Research Part II  The Castle as an example

The Castle of Good Hope
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Explorelab Research by Benjo Christian Zwarteveen © 2016

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The Castle in the landscape

No matter where you are in the city of Cape Town, you’ll find a beautiful landscape all around you, dominating the skyline more than the tall buildings in the city centre. In this chapter I will explain why the Castle of Good Hope was constructed at that place, what it has to do with the mountains and cliffs around the city and how this position of the building in the landscape has changed. At the end of the chapter, I can give some recommendations and ambitions for the future of this Castle in the city landscape of Cape Town.
In my field trip to South Africa I saw the importance of the correctness of the history of the country. For the new South Africa, the history doesn’t start at the end of the 15th century, when the Portuguese sailed to the Cape of Good Hope for the first time, not in the 17th century, when Jan van Riebeeck first settled in the Cape, but the history starts with the KhoiKhoi and the San people. The KhoiKhoi were hunters, gatherers and cattle herders, with a sophisticated and yet easy society, a society at peace, a society with their rock drawings as only remaining physical heritage. This stabilized society lasted until they were challenged by the Bantu people from the northeast and the European traders and colonists from the southwest. The Europeans brought violence with them, the Bantu people mingled more with the Khoisan.¹

¹ In Part 1, the chapter about the mutual history, this is more elaborated on.

The Khoisan didn’t have permanent settlements, as they were hunting or herding cattle that graze at different places during different seasons. The place where the Dutch chose to settle was called //Hui !Gaeb by them, which means ‘where the clouds gather’ in the language of the Khoisan. The first Dutch to reside in the Table Bay for a longer period were a group of shipwrecked sailors, who had to survive there for a couple of months in the winter of 1649. They saw the potential of the place, with a naturally protected harbour and fresh water streams that were flowing through the valley. The Table mountain must have been a beacon that everyone knew about, it was the last natural wonder they would encounter before sailing into the Indian Ocean. When they were rescued and brought back to the Republic, they must have encouraged the VOC to settle in that particular bay, the bay where the clouds gather, up to today, gather.

The Dutch folk tale about Jan van Hunks, who held a pipe smoking competition with the devil on Devil’s Peak, has given the place ‘where the clouds gather’ a new meaning.

¹ Up to today, the clouds gather around the mountain, providing this view from Robben Island.

2. This illustration shows the story of Jan van Hunks, a legend about Captain Jan van Hunks, who lived at the slopes of the mountain that was later called Devil’s Peak. He started a pipe smoking competition with a person in a black cloak an with a black hat. The competion lasted for days and at the end, the pirate Captain won the competition, leaving the Devil so angry that he made Van Hunks vanish into the smoke. Every year, the smoking contest is repeated, when the clouds gather over the slopes of Table Mountain. Source: historicalmedia.co.za
A place of replenishment

The protected replenishment station

Cape Town was primarily meant as a replenishment station on the spice route of the VOC between Amsterdam and India and the East Indies. The Company decided to send the first colonisers in the year of 1652, to strengthen the position of the bay. Their assignment was to build a fort and a replenishment station, with gardens to provide passing friendly ships the necessary fresh fruit, vegetables, meat and water (Thompson, 2001, p. 32). What was needed: a harbour and place for anchoring, a fortress to protect the settlement and gardens to grow crops. The settlement functioned well and in 1672 Cape Town’s population counted 220 persons (Thompson, 2001, p. 13). For the gardens, the Dutch chose the most flat and fertile piece of land in the bay. They immediately started building the first fortress and digging irrigation channels for the gardens.

In the first decade the Dutch didn’t have much to fear from the English, more from the Khoisan people with whom they were in a continuous conflict situation, though there was also mutual trade. A line of small fortresses was built in the first ten years of the Dutch rule, mainly the east of the Devil’s Peak was fortified by a range of small fortresses. That was because of the fertile lands that were situated on the rainy side of the mountains, the current areas Rondebosch and Kirstenbosch. In 1660, after some quarrels with the Khoisan, a thick hedge was planted around the settlements east of the mountains, guarded by several watch houses (Thompson, 2001, p. 38). The continuous tensions between the Dutch and the English and eventually the outbreak of war in the 1660s caused the construction of a new Castle in the Table Bay, the current Castle of Good Hope. With the construction of the fortress, the defence lines outside the town and the gardens, the Dutch had implemented their long tradition of constructing and engineering the landscape, on the African soil.²

² In Part I, the chapter about the mutual history, this is more elaborated on.

3. On this map, the 1968 situation (not very different from the current situation) of streets and blocks is superimposed on the map of 1693. The square fortress of Jan van Riebeeck was situated on the Grand Parade, to the northwest of the new Castle.
Source: Flickr.com
4. Cape Town around 1670, showing the first settlement and the new fortress. Source: atlasofmutualheritage.com

5. Cape Town around 1760, showing the extent of plantations and gardens in the City Bowl, as well as the line of fortifications to the east of the Castle, and the batteries at Green Point. Source: atlasofmutualheritage.com
6. R.J. Gordon, Plattegrond van Kaapstad, (1782). This map shows the full extent of the fortifications in the City Bowl of Cape Town, with Fort Knokke in the bottom left, attached to the French defence line. Source: Rijksmuseum Amsterdam / atlasofmutualheritage.com
The old fortress (Van Riebeeck's fortress) didn't suffice anymore, and the new fortress was planned a little more to the northeast of the valley, where it was out of reach from gunfire from Signal Hill. The Casteel de Goede Hoop (English: Castle of Good Hope) was placed more in the direction of the neck between the Devil's Peak and the bay, the current area of Woodstock. Therefore it was positioned strategically at the main road into town and the valley. In 1702 a Danish visitor described the view on Cape Town, with its strong Castle, elegant church tower and stone houses clad with white plaster (Thompson, 2001, p. 39).

Because until the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century the fortress and the batteries were all in active service, the fields around the Castle needed to be empty, to have an open field of fire. The town grew gradually over time, to 15,000 inhabitants (10,000 slaves) in 1795, with 1,145 houses and quite some public buildings. In the second half of the 18th century, the continuous wars between the European empires confirmed Cape Town as being an important strategic fortress in the world. It continued to be a town protected by walls and batteries, and by its natural surroundings.³

³ In the historic maps of Cape Town, the area outside the walls remains unbuilt, the terrain around the Castle is also kept empty.

