the narrative

OF A HOME AND LANDSCAPE FOR

a sense of purpose in late life

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Research booklet
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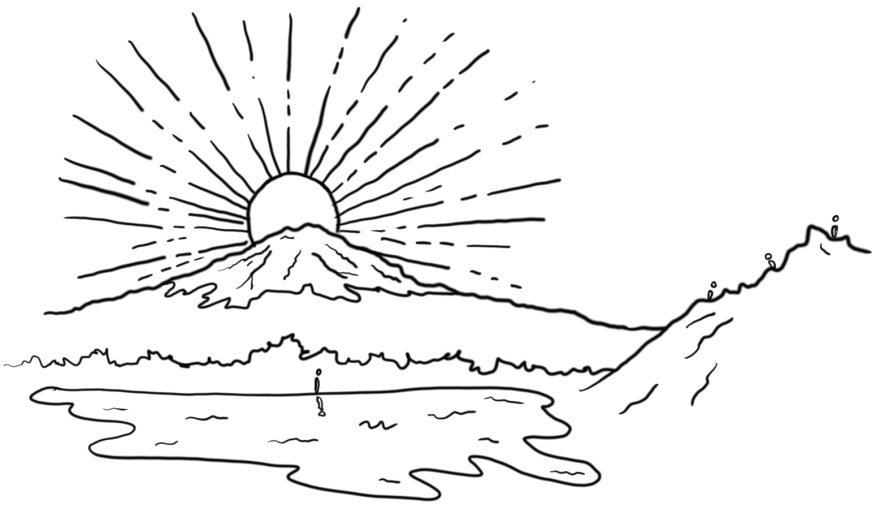
The research

for a home and landscape of a sense of purpose in late life



The Mountain

life-long masters

We move through life phases as we age. The rhythms of our daily life change with us as a progressive journey. It is a slow and steady journey, but also one that goes up and down the hill. As we have climbed more mountains and hills, swam across the lakes of which we did not know how deep they really were and seen the clouds pass by, we strengthen our mind and body. We never know when our last phase, last mountain, last lake, last rain drop will be. One would think to never stop moving....

At the moment we think we have aged enough to be close to that last phase we stop. We stop with trying to climb the mountain while whole our lives we have spent trying to find the best way to climb it. We are life-long masters at climbing the mountain, but we stop. As a result we spent our last phase, timed over maybe a day or maybe a decade, standing still looking at our reflection in the lake while our loved ones, desires, hobbies, aims and life-long lessons pass by.

Summary

Challenging in the face of many losses and negative biases is our last phase of life, the late life. We end in nursing homes out of sight from our communities, we are viewed as valueless and stripped away from our own desires and standards. During a stay in a care home I saw these things happen while talking to and observing people in late life. Whereas some had found purpose in the small things like watering plants once a month, most had lost their sense of purpose in life, their reason to wake up. I believe that architecture and landscape architecture can contribute to the creation of a home and landscape that allows people in late life to thrive and flourish through the maintenance and promotion of a sense of purpose in life. The main question is: *"What characterises a place that allows for a sense of purpose in life at the intersection of architecture and landscape architecture for people in late life?". 'A sense of purpose in life'* is composed of two sets of terms, '*a sense of*', stressing the meaning of feeling and being able to feel that one has a purpose in life, and *'purpose in life'*, which entails the reason why one wakes up and why one feels like their life has meaning.

Through literature study this research question has resulted in a number of conclusions. The home and landscape for a sense of purpose in late life should allow for reminiscence, commitment, personal optimism and spiritual well-being, while also addressing the temporality of life and allowing for mutual recognition and a (re)connection with nature. These can be implemented in the design with three gradients, namely the intensity gradient flowing from passive to active moments, the reciprocity gradient flowing from private to public and the home gradient transitioning between being alone to having visitors over. The feelings of trust and safety, and feeling at home are of high importance. In the design the transitions between the extremes of the gradients should be well facilitated, sometimes smoothened, sometimes exaggerated.

The conclusions made have to be placed within a dwelling program for people in late life in the context of the chosen site, namely Sparrenheide in Driebergen-Rijsenburg, a mysterious and dynamic but soothing and peaceful landscape with sloping hills and many tree canopies hugging the landscape. As well the site is located in a transitional zone enclosed by a village, a man-made landscaped park in a forest and a highway, all on the flank of a hill ridge located in the middle of the Netherlands.

All combined, the main conclusions of this research together with key lessons and tools from the fieldwork and interviews conveyed, and the core values of the site should guide the design towards a home and landscape that stimulates people in their late life to hold on to their (changing) sense of purpose in life as small or a big as it is. A home and landscape in which people in late life can flourish and be given back the values of their lives.

Preface

Being able to completely submerse myself into the topics of my interest – philosophy, psychology, landscape and architecture – without having to make any concessions on these interests has been quite an exhilarating and refreshing journey. This journey has felt highly personal, partly as my careful thoughts on starting this journey initiated four months before entering the design studio of care while talking to my grandma and experiencing the isolation of the global pandemic. Over the past six months of researching I was so intrigued by certain specific topics that I started to lose and doubt possible connections between the fields of philosophy, psychology, landscape and architecture. However, over the last two months things interestingly fell into place as certain chapters were closed and looked at from a distance, and as I started to trust my instincts on which direction to go. Maybe this research report is similar to a diary, in the sense that at first everything seems interesting and eventful to write down, to later only reminiscence about the thread that holds everything that matters and makes sense together.

With the design process ahead in the next months I feel challenged to stay true to the essence and philosophy behind the architectural and landscape architectural elements that have been identified through the literature research, the fieldwork and site analysis featured in this booklet. Only in this way I feel I can positively add to the ideas of the creation of a home and landscape that accepts, recognizes, and promotes the value and purpose of the lives of people in late life.

I would like to dedicate this research to my grandmother and mother. Without whose silent fights for women's rights and without them as role models in leading functions I would not be graduating as a woman at a technical university. And without whom I would not have been inspired to start a research in the quality of late life in care and architecture. Thank you.

I hope you enjoy reading this research booklet as much as I enjoyed researching and creating a booklet dedicated to the home and landscape of a sense of purpose in for people in late life.

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Introduction

Inspirations

The journey that has led me to start the search for a home for a sense of purpose in late life began back in May 2020. After having quarantined solely by herself for already two months I could finally meet my oma again at a distance. What would one say upon seeing someone who was forced to be, eat, sleep and walk alone for such a long time? I wondered how she would feel and what she would tell.

I was seated in her patio distanced away from my oma who was seated just inside her living room, on the other side of the door threshold. She began talking like never before. The tomato plant she had gotten from friends were discussed in full glory. How they changed colour from green to red day by day, how she watered them each day after waking up but before making her puzzle, and how the sun shined upon them was told in detail. My worries about her being sad or feeling lonely did not seem to be needed like they were needed years ago when her husband was ill. Surprised and relieved I left my oma while I kept thinking about how the small things like the tomato plant seemed to change her attitude in and about life. These things allowed my oma to be strong and flexible in times that challenged her, and the world, the most.

There is no other way than to start this research with my oma of 85 years old. The ‘tomato conversation’ changed my view upon late life. Along with two other aspects my oma was my inspiration for starting a design and research studio that was grounded in architecture for late life and care.

Oma

When my grandfather suffered from Parkinson and dementia I saw my oma in a really sad stage. I wondered whether she would come over the suffering caused by the illness and eventually death of her husband. Luckily, as time progressed oma became a happier person. Although she had gone through suffering, it seemed she became more happy than the years before. Without having to take care of her husband, she allowed herself to make time again to undertake her hobbies, to make a structure in her day to have rhythm and to visit her coffee place again. She was finally flourishing again.

Along came the pandemic, I was scared for my grandmother that she would become sad and lonely again, but she did not. She showed great strength in keeping her mind sane and triggered. She adjusted her rhythm of going to her favourite coffee place each day to one of being indoors and completely isolated. She changed her hobbies and found purpose in other activities such as growing tomatoes in her small garden and participating in the daily puzzles on the radio. Figuratively, the pandemic cannot touch her, she has found meaning in the little things and she has found purpose, allowing her to accept and be flexible and open-minded to change.

