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“Utopian fantasies of the perfected imperial prospect and fractured images of unresolved ambivalence and unsuppressed resistance”: the Grootte Schuur landscape considered as an imperial dream topography of Cecil John Rhodes, 1890-1929.

(W J T Mitchell *Landscape and Power*, (University of Chicago Press: Chicago & London, 1994) p.10)

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signed by candidate

Signature Removed

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Abbreviations

CA: South African National Archives, Cape Town

CBCM: University of Cape Town Council Building Committee Minutes,
housed in University of Cape Town Administrative Archives

M&A UCT: Manuscripts and Archives library, University of Cape Town

UCT: University of Cape Town

UCTQ: *University of Cape Town Quarterly* periodical

Introduction

Background:

In *White Writing*, J M Coetzee uses the term “dream topography” to explain white settler representations of the South African landscape as “a vast, empty, silent space, older than man, older than the dinosaurs whose bones lie bedded in its rocks [*sic*], and destined to be vast, empty and unchanged long after man has passed from its face”.¹ The essence of dream topography is to read the landscape in a particular way, which is not the only possible reading, but it is presented in such a way that it comes to be seen *as how it really is*. Subsequently, as people come to accept this representation as real, their response to, and interaction with this landscape is directed appropriately. The set of ideas that form such a perception of the African landscape, those ideas of European colonialism and British imperialism that imagine Africa as empty, are materialised on the landscape. The landscape becomes a metonymy for a set of “big ideas” that can, retrospectively at least, be read and examined.² Reading landscapes and topographies is so interesting because the embedded ideas are tacit; we often do not realise that a landscape has been carefully structured around big ideas that guide our thoughts to a particular reading of the landscape. Instead, we accept it as the only reading that there might be and so are not even aware that we are in fact reading the landscape. Rather, we assume that we are appreciating it for what it is. The more “complex sign systems”, carefully planned sight lines and architectural arrangements that determine *how we experience the landscape* remain unspoken, unacknowledged.³

The Groote Schuur landscape, probably more than anywhere else in South Africa, is a truly hybrid landscape. Many sets of big ideas were at play on this landscape between 1890 and 1929. At the end of the nineteenth century, Cecil Rhodes brought ideas of paternalism, imperialism and empire to the Estate and notions of creating a European space in Africa; Groote Schuur would be a meeting point where Africa and Europe would fuse in the same frame, where the wildness of Africa and the empire would energise the classicism of European civilisation. The idea of Britain in

¹ J. M. Coetzee, *White Writing: on the culture of letters in South Africa*, (Yale University Press: London, 1988) p.7

² Nick Shepherd & David Van Reybrouck, ‘British Lions in Wild Africa; First Thoughts on the site of the Groote Schuur Zoo’, Discussion paper for World Archaeological Congress, Washington D.C., 25 June 2003

³ David Bunn, ‘White Sepulchres: On the Reluctance of Monuments’, H. Judin & I. Vladislavic (eds.), *Blank Architecture, Apartheid and After*, (NAI Publishers, Rotterdam, 1998), C4

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Africa perhaps found its most expressive form in the establishment of the European styled University of Cape Town on the slopes of a distinctly African mountain. As W J T Mitchell argues, landscape should be “seen more profitably as something like the dreamwork of Imperialism, unfolding its own movement in time and space from a central point of origin and folding back on itself to disclose both utopian fantasies of the perfected imperial prospect and fractured images of unresolved ambivalence and unsuppressed resistance”.⁴

Furthermore, this landscape is complicated by the dynamic shifts and changes that occurred in social and political thought during this period. Ideas on paternalism, of Britain having a pastoral role in Africa, were increasingly overshadowed by ideas of indirect rule and nationalism after Union in 1910 and then by the beginnings of ideas on absolute racial separation.⁵ A sense of trusteeship was increasingly supplanted by ideas of partnership between coloniser and colonised. These contestations are all played out on the landscape, just as they were in other fields and are complicated further by the enduring legacy of Rhodes.

Intention:

In this mini dissertation I will examine in detail four elements of the Groote Schuur Estate to see how these “big ideas” of dream topographies are played out on this specific landscape. 1890 is a natural starting point for my project since this was the year in which Rhodes took up permanent residency at Groote Schuur, acquired property that extended from “Mowbray southwards to Constantia” and began shaping the landscape according to his will.⁶ However, I have extended my study beyond the year of Rhodes’ death in 1902, to 1929. This later date was the year that the University of Cape Town moved into its new Groote Schuur campus, and celebrated its centenary anniversary here. The event was seen as marking the conclusion of one of Rhodes’ earlier dreams;

⁴ W J T Mitchell, “Imperial Landscapes”, in Mitchell (ed.), *Landscape and Power*, (University of Chicago Press: Chicago & London, 1994) pp.5-34 at p.10

⁵ Paul Maylam, *The Cult of Rhodes* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2005) p.61

⁶ Phillida Brooke Simons, *Groote Schuur: Great Granary to Stately Home*, (Fernwood Press, Vlaeberg, 1996) p.15

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the founding of a “teaching University in the Cape Colony...under the shadow of Table Mountain”.⁷ The University campus is the most recent site that I focus upon.

There are difficulties associated with these date brackets as a significant portion of the period lies outside Rhodes’ lifetime. Thus, I am left with the issue of legacies. The later zoos, the Memorial and the University were all constructed after his death yet, they are all projects that were conceived, albeit more vaguely in some cases than others, during his lifetime. Perhaps the best way to deal with this is to consider the Groote Schuur landscape as Rhodes’ legacy, or a legacy to Rhodes. Provisions are made in Rhodes’ Will for the construction of new buildings on the landscape, so long as they were not for private residences and were uniform in style with that which he had cultivated on the Estate.⁸ However, there may be some disparity between how people interpreted his documented Will, and his will or intention for the landscape. The issue of Rhodes’ legacy becomes particularly complex as the period immediately following his death saw such dramatic shifts in terms of social and political concepts. Rhodes’ ideas of paternalism were overshadowed by ideas of indirect rule, nationalism and contestations that eventually laid the foundations for apartheid.⁹ His legacy for the nation, the Groote Schuur Estate, was not isolated from these dynamic shifts. Rather, these shifts fundamentally affected interpretations of the legacy of Rhodes in South Africa and determined if indeed there was even a place for this legacy.

I have chosen four elements of the Groote Schuur Estate that I feel are the most interesting and exemplary in terms of examining Groote Schuur as a hybrid landscape where Europe and Africa met and collided with the British Empire under the figure of Cecil Rhodes in 1890, where Groote Schuur became a “contact zone...a space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, racial inequality and intractable conflict”.¹⁰ Furthermore, the floral landscape, the zoo, the Memorial and the University site are all places where we might read Rhodes’ will, but simultaneously appreciate that this landscape was neither

⁷ Cecil Rhodes, Speech at Annual Congress of the Afrikaner Bond, 30 March 1891 in *Cape Times*, 1 October 1929

⁸ CA: PWD, vol.2/2/29, ref.B124/9, Rhodes Final Will, 1 July 1899

⁹ John Iliffe, *Africans: The history of a continent* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) p.200

¹⁰ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: travel writing and transculturation* (Routledge: London, 1992) p.6

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isolated nor sheltered from changing events and ideas in South Africa during this period, which also had an impact on how these legacies were interpreted and evolved. There are other elements of the Estate, such as the old summerhouse and particularly the Groote Schuur house that I am not including in my study. This is not because these elements cannot be read as part of a constructed landscape, or because they are insignificant. Rather, I feel that they are less specifically connected with the figure of Rhodes than the selected sites or, as is the case with the homestead, they have previously enjoyed more thorough investigation. The house itself has previously been the subject of several studies concerned with the political life of South Africa's premiers and the other elements of the Estate on which I write have been somewhat overshadowed. Yet, they do seem to be equally indicative in terms of understanding the Groote Schuur landscape as a specifically Rhodesian dream topography.

Chapter outline:

My project begins with what I hope is a thorough literature review of all the works that are connected with this subject, which precede my own study and to which I am indebted. I précis the works that are most relevant to my particular study, and make reference to those books and articles that also deal with figuring African landscapes, the Cape-to-Cairo metaphor, imagining Table Mountain, reading architecture, and Cecil Rhodes. This review of secondary material is followed by my methodology chapter, which is concerned with the process of accumulating primary material. Essentially, it is the primary material that I found in the archive that shaped my thesis because the material available simultaneously enabled and limited what I could really study. As well as explaining which archives I entered and which collections I used, I decided to make the chapter quite reflexive and look at the wider complexities involved in dealing with the archive and archival research in history. The same ideas that shaped readings of the Groote Schuur landscape also shaped how the archive was formed, what was included in it and, perhaps most importantly, what is left out. The archive itself becomes another site to study as well as being the site where I conducted my study.

The results of my project comprise the final four chapters. Each chapter deals with one specific site: flora; the zoo; Rhodes Memorial; and the University site. This order is in part determined

chronologically. Changes were made to the floral landscape with immediate effect after Rhodes acquired Grootte Schuur and plans for the construction of the first lion house and zoo were drawn up shortly after. The Memorial was completed in 1912, several years later than these earlier projects, and construction of the University campus after this. However, there are other reasons for choosing this order of chapters. Far less has been written about the floral landscape and the zoo, than the Memorial and University on the Grootte Schuur Estate. It was certainly more challenging to find secondary literature for the first two of these chapters, probably because archival material on these subjects was less easily accessible. As such, it seems more interesting to begin with these elements and offer a reading of them in a similar way to the Memorial and University, where readings, however tentative, have been offered before. I want to keep the idea that these elements are connected to one another and work together to form the wider landscape of Grootte Schuur at the forefront of the reader's mind. For this reason too I chose to open this section with a chapter on flora since this element of the landscape is present at every site on the Estate. I hope that by beginning with this chapter, I will be able to maintain this idea throughout the following studies, before drawing them all together once more in the conclusion.

I have included two maps on the following pages as part of this introduction. They show the wider landscape of Grootte Schuur, set against Table Mountain. The first shows the Grootte Schuur Estate in 1903, the year after Rhodes' death. Here we can see that a zoo has been tentatively established but there is no sign of the Memorial and University that were constructed in the following years. These are elements that we can see in the map of Cape Town, drawn in 1930 at the end of this period. By comparing these plans we are able to appreciate the changes that were wrought on this topography between 1890 and 1929 and that can be read as indicative of wider "big ideas" that were being played out in Africa during this period.¹¹ The flora, the zoo, the Memorial and the University must all be considered as part of the wider landscape that is shown in these maps.

¹¹ Shepherd & Van Reybrouck, p.4

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Map 1. CA: M3/805 Plan of Grootte Schuur showing Forest Lands, 12 February 1903 6



Map 2. CA: M3/210, Map of Cape Town drawn in Surveyor General Office, 1930

Literature Review

Figuring African Landscapes:

My interest in J. M. Coetzee's work, *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa*, is in his notion of "dream topography"(6). A dream topography is essentially an imagined, idealised landscape, rather than the 'real' topography. Coetzee argues that such a device was employed by European Imperialists when (re)presenting Africa to an audience at home. Consequently, Africa became 'known' to Europeans through a series of established tropes. According to Coetzee, two dream topographies dominated in white writing on South African landscape. One, projected by the South African pastoralist, is of "a network of boundaries crisscrossing the surface of the land, marking off thousands of farms, each a separate kingdom ruled over by a benign patriarch with, beneath him, a pyramid of contented and industrious children, grandchildren, and serfs"(6). However, it is the "rival dream topography" that was more familiar with Imperial British explorers and travellers in Africa (7). In these accounts, South Africa is perceived as "a vast, empty, silent space, older than man, older than the dinosaurs whose bones lie bedded in its rocks, and destined to be vast, empty, and unchanged long after man has passed from its face" (7). Whereas the pastoral landscape can be "humanized when inscribed by hand and plough", "it is by no means clear" to other dream topographers "that the ploughshare is enough to break the resistance of Africa"(7). Of course, as Coetzee illuminates, this is not the only possible representation of the African landscape but instead meets the Imperialists' desire to see it as such. In "all the poetry commemorating meetings with the silence and emptiness of Africa...it is hard not to read a certain historical will to see as silent and empty a land that has been, if not full of human figures, not empty of them either; that is arid and infertile perhaps, but not inhospitable to human life and certainly not uninhabited (177)".¹²

In *Orientalism* Edward Said also explores the idea of imaginative geographical spaces. Drawing imaginative boundaries that are often "dramatic" (73) is a further manifestation of distinguishing between the 'self' and the 'other' that occupies Said attention in this study.

¹² J. M. Coetzee, *White Writing: on the culture of letters in South Africa*, (Yale University Press: London, 1988)

Imaginative geographies are part of the “universal practice of designating in one’s mind a familiar space which is ‘ours’ and an unfamiliar space beyond ‘ours’ which is ‘theirs’...[and] making geographical distinctions that *can be* entirely arbitrary” because “imaginative geography...does not require that the barbarians acknowledge the distinction” (54). These “geographic boundaries accompany the social, ethnic, and cultural ones in expected ways” (54). While it is true that geographical and scientific knowledge of the world increased manifold in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, this is “not to say...that what they know has effectively dispelled the imaginative geography and historical knowledge” (55). Subsequently, Said argues, “The Orient was something more than what was empirically known about it” (55) and, presumably, so was ‘Africa’ as Coetzee discusses. Although these boundaries are often arbitrary and imaginative, they are so entrenched in the imagination that they become the paradox of a “fictional reality” (54). Hence, imaginative geography “legitimizes a vocabulary, a universe of representative discourse peculiar to the discussion and understanding” (71).¹³

Mary Louise Pratt explores the idea of boundaries and “contact zones” in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (6). Her frame of reference is slightly different from Said’s in that it is the actual boundary that interests her, rather than the two worlds that the arbitrary boundary seems to separate. For Pratt, this meeting place, or contact zone, is “a space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, racial inequality and intractable conflict” (6). Cape Town, Table Mountain and Groote Schuur are all ‘contact zones’ where Europeans believed that they ‘met’ Africa for the first time and encountered the ‘other’ who inhabited the unknown territory beyond. Certainly, as Pratt argues, the “Imperial Metropolis tends to understand itself as determining the periphery” (6). Yet, Pratt acknowledges that the “contact zone” is often synonymous with the “colonial frontier”, but refrains from using this term so as to avoid the solely “European expansionist perspective” (7). In this argument then there is space for the African response to be recognised. She applies the ethnographic term “transculturation” to this phenomenon, which emphasises the varying responses of a subordinated culture to domination (6). If we understand the space occupied by Groote Schuur Estate as a contact zone, then we might view Rhode’s estate as an attempt to impose a dominant imperial culture on the Table

¹³ Edward Said, *Orientalism*. (Penguin Books: London, 2003)

Mountain slopes but simultaneously allow ourselves space to explore other possible representations of the same landscape. Pratt's suggestion is not necessarily that the Imperial culture fails to dominate completely at the contact zone but instead that the indigenous cultures succeed in determining "to varying extents what they absorb into their own" (6).¹⁴

The collection of Essays, *Landscape and Power*, edited by W J T Mitchell is more generally concerned with "landscape as an allegory of psychological or ideological themes" (1) that includes Imperialism. Mitchell's suggestion is that all "natural features such as trees, stones, water, animals and dwellings can be read as symbols...[and] can be linked with generic and narrative typologies"(1). Instead of asking simply what landscape "is" or "means", these works propose examining "what [landscape] does, how it works as a cultural practice"(1).¹⁵ In his own essay, "Imperial landscapes", Mitchell argues that landscape should be "seen more profitably as something like the dreamwork of Imperialism, unfolding its own movement in time and space from a central point of origin and folding back on itself to disclose both utopian fantasies of the perfected imperial prospect and fractured images of unresolved ambivalence and unsuppressed resistance" (10). Certainly, this idea can be applied to the constructed landscape of Groote Schuur Estate. Furthermore, he argues that landscape is a "medium of exchange between the human and the natural, the self and the other" (5).¹⁶ David Bunn's essay, "Our Wattled Cot: Mercantile and Domestic Space in Thomas Pringle's African Landscapes", that appears in this collection is more specific to Africa. His argument, like Said and Pratt, is that "the African Landscape is conceived as a liminal zone between the self and savagery" but Bunn believes that "for an increasingly jaded urban audience, colonial landscapes, and the South African landscape in particular came to be perceived as repositories of romantic subject matter" (128). Perhaps his most pertinent suggestion, and one that can surely be applied to Rhodes' estate, is that "what we often find in the colonial landscape is an exaggerated form of *anadisis*, or 'propping', of one landscape paradigm upon

¹⁴ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: travel writing and transculturation* (Routledge: London, 1992)

¹⁵ W J T Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, (University of Chicago Press: Chicago & London, 1994)

¹⁶ Mitchell, "Imperial Landscapes", in Mitchell (ed.), *Landscape and Power*, (University of Chicago Press: Chicago & London, 1994) pp.5-34

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another" (144).¹⁷ European, Classical and African landscapes are propped up on top of one another on Rhodes' Estate, although not always comfortably so.

Hermann Wittenberg also writes extensively about the relationship between Imperialism and Africa's landscape in his thesis *The Sublime, Imperialism and the African Landscape*. My interest is particularly in the attention he pays to mountainous topographies. Although his specific case study is of the Ruwenzori Mountains in Uganda, much of the theory is applicable to the Table Mountain range. Wittenberg highlights how "Colonial control and exercise of power, and the potential for civilisational progress, is mapped over an altitudinally differentiated terrain in which the high ground is claimed as a natural domain for colonial settlement" (7). African mountains are "significant ideological location[s] because they constitute a convenient site through which an ideology of incommensurable racial difference could be articulated in aesthetic terms"(77). Moreover, he demonstrates how "climbing mountains is not only suggestive of an elite viewpoint, but, that the imaginative and physical possession of mountains in the racially contested landscape of Southern Africa is expressive of colonial power and civilisational superiority" (115).

Cape to Cairo:

Wittenberg also discusses the "transcontinental trope" of the "Cape to Cairo connection which sought to imaginatively bridge the a-historical terrain of Africa with a transcontinental meaning-making structure to give coherence to the West's civilisational and imperial projects on the continent" (88). Cecil Rhodes is one of the most renowned proponents of this very idea and Wittenberg makes mention of Herbert Baker's suggestive glyph that represents "Rhodes Way from Cape to Cairo" (88). Rhodes' "beloved Cape, the southern-most point in the Cape-to-Cairo axis" (88) is obviously represented here and his Estate on Table Mountain played a prominent role in this element of his imagination.¹⁸

¹⁷ David Bunn, "Our Watted Cot: Mercantile and Domestic Space in Thomas Pringle's African Landscapes", in Mitchell (ed.), *Landscape and Power*, (University of Chicago Press: Chicago & London, 1994) pp.127-174

¹⁸ Hermann Wittenberg, *The Sublime, Imperialism and the African Landscape*, (Thesis D.Litt. (English) University of the Western Cape, 2004)

Peter Merrington further explores this Cape to Cairo trope in his article "A Staggered Orientalism: The Cape to Cairo Imaginary". He declares that the "essay's emphasis [is] on an imagined continent that was made to serve as an imperial sign system, a geographical space that was understood to be mysterious, a *temenos* or shrine, a sequence of monuments (natural or man made) from the Gizeh plateau to the Ruwenzori, to Great Zimbabwe and Cecil Rhodes's Matopos, the Union buildings, and the numinous natural acropolis of Table Mountain" (324). The Groote Schuur estate is part of this sign system and the careful arrangement of the landscape cannot be divorced from this Imperial idea that loomed so large in the imagination. Merrington's study seeks to draw attention to the Imperial "interpretation of the Cape as...Mediterranean" (327). This notion was (and still is), he acknowledges, often expressed through somewhat "frivolous" (330) means but "the most frivolous formation is blended with the colossal scale of Rhodes's imperial dream, as if the idea were thereby in some way domesticated, rendered self evident or inevitably part of the scheme of things" (331). Every element on Rhodes' estate is orientated to look northward towards Cairo, making it a most physical manifestation of this imagined connection as "both a prospect...and prospectus for projected schemes" (359).¹⁹ Lois A. C. Raphael, *The Cape to Cairo Dream: A Study in British Imperialism* considers similar themes.

The Cape-to Cairo trope did not die with Rhodes but came to be seen as a natural route for 'exploring' and imagining 'Africa'. Hence, a body of Colonial travel literature was written recording journeys that began at one extreme of the Continent and ended at the other: M. L. Belcher, *Cape to Cowley via Cairo in a light car*, Stella Court Treatt, *Cape to Cairo: The record of a historic motor journey*; E. S. Grogan and A. H. Sharpe, *From the Cape to Cairo*; Reginald Reynolds, *Beware of Africans: a pilgrimage from Cairo to the Cape*; Leo Weinthal, *The Cape to Cairo route: special supplement to Illustrated London news*; and Robert Williams, "The Cape to Cairo Railway" in *Journal of the Royal African Society* (1921) vol.20. The Cape to Cairo idea continues to loom large in today's imagination, prompting the more recent publications of *Cape to Cairo: one family's adventure along the waterways of Africa* by Kingsley Holgate in 2002 and *Dark Star Safari* by Paul Theroux that documents his overland trip along this route as recently as 2003.

¹⁹ Peter Merrington, "A Staggered Orientalism: The Cape to Cairo Imaginary" in *Poetics Today* (2001) Vol.22 pp.323-364

Imagining Table Mountain:

The Groote Schuur Estate is part of the wider topography of Table Mountain, which is of course a formidable landmark on its own and thus exerts a real influence over any landscape constructed in close proximity to it. Nicholas Vergunst has compiled the most extensive study of Table Mountain as a cultural landscape in *Hoerikwaggo: Images of Table Mountain*.²⁰ This catalogue is a collection and commentary of works of art depicting the mountain through the centuries that were displayed in an exhibition at the South African National Gallery between 2000 and 2001. Vergunst draws attention to how “images of the mountain signify changing relations and attitudes toward the Cape over the past five centuries” (13). There is no single encompassing ‘reading’ of Table Mountain. Instead, it is “a cultural palimpsest- a multi-layered, polyvocal symbol that ‘speaks’ through various people in different ways with astonishing clarity, variety and diversity” (13). As a landscape, Table Mountain “is always inclusive of man and nature, of the beholder and the beheld” (19). This understanding of landscape is interesting in terms of exploring how Rhodes interacted with nature on the Estate lands as both the beholder and the beheld. Like Pratt and Said, Vergunst writes about the “notion of the horizon-as-frontier [that] enabled the traveller-settler to distinguish between *home* and *the unknown*. For them the frontier was also the perceived limit of someone else’s world” (42). Table Mountain is, then, at once the arbitrary boundary and contact zone, which has cultural implications for a topography built on its slopes. In Imperial times however, Vergunst highlights how “Table Mountain was usually depicted as the central feature of a tamed and civilised landscape, echoing in its painted form or drawn contours the ordered streets of the expanding town below its ramparts” (73).²¹ Certainly, Rhodes’ choice of location cannot have been incidental to such an understanding of the mountain.

Vergunst’s work draws quite heavily on Sam Fuller’s study, *Continuity and Change in the cultural landscape of Table Mountain*. Fuller demonstrates how “there was a preconceived framework for interpreting and perceiving all that was African, long before the Cape was first discovered” (32) and, as Said asserts, this imaginative knowledge was not dispelled after contact was made, but lingered on through the succeeding centuries. Indeed, “The Cape and the awesome

²⁰ Hoerikwaggo is the Khoi name for the mountain, which is translated as ‘mountain of the sea’.

²¹ Nicholas Vergunst, *Hoerikwaggo: Images of Table Mountain*, (South African National Gallery, iziko exhibition, November 2000- April 2001)

spectacle of Table Mountain, was the first real point of contact for Europeans with the unknown Southern Africa, a foothold established with a view to discovering the region's uncharted interior" (36). Consequently great meaning was attached to the Mountain. This location ensured that it became perceived as a "gate" (47) to these unknown lands when viewed from the North face. However, Rhodes' site was on the other side of this gate and from here he could 'access' the African interior. Fuller argues that in spite of all the mystery that shrouded the Cape and the Mountain whose "height, abrupt and sheer face...dramatic plateau coupled with luscious vegetation, [was] truly alien in comparison to...home landscapes" (56), by the end of the nineteenth century "the mountain had essentially been tamed by the Imperial powers of Europe" through exploration in the name of science and leisure (73). The most popular means of taming the mountain was by means of almost literally propping a European landscape on top of this; "the most direct attempts at familiarisation involved the planting of European trees and flower gardens on and around the mountain" (78). Yet, in spite of these efforts to tame and shape the mountain, it "remained a wholly African symbol of resistance, in the heart of [a] fledgling civilisation" (81).²² This was the reality of the landscape upon which Rhodes sought to realise his own dream topography and revive Classical European civilisation.

Lance van Sittert's article "The bourgeoisie eye aloft: Table Mountain in the Anglo-urban middle class imagination, c.1891-1952" also refers to the difficulties inherent in reading the visual imagery of Table Mountain, which is dominated by the hegemonic Imperialist gaze. His interest is also in the process by which Table Mountain came to be known to Europeans in this period, as through leisure and science as "Table Mountain came to be imagined from the late eighteenth century as a site of scientific and romantic pilgrimage for Cape Town's itinerant intellectuals and administrative elite" (163). Perhaps most interesting is his assertion that after 1910 there was "a growing concern over felling of silver trees...indigenous counterpart to European oak" in a "local arboreal allegory of colonialism" (174).²³

²²Sam Fuller, *Continuity and Change in the Cultural Landscape of Table Mountain*, (Thesis MSc., Dept. of Environmental and Geographical sciences, UCT, 1999, Unpublished)

²³ Lance Van Sittert, "The Bourgeoisie eye aloft: Table Mountain in the Anglo-urban middle class imagination, c.1891-1952" in *Kronos*, vol. 29 (2003) pp.161-190

Louise Green has carried out several studies that explore this relationship between nature and culture that is played out on the slopes of Table Mountain on the Groote Schuur Estate. In her seminar paper “Alternatives at the end of nature: reimagining land in twenty-first century South Africa” she explains “the curious aspect of ‘nature’ which is that it appears to attain a kind of hyper visibility in the domain of culture at the same time as the actual referent for that term is becoming harder and harder to locate” (1). Nature enters culture as a “fragile and enigmatic concept” capable of “chang[ing] its shape to fit every different context and yet to always leave a remainder” (3). Between 1890 and 1930, “the term ‘nature’ is defined, redefined in relation to the colonial project, the ‘opening up of wild regions of Africa and Asia’, and the resulting zoological gardens with their barred cages are concrete manifestations of a particular relationship to nature...nature retains the power to disturb” (4).²⁴ Such a perception of nature shaped Rhodes’ interaction with this aspect on his grounds and perhaps limited the totality of his vision whilst simultaneously shaping it. In her paper *Disciplining the Landscape: Table Mountain and the production of Nature in the twentieth century*, Green deals more specifically with the Groote Schuur landscape. This is, she explains, an example of the “conscious and deliberate transformation of nature into landscape” (2). However, whilst Groote Schuur is most definitely a constructed landscape, it “represents the unspoiled landscape far away from the dark side of the production of wealth that makes it possible- the world of the mines, work, exploited black labour and devious business deals” (4). In this sense it is a dream topography, which allows only one version of itself to be overtly read. As a landscape, Green recognises that it was not only worked over so that it was possible to walk or ride through, but “was also arranged for the gaze” (4). She also pays attention to the presence of a zoo on the site, which, she argues, is symptomatic of the position nature came to occupy in society as “the animals, no longer threatening and different, became merely interesting” (6).²⁵

Another way in which Table Mountain has been imagined is as a set of crisscrossing footpaths and peaks. By either hiking or climbing these peaks, we might come to ‘know’ Table Mountain in this way. This idea has provoked the publication of several hiking and mountaineering guides to Table Mountain including: Jose Burman, *A peak to climb : the story of South African mountaineering*

²⁴ Louise Green, *Alternatives at the end of nature: reimagining land in twenty first century South Africa*, Seminar delivered at CAS, UCT, 18 May 2005

²⁵ Louise Green, *Disciplining the Landscape: Table Mountain and the Production of Nature in the twentieth century*, Seminar delivered at CAS, UCT, 2005

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(Cape Town : C. Struik, 1966); Edward George Pells, *A short history of the University of Cape Town Mountain and Ski Club, 1933-1952* [Cape Town : s.n., 1952]; B. M. Quail, *Table Mountain guide : walks and easy climbs on Table Mountain, Devil's Peak and Lion's Head* (Cape Town : Cape Town section of the Mountain Club of South Africa, 1983); *Climbs on Table Mountain* (Cape Town : Mountain Club of South Africa, 1952) ; *Table mountain climbs: a classified list of routes.* (Cape Town : Mountain Club of South Africa, 1932); and the *Journal of the Mountain Club of South Africa* (Cape Town : The Club, 1894-). However, even this reading of the mountain has been racialised in the past since the Mountain Club of South Africa admitted only white members until the 1980s, suggesting that only this group was allowed to 'know' the mountain.