7. Map showing the early fortifications of Cape Town, roughly between 1660 and 1750. Source: CapeAlmond

8. (page 13). Own illustration. All the fortifications of the Cape Peninsula from 1650 to 1945.
1795 Battle of Muizenberg
1795 Battle of Muizenberg
1805 Battle of Blaaauwberg

Battery / Fortress early Dutch period (1660 - 1750)
Battery / Fortress late Dutch period (1750 - 1806)
Battery English period (1806 - 1910)
Battery Union of South Africa (1910 - 1945)
Industry, trains and harbours

In the beginning of the 19th century the English colony wasn’t evolving very quickly. After Napoleon’s defeat the need for a fortified stronghold in the Cape became less urgent. The military structures the Dutch and the English built from 1750 to 1820 were offered for rent in 1828, except for the Castle. That provided more possibilities for the town to grow. Soon the land between the Castle and the outer French battery in Woodstock, a piece of land that was until then only used for farming, was filled in with new building blocks. In the 1860, half of the District Six or Zonnebloem area was built. At the end of the 19th century, the railway station was built and the track was built on the former main road into town that ran through the Imhoff battery. This battery was demolished to give room for the railway tracks. When Cecil Rhodes took interest in expanding the railway to Cape Town, he opted for demolishing part of the Castle, but a prominent Dutch-Afrikaner woman, Marie Koopmans-de Wet, prevented this from happening (Johnson Barker, 2003, p. 53).

To the west of the valley of Cape Town, the city grew towards the area that is known as Green Point and Sea Point. New docks were built between Green Point and the centre of the city, below the Signal Hill, to accommodate the larger steam ships. The docks are now known as the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront, one of the major tourist attractions in Cape Town. Slowly the land reclamation from the sea started, to accommodate the expanding harbour of Cape Town. The Castle started to lose its position in the fortified landscape and its position at the sea.4

The relation with the mountains around the town must have felt somewhat the same as now. The relationship with the Parade as place for military splendour strengthened. The Grand Parade was, during the English colonisation of the Cape, used as place for actual military parades (Johnson Barker, 2003, p. 53).

4 These assumptions are made according to the historic maps of Cape Town on the next pages.
A racially segregated landscape & car traffic

After the WWII, several discriminatory racial laws caused a racially divided landscape. The only places in the city bowl of Cape Town where Cape Malays or coloured people were allowed to live was in the Bo’ Kaap area on the slopes of Signal Hill, and in District 6. In 1966, the District 6 area was claimed as a residential area for whites only and all the inhabitants, mostly dockworkers, were relocated to the Cape Flats area, about 15 kms away on the plains outside the city. In the 1980s the District 6 area was completely empty, no construction of ‘white’ houses had started, only the campus of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) was built.\(^5\)

The Castle was, because of the racial laws on Group Areas, enclosed by the emptied District 6 area to the south(east), the industrial areas to the east and north and the Parade and the central town to the west. It had become an enclosed island in a metropolitan city.

The introduction of car traffic to the city caused a bypass of entering the city. If you would take the N2 highway to town, you would ‘fly-over’ the railway tracks, float above the Foreshore district on an elevated road and enter town on the Buitengracht. The Castle was no longer the main gateway to town.

\(^5\) More information to be found in Part I of the thesis, the chapter about the current South Africa.
Conclusion

The original reason why the Castle was built in this particular valley, on this place, was because of its strategic position and its healthy position.

The Castle and its position in nature

STRATEGIC POSITION
The Castle has been built on a strategic position in the landscape. In the Cape Peninsula, all the natural valleys or gaps in the landscape were protected or blocked by a fortress, wall or hedge.

From the position of the Castle, enemy ships in the bay could be shot, as well as enemies from the east and the plains of Cape Town. The Castle was built right at the beach, with the access road between the sea and the walls of the Castle.

HEALTHY POSITION
Cape Town itself was positioned in this valley because the availability of water, because of the protection of mountains on almost all sides and because of the fertile grounds. The gardens that were planted right at the beginning of the settlement would provide the town and the passing ships the necessary fresh food and meat.

Developing and influencing the landscape

HARBOR, TOWN AND URBAN AXES
Because the Castle had to have an open field of fire, the area around it could not be developed for the town. The town was built up between the gardens and the sea, more to the west than the Castle. The town developed around a central axis, the Heerengracht, current Adderley Street, the
central axis of the gardens lengthened through the lower part of town. The other axis was Strand Street, which still exists, a broad street that lay almost at the beach. It formed an axis from the Castle to the Signal Hill lime quarry. The jetty which was the welcoming platform for overseas ships was situated next to the Castle, to the ‘inside’ of the town, the northwest side. Before the English period, there was no proper dock where ships could land.

INFLUENCING THE LANDSCAPE
The fortification works of the Cape Peninsula were vast and had great influence on the landscape, especially around the Castle, where the French line was built. Eventually, all the streams in the valley were canalized, either for irrigation or protection. The settlers wanted to control the water streams, which must have felt familiar for the Dutch.

Losing relevance in the landscape
TOWN OVERGROWS CASTLE
After the great war between France and the rest of Europe, and the defeat of Napoleon, the Castle soon lost its relevance as a military defence building for the city. The town grew in the 19th century and eventually the town overgrew the originally open fields around the Castle.

FROM FORTRESS TO MILITARY HQ
The Castle might have lost its relevance as fortress of protection, but the military regiment in the Cape remained stationed in the building. Though the stables and the barracks were placed in other buildings around the (military) parade, the Castle remained part of a military whole.

RELATION WITH SEA AND MOUNTAINS
The coming of larger ships, trains and industry was the reason to reclaim land from the bay. The Foreshore was gradually drained, ending the bond between the Castle and the sea. The bond with the surrounding mountains, never changed.
CASTLE WITHIN A RACIAL SEGREGATED CITY
The Castle is positioned next to District Six, which was a lively multicultural part of the city until it was demolished during the 1970s. Now the plans for this part of town are still very vague, but what is essential is that the Castle lies within an area that has the potential to be a multi-ethnic neighbourhood again.

The Castle should address these people and be friendly to its multi-cultural direct environment (this will become clearer in the next chapter).

CASTLE WITHIN A NEW MUSEUM LANDSCAPE
The Castle nowadays hosts two museums, the South African Military Museum and the Iziko William Fehr collection. Iziko has plans for the future to open a new city museum in the old Standard Bank building at the corner of Adderley St. and Darling St. This museum will be the primary museum of Cape Town, from which the visitors are sent to the secondary museums like for instance the Koopmans-de Wet House, the Slave Lodge, the Natural History Museum and of course, the Castle.

Both in content and in spatial sense, the Castle must be embedded in a safe visiting system of Iziko musea in Cape Town.