A daily walk

Over the last half year during quarantining I have been walking the same path an hour each day in the neighbourhood where I grew up in. In the same path I have seen the seasons change from winter to spring to summer, and now to fall. During my walks I wondered why I was doing this every day, the same path, all alone. I guess it was the need to feel connected to the outside and to be in the nature that was surrounding my home that now functioned as a work, live, work-out and eat place all at once. Most of all, the daily walk gave structure and a purpose to each day, as well as happy feelings.

During the pandemic I myself began to have a life associated with the 'isolated elderly life'. Along with the rest of the Netherlands, I could not meet up with friends, go to the sports centre, have drinks nor go to university for class. Soon I realised that the daily walks during my new 'isolated elderly life' were things that were keeping me sane and happy. Seasons changed the pathway I walked, but the pandemic did not. It was such a relief to walk under the tree canopies and feel the sunrays on my skin, in those moments it felt like there was no pandemic, it was just me and nature.


IKIGAI
生き甲斐

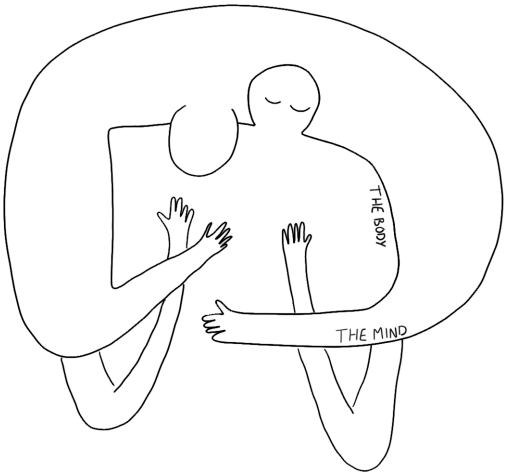
Ikigai

生き甲斐

I have never been particularly interested in ‘elderly’. Actually a decent part of my teenage life I have been despising the fact that people became ‘elderly’. I associated elderly with negative emotions overruling the positive ones, and did not understand where it came from nor why the elderly would not ‘choose’ for a happy life. I remember pouring coffee in a cup for a woman at a care home when I was thirteen during a short internship. She showed negative emotions which I took very personally. There was a very distinctive smell in her room, that of coconuts. Now when a coconut smell enters my nose I immediately think of her and feel negative again. I told my thirteen year old self to never become ‘like that person’.

Ten years later, with this experience in mind, I started reading Ikigai, a book on purpose in life, elaborating on the Japanese secret to a long and happy life. I was surprised to read that there were people in their late life, even around 90 years old, who were still active, happy and healthy. This was in many ways in contrast to the experience I had as a teenager with people in late life during my short internship. This book and its teachings has since reading it stayed in my mind.

As the book clearly relates to all phases of life, I started to wonder why in the last phase of life the people that I had met lost their happiness, spark and purpose. Ikigai seemed to show the solution and I wondered how I was going to relate ikigai to my life now, and when I would be in my last phase of life. Ikigai was the theme that connected me to the interest in designing living environments for people in their late life, and thus the final reason why I chose the graduation studio Designing for Care.


THE BODY
THE MIND

The reason why

While reading Ikigai, while talking to my grandmother finding purpose in growing tomatoes and playing wordfeud during a pandemic, and while walking through the nature where I grew up in as part of my daily rhythm, I found similarities in the life of my grandmother, the temporary isolated pandemic life of myself and the book. All three focused on finding a purpose in sometimes rapidly changing environments in order to stay sane and happy. I realised that finding a purpose in life is of importance in each phase of life.

I believe we are never an 'elderly' as our phases in life are ageless. Yes, we age, our bodies age. But it is our environment that ages our mind with expectations and limitations belonging to our current life phase.

Throughout my years in architecture I have seen myself searching for a connection between architecture, landscape architecture and well-being. Although my interest in well-being, body and mind, has its origins in the fields of psychology and my personal life, it continues in a search for the relationship between the natural environment, built environment and body and mind. I hope that with this search I will be able to create a living environment for people in their last phases of life that allows them to thrive and flourish. I hope to create a living environment that recognises, hosts and allows the flourishing of people in their late life phase.

Problem statement

The loss of a sense of purpose

Each phase of our lives is unique in many ways but at the same time quite similar. Similar in its quest to seek after a dream, aim or vision, to seek after what we would like to achieve, do or be. As a child we dream of being a professional dancer so we take dancing lessons, as a teenager we want to belong and explore so we meet with friends and make new ones, and as an adult we think about buying our own house so we work until we are able to afford one. These aspirations give us meaning, as small or as big as they are, they give a purpose to and in life. The importance of having a sense of purpose in life for psychological functioning and human flourishing has been shown over the years by several researches.

However, oddly enough, there is one phase in life in which we seem to compromise the sources that generate purpose in our life, namely our late life phase. As I interviewed people in late life and observed their daily routines during a stay at a care home I learned that the people in late life settled for anything as they thought and acted like there was no use in fighting for themselves anymore (*'geen zin meer hebben'*). It seemed they had given everyone but themselves power over their own mental well-being. As well I noticed that the social network of the residents had decreased because of losses encountered and people not finding them interesting or helpful enough, that their mobility had and was reducing making it harder to participate in meaningful activities, and that the care givers, although with the best intentions, took over quite some activities that the people could do themselves with some help, all while these activities could maybe stimulate them. Some people were simply waiting to die, although their death could be still years ahead. Lastly, I observed that the care system in the Netherlands is overloaded with older people in need for care while at the same time under supported by care givers. As a result the care givers had no time to focus on the mental aspect of care.

Why do we suddenly settle for less while we have spent our whole lives trying to aim for our dreams? Why and how do we lose our purpose in our late life? How can architecture help and facilitate protecting the sources that generate meaning in our late life? I hope that architecture can stimulate people in their late life phase to hold on to their (changing) purpose in life as small or a big as it is.

Research question

& subquestions

The main research question is:

"What characterises a place that allows for a sense of purpose in life at the intersection of architecture and landscape architecture for people in late life?"

Terms used within this research question will first be defined.