Reading Architecture: Groote Schuur

In "Whited Sepulchres: On the Reluctance of Monuments", David Bunn explores how such a "fantastical element in colonial representation" (6) is translated in architecture. He pays attention to Herbert Baker's constructions for Rhodes and in particular to Rhodes' Memorial that stands on the Groote Schuur Estate. Every element of the Memorial, from the brooding bust to the bronzed lions, is part of a more complex sign system and "evidence of the force required to disseminate [Rhodes'] vision" (7). The effect is made more dramatic for its location on the slopes of Table Mountain as "this monument commands a spectacular view: in the metaphor of an older, English landscape tradition, class privilege is expressed in the excursive eye looking benevolently down upon a picturesque scene" (7).²⁶ This careful arrangement of architecture that is drawn together through a series of sight lines is further discussed by Hermann Wittenberg in "Rhodes Memorial: Imperial Aesthetics & the Politics of Prospect". His idea is that carefully constructed sites on the Groote Schuur Estate are inextricably linked together by the underlying presence of Cecil Rhodes in one form or another and are drawn into one sight line in the African landscape by Devil's Peak Mountain which naturally draws the eye upwards to a focal point. The overall effect is that of "a European space in Africa", just as Rhodes desired (13).²⁷ Wittenberg's published article "Rhodes Memorial: On the Aesthetics and Politics of Colonial Culture" in L. Nas and L. Marx (eds.), *Inter*

²⁶ David Bunn, 'White Sepulchres: On the Reluctance of Monuments', H. Judin & I. Vladislavic (eds.), *Blank Architecture, Apartheid and After*, (NAI Publishers, Rotterdam, 1998), C4

²⁷ Hermann Wittenberg, 'Rhodes Memorial: Imperial Aesthetics & the Politics of Prospect', Address delivered to centre for African Studies, Oppenheimer Institution Building, Cape Town, 20 March 1996

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Action 2, is concerned with similar detail. David Van Reybrouk and Nick Shepherd also explore similar ideas in “British Lions in Wild Africa; First Thoughts on the site of the Groote Schuur Zoo”. In consciously and carefully placing the various architectural elements of the Estate within this line of sight, a connected set of “big ideas” might be investigated.²⁸

More recent literature on monuments in South Africa tends to focus on the post apartheid period, such as Annie Coombes *History after apartheid: visual culture and public memory in democratic South Africa* (2003) and the Government Publication, *Freedom Park: Garden of Remembrance* (2004). However, literature that deals with the topic over a more extensive time scale include; Denis Hatfield, *Some South African Monuments*; ICOMOS, *Monuments and Sites, South Africa*; J.J. Oberholster, *The historical monuments of South Africa*; and C. Van Riet Lowe, *The Monuments of South Africa*.

The presence of the zoo on the Groote Schuur Estate has provoked some limited academic interest, resulting in Shepherd and Van Reybrouk’s paper mentioned above. The wider literature on Zoo Studies, such as Bob Murray and Garry Marvin’s *Zoo Culture*²⁹ and Cornelius Holtorf and Van Reybrouk’s “Towards an Archaeology of Zoos”, is of further use in examining how ideas might be played out within such a place.³⁰ Their focus is on both sight lines and setting, which affect the appearance and location of cages and walkways. Other works that deal with the zoo site include: Sofia Åkerberg, “Nature Simplified: the illusion of nature in zoos”³¹ and *Knowledge and Pleasure at Regent’s Park: The Gardens of the Zoological Society of London During the Nineteenth Century*; E. Baratay and E. Hardouin- Fugier, *Zoo: A History of Zoological Gardens in the West*; V. Buchli and G. Lucas, *Archaeologies of the Contemporary Past*; Sarah Cross, “Republican Values on the African Plains: Zoo landscapes in Dublin and Accra”³²; N. Rothfels,

²⁸ Nick Shepherd & David Van Reybrouk, ‘British Lions in Wild Africa; First Thoughts on the site of the Groote Schuur Zoo’, Discussion paper for World Archaeological Congress, Washington D.C., 25 June 2003

²⁹ Bob Mullan, & Garry Marvin, *Zoo Culture*, (Weidenfeld & Nicolson: London, 1987)

³⁰ Cornelius Holtorf, & David Van Reybrouk, ‘Towards an Archaeology of Zoos’, *International Zoo News*, vol. 50, no. 325, 2003

<<http://www.zoonews.ws/IZN/325/IZN-325.htm>>

³¹ In E. Måråld, C. Nordlund, L. Pitkå-Kangas & S. Åkerberg (eds.), *Nature Improved? Interdisciplinary Essays on Humanity’s Relationship with Nature* (Umeå: Kungl. Skytteanska Samfundet, 1999) pp.39-50

³² Sarah Cross, “Republican Values on the African Plains: Zoo landscapes in Dublin and Accra”,

Discussion paper for World Archaeological Congress, Washington D. C., 25 June 2003

<<http://logomancer.com.aoz/WAC%20papers/SarahCross/Crosspaper.htm>>

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Savages and Beasts: The Birth of the Modern Zoo; Christina Wessely, "Reconstructing the Metropolis- The Aesthetics of Consumption in the Nineteenth Century Zoo"³³;

The other site on the Estate that my research focuses on is the University of Cape Town. The most recent comprehensive work that deals with this is Howard Phillips' *The University of Cape Town, 1918- 1948: The Formative Years*, first published in 1993. A very early account that covers only the most preliminary years of the University is Professor W Ritchie's, *The History of the SAC*, written in 1918. However, this work is useful in part in reading the site as part of Rhodes' legacy. The *UCT Quarterly* continued to be published throughout the period studied and provides some descriptions, particularly in the editorial sections, about developments at the Grootte Schuur site.

More general accounts of the history of the Grootte Schuur Estate include: Phillida Brooke Simon's work, *Grootte Schuur: Great Granary to Stately Home*³⁴ and a book produced by the Department of Information in Pretoria, *Grootte Schuur*³⁵. Their interest is in providing a chronology of events at Grootte Schuur, such as recording when each premier took up residence here. There are some details about the types of animals and plants on the Estate over the period and often these are accompanied with images. For a still wider understanding of the type and style of architecture used in the Cape during this period, the following works are illuminating: Herbert Baker, *Architecture and Personalities*; Doreen Greig, *Herbert Baker in South Africa*; Michael Keith, *Herbert Baker*, and John MacKenzie (ed.), *Imperialism and Popular Culture*.

Rhodes:

The material produced on the life of Cecil John Rhodes is prolific. According to Paul Maylam, who performed the most recent survey of such works in his book *The Cult of Rhodes*, Perhaps most noticeable is the absence of works by Africans and Afrikaners in the literature. published in 2005,

³³ Christina Wessely, 'Reconstructing the Metropolis- The Aesthetics of Consumption in the Nineteenth-Century Zoo', Address delivered to WAC, Washington D.C., 25 June 2003

³⁴ Phillida Brooke Simons, *Grootte Schuur: Great Granary to Stately Home*, (Fernwood Press, Vlaeberg, 1996)

³⁵ P. Mulder, *Grootte Schuur: Residence of South Africa's Prime Minister*, (Department of Information: Pretoria, 1970)

there are as many as twenty-six biographies of Rhodes printed in English.³⁶ However, only four of these books are, as Maylam points out, written by professional historians: Apollon Davidson's *Cecil Rhodes and His Time*; John Flint's *Cecil Rhodes*; Robert Rotberg's *The Founder: Cecil Rhodes and the Pursuit of Power*, and Basil Williams' *Cecil Rhodes*. Maylam's own study should also be included in this genre since he is a professor of history at Rhodes University in Grahamstown. Most of the earlier biographies were written by Rhodes' close associates and acquaintances. In this category Maylam includes: Herbert Baker, *Cecil Rhodes: By his Architect*; Sir Thomas Fuller, *The Right Honourable Cecil John Rhodes: A Monograph and Reminiscence*; Philip Jourdan, *Cecil John Rhodes: His Private Life*; Gordon Le Sueur, *Cecil Rhodes: The Man and his Work*; J. G. McDonald, *Rhodes: A Life*; Sir Lewis Mitchell, *The Life of the Rt. Hon. Cecil John Rhodes 1853-1902*; Princess Catherine Radziwill, *Cecil Rhodes: Man and Empire Maker*; and John Verschoyle, *Cecil Rhodes: A Biography and an Appreciation*. Maylam's final category is that "produced by people who had reputations as writers but were not guild historians based in the academy".³⁷ This includes: Neil Bates, *Cecil Rhodes*; Ian D Colvin, *Cecil John Rhodes 1853- 1902*; Peter Gibbs, *The True Book about Cecil Rhodes*; J. E. S. Green, *Rhodes goes North*; Felix Gross, *Rhodes of Africa*; Howard Hensman, *Cecil Rhodes: A Study of a Career*; J. G. Lockhart, *Cecil Rhodes*; J. G. Lockhart and C. M. Woodhouse, *Rhodes*; John Marlowe, *Cecil Rhodes: The Anatomy of Empire*; André Maurois, *Cecil Rhodes*; Sarah Gertrude Millin, *Rhodes*; William Plomer, *Cecil Rhodes*; Brian Roberts, *Cecil Rhodes: Flawed Colossus*; Kevin Shillington, *An African Adventure: A Brief Life of Cecil Rhodes*; Anthony Thomas, *Rhodes*; and Richard Tomes, *Cecil Rhodes: An Illustrated Life of Cecil Rhodes*.

However, in spite of the sheer number of books produced on the subject, "reading through them, one becomes aware of the rehashing, the recycling of information, the repetition of the same story from one study of Rhodes' life to another".³⁸ A large number of the biographies are hagiographies that pay Rhodes undue reverence as a liberal visionary, which is a representation that persisted until the mid twentieth century. Another body of the work seeks to "debunk" Rhodes, and Maylam concludes that too few of the works represent a more critical intermediate viewpoint.³⁹

³⁶ Paul Maylam, *The Cult of Rhodes* (Cape Town: David Philip, 2005) p.1

³⁷ *ibid* p.3

³⁸ *Ibid* p.2

³⁹ *Ibid* p.16

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Indeed, Maylam identifies only two texts dealing with Rhodes by black authors: Bernard Magubane, *The Making of a Racist State* and Stanlake Samkange's pamphlet, *What Rhodes really said about Africans*.

Several articles and essays concerning Rhodes' time in South Africa have been written and these are, in some way, relevant to understanding his relationship with the Groote Schuur Estate: Jeffrey Butler, "Cecil Rhodes", *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, (1977) vol.10; Peter Henshaw, "John Buchan from the 'Borders' to the 'Berg': Nature, Empire and the White South African Identity, 1901-1910", *African Studies*, (2003) vol.62; Terence Ranger, "The last word on Rhodes?", *Past and Present*, (1964) vol.28; George Shepperson, "Cecil John Rhodes: Some Biographical Problems", *Rhodes Newsletter*, (1981) and "Cecil Rhodes: Some documents and Reflections", *Rhodesian History*, (1978) vol.IX; S. B. Stevenson, "Rhodes, 'More an Agent than an Initiator'", *Heritage*, (1981) vol.1; and Richard Wood, "Cecil John Rhodes", *Heritage of Zimbabwe*, (1991) vol.10. There is, of course, another body of literature dealing with other aspects of Rhodes' life, including particularly his involvement with Rhodesia. However, whilst I am not suggesting that these topics are irrelevant to my study, I am suggesting that the works listed above are more pertinent. I have treated fictional works that include representations of Rhodes (of which there are many) in a similar fashion, with one notable exception: Ann Harries, *Manly Pursuits*. Her account, although fictional in many ways, is set in part in Oxford but largely on the Groote Schuur Estate. One of her representations in the novel is of Rhodes as imperial ecologist, determined to "fill [his] forests with the sounds of all the birds of Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire" and thus, her reading of the landscape does coincide significantly with my own.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Ann Harries, *Manly Pursuits*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2000)

Methodology

Initially, the process of archival research for my dissertation seemed quite straightforward; I would enter the archive, search through the index and catalogues, locate files, letters, maps and plans, and then spend several days, weeks, months, shifting through these stacks of papers to find information that I considered relevant and revealing for my topic. However, the more I thought about this methodology, the more complex it seems to have become. I was first struck by my presupposition that I knew exactly what I (and other researchers) meant by the 'archive', even in a physical sense. Achille Mbembe and Ann Laura Stoler have both explored this idea in their contributions to the volume *Refiguring the Archive*.⁴¹ Stoler draws attention to how in Cultural Theory in particular, "the archive' has a capital 'A', is figurative, and leads elsewhere. It may represent neither a material site nor a set of documents. Rather it may serve as a strong metaphor for any corpus of selective forgettings or memories".⁴² Clearly, interpretations of the notion of the archive are far wider than I had assumed. Yet, perhaps more pertinent for my own research, since I have principally limited my use of the 'Archive' to sets of tangible documents, is Mbembe's reflections on the term. He suggests that "the term 'archives' first refers to a building, a symbol of a public institution, which is one of the organs of a constituted state".⁴³ Yet, simultaneously it is "understood as a collection of documents, normally written documents kept in this building".⁴⁴ Thus, "there cannot be a definition of 'archives' that does not encompass both the building itself and the documents stored there".⁴⁵ The South African National Archives building on Roeland Street, Cape Town, and the Manuscripts and Archives rooms in the Centre for African Studies at the University of Cape Town are then as much a part of the archives that I studied as the documents that they house. And each building *is* an organ of the constituted institution that they represent, which, surely, impacts upon the articles stored within them.

As I became less sure of my ability to deal with the 'archive' (let alone the 'Archive' with a capital 'A'), I felt, somewhat reprehensively, that perhaps archival research had once been less

⁴¹ C. Hamilton, V. Harris & J. Taylor, *Refiguring the Archive*, (Cape Town: David Phillips, 2002)

⁴² Ann Laura Stoler, "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance: On the Content in the Form" in *Refiguring the Archive*, pp.83-103 at p.87

⁴³ Achille Mbembe, "The Power of the Archive and its Limits" in *Refiguring the Archive*, pp.19-26 at p.19

⁴⁴ *ibid* p.19

⁴⁵ *ibid* p.19

complicated. Indeed, until the 1950s the idea of archival practice in historical research in the humanities and social sciences was underpinned by the models of French sociologist August Comte and German historian Leopold von Ranke, developed in the 1830s. Ranke was concerned with an empirical approach to history that involved careful and systematic “collection, examination, and interrogation” of documents from the past, similar to that of the Natural Sciences so that the idea of scientific truth about the past came to permeate the emerging discipline of history.⁴⁶ Ranke’s three principles of historical investigation demanded the theoretical objectivity of the historian, this close analysis of archival material and the importance of reconstructing it “*wei es eigentlich gewesen*” or, “as it really was”.⁴⁷ The model began to crumble as historians doubted their ability to be truly objective and rejected a positivist history that believed the past really could be told as it really was. However, the archive had, by now, become “established as a symbol of truth, plausibility and authenticity” and maintained this privileged status deep into the twentieth century.⁴⁸ Whilst secondary sources are studied with a foregrounded awareness of bias, the archive is, as Nicholas Dirks argues, “constituted as the only space that is free of context, argument, ideology—indeed history itself”.⁴⁹ Helen Freshwater draws a useful analogy between our perception of the authenticity of archival documents and how we still use paper documentation, such as passports and birth certificates, as ultimate proof of our genuine identity. Whereas we are prepared to disseminate nearly all information electronically, especially across the internet, we still only trust and accept physical, touchable information as truly authentic documents of evidence or identity. Were this the case, my task would have some sort of conclusion as my time in the archives would equip me with a body of authentic, uncontaminated evidence...

But I am not, of course, operating in a world that continues to believe history really can be reconstructed, beginning in the archive, nor in one that perceives the archive as untroubled. As Derrida highlights, “postmodernism and deconstruction have made sure of that”.⁵⁰ The archive is not innocent, it “doesn’t simply record the past...[it] constitutes the past, and in view of a future

⁴⁶ Helen Freshwater, “The Allure of the Archive”, in *Poetics Today* (2003) vol. 24, no.4, pp.729-758 at p.730

⁴⁷ *ibid* p.730

⁴⁸ *ibid* p.730

⁴⁹ Nicholas Dirks, “Annals of the Archive: Ethnographic Notes on the Source of History” in B. K. Axel (ed.) *From the Margins: Historical Anthropology and its Futures* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002) pp.47-65 at p.48

⁵⁰ Jacques Derrida, “Archive Fever: a seminar”, in *Refiguring the Archive* pp.38-60 at p.39

which retrospectively, or retroactively, gives it so called final truth".⁵¹ The archive is formed within a discourse and in turn, forms the discourse. In the case of the documents that I studied, the hegemonic discourse is that of European colonialism. It is simultaneously "the outcome of historical process and the very condition for the production of historical knowledge".⁵² Thus, to accept the documents as uncontaminated we ignore the very processes that led to their formation and survival and, perhaps unwittingly, continue operating within the very same limits of the discursive box in which the archive was formed, hence perpetuating it further. We may never be able to reconstruct the past as it was, (which is a problematic idea in itself), but we are not obliged to (re)construct it within the same discourse that the archive was formed.

By acknowledging this complexity of the archive, we must not simply content ourselves with challenging the documents that exist within it, but should recognise that a significant body of information has been left out of the archive. A discourse tells only one normalised story and so relies on silencing others. The power of the existing archive, and the State that relies on it, "rests", in Mbembe's words, "on its ability to consume time, that is, to abolish the archive and anaesthetise the past", "more than on its ability to recall".⁵³ There is a careful process of selection that determines which material is included in the archive and which is left out. Similarly, as Dirks implies, the sheer excess of material in the archive amplifies the distortions of the past.⁵⁴ Yet, as Jane Taylor argues, such processes are "veiled, their mysteries shared between communities of initiates" and we rarely even seek to penetrate these mysteries, so ready, as we are, to accept that the material shown in places of public record is inevitable.⁵⁵ We are able to locate some of the agents in this process as clearly the archivist, donor and author have an impact in discerning which documents go in, and stay in, the archive. But, the problem is deeper than this and it seems appropriate to recall Foucault's interpretation of the archive in *Archaeology of Knowledge*: not as the "sum of all the texts that a culture has kept upon its person as documents attesting to its own past, or as evidence of a continuing identity; nor [is it] the institutions, which in a given society, make it possible to record and preserve those discourses that one wishes to remember and keep in circulation. [It is rather] *the general system of the formation and the transformation of*

⁵¹ *ibid* p.42

⁵² Dirks, p.48

⁵³ Mbembe, p.23

⁵⁴ Dirks, p.52

⁵⁵ Jane Taylor, "Holdings: Refiguring the Archive" in *Refiguring the Archive* pp.242-281 at p.244

statements" (emphasis in text).⁵⁶ In this interpretation then, the processes of inclusion and exclusion transcend those same practices that are more consciously practiced within the realms of the state and national archives. The notion of the agent is then more vague and interpreting the archive becomes an even more complicated procedure.

Another pitfall in the process of archival research, which Freshwater cautions against and which, I admit, I first stumbled into, is a perceived familiarity with the characters one encounters in the archive. I did begin to sense the familiar presence of Herbert Baker and Masey and, albeit for a shorter time, Solomon, in the documents I was studying. Indeed, Freshwater suggests that "this empathy for the guardians and creators of the archive is surely one of the most innocuous charms of the archive".⁵⁷ This is, however, an illusion since these figures are "ghosts, mere shadows of the past...their actions are complete, and their original significance will remain undetermined; open to interpretation".⁵⁸ Mbembe uses a similar metaphor to unravel the archive. He equates the role of the historian to that of a spectre. The historian brings the dead back to life only as far as by "reintegrating them into the cycle of time, in such a way that they find, in a text, in an artefact or in a monument, a place to inhabit, from where they may continue to express themselves".⁵⁹ Furthermore, Mbembe argues that I only seek to restore these characters to life so that I might lean on them as a prop and allow myself to write beyond an originary text and through this "act of dispossession" establish my own authority.⁶⁰ Thus, in practicing this methodology, I become imbued in the archive.

Consequently, I became very interested in the manner by which the collections and documents I dealt with entered the archive, rather than only in their content. This information was not readily available. In the UCT Manuscripts and Archives Library, I was informed that a librarian would first need to look through the files so that anything controversial could be removed, which led me to ponder once more how material was selected as controversial or harmless, and who authorised this decision. The practice of excluding documents, discussed in such detail above, was being performed as easily as I waited. Suffice to say, I do not know which documents were

⁵⁶ cited, Freshwater, p.752

⁵⁷ Freshwater, p.737

⁵⁸ *ibid* p.738

⁵⁹ Mbembe, p.25

⁶⁰ *ibid* p.25

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removed from this body of information, just as I do not know which documents were left out when the archival collections, on which I based my research, were processed, often several decades earlier. More ominously, I will never know which stories were never even heard or told in this period, silenced as they were, and still are, by the hegemonic endurance of a European discourse.

Yet, whilst the archive may deliberately exclude information, they also face another physical problem in preserving what they might choose to include. This certainly seems to be the case in the Kendall and Earle Gift papers, more commonly known as the Baker Collection. Mr Marriott Earle in his address speech on the 1st September 1967 at the official donation ceremony to UCT, revealed that when he joined Baker's successor practice, "only a little over some quarter of the drawings appearing in [their] Register had survived the years- the ravages of moths, insects, rats and other form of depreciation and loss".⁶¹ Walgate, who donated the Walgate and Elsworth Collection on the 28th February 1968, also reveals the absence of some potentially useful documents from the period of his association with J M Solomon in the University project. Walgate recalls donating a "1/16" scale drawing of the two residences, some sketches of detail and possibly [further] originals of the well known block plan and landscaped elevation" to the head of architecture at UCT; Thatcher.⁶² Yet, it appears that Thatcher did not keep a tidy office and after his sudden death, the documents could no longer be located and Walgate resigned himself to the fact that probably these documents were destroyed along with a "mass of junk" in the room.⁶³ Dr R F M Immelman, the UCT Librarian dealing with Walgate, subsequently sought to assure him that the material he donated "[would] all be carefully safeguarded and preserved for the future".⁶⁴ Issues of preservation are, of course central to the archive, and its ability to exist depends on its ability to succeed in doing this.

However, in spite of the 'lost' documents, the Baker Collection is, if not prolific, certainly considerable, consisting as it does of some six thousand drawings and 15,000 other records. It was Earle who publicly decided to donate these documents with the idea that it was "somehow fitting

⁶¹ M & A UCT: Administrative file on: BC206 (Baker Collection) Marriott Earle address speech, School of Architecture, Centilivres block, 1 September 1967

⁶² M & A UCT: Administrative file on: BC318 (Walgate & Elsworth Collection) Memorandum: re. J M Solomon's drawings by C P Walgate

⁶³ *ibid*

⁶⁴ M & A UCT: Administrative file on: BC318 Immelman to Walgate, 28 February 1968

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that these records should now be located on the campus where Rhodes and Baker had first met and formed an association which was to lead to great things in Art and Architecture and in which Rhodes took a deep interest".⁶⁵ (Rhodes' presence then lingers still in these decisions being made so long after his death.) Equally, Earle's decision to donate these documents led me to speculate, in spite of my training as a historian that warns against doing this, about the opportunity Earle had to exclude documents from his collection if he deemed them uninteresting or perhaps controversial. He also played an important role in ensuring that the documents arrived at UCT, rather than becoming part of the National Archives since he believed they should be located in a conveniently accessible place for architectural students.⁶⁶ In doing this, Earle not only implied the use to which the documents might be put, but in some way shaped the collection's audience.

In 1973, the Baker material was supplemented with the donation of the Fleming Collection, when Mr Leonard Fleming "donated about 500 documents in connection with the construction of the Rhodes Mem. on Devil's peak, the Rhodes statue and Rhodes Cottage at Muizenberg, covering the period 1905-1913".⁶⁷ As this became one of the most heavily used collections in the library, UCT requested any further material from the firm.⁶⁸ This information is interesting as it suggests that the public can, to some extent at least, determine the subject content of the archive and that the archive is susceptible to pressure from researchers. Thus, I am in some way indebted to those preceding researchers whose interests coincided with mine and who applied pressure, however subtly, so that there was more information available to me on the subject of Cecil Rhodes' Groote Schuur Estate in the archive.

There were further collections that drew my attention- the C J Sibbett papers and Edith L Stephens Papers amongst others- but details surrounding their donations are scarcer. However, it was only the BUZV collection that had no accompanying file with details about its formation at UCT Manuscripts and Archives. The librarians were able to tell me that it was started sometime in the 1920s by a UCT librarian concerned initially with collecting newspaper collections about the University. This was then extended to accumulating pamphlets and photographs. In the last six

⁶⁵ M & A UCT: Administrative file on: BC206, Address speech, 1 September 1967

⁶⁶ M & A UCT: Administrative file on: BC206, Earle to Mrs Shippley at the Cape Provincial Institute of Architects, 2 May 1967

⁶⁷ M & A UCT: Administrative file on: BC605, Laurenson to Messrs Fleming and Cooke, 18 March 1976

⁶⁸ *ibid*

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months the library made the decision to use the 'Monitoring SA' engine to scan all South African media for information produced on UCT and to store this electronically. This idea of a digital archive raises another set of questions relating to the earlier idea about the perceived higher authenticity of tangible documents. I was spared too much time deliberating these questions with reference to my own research as the dates of my project limit me to those earlier newspaper clippings and photographs that are produced on paper.