THE RELATION WITH THE PUBLIC SPACE
Because of the FIFA World Cup 2010, a lot in the city has changed. Main roads were broadened, the Central Station was refurbished, the taxi buses checked and the public walking routes improved. From the Central Station to the Green Point Stadium, which was of course the main project of the 2010 Cup in Cape Town, a walking route (the fan walk) was constructed. This walking route was attached to the Stadium, the Waterfront, the city centre with the St Georges Mall street and the Greenmarket square, the central square of the town.

The Castle should be better attached to the existing pedestrian routes through town, which were improved for the FIFA World Cup 2010.

THE RELATION WITH THE NATURAL LANDSCAPE
Although I already explained that the relationship with the sea is completely lost, the relationship with the mountains is still very strong.

The (symbolic) relation with the sea and the former main access road into town should be strengthened.
In this chapter I look at the Castle specifically as an object in the city. So does the Castle respond to the city or the other way around, has the city responded to the Castle? As most of the changes to the building were done during the Dutch rule, the emphasis is on that era more than on the centuries after. I will end this chapter with some observations from my own experiences on the situation now, some conclusions and an agenda for the future.

The Castle as object in the city
At first I will explain how the Castle functioned during the Dutch rule and how its position was within its direct environs.

The Castle related to the town

In the previous chapter I explained the importance of the fortifications in the landscape of the Cape Peninsula. The military active function of the Castle caused a field of fire around the Castle. When a siege was at hand, some buildings in town had to be demolished to prevent the enemy from using them as shelters (Johnson Barker, 2003, p. 34). This made the Castle a detached object in town, with the Parade field as only connection to the Heerengracht (Adderley St.), the main axis of town.

The design and building of the Castle

PLANS FOR A NEW CASTLE

As the old fortress built by Jan van Riebeeck was ill located and not strong enough to withstand a siege from the sea, the new fortress was commissioned by Zacharias Wagenaer, the next governor of the Cape. Isbrand Goske, from Cochin (Kochi, India), accompanied by Peter Dombaer, his engineer and master builder, arrived with instructions for the new Castle in 1664. The Castle was built in the style of Vauban (1633 – 1707) and Menno Baron van Coehoorn (1642 – 1704), with sloped walls, wider at the bottom, to divert the impact of cannon balls. With the five points of a star, enemies coming to close to the fortress could be shot in the flanks (Johnson Barker, 2003, p. 17).

BUILDING THE CASTLE

In 1666 the first stone of the Castle’s foundations was placed by Wagenaer. The foundations were 5 metres wide and about 3.5 metres deep, based on a firm stone layer in the ground. About 300 soldiers (mercenaries) of the VOC worked on the Castle, although when they were needed to fight in the colonial overseas wars, they were sent away. Also slaves and captive Khoisan were used for construction works. In 1672, Goske became governor of the Cape and he urged the Castle to be built at quicker pace. He brought artisans and masons with him, along with Dutch bricks, to assist with the final works on the building. In 1674 most of the garrison moved from the old fort to the new one, except for the governor, who still inhabited the stone house of the old fort, that was the only remaining part. In 1676 authority was handed over to governor Bax, who personally helped with the construction, to finish the works. On the 26th of April 1679, the Castle was officially
declared ‘completed’ and the new governor Simon van der Stel was the first governor to move into the new Castle, in October 1680 (Johnson Barker, 2003, pp. 22-34).

MATERIALS
Stones for the Castle were excavated from the quarry at Signal Hill, in the current Waterkant area. Shells used for the mortar were collected at the beaches of Robben Island, but after 20 years of construction, the provisions at Robben Eiland were depleted, forcing the workers to collect shells at Saldanha Bay, 130 kilometers north of Cape Town. The shells were burnt at limekilns, which were constructed in the Castle courtyard. Due to the bad quality of the bricks from the African ground, bricks were imported from the Netherlands (Johnson Barker, 2003, pp. 25-26 & 30).

FUNCTIONS AND USERS
The fortress housed the residence of the governor of the Cape as well as the houses of the second in charge, the secunde, and other officials of the military regiment. During the whole period of Dutch rule in the Cape, the Council of Policy (the government body of the colony) and the Council of Justice were seated in the Castle. It was therefore the centre of the administration of the Cape, complete with a secretariat. It was, like the city hall of Amsterdam at that time, the central meeting place for the bourgeoisie and tradesman. This of course required vast granary storage and wine cellars, for the food provision of guests, the governor and the regiment. It functioned like a small town within a town, complete with a church (Johnson Barker, 2003, pp. 34-42).

FIRST CHANGES
One of the first changes to the building was the changing of the entrance from the seaside to the parade side of the Castle, which was completed in 1684. The bell tower dates from 1697. The second major change to the building was the construction of the 12 metre high shot-proof cross wall in 1685, that would protect half the building when missiles were shot on the Castle from higher grounds (Johnson Barker, 2003, pp. 34-38).
The third change to the building during the Dutch time was the construction of the bakhuis (English: baking house) in the second courtyard of the building. This building created a more private, third courtyard with a pool and a garden in it. Simon van der Stel and his son Willem van der Stel wanted to create a more palace-like interior of the building, a palace within the military walls. In the beginning of the 18th century, some improvements were made to protect the walls of the Castle from the outside. Ravelins were made and a deeper moat was dug (Johnson Barker, 2003, pp. 38-49).

**Trade at the Parade**

The parade became the Castle’s main point of entrance and the connection with the public space of the town. At the beginning of the 18th century, the Parade was only in use as a military field, maybe for training or marching. There was a stream with fresh water running from the Heerengracht and a fountain. The jetty (Dutch: ‘t Hooft) was the place where the ships are embarked, and it was situated next to the gate of the Castle. From halfway the 18th century, warehouses were built at the seaside of the parade, so the parade became more and more a place for goods, trade and storage.¹

**Strengthening the fort**

As explained in the previous chapter, during the 18th century, Cape Town including the whole peninsula was turned into one big fortress, protected by more than 30 batteries, towers, forts and redoubts. In 1743 Gustaf Baron van Imhoff, who visited the Cape, ordered the construction of a new fortress in current Woodstock, fort Knokke. He also ordered the Castle to be linked with the fortress by walls and batteries, which was completed in 1744. The third thing he commenced was the building of the Van Imhoff Battery, at the seaside of the wall, which added 17 cannons to the fortress (Johnson Barker, 2003, pp. 42-49). The main access road into Cape Town ran through the Imhoff Battery, until the construction of the railway in the 19th century.²

When the French came to assist and strengthen the position of Cape Town, roughly in the 1780s, there were extensive plans to double the ravelins around the Castle, but that never happened.³

**Military parade during English reign**

When the English took over the Cape Colony, the Castle wasn’t changed much. Only the walls is the road through the Imhoff Battery, in the direction of current Woodstock.