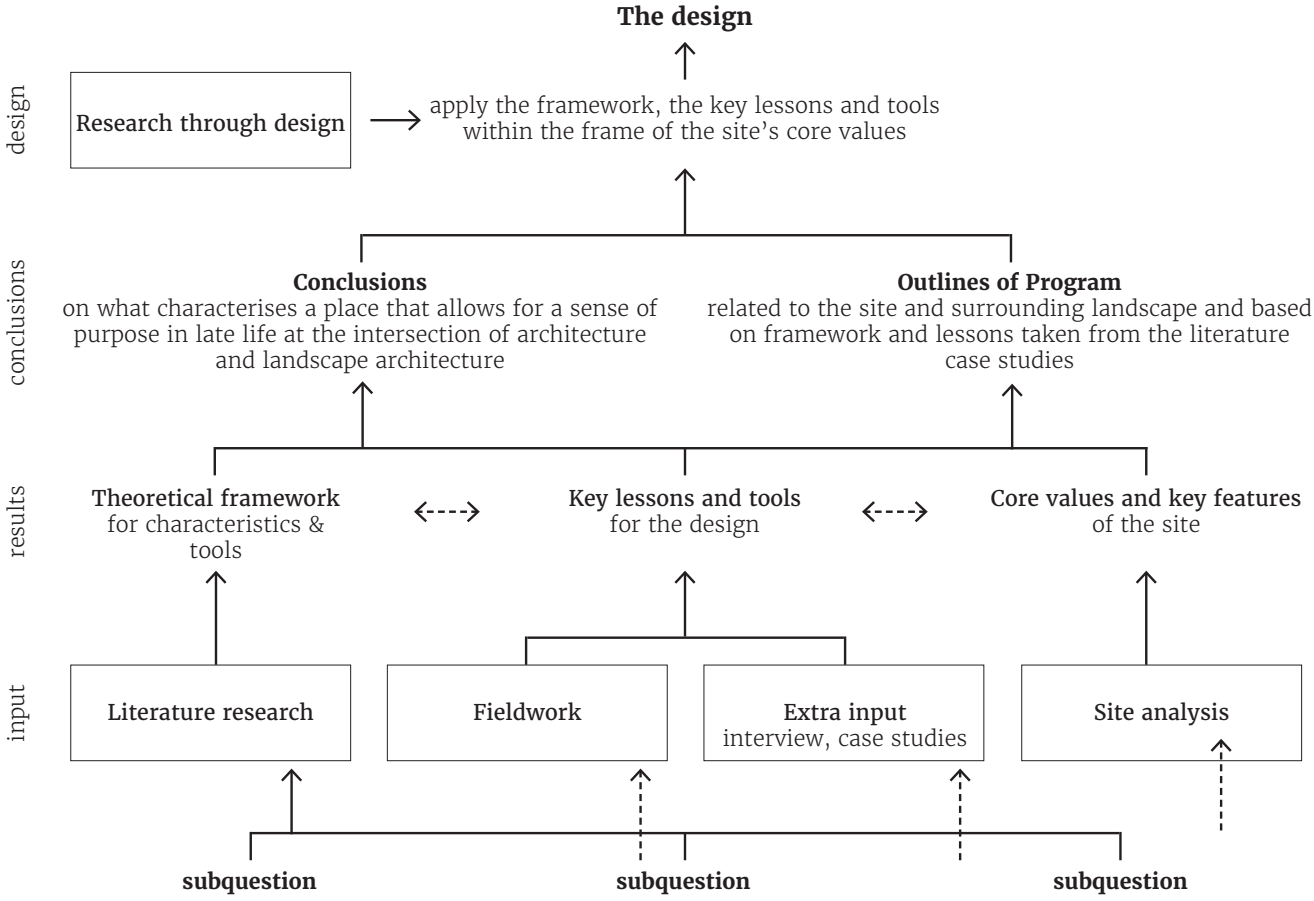
'A sense of purpose in life' is composed of two sets of terms, '*a sense of*' and '*purpose in life*'. A 'purpose in life' entails the reason why one wakes up and why one feels like their life has meaning. A purpose in life ranges within a broad spectrum of events or sources, like a child, making coffee or meditating. 'A sense of' stresses the meaning of feeling and being able to feel that one has a purpose in life. The complete term was derived throughout the writing of the narrative. In the first essay the evolution from the starting term *'ikigai'* towards the term of 'a sense of purpose in life' is explained, defined and elaborated upon.

The term *'late life'* entails the life phase that occurs late in life and includes all people who find and assign themselves to this phase. This term is carefully chosen over the term 'elderly' as the last term immediately puts a set of people into a paradigm that holds many mostly negative prejudices and expectations. Of course there are characteristics of late life that apply to many people in the life phase, for example being retired, being in need of care, suffering from illnesses and experiencing a loss in mobility. However, this does not comply to everyone. A person located in the late life phase without those mentioned needs and experiences as well belongs to late life and deserves a safe and homely place to live in.

Finally, the term *'the intersection of architecture and landscape architecture'* is used. The intersection between both fields implies how one transitions from the interior to the exterior and vice versa. Landscape architecture is put into the research question as the importance of being in and feeling connected to the outdoors was stressed by and followed from the interview conveyed on the sense of purpose in all phases of life during quarantine and from literature. As well, the design location is situated next to a park with landscape interventions. From the point of view of designing from what is already there the intersection of architecture with landscape architecture could not be forgotten.

Research plan

Goal *"a home and landscape that stimulates people in their late life to hold on to their (changing) sense of purpose in life as small or a big as it is"*



Research Question
"What characterises a place that allows for a sense of purpose in life at the intersection of architecture and landscape architecture for people in late life?"

definition

Problem statement
In our last phase of life we seem to compromise the sources that generate meaning in our life. This critical as meaning in life is important for psychological functioning and human flourishing.

Fieldwork observations
Most older people settle for less ('geen zin meer hebben'), some older people are simply waiting to die, most older people feel no sense of purpose in life

Inspirations
Oma, daily walks and the book 'ikigai'

Start of research

Methods

The research for a home of a sense of purpose in late life is subdivided in three sections.

1) Fieldwork research
By observing and sketching during a stay at a care home for several days and nights, and by analysing afterwards, several conclusions were made that led to the desire to change something and so to the formulation of the problem statement. As well, some key lessons and tools were derived from being in a care home, greatly functioning as a real-life case study.

2) Literature research
The second type of input in this research is literature research. Literature research provides this research with a theoretical framework through applying readings in literature into the writings of essays. Through the theoretical framework I could explore the research topic from different fields of study, for example philosophy and architecture, and connect them in a useful and coherent manner. Whereas from the fields of philosophy the theoretical framework has provided tools and characteristics for maintaining and promoting a sense of purpose in late life, from the fields of architecture and landscape architecture the theoretical framework has provided tools and characteristics for the creation of a home and landscape for a sense of purpose in late life. The theoretical framework forms the glue between different fields of study that will, hopefully, bring architecture, landscape architecture and people in late life together in the design.

The literature studied is obtained through several fields of study:
- Through philosophy, for example *What makes life worth living?* (Mathews, 1996) and *The Little Book of Ikigai: The secret Japanese way to live a happy and long life* (Mogi, 2017).
- Through psychology, like *Purpose and meaning in highly active seniors* (Penick & Fallshore, 2005) and *Zingeving en spiritualiteit in de ouderenzorg* (Dijke, 2008)
- Through architecture, such as *Health promotion by design in elderly care* (Dilani & Morelli, 2005) and *Temporal Cues in Built Environments* (Nute & Chen, 2018)
- Through landscape architecture, for example *Time and Temporality in Japanese Gardens* (Miller, 1999) and *Relating Architecture to Landscape* (Birksted, 1999)

3) Site analysis
The research of the design location Sparrenheide looks into the history, demography, urban aspects, climate and landscape aspects of the site, and

thus provides key features of each aspect of the site. As a conclusion these key features are translated into core values of the site in relation to creating a home and landscape for a sense of purpose in late life. These core values form the key towards integrating the literary concept of a sense of purpose in late life with the existing elements, opportunities and strengths of the site.

The bundling of methods

The combination of the fieldwork, literature research and site analysis, along with additional smaller input like an exercise in a wheelchair, interviews, a small case study of the Blue Zones, the watching of documentaries as a replacement of unfinished fieldwork – due to the pandemic – and my oma's house, all together provided an overall conclusion on the characteristics of a place for a sense of purpose in late life at the intersection of architecture and landscape architecture. Besides the answer to the research question, the fieldwork and literature research formulated a program outline in relation to the research topic. This program outline entails straightforward requirements for spaces as well as more conceptual transitions or feelings a space has to convey.

Together, the conclusions and program outline will guide me during the design process for a home and landscape of a sense of purpose in life. As the research and design process is not linear but closely tight together and inter-connected, most likely research by design will as well occur, and the research will continue during the design process.

For an elaboration on the methodologies this research covers, please refer to the appendix, '*the methodology*'. The relevance of the types of methods and methodologies chosen in relation to research in architecture is discussed in the appendix in '*a theoretical reflection*'.

Readers' guide

According to the division of methods, this research book is as well divided into three sections which are sometimes accompanied by extra input.

The experience – A stay at a care home

Fieldwork

The first chapter elaborates on the experiences made during the fieldwork conveyed during the first quarter of the research process. The fieldwork consisted of three days and two nights of being, eating, sleeping and participating in activities at a care home in Loenen. The raw material made during the fieldwork and the analysis made after the fieldwork are bundled in a separate booklet named '*The experience*' and its materials inside and the booklet itself is composed together with another student with whom I stayed at the care home.

In this booklet only the observations and raw material sketched by myself that led me to discovering the topic of my research and to the definition of the problem statement are mentioned. Finally, three personal conclusions as a result of the fieldwork conveyed are mentioned and explained.

