Dantzig?'

Het derde en laatste deel is gewijd aan religie, aan de islam in al zijn verschijningsvormen. *David Suurland* stelt zich de vraag of islamitische uitingen, en de organisaties waarin zij plaatsvinden, verboden mogen worden vanwege hun potentie voor politiek geweld. Hij analyseert wat ideologisch denken inhoudt, en hoe zich dat verhoudt tot een totalitaire rechtsorde. Wat is islamisme en impliceert dat een totalitaire rechtsorde? Kunnen juridische maatregelen worden

genomen tegen geweldloze islamitische organisaties, instellingen en personen? Suurland stelt in zijn essay *'Totalitarisme, islamisme en het EVRM'* dat politiek geweld nooit ontstaat in een vacuüm; het betreft een sluipend proces. Het is het gevolg van voorafgaande structurele agitatie en propaganda, zoals we bij het nazisme en het communisme hebben gezien. Hij ziet een overeenkomst tussen de islamisten van nu en de totalitaire bewegingen uit het verleden in hun bereidheid de democratische mensrechtelijke rechtsorde daadwerkelijk af te schaffen en dat verbindt de islamisten van nu met de totalitaire bewegingen uit het verleden. Hij stelt dat het islamitische ideaal van de implementatie van de sharia noodzakelijkerwijs leidt tot de afschaffing van de democratische rechtsorde en de toepassing van structureel legitiem geweld. Het islamisme reduceert de mensheid tot een strijd tussen islam en ongeloof. "Het islamisme heeft de Jodenhaat van de nazi's vrijwel letterlijk overgenomen en gelegitimeerd met een beroep op haar eigen canonieke bronnen", aldus Suurland. "De substroming van het islamisme heeft de zuivering van de theologie (salafisme) opgerekt naar het sociale, educatieve, maatschappelijke en politieke domein en vertoont alle tekenen van een totalitaire beweging". De AIVD moet dan ook geen onderscheid maken tussen enerzijds het jihadi salafisme, dat geweld goedkeurt en anderzijds het a-politiek en politiek salafisme anderzijds. Het EVRM (het artikel 17) heeft voldoende ruimte om vanuit een mensenrechtelijk kader op te treden tegen het islamisme. De vraag is echter of de politiek de ernst van de situatie erkent en bereid is in te grijpen.

Ook *Dirk Verhofstadt* gaat in op de verhouding tussen een weerbare democratie en de vrijheid van godsdienst, waarbij hij in tegenstelling tot Suurland onderscheid maakt tussen islamisme en radicale islamitische organisaties. Hij concentreert zich in zijn essay *'Salafisme versus democratie'* op deze laatste stroming. Hij ziet de radicale islam, meer in het bijzonder het salafisme, als grootste bedreiging van de democratie. Meer en meer roepen radicale religieuze organisaties op tot haat en geweld en tot het plegen van terroristische daden. Ook hij ziet aanleiding tot verbod in het gegeven om de vrijheid van godsdienst net zo te behandelen als de vrijheid van meningsuiting (art.17 van het EVRM).

Bij de verdediging van de democratie tegen de radicale islam is Verhofstadt schatplichtig aan Karl Popper, te weten dat het wezen van de democratie bestaat uit het voorkomen van tirannieke of totalitaire regimes. Popper verzette zich ook tegen 'anti humanitaire religies'. Geen Allah boven de civiele wetgeving dus. Anders dan Suurland gelooft Verhofstadt er niet in dat de islam en de democratie

per definitie niet met elkaar zijn te verenigen. Gematigde moslims moeten juist worden gesteund in hun strijd tegen de radicale islam. Zowel Suurland en Verhofstadt zijn voor juridische maatregelen die de overheid ter bescherming van de democratische rechtsstaat tegen islamitische en salafistische organisatie moet nemen. De radicale islam is het grootste gevaar voor de vernietiging van onze democratie en een terugkeer naar het totalitarisme, aldus Dirk Verhofstadt.