More aware, as I hope I now am, about the inherent complexities of practicing archival research, I certainly remained cautious about accepting too readily any of the information that I encountered in these various collections. Concurrently, I became aware of how the discourse in which the document was written shaped it, even through the author's unashamed acceptance of certain terms. Perhaps the most prominent example of this is the use of the term "public" in so many of the texts, particularly with reference to concerns over maintaining "public" access to the Groote Schuur Estate. Public accepted, as it is today, is a comprehensive term. Yet, we cannot imagine that people were concerned that everybody in Cape Town be allowed access to the Estate. Rather, they were concerned with a specifically *white* public. Writing for the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1902, Mr Garrett did complain that "brown people from the slums of Cape Town fill the pinafores of their children with flowers plucked from [Rhodes'] garden, and wander round the house as if it were their own" but this is the only reference to the presence of people that were not considered white as public at Groote Schuur that I could find.⁶⁹ Photographs depict only white people enjoying the Estate: blacks and coloureds are excluded. More than that, they are ignored; we are not even aware of their presence. Essentially this sentiment is captured in the imperialist's use of 'public'. Public was interpreted as referring to everyone but as people who were not perceived as white were considered so insignificant, their inclusion in this category was not even considered. Thus, a very small section of people really was understood as being the encompassing 'public' as even ignorance of such exclusion was normalised by the imperialist discourse.

Another apparently innocent reference used in the texts is that of 'mountain lover'. Initially it seems quite straightforward as an expression of Rhodes' appreciation, and that of his

⁶⁹ cited, W T Stead, *The Last Will and Testament of C J Rhodes*, (William Clowes and Sons Ltd.: London, 1902) p.13

contemporaries, for the aesthetic beauty of Table Mountain and Devil's Peak. However, this term, like others, is steeped in discourse. Wittenberg argues that as mountains and high ground came to be considered as areas suitable for higher civilisation in contrast with lower grasslands and swamp lands that were perceived as degenerate, African mountains, such as Table Mountain, became "invested with a correspondingly high sense of value".⁷⁰ These ideas underpinned the interest of South Africa's prime figures in portraying themselves as lovers of mountains. Whether or not they really did "love" the Mountain became less important than the implications of their close association with it. This is a clear example of hagiography and draws attention to the caution with which documents portraying Rhodes in this way, such as the 1912 Memorial Opening souvenir pamphlet, should be handled.

As my days in the archive draw to an end, I find myself with perhaps more questions than answers about the methodological approach I chose in my research. Even my basic understanding of what the 'archive' physically is has been re-examined. I do not suggest that my time in the archive has permitted me to reconstruct the past as it really was, or even to imply that such a notion of 'reality' can even be understood in the aftermath of postmodernism and deconstruction. The archive is not a provider of neutral truth but is contaminated, just as secondary texts are. The documents are *not* all encompassing and what is left out of the archive is highly relevant in terms of understanding the material that has been included. As I mentioned earlier, it is not even that documents are systematically destroyed and excluded (although some probably are), but rather that they were never even written, silenced as they were before their conception by a hegemonic discourse that normalises their absence. Perhaps one of my greatest difficulties in this sense was in my efforts to understand what has been at Groote Schuur before Rhodes' great project of landscaping began. As Africa is understood as an effectively empty and untamed continent before the arrival of Europeans in Imperialist discourse, few recordings of what was there previously were made since, to all extents and purposes, this discourse suggests that nothing was actually there. These problems made my task no easier and in fact probably made me increasingly anxious about my entry into the archive. However, as Freshwater argues, this awareness is "key" when entering

⁷⁰ Wittenberg, *The Sublime, Imperialism and the African Landscape* p.7

Cultivating an English Garden on African Soil

“The whole of the forest estate, especially near Groote Schuur, should be a park rather than a forest, with fully developed trees singly and in groups, and grass and wild flowers and glades between...”⁷²

We should first consider the Groote Schuur Estate as it was prior to Rhodes' arrival here in 1890 so that we might achieve some understanding of the significance of the changes that occurred on the landscape in the succeeding years. The house, the Great Granary, or *Groote Schuur*, was constructed in 1657. It was rented out to a series of notable figures, including Sir Henry Barkly, Sir Hercules Robinson and Sir Henry Loch, in the decades before Rhodes chose to establish himself here. Clearly, the presence of a house is evidence that there had been substantial engagement with the landscape prior to Rhodes, but it is difficult to ascertain the impact that these figures had in cultivating flora and vegetation in the area immediately surrounding the dwelling. Herbert Baker, by insisting that initially the Groote Schuur Estate was “a jungle right down to the house when Rhodes bought it”, suggests that little effort to ‘manage’ the flora and vegetation had in fact been made.⁷³ However, whilst acknowledging Baker's observations, we should remember that it was to his advantage to make such remarks as they served a purpose in emphasising just how far improved the Estate was under his guidance in the late nineteenth century. Similarly, Groote Schuur had not occupied the central position in South Africa's history that it came to under Rhodes and so it seems likely that the notion of landscaping it in a specific way did not assume the same importance for earlier tenants. Rhodes also significantly extended the boundaries of this project in the 1890s as he increased his lands by one thousand five hundred acres to include the present day Bel Ombre, Kirstenbosch and Mount Pleasant.⁷⁴ His properties extended southwards from Mowbray to Constantia along the Eastern slopes of Table Mountain at the end of his life, although the landscaping project of all these areas was by no means complete at the time of his death.

Centuries before Rhodes decided to make his home on the lower slopes of Table Mountain, European visitors and settlers at the Cape had already begun to form impressions of the

⁷² M & A UCT: BC206, folder 49, Baker to Kendall, Letter, 29 November 1928

⁷³ *quoted* Simons, p.40

⁷⁴ Mulder, p.6

landscape. The dramatic plateau of the Table, as well as its sheer face and imposing height, evoked a sense of awe and disorientation that was exacerbated by the “luscious vegetation” of the slopes that seemed “truly alien in comparison to their home landscapes”.⁷⁵ Ignorant during these early years of European exploration of later Linnean systems of classification that were widely used after 1758, the vegetation was simply considered exotic, just as Africa was. Subsequently, the vegetation that was ‘discovered’ on the Mountain slopes during these centuries of European exploration came to be seen as ‘indigenous’ and, using a European process of naming, the lush vegetation was identified in terms more familiar, such as “silver trees, proteas and heaths”.⁷⁶ Several of these species were cleared from specific areas on the Estate during Rhodes lifetime and imported stone pines were planted in their place. This practice of cultivating pine trees was continued after his death; after great debate over which trees should be planted on the area now reserved for Rhodes Memorial, Masey wrote to Baker on 27th July 1908 to “note [his] final decision to have the stone pines after weighing all considerations”.⁷⁷ However, as recorded in the *Note on the Restoration of Native Flora on the slopes of Groote Schuur Estate*, Smuts later expressed a desire to remove these trees and “wanted to see the slopes clad with their original vegetation of silver trees, proteas and heaths once more; instead of pines which had replaced these, partly by being planted and partly by self sowing”.⁷⁸ I hesitate in using the terms ‘indigenous’ and ‘original’ too freely as it seems that in the context used by Rhodes’ immediate successors, ‘indigenous’ came to be understood as all that had existed on the mountain slopes prior to the arrival of Europeans. This is, of course, a particularly Eurocentric viewpoint that ignores any interaction that previous Cape inhabitants might have had with the landscape. Yet, if we are to adopt a contemporary understanding of what was indigenous to Table Mountain, we see a shift towards favouring this type of flora for the Estate after the death of Cecil Rhodes and more insistently after the 1910 Union of South Africa. Van Sittert draws attention to a wider public concern in the post Union period for regenerating the original vegetation of Table Mountain. One expression of this was protest over continued felling of the silver tree, *Leucadendron argenteum*, the indigenous

⁷⁵ Fuller, *Continuity and Change in the Cultural Landscape of Table Mountain*, p.56

⁷⁶ M & A UCT: BC275 (Edith L Stephens Papers), Note on the Restoration of Native Flora Species on slopes of Groote Schuur Estate

⁷⁷ M & A UCT: BC605, folder A1, Masey to Baker, 27 July 1908

⁷⁸ M & A UCT: BC275, Note on the Restoration of Native Flora Species on slopes of Groote Schuur Estate

counterpart to the English Oak.⁷⁹ Even Baker came to lament, in private at least, the waning of apparently indigenous flora at the end of our period. In 1927 he wrote to General Hertzog about the decline of the yellow wood tree at Groote Schuur in the face of pines and oaks when “the yellow wood is one of the most beautiful trees in South Africa, but there are now hardly any good specimens of them...where...they were originally common”.⁸⁰ These actions, Van Sittert suggests, came to be viewed as “local arboreal allegories of colonialism” and gradually came to be regarded with hostility.⁸¹

Furthermore, the *Note on the Restoration* suggests that the foreign stone pines were actually damaging the landscape since “they destroy the soil structure because the water leaches through their needles and washes away the soil”.⁸² A solution to this situation was now sought in local vegetation and the East African Mountain finger grass was used “to prevent further soil erosion”.⁸³ An experiment was also conducted using Wynberg finger grass “on one section of the slopes” but this was less successful as this plant “needs richer soil and also its runners are superficial, so not so good for eroded mountain slopes as the East African grass”.⁸⁴ Yet, it is highly significant that a solution was searched for in African vegetation in the period after Rhodes, rather than importing another plant for this purpose. I am not suggesting that Rhodes’ successors suddenly considered African vegetation far superior but that in experimenting with floral species that were considered indigenous, these people demonstrated a more profound willingness to engage with ‘Africa’. This seems to reflect the simultaneous political shift in imperial thought that now favoured governance of the colonies through indirect rule, rather than through the system of paternalism embraced by Rhodes. Indeed, Lugard’s system of indirect rule proposed minimal interference by the Colonial State and African solutions to perceived African problems. As people in South Africa became less enthusiastic about British influence in the Cape after the 1910 Union, there was an increased readiness to identify South Africa as part of the wider African continent, distinct from Europe, albeit not a greater enthusiasm to identify themselves with ‘Africans’. The *Note on the Restoration*

⁷⁹ The silver tree seemed to possess similar characteristics to the English oak since both have a propensity to grow in prolific numbers over landscapes on which they occur naturally. For the silver oak, this is the Cape landscape, whereas for the English oak this is the lowland areas of Britain.

⁸⁰ M & A UCT: BC206, Box 48, Herbert Baker to General Hertzog, 6 September 1927

⁸¹ Van Sittert, p.174

⁸² M & A UCT: BC275, Note on the Restoration of Native Flora Species on slopes of Groote Schuur Estate

⁸³ *ibid*

⁸⁴ *ibid*

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similarly echoes the idea that British presence, embodied in this context by the presence of the pine trees, stifled South African development when stating that “all the silver trees now coming up on these slopes through the grass are self sown... They must have been waiting under the pine carpet till this moisture holding mat [of fynbos] came along and gave them a chance”⁸⁵

The stone pine trees that caused such grave concern to nationalists do, however, persist on the Estate today and, with their distinctive umbrella shape, form a significant feature of the contained Rhodes Memorial landscape. A specific style of floral landscaping was employed at this area. Dora Fairbridge and Baker both agreed that “any attempt at ‘garden gardening’ would be very inappropriate to the massive dignity of the memorial”.⁸⁶ A more monumental effect was required, which could be achieved by planting larger blocks of species that would be appreciated from a distance and emphasise the site’s magnitude, rather than by arranging smaller plants to be appreciated at close quarters. The site on which the landscapers were working at the memorial was considered “open space” at the beginning of the twentieth century.⁸⁷ It is difficult then to ascertain the type of vegetation that existed in this area prior to interference by his Rhodes Trustees. However, suffice to say that the imposing trees that now frame the site were absent in Rhodes’ period and that probably instead the area was carpeted in low lying shrubbery, such as fynbos.. The scribbling in pencil on the back of the *Note on the Restoration* held in the UCT Archives is illuminating in telling us that between 1904 and 1908, Neville Pillans, assistant to Fairbridge “planted hundreds of young silver trees in the open spaces round Rhodes Memorial by permission of Jameson”.⁸⁸ However, these first trees were apparently all eaten by deer but in the same year replanting began and so the roots of the silver trees that now stand at the Memorial site were founded.

Another block of vegetation was proposed to immediately surround the building. Masey conveyed Fairbridge’s preference to Baker for “a kind of creeper, namely mesembryanthemum...which grows on the mountain side at Sea Point, at the same altitude, and ...forms a sort of carpet”, rather than

⁸⁵ *ibid*

⁸⁶ M & A UCT: BC605, folder A1, Dora Fairbridge to Baker, 3 April 1908

⁸⁷ M & A UCT: BC275, Note on the Restoration of Native Flora Species on slopes of Groote Schuur Estate

⁸⁸ *ibid*

planting "grass, which is comparatively uninteresting".⁸⁹ However, a few days later on 23rd July 1908, Masey once again wrote to Baker with the news that "with respect to the "mesems" versus grass...the grass has now been planted and looks very nice".⁹⁰ It is grass that remains in this vicinity to the present day. Fairbridge was also concerned to implement Rhodes' presence and mark there as far as possible, leading her to propose planting another block of "blue... periwinkle" on the "terrace of the north side", it being "Rhodes' favourite colour".⁹¹ This idea did not see fruition.

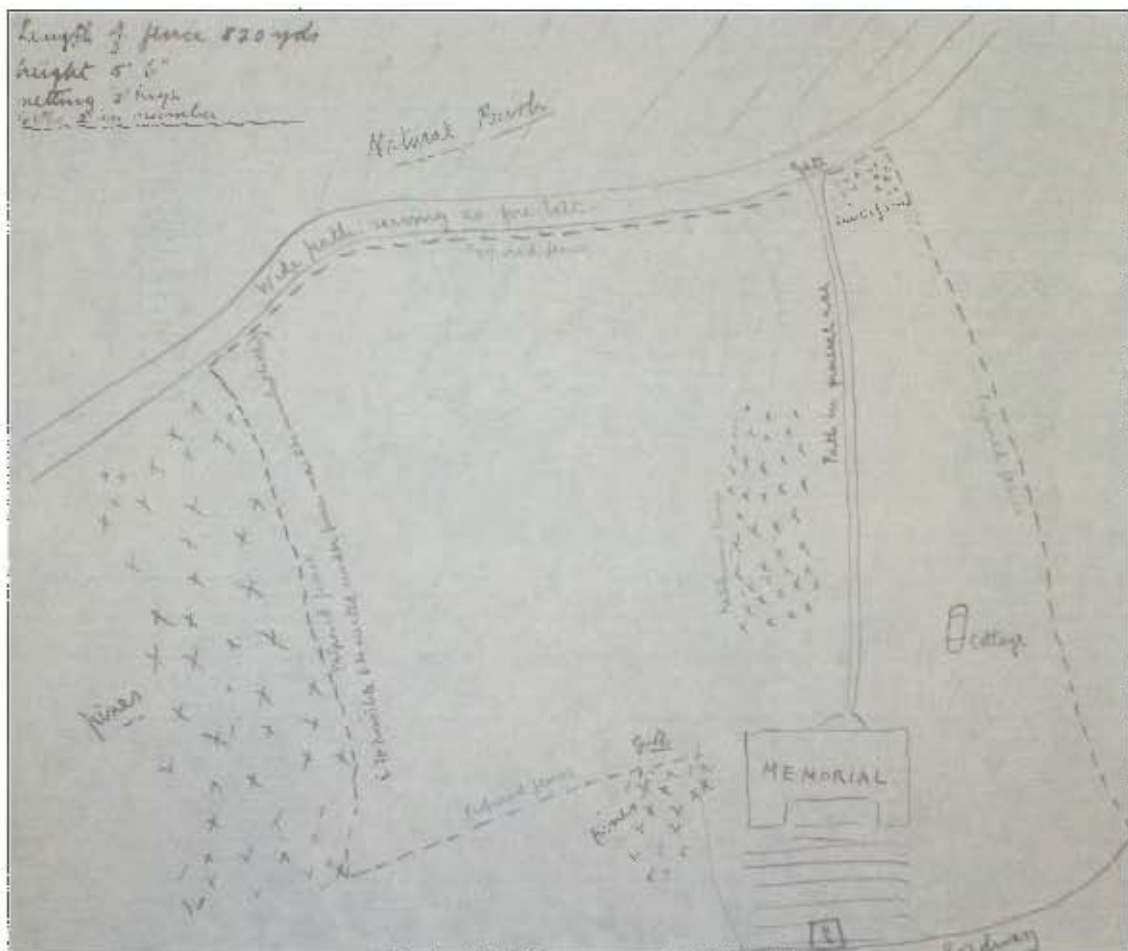


Fig 1. M & A UCT: BC275, Pillans' rough sketch proposal for planting around Rhodes Memorial

This simple sketch emphasises Pillans' understanding of block planting at the Memorial site. The effect is appreciated at a distance where the regimented system of planting the pine trees gives an impression of them marching up the hillside to the Mountain peak. Thus, our eyes are naturally drawn to the Memorial where our gaze lingers before

⁸⁹ M & A UCT: BC605, folder A1, Masey to Baker, 15 July 1908

⁹⁰ M & A UCT: BC605, folder A1, Masey to Baker, 23 July 1908

⁹¹ M & A UCT: BC605, folder A1, Masey to Baker, Telegram, 5 September 1908

advancing to the summit. No trees are planted on the slopes directly below the Memorial and so there is an easy view from lower ground.

The style of 'garden gardening' that Fairbridge rejected as inappropriate at the Memorial site was practiced with vigour on the grounds around the house and in the adjoining terrace gardens. Here, bougainvillea vines were juxtaposed with pink mountain lilies, blue plumbago and hydrangeas to create a patchwork of colour.



Fig 2. CA: E9363 (Eliot Collection), Hydrangeas at Groote Schuur c.1900

This photograph of part of the Groote Schuur Estate was taken near the end of Rhodes' life and now forms part of the Eliot Collection in the Cape Town Archives. The scene pictured above will seem familiar to anybody who has visited English gardens. Pink and blue hydrangeas are still popular flowers across England, just as they were at the beginning of the twentieth century. The stone pines that we can see in the background of this photograph were also imported from Britain and emphasise the idea that in this area of the Estate at least, there is a recognisable English space in Africa.

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James McDonald recalls how on Christmas Day Rhodes permitted the public to enter these terraced gardens to pick bunches of these flowers for themselves.⁹² In his Will, Rhodes made a provision of £1000 per annum to be used for “keeping and maintaining in good order the flower and kitchen gardens appertaining to the said residence”.⁹³ However, it seems that as time wore on, less attention was paid to this clause since Baker found cause to complain to Kendall in 1927 that “the bougainvilleas meant as creeper or bushes, have become tall hedges on the terraced garden [and] the flowers in the garden are not seen from the house as they should be”.⁹⁴ Although the garden may not have been quite as managed as Baker wished, it was still sufficiently tended that in 1970 Mulder was able to recognise that at Groote Schuur, the “mountain slopes on the estate reflect English landscape gardening tradition” with ‘natural’ features, including the “romantic layout of copses, lone trees and rolling turf”.⁹⁵ The dense forests of conifers that surrounded the Great Granary and lined the avenues were further recognised as part of the English stately home tradition. In line with ideas on the poetics of space, it is the recognisable qualities that are vested in this type of landscape that are significant, rather than the objective space. It does not matter that Groote Schuur Estate was not an English garden or Stately home, rather what is important is “what poetically it is endowed with, which is usually an imaginative or figurative value”.⁹⁶ Those feelings then, that an Englishman associated with an English garden, that allow it to be described as civilised and homelike, are translated on to the Groote Schuur Estate where the original is re-enacted in objective space. The endearing qualities of such a landscape would apparently be all the more obvious when contrasted with the hostile African landscape.

Changing and alternative readings of the landscape over this period are, however, more obvious at the Kirstenbosch site. Rhodes acquired these 528 hectares of land for £9000 in 1895 and incorporated them into the southern part of his growing estate. The intention for his acquisition was popularly explained as Rhodes’ continuing desire to protect the mountain slopes against urbanisation. As late as 1954 C J Sibbett, Rhodes’ ardent advocate, continued to propose that “Cape Town...can never be too thankful for [Rhodes] saving the side of the Mountain, including

⁹² J. G. McDonald, *Rhodes: A Heritage* p.11 (We must of course be cautious when accepting Mc Donald and Rhodes’ interpretation and understanding of ‘public’, as discussed previously)

⁹³ CA: PWD, vol.2/2/29, ref.B124/9, Rhodes Final Will, Clause 14.ii, 1 July 1899

⁹⁴ M & A UCT: BC206, Box 49, Baker to Kendall, 9 August 1927

⁹⁵ Mulder, p.15

⁹⁶ Said, p.55

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Kirstenbosch, for us".⁹⁷ The emphasis was on preservation but not, at this point on protecting indigenous flora since Rhodes did interfere with the vegetation here; the camphor trees, native to China and Japan, not South Africa, which today line the Kirstenbosch Camphor Avenue along the old road to Hout Bay, were planted here in the 1890s under Cecil Rhodes' orders. They remain a symbol of former imperial possession of the land. Yet, Rhodes was the last private owner of this site, which also passed to the Nation after his death in 1902, along with the rest of the Groot Schuur Estate. Following the 1910 Union there was greater emphasis on the idea of 'South Africa' and, according to Professor Ritchie, a "spirit of hopefulness for the future which prevailed...in many directions and not least in the direction of higher education".⁹⁸ The establishment of the Botanical Gardens in 1913 was a manifestation of this spirit and the emphasis shifted towards deliberately preserving vegetation that was specifically indigenous to southern Africa. Scientific approaches were employed for this purpose and now these plants were cultivated primarily with the intention of studying them, as well as appreciating their aesthetic value. Thus, there are today fynbos and protea gardens on the upper slopes of Kirstenbosch whose embryonic form stretches back to this earlier period. Furthermore, an association was formed with the University of Cape Town's Botany department during the early development stages when the Building Committee and Kirstenbosch agreed in 1920 to build the University *Bolus Herbarium* in the Gardens, rather than on the central campus.⁹⁹ This permitted closer proximity to the species being studied. As the focus at Kirstenbosch shifted more obviously towards preserving 'African' vegetation, it becomes easier to find an alternative reading of the landscape to that of Rhodes' ideas of paternalistic imperialism. There was no longer the enthusiasm for importing plants from across the British Empire that there had been at the beginning of this era. Indeed, in 1927 even Baker expressed regret that the University boundary had recently been lined with "gums or other *alien* trees [emphasis my own]" as was once common practice but was now perceived as inappropriate.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ CJS to Hennessy, 29 Dec 1954, BC50

⁹⁸ W. Ritchie, *The History of the SAC* (Cape Town: T Maskew Miller, 1918) p.553

⁹⁹ CBCM, 10 February 1920

¹⁰⁰ M & A UCT: BC206, Baker "Report on Groot Schuur", 5 October 1927



CA: M3/804, Map collection, Kirstenbosch
30 December 1902

The plan above shows the arrangement of plants at Kirstenbosch in 1902, the year of Rhodes' death. Large alien pine tree plantations are visible here, which caused unease amongst a more nationalist minded public in the following years. However provisions are already made for maintaining indigenous vegetation, such as proteas. Indigenous and alien vegetation exist side by side at this site as part of Rhodes' vision of a hybrid landscape.

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These various elements of the Estate; the Memorial, the Terrace Gardens, Kirstenbosch, were areas where different methods of vegetation were practiced. Yet, it was important that these elements of the Groote Schuur Estate were not isolated from one another as this would hinder full appreciation of the landscape. Access between sites was essential. As Green argues, for Rhodes, "possessing the land meant working it over so that it was not only possible to walk or ride easily through it, it was also arranged for the gaze".¹⁰¹ His guests were not only supposed to appreciate, at close quarters, the various plants that bordered and shaped the paths through which they passed, but to appreciate where the paths led and the views that were to be enjoyed at the end of them. This was "part of a wider project which might be described as cultivating a public".¹⁰² The ultimate vista on the Estate was obviously the flat summit of Table Mountain and essentially every element of Groote Schuur was "laid out so that flowers, shrubs and masonry would lead the eye first to the line of trees above the garden and then to the mountain beyond".¹⁰³ Another method by which views were enhanced was through clearing vegetation. Professor Walker's Memorandum to the UCT Building Committee is illuminating in this respect. He recalls how the summerhouse stood within a grove of tall evergreens and was connected to Lover's Walk by an avenue lined with oak trees when Rhodes took possession of the site. Under Mr Rhodes he reports, this avenue and grove were felled so that the summerhouse could be seen quite clearly from other areas on the Estate.¹⁰⁴ Similar issues were raised with respect to viewing the Memorial site. Ideally, the approach roads were to be lined in the traditional manner with pine trees, as other paths on the Estate were. Concern was expressed by Masey that "if [they] line the road with trees upon either side [they would] block out the view of the Memorial from Groote Schuur which Mr Jameson told [them] they were anxious to preserve".¹⁰⁵ Similarly, Pillans argued that the presence of the pines would interfere with "the popular wish for a clear view of the Memorial from below and an uninterrupted survey of the country from the building".¹⁰⁶ Vegetation, in this instance, could concurrently enhance the dream aspects of the landscape and inhibit them. A compromise of sorts had to be made in this area, as in many others.

¹⁰¹ Green, *Disciplining the Landscape* p.4

¹⁰² *ibid* p.4

¹⁰³ Simons, p.40

¹⁰⁴ CBCM: 13 May 1927, Appendix, Memorandum for Professor Walker, 7 May 1927

¹⁰⁵ M & A UCT: BC605, folder A1, Masey to Baker, 23 July 1908

¹⁰⁶ M & A UCT: BC605, folder A1, Pillans to Baker, 23 August 1909

However, despite Rhodes' premier status in the Cape, he was not given an absolute *carte blanche* to cut up the land immediately and as he wished. Several frustrating obstacles blocked his way. Perhaps the most difficult of these was posed by the Westbrook property that stood on the Estate. Rhodes complained bitterly about the stuffiness in his own house that was caused by the absence of the South East wind whose passage along the lower slopes was interrupted by Westbrook's poplar forest. Yet, his grumblings continued as the property could not be bought until 1927 when it passed into the hands of the Union Government. This, of course, occurred many years after Rhodes' death but it seems that his preoccupation with the Westbrook property was such that he intended to leave money in his will to clear vegetation from it. In a letter to his associate Kendall, written on 9th August 1927, Baker expressed delight at these new possibilities as "it was Rhodes' great desire to cut down some of the oak trees on Westbrook property so that he could see the distant mountain from his stoep".¹⁰⁷ These extensive financial provisions highlight Rhodes' longer term ambitions for the Groote Schuur Estate; his dream topography might not be realised in his own lifetime but nor would it be halted with his death.