The narrative – A sense of purpose in late life

Literature research

The second chapter *'The narrative'* entails the theoretical framework and consists of three essays. As the essays continue, the focus on certain fields of study shifts: essay one is fully philosophical, essay two combines philosophy with psychology, and essay 3 links psychology, philosophy, architecture and landscape architecture together.

The first essay focusses on the philosophy of ikigai and its characteristics. The question asked in this essay is: *"What does ikigai entail and what are the characteristics of a purposeful life? Is ikigai of relevance in Western culture?"*. This essay redefines the research topic from the term 'ikigai' to 'a sense of purpose in life'.

As a result, essay 2 focuses on the value of a sense of purpose in life for people in late life and searches for the characteristics for a purposeful life at late age. Strategies for maintaining and promoting a sense of purpose in late life are proposed with the use of literature from the fields of philosophy and psychology. This essay aims to answer the question: *"What is the value of a sense of purpose in life for people in the late life phase, how do they view having a sense of purpose and what are the characteristics of such a life for them?"*.

The final essay focuses on architecture and landscape architecture related to the strategies and important characteristics of a sense of purpose in late life defined and explored in essay 2. For each important strategy and

characteristic architectural and landscape architectural interventions and elements are mentioned and identified in creating context for, a home and landscape for a sense of purpose in late life. The question posed and answered is: *"How can architecture and landscape architecture allow, promote and maintain a sense of purpose in late life?"*

The home and landscape of a sense of purpose in late life

Site analysis

The final chapter focuses on the site, Sparrenheide in Driebergen-Rijsenburg, for which and from where the home and landscape for a sense of purpose in life will be designed. The site analysis is made in collaboration with two other students, partly as the size of the site is too large to grasp by oneself giving the limited time, and bundled in a separate booklet named *'The site'*. The analysis starts with an analysis of the history of the site and its surroundings, then continues with the demographical aspects of the site and is followed by analysis on the urban, climate and landscape aspects of the site. It concludes with an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the site translated to a communal vision for the whole area.
In this booklet I will summarise the key features that I have personally found to be of interest and have translated these into core values of the site that are related to the topic of this research, a place for a sense of purpose in late life.

FIELDWORK

The experience

of a stay at a home of the
late life phase

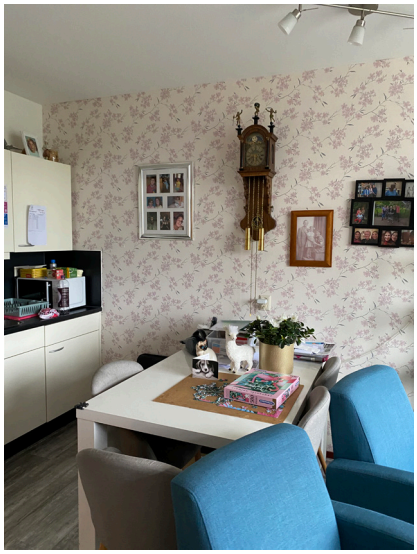
A stay at a care home

Introduction

At a young age one walks the stairs to their student room, cooks dinner in a narrow crowded kitchen and goes to friends whenever one feels like it. One does not realise that these activities are not a given for everyone, especially for people of old age. The phase of late life feels far away to most people, as well to me. Before starting this research I never really pondered on what my life will be like when I am around 80 years old, let alone where I will live. I have seen the house where my grandfather was relocated to when he suffered from dementia, I have seen the house where my 98 year old grandmother lived all by herself until the end, and I still visit my other grandmother who lives in an one-levelled senior house. But still, the visits to the houses, or care institutions, of my grandparents were short and not everyday visits for me. Whereas for example row houses, dwelling for students, the building of schools and museums are well-known and familiar buildings to me, I actually did not know how dwelling for care or for people in late life at the core really worked, let alone how it feels to live, eat and sleep in such a place.

To immerse and familiarise myself with some of the usual living environments of people in late life I stayed at a care home in Loenen in the Netherlands. A home that consists of care apartments, as well as apartments for people needing psychogeriatric care and supported housing. At the care home I ate, slept, made dinner and participated in the activities of the people living there. I soon realised that for me the daily simple things such as stepping over a threshold to the balcony, were for the people living at the care home the reason that kept them from going outside. All findings, observations, raw material and an analysis of this fieldwork at a care home can be found in the separate booklet named '*The experience*'. In this chapter I will bring you along the findings during the stay that resulted, alongside with the inspirations mentioned in the introduction (reading ikigai, my oma and my daily walks), in directing this research towards the topic of a sense purpose in life.

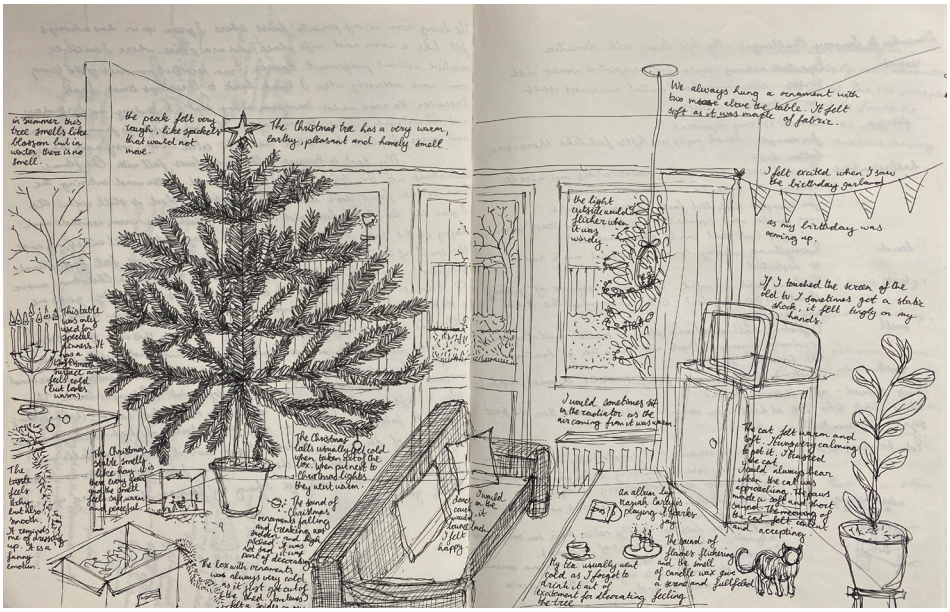




The care apartment where I stayed, a nook in the collective living room & the apartment of an inhabitant



The view from the collective living room, the entrance hall and the outdoors at the main entrance