Paul Cliteur benadrukt in zijn essay *'Weerbare en meebuigende democratie'* de weerbare democratiehouding van de politiek en bestuurders, die helaas vaak ontbreekt omdat ze het gevaar niet herkennen. Vanuit het salafisme wordt een serieuze poging gedaan de vrijheid van meningsuiting als principe om zeep te helpen en de politiek-bestuurlijke elite neemt onvoldoende stelling. Er is eerder sprake van impliciete concessies aan het salafisme.

Er moet erkend worden dat er een probleem is. Meebuigende democratie is een democratie waarbij de politieke leiders concessies doen aan antidemocratische krachten die uiteindelijk de democratie zullen afschaffen. De affaire Rudi Carrell, de Rushdie-affaire, de moord op Theo van Gogh, en de 'cartoonaffaires' illustreren dat, aldus Cliteur. De vrijheid van meningsuiting moet feitelijk worden versterkt "desnoods zou er een apart gebied moeten worden ingesteld waar schrijvers en kunstenaars op koste van de staat in alle veiligheid kunnen doorgaan met hun werk." Voordat er een weerbare vorm kan ontstaan, is het noodzakelijk dat men onderkent "dat op dit moment de democratie weerloos is en samenwerkt met het kwaad."

Afshin Ellian, Gelijk Molier, Bastiaan Rijpkema (Red.)- De strijd om de democratie. Essays over democratische zelfverdediging.

Boom uitgeverij, Amsterdam, 2018 | Paperback ISBN 9789024411634 - E-book ISBN 9789024420582

De democratie is in het Westen niet langer vanzelfsprekend. Als we de democratie in stand willen houden is het hoogstnoodzakelijk dat we de haar ondermijnende signalen herkennen en erkennen dat er een groot probleem is. Trump met zijn America first politics, de verregaande ondermijning van de rechtsstaat in o.a. Hongarije, Polen en Turkije, het opkomend rechts extremisme en populisme, het antidemocratische gedachtegoed van de radicale islam dat aan invloed wint, de media en de vrijheid van mening die onder druk staan en de groeiende scheidslijn tussen arm en rijk bedreigen de democratie.

'De strijd om de democratie' roept op tot bewustwording en actie voordat het te laat is.

Europa wake up!

Zie de eerste editie *Nacht van de Rechtsstaat*, 19 november 2010, Felix Meritis, Europees Centrum voor kunst, cultuur en wetenschap.

Linda Bouws - St. Metropool Internationale Kunstprojecten

Organic!



This is a diatribe written for the benefit of those of you who occasionally suffer from bad consciences because you grow roses.

When I met Gerhard Verdoorn he was the Executive Director of Birdlife South Africa. We sat together through a long day devoted to the presentation of the outcomes of research into the harm caused to the environment by pesticides (including fungicides – biologists often don't discriminate between the two), and at the end of the day, looking for helpful advice, I asked him what he thought I should spray my roses with. He barked one word in answer: "Roundup!"

Given the facts that roses are exotics in the southern hemisphere, that they will not grow down here unless you fertilise and spray them, that fertilisers and sprays undoubtedly harm the environment, that the environment is in trouble and needs to be cosseted, and that global warming is going on the one hand to parch our lands (through chronic droughts) and on the other hand to drown them (through raising the level of the seas), Professor Verdoorn's response to me would seem to be fully justified. But it only SEEMS to be justified. In reality, it was either witty or rude, depending on your frame of mind at the time, but not at all

justified. There are about seven billion people in the world. If we didn't use fertilisers, insecticides and fungicides, we could feed about four billion of them.

If we took Gerhard Verdoorn's advice seriously we would kill about three out of every seven people alive today, which would seem to many of us to be a greater evil than spraying our gardens and crops with insecticides. We need to use insecticides and fertilisers in order to be able to feed the world with food for the body, and if you accept the premise that man does not live by bread alone, we need to use insecticides and fertilisers also to produce what life is all about on a full stomach, which in your world and mine is the creation of beauty, which for our purposes means growing roses. What to do, then, about the need to preserve the environment? Is there an insuperable contradiction between our desire to save the planet and our desire to serve our physical and aesthetic/spiritual appetites? I think not. Such contradictions exist only in the minds of fundamentalists. I think that a really useful compromise can be reached, which involves the avoidance of unnecessary fertilising and spraying. I now spray reactively instead of by rote, and that seems to work. And I fertilise with a small monthly handful of a suitably balanced fertiliser appropriate to the particular season of the year, and that seems to work too. The soil in our garden is rich with earthworms. Our garden has roses in it, but it also has bees and many other insects in it, and masses of birds. At times, living at home is like living inside an aviary. So my conscience is clear.