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¹ These are assumptions based on the historic maps of Cape Town.

² On the historic maps, the only main road that is drawn, is the road through the Imhoff Battery, in the direction of current Woodstock.

³ Based on maps in the archive.
were topped up with brick, which was done in the 1830s. All the governmental functions were moved out of the Castle in 1811, leaving it just for the military to use. To keep up the military appearances, every Sunday evening, parades were held on the Grand Parade, attended by the English governor of the Cape (Johnson Barker, 2003, p. 53).

Slowly the main military functions moved out of the Castle, such as the barracks and the stables. The military buildings were starting to scatter over the town (Preez, 2015).

The struggle of existence

In the second half of the 19th century the pressure on the existence of the Castle was turned up. The English authority tried twice to sell or demolish the Castle, but the Afrikaners still living in Cape Town prevented this from happening. The last one to try to demolish a part of the building was Cecil Rhodes. The railway had to be extended and the Catzenellenbogen and Buuren bastions had to be removed, as well as the complete Imhoff battery. By intervention of Marie Koopmans-de Wet, a prominent woman with Dutch roots, this didn't happen.

19. (left) Unknown painter, Imhoff Battery (circa 1850). In this painting, it can be clearly seen that the Imhoff Battery was located right at the seawater, soon after 1850, the Battery would be destroyed to make way for the railroad (Johnson Barker, 2003).

20. (right) T.D. Ravenscroft, Saturday Morning Sales, Grand Parade (circa 1906). The brand new City Hall with its clock tower prominently in the middle.

Only the Imhoff battery was demolished to give room for the railway (Johnson Barker, 2003, p. 57).

In the course of the 19th century, the Parade was coming towards its current size, because of the construction of the railway and larger buildings like the Standard Bank (1883) and the Volunteer Drill Hall (the current public library) (1884). With the construction of the City Hall (1905), the Castle bell tower was no longer the most prominent eye catcher on the Parade.

Function-wise, the Castle got a boost in 1912, when the Castle became the head quarter of the Union Defence Force No. 1 Military District of the Union of South Africa. During the World Wars the Castle worked as (communicational) headquarters of the military force of the South African Union (Johnson Barker, 2003, pp. 57-58).

The domain of the car

After the defeat of Napoleon, the city of Cape Town overgrew the Castle, in the direction of the Table Bay. The Castle was stripped of the ravelins (except for the one in front of the main gate)

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4 I've found pictures of these large buildings, found the construction years at online catalogues. On the maps the construction of the large buildings and the shrinking of the Parade is also visible.
Maps of the direct environs of the Castle, from 1693 to 2015.

Legenda:
- The Castle of Good Hope
- Water
- Planted trees
- Built space
- Unbuilt space
of the Castle gate and at the east side of the Parade, became more important as a route in and out of town. The construction of the flyover bridge crossing the railway, east of the Castle, concluded the isolation of the Castle as an island within car traffic.5

The Castle in the current Cape Town

The situation of an island in town is up to today the case. Entering the Castle is a disaster if you come walking. When you come by car you can park between Leerdam and Oranje Bastions and walk around the Leerdam Bastion to the front gate, without having to cross a main traffic artery.6

The Castle is one of the main sights of the town when considering tourism. On many maps of the city the Castle is used as main orientation point for the City Bowl.7 When you compare it with another great object in the city, the new Green Point Stadium next to the Waterfront, the difference is that there, the public space leads you (safely) towards the building, whereas to reach the Castle you have to cross a very busy and dangerous road. The public space between the Central Train Station (also a large object in town) and the Green Point Stadium was upgraded because of the 2010 World Cup. The public space between the Castle and the Station and the town centre is relatively outdated.8

When I was visiting Cape Town, I noticed that the Castle is used for quite some public events. With the Freedom Day celebrations (national holiday in SA) the Castle opened up for the public and there was a show of all sorts of cultural groups from Cape Town. Two weeks later a marathon route went past all the important slave places.
in town. The runners went from Strand Street, through the small gate between Nassau and Catzenellenbogen and out through the main gate towards the Slave Lodge. This showed me that there are efforts to open up the object more to public events.

The Castle now hosts two museums, the William Fehr collection of the Iziko Museums and the Military Museum. There is a small restaurant at the Castle and a gift shop supporting these museums. Next to the museums, the SAHRA National Monuments Council occupies a part of the building. The Military Archives, the Military Recruitment offices and the office of the Castle Management Board are also housed in the Castle. There are different rooms in the Castle for hire as (wedding) venue.

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9 Derek Williams, supervisor of the Castle terrain, told me during my stay in 2015.

10 This I experienced during my site visits to the Castle in April and May 2015.

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25. G. Fagan (drawing), Peter Büttgens (annotations and colour), (2010). A drawing which shows which areas of the Castle are reconstructed, the so-called lacunae (Büttgens, 2010).
The new Castle of Good Hope was positioned on a better spot in the valley and on more solid ground than the former Castle. The Castle was built as a Vauban style fortress in the form of a five-pointed star. The Castle was placed at an empty piece of land outside the town, the only connection between the town and the Castle was the main road, which past the Castle. In the course of the 18th century the Castle was extended with new fortification works at the exterior of the building. Succeeding governors made the interior more and more luxurious.

The English inherited a small city palace within the Castle walls. The only major change the English adapted was topping up the walls with a few layers of brick. Under British rule, the Parade in front of the Castle became smaller, due to the coming of the railway, which also caused the demolition of the Imhoff battery at the seaside of the Castle. With the construction of the new town hall the Castle wasn't the most prominent structure at the Parade anymore.

In the 20th century, especially after the Second World War, the Castle became an isolated island in the midst of car traffic. The Strand Street has become one of the most important roads into town from the N2 highway. The connection with the Buitenkant Street, which runs to Oranjezicht, Gardens and Vredehoek is right in front of the Castle gate. This results in the Castle being quite detached from the public space of the town.

Conclusion

Construction of the Castle and relation with town

The new Castle of Good Hope was positioned on a better spot in the valley and on more solid ground than the former Castle. The Castle was built as a Vauban style fortress in the form of a five-pointed star. The Castle was placed at an empty piece of land outside the town, the only connection between the town and the Castle was the main road, which past the Castle. In the course of the 18th century the Castle was extended with new fortification works at the exterior of the building. Succeeding governors made the interior more and more luxurious.