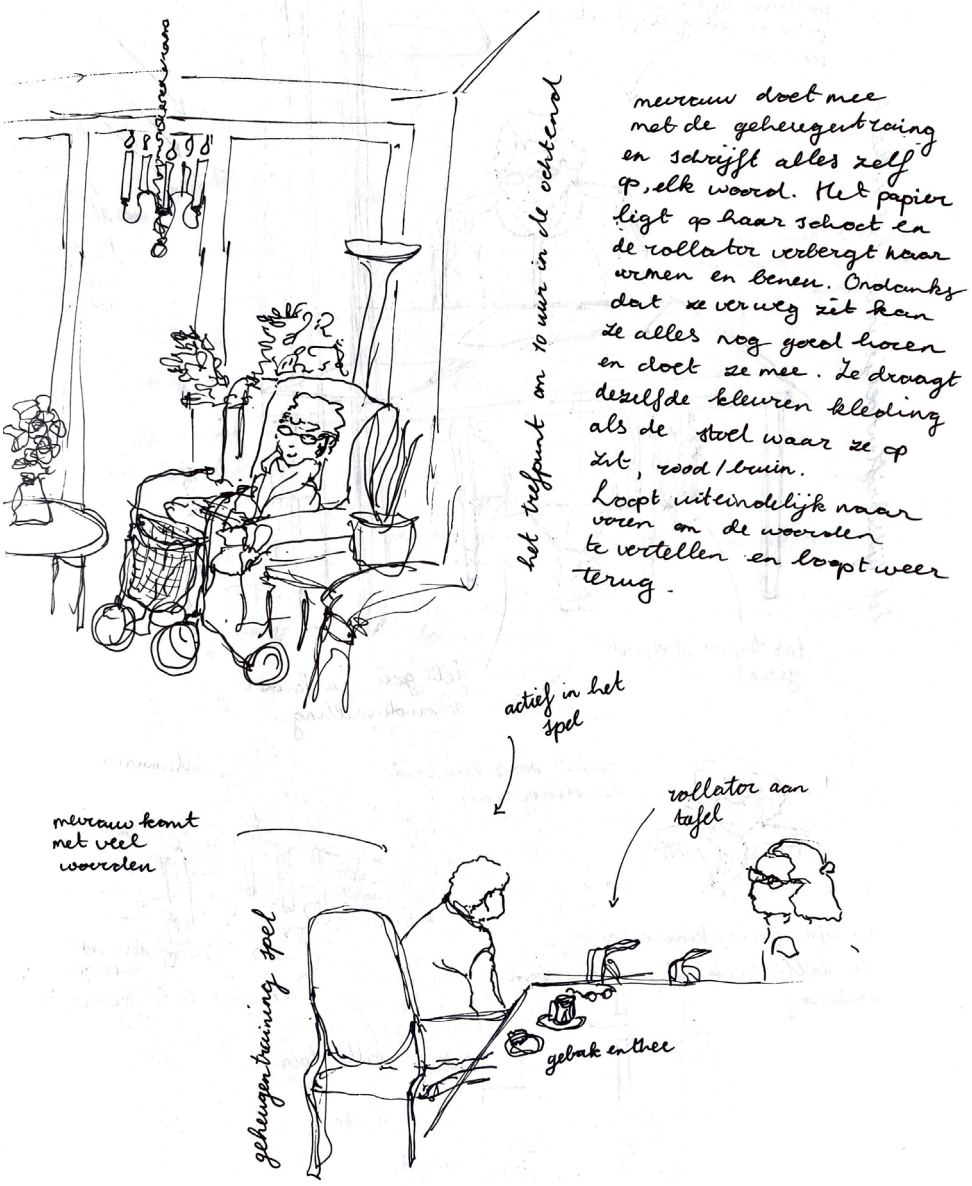
My small moments of joy when I was a child

Small places creating moments of joy

Raw material

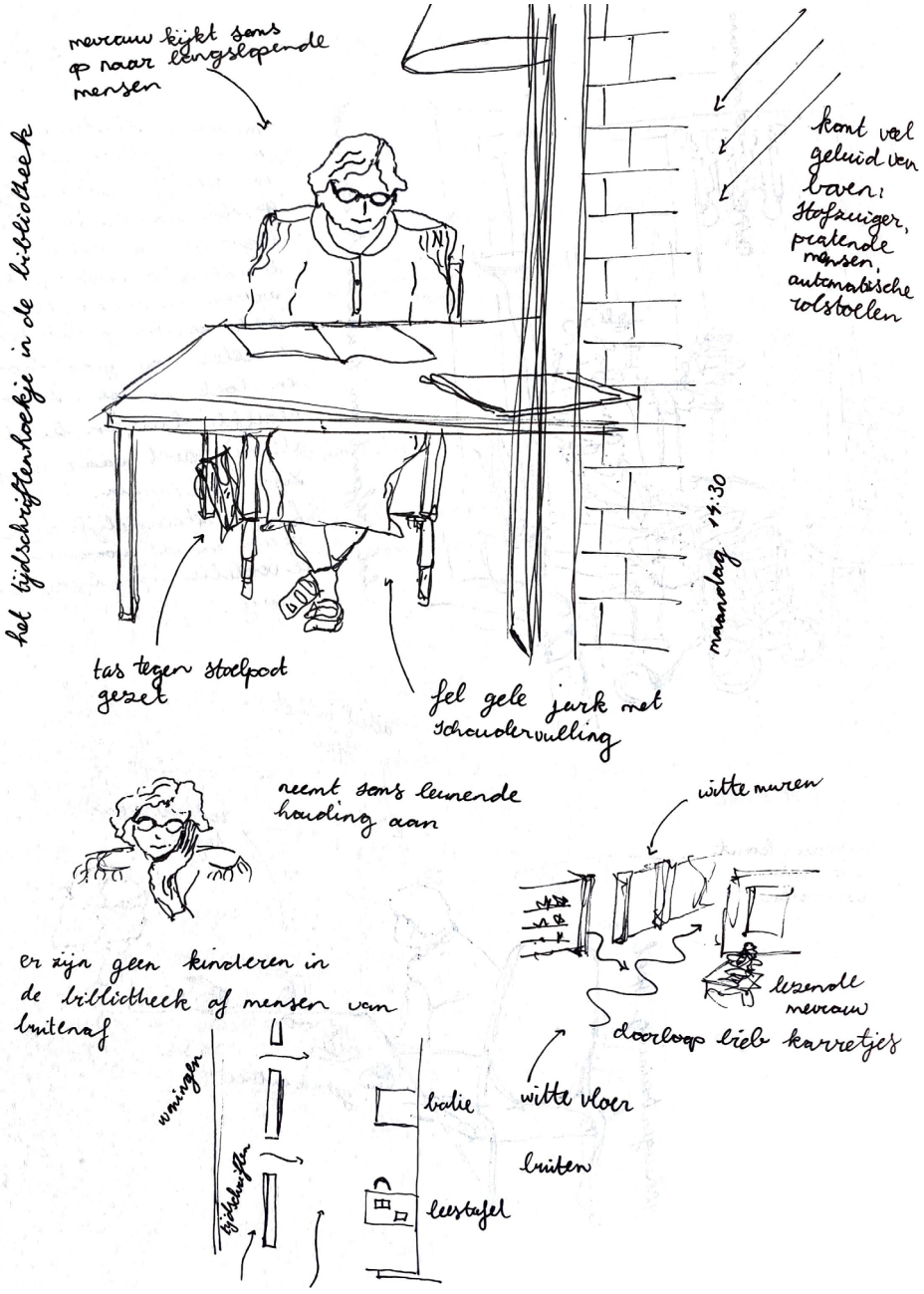
While immersing myself into the daily lives of the people living at the care home in Loenen I observed that most people I had met had a special place in the care home that created a small moment of joy in their day. These moments appeared to be really important as they marked something in their day that gave structure and it provided them with something to look forward to each day. In the ever-accelerating lives of myself and the people around me – see, always having something to do: working, studying, working out, doing the groceries etc – I had never considered these small moments of joy as a special moment to me. However, in the late lives of the people in Loenen these small moments appeared to play a big role as their lives were not in the ever-accelerating mode anymore. During the observations I made sketches of these small moments of joy I witnessed. In the upcoming pages these sketches, the raw material of the fieldwork, are shown and explained.

Small places creating moments of joy



Everyday this woman was seated in the same chair. The chair was located in a corner of the collective living room overlooking the whole space and the attached open hallway. It was a somewhat concealed space with a clear view on the environment. She seemed joyful while, from 'her' chair, she greeted everyone who passed by and drank her coffee in the morning.

Small places creating moments of joy



At night when dinner was served this woman wandered around the hallways. Once she passed the collective library she walked to the same table as the day before. This day she took a new magazine and sat at the table underneath a big lamp illuminating her readings. She sat there quietly for an hour every night. She seemed at peace and very focussed during this moment, in contrast to when she wandered through the building.

Small places creating moments of joy

Although never at the same place within, this woman could be found at most moments of the day in the collective living room. She joined most activities and always brought her glasses and napkins. Her stroller was usually located in front of her, marking her personal space.

Small places creating moments of joy

Usually the same group of people were found in the collective spaces. They seemed to know each other quite well and enjoyed playing games together. Being together was a small moment of joy for them and this moment was facilitated in, besides the seating area, the dining area of living room.