Note that I don't react (except by feeling a bit peeved) to the advice one hears so often today to go 'organic' - to grow garlic or marigolds, for instance, round the rose bushes to keep the insects away. Garlic and marigolds don't in fact keep the insects away, and in any event this use of the word 'organic' is just a gimmick. I really do believe that people in marketing call products 'organic' to persuade the gullible general public to buy inferior products while paying more for them than they would for better stuff. As a child I was the victim of my mother's passion for whatever the current gimmick in food happened to be. I was fed on spinach, tomatoes, carrots, cod liver oil, and so forth. Do you remember those days? My Mom, bless her, didn't have a clue. She believed whatever she was told. In other words, she was very modern. If you ask people today what they actually mean when they talk about 'organic vegetables,' for instance, they will say that they are vegetables grown without the use of chemicals. But, you say, this can't be. The vegetables themselves are in fact chemicals, the soil consists only of chemicals,

people are chemicals (being made up almost entirely of water, which is a compound of hydrogen and oxygen, which are two chemicals). Get rid of chemicals and you get rid of the world! If the people you're talking to get the point they will say that you've misunderstood; that they meant vegetables grown without the use of synthetic chemicals. But, you answer, all synthetics begin as natural products.



You can't synthesise something out of nothing. Synthesising things is like cooking. When you cook you start with a lot of raw materials and make a good meal out of them. You wouldn't suggest that people should eat only raw stuff, would you? How could you eat a potato? What would you do with soya? The point about synthetics is that they make it possible for us to isolate what we want from natural products, to bulk them up, to transport them, and to use them to feed

the world. Take Cypermethrin, for example. (The person you're talking to pulls a face.) Cypermethrin is produced naturally by chrysanthemums, which is why insects don't eat chrysanthemums. But you can't extract enough from actual chrysanthemums to use as a general insecticide. And if you tried you'd wipe out all the chrysanthemums in the world. So you have to synthesise Cypermethrin instead, from whatever natural products you may need - things like oil and rape seed and salt, perhaps. No, says the person you're talking to. She wants you to use only organic things. Oil is terrible! she says. You tell her that oil is organic. The word 'organic' means carbon-based, which is what oil very obviously is. It's a derivative of fossilised trees. Synthetics made from organics are obviously still organics. The person you were talking to has turned her back on you, pretending to need another biscuit to go with her (organic) tea, and has started a conversation with the hostess of the day, who doesn't grow roses. You go to the nearest computer, Google for the word 'organic,' and print out for her benefit what Wiki has to say on the subject:

Organic foods are made in a way that limits or excludes the use of synthetic materials during production. For the vast majority of human history, agriculture can be described as organic; only during the 20th century was a large supply of new synthetic chemicals introduced to the food supply. This more recent style of production is referred to as 'conventional.' Under organic production, the use of

conventional non-organic pesticides, insecticides and herbicides is greatly restricted and saved as a last resort. However, contrary to popular belief, certain non-organic fertilisers are still used. ... Most certifications [of organic food] allow some chemicals [!!!] and pesticides to be used.

You give the sheet of paper to the person you were talking to. She smiles at you sweetly but vaguely, puts it down on the tea table, resumes her conversation with the hostess, and leaves the event without having read it or taken it with her.

You're not going to win with that sort of person because they have what amounts to a religious belief in the vague ideas and empty fashionable words they use, and they won't allow you to shatter their faith - they're unwitting fundamentalists - but at least you have a balanced view of these things and can grow roses and be easy in yourself. You will know that you are choosing to use 'chemicals' that biodegrade quickly and that target what you want them to deal with, rather than broad spectrum chemicals (if you want to kill greenfly you don't need to kill bees at the same time). You are growing beautiful roses, but you are also preserving your patch of the world as a healthy, bio-diverse environment. Well done, you!