Careful arrangement and clearing of vegetation, along with selective planting of specific species do make it possible to read sets of ideas on this landscape. However, implementing dream topographies in this manner is perhaps the most precarious. As the recent fires on Table Mountain and Signal Hill have demonstrated, the slope side vegetation can be rapidly destroyed. It is not only recently that the natural landscape of Table Mountain has been imagined as fragile. This threat has always been very real and occupied Masey's thoughts as he began planning flora for the Rhodes' Memorial site in 1909; in a telegram to Baker he expressed concern at information gleaned from Garlick "that a fire passed over the ground upon which the Memorial stands only a few years ago".¹⁰⁸ Yet, vegetation, the worst victim of these mountain fires, was also intended as a line of defence against them. In Rhodes' time gum trees were planted "as a fire belt" although they were later considered fairly ineffective, standing as they often did "in the midst of inflammable growth".¹⁰⁹ The old fashioned method of clearing the vegetation to create wide and barren fire

¹⁰⁷ M & A: BC206, Box 49, Baker to Kendall, 9 August 1927

¹⁰⁸ M & A UCT: BC605, folder A1, Masey to Baker, 18 February 1909

¹⁰⁹ M & A UCT: BC605, folder A1, Pillans to Baker, Letter, 20 September 1910

paths was reverted to in the following decades but even these are no guarantee against this element of the landscape being reduced to memory in the face of persistent flames.¹¹⁰

Possession then did not come as simply as deciding to plant English Oaks or bougainvilleas on the slopes since Table Mountain was never a blank landscape waiting to be conquered by Europeans and their flora. This notion of “South Africa as a vast, empty, silent space”¹¹¹ is a dream topography of white writing in South Africa but seems, as Coetzee argues, to be “a certain historical will” to see it as such.¹¹² ‘Indigenous’ plants and trees, as well as those planted by Dutch predecessors, already occupied these mountain slopes and drew nourishment and water from its soils. It was not simply a case of planting European equivalents on barren earth. Nor should we suppose that this was the totality of Rhodes’ vision or the only reading of the landscape.

Perhaps a more feasible way of reading this landscape is to view it as another ‘contact zone’. Pratt employs this idea in understanding Imperial landscapes in travel writings. A “contact zone” is explained as a “space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish on going relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict”.¹¹³ Indeed, the “Cape of Good Hope was one of the few places in Africa where Northern Europeans had access to the continental interior” and so the whole area can be seen as a contact zone.¹¹⁴ Struggle, adaptation and assimilation similarly took place between floral species at Groote Schuur. To some extent the established trees and plants were cleared from the lower slopes but simultaneously they became assimilated into Rhodes own dream topography or remained resistant in the face of it. To only view the Groote Schuur Estate as a colonial frontier, as part of Rhodes’ Imperial project means adopting only a European expansionist perspective when in fact far more complicated and subtle relationships were being played out on the land.

¹¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹¹ Coetzee, p.7

¹¹² *ibid* p.177

¹¹³ Pratt, p.6

¹¹⁴ *ibid* p.40

Housing the British Lion at Grootte Schuur

“Some men put cows in their park; I like to see people in mine”.¹¹⁵

Animals are perhaps the most tangible feature of any landscape. Indeed, few of the species that Rhodes introduced to his Estate in the 1890s endured, and those that did often came to be considered ‘pests’, rather than an integral part of an ideal landscape. Yet, as Rhodes proceeded to construct the Grootte Schuur estate, he made provisions for the enclosure of various animals in his zoo and the remnants of these persist into the present day as part of the topography on the lower eastern slopes of the mountain. The fear that these mountains once imbued in the Cape’s inhabitants was often associated with the wild lions, leopards, wolves and baboons that were believed to roam freely across the range, from Devil’s Peak to Lion’s Head.¹¹⁶ Again, as Fuller suggests, just as familiarisation with the mountain was achieved through controlled cultivation of flora and fauna, another “means of subjugating and controlling Table Mountain was to tame its wild beasts”.¹¹⁷ An earlier attempt to do this had been made by settlers who established a small menagerie in the company gardens but Rhodes’ zoo project was far grander than this. “Zoos are”, as Mullan and Marvin argue, “about humans, for zoos tell us stories of human power, the exercise of control and domination”.¹¹⁸ Moreover, Rhodes’ message of ‘power’ would not be lost on his audience as the “zoo...is a dream world that comes easy to one. Easier than the dream world of art galleries which need so many keys to it”.¹¹⁹

The zoo site lies directly above the Grootte Schuur house. A short walk immediately north of the zoo site now takes the visitor on to the University of Cape Town’s campus. The University, whilst not actually built during Rhodes’ own lifetime, was a project conceived by him as a concrete expression of his interest in ideas on scholarship. Slightly further north of these sites is the imposing Rhodes Memorial. That the zoo site was placed within this line of sight along which a connected set of “big ideas” might be investigated is not incidental.¹²⁰ The visitor’s experience of this exemplary landscape was carefully controlled from within the zoo itself since when the visitor

¹¹⁵ Mulder, p.6

¹¹⁶ Fuller, *Continuity and Change in the Cultural Landscape of Table Mountain* p.61

¹¹⁷ *ibid* p.80

¹¹⁸ Mullan, & Marvin, p.45

¹¹⁹ *ibid* p.2

¹²⁰ Shepherd, & Van Reybrouck, p.4

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walks up from one cage to the next, their gaze is drawn further upwards along Devil's peak and across these other sites that memorialise Rhodes. Perhaps even more significantly, when the visitor looks back from a series of prudently placed viewpoints to see where they have just climbed from, their gaze is naturally carried northwards over the city and beyond that to the Karoo and "golden city of Johannesburg".¹²¹ Essentially, our gaze is directed beyond the boundaries of our own sight towards Cairo, a 'civilised' city at the other extreme of Africa and Rhodes' ultimate ambition for colonising the whole continent of Africa. The most "frivolous formalism" of the zoo layout is, as Merrington suggests was often the case, "blended with the colossal scale of Rhodes' imperial dream, as if the idea were thereby in some way domesticated, rendered self-evident or inevitably part of the scheme of things".¹²² However, there is perhaps an alternative reading along this line, in the post 1910 Union period. Instead of looking as far as Cairo, the visitor might imagine gazing only as far as Johannesburg and northern South Africa, towards the boundary of the newly unified Nation. More recently, this northward looking perspective can be seen as reflecting a desire to look towards the interior, towards Africa, instead of facing the sea and the direction from which, in popular imagination at least, the white settlers arrived.

Central to any close reading of the zoo is a close examination of the lions' cage as this feature retained prominence in the imagination of the public throughout this period. Yet, the remnants of today's cage allude little to the first spectacular enclosure that Cecil Rhodes and Herbert Baker envisaged in 1894. Two other lion's cages were subsequently planned and actually built between 1900 and 1929 but neither was as dramatic as the first house. The desire to create so elaborate a setting to display these beasts was quite in keeping with Rhode's wider fascination with the lion as a motif for British Imperialism. Indeed, if, as Holtorf and Van Reybrouck suggest in their paper 'Towards an Archaeology of Zoos', "individual features...can become indications and clues for what zoos are, or were, about", then there cannot be a more compelling example than that of the lion's cage which seems to encapsulate and communicate so many of Rhodes' ideas on the Imperial mission.¹²³

¹²¹ *Groote Schuur: the residence of the Right Honourable Cecil J. Rhodes* (Spottiswoode and Co.; London, 1896) p.5

¹²² Merrington, p.331

¹²³ Holtorf, & Van Reybrouck

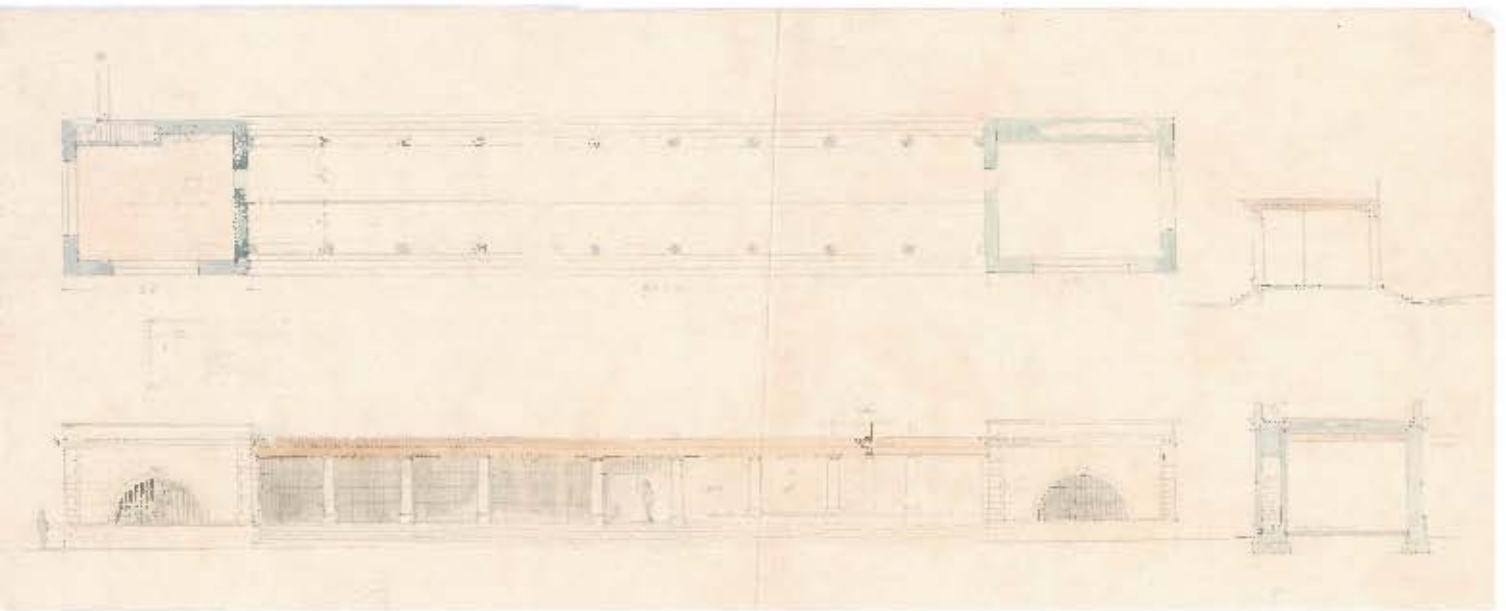


Fig. 3. M & A UCT: BC206, Herbert Baker's original plans for the lion house, 1894

The original plans above show an elaborate enclosure complete with summer and winter houses for the lions and a promenade that Baker suggests satisfied the "Old Roman" in Rhodes who "pictured the beauty of lions moving through Great Columns".¹²⁴ The columns are imitations of the Tuscan order that Baker encountered in Rome during his tour of Classical European sites, which had been funded and directed by Rhodes. This order is basically a simplified version of Roman Doric, which itself is an adaptation of the Greek Doric order. Architecturally, it only came into its own in Roman architecture. The curved arches of the sleeping dens are repeated in the most recent lions' den.

Architecture in historic views is often used in such a way "to create a mood in order to emphasise what was felt to be some cultural quality associated with the animal".¹²⁵ The European visitor, dazzled by the enclosure's obvious grandeur, would also be capable of interpreting the series of "encoded meanings" and "signs" that were captured in this construction as the Victorian public was familiar with the Classical civilisations.¹²⁶ In consciously alluding to these historically great Empires, Rhodes could hope to legitimise the very idea of Empire itself and thus his own empire-building project in Southern Africa.¹²⁷ These are the "familiar cultural signs and practices" that Christina Wessely argues remain as "central concepts and mechanisms" in the construction of the zoo.¹²⁸ However, in her article Wessley argues that zoos built in the nineteenth century normally placed animals within a setting that would only be familiar to the viewer for its exotic

¹²⁴ Herbert Baker, *Cecil Rhodes by his Architect Herbert Baker*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1934) p.46

¹²⁵ Mullan & Marvin, p.48

¹²⁶ Wittenberg, "Rhodes Memorial: Imperial Aesthetics & the Politics of Prospect", p.1

¹²⁷ *ibid.*, p.7

¹²⁸ Wessely, p.4

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character. As such, African elephants were put in Indian pagodas and other animals in fantasy enclosures complete with turrets and all manner of strange paraphernalia. Conversely, at Grootte Schuur, in this imagined setting, the lion was immediately separated from its natural 'exotic' environment by this constructed Classical cage which also placed the lion in another framework of time. The intention was rather a perfect fusion of all that was apparently best in European culture with all that was best about Africa; essentially Africa without the Africans as with the white settler dream topography.

This early project, had it seen fruition, would have been extensive and costly. Indeed, the plans were later revised for this expedient reason. However, an examination of Baker's accounts for the year 1898 highlights how important this project of the lions' house was to him and his patron. He writes in his inventory about the "special nature of the work", which requires a wide variety of building materials, including teak, lime, iron and cartage, still all amounting to a hefty £762 17 6.¹²⁹

¹²⁹ M & A UCT: BC206, Box 49, Grootte, Schuur: CR, 1898 Herbert Baker

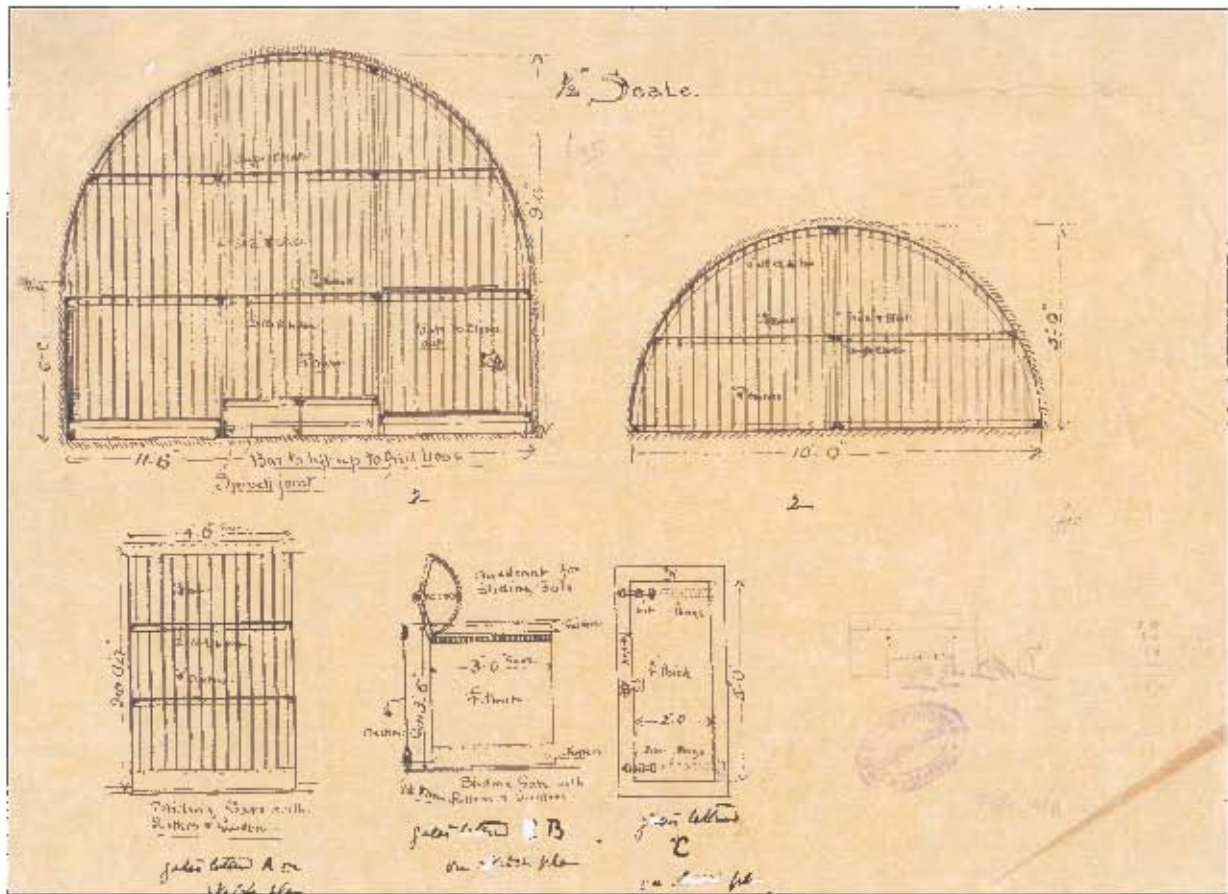


Fig. 4. M & A UCT: BC206. Revised plans for the Lion's cage, 1898

The detailed drawings of the cage bars and door above show attempts to modify and revise the original plans but as the cost suggests, the work, involving pulley systems and sliding gates was still complicated and extensive. However, the arched shape of the bars is a feature that was used when the lion cage was re-imagined in 1929 and that can still be seen today. Interest in the lion house persisted even after a mysterious fire in the thatched roof burnt down the Groote Schuur house on 15th December 1896. Expensive and time consuming renovations ensued so that the house might be returned to its former glory, and yet ideas about building a house for the lions were not abandoned.

The cage that was first actually built to display the lions, was far simpler than Baker and Rhodes had hoped. It was this cage that the nation inherited in 1902 when the Government took possession of Rhodes' estate after his death and in accordance with his will. The photograph

below, taken in the early twentieth century, shows the alignment of cages along the roadside. The big cat house, whilst attracting more attention by virtue of the perceived ferocity of the animals it enclosed, was not particularly striking in its appearance. The heavy bars of these early cages did, as Mullan and Marvin suggest, "signify the presence of a dangerous beast which had to be separated from humans...not only does such a barrier fulfil the practical purposes of physical separation but it is also a symbolic device heavily laden with significance".¹³⁰ In this case, the perceived inherent ferocity of the lion, which makes it so difficult to manage, is alluded to by the presence of the thick safety bars yet, simultaneously, the fact that the lion is caged is supposedly symbolic of Rhodes' authority over nature, in spite of its perceived resistance.

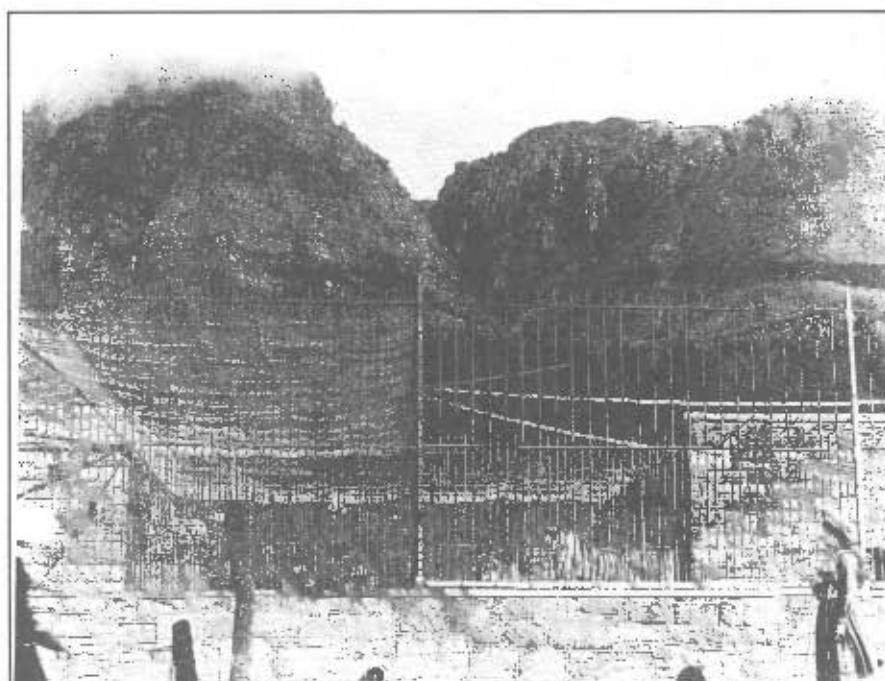


Fig. 5. CA: R1507, (Ravenscroft Collection), Young girl viewing the lions(Exact date unknown)

These photographs of the zoo are from the Ravenscroft collection in the National Archives in Cape Town. Thomas Ravenscroft settled in the Cape in 1900 after travelling Southern Africa as a commissioned photographer for the Cape Government railways. He was a frequent visitor to the southern suburbs since Rhodes "requested his services at Groote Schuur on diverse occasions".¹³¹ Most of the pictures in this collection were taken in his earliest years in Cape Town, before 1918 when he moved and settled in Hermanus.

In the picture above, a young girl peers intently at the lions through the cage bars. Her stance is that of an interested observer - she shows no outward signs of fear at her proximity to a 'dangerous' animal. Indeed, the heavy bars succeed in giving a sense of distance and security as they are symbols of man's authority over nature. The girl is able to move freely around the cage whereas the lion, a symbol of untamed Africa, is captured within it. The scene seems to be an allegory of colonialism.

Significantly, it is framed by the omnipresent Table Mountain, which rises above the cages in the background.

¹³⁰ Mullan & Marvin, p.51

¹³¹ W J Kock (ed.) *Dictionary of South Africa Biography* Vol.III (Cape Town & Johannesburg: Tafelberg-Uitgewers Ltd., 1972) p.702

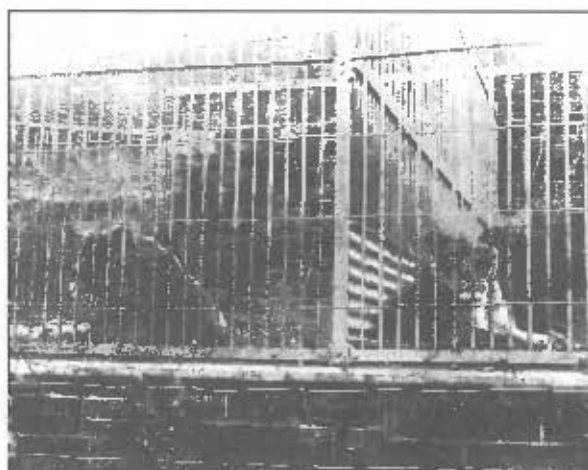


Fig. 6. CA: R1506. Early Lion cage (Exact date unknown)

Again, the heavy bars and calm appearance of the lions give a sense that Nature, or Africa, has been tamed at the zoo.

The location of these cages is particularly important in terms of understanding how the feature may have been read in Rhodes' time. It seems that Rhodes' choice of location was somewhat precarious in that it was on the periphery of his estate, bordering what is now De Waal Drive. In a letter to Mr Mansergh of the Cape Council in 1910, the writer, whose own name is no longer legible in the run ink, drew attention to the fact that "a portion of the road leading past the lions, and a piece of ground above it, is the property of the estate of Mr Moodie... Mr Rhodes was never able to purchase this land owing to its being entailed but to get over the difficulty he hired it at an annual rental of £10".¹³² For Rhodes to go to such lengths then to secure this area, one can only assume that this space held a particular significance for him. It is not as though there was insufficient room to establish a cage elsewhere on his vast estate which extended far up the slopes of Table Mountain. The explanation for this must surely lie in access to the animals. In a letter to the editor of the Cape Times, printed in the 18th November 1910 issue, a reader described how "astonished and dismayed" he was "to find that fences were being put up all around... to enclose the Glen... and the most direct road from Rondebosch to the lions".¹³³ Such previous ease of public access to the lions in Rhodes' time was possible through this location on almost 'borrowed' land but was certainly what he intended as it allowed an immediate association to be formed by the public between his estate and the lion and, in turn, with him. Furthermore, this location for the lion's den allowed his own physical proximity to the lions as there once existed an "avenue leading from [the] main

¹³²CA: PWD (Public Works Department) vol.2/2/29, ref.B124/9, Letter to Mr Mansergh, 21 November 1910

¹³³ *Cape Times*, 18 November 1910, Letter to the Editor

doorway of the hall to what was once the bird and tortoise paddock, below the lion house of the zoo".¹³⁴ This desire for direct proximity with the lion, perceived by Rhodes as the icon for Imperialism, was frequently expressed, and finally eternalised, in the Rhodes' memorial just along from the zoo. The careful location of the lion cage by Baker and Rhodes must be read as part of the process of creating a dream landscape.

After 1910, the Union Government assumed control of the lions. There followed an extensive campaign to reconstruct the zoo to be more of a zoological garden, which will be discussed below. However, as plans for the reconstruction demonstrate, the lions' cage still occupied a prominent position at the centre of this new symmetrical cage arrangement. Part of the reorganisation depended on shifting the cages further up the mountain slopes, away from the roadside and it was the lion cage that was placed at the pinnacle position of the zoo. The idea was that the visitor would pass the less exotic animals on their way upwards and reach, as the finale, the most 'wild' and least tame of all the animals in the zoo. The suspense that was forced in the design of this view ensured that the prominence of the lion would be appreciated when the climb was completed.

From the front, this lion's cage still appears as something of a theatrical backdrop, complete with a stage in which the lions might perform. This setting, which is far less spectacular than that originally envisaged by Rhodes and Baker, does not detract from the wider vista of Table Mountain and Devil's peak, but does incorporate the arched features of the early imagined house, as discussed above. Thus, the lions performed within a setting that was perceived as more African, which was particularly important in this post-European Colonial period when South Africa was toying with her own separate identity. The lion was now being interpreted more as an African icon, rather than an imperial one. These similar ideas were also of course being thought about the flora on the estate at that time, particularly at Kirstenbosch.

¹³⁴ Mulder, p.15

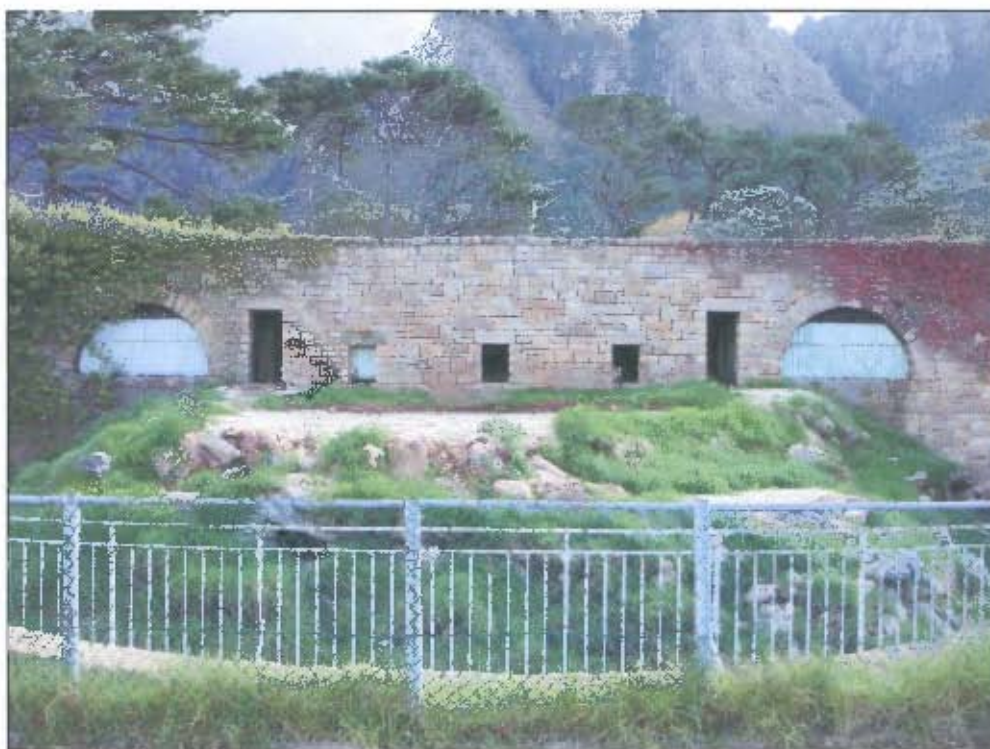


Fig. 7. The Lion's Cage, as it stands empty today

The absence of the earlier heavy bars and the use of a moat around the central area make this cage a prime example of Carl Hagenbeck's cage design.