The English inherited a small city palace within the Castle walls. The only major change the English adapted was topping up the walls with a few layers of brick. Under British rule, the Parade in front of the Castle became smaller, due to the coming of the railway, which also caused the demolition of the Imhoff battery at the seaside of the Castle. With the construction of the new town hall the Castle wasn't the most prominent structure at the Parade anymore.

In the 20th century, especially after the Second World War, the Castle became an isolated island in the midst of car traffic. The Strand Street has become one of the most important roads into town from the N2 highway. The connection with the Buitenkant Street, which runs to Oranjezicht, Gardens and Vredehoek is right in front of the Castle gate. This results in the Castle being quite detached from the public space of the town.
Functions of the Castle

During the British and Dutch rule, the Castle was a meeting place for the important figures of town. It was the main residence of the governor during Dutch rule, and it housed the Court of Justice and the Council of Policy. The British turned it more into a regiment place, with war administration as main function.

In the beginning of the 20th century, the building was handed over to the Union Defence Force, who used it more extensively than the British did, especially during the two World Wars. The Castle is still the seat of the regiment of the Western Cape, but the museum and tourist functions are becoming more and more important.

Looking to the future & ambitions for the place

THE CASTLE AS AN ISLAND
The Castle has always been a sole identity in Cape Town, as an island in town. This is both a quality and a threat. A quality because the Castle has created a sort of distance that makes the interior of the courtyard a discovery to cherish. Though, the broadening of the roads, extending them to be major traffic arteries in town, has isolated the Castle island. Especially the main gate is difficult to enter, as there is no safe pedestrian crossing from the Parade. I don't consider this a strong point. I think the Castle should be attached better to the public space around, especially at the front gate (Castle Street), Darling Street (to Adderley Street and Green Market Square) and Strand Street (to Station). It is quite unclear what will happen in District Six, but this used to be a lively area right at the premises of the Castle. Depending on the outcome of these urban renewals, an attachment there could be made as well.

The Castle should be attached better to its public environs. Obvious directions are at Darling Street (District Six ↔ Adderley Street) and Strand Street (towards Station).

A CASTLE WITH NEW FUNCTIONS
The Castle still has a strong military feel around it, which is part of the history of the building, but also can be constraining in some ways. It feels like a monoculture. The Iziko Museum and the restaurant are the only refreshing functions of the Castle. The Castle used to be more of a town in a town, with important governmental functions in it, which made it an exciting venue. The Castle can be more open to new functions.

The Castle of Good Hope should not only house the functions it now houses. There should be room for more exciting and important functions in town.

DETAILING AND RESTORATION
It is difficult to determine the material authenticity of the Castle. What is known, is that restoration architect Gabriel Fagan restored the Castle towards a couple of images of how it could have looked like during its ‘heydays’. The current bakhuis is a complete reconstruction.

Authenticity is not in the current materials of the Castle, which are mostly reconstructed to a certain image of the Castle during the ‘heydays’. This quasi-authenticity is to be respected, but isn’t of great universal heritage value. Alterations can apply in a new design.
Welcome Stranger to this Wondrous Place.
A Place of Friendship and Mental Peace.
Content is Eekek and Tedious time.
When Sad Reflections Ponders no Cheering Comfort.
Gladly the Weary Eye.
As the Incessant Hours Induce Rotation.
Fly.
In this Place a Woman has been and she a Hopeful Plane.
To Repose in with another.
May the Foul and when he returns.
The Hope Snailed and if she Read.
That he will be Punished.
The story of the Castle

Things that cannot be put in maps, in archives or in words are just as important as the tangible things. In this chapter the stories around the Castle are told, and not only the heroic stories but also the messages that the Castle brings and the meaning it has.
A history of impressing and oppressing

Though peaceful trading occurred between the Khoisan and the Dutch, and other Europeans before the Dutch, there were also quarrels and wars between them. The first of these wars occurred about ten years after the coming of the first settlers. The Khoisan only inhabited semi-permanent villages, and by the time they came back to winter near the Table Bay, they found their green herding lands occupied by the Dutch free burghers. The first fortress built along with the planted hedge by Van Riebeeck was meant to prevent an attack from land, not only from the sea. When the second fortress, the Castle of Good Hope, was constructed, 300 workmen (VOC soldiers), imprisoned Khoisan as well as slaves had to work on the construction (Johnson Barker, 2003, p. 25 & 27). In the last phase there were more skilled artisans involved in the construction of the Castle (Johnson Barker, 2003, p. 30). At the very end of construction, all the people, regardless of rank, passing the Castle had to remove soil to dig the moats, so the Castle was constructed by everyone in town (Johnson Barker, 2003, pp. 32-33). The fortress had to be able to attack ships in the bay, as well as attack any enemies from the land side of the fortress (Johnson Barker, 2003, p. 17).

The fortifications and Castle must have been impressive to behold, sending the intrinsic message of “Get out!” On the other hand, the slaves received the same spatial protection from the fortress as the white slave owners did. The fortress and fortifications were walls, scaring enemies away from the settlement and safeguarding the ones inside the settlement.

Torture and prison

During the entire Dutch occupation of the Cape, the Castle was used as a prison and for torture. Before the Slave Lodge was built, the Castle also was home to the slaves that just were imported by the VOC (Johnson Barker, 2003, p. 33). The tour guide in the Castle told me everything about the torture that had been done in this place, whipping, hanging people upside down, quartering bodies of prisoners, crushing thumbs, and chopping off hands. During torturing the accused had to confess, otherwise there would be no sentence or trial. After the torturing, the prisoner was locked up in the room next to the torture chamber. A misunderstanding exists about the Donker Gat (English: Dark Hole), which is thought by many as a torture chamber, but actually was used as gunpowder storage. Slaves and rebels were treated much worse than accused Europeans (Johnson Barker, 2003, pp. 142-147).

During the British wars with the Xhosa and Zulu, important captives were locked up in the cells of the Castle. The cells are still there, with engravings in the wooden doors (Johnson Barker, 2003, pp. 136-139).

Ghost stories

One of the most famous inhabitants of the Castle must have been Lady Anne Barnard, who was living in the Castle during the First English period around 1800. She was the wife of the Colonial Secretary and she was acting ‘First Lady’ of the Cape Colony. In her journal she wrote about the cruelty of the torturing, which was abolished in 1797. According to her, more people had died of torturing in the Castle than people that were given a merciful death penalty (Johnson Barker, 2003, pp. 146-147).