About the Author

Professor *Alan Brimer*, BA, UED (UCT), BA Hons, MA, D.Litt et Phil (UPE), was born in Cape Town in 1938, and moved to Beaufort West in 1944. In 1947 he went back to Cape Town and became a boarder at St. George's Grammar School and a choirboy in St. George's Cathedral, where he became the assistant organist in 1950, at the age of 12. He has played church organs ever since. Two years later his parents bought a house; he came home from boarding school, and was given the gardening to do as his share of the family's household duties. He soon found the pleasure of growing roses, and has grown them off and on ever since.

Aged 14 he became musical director of the Camps Bay Operatic and Dramatic Society, and conducted a full set of performances of *Die Fledermaus*, with an orchestra in the pit, wearing tailcoat many sizes too large for him. He continued to conduct shows for the next 16 years. At UCT he became Captain of the Weightlifting Club, and added competitive weightlifting to his other sports, tennis, rugby and squash. He still plays squash whenever he can find the time.

After graduating he took a teaching job (English and Maths) at Grey High School, Port Elizabeth, where he became Vice Principal at the age of 30. Then he took a

lectureship in English at the University of Port Elizabeth, which he left in 1977 to become Professor and Head of the Department of English at the University of Durban-Westville.

He retired as the Academic Registrar of the university, and currently works as a consultant in higher education. This has involved him in working for various public and private higher education institutions, the CHE and SANPAD. He also edits academic publications, theses and dissertations.

His doctoral thesis was about T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and he has since published articles on medieval poetry, Shakespeare, Eliot, and literary theory. At the moment he has about 500 roses in his garden, writes about roses every so often, and tries to popularise rose growing in KZN.

Kishore Mahbubani - Is het Westen de weg kwijt? Een provocatie



Kishore Mahbubani – Ills.

Joseph Sassoon Seman

Van het jaar 1 tot het jaar 1820 waren China en India de twee grootste economieën. Pas in de afgelopen tweehonderd jaar werden Europa en America succesvol. Er is geen westerse leider die durft te zeggen dat er nu aan een periode van westerse hegemonie een einde komt. Het Westen kan niet langer zijn wil opleggen aan de wereld. China en India hebben hun economische aandeel heroverd; het westerse aandeel in de wereldeconomie zal alleen maar verder slinken. Het Westen domineert niet meer. Het is van groot belang zich hieraan aan te passen, een concurrerende mondiale strategie te ontwikkelen. Van een coherente strategie om met de nieuwe situatie om te gaan is echter geen sprake. In plaats daarvan slaat het Westen wild om zich heen door Irak aan te vallen, Syrië te bombarderen, Rusland sancties op te leggen en China op te hitsen. Het moet leren zijn huidige positie te delen of zelfs af te staan.

Gaat dat lukken? Het klinkt paradoxaal, maar alleen door de neergang te erkennen kan het Westen op lange termijn succesvol blijven, zo betoogt Kishore Mahbubani. Het Westen heeft 'een dosis Machiavelli' nodig, door het voortouw te nemen bij de introductie van een nieuwe orde. Een machiavellistische, pragmatische moraal boven een idealistische of dogmatische moraal.

Objectief gezien heeft de mensheid er nooit zo goed voorgestaan en dat is grotendeels te danken aan westerse praktijken en westerse ideeën die invloed hebben gehad op andere samenlevingen. Het grootste geschenk van het Westen is het redeneervermogen, waardoor het persoonlijk welzijn is verbeterd. De verspreiding van het westerse redeneervermogen heeft drie stille revoluties op gang gezet die het grote succes van niet-westerse samenlevingen verklaren. De eerste revolutie is van politieke aard, het verzet tegen het feodale systeem, waardoor de meeste Aziatische leiders begrepen dat ze rekenschap aan hun volk moesten afleggen en niet omgekeerd, hetgeen o.a. het grote succes van China verklaart. De tweede revolutie is van psychologische aard: men is erin gaan geloven dat men zelf het heft in handen kan nemen en via de ratio een beter resultaat kan krijgen. De derde revolutie is van bestuurlijke aard: via deugdelijk rationeel bestuur verandert de samenleving in positieve zin. Goed bestuur kan de samenleving transformeren en verheffen.