The lions would enter this central foreground from the pens at the back, almost like actors entering from the wings and the visitor could watch them 'perform' as they grazed and fed from the pit below. Nowadays it is people, not lions, who 'act' on this stage. At the moment a theatre production of *Rolling Heads* is being housed here at the Old Zoo. It is still the moat that separates audience from actors.

However, whilst the act might be very different, the wider setting is the same as the stage continues to be overshadowed by the looming Mountain Under which Rhodes once acted out his ideas of Empire.

This new design was also motivated in part by a growing concern for animal welfare in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. On the 19th April 1929, a short piece appeared in the newspaper about the extensive reorganisation of the zoo which detailed how the lions would now, as a result of public pressure, be "housed in a pit or enclosure, where there [sic] will be able to roam about and stretch their limbs with greater liberty than hitherto".¹³⁵ These ideas reflect a shift in ideas towards animals and nature in the period, which was reflected in a change in the design of zoo cages across Europe, first inspired by Carl Hagenbeck in 1910. His idea was to create "an impression of how these animals really lived" and so "animal enclosures were thus designed to be open air panoramas with concealed moats rather than bars confining the animals to their allotted space. For the first time the public could stand in front of wild animals and see them without the intrusion of any visual

¹³⁵CA: 3/CT vol.4/1/5:121, ref. B562/5, Newspaper clipping (without heading), 19 April 1929

obstruction".¹³⁶ As Green argues, by this stage, animals were no longer considered threatening or different; rather they had become interesting since man's authority over nature in this respect was no longer contested.¹³⁷

Consequently, the lions, along with the other animals at the zoo came to be seen as interesting objects of scientific study as fear of them abated. This attitude also determined the latest cage design, as another article appearing slightly later in 1929 in the *Cape Times* suggests. This piece detailed the layout enclosure as having "five sleeping dens, five separate pens and one common pen in the centre", made out of "iron grilles".¹³⁸ These five dens are placed discretely behind the common pen, in which most visitors saw the lions. However, there was the opportunity to view the lions from an alternative vantage point in their sleeping pens. The effect of repeated cages in a line seems to be symptomatic of what Wessely describes as a contemporary "preference for taxonomic exhibitions".¹³⁹ The lions are viewed less as individuals and more as subjects to be studied, which surely is fitting with a growing interest in the disciplines of biology and zoology in particular. The public was able to study these animals in these display cases behind the open enclosure but at a distance of "no nearer than six feet".¹⁴⁰ The boundary between human and animal is fixed; there is to be no actual interaction between the two.

¹³⁶ Mullan & Marvin, p.51

¹³⁷ Green, "Alternatives at the end of nature" p.5

¹³⁸ *Cape Times*, "Groote Schuur Menagerie", 25 November 1929

¹³⁹ Wessely, p.2

¹⁴⁰ *Cape Times*, "Groote Schuur Menagerie", 25 November 1929



Fig. 8. 'Backstage' at the lions' den

Hidden behind the front façade of the lion house, depicted in Fig. 7, lies this series of sleeping pens. Here, the heavy bars are still in use, which testifies to the fact that the lions are not tamed to the point that they offer no threat and can merely be considered interesting. The main stage is instead something of an illusion, representing how man now wishes to perceive his relationship with Nature. These animals remained something of a mystery and hence continued to be an interesting subject for scientific study, whilst retaining a place in popular imagination.

At the beginning of this process of reconstruction, in 1929, debates ensued over the status of Grootte Schuur zoo site and an article appeared in the Cape Times stating that the "trustees of the Rhodes Estate d[id] not regard the place as a "zoo" but merely a "collection of animals"".¹⁴¹ Furthermore, the journalist claimed that "Cecil Rhodes at no time contemplated the formation of a large zoo on the estate", which was apparently reflected in his and Baker's use of the term "menagerie" on the official plans, rather than zoo per se.¹⁴² If indeed we are to regard the Rhodes zoo as merely a collection of animals then this surely affects our reading of the place as it suggests a more limited and specific access to this element of a dream topography. It becomes a private, rather than a public, landscape.

As a 'collection', this menagerie then seems to be part of a historical Western interest with accumulation that James Clifford argues has "long been a strategy for the deployment of a

¹⁴¹ *ibid*

¹⁴² *ibid*

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possessive self, culture and authenticity".¹⁴³ Rhodes' wider desire for "the extension of British rule throughout the world" and "colonisation by British subjects of all lands" captures a similar spirit of the need for possession to that expressed in his accumulation of a wide variety of animals.¹⁴⁴ Clifford argues further that collecting "implies a rescue of the phenomena from inevitable decay or loss...the collection contains what 'deserves to be kept, remembered and treasured'".¹⁴⁵ Rhodes then, in forming his collection was, on a smaller scale, determining which elements he wished to have as representatives of not only Africa but the wider British Empire. It was his interpretation of what was significant that was expressed in his collection which left him in a very powerful position in terms of what he included and, significantly, in terms of the elements that he decided not to preserve in this framework. His ability to select and omit does, in this context, place him in a very powerful position in determining how his audience also interpreted the Empire.

The animals that Rhodes chose to inhabit his zoo and to display to his public were certainly carefully selected. The lions were most obviously imbued with imperial meaning, as contemplated above. However, the other animals in the collection were also very significant. Animals of a local African origin included the springbok, "Zebra, wildebeest, ostriches and the slow, deliberate tortoise", all of which could "wander at leisure" in their indigenous African environment.¹⁴⁶ But even in the "early days" of the zoo, "Rhodes introduced a great variety of unusual animals such as Japanese Sambur deer and Himalayan Tar".¹⁴⁷ "Kangaroos, wallabies and emus were imported from Australia and llamas from Peru; there were aviaries filled with golden pheasants, quail from California and wild duck from Japan".¹⁴⁸ English fallow deer and the grey squirrel were also imported from Rhodes' home country in great numbers, both of which flourished prolifically in the ensuing years. Essentially, nearly every corner of the globe touched by the British Empire in Rhodes' time was represented in the zoo. Europe was fused with Africa, Asia, Australasia and the Americas.

¹⁴³ J. Clifford, "On Collecting Art and Culture" in S. During, *The Cultural Studies Reader*, (Routledge: London, 1993) pp.57-76 at p.60

¹⁴⁴ Cecil Rhodes' first will, 1877, cited in A. Davidson, *Cecil Rhodes and his time*, (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1988) p.7

¹⁴⁵ Clifford, p.67

¹⁴⁶ Simons, p.41

¹⁴⁷ Mulder, p.127

¹⁴⁸ Simons, p.41



Fig. 9. CA: R1499. Zebras (Exact date unknown)

This photograph above is also part of the Ravenscroft Collection. The four zebras are not photographed behind bars but instead appear to wander freely around the Estate, as Rhodes supposedly wished. The vegetation from which they are feeding are camphor trees, imported from Britain by Rhodes and planted across the Estate. This image captures the fusion of Africa, embodied in figure of the zebra, with Britain, represented by the Camphor trees, which is a microcosm of Rhodes notion of Empire.¹⁴⁹

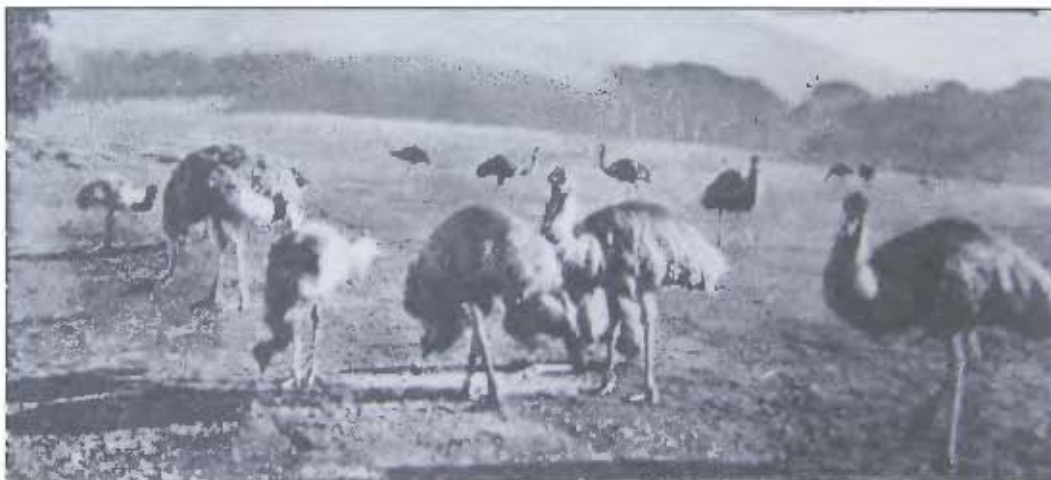


Fig. 10. CA: AG11189 (Archive General Photograph Collection), "Ostriches", c.1913

(This is the title under which this photograph appears in the archive. However, the birds actually seem to be emus, not ostriches)

¹⁴⁹ The camphor tree is native to Taiwan, southern Japan, southeast China and Indochina. However, it came to be associated with the British Empire when, in the eighteenth century, the Royal Society for Arts, Manufacture and Commerce, began to offer premiums for successful introduction of camphor trees into the West Indies and other areas of the Empire. Thus, this specie came to be a symbol of specifically British interest in those countries into which it was introduced.

The emu is indigenous to Australia, which was already part of the British Empire when Rhodes arrived in South Africa. These birds meander through stone pines and camphor trees, as well as through Cape fynbos, and are another element of the hybrid landscape. In the background of this picture, we can see the slopes of the Mountain against which the whole Estate was set.



Fig. 11. CA: R1498. Peruvian llamas at the zoo (Exact date unknown)

In this picture by Ravenscroft, we see an animal that is neither familiar with the 'African' elements of the landscape, nor with the stone pines and camphor trees that were at least recognised as 'British', in spite of the fact that the former are not indigenous to this island. By introducing animals that are obviously associated with areas beyond Africa and Europe, in this case from South America, Rhodes succeeded in proving how extensive was the realm of the British Empire. The whole world should, in his understanding, be brought under the control of Britain. At Groote Schuur he played out this idea by introducing animals from all over the world into the same space over which he presided. Again, this was the Empire in microcosmic form.

However, this "hybrid vision" of Rhodes was applied only to the "world of natural species and African landscapes", not, as Nick Shepherd and David van Reybrouck point out, to "African people (emphasis in original text)".¹⁵⁰ Rhodes may have toyed with the idea of mixing cultures in his zoo collection but outside these confines the idea of miscegenation or racial mixing horrified him and his contemporary Imperialists. His elaboration of the Glen Grey Act, more popularly known as the "law for Africa", was one in which Rhodes' biographer, David Apollon, suggests "we can already see features of the policies which were followed in South Africa...under the name of

¹⁵⁰ Shepherd, & Van Reybrouck, p.4

'apartheid'.¹⁵¹ Racial purity and a belief in the inherent superiority of the Anglo-Saxons continued to underpin the Imperial mission, embodied in the figure of Rhodes himself. Yet, in a landscape that was envisaged in terms of the white settler dream topography as "empty" of people, Rhodes was able to play out other ideas.¹⁵²

Returning to the issue of the zoo's status, it seems that the intended audience for Rhodes' collection was extensive. This menagerie, if he did truly consider it as that, was not a private collection with limited or special access. While the lions were always housed within the confines of a den out of necessity, the zoo was "originally planned so that a large variety of animals could freely roam in large paddocks" and thus could be viewed from many areas on the estate.¹⁵³ This notion of placing the house at the centre of the menagerie was not a novel one. At Versailles, Louis XIV had constructed his collection in such a way that "nature is reorganised into a pattern which converges on the house at the centre of the system and from where it can be seen at a glance".¹⁵⁴ As such, "one had to be in this central position in order to survey the entire collection with one sweeping glance", which held clear "implications in terms of relationships of visibility, power and control".¹⁵⁵ The inhabitants of Rondebosch and Mowbray were able to see some of the zoo animals from their own dwellings but their view was piecemeal compared with that of Rhodes.

However, the local inhabitants did enjoy closer encounters with the animals than this as Rhodes publicly adopted an open access policy for his estate. In fact, Rhodes rarely closed off the Groote Schuur estate to his public and only when it was an emergency situation; "only when there was an outbreak of the dreaded *rinderpest*...did he order the gates to be temporarily closed".¹⁵⁶ Rhodes' desire to keep open access to the zoo was acknowledged even posthumously. In a letter dated 23rd September 1926 Mr Bird as representative of the City Council wrote to the Town Clerk to inform him that were a new zoo established on the site the "council would not charge for admission, it would not in any way be going against the late Mr Cecil Rhodes last wish that it

¹⁵¹ Davidson, p.233

¹⁵² Coetzee, p.7

¹⁵³ Mulder, p.127

¹⁵⁴ Mullan & Marvin, p.101

¹⁵⁵ *ibid* p.103

¹⁵⁶ Simons, p.42

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should remain free to the public".¹⁵⁷ When "reproached once by a friend for allowing the public to wander all over the Grootte Schuur Gardens at will", as they still may...he answered, "some men put cows in their park, I like to see people in mine".¹⁵⁸ Thus, the public served a dual function. Their presence was necessary so that they could appreciate Rhodes' power manifested in his grand estate and collection of animals and in turn reinforce and reassure him of his own prominent position in Southern Africa. Simultaneously, the visitors seem to have become part of the zoo, mingling freely with the animals as they did within the same boundaries of the Grootte Schuur estate as the animals. Only the lions and leopard were cut off from the people with a more definite cage boundary. The public, like the animals, were, of course, an essential part of Rhodes' Empire and their presence in the zoo allowed Rhodes to appreciate his perceived relationship of power over them too. I wish, however, to reiterate that whilst the public were a significant feature at this earliest zoo, Rhodes' understanding of 'public' was selective along racial lines, rather than truly comprehensive.

After Rhodes' death, the zoo was passed over to the ownership of the government trustees in accordance with clause thirteen of the former owner's will that stated "De Grootte Schuur" and "all other land belonging to [him] situated under table mountain" be cared for.¹⁵⁹ The provision was, however, that "any buildings that may be erected shall be used exclusively for public purpose".¹⁶⁰ Open access to the estate was to be his legacy. In 1910, following the Union of South Africa, the management of the zoo site passed into the care of Henri Jacques Guillaumedé Fonseca Wolfheim until 1931, which allowed him to witness all ensuing debates about the future of this landscape.

The zoo that the Union of South Africa inherited in 1910 had altered little since Rhodes' time. Indeed it was not until much later in the period that demands for change were either raised or considered seriously.

¹⁵⁷ CA: 3/CT, vol.4/1/5/121, ref. B562/5, Letter from Mr Bird, Rondebosch to the Town Clerk, 23 September 1926

¹⁵⁸ Mulder, p.6

¹⁵⁹ CA: PWD, vol.2/2/29, ref.B124/9, Rhodes Final Will, Clause 13, 1 July 1899

¹⁶⁰ *ibid*



Fig. 12. CA: R1508. The first zoo at Groote Schuur

In this picture we can see how visitors enjoyed close interaction with some of the less dangerous animals, such as the lamb to the bottom right of the image. The lions and big cats were housed in the heavily barred cages behind. The scene is again framed by the Mountain.

One of the major concerns about the zoo site was the issue of animal welfare which was gaining prominence within influential circles especially during the 'twenties. The proximity of the cages to the road, which is shown above, provoked numerous complaints. According to Mulder, in this period "concern for both the free running and caged animals reached phenomenal proportions".¹⁶¹ The letters and newspaper articles published and preserved at, and from this time, certainly suggest that this was the case. On 28th March 1929 the Town Clerk of Cape Town received a letter from a Miss J R Pollock who was a resident of Rondebosch and visitor of the old Rhodes' zoo that demanded "the speedy release from torture of the wretched animals and large birds at present...in that most pitiable pretence of a zoo".¹⁶² Her distress at the "wickedly criminal conditions [that] have been existent ever since the prison was constructed" are not unique but are symptomatic of those that litter the small archive section that covers this period of the zoo's

¹⁶¹ Mulder, p.126

¹⁶² CA: 3/CT, vol.4:1/5/121, ref. B562/5, Letter to Town Clerk from Miss J R Pollock, 29 March 1929

history.¹⁶³ Green suggests that this "impulse to lessen the suffering of captive animals" is as much a reflection of a shift in the "position 'nature' occupies in society", as an indication of more humane treatment.¹⁶⁴ The implication then is that Rhodes had so successfully projected an image of a landscape where the animals, albeit not tamed, ceased to be considered a threat. It was a landscape that seemed to fall perfectly under his control yet, people came to resent his methods of control and this criticism perhaps facilitated an alternative reading of the landscape which no longer sees it as ideal.

In 1928, it did not seem that such welfare complaints were influencing the government to any significant degree as the Town Clerk issued a statement in July of that year to the effect that his council "would not in any way increase or alter the existing zoo; all that was intended was to remove the cages a little higher up the mountainside".¹⁶⁵ However, a year later, in apparent response to increased Public pressure the Cape Times revealed in a short article entitled "Extensive scheme of Reorganisation" that "in the plans for the reconstruction of the zoo attention has been paid to the consistent complaints of the Society for the prevention of the Cruelty to animals and other kindred bodies" so that "cages which formerly were very close to the roadway will be removed and rebuilt in more secluded surroundings".¹⁶⁶ To some extent then the layout of the zoo site must be understood as an expression of these contemporary public concerns that were successful in influencing the shape of reconstruction. This public was no longer committed to rehearsing Rhodes' reading of this landscape.

Plans for this zoo reconstruction were somewhat overshadowed by and influenced by the simultaneous construction of the University on adjacent land. As the University was coming into its heyday of conception the once glorious zoo was falling into a state of disrepair and would henceforth always stand in the shadow of the spectacular University setting. The early decision of the UCT Building Committee to compartmentalise buildings along departmental lines was a practice similarly employed at the new zoo in 1929. As the plan in figure 13 shows, cages were divided quite definitely between groups of species. Substantial intervals of space separated the

¹⁶³ *ibid*

¹⁶⁴ Green, *Disciplining the Landscape*, p.6

¹⁶⁵ CA: 3/CT, vol.4/1/5/121, ref. B562/5, Letter to Assistant Secretary from the Town Clerk, Cape Peninsula Public Association, 19 July 1928

¹⁶⁶ CA: 3/CT, vol.4/1/5/121, ref. B562/5, Newspaper Clipping, 19 April 1929

enclosures, which permitted optimum viewing so that the species could be studied. This formation of a zoological garden was a natural continuation from the establishment of the botanical gardens at Kirstenbosch. When, shortly after the formation of a special committee to deal with the zoo question was formed on the 31st October 1929, Councillor H Jasper Smith declared that "there was no reason why the city should not have one of the finest zoological gardens in the world", he was expressing a popular view.¹⁶⁷ Principal Beattie of UCT had already proposed a similar suggestion to the Council in 1928 when he wrote: "South Africa is essentially an agricultural country and the various education departments are endeavouring to turn the interest of South Africans-particularly those who are town bred-towards that view of nature which is preliminary to a systematic study of agricultural life and work. Nature study and biology have been introduced into the school curriculum and on the botanical side the work of the schools is assisted by co-operation between the educational authorities and the trustees of the National Botanical Gardens at Kirstenbosch; in this way direct contact with South African plants in the living state is provided. A similar result could be obtained for South African Animals were suitable arrangements made at the zoological park. The Zoological Park would provide opportunity for research in problems of special interest to South Africa...Our wonderful flora can be seen by [visitors] at Kirstenbosch, our no less wonderful fauna should be shown at the Zoological Park."¹⁶⁸ In the aftermath of overt European colonialism, a South Africanisation of knowledge was taking place. These places that became interconnected sites for conducting scientific and academic research merely reflected this trend.

This more methodical arrangement of the zoo was also a matter of necessity in terms of satisfying a public previously antagonised by the roaming zoo animals on the Grootte Schuur site. It seems that people no longer possessed (if in fact they ever did) a shared appreciation of Rhodes' vision of the beauty of wild animals wandering freely between the mountain slopes of his grounds and the more European setting of the Grootte Schuur estate. The animals were becoming a nuisance. In 1934 the Cape Town Water Works department wrote a particularly irate letter to the Public Works department, now in charge of the zoo, threatening to shoot down any animals found grazing in their newly established plantations. A series of similar and equally hostile complaints

¹⁶⁷ CA: 3/CT, vol.4/1/5/121, ref. B562/5, Report of Meeting of the Special Committee re. Zoological Gardens held at the City Hall, Cape Town, 8 November 1929

¹⁶⁸ CA: 3/CT, vol.4/1/5/121, ref. B562/5, Letter to J R Finch, esq. City Hall, Cape Town from J C Beattie, Principal at UCT, 7 May 1928

eventually "necessitated the fencing off of the entire estate up to the steepest crags where the crannies and cliffs in any case formed a natural barrier".¹⁶⁹

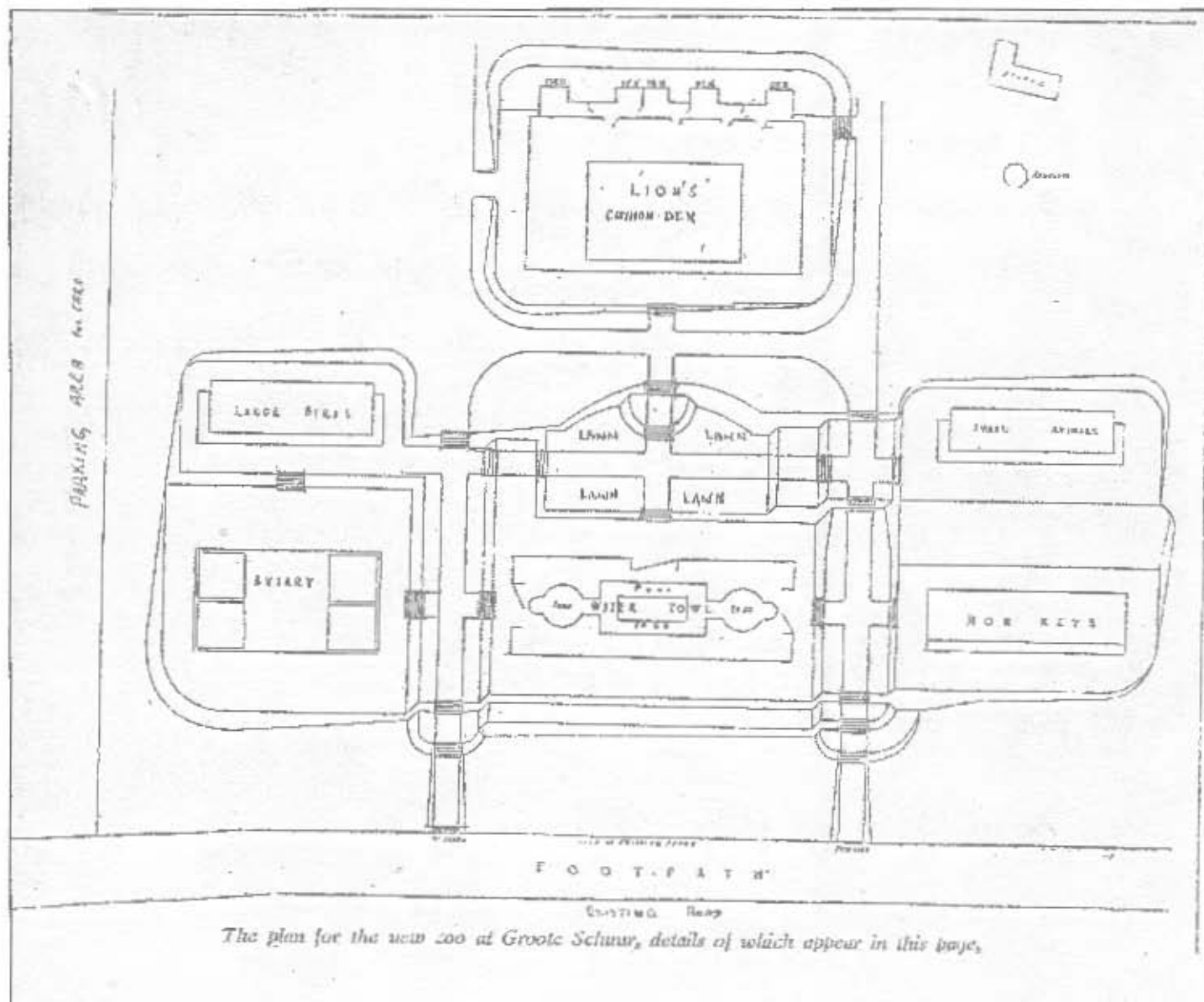


Fig. 13. *Cape Times*, "Plans for the new zoo on the original Groot Schuur site". 25 December 1929

In the new methodological arrangement of the zoo into a zoological garden, the lion house continues to occupy the prominent position on the hillside. It is the closest enclosure to the mountain peak and draws the visitors towards this point as they pass through the other cages on their way to this final construction. As the plan shows, the cages were well spaced to allow visitors to study and scrutinize the animals within.

¹⁶⁹ Mulder, p.127

As Rhodes' successors changed their ideas about how animals and the zoo should be read and understood, his absolute vision for this element of the estate was, in some way, undermined. Again, the geographical landscape of Table Mountain, whose natural magnificence the zoo was intended to enhance, along with other practical constraints also served as obstacles to his dream. Yet, the remnants of the idea of his dream still linger today. The zoo does stand on the site that Rhodes set aside for it and the remains are still heavily steeped in symbols and ideas that can be read now as they were in imperial times. However, as ideas on nature and landscape shifted and changed over this period, fissures appeared in Rhodes' dream topography and people began to entertain the idea of alternative readings of this element of the landscape.

Rhodes Memorial

"To the North, Table Bay in the Atlantic, to the South, False Bay in the Indian Ocean, and Eastwards over the wide-stretching Cape Flats to the distant peaks of the Hottentots Holland and the plateau of the South African Hinterland"¹⁷⁰

(The view from Rhodes Memorial)



Fig 14. Rhodes Memorial (Own image)

The most eye catching and fantastical element on the Groote Schuur Estate must be the Rhodes Memorial that was formally unveiled on 5th July 1912. However, the very fact that it was constructed and opened so many years after Rhodes' death poses some difficulties in terms of reading it as part of *his* dream topography. We are faced with the realisation that this aspect, more than the floral landscaping and zoo layout, was the product of those people who were left with the task of interpreting Rhodes' legacy as they continued to shape his bequeathed estate. Yet, the group of planners was probably closer to Rhodes than those in charge of executing his ideas on any other part of the estate. In 1905 Lord Grey, Lord Rosebery, Lord Milner, Sir Leander Starr

¹⁷⁰ M & A UC1: BC206, Box 73, *Dedication of the Rhodes Memorial, Groote Schuur, Cape Town*, Souvenir program, 5 July 1912

Jameson, Mr Hawksley and Sir Lewis Michell formed a group of trustees and appointed themselves the task of creating a memorial that would be fitting for their mentor. However, since Rhodes had spent a significant portion of his time considering the form of his own memorial in the latter years of his life, the Trustees did possess a set of guidelines for their project, vague as these might have been. Indeed, Wittenberg suggests that in the aftermath of the disastrous Jameson raid, Rhodes “spent the rest of his life devoted to his business interests and making arrangements for his memorialisation”.¹⁷¹ His trustees then, along with his premier architect, Herbert Baker, did have some idea of how Rhodes’ dream memorial might take shape on the mountain side. But, of course, they also had the opportunity to alter this as they saw fit.