The interviewed people during the fieldwork

Observations

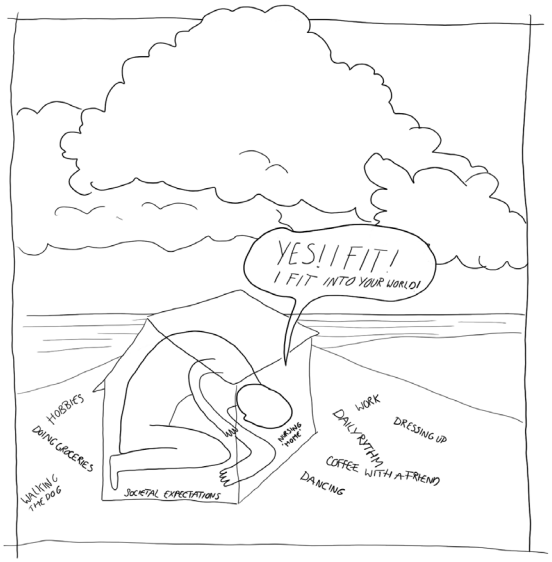
Besides these places creating small moments of joy I witnessed as well many obstacles that the people living in the care home had to face before arriving towards these moments. Moreover, these obstacles sometimes prevented them from being able to experience these moments of joy.

Firstly, I noticed during the interviews (see chapter *'People'* in *'The experience'* booklet) that the social network had decreased of many because of losses of friends or family members encountered and people not finding them interesting or helpful enough. For many their social circle consisted only of the family members that were willing to pass by every once in a while and the people that they saw in the hallway. Some had created a friend group consisting of people living in the care home as well, but as well these people mentioned that they missed their old friends and family members.

Secondly, for many people in late life the degree of their mobility was reducing and had already reduced a lot. As a result of not being able to move around easily it was harder to participate in purposeful activities for them. In interviews the inhabitants mentioned that due to their loss in mobility they hardly came outside anymore. To experience how limiting a loss in mobility really is I rolled around the campus of the university of Delft in a wheelchair for two hours (see appendix *'Stepping into one's shoes'*). This experience was very eye-opening as during the rolling I experienced way more obstacles than I thought I would. Only some of the obstacles were thresholds, very narrow walking paths, unsuitable surfaces to roll on, cars overlooking me, buttons and cameras located too high; all in all a very unfriendly campus to wheelchair on. After I was exhausted, my hands hurt and arms burned. I completely understand why people in late life as a result of mobility issues often along with illness and in a bad condition are held back often to not undertake certain activities.

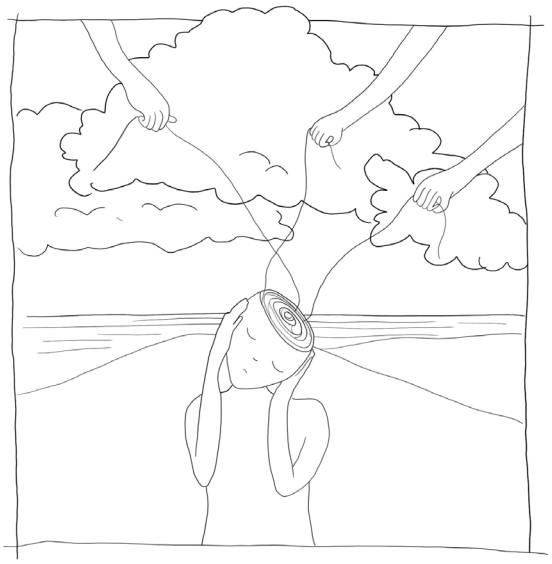
Thirdly, I noticed as well that, although with their best intentions, the care givers took over quite some activities of the older people. While these activities, perhaps with a little help, the older people could do themselves. In this way the people were deprived from participating in some activities and not encouraged to remain active or keep a degree of independence themselves.

Lastly, during my stay at a care home and while watching the documentary series '*Anita wordt opgenomen'*, translated in English to *Anita is being admitted to a nursing home*, I learned that the Dutch care system is overloaded by people in late life needing care while at the same time being under supported by a small amount of available care givers (Witzier, 2020). Due to this imbalance in people needing care and available people providing care, the Dutch care system has no time and money to focus on the mental well-being of its inhabitants.



SETTLING FOR LESS

WAITING TO DIE



DISSASPEARING PURPOSE IN LIFE

Conclusions

Personal fieldwork conclusions

After the observations during the fieldwork, the experience of being in a wheelchair and watching several documentaries on late life, three thoughts, or conclusions, kept lingering in my mind.

My first thought and conclusion was that almost all people in late life settle for less (in Dutch *'geen zin meer hebben'*). They have to fit into the Dutch care system and the Dutch biased views and expectations of people in late life, resulting them in leaving their own hobbies, values, ideas and rituals behind. Eventually, this makes them lose their lust for life.

As well I concluded that some people in late life are just simply waiting to die. This is critical as this 'simply waiting to die' could go on for maybe not just 2 months, but possibly for 7 or 15 years. No one deserves to live with this thought for a long period of time.

Lastly I concluded that, closely attached to the two conclusions before, people in late life often feel like they have no purpose in life. They do not sense a purpose in their lives and as a result think they are useless, not of any value to a community and do not have a reason to wake up.

As a result of these fairly sad conclusions I arrived to the problem statement, elaborated on in the introduction, that in our last phase of life we seem to compromise the sources that generate purpose in our life and these sources are threatened by things like losses and mobility issues. This is critical as having a sense of purpose in life is important for psychological functioning, human flourishing, and well-being.

LITERATURE

The narrative

of a sense of purpose in late life

Song at Sunset

'To breathe the air, how delicious!
To speak, to walk, to seize something by the band!
To be this incredible God I am!
O amazement of things, even the least particle!
O spirituality of things!
I too carol the Sun, or at noon, or as now setting,
I too, throb to the brain and beauty of the earth, and of all the growths of the earth...
I sing the equalities, modern or old;
I sing the endless finales of things;
I say Nature continues – Glory continues;
I praise with electric voice;
For I do not see one imperfection in the Universe;
And I do not see one cause or result lamentable at last.'

– *Song at Sunset, Walt Whitman, 1990*

The purpose of life

Ikigai & its characteristics

Introduction

Described immensely in the poet '*Song at Sunset*', written by humanist and poet Walt Whitman (1990), is the beauty of life and living, and the mere joy of living. This mere joy of living runs so deeply and strongly through the poem that it seems to annul any possibility of feeling any other kind of emotion. Life is pure happiness. Philosopher William James (1895) questions this poem, describes it as '*the optimistic temperament universal*' and goes further by calling it '*insanity phases of melancholy*'. In his essay '*Is Life Worth Living?*' he compares the Song at Sunset to poems of temperamental pessimism. Concluding this comparison of the ultimate optimism versus the ultimate pessimism, in order to answer the question if life is worth living, James states that nor being an ultimate optimist or pessimist is the solution to a happy life, one just needs to believe possibility exists. In the conclusion he writes '*Believe that life is worth living, and your belief will help create the fact. Your faith beforehand in an uncertified result will make the result come true*' (James, 1895, p.24).

Tackled by various people throughout history, for example philosopher Albert Camus (1955) who contended that life is worth living not despite but because it has no meaning, the topic of life worth living has been broadly discussed throughout numerous fields of expertise besides philosophy such as healthcare, poetry, media and in every day conversations. Answers to the questions if life is worth living differ but a central theme in these answers can be found, the theme of a sense of commitment, a sense of purpose (Mathews, 1996).

This sense of purpose plays an inevitable role in life in Japanese culture, so importantly that there is a word in Japan embracing this all-encompassing theme, the word *ikigai* (Mathews, 1996, 5).

The origin of the word ikigai can be traced back to the Heian period, from 794 to 1185. *Gai* is derived from the word *kai*, meaning shell in Japanese. Shells were highly valuable in the Heian period as they were decorated by hand by artists and used in a shell matching game. From there ikigai was created as a word meaning value in living and incorporating values in life (Mitsuhashi, 2017).

Nowadays the Japanese dictionary defines the ikigai as *ikiru hariai, yorokobi* and *meate* translated as something to live for and the joy and goal of living (Mathews, 1996). In Japanese ikigai is written as 生き甲斐, the combination of 生き meaning '*life*', with 甲斐 meaning '*to be worthwhile*'. Roughly ikigai translates to *"the happiness of always being busy"*. Although there is argument over the meaning of ikigai, many definitions lead to the explanation of ikigai as having something to live for. Having an ikigai therefore gives a sense of purpose to each and every day, it is the direct answer to the question what makes life worth living (García & Miralles, 2017).