De ervaringen met rationeel goed bestuur maken de inwoners van China, India en Indonesië optimistischer dan de westerse burger. Negentig procent van de

jongeren zien de technologie als de factor die hoop geeft voor de toekomst.

De twee wereldoorlogen en 11 september hebben het Westen afgeleid. Zij hebben bijvoorbeeld niet gezien dat niet 11 september de belangrijkste gebeurtenis was met verstekkende gevolgen, maar de toetreding van China tot de Wereldhandelsorganisatie, hetgeen in het Westen leidde tot 'creatieve destructie' en een verlies van grote aantallen banen, aldus Mahbubani. Hierdoor nam de ongelijkheid binnen westerse economieën toe en dat veroorzaakte weer Brexit en dat Trump aan de macht kwam. Alhoewel de massa de westerse elite wantrouwt, denkt ze dat ze nog steeds gelijk heeft. Dat het Westen aan macht verliest toont Mahbubani aan met vooral economische gegevens: in 2050 zal het koopkrachtpariteit van de G7 zijn geslonken van 31,5 procent in 2015 naar 20 procent en dat van E7 zou zijn toegenomen van 36,3 procent naar 50 procent (bron PricewaterhouseCoopers). Maar deze gegevens bieden ook inzicht in "het uitbannen van menselijke ellende en een toename van het menselijk geluk." De wereldwijde opmars van functioneel bestuur, vinden alleen niet plaats in Noord-Afrika en het Midden-Oosten, regio's waar het Westen zich mee heeft bemoeid, aldus Mahbubani. "Dankzij functioneel bestuur, redeneervermogen en intelligente, welgestelde inwoners zullen oorlogen blijven afnemen, komt geweld minder vaak voor en zullen economieën gestaag blijven groeien." Een historisch keerpunt waarbij de informatierevolutie een grote positieve rol speelt.

Dankzij westerse hoogmoed en strategische missers ten opzichte van de islam, Rusland en niet-gewenste bemoeienissen met de wereld is het Westen verzwakt. Het Westen heeft het islamitische geloof zwaar onderschat: "de islam is misschien wel de meest dynamische, sterkste religie op aarde." In 2015 was 24,1 procent van de wereldbevolking islamitisch; voorspeld wordt dat in 2060 31,1 procent moslim is. Zij worden ook steeds religieuzer, aldus Mahbubani. "Het Westen zou eens goed moeten nadenken over wat het de islamitische wereld in de afgelopen twee eeuwen heeft aangedaan." Ook was de vernedering van Rusland een grote strategische misser, waarbij hij de gebeurtenissen rond de Krim als voorbeeld neemt. De derde grote misser is de roekeloze inmenging van het Westen in de binnenlandse aangelegenheden van andere landen: door democratie te exporteren is het lot van veel mensen juist verergert.

De aanslagen van 11 september moeten, aldus Mahbubani, worden gezien als een "onontkoombare vergelding door de eeuwenlang door het Westen vertrapte islamitische wereld."

De nieuwe strategie van het Westen zou minimalistisch moeten zijn, multilateraal en machiavellistisch, en niet langer agressief en interventionistisch. Het Westen moet zijn bemoeienissen met de islamitische wereld en met China en Afrika ernstig beperken, maar de praktijk van vrij ondernemerschap en maatschappelijke harmonie is nog steeds een waardevol voorbeeld.

Om samen te werken, nieuwe wereldwijde consensus te bereiken, zijn effectieve, mondiale instituties nodig, zoals de Algemene Vergadering van de Verenigde Naties waar alle 193 soevereine landen vrijuit kunnen spreken. Zo kan het Westen horen en begrijpen hoe 66 procent van de wereldbevolking denkt. Het Handvest van de Verenigde Naties en de Universele Verklaring van de Rechten van de Mens, dienen dan als basis voor de waarden van die nieuwe consensus. Het afnemende westerse aandeel in de wereldbevolking en wereldmacht, maakt het belang van een sterkere, internationale rechtsorde van belang. Een machiavellistische visie die leidt tot Westerse koersverandering is gebaseerd op een aanpak die de mondiale langetermijnbelangen van het Westen dient. Europa en Amerika staan hierbij niet voor dezelfde uitdaging, hun belangen lopen uiteen.