Another reference point for planning was the knowledge that Rhodes had always sought the “continuation of the Imperial idea in two interrelated spatio-temporal endeavours: scholarship and architecture”.¹⁷² The trustees’ physical proximity to Rhodes throughout his life afforded them a more detailed understanding of Rhodes’ own notion of imperialism and the form it might take. As discussed in the previous chapter, his ideas on a particular form of imperialism had already been played out in architectural constructions at the zoo site, which he had directed and overseen during his lifetime. We should not assume, however, that there was a comprehensive appreciation of Rhodes’ desire for a memorial or the shape that it might take, nor that there was absolute agreement over this issue, even within the small group of trustees. As far as the wider public was concerned, it seems as though most were fairly ignorant of the scheme. In January 1912, just a few months before the official opening ceremony at the site, the Town Clerk addressed a letter to Herbert Baker’s firm to “question...the general conception of the memorial at Groote Schuur, and whether there was any intention in the mind of the late Mr Rhodes to build such an architectural adornment in connection with the estate, and the motive therefor [*sic*], if any”.¹⁷³ Consequently, it seems that knowledge of Rhodes’ dream of a memorial was limited to a smaller group of people who were most probably in a better position to interpret and proceed with it but, simultaneously, were in a position to influence it taking a different shape if they wished simply on the basis of the authority that their former proximity to Rhodes afforded them. Furthermore those people, the majority of who were black Africans, who continued to suffer economically and socially in the

¹⁷¹ Wittenberg, “Rhodes Memorial: Imperial Aesthetics & the Politics of Prospect” p.4

¹⁷² *ibid* p.6

¹⁷³ M & A UCT: BC605, folder A1, Town Clerk to Baker, 6 January 1912

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aftermath of Rhodes, are unlikely to have remembered him in so favourable a light as the trustees and many white English speaking Capetonians did. Yet, these alternative stories of opposition are silenced by an archive that was formed in a hegemonic Imperial discourse. So successful is the archive at normalising ignorance of these differing voices that their absence is not even heeded.

Initially even the location of the site posed some problems for the group of trustees. The estate by 1912 now belonged to the Union government, as Rhodes requested in his will. His trustees were not, however, content to allow the Union government, or anyone else, to take credit for the construction of the monument on the mountainside. In an effort to refute any similar suggestions, Baker's firm announced quite resolutely that it would "be as well to remind the people that it is possible to put the monument in the beautiful position in which it is owing to Rhodes' own generosity. He, himself, bought practically the whole of the slopes of Table Mountain, stretching for nearly ten miles, and bequeathed all this Estate to the Nation".¹⁷⁴ Lord Grey's speech at the memorial opening reiterated these sentiments. The fulfilment of this dream was, on the insistence of the trustees, to be read as that of Rhodes, not his political successors. There were, in fact, early discrepancies amongst the trustees as to where exactly the site should be located and not all were in agreement about placing the memorial on Rhodes' former Estate. In his biography of Cecil Rhodes, Baker alerts his reader to Lord Grey's suggestion that the memorial be "a colossal statue on the Lion's Head promontory to be seen from Cape Town and the sea".¹⁷⁵ However, the committee was eventually swayed by the argument in favour of the memorial's proximity to the Estate on Table Mountain, which was perceived as embodying the enduring spirit of Rhodes. From Lion's Head, "that beacon hill, [the memorial] would have been invisible from his own beloved mountainside".¹⁷⁶

The site that was finally chosen had already been selected by Rhodes as a favourite place on his Estate from which he claimed to view his 'beloved mountain' and the horizon in the distance. He had previously overseen the clearing of some of the trees in the area so that he might erect a bench on this spot and enjoy the vistas sitting on it. What Rhodes actually pondered on from this spot was less important to him and his trustees than perpetuating the idea that Rhodes had a

¹⁷⁴ M & A UCT: BC605, folder A1, Baker to Robinson, 20 May 1912

¹⁷⁵ Baker, p.130

¹⁷⁶ *ibid* p.130

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special relationship with the mountain that was visibly expressed by his supposed frequenting of this particular place. As I argued in the methodology chapter, it suited Rhodes well to portray himself as a mountain lover as 'mountains' were imbued with all sorts of ideas on civilisation and racial superiority. However, other than this bench there was very little interference in this minute landscape and no other constructions in Rhodes' lifetime.

Baker remained insistent that this was Rhodes' "favourite view" as "first...you climb the mountain, both the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, in Table Bay and False Bay can be seen".¹⁷⁷ Again, in the souvenir program for the dedication ceremony, visitors were forever reminded that here "in the vicinity Rhodes would dream for hours", perpetuating this representation further.¹⁷⁸ The prospect of a spectacular view was, as David Bunn argues, similarly a feature in "much of [Rhodes'] domestic architecture".¹⁷⁹ Yet, for all the advantages that this spot seemed to afford, the wider public were not wholly convinced of the advantages of constructing the memorial here. The *Sunday Post* reported on 30th June 1912 that "when first the site was selected there were fears that the memorial would destroy the natural charm of the landscape" but the official editorial conclusion was that "if anything, it has enhanced it".¹⁸⁰ It is difficult, of course, to determine how far Rhodes was concerned that his wider public share his dream and influenced the shape that his landscape took in exemplifying it. And, his concern was for a very select understanding of 'public'.

Perhaps more important than permitting others to direct the appearance of his dream landscape, was Rhodes' desire that all inhabitants of, and visitors to Cape Town, unavoidably confront its topography. Access and visibility thus remained important throughout the construction and planning of all elements of the Groote Schuur Estate. As discussed above, Baker was particularly concerned that the memorial be viewed on this side of the mountain so that it was visibly connected with all other elements of the landscape to create an effect that would be read as "picturesque". Both Bunn and Mitchell agree that this heightened interest in the picturesque was a feature of Imperial landscapes, particularly in the British Empire. Access to the memorial site still remains something of an issue and was heavily debated and contested during the period of

¹⁷⁷ *ibid* p.127

¹⁷⁸ M & A UCT: BC206, box 73, *Dedication of the Rhodes Memorial, Groote Schuur, Cape Town*, Souvenir program, 5 July 1912

¹⁷⁹ Bunn, 'White Sepulchres: On the Reluctance of Monuments'

¹⁸⁰ *Sunday Post*, 30 June 1912

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construction and immediately after the opening ceremony. In Lord Curzon's report on behalf of the Smartt Syndicate Ltd. about the state of the memorial in 1909, he expressed regret that "at present the memorial is approached by two roads- one from the direction of the lions den, the other from Cape Town...both approach from the most unfavourable of angles- viz the side- where it is impossible to realise the majesty or scale of the memorial".¹⁸¹ Baker was still dissatisfied by these approach roads when writing Rhodes' biography, published in 1934. He argued that "there should be a vista cut through the pine forest below the memorial and terraces formed to lead from 'Rhodes Road' at the bottom of the great slope up to the Memorial" and that "it was found by survey to be a difficult but not an impossible undertaking".¹⁸² However, lack of either funding or enthusiasm meant that the project was never carried through and to this day the Memorial can only be approached directly from the side, even though it can be viewed head on at a distance for miles around.

Yet, as Wittenberg points out, more important than being "the object of the look", is that the monument is "a site where a particular type of looking can take place". The visitor's presence at the monument ensures that "the subject is not only brought face to face to worship the great man, but with what he sees".¹⁸³ The sight is drawn upwards from a height of 150m at the foot of the memorial to Devil's Peak that towers above at 1001m. Horizontally, the visitor's gaze is drawn across to the Hottentot Holland Mountains in the distance, slightly north and south of the 33°57'S line of latitude.

¹⁸¹ M & A UCT: BC605, Lord Curzon Report

¹⁸² Baker, p.132

¹⁸³ Wittenberg, "Rhodes Memorial: Imperial Aesthetics Prospect" p.14



Fig. 15. The view from the top of the memorial: (own image)

Looking northward from the bus, the visitor's sight is first guided down the steps, which are flanked on either side by the bronze lions, to Physical Energy. From there we share the riders' view: "Cape Town glitters below... through the lights a long straight road cuts northward, always northward, through smiling vine-lands and the parched Karoo to cities yet unborn, and at long, long last to Cairo".¹⁸⁴

From this elevated vantage point the subject surveys what appears to be a "diminutive landscape under the imaginative control of an all-powerful surveying eye"; that of Cecil Rhodes.¹⁸⁵

Figuratively, all future constructions and activities that take place within the spectre of this vista appear to do so under his watchful eye. Indeed, the rapid development of the Cape Flats and "growth of buildings in the background" of the memorial were recorded by Baker's firm with interest.¹⁸⁶ The whole horizon then becomes part of wider dream topography of Africa, beginning at the Cape with the Groote Schuur Estate at the axis.

Rhodes, according to his trustees, "recognised that Architecture, in the repose of its massive walls, and the rhythm of its arches and columns, had the magic power to give scale and proportion and the human sense to landscape and that through this power, art became the

¹⁸⁴ cited in P. Merrington, "Dorothea Fairbridge, Cape Town, 1862-1931, & the Aesthetics of Union", *Journal of Southern African Studies Twentieth Century Anniversary Conference* (York, 1994) p.4

¹⁸⁵ *ibid* p.14

¹⁸⁶ M & A UCT: BC206, Kendall to Baker, 19 May 1933

interpreter of nature to man".¹⁸⁷ However, it was a very specific relationship between man and nature that Rhodes wished to portray, just as it was with a particular kind of architecture that he wished to do it. In the case of the Memorial, the fundamental concern with the architecture was that it be "everlasting".¹⁸⁸ Wittenberg asserts that this is the "strategy of monumental architecture: it attempts to freeze time, to be a-historical by violating the fluid historical processes of change by imposing its fixed meaning or message on the future. It is not only of time but also, simultaneously, attempts to be *outside* time".¹⁸⁹ On a superficial level, and in terms of being enduring, we must see this project as a success since it still constitutes a well known site today and it is "clear that it has been successful in its manipulation of time and space".¹⁹⁰ There emerged, during this period, a unique 'Colonial style' that was capable of achieving these ends. In South Africa this style took on a particular appearance, vested as it was with Rhodes' own interpretation of imperialism. Essentially, as Bunn argues, "Baker's projects for Rhodes reveal that white imperial monumentality is stylistically and politically regressive, always longing for an older mode of administration in which paternal authority is invested with wide, unmediated political powers".¹⁹¹ Of course, it was Rhodes who supposedly headed this paternal system. The message of colonialism that is reflected in the monument is, then, Rhodes' ideal of it, rather than how it was played out in practice. By the time the Memorial was being constructed, British colonialists were officially leaning more towards ideas of indirect rule in the colonies, which they began devising after Frederick Lugard subjugated the Sokoto Caliphate in Northern Nigeria, just before the First World War. The idea of indirect rule, which rested on keeping intact, or creating, 'African' systems of administration, ran contrary to Rhodes' notions of paternalism.¹⁹² In this light, we might read the Memorial as 'outdated' from the moment of its conception and, somewhat ironically, as attempting to memorialise a figure who embodied a style of British imperialism that had since been discredited as ineffective.

However, Rhodes and Baker both deemed that the ideal of a paternalistic Empire was best captured in the ancient Greek and Roman empires. Bunn asserts that the nineteenth century British Imperialists held a "sympathetic identification" with these older Empires and their method of

¹⁸⁷ M & A UCT: BC206, box 73, *Dedication of the Rhodes Memorial, Groote Schuur, Cape Town*, Souvenir program, 5 July 1912

¹⁸⁸ M & A UCT: BC206, Box 73, Kendall to Baker, 10 July 1955

¹⁸⁹ Wittenberg, "Rhodes Memorial: Imperial Aesthetics & the Politics of Prospect" p.1

¹⁹⁰ *ibid* p.3

¹⁹¹ Bunn, 'White Sepulchres: On the Reluctance of Monuments'

¹⁹² John Iliffe, *Africans: The history of a continent* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) p.200

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rule.¹⁹³ Furthermore, Rhodes and his contemporaries sought legitimacy for the British Empire in the more ancient empires by fostering this association. The visual arts in the Victorian era reflected and encouraged this relationship with the ancient world. Revered artist, Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema (b.1836, d.1912), painted an acclaimed series of works designed to reproduce the life of ancient Egypt. Similarly, Lord Frederic Leighton, (b.1830, d.1896), the first English painter to receive a peerage, also chose themes of classical mythology for his works and consequently met with great success.

Another obvious and overt ways of exploring this relationship was through imitation of ancient architecture. The focus of monumental architecture was symbolic, rather than what was then considered 'realistic'. This is an idea that was also followed in the construction of the Lion's cage and Baker's earliest plan for a cage with columns and colonnades. In the case of the monument, however, it seems that both Rhodes and Baker's preference was for ancient Greek architecture. This is unsurprising. The landscape in ancient Greece was "punctuated...by hard, white forms, touched with bright colours, which stood out in geometric contrast to the shapes of the Earth. Unlike the Roman Pantheon...or the medieval cathedral...the temples were not normally intended to shelter men within their walls. Instead they housed the image of a god, immortal and therefore separate from men, and were themselves an image, in the landscape, of his qualities".¹⁹⁴ There can be little doubt that this style was consciously imitated when we examine the Rhodes' Memorial.

Rhodes had certainly been determined to verse his architect in this style, which motivated him to send Baker on an extensive tour of Greece, as well as Italy and Egypt, during his lifetime. Baker writes in his memoirs about how these sites influenced his decision to make the monument's "columns...plain and massive like those of the Grecian Doric, which he sent [him] to study at Athens, Paestum and Agrigentum". It was, however, the "temple at Segesta, with its unfluted columns, set high up on its lonely mountain side overlooking the sea, which seemed to [Baker] to breathe inspiration for [Rhodes] own memorial on the slopes of Table Mountain".¹⁹⁵ Certainly, the

¹⁹³ Bunn, 'White Sepulchres: On the Reluctance of Monuments'

¹⁹⁴ Vincent Scully, *The Earth, The Temple and The Gods: Greek Sacred architecture* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1962) p.1

¹⁹⁵ Baker, p.127

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Memorial on Table Mountain is reminiscent of this very style and captured within it are those very ancient ideas of Empire and paternalism.



Fig. 16. The Tuscan columns of Rhodes Memorial (own image)

The simple columns that are incorporated into the Memorial architecture do resemble the columns of the Segesta Temple in Sicily, pictured below. Baker admitted that it was this temple that he visited on his tour of Europe that most influenced his particular design choices at the Rhodes Memorial.



Fig. 17. The Segesta Temple from the East (reproduced from: Scully, fig 179)

The Segesta Temple, like Rhodes Memorial, occupies an isolated position on the mountain side. The implications of modeling buildings on revered architecture are discussed throughout this chapter.

This desire to form recognisable replications of celebrated architecture continued throughout the process of building the Memorial. Masey, partner in Baker's firm, suggested that "the whole thing would be enormously increased in importance and artistic value if the front portion could be modified so as to have two fine tiers of steps leading up to the platform somewhat after the manner of the Propylaea".¹⁹⁶ This notion of recreating Greek architecture also preoccupied Lord Curzon who expressed dismay at the nature of the approach roads to the Memorial when writing "imagine the Greeks consenting to two narrow lateral approaches to the Propylaea at Athens!"¹⁹⁷



Fig. 18. Propylaea and stairs (Reproduced: Soucy, Fig. 332)

Although the Propylaea in Athens lies in ruins, it is still possible to see how the design influenced Baker's plans for Rhodes Memorial. This flight of steps, pictured above, passes through rows of Doric columns that jut out on the left and right, before reaching the final platform. It is a dramatic approach that was greatly admired by Baker and his contemporary architects and which they sought to replicate in Cape Town.

¹⁹⁶ M & A UCT: BC605, Masey to Baker, 19 August 1905

¹⁹⁷ M & A UCT: BC605, Lord Curzon Report

Masey seems, in spite of his suggestions on Greek architecture, to have had an alternative penchant for ancient Egyptian monumental architecture. Early in the planning stages of the Memorial he wrote to Baker to inform him that “personally [he] should have inclined to make the whole Temple with Egyptian rather than Greek character”.¹⁹⁸ Such a predilection may also have sat well with Rhodes since it sat comfortably with his thesis that Cape Town was a Mediterranean environment, similar to Cairo, at the other extreme of the African continent. This is what Merrington refers to as a Colonial “staggered orientalism” where “the Cape and Southern Africa have been made out to be the naturalised allies of Mediterranean Africa”.¹⁹⁹ Such an idea served Rhodes well. Firstly, it elevated the significance of the Cape area. As expressed by Hegel, the hegemonic discourse in Britain on Southern Africa was that it “*had no history...Africa was but on the threshold of history...[with] an exception, however, for two sites on the Mediterranean seaboard of Africa- Phoenician Carthage and Egypt*”.²⁰⁰ Consequently, as links were established between Southern Africa and the ancient Middle East, the Cape was brought into the realm of history whilst simultaneously the achievements of “indigenous African peoples” were undeniably diminished.²⁰¹ Rhodes, in visibly forging these links, was perceived only as performing an inevitable undertaking, which was legitimised by the supposed absence of previous historical achievements at the Cape. Certain elements of the memorial did in fact eventually take their inspiration from Ancient Egyptian and expressed these very sentiments.

This idea of “historicising architecture” in an effort to “legitimate by invoking past ‘greatness and glory’, the present idea of empire” is, according to Wittenberg, not a characteristic unique to Imperial Empires.²⁰² It is also associated with a growing interest in vernacular architecture, which prompted ideas that Egyptian architecture might be more suitable to African styles, that ancient Greek or Roman styles were. Additionally, it was connected with a growing sense of nationalism in the nineteenth century and these ideas were played out in the twentieth century, particularly in It Third Reich architecture that was directed by Albert Speer. His idea was that as the resembling monuments themselves began to age and decay they would become more and more similar to the present day ruins of the Classical period. Thus, as they aged they would continue to serve their

¹⁹⁸ M & A UCT: BC605, Masey to Baker, 19 August 1905

¹⁹⁹ Merrington, p.326

²⁰⁰ *ibid* p.334

²⁰¹ *ibid* p.337

²⁰² Wittenberg, “Rhodes Memorial: Imperial Aesthetics & the Politics of Prospect” p.7

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purpose of hailing back to a past age and take on an appearance of greater antiquity than they actually possessed. It was, as Bunn argues, in the case of the Third Reich and Rhodes' Imperial Empire, towards this older form of paternal authority that they looked.²⁰³

Wittenberg suggests that these ideas and themes can be read in the individual elements of the Memorial that together constitute the overall monumental effect. He identifies five components at Rhodes Memorial, including the site location, as discussed in detail above.²⁰⁴ Bunn also subdivides the memorial, but this time into two vantage points, one of which is from the top of the steps by the bust, and the other which is at Watt's Physical Energy statue, which is one of Wittenberg's feature elements. Bunn argues that the very fact that the monument possesses more than one vantage point is symptomatic of the changing nature of Colonialism during the construction period. At this time, "new contradictions emerge, and it is as though a single vantage point can no longer be maintained on the Colonial periphery".²⁰⁵ When we examine these inherent and subtle complexities we come to realise that perhaps Rhodes' dream of absolute paternal Imperialism could not be perfectly expressed even at his Memorial. For Wittenberg, the Physical Energy statue is also highly significant as the pose embodies the paradox of Colonialism: a simultaneous moment of drive and moment of stillness and surveying. At the same time as the rider draws in the reins to survey the vista beneath the mountain, "Energy is the figural representation of the penetrative journey into the interior which is so constitutive of the colonial project".²⁰⁶

²⁰³ Bunn, 'White Sepulchres: On the Reluctance of Monuments'

²⁰⁴ Wittenberg, "Rhodes Memorial: Imperial Aesthetics & the Politics of Prospect" p.9

²⁰⁵ Bunn, 'White Sepulchres: On the Reluctance of Monuments'

²⁰⁶ Wittenberg, "Rhodes Memorial: Imperial Aesthetics & the Politics of Prospect", p.11



Fig. 19. M&A: Macmillan Collection. Sketch for Watts Physical Energy statue

This pose captures the paradox of colonialism: a moment of stillness and surveying, combined with that of movement and a constant strive forwards. The rider's features do not resemble those of Rhodes, yet the statue came to be so associated with his person and memory.

Wittenberg argues, however, that it is this statue that is the intended vantage point of the Monument, rather than it being an alternative focus. My own reading of the Memorial corresponds with that of Wittenberg, rather than Bunn. Physical Energy occupies a prominent position from every viewpoint at the Memorial: we cannot stand at the base of the Memorial and look up towards either the Bust or the Mountain peak without Physical Energy interrupting our view; from the bust looking down, our sight is directed by the rows of Lion statues towards Energy before the vista opens up; and the only view in which Energy doesn't appear directly is when we are standing so close to the statue that we cannot be unaware of its presence. Of course, there is not just one view from the Memorial, but in all of these alternative views, Energy features. In this respect, the presence of Cecil Rhodes at the Memorial can be read differently but cannot be ignored, especially as this statue has since come to be linked more and more with the figure of Rhodes.

The statue itself was not originally intended for Rhodes, nor was it originally destined for the Groote Schuur Estate immediately after it was given to the Rhodes Trustees Committee. Instead, the initial idea was that the statue be placed at the Zambezi Falls as a memorial in what was then Rhodesia. However, Baker explains that eventually "it was decided that it should form the central expression of [Rhodes'] memorial on the slopes of the mountain, which had been his home and the source of inspiration to him".²⁰⁷ When Watts first decided to give the statue to Rhodes, there was some pressure on him to alter the features of the rider so that they might resemble him.

²⁰⁷ Baker, p. 128

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No such attempts were made in this direction, yet this statue has become inexorably linked to the figure of Rhodes. In 1907 another cast was made and placed in Kensington Gardens, London in memory of Rhodes. A further model of Energy was cast by the British South Africa Company in 1959 and unveiled as another memorial to Rhodes in the following year in Lusaka, in what was then Northern Rhodesia. As soon as Zambia became independent in 1964, calls were made to remove the statue as it could not be divorced from the figure of the country's former oppressor. The statue was then moved to Salisbury in Southern Rhodesia but once again vehement protest was voiced against displaying Rhodes' colonial statue in an independent Zimbabwe in 1980. The following year it was removed from public view and placed in the archives as once again its colonial overtones were considered offensive in independent Africa.²⁰⁸

In spite of the ideas that the statue came to embody, its form was not initially appreciated by all. Writing with reference to Physical Energy, Masey exclaimed to Baker, "with your fine taste of beautiful things you will be as disillusioned as I was when I saw it".²⁰⁹ However, the fact that Earl Grey, a figure of such prominence and an adherent admirer of Rhodes, had donated the statue, along with the fact that it seemed to express Rhodes' version of imperialism so aptly, was sufficient in overcoming any aesthetic opposition to the statue. Rhodes, after seeing the statue late in his life at Watt's studio supposedly remarked; "that is what I should like to have to commemorate the completion of the Cape-to-Cairo Railway".²¹⁰ Its position then at what would have been the head of this particular dream seems to be fitting in terms of implementing this idea on the landscape. Again, the Groote Schuur Estate is drawn into a wider dream topography and imagined Africa that is possessed from between extremities by Rhodes.

Whilst Masey continued to harbour doubt about Physical Energy's suitability for the Memorial, there was more unity amongst the trustees over the issue of incorporating the 'Lion' into the memorial. Rhodes' self proclaimed association with the 'King of Beasts' was perfectly evident in his lifetime and expressed in his desire for the elaborate Lions' House, or Temple, that he intended to construct on his Estate. Indeed, as discussed above, the Lions were the apex of the zoo site and the construction of the memorial along the same sight line was no merely incidental. There was

²⁰⁸ Maylam, p.55

²⁰⁹ M & A UCT: BC605, Baker to Masey, 24 August 1905

²¹⁰ M & A UCT: BC605, Newsletter, *South Africa*, 3 August 1912

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undisputed agreement that the Monument would necessarily reflect Rhodes' perceived proximity to the lion, if the Memorial were to reflect his dreams in any way. Baker's report to the Rhodes Memorial Committee on 13th June 1907 reflects this sentiment as he stated that "the lions are of the first importance" and "will cost about 5000 £ and we can spend that first and see what we have in hand".²¹¹ Once more, this dream element of the landscape centres on the figure of the lion. Around the same time, although the exact date has been lost, Kendall also addressed the Rhodes National Memorial Committee with the suggestion that the statues of the "Lions should be increased to 10 feet" to draw further attention to them whilst concurrently giving "an increased height to the entire monument, and improve the emphasis of the Temple taken as a whole".²¹²

The Lion statues offered Masey an opportunity to incorporate an Ancient Egyptian element into the Memorial as he had requested from the outset of the planning period. The figure of the lion also seems to have been one where Rhodes felt there was a natural association with the Classical world. In Baker's biography he reflects on how Rhodes requested that he visit "the long avenue of sphinxes at Kamac" so that he might see "in repetition the symbolism of guardian sentinels".²¹³ The two rows of lions that guard the ascending steps of the Memorial were clearly inspired by those that Baker did see in Egypt. The eight lion statues, modelled by Swann, also imitated in form the appearance of the sphinx lions of Egyptian Temples, rather than that of the supposedly 'African' lion. In the souvenir program of the Dedication of the Memorial, the reader received the following explanation for this as: "Rhodes had a special veneration for the avenue of repeating sphinxes which stretch for a mile or more in a straight line outside the great temple of Kamac...giv[ing] expression to the qualities of calm and reserved strength and power, whereas most representatives of the lions in periods, after the Egyptian, embody more often the qualities of restlessness and ferocity".²¹⁴ Thus, the sphinx like appearance of the Memorial lions were intended to reflect the qualities of energy and calm power that Rhodes' trustees wished to suggest he once propagated over the land that lay beneath this very monument. Furthermore, the committee proposed that in placing the image of the lion on this spot, they were fulfilling Rhodes' sentiment

²¹¹ M & A UCT: BC206, Box 73, Baker's report to the Rhodes Memorial Committee, 13 June 1907

²¹² M & A UCT: BC206, Box 73, Kendall to Chairman of the Rhodes National Memorial Committee, (exact date unknown)

²¹³ Baker, p.130

²¹⁴ M & A UCT: BC206, box 73, *Dedication of the Rhodes Memorial, Groote Schuur, Cape Town*, Souvenir program, 5 July 1912

that "the attraction of King of Beast and noblest architecture, would bring people to the mountainside, where art and nature together at their best, must perforce, be thought lift them out of themselves and inspire them with lofty thoughts".²¹⁵ Of course, not everybody who laid eyes on the Memorial was privy to a copy of the Memorial program, or versed in reading ancient Egyptian architecture. For these people the figure of the lion might be associated more generally with popular notions of lions as unduly ferocious and fear invoking. That such readings do not appear in the archive does not, I would like to suggest, mean that there was a monolithic reading of this element of the Memorial, rather that the readings that survive are those that adhere to the discourse in which the archive was constructed. And, that their survival depended upon a reading that ran concurrent with these discursive ideas.