Lady Anne was a beauty, according to her portrait. Some people believe that her spirit lights up the ballroom at night every now and then, filling the room with music and joy, after which it gets dark again and the only thing left of her is the smell of her perfume.
Another lady ghost has been seen at least thrice in the Castle, the grey lady she is called, her last presence being in 1947. But there are more ghost stories around the Castle, the oldest one surviving from the building of the Castle, when there was a mutiny among the workers that had to drag stones from the Signal Hill quarry. The four accused leaders of the mutiny were captured and they had to pick straws telling them who was to live or die. Their four ghosts have been spotted around Leerdam bastion, Strand Street and the Signal Hill quarry.

The tower bell (1697) has a strange habit to ring itself at certain occasions, by the first rondganger (English: time keeper) that hung himself from the bell. The scariest ghost is probably the ghost of Governor Pieter Gijsbert, who was governor between 1727 and 1729. He was a cruel man and when he sentenced someone to death, that person cursed him and he died that same afternoon, now haunting the corridors of the Castle (Johnson Barker, 2003, pp. 117-119).

Social life in and around the Castle

The Castle, as said in the previous chapter, was a small town in Cape Town, with the families of the senior officers, with their wives, children and slaves, living in the rooms of the Castle. Most of the soldiers in the Castle were mercenaries from Holland, the German States or French Huguenots. During the VOC rule, soldiers had to work for 24 serried hours in three days, so they had two days off to work on farms, at one of the workshops in town or even work their own land as free burghers. As interracial marriages were allowed, they must have brought all kind of coloured women with them, as was the case during the whole length of the 18th century. The Castle was a place where slaves, servants and businessmen walked in and out (Johnson Barker, 2003, p. 123), so a multicultural and mixed society, though based on inequality. At the end of the 18th century, the VOC army at the Cape existed of Dutch, German, French and Swiss regiments (Johnson Barker, 2003, pp. 120-124). An edict from 1672 that had to prevent sex between Dutch and slaves was ignored completely (Johnson Barker, 2003, p. 125).

In the English time, the regiment consisted of English and Irish soldiers. This was a more prudent time, where free sexual moral became out of question (Johnson Barker, 2003, p. 125). The Castle was in that sense a family town, full of hard work, with the seat of government in it and the colony’s administration as well as its courthouse. But also the Castle must have been full of interracial love and sex, which caused the large group of coloureds that live in the Cape now. In the interview I had with Heinrich Wolff, Wolff (2015) emphasized on the social life that was attached to the Castle, leaving the military actions of the Castle far behind in the importance for the heritage (Wolff, 2015).

Only during the end of the English rule and the start of the South African Union, the Castle became more an office than a place to live (Johnson Barker, 2003, pp. 53-58).
The Castle in the shadow of apartheid

The Van Riebeeck festival

To celebrate the 300th anniversary of the landing of Jan van Riebeeck in Cape Town in 1952, the government of the Union organized a massive event at the newly drained Foreshore area in Cape Town, between the landing’s place of Jan van Riebeeck at Granger Bay and the Castle of Good Hope. It was a showcase for the apartheid government to see the landing of Van Riebeeck as the start of the cultivation of the country, pretending there was nothing there than some savages, when the Dutch landed the shores (Witz, 2003, pp. 1-9).

Van Riebeeck had gained a lot of popularity, already during the end of the 19th century. In 1804, the coat of arms of Cape Town was presented at the Castle and was carried to the new Town Hall at the Parade, where there was a toast on Van Riebeeck as founding father of the European settlement in the Cape (Witz, 2003, pp. 36-37). In 1938, when the Grote Trek (English: the Great Trek) of the Afrikaner Boere was remembered with a massive march of ox wagons through the whole country and into Namibia, the start was at the Castle of Good Hope (Witz, 2003, p. 50).

The Castle was during the Van Riebeeck fair, in March 1952, the place where the historical art was shown, including portraits of the Van Riebeecks from Holland. Thousands of people from all over South Africa came to see the fair, which was set up similar to the world expos. At the end of the fair, the festivities would end with the landing of the Van Riebeecks on the ship the Dromedaris (Witz, 2003, p. 182).

Right before the landing of Jan van Riebeeck in Cape Town, a mass of 6,000 people protested against the Van Riebeeck festival, with Silas Modiri Molema of the ANC as key speaker (Witz, 2003, pp. 144-146).

The ceremony of the landing was re-enacted at the beach of Granger Bay, after which the ceremony started, of course with a lot of national pride. After the ceremony Jan van Riebeeck and Maria de la Quellerie were escorted to the Castle of Good Hope, their ‘residence’ (Witz, 2003, pp. 86-87). Jan van Riebeeck had never seen this Castle in his entire life, as it was only finished about 20 years after his departure from Cape Town. The rest of the festivities, all sorts of cultural splendour around the themes of 300 year civilization in South Africa, were displayed around the Castle, which was “South Africa’s oldest and most memorable building” (Witz, 2003, p. 105) (cited from minutes of the executive commission for the Van Riebeeck festival, 1950). The whole festival was boycotted by 95% of the non-white population of Cape Town (Witz, 2003, p. 143). Ironically the exhibition about the coloured, or in fact, Malay people, who by then had more privileges compared to black Africans, was housed in the Castle. The objects were not art, but products of their civilization, according to the exhibition (Witz, 2003, pp. 141 & 146-148).

For the ANC, the protests at the Van Riebeeck festival were the first of a long range and long struggle to overcome the problems of apartheid (Witz, 2003, pp. 251-260).


30. Cape Times (1952). Jan van Riebeeck (André Huguenet) and Maria de la Quellerie (Frances Holland) on the Kat balcony during the Van Riebeeck Festival, April 1952 [UCT Libraries], derived from Witz (2003).
The Fagan restoration of the Castle

The restoration done by the architect Gabriel (Gawie) Fagan and his wife Gwen Fagan was already discussed in the previous chapter, but its connotations with apartheid I haven’t explained yet. When Fagan restored the Castle from the 1970s on, he wasn’t aware of the ruling guidelines of heritage conservation at all. He just did what deemed right. This included the ‘cleaning’ of the Castle and reconstructing some important parts of the Castle from Dutch and early English times, as derived from photos in the book of B. Johnson Barker (2003) and as explained in the thesis of P.J. Büttgens (2010). You might even assume that the restoration was in line with the thoughts of the government to create a cleansed view on the history of the country, which should be white only. This doesn’t mean that it was the ideology of Fagan himself, but it means that the apartheid government used the Castle restoration as a way to show the splendour of the colonial architecture, in an almost provocative way.

The restoration by Fagan has caused the Castle to be a very sterile and clean building at the inside, very orderly and strict, without the city life that there once was within the Castle.\(^1\)

Current associations with the Castle\(^2\)

With the Castle housing two museums now, the offices of the military and the national monument authorities, the story of the Castle has become quite predictable. School classes either white, non-white or mixed have field trips to the Castle, there is military presence everywhere and it is nowadays just a place where people work.