Voor Amerika zijn China en Rusland de uitdaging, voor Europa is het de islamitische wereld die voor zijn voordeur staat. Europa zou vrede moeten sluiten met Poetin en Oost-Aziatische economische succesverhalen (Maleisië) moeten aanmoedigen in Noord-Afrika door met China samen te werken. Europese strategische acties moeten worden vergroot, o.a. door verhoging van de NAVO bijdrage. Amerika zou vrede moeten sluiten met de islamitische wereld en China moeten zien als economische concurrent en niet als militaire concurrent.

Amerika zou zijn strategische belangen op Korea moeten laten sporen met China, aldus Mahbubani. En nu is Amerika onder Trump gericht op militaire concurrentie, terwijl Amerika de basis zou moeten leggen voor meer rust in de wereld.



Dat het Westen zich niet strategisch weet aan te passen, is de oorzaak van veel incidenten in de wereld. Zij moet radicaal van koers veranderen. Westerlingen hebben het mis als ze denken dat democratie een noodzakelijke voorwaarde is voor economisch succes; anders zou China immers niet zo succesvol zijn. De tekortkomingen van de democratie verlammen westerse samenlevingen, aldus Mahbubani. Als Europa niet verandert, dan betekent dat collectieve zelfmoord. Door naar het Oosten te kijken en niet naar het Westen veranderen islamitische landen en moderniseren. Het Westen zou moeten stoppen islamitische landen

te bombarderen. Het goede voorbeeld van de Europese cultuur van vrede zal ook tot het Midden-Oosten doordringen, "het belangrijkste pluspunt van een vernuftige terugtrekking van de westerse macht uit de regio."

Het Westen moet vredelievend zijn, niet pessimistisch en vertwijfelend. Het zal China en de islamitische wereld als sterke potentiële partners moeten zien, en niet als bedreiging. Als de middenklasse in de wereld van 1,8 miljard in 2009 zal zijn omhoog geschoten naar 4,9 miljard, biedt dat nieuwe kansen voor competitieve westerse economieën.

Is zijn laatste hoofdstuk beantwoordt Mahbubani de vraag of het Westen de weg kwijt is. Het Westen begrijpt niet dat het tijdperk van westerse overheersing ten einde loopt. Ze zouden zich moeten richten op grote, mondiale uitdagingen, in plaats van op binnenlandse strubbelingen. Dat China de wereld gaat leiden en de grootste economie zal worden staat nog niet vast, evenmin als een nieuwe periode van Aziatische hegemonie. Het Westen moet zijn nieuwe positie erkennen en dan kan het een grote rol spelen in de toekomst van de wereld. Dit boek is dan ook als geschenk bedoelt aan het Westen, als herinnering wat het allemaal heeft gedaan als de meest succesvolle beschaving uit de geschiedenis.

Is het Westen de weg kwijt? Een provocatie is vooral geschreven vanuit een westerse, neoliberale wereldvisie. Als de islamitische wereld steeds machtiger en religieuzer gaat worden, zoals Mahbubani voorspelt, wat betekent dat dan voor de nieuwe wereldorde en de democratie? Hoe gaat de wereldeconomie er dan uit zien? In de islamitische principes is bijvoorbeeld het maken van woekerwinsten verboden. Het islamitische economische systeem (IES) is geworteld in de

ethische-sociale leer van de Koran en de Soenna. Het systeem geldt zowel voor niet-moslims als moslims. Hoe wordt dit conflict tussen het Westen en de islamitische wereld dan opgelost? Dit soort vragen worden niet beantwoord in 'Is het Westen de weg kwijt'.

Kishore Mahbubani: 'You in the West have no idea how the rest of the world looks at you. They see an emperor without clothes. The world has changed tremendously, but you do not understand what that means. *Globalisation Lecture 23: The Century of Asia: The inevitable global power shift*, Felix Meritis, Amsterdam, 13-11-2008. Zie: <http://rozenbergquarterly.com/kishore-mahbubani-the-century-of-asia-the-inevitable-global-power-shift/>

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