Fig. 20. M & A. Macmillan Collection, Lion statue at the memorial

The image above is an early photograph of one of the eight lion statues at the Rhodes memorial. The lion's pose is one of calm and reserved strength and is modelled on the sphinx lions at Egyptian temples. Thus, the statue is supposed to embody the best of wild Africa and ancient civilisation.

The final, and more controversial, element of the Memorial was that of the bust. There were no real guidelines as to whether Rhodes wished to include a more realistic impression of himself at the Memorial and it was this issue that decided later in the course of the planning. There was significant discussion and disagreement between the trustees over how the figure of Rhodes

²¹⁵ *ibid*

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should be represented at the Monument, if at all. Lord Curzon argued quite passionately for a representation of Rhodes' figure at the Monument. His argument was influenced by ideas of Ancient Greek Doric architecture, reflecting a continuing desire to imitate this style on Table Mountain. Lord Curzon compared the Grootte Schuur Memorial with a hypothetical memorial to Pericles, constructed by the Athenians, and contended that "if Pheideas had further undertaken to depict the patriotism of the character of Pericles by some imagined sculptured conception at the foot of the steps- is it not certain that in visiting the site, we of a later age, would have gazed at and admired the handiwork of Pheideas, in its relation to the art of Pheideas, but when we had mounted the summit would not our first observation have been- but where is Pericles?"²¹⁶

Certainly, the other trustees were swayed by the spirit of the argument and came to be in agreement that Rhodes' undisputed presence was necessary in securing the Monument as everlasting and enduring. However, Lord Curzon was unimpressed by proposals of housing a giant bust of Rhodes within the Temple at the top of the steps, arguing that "a bust is essentially an object for commemoration on a small scale, or for commemoration indoors...we should commemorate Rhodes by something statelier and less removable than a bust".²¹⁷ A glance at the Memorial today will confirm that Lord Curzon's opposition was not successful. Rather, Kendall's recommendation for "a colossal treatment of the head and shoulders in the position of Thought, as the grandest and most poetic conception" was taken up.²¹⁸ It was finally agreed that a Colossal treatment of the head was "more in harmony with the Doric spirit of the architecture" and that "a realistic treatment would...create great discord, and destroy the spirit of the monument" that was essentially of an "ideal order".²¹⁹ Once more, the association between the mountain as a site of inspiration and contemplation for Rhodes was being drawn upon.

²¹⁶ M & A UCT: BC605, Lord Curzon Report

²¹⁷ *ibid*

²¹⁸ M & A UCT: BC206, Box 73, Kendall to Chairman of the Rhodes National Memorial Committee, (exact date unknown)

²¹⁹ *ibid*



Fig. 21. M&A' Macmillan Collection. The bust at the Memorial

Wittenberg suggests that in order to truly appreciate the message of the bust it must be read in conjunction with Rudyard Kipling's epigram:

"The immense and brooding spirit still shall quicken and control
Living he was the land and dead his soul shall be her soul"

The most significant element of this verse is, for Wittenberg, the suggestion that the African land is feminine. Once again, at the Memorial there appears the "recurrent colonial trope of the masculine, conquering, colonising force penetrating the female landscape",²²⁰ It is, however, possible to offer a different reading of this epigram if we read it in conjunction with Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Ozymandias of Egypt*. The similarities between these verses, however unintentional, can be read. *Ozymandias'* once imposing sculpture betrays the arrogance of tyrannical power and the tyrant's belief in his enduring presence that will outlive his death. The irony is, of course, that the "decay", the "lone and level sands", the "nothing" that surrounds the now "colossal wreck", belies only the transience of power, which cannot be immortalised but will shatter if attempted.²²¹ Rhodes' sculpture can be considered as part of a genre of such sculptures. The inscription then becomes a

²²⁰ Wittenberg, "Rhodes Memorial: Imperial Aesthetics & the Politics of Prospect" p. 12

²²¹ Percy Bysshe Shelley, *The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, (Montana: Kessinger Publishing, 2004) p.65

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poetic commonplace, merely another typical feature of this genre of memorial, rather than the key to understanding the memorial itself. As such, we might consider the possibility that the memory of Rhodes will suffer a fate similar to all those memorials that Shelley's Ozymandias sculpture represents. Indeed, the specifically Rhodes-ian interpretation of Colonialism, captured in his memorial, had already begun to fade by the time of the opening ceremony in post Union South Africa. Yet, as the monument was on Rhodes' Estate and centred on his person and dreams, such a view could apparently be bestowed with the element of endurance. This was, of course, a dream topography and one that might have been at odds with events that were taking place outside this imagined time and place.

Every element of the Memorial, from site to sculpture, fitted together to form this fantastical element on the Groote Schuur landscape. It may lack the vertical approach road that Lord Curzon and Baker desired, but up to this point, the Memorial has succeeded in enduring and remains a focal point on the mountain topography. Whilst we may no longer share Rhodes' ideas of 'Africa', it is still possible to interpret them on this site through location, sight lines and the symbolic Energy statue, the bust and the sphinx styled Lions. The Rhodes Memorial constitutes a highly significant element of a constructed topography that imagined Africa in a most specific way with Rhodes as the apex.

The University of Cape Town: A British institution on an African Mountain?

“Nothing will overcome the associations and aspirations they will form under the shadow of Table Mountain”²²²

(Rhodes, 1891, reflecting on the advantages of a University in Cape Town)

It was not until 1929 that the former South African College, the SAC, officially moved to its new University headquarters on Rhodes' Groote Schuur Estate. The events leading up to this transition had a lengthy history since plans for the establishment of a University of Cape Town on this site had been discussed, at least tentatively, for four decades previously. However, the idea of a University on the Groote Schuur Estate bore little fruition until 1918 when J. M. Solomon was appointed principal architect for the project and began drawing up feasible architectural plans. These proceedings followed Rhodes' death by several years which, once again, raises similar questions to those addressed in the building of the Rhodes Memorial about whether the element of legacy at these sites. Indeed, the issue is perhaps more complicated as the Groote Schuur Campus was built to house and honour what had come to be recognised as a national institution: the University of Cape Town. It was not, as is the case with the Rhodes Memorial, designed with the central concern of preserving his memory at the site. Significantly, after the 1910 Union of South Africa, national sentiment visibly began shifting away from Rhodes. As the completion date of the campus at Groote Schuur neared, the figure of Rhodes continued to fall out of national favour, especially amongst Afrikaners. Early in 1927, the editorial section of the newspaper, *Die Volkstem*, felt obliged to refuse articles seeking to commemorate Rhodes, such as those by C J Sibbett, one of Rhodes' enduring admirers, on the grounds that “most English people have not yet realised how deeply ingrained among the Dutch the feeling against Rhodes remains...silence is the best and wisest policy at the moment”.²²³ Thus it seems that concern to follow those wishes interpreted as Rhodes' would be somewhat diminished. Furthermore, significant numbers of prominent political figures in Johannesburg remained disgruntled with the fact that the national University was being established in the Cape, rather than in the north of South African.

²²² Speech at Annual Congress of the Afrikaner Bond, 30 March 1891 in *Cape Times*, 1 October 1929, UCT microfilm

²²³ M & A UCT: BC50 (C J Sibbett Papers) Assistant Editor of *De Volkstem* to C J Sibbett, 9 March 1927

There still seems to be room to further explore the debate over whether or not the location of the University where it stands now was ever that intended by Rhodes. The site chosen was originally described as being on the land above the summer house, which was previously, as demonstrated in the photograph below, absent of any other buildings. At this point, Rhodes' summer house occupied the most elevated site on the mountain slopes along this vertical sight line. The Memorial, of course, was built still higher up between approximately 150m and 170m.



Fig. 22. M & A UCT: BC31B

The approach to the University site, showing the old summerhouse

The photograph above shows the area above the summerhouse before construction on the University site began. This image allows us once again to appreciate how the University site is framed by the mountain peak as this site lies under its shadow.

Herbert Baker's opposition to the present site was perhaps the most vocal, or at least the most successfully captured in archival records. Baker, so instrumental in designing and overseeing the building of the zoo and the Memorial discussed, as well as the house and residences, played a far minor role in the University construction. His absence from South Africa in this period on

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account of his architectural commitments in New Delhi, meant that the University committee appointed J M Solomon as principle architect. Initially, Baker was elected overseeing architect. However, the UCT Building committee became frustrated with his preoccupation with projects in India and Britain. After yet another postponed trip to South Africa, the committee announced at a meeting on 24th December 1918 that they had terminated Baker's contract as consulting architect.²²⁴ Sir Edwin Lutyens was approached to fill this post, accepted it almost immediately and continued to fulfil this role even after Solomon's suicide in August 1920. Baker's further exclusion perhaps provoked some personal bitterness and may, in some way, account for his perpetual opposition to the University campus as it developed. He maintained, however, that his resentment sprung purely from his commitment to Rhodes' architectural wishes. In his biography of Rhodes, Baker states quite explicitly that "the site chosen is not that which [Rhodes] discussed with me and which I surveyed for him. That was farther from his own house, and the present buildings with their ground and terraces encroach on the parkland which he laid out at the back of Groote Schuur".²²⁵ Baker is less forthcoming, however, on the exact location of the alternative site and it is difficult to find evidence for where this might be since communication between Rhodes and Baker on the subject was, as the latter suggests, verbal and personal. This makes it somewhat difficult to prove either way.

Again, in the *Report on Groot Schuur* in October 1927, a copy of which survives in the UCT Manuscripts and Archives division, Baker proposed that "it is useless to criticise the site of the University which is so different from that which Cecil Rhodes intended and often discussed with me" and lamented the "harm which the selection of this site has involved and some other things which have been done and which I fear may be done in conflict with the sentiments of Rhodes".²²⁶ Additionally, Baker suggests that the "university grounds do undoubtedly spoil the background on the mountain slopes behind Groot Schuur, as created by Rhodes own personal landscape gardening".²²⁷ This is, however, a rather subjective view and several other followers of Rhodes professed quite the opposite and lingered on the suitability of the University to the site. In a letter to the Committee following his appointment, Sir Edwin Lutyens expressed "no hesitation in endorsing

²²⁴ CBCM: 24 December 1918

²²⁵ Baker, p.49

²²⁶ M & A UCT: BC206, Box 49, Report on Groot Schuur, 5 October 1927

²²⁷ *ibid*

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the site chosen” and remained convinced that it was better than the site further north inline with Rhodes’ Mem, which he recommended when last in Cape Town in 1911 and which was the furthest line south that Baker would then contemplate.²²⁸

A subsequent complaint from Baker rested on the idea that the University buildings and campus left the Groote Schuur Estate disjointed since it “cut off the from the mountain those favourite spots of his, the old Governor’s Summer House, and the Wool Sack...built as a cottage in the woods for poets and artists, where they might be inspired by the beauty of the mountain”.²²⁹ If we are to accept that the Groote Schuur campus of the nineteen twenties was in no way reminiscent of the University Rhodes intended, then such a juxtaposition of buildings does seem contrary to the overall feeling of the Estate since reaching any of these ‘favourite spots’ would require first circumnavigating the University site. However, if we do not accept the University as running absolutely contrary to Rhodes wishes, we instead perceive it as part of the Estate and thus proximity to these other sites is in keeping with ideas of access on the Estate.

Opposition to the University location might be levelled more successfully on the basis of certain aspects of Rhodes’ final will, which, in clause thirteen, stated that “no buildings for suburban residences shall at any time be erected on the said property and any buildings which may be erected thereon shall be used exclusively for public purposes”.²³⁰ The truly public nature of a University, which is inherently exclusive simply by being an institution of academic excellence, might be a point of debate. However, we must acknowledge that Rhodes’ interpretation of public was quite different to contemporary twenty-first century views and already exclusionary along racial lines. An investigation by the Building Committee into these complaints concluded in May 1927 that in spite of popular opinion surrounding issues of public access, “the title deeds of the Groote Schuur Estate contained no servitude reserving to the public access to the japonica garden”.²³¹ Furthermore, it was noted that “the gate leading to the garden was closed from time to time by Mr Rhodes”, suggesting that whilst the popular idea of public access enhanced his reputation,

²²⁸ CBCM: Appendix, Sir Edwin Lutyens to Mr Murray, 28 March 1919

²²⁹ *ibid*

²³⁰ CA: PWD, vol.2/2/29, ref.B124/9, Rhodes Final Will, Clause 13, 1 July 1899

²³¹ CBCM: 13 May 1927

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Rhodes' own notion of it was somewhat flexible and suited to his whims.²³² Thus, it is perhaps less surprising that those citizens who mounted protest at the closure of the public area around the Summer House and Japonica garden were not successful in their efforts to regain public access but were instead allayed with the promise of other means of access to the sites and the establishment of picnic spots elsewhere on the Estate.²³³

Whilst Baker may have been overtly critical about the present site and appearance of the University, he never diverted from the idea that Rhodes did dream about establishing a University somewhere on the Groote Schuur estate. Nor did he ever underestimate Rhodes' interest in scholarship, or at least Rhodes' desire to be visibly associated with notions of scholarship. Wittenberg argues that just as Rhodes used the medium of architecture in seeking "the continuation of the Imperial idea", *scholarship* was an "interrelated spatio-temporal endeavour".²³⁴ Certainly, in his final will, Rhodes stated quite explicitly his perceived relationship between scholarship and the continuation of Imperialism. Clause sixteen of the document states that "the education of young Colonists at one of the Universities in the UK is of great advantage to them for giving breadth to their views for their instruction in life and manners and for instilling into their minds the advantage to the colonies as well as to the United Kingdom of the retention of the unity of Empire".²³⁵ He also left a substantial amount of money to the sum of £100 000 "free of all duty whatsoever to [his] old College Oriel College in the University of Oxford", which he believed pursued the mission as outlined above.²³⁶ Of course, leaving money to old schools and colleges is not an unusual provision in a Will and on its own would have been insufficient in associating Rhodes with ideas of scholarship, or even in proving his apparent dedication to it. Rather, it was his establishing of the Rhodes scholarship scheme that originally provided nine scholarships for students in Rhodesia, fifteen for the Cape Colony and Natal, fifteen for Australia, three for Tasmania and also for New Zealand, nine for Canadian students, three each for Bermuda and Jamaica and thirteen for the American States.²³⁷ Aside from the latter group of scholarships, each category provided for a colony directly under British control at that time with the intention that

²³² *ibid*

²³³ Howard Phillips, *The University of Cape Town, 1918-1948: The Formative Years*, (Creda Press: Cape Town, 1993) p.148

²³⁴ Wittenberg, "Rhodes Memorial: Imperial Aesthetics & the Politics of Prospect" p.6

²³⁵ CA: PWD, vol.2/2/29, ref.B124/9, Rhodes Final Will, Clause 12, 1 July 1899

²³⁶ *Ibid* Clause 12

²³⁷ McDonald, p.108

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certainly scholarship and British imperialism would be inextricably linked with the figure of Rhodes and outlasts the three years of studying that the students would receive at Oxford University. The incorporation of the American states into the scheme is significant as it seems to belie one of Rhodes' other big ideas, which was the ultimate reunification of Britain and the USA, which would pave the way towards an Anglo-Saxon world government.

In light of this, the establishment of a University on his Estate seems quite in fitting with Rhodes' dreams and aspirations and would surely be the most visible manifestation of such an ambition to associate him with a particular kind of scholarship.

Certainly, the proponents of the idea that the University is located where Rhodes intended, argue that the close proximity between the Groote Schuur residence and the University successfully expresses the perceived close relationship between Rhodes and scholarship, particularly in South Africa. Maylam suggests, as does Baker, that Rhodes first attempted to found a University for Dutch and English students in the Table Mountain foothills as early as 1891 whilst attempting to foster more amenable relations with the Cape Dutch. Plans were opposed by the Victoria College in Stellenbosch as the Dutch majority here felt that such a scheme would run counter to their own interests.²³⁸ The plan was later revived in 1895 and it seems that progress was made towards selecting a site but this was once again thwarted, this time by the Jameson raid. Great mention is also made of a speech that Rhodes made at the annual Congress of the Afrikaner Bond at Kimberley in 1891. Even at this stage, just one year after Rhodes had taken Groote Schuur as his residence, he informed the Congress that he had "obtained enormous subscriptions in order to found a teaching University in the Cape Colony", which led him to consider he had "been in Natal, at Witwatersrand and Bloemfontein...[His] wealth... life,...ideas were formed...in Kimberley, but there is no place that can form, train and cultivate the ideas of the young men in this country, no place better suited to such objects than the suburbs of Cape Town" where "nothing will overcome the associations and the aspirations they will form under the shadow of Table Mountain".²³⁹ The Cape Times reprinted this element of the speech during their coverage of the centenary celebrations of the SAC at Groote Schuur as evidence of the lengthy history of the site

²³⁸ Maylam, p.64

²³⁹ *Cape Times*, 1 October 1929

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and the embryonic idea of Rhodes' time. However, whilst the site does indeed lie in the shadow of Table Mountain and in the Rondebosch suburb, satisfying Rhodes' ideas, it could equally have been located in several other places on the slopes. Moreover, the speech made at Kimberley was made in the early years of Rhodes' occupancy at the Cape and his thoughts may have changed significantly over time, which makes it difficult to accept this speech as expressing the "vision" of the present University with which he was credited by the Cape Times.²⁴⁰

Professor Ritchie, writing on the history of the SAC in 1918, also cites a letter written by General Smuts to Otto Beit and J Wemher about the University as evidence to support his notion that the campus completes part of Rhodes vision. In the letter Smuts questions whether "it might be possible to establish a National University on Mr Cecil Rhodes Estate of Groote Schuur, which has been left for the residence of the Prime Minister of United South Africa...It will be remembered that Mr Rhodes had had some such scheme in view in his life-time, so that the proposed site for a National University had a special appropriateness, especially in view of the colonies which he had for seen and provided for".²⁴¹ In this instance then the site is divorced from ideas of paternalism associated with nineteenth century British Imperialism, and instead becomes part of another interpreted vision of Rhodes for the Union of South Africa. Such an association was surely more palatable for the colonies outside of the Cape. However, it is difficult to separate the figure of Rhodes from British Imperialism and to ignore all readings of such ideas that were captured in the landscape surrounding the later University site. Rhodes will never be remembered solely for his involvement in the Union of South Africa.

The evidence used for settling the question as to how far the present University site corresponded with Rhodes' dream site, if he had ever envisaged anywhere more specific, is inconclusive. However, it does seem as though the current location fulfilled most of the criteria that Rhodes loosely set out in his Kimberley speech, which is perhaps captured more effectively in the architectural form that the campus began to take. The clearest example is probably in the residential nature of the University. In his final will, Rhodes expressed quite clearly in Clause 16 how he "attach[ed] great importance to the University having a residential system", which he further

²⁴⁰ *Ibid* p.10

²⁴¹ Ritchie, p.554

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emphasised by stating that while there were, at the time, more than fifty students from South Africa at the University of Edinburgh, the institution had no residential system and consequently would be allocated no money in his will.²⁴² His ideal University was, unsurprisingly, inspired by the Oxbridge system, of which he had been part when reading for his Bachelor degree. His attachment to his old college was such that he requested Baker to travel to Oxford to take measurements. Baker asserts that “[Rhodes] would have realised...that the Gothic or Tudor architecture of Oriel would in many essential details be unsuited to the climate of South Africa” but leaves us once again to accept his word for this.²⁴³ Sir Thomas Fuller, an acquaintance of Rhodes, also records how Rhodes went as far as to request that copies of the architectural plans of his old college be sent to him in the Cape.²⁴⁴ However, although the building style of the University little resembles that of the Gothic or Tudor, the residences do conform with “the quad system of Oxford which [Rhodes] had mostly in mind”, according to Baker.²⁴⁵ Furthermore, there are many examples of neo-classical quads at Oxbridge that are similar in building style.

The perceived importance of the residential aspect of the University, arranged around a system of quadrangles in the style of Oxbridge colleges did persist on the insistence of the University Building Committee. That the University would be residential was never doubted as it was this that made the University both unique and distinct from the University of the Cape of Good Hope. Similarly, opposition to building anything different on Rhodes Estate would have been met with great opposition. The quad system proved more difficult to implement than Rhodes might have foreseen, if in fact he really had planned his vision so thoroughly in this direction as Baker wishes us to believe. Constructing quadrangle arrangements of any respectable size on the steep slopes of the mountain would prove to be an expensive and time consuming task. J M Solomon repeatedly informed the Committee of these difficulties and once again in January 1918 wrote that he felt “reluctantly compelled to bring to the notice of the Committee the fact that the conditions laid down for the planning of the Residences on the level quadrangle system is one that does not lend itself to economical results on the slopes of Groote Schuur...whilst there can be no doubt that this system is the ideal method of planning for College Residences, it is one which primarily requires an

²⁴² CA: PWD, vol.2/2/29, ref.B124/9, Rhodes Final Will, Clause 16, 1 July 1899

²⁴³ Baker, p.48

²⁴⁴ Sir Thomas E Fuller, *The Right Honorable Cecil John Rhodes: A Monograph and a Reminiscence* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1910) p.155-156

²⁴⁵ *ibid*

approximate level site".²⁴⁶ Yet, the Committee remained insistent on this point. At the Committee meeting of 21st May 1918 the members voted unanimously against even building a fourth storey on to the residences so that the quad could be reduced in size, making its construction more feasible.²⁴⁷ This was even at a time when funding was so short that all efforts were being made to cut costs on other areas of the site. Already in the same year proposals had been made to purchase the Rhodes recreation ground or showground instead of excavating land for new playing fields.²⁴⁸ Another clear example of limited funds was the Committee's resort to purchasing existing properties in the vicinity of the site for use by the University; the Minutes of the Committee meeting of 24th October 1924 record the proposal to purchase the Glenara building adjoining the site so that it might be used as the administration block.²⁴⁹ It was eventually purchased but for use as the headmaster's house. However, similar to the bronze lions at the Rhodes Memorial, the quadrangles became the focus feature of the site and subsequently everything was organised, financially at least, around them. The earliest plans (shown on page 95) that were drawn up by Solomon in 1918 for the residences show no deviation from the arrangement and, like Oriel college, both the women's and men's residences possessed quadrangles, albeit only two each rather than the three quads of the Oxford College. These were the first buildings on the site to have a certificate of completion attached to them on 4th May 1928.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁶ CBCM: Appendix, Solomon to Murray, 31 Jan 1918

²⁴⁷ CBCM: 21 May 1918

²⁴⁸ CBCM: 8 Feb 1918

²⁴⁹ CBCM: 24 October 1924

²⁵⁰ CBCM: 4 May 1928

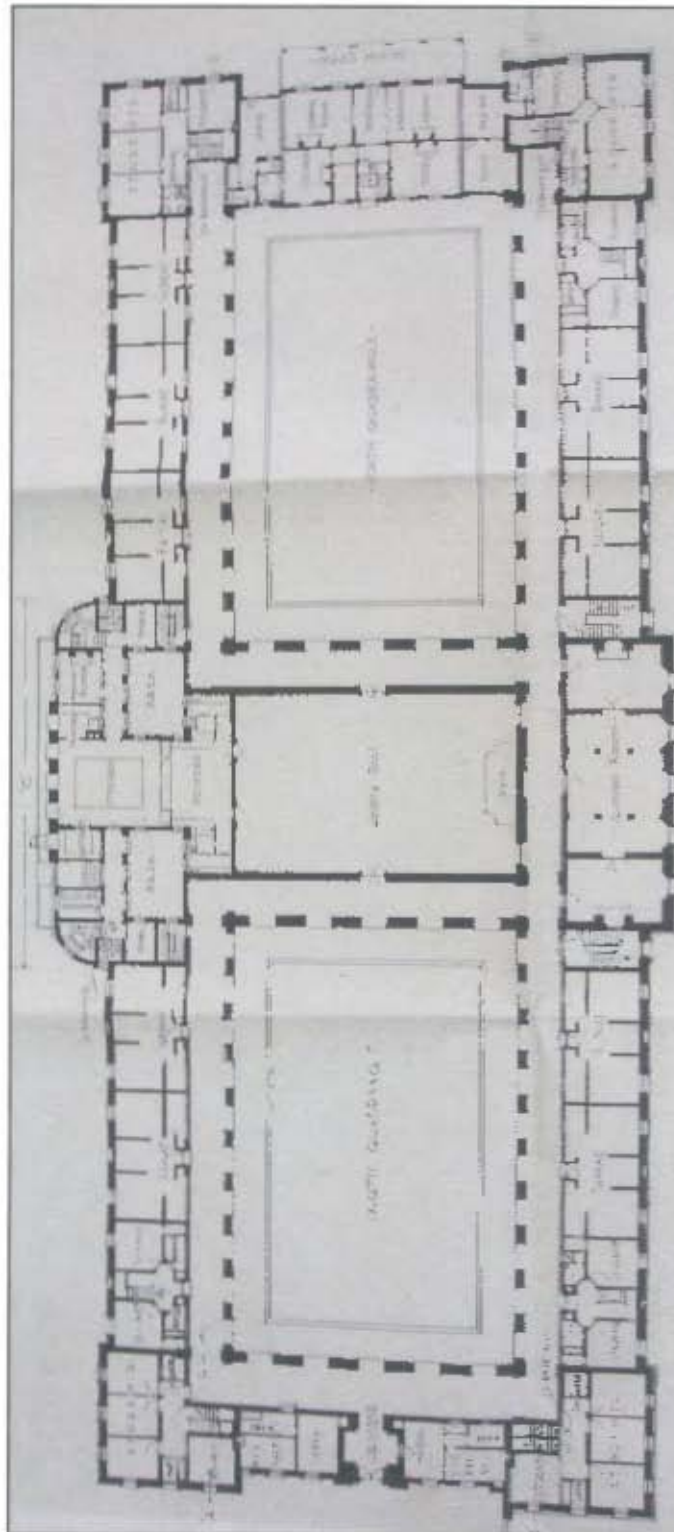


Fig. 23. M & A UCT: BC326 (Hawke & McKinlay Collection) A13.2.2, UCT Residences, 1917-1926

The diagram above shows a final plan for the Shiraz and Fuller halls of residences. Despite vehement protestations from Solomon on account of cost and practicality this plan shows the commitment of the UCT building committee to an agreement that the residences would be organised around a system of quadrangles, as halls of residences were at Oxford.