In getting to know the Castle management board with Calvyn Gilfellan and Adre Aggenbach I noticed that the new aim for the Castle is to get more visitors and open it up to the local community more. On my first day in Cape Town, there were Freedom Day celebrations, with dances by Khoisan children, marching bands from all different areas in Cape Town, festivities that attracted new visitors to the Castle, people that have no associations at all with the building, that maybe see it for the first time in their lives.

I also heard from Adre that the board had received emails from people in town that really hated the building, who literally wished for a tornado that would demolish the building. They remembered that there was a member of their family that was imprisoned at the Castle. Whether this was true or not doesn’t matter, it is important to understand that not everyone looks at the Castle as a beautiful piece of cultural heritage. It is regarded as a piece of art by the board, who would really like to see the Castle being world heritage, in a collection of Dutch overseas trading stations and fortresses.

In the last week of my trip to Cape Town there was a marathon to commemorate the atrocities of slavery in Cape Town, the Jive Slave Route Challenge, going past all the important slavery places in town, including the Slave Lodge at Adderley St., District Six, the Bo’Kaap and starting at the Castle. This shows that the Castle is also used as an active place for memory and reconciliation, terms that I’ve discussed in the theoretical chapters. But in the sense of memory and reconciliation, the Robben Island is a much more important place for the blacks.\(^3\)

\(1\) Both the restorations and the current use of the Castle made it a quiet and sterile place in my experience.

\(2\) This paragraph is mostly based on personal experiences during the site visit in 2015.

\(3\) In the several encounters I had with black taxi drivers, they all mentioned the importance of Robben Island for them.
A place of atrocities

Especially in the beginning of its existence, the Castle housed slaves and was the place where criminals, runaway slaves, thieves and political captives were imprisoned, tortured and killed. The most horrible things happened within the walls and just outside the walls of the Castle. Some ghosts are said to still haunt the premises of the Castle. The Castle had (and still has) large walls around it that were meant to impress enemies and protect the inhabitants of Cape Town, giving a dual message, a protective message on the inside as well as an offensive one at the outside.

The Castle as the birthplace of the rainbow nation

Though a lot of bad things happened in the Castle, there was an extensive exchange of trade, relationships, love and sex in the Castle, also interracially. The soldiers that were stationed in the Castle originated from different European countries and were allowed a ‘free’ life next to their stationary position, in which they could have wives, children, other work or even their own piece of farming land. This is why you can consider the Castle the start of the mixing between the white European population and the non-white slave and Khoisan population of the town, the birthplace of Cape Town.

Purifying the Castle

During the English period the Castle became more serious. It turned more into an office than a place of the city. In the 20th century, the
Castle was used as a décor for several (white) nationalistic events, of which the Jan van Riebeeck festival in 1952 was the biggest. The Castle was more and more used as a symbol of the start of civilization in South Africa, with the period before 1652 being a dark and savage era. The last restorations, during the apartheid regime, were based on purifying the Castle, stripping it of all ‘noise’ and restoring it to the way it was meant by the white colonists, restoring it as a piece of national cultural history.

The Castle open to all South Africans

In the current South Africa the Castle has lost associative importance. It is only seen as an historical object, with two museums in it that show the history of the building and the military in South Africa. Next to the Robben Island UNESCO site, the Castle has little importance as a place of reconciliation. Though there are reconciliation events organized in the building. And there are people that still see the Castle as a provocative symbol of oppression and rather have it deleted.

DESYMBOLIZING THE CASTLE

The Castle was a place that was bursting with live, and which was the centre of the early Cape Town. Now the Castle has been stripped of all the disturbing elements and turned into an open air museum. The ideology of Fagan to restore the Castle in a certain way was (mis)used by the apartheid government.

The Castle should be provided with a new layer of life, which restores in a way the multicultural hub that it was in Cape Town.

DEALING WITH MEMORY OF ATROCITIES

People have been imprisoned and tortured inside the Castle. The Castle was built up with the help of slavery and was housing slaves in the first years of its existence. The Castle was built by the VOC, a company that openly traded slaves and made profit on them.

The Castle should be a place where these bad things are addressed in an appropriate way, giving space for memory and reconciliation of the oppressive and slavery past.

Looking to the future & ambitions
On the landscape

When the Dutch arrived in the Cape, they found an untouched landscape, only inhabited temporarily by the Khoisan. Soon the landscape was cultivated, the streams canalized and the strategic valleys and gorges protected by a thick hedge or fortifications. A city emerged, with vegetable gardens to provide food for the passing ships, and most importantly, a Castle was built to protect the bay, to keep enemies from the sea and from the land out of the Table Bay. To me, the fortification of the landscape was very dual. On the one hand, the fortifications kept the indigenous people out of the colony. On the other hand they gave protection to the multi-cultural inhabitants of the town. Though the town was fortified to the fullest extent, it was a lively place, where trade and commerce were more important than fighting.

In the 19th century, as widespread education, industry and railway reached Cape Town, the Castle lost its strategic relevance in the landscape. The town overgrew its fortified borders to make place for industry, the harbour and the first suburbs. The town in the 20th century became more and more a segregated city, both functionally and racially, which is a heritage that has to be dealt with until nowadays. The Castle has become an island in a dense, car-dominated city landscape, where there are almost no traces of the old fortifications that were stretched out along the beach and the mountains. The dissonance in this heritage, if you look at it as landscape heritage, is in the disruption of its context. The Castle is no longer part of a fortified landscape, which makes the meaning of

Relating the case study to the theory
the Castle in its current environment somewhat unclear. The Castle has become part of a landscape of museums, which is a great asset. It provides the opportunity to use it as heritage to educate. But the Castle has also became part of a landscape of colonial heritage, which tells a confronting story about the history of oppression in this part of the world. The threat is in the fact that museums are not affordable to every South African and so the heritage is only experienced by the more fortunate, making it heritage for the ‘elite’.

On the object in the city

If you look at how the Castle was built, the military theories and strategies on which it was designed, were determined in Europe, though the locally available building materials and the landscape around the building site determined how the actual building was done. The fortress itself was built to keep out intruders, with the use of high walls with cannons on top. But inside the Castle was softened, painted in an exotic colour and functioning as the bustling governing centre of the colony.

After the arrival of the English, the Castle was deteriorated and becoming less important in its function. It was stripped from all its outer works and reduced to a sole identity in the city. The isolation of the object prevents the direct environment to profit economically from the heritage tourism.