Kamiya Mieko, referred to by some as the Mother of Ikigai Psychology, was one of the first researchers to extensively study ikigai. Although published in 1966, nowadays her book Ikigai-ni-Tsuite (translated to What Makes Our Life Worth Living) is still studied by Japanese researches and psychologists (Mathews, 1996). Mieko defines ikigai as:

- *Ikigai – the source of ikigai* - a specific experience or source of value in one's life that creates a sense of worth and happiness
- *Ikigai-kan – the sense of ikigai* - the state of mind of when one is feeling ikigai associated to a source

For example, a mother or father could say "My child is my ikigai", stating that her/his child creates a sense of worth in her/his life. Their child is their source that creates a sense of purpose (Yamamoto-Mitani & Wallhagen, 2002) (Nakanishi, 1999, ikigai in older people).

Although ikigai is a Japanese concept and a way of living for many Japanese people, it is an universal human experience (Mathews, 1996). Ikigai is what each one of us most truly lives for on a day to day and year to year basis, be it a life-long dream, a certain belief, a pet, a lover or a creative endeavour. The essay aims to answer the question: *"What does ikigai entail and what are the characteristics of a purposeful life? Is ikigai of relevance in Western culture?"*

In this essay I firstly explore several interpretations of ikigai and study ikigai as a concept deeply rooted in Japanese culture. The study of ikigai is then followed by questioning its relevance to Western, including Dutch, culture. In addition, I elaborate on the terminology used to define ikigai in Western culture in this research.

Fig. 1 – The highly valuable and hand painted shells from the Heian period (IkigaiTribe, 2020)

Fig. 2 – A picture of Kamiya Mieko, the Mother of Ikigai Psychology (Christian Press, 2020)

Interpretations of ikigai

When embarking upon the ikigai journey it quickly becomes clear that there is not one definition belonging to ikigai. Definitions of ikigai can be found translated in concise diagrams and in difficult to comprehend atmospheric poems. Differences in views and conceptualisations of ikigai can be explained by the idea that ikigai reflects individual values and world views (Yamamoto-Mitani & Wallhagen, 2002). Japanese neuroscientist, researcher and writer Ken Mogi, who is based in Tokyo and has written two books covering ikigai, explains in a podcast covering the topic of ikigai (Kemp, 2020), that ikigai cannot be defined concisely as ikigai is deeply personal and very cultural. He elaborates on the statement saying that the Japanese people have never sought to discover a general definition of ikigai. Japanese people do not need a concise definition as they understand the concept of ikigai from living in Japan and growing up in its culture. For Japanese people ikigai is something natural, as it is something in the air (Kemp, 2020; Mogi, 2017). As Mogi continues to explain Ikigai, without defining ikigai literally, he mentions that ikigai is an all-inclusive, integrating concept, stating:

"Ikigai refers to all things, not just one element of our life, but all of it as an integrated, coherent process enjoyed by you. So, you are at the centre of this ikigai universe. And within the universe, you have many different plants, flowers, trees, which grow and gives you joy but at the end of the day, ikigai is the single comprehensive umbrella term to describe all of it."

- Ken Mogi, 2020 in an interview with N. Kemp (2020)

In contrast to the open interpretation of ikigai by Mogi, in Western literature strict frameworks surrounding the topic of ikigai have been made in order to understand the concept of ikigai. These frameworks often try to create a concise definition of ikigai and focus on the aim of achieving a dream job or receiving a certain salary. Mogi explains that this approach is in total contrast to the Japanese approach in understanding ikigai. The Japanese practice ikigai every day without having formal definitions of what it should be. Whereas the Japanese start from practicing ikigai, the Western approach starts from definitions. An interesting comparison is made to the approach of the Japanese towards ikigai with the approach of a Buddhist monk training in which the goal is to achieve enlightenment, called *Satori*. Even though the training evolves around Satori, no one in the training, as well as the high priest, is able to describe what a Satori exactly is (Kemp, 2020).

Ironically, my inspiration for this research started with reading a book covering the topic of ikigai authored by two non-Japanese writers, Hector Garcia and Francesc Miralles. In the book a 'westernised' framework, composed by Marc

Winn called 'What's Your Ikigai?', is shown containing four components one needs to complete in order to achieve ikigai:

What you Love (your passion)
What the World Needs (your mission)
What you are Good at (your vocation)
What you can get Paid for (your profession)

Kemp and Mogi argue that this framework focusses on the pursuit of (financial) success while the concept of ikigai evolves around self-actualisation in which the small joys in daily life result in a more fulfilling life in general (Kemp, 2020). Therefore, the next paragraph will start with ikigai explained by Mieko Kamiya, the mother of ikigai psychology.

Ikigai in the Japanese context

Mieko Kamiya (1966) researched the concept of ikigai as a psychiatrist while working with socially excluded people, such as leprosy patients. Besides leprosy patients, Kamiya observed and studied people suffering from other life transitional events such as bereavement, and saw them lose their ikigai over time (Kono, 2018). Emotional feelings defined by Kamiya in relation to losing one's ikigai were anxiety, isolation, loneliness, self-denial, desperation and disintegration of mind and body. While working with her patients Kamiya composed a list of aspects of ikigai, translated by Fleming, Bresler and O'Toole (2014) as follows:

a. *Life satisfaction* – viewed by Kamiya as the most basic need - the human desire to live life fully;
b. *Change and growth* – a sense of aliveness gained by extending one's capacity and venturing into new areas of study and activity;
c. *A bright future (mirai-sei)* – having possibilities for future life and happiness;
d. *Social engagement* – human desire for friendship, sympathy, respect as well as recognition by others;
e. *Freedom* – spiritual need to be free from restriction;
f. *Self-actualization* – joy of creation as significant part of humans' ikigai formation;
g. *Meaning and value* – search for the meaning of life and the significance of existence.

These aspects together allow for having a sense of ikigai according to Kamiya (1966) at which self-actualisation is at the centre, described by Kamiya as the development of the core of ikigai taking effort and patience to realise.

Although Kamiya's research and conclusions play an important role in the exploration of ikigai, it is questionable if her theories on ikigai are of relevance to today's population as her research was conducted over 50 years ago. Considering the fact stated by Mogi (2020) that ikigai is very cultural and that over the last half century quick social changes have taken place in Japan, some of Kamiya's ikigai theories might no longer be of relevance in today's society. In addition, sociologists claim that the sources of ikigai change along with shifts in social values (Kono, 2018).

In reaction and building upon Kamiya's theories, Japanese clinical psychologist and professor at Toya Eiwa University Akihiro Hasegawa has researched ikigai and published several articles on it. From 1995 to 2000 Hasegawa worked as clinical psychologist at a psychiatric hospital treating patients with dementia. While working there Hasegawa noticed differences in the progression of dementia in patients. He discovered that patients who had a sense of ikigai could hold off dementia longer and had slow-progressing dementia. This inspired Hasegawa to research ikigai in depth and create a model on ikigai relevant to today's society. He states that ikigai entails reason for living, self-actualization, the meaning of life and purpose of life (Hasegawa, Fuijwara and Hoshi, 2001). Hasegawa and Mieko both write that Japanese people believe that the sum of small joys in everyday life, when in accordance with one's true nature will result in a fulfilling life as a whole (Kono, 2018). To conclude Hasegawa has composed the Constituent Elements of Ikigai showing the sources of ikigai and the feeling of ikigai interlocking at the self (Hasegawa et al., 2001).

The general characteristics of ikigai in Japan are identified by Takahashi (2001). Firstly, ikigai contains no religious element and reference to God. Ikigai does interfere with spirituality in Japanese culture as it focuses, for example, on encounters with nature, experiences with nothingness and awareness of the here and now. Secondly, the search for ikigai does not stem from the need for self-identification. It is rather a social construct that comes from the need to belong to a group, to build balanced relationships and to achieve shared goals by participating in community activities. It provides a long-term source of well-being.

The last characteristic can be argued as it conveys a more traditional value, since today the sense of ikigai as an individual desire emerges more and more. Mathews (1996) argues that ikigai is both individual and social. However, whether one's ikigai is prompted more towards the individualistic or collective side, ikigai is created through acknowledgement and several interactions in a social world (Fleming, Bresler and O'Toole, 2014).

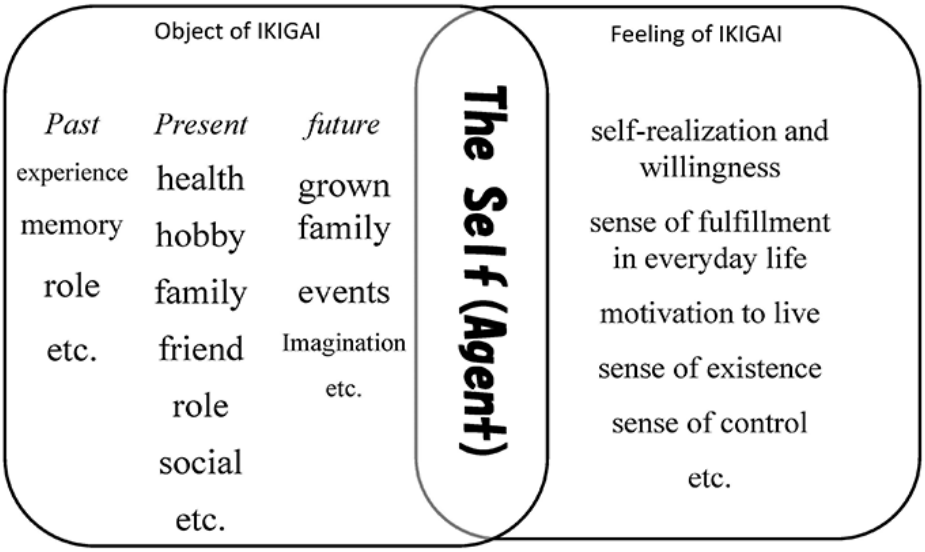


Fig. 3 – The constituent elements of 'ikigai' (Christian Press, 2020)

Relevance of ikigai to Dutch culture

Since ikigai is deeply rooted in Japanese Culture and the Japanese and Dutch cultures are located on the opposite to each other, one could wonder whether it would be relevant to research the concept of ikigai in the architecture and culture of the Netherlands. Especially, as we learned that the Japanese consciously grow up with ikigai, and the Dutch do not. Particularly the culture differences between that of the Japanese and Dutch lie in the Japanese success-driven culture, one that values ambitions and successes, versus the Dutch quality-oriented culture that values the quality of life, and Japanese collectivism versus Dutch individualism (Kotera, Van Laethem & Ohshima, 2020). However, both countries share the important global issue of today, that of maintaining good mental health and well-being.

Although the Japanese are the native speakers of ikigai, ikigai is an important concept globally according to Mogi (Kemp, 2020) as in any culture ikigai usually is present but comes as something unconsciously practised. The aim is to make the idea of ikigai, or how it may be called in another culture, a conscious practice: something that is possible in every culture. Another geographical place in which the concept of creating a sense of purpose in life is consciously practised is Nicoya in Costa Rica. Where the Japanese live by Ikigai, the Nicoyans live by *plan de vida*, both translating to the reason why they wake up in the morning (Buettner and Skemp, 2016). In other languages rough counterparts of ikigai as a concept of self-actualisation can be found – in French '*raison d'etre*' and *'joie de vivre'*, and in Italian 'ragione d'essere'. Nonetheless these terms seem to be more philosophical and conceptual, whereas ikigai is less philosophical and more intuitive. (Fleming, Bresler and O'Toole, 2014).

In a comparison in the processes to ikigai between Western and East Asian countries Takahashi (2001) noted a cultural difference. He noted that Western interviewees focused on the importance of independence in living a purposeful life, while the East Asian interviewees stressed the significance of belonging, especially of belonging to a family. Family was mentioned as a source of ikigai by the Western interviewees as well, however, in a different way than the East Asian interviewees did. Whereas the Western interviewees when stating family as a source of ikigai often meant their independent and individual relationships with their partner, the East Asian interviewees meant their close interdependent relationships with their children. In conclusion, in both cultures family was a frequently mentioned source of ikigai but how they experienced ikigai from this source was different.

Interestingly, research has been done by Kotera, Van Laethem & Ohshima (2020) exploring the differences in work mental health between the Japanese and Dutch contrasting cultures. A cross-cultural comparison of mental health between Japanese and Dutch people was conveyed researching

relationships with mental health shame, self-compassion, work engagement and motivation. The findings show that job crafting, mindfulness and enhancing ikigai (defined in the research as meaningfulness in life) is helpful in protecting mental health related to self-compassion, caring for self, and work engagement in both cultures (Kotera, Van Laethem & Ohshima, 2020).

Although we, human beings, are different in our culturally shared values and in the rules and limits of our societies (Yamamoto-Mitani & Wallhagen, 2002), we are also similar as we see the world in parallel ways through sharing individual similarities and through underlying similarities of our sociocultural worlds that transcend the cultural differences (Mathews, 1996). Ikigai can serve as a new ingredient in one's life that once mixed with one's culture and personal ideas it can lead to a more creative and enjoyable life (Kemp, 2020).

A sense of purpose in life belongs to everyone

Concluded from the brief writing on ikigai in the Asian and Western culture can be that regardless of culture, to every human being on this planet it seems a relevant question to ask yourself what the things are that really give you joy. Big goals such a becoming a CEO are great, but not necessarily one's ikigai. Ikigai is most likely hidden in the really inner sanctuary of your heart. Finding your ikigai is a journey surrounding self-reflection. Ikigai is the sum of small joys in everyday life that lead to a life worthwhile to live, something wished for and relevant to every human being on this planet.

Yet writing this essay the thoughts keeps lingering that using the term ikigai might not be the best term for this research due to several reasons. Firstly, ikigai remains a difficult to grasp concept for Western culture as it is abstract, personal and cultural (Fleming, Bresler and O'Toole, 2014). Secondly, the aim of this research is to find (landscape) architectural and/or atmospheric characteristics that will serve as a place for promoting the concept of ikigai. However, this concept is difficult to translate to architectural characteristics as it is abstract and therefore difficult to transform into something structural. The third argument entails that the philosophy of ikigai and Japanese culture need to be studied intensively first, before writing the architectural framework, in order to fully understand and respect its culture and original and true meaning. This is impossible as this research is an architectural research, not one within the field of sociology, and within the given timeframe.

Therefore the terminology *'a sense of purpose in life'* has been chosen for this research. A sense of purpose in life is a more clear and robust term as we can let go off and transform our purpose in life. It is as well a term that triggers personal and systemic resistance, and thus fertile matter to work with. Besides, *'a sense of'* is added because everyone always has a purpose, however,

one needs to be aware of it in order to be able to feel the positive feeling of having a purpose. Lastly it can be transferred to architectural characteristics fitting to the culture of the Dutch. Throughout this research the concept of ikigai will be used as an inspiration for creating a sense of purpose in life, therefore this chapter remains relevant as it shows how a purposeful life is lived after in other cultures, and adds to the reason why most Japanese people wake up every day.

Conclusion

All in all ikigai is the sum of small joys in everyday life that lead to a life worthwhile to live. One may have found their Ikigai already, others are still, consciously or unconsciously, searching for it. Ikigai never enters or leaves the body, it has always been and is always carried in every human being, if they are aware of it or not (García & Miralles, 2017). Ikigai is something relevant to everyone, it is an escape from reality, a small happy moment and a life worthwhile to live, something we all look for in our lives.

Whether we talk about ikigai within the westernized framework or as a means of living in Japan we can conclude that firstly, ikigai is deeply cultural and social, and secondly ikigai is very personal and individual. Moreover, ikigai has no religious element to it but is spiritual. The study of ikigai in different cultures has shown that the sense of ikigai in Japan is more focused on collectivism whereas in the Western cultures ikigai is focused on an individual desire. However