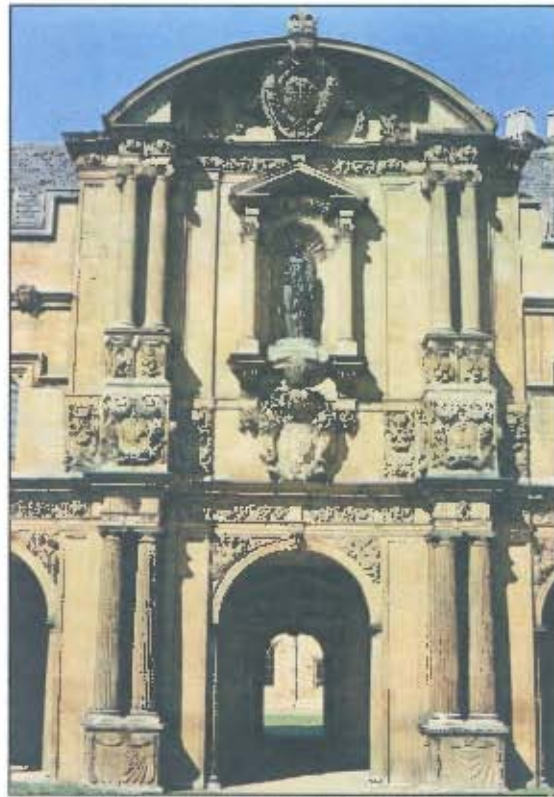


Fig. 24. View through to second quad from Canterbury Quadrangle, St. John's College, Oxford University. (Felix Markham, *Oxford* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1967) facing p.80)

The images above and below should be compared with plans of the UCT residences. This photograph of St. John's College, Oxford and the plan of Oxford University demonstrate the influence that this British institution had on those involved in building a University in Africa. The University quadrangle is a distinctly British design and its replication at Groote Schuur emphasises the idea that UCT is another British space in Africa.

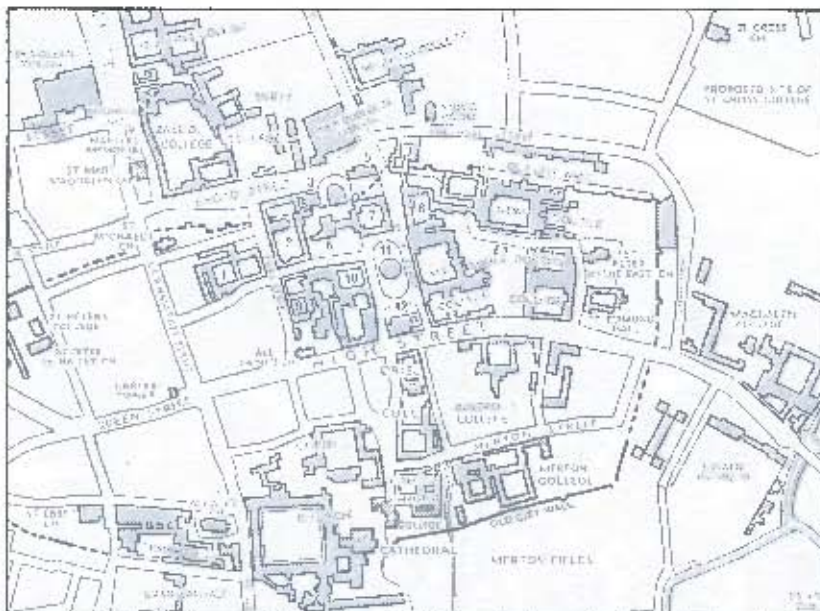


Fig. 25. Plan of central colleges arranged around quadrangles at the University of Oxford. Original, Rhodes' old college, sites near the centre of the plan, just below the High Street. (Markham, *Oxford* p.189)

The quadrangles and residences were but one of the difficulties faced by Solomon when drawing up plans for an extensive campus on the mountain side. The steep gradient that had caused such difficulties at the Memorial site became far greater in this case since the project was more extensive in both breadth and depth and consequently cut across a far larger number of contour lines. Initially, proposals were made to shift the site closer to the Main Road, below the summer house, where the land is flatter. As the campus has extended over the years, it has been in this direction; no significant efforts to extend the University any closer to the summit have been made, simply because the project would be of an inordinate cost. Few would wish to revisit the challenges faced by the UCT building committee during these years. However, concerns were voiced that the campus stretched further up the mountainside in this particular location than Rhodes intended. There is correspondence to this effect in the archives between Kendall and Staten where the former suggests "that the Hofmeyer grave...has been covered up by some of the University Tennis Court [and] it is believed that in Rhodes Will some special provision was made for respecting this grave".²⁵¹ Indeed, Clause thirteen of Rhodes Will states that "the grave of the late Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr upon the said property [Groote Schuur] shall be protected and access permitted thereto at all reasonable times by any member of the Hofmeyr family for the purpose of inspection or maintenance".²⁵² The UCT building committee was concerned by these accusations and issued an inquiry to be carried out by Professor Walker, whose father had spent a significant amount of time of the old Estate. A final conclusion on the matter was reached and the committee was duly informed that the "lower tennis courts on the Groote Schuur Estate partially covered the old Rustenberg slave cemetery, and that the 'Hofmeyr Grave' referred to in Mr Rhodes' Will was immediately to the rear of Groote Schuur House".²⁵³ No provision had been made in the Will for the graves of former slaves. However, Professor Walker's memorandum attests to the difficulty inherent in locating the exact site of this particular grave on the Estate. It appears that Rhodes merely alluded to the presence of the site, rather than located it specifically as perhaps even he was ignorant of the exact location yet wished to seek some legitimacy of descent at the Estate by providing for its former inhabitant. In this aspect then the University may have encountered serious

²⁵¹ M & A UCT: BC206, Box 73, Kendall to Staten, 7 November 1928

²⁵² CA: PWD, vol.2/2/29, ref.B124/9, Rhodes Final Will, Clause 13.iv, 1 July 1899

²⁵³ CBCM: 13 May 1927

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difficulties if seeking to carry out Rhodes' Will exactly. However, the fact that these doubts were raised after construction, rather than before, suggests that implementation of the Will was not foremost in the minds of the Committee at every stage. Not obviously seeking to adhere to it fully yet simultaneously not deliberately seeking to revoke.

One element of the University of Cape Town that lay on the Grootte Schuur Estate but was some distance from what is now known as the main campus is the Medical school which was built on the northern most corner of Rhodes Estate; the foundation stone was laid here on 10th March 1925. The emergence of the medical school here was born out of pragmatic necessity. Before plans for the University campus were drawn up, the Union Government had already agreed that a new hospital was needed for the increasingly populated suburbs of Observatory and Salt River. Hence, the Grootte Schuur Hospital's present location in close proximity to these areas. The Government applied pressure to the University committee throughout 1919 to abandon their choice of site above the summerhouse and build the whole campus next to the Hospital site so that the campus would not be divided.²⁵⁴ The medical professors supported the Government's appeal but the University committee was not forthcoming and thus the University remains split today as the Medical school developed around the hospital out of academic necessity and the main campus continued to develop two kilometres away. The issue highlights the growing specificity of academic departments during this period. Indeed, the whole campus was arranged around the idea of departments and departmentalising knowledge.

Another article appearing in the *Cape Times* 2nd October edition clearly emphasises this as the reported describes the campus: "Starting one's tour of inspection from the southern end of University Avenue, there is, on the left, a small two storeyed building which contains the Departments of Geology and Minerology. From the Department of Geology let us walk in the direction of Cape Town, passing the Engineering building which is in course of construction on the left, and the arts block on the right...On the left will stand the library, the central hall, the students' centre, the erection of which has not yet begun. Opposite is the De Beers Institute of Physics and Mathematics...Almost directly opposite the De Beers Institute stands the Chemistry block, a

²⁵⁴ Phillips, p.148

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handsome three storeyed building...adjoining the Chemistry block is the small Psychology building...Finally we come to the large building shared by the departments of Botany and Zoology²⁵⁵ Earlier plans show that the latter department block was originally to be built at the southern end of the site. However, at a meeting on the 13th May 1927 the Committee decided to move the building to the northern end where no extensive laying of new foundations was required.²⁵⁶ There was no provision for interdisciplinary centres at this time, such as the present day buildings that house the Centres for African Studies and Jewish Studies, which reiterates the focus on disciplinary departments at that time.

²⁵⁵ *Cape Times*, 2 October 1929

²⁵⁶ CBCM: 13 May 1927

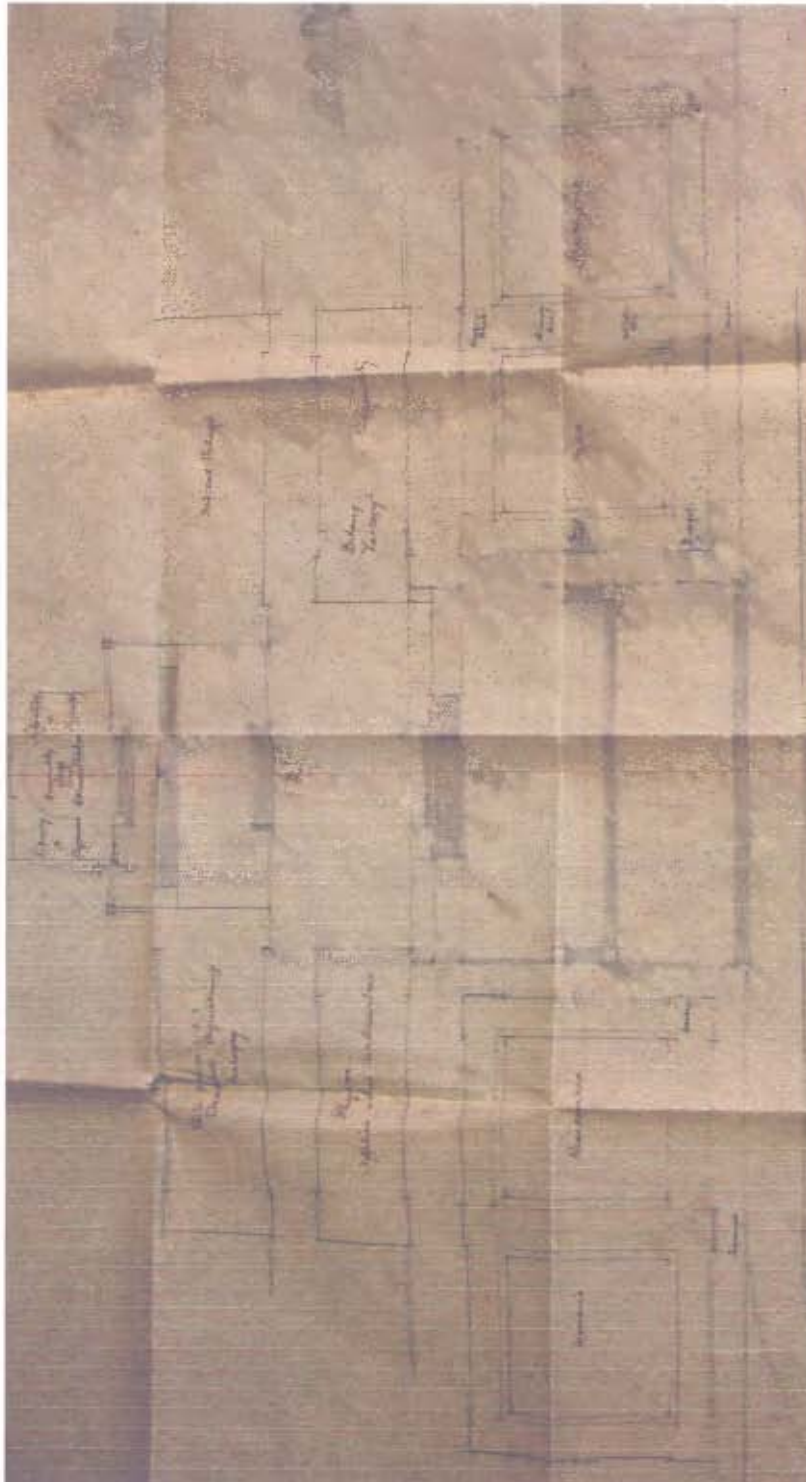


Fig. 26. M & A UCT: BC326 A15.1.1 UCT Grootse Schuur- Preliminary Sketch showing disposition of buildings on site. Approx 1/60th scale, November 1917.

The early sketch above is one of the first plans to be drawn up for the University site. It is significant in terms of demonstrating the early commitment to the quadrangle arrangement of the residences and to a central campus. In this diagram we can see a block labelled Medical school to the top right of the campus. This plan was never carried through and the campus remains split across the estate to this day.

The elevated location of all buildings above the summer house, whether Rhodes exactly intended or not, was very successful in ensuring the University's prominence on the landscape. Hence, the University, like the Memorial, can be appreciated at a great distance from Table Mountain and its presence draws the viewers' eyes towards this landmark. This satisfied one of the concerns of the old SAC that at last "the citizens of the Peninsula are conscious that they have a University in their midst".²⁵⁷ Once again, we can use Wittenberg's ideas about altitudinally differentiated topography and race. In this discourse "the high ground is claimed as a natural domain for colonial settlement" since higher ground suggests superiority.²⁵⁸ To qualify for admission to the University of Cape Town and residence on the Groote Schuur campus in this period rested, in part, on the student being considered 'white'. In 1921 debate ensued over whether an Indian student from Natal should be accepted at the UCT Medical School. Dr J Petersen was not alone in voicing to the Committee his "fear that if [UCT] once establish the principle of admitting coloured students from any part of the Union to our classes...that white and desirable students will give us the go bye...and eventually [UCT] classes will be filled by coloured and other undesirable students".²⁵⁹ Thus ideas about race and superiority were reinforced as the white UCT students physically surveyed the rest of Cape Town's inhabitants from their elevated position. However, as discourses on mountains change over time, such a reading is no longer applicable.

Careful arrangement of the site along specific sight lines succeeded in further emphasising the perceived close relationship between University and Mountain. Prior even to the completion of the campus buildings observers recognised this intention. The *Cape Times* reported in their feature "A Century and After" during the 1929 centenary celebrations that "the library...the University Centre, and the greated domed Hall which will fill the gap in the centre of the top most terrace and pull the long line of buildings up and back towards the towering Devil's Peak" that stands 1001m above sea level.²⁶⁰ The symmetrical arrangement of the buildings around a central site line that fell along this sight line succeeded further in achieving this aim. As the plan shows below, the men's residence lay on one side of the line and the women's directly opposite, equidistant from the axial line. Originally intended to run perpendicular to this central site line, the Committee agreed to

²⁵⁷ *UCTQ*, Vol.11 (1928) p.108

²⁵⁸ Wittenberg, *The Sublime*, p.7

²⁵⁹ CBCM: Appendix, Dr J Petersen, 1 March 1921

²⁶⁰ *Cape Times*, 1 October 1929

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change the axial line to fit with the contours of the mountain on 9th May 1921.²⁶¹ The numerous sets of steps that run up the centre, physically, as well as visually, carry the visitor up the mountainside. Furthermore, the proximity of the residences to the central aspect of the site expresses the great importance attached to this aspect of the University.

The *Cape Times* also attached significance to the outward facing prospect, over the Cape Flats to the Hottentots' Holland mountain range and suggested that "as it grows in equipment, in tradition, in the strength of its faculties, in its opportunities for research, the University of Cape Town, with its outlook from Groote Schuur northwards through the African Continent, is bound to play a more and more vital part in the national life".²⁶² It is significant that the reporter associates this prospect with a national sentiment. The same view from the Memorial and Zoo was previously interpreted as drawing the eye north towards Cairo, the pinnacle of Rhodes' imperial dream. By 1929, however, such dreams had been abandoned and the significance of looking northwards towards Johannesburg emphasised the significance of the Union and association with Africa, rather than British Imperialism. Such a reading seems more difficult, however, at the Memorial since the figure of Rhodes is surely captured most obviously.

²⁶¹ CBCM: 9 May 1921

²⁶² *ibid* p.10

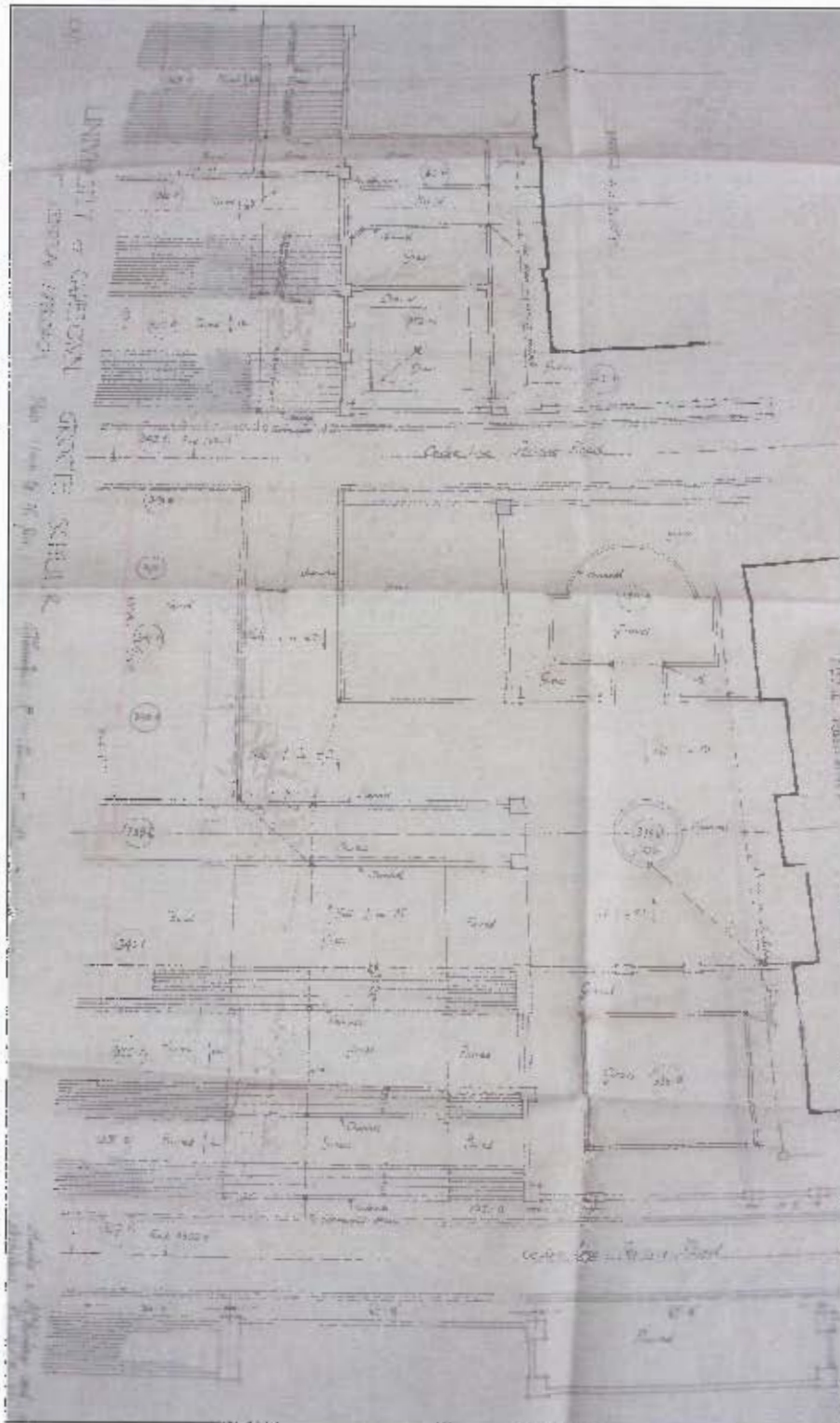


Fig. 27. M & A UCT. BC326. A15.1.6: UCT Central approach February 1923

The symmetrical arrangement of buildings around this central site line ensures that the visitors gaze is carried upwards to the mountain peak that now towers above the Jameson Memorial Hall. The above plan was drawn after the committee agreed to alter Solomon's plans and curve the site in accordance with the mountain contours, which saved time and money.

There are definite echoes of Rhodes' architecture on the campus. The Jameson Hall, whilst not completed by the close of this period had been fully planned so that by the 13th April 1929 the minutes of the committee report authorisation for work to begin.²⁶³ The Doric columns that support the original Jagger library and student centre either side of the Jameson Hall resemble those of the Rhodes' Memorial and Baker's Lion's House that was never actually built. At the University it is students, rather than lions, that parade through the colonnades. However, cost restraints on the campus were such that the UCT Building Committee decided to use "artificial" stone for the columns instead of the same robust mountain stone used at the Memorial as was planned originally.²⁶⁴ The columns of the Jameson Memorial Hall are imitations of the Ionic order, which serves to further distinguish this building from those adjoining. This feature, along with the position of the Memorial at the axis of the sight line, emphasises its significance. The figure of Rhodes is inextricably bound up with this through the decision to name the Hall after one of his closest, albeit infamous, associates.



Fig. 28. The Jameson steps and Hall, UCT (own image)

The ionic style columns of the Jameson Hall distinguish it from those of its surroundings, emphasising its prominent position on the site. The more simple Tuscan columns of the library buildings are repeated at the memorial and in plans for the old lion cage.

²⁶³CBCM: 13 April 1929

²⁶⁴CBCM: 12 September 1929

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A more obvious symbol of Rhodes at the University is captured in the statue representation of him at the bottom of the Jameson steps. Although only placed here in 1934, outside of the period studied, there were discussions to install a statue of Rhodes at the University during the meeting of the Building Committee on the 19th September 1924. A proposal was made to have the statue of Rhodes moved there from the Municipal Gardens and “no objection” was raised by the University if this was considered “the most suitable site for the Rhodes’ statue”.²⁶⁵ Yet, whilst there was no objection to the idea, nor was there insistence on Rhodes’ figurative presence being captured immediately on the site and the statue was not erected until many years later following a gift from the Trustees. Yet, the overall outward appearance of the 1929 buildings seem to have been considered as sufficiently fitting with the perceived aesthetic preferences of Rhodes; it was not until the New Science Lecture theatre was built in 1949 that the Rhodes Trustees had cause to be “greatly distressed at the way in which the University authorities had, wittingly or unwittingly, been showing a complete disregard for Rhodes’ wishes as expressed in his Will, by erecting on the Estate a type of building quite contrary to that stipulated for”.²⁶⁶ This was the first time that they broke from the style established by Solomon and the implication is then that Solomon’s style was interpreted as reflective of Rhodes’ wishes.

²⁶⁵ CBCM: 19 September 1924

²⁶⁶ Phillips, p.220

Conclusion

The Groote Schuur landscape is “an instrument of cultural power, perhaps even an agent of power that is (or frequently represents itself) as independent of human intentions”.²⁶⁷ It “works as a cultural practice”²⁶⁸ as the many elements that compose the landscape are carefully arranged and interconnected along a series of sight and site lines that guide our thoughts towards a particular reading of the landscape and set of “big ideas” around which it was constructed.²⁶⁹

Today, when we survey this landscape from a distance, our sight is naturally drawn towards the Memorial and the University buildings and the stone pines, distinctive on account of their unusual umbrella foliage, do not escape our attention. The zoo site is less captivating but we can still see the descendants of the old zoo zebras and antelopes roaming the lower slopes of the Estate. These are all projects that were conceived of by Rhodes in his lifetime, if not completed before his death. Physically, these elements are connected to one another by a series of paths and clearings so that we can pass with ease from the house to the zoo, to the University upper campus, and finally, up to the Memorial, which stands between 50m and 70m above the former sites. The slopes above these sites are clear of further architecture and so the view to the North of Devil’s Peak, which stands 1001m above sea level, is uninterrupted, even by trees or foliage. To the East, the view is cleared so that at each site we can survey, from our elevated height, the Cape Flats and Hottentot Holland Mountains in the distance.

Cecil Rhodes’ megalomaniac ideas are realised on this landscape; the elevated location of the Groote Schuur Estate and the architectural elements under discussion, which all stand at least 100m above sea level, permitted Rhodes, metaphorically at least, to survey a “diminutive landscape under the imaginative control of [his] all-powerful surveying eye”.²⁷⁰ This, of course, fits in with his notion of paternalistic and pastoral imperialism, which Foucault explains as: “if the state is the political form of a centralised and centralising government, let us call pastoralship the

²⁶⁷ Mitchell, p.1

²⁶⁸ Shepherd & Van Reybrouck, p.4

²⁶⁹ *ibid*, p.1

²⁷⁰ Wittenberg, “Rhodes Memorial: Imperial Aesthetics & the Politics of prospect” p.14

individualising power”.²⁷¹ Rhodes is the embodiment of this individualising power. The landscape that he presides over is a hybrid one. It is the microcosm of Rhodes’ ideal of empire; the classical elements of European civilisation are imitated in the architecture at the zoo, the Memorial and the University but are infused with the raw energy of wild Africa that is represented by the lions and Table Mountain. In this imperial context, Africa was considered a single comprehensive entity where areas and landscape were indistinguishable from each other. Only Cape Town and Cairo offered bastions of civilisation at the extremities of the continent. In this discourse, Cape Town was considered “Mediterranean”, which was an idea that Rhodes and his successors perpetuated by choosing to import vegetation grown in the Mediterranean, as well as replicating Greek and Roman architecture in an effort to foster this association.²⁷² As such, the Cape to Cairo project came to be seen as virtually inevitable and seemed to guarantee Europe’s place in Africa. This imperial “utopian fantasy” of Europe in Africa is finally captured in the construction of a University that bears a resounding resemblance to an English institution, but is located on an African mountain.²⁷³

Yet, there are “fractured images of unresolved ambivalence and unsuppressed resistance” on the Grootte Schuur landscape.²⁷⁴ Africa is not the “silent and empty” land of white settler dream topographies but has been a land that is, if “not full of human beings, not empty of them either; that is arid and infertile, perhaps, but not inhospitable to human life, and certainly not uninhabited”.²⁷⁵ The Grootte Schuur landscape should be considered as a “contact zone” since the “Cape of Good Hope was one of the few places in Africa where Northern Europeans had access to the continental interior”.²⁷⁶ At contact zones, at “space[s] of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, racial inequality and intractable conflict”.²⁷⁷ Certainly, those elements of the landscape, such as the fynbos and protea vegetation, that preceded Rhodes’ arrival and came to be considered indigenous to Africa, were not swept away by his changes to the Estate but were, to an extent at least, necessarily incorporated into his dream

²⁷¹ Bunn, “White Sepulchres: On the Reluctance of Monuments” p.

²⁷² Merrington, “A Staggered Orientalism: The Cape to Cairo Imaginary” p.323

²⁷³ Mitchell, p.10

²⁷⁴ *ibid*, p.10

²⁷⁵ Coetzee, p.177

²⁷⁶ Pratt, p.40

²⁷⁷ *ibid*, p.6

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topography. This seems to be a wider metaphor for Britain's relationship with Africa throughout, and beyond, this period.

The imperial image of the landscape was fractured further during this period as alternative ideas on Britain's place in Africa competed with ideas of paternalism imperialism and a hybrid landscape that would be held together by the legacy of the figure of Rhodes. Ideas of indirect rule gained prominence after Rhodes' death, as did notions of nationalism and a South African identity. We can see these contestations being played out in the ambivalences of the Grootte Schuur landscape: the vista from the Memorial could be considered as looking northwards to Cairo, which is part of an Imperial project, or as guiding the visitors sight towards the rest of South Africa, away from the direction by which the Europeans arrived in Africa; the institution of the University was first conceived of in Europe but in Cape Town it has evolved and adopted a distinctly African appearance on the side of Table Mountain; and an avenue of camphor trees, imported by Rhodes, and stone pines still exist in and alongside the botanical gardens of Kirstenbosch, even though it was established as a sanctuary for indigenous flora in 1913. Grootte Schuur is an exemplary African landscape that does "disclose both utopian fantasies of the perfected imperial prospect and fractured images of unresolved ambivalence and unsuppressed resistance", which acts as a concrete metaphor for conflicting and competing ideas in South Africa between 1890 and 1929.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁸ Mitchell, p.10

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