The military administration is still housed in the Castle, along with some office spaces and two museums. The most recent restoration of the Castle was based on the idea of returning it to a fantasized time layer, combining Dutch and English influences.

The dissonance in the Castle as a heritage object in the city lies within the use of the heritage and the prospects for the future. It is not clear what kind of heritage the Castle aims to be. Will it be a museum for educational purposes, a horror castle for the indifferent tourists or a worldwide example of colonial architecture, as UNESCO listed heritage? And who owns the Castle? The different stakeholders all have their own purposes for using the Castle, which don’t always complement each other. Intrinsically, the building has problems with the accessibility, as it was built to keep people out.

On the Story of the Castle

The Castle is an object where the stories make up most of the heritage. To start with, the Castle was built in a time of, as we would call them now, huge human rights violations. Mainly the work on the Castle was done by slaves and sailors of the VOC. But this was also very dual. As it was of the utmost importance that the Castle was finished on very short notice, in times of war, to protect the people of Cape Town, they were expected to aid in the construction works. So the Castle was built, not only on the sweat and blood of slaves, but also by the inhabitants of the town.

When the Castle was in full use, during the rule of the Dutch VOC, the Castle was used for trials and torturing of prisoners. It was also the main office for the navy officers and the governor and his council. So a place for the high class society, but also a place for crooked oppressors and torturers, a place that instilled fear for the ruling colonial power.

During the English rule the Castle became less and less a symbol of colonial power. The importance of this kind of symbol was taken over by the Grand Parade and the Town Hall, which became the new symbols of colonial manifestation of power. In history, the Grand Parade, where the Castle is situated at, has been a major site of importance for South Africa. Especially in the struggle for freedom, the square was a place for big protests against apartheid. Nowadays, the Castle is an important memorial site for the victims of colonial presence and power.

The stories and connotations attached to the Castle are the main reason of the dissonance of the heritage. The deeds that were done, the atrocities that were committed by the VOC and the English empire have left a bigger scar than the military landscape or the fortress as object itself. The events that took place inside the Castle walls created a group of perpetrators and a group of victims. The white, apartheid-supporting inhabitants of South Africa used the Castle as
prestige object to show the greatness of the colonial power. On the other hand, some coloured inhabitants of Cape Town would rather see the Castle teared down to the ground. The mayor of Cape Town sees the Castle as the origin of all the current social problems in the country. That polarisation makes the Castle a striking example of dissonant heritage.
Sources Part II


Reflection on research methodology

In the research, the different chapters I defined were very helpful to define both the context of the case, as the case of the Castle itself. The aim of the research was to define the problem there currently is with colonial heritage in South Africa and to explain to what extent the Castle is an example of this. Besides that I had to define the meaning of this dissonant or contested heritage and what possible problems there could emerge in general. I noticed that the resources related to this subject were quite limited. Only one major literature source was available to describe the phenomenon of dissonant heritage. Luckily, this source was very elaborate and useful to explain the situation.

As I already said, the chapters of the research really helped me to cover the extent of the context of this heritage. At first, to understand ‘dissonant heritage’ as a notion, and secondly, to understand the Castle of Good Hope as a heritage object, embedded in the landscape and in its intangible form. The last chapter of the first part of the dissertation, the current state of South Africa and its recent history, could be extended every month, the times are changing rapidly and the actualities concerning corruption and anti-colonialism are exerting pressure on the socio-economical and political agendas within the country.

The interviews I had with experts in South Africa and in the Netherlands were helpful to a certain extent. There was a sense of nescience on how...
to deal with the opposition against colonial heritage. The overall conclusion was to just let it be, let it go, if the mob wants the heritage out of their sight, it will be removed. But besides this, there was also a certain hope that everything would just turn out fine. Strange things happen with heritage at all times, these are the changes that each heritage object needs to deal with. The only thing you can do as an architect is try to give these feelings a (re)new(ed) expression through architecture.

From research to architecture

To utter this expression of architecture, I had no tools, no prescribed measures that could be applied when considering dissonant heritage. What I tried was to bring new relevance to the colonial architecture, in three main design interventions. The first intervention being a designed theme that I gave to the Good Hope Park, as I named it. That theme is the current democracy of South Africa, which gives a certain identity to the country, although even this theme is nowadays highly contested and the democracy is severely challenged at the moment. In this first intervention I tried to counter these fears of a democracy slipping through the fingers.

The second intervention was the changing of the routing around the Castle, based on the unsafe situation around it and the refurbishment of the train station to the north. This intervention was not really based on the research, although the research did elaborate on the necessity of the addressing of multiple social groups, groups that would now pass by the Castle instead of encountering it. I made the Castle an inevitable building in town. The third intervention was to deepen the experience of the dissonant heritage, to give space for grief, resentment but also joy, love and laughter. Both in the form of a museum, as in the form of functional use of the park, this would widen and deepen the experience of the heritage for multiple social groups, which is necessary to ‘dissolve’ dissonant heritage. In the design for the Island of Confrontation, I have designed a pavilion that expresses the feelings that can be associated with confrontation. I created a ‘beautiful’ space, but when you are in that space, you feel something is out of balance. The images from South Africa and the rest of the world that will be exposed in the building will confront the visitors with the problems in our society and show that there is always hope for a better future, though you might feel uncomfortable at the moment.
My position in society

When I was on my field trip to South Africa I visited the University Campus of UCT in Kirstenbosch, where I told students about my plans to ‘solve’ dissonant heritage and to fight the problems with architecture. One student asked me why I should be the one solving the problems. Why precisely, should a Dutch student come and solve the problems that the Dutch created? He would rather let a Japanese architect make a redesign for the Castle. Back then, I didn’t have an answer, now as a reflection, I can give a two-way answer. At first because I feel very connected with the country, I care about what happens among the students and I follow as much as I can about the country on the news and on Facebook. In the colonial architecture, I see a future of places to meet each other and meet the challenges that followed from the past, I care for the heritage and for its future and the future of South Africa, that’s why I can facilitate that. That is already partly my second answer, that an architect is a facilitator, you make spaces that are used. Especially when it comes to exhibition spaces, city parks and museums, as an architect you can create the canvas that is needed for these expressions, in this case the expressions connected with the past. You should watch out for becoming the artist yourself. The rooms should be filled with expressions from the ones that are, with their culture, connected with the heritage. In the case of the Castle of Good Hope, the whole city is connected with the building in some way, as it was the birthplace of the town.

About Explorelab

I’m really happy with my choice to graduate in Explorelab, as it gave me the opportunity to research the theme of dissonant heritage. In my reflection I hope it is clear enough that the outcome of the research helped me to define the starting points for my design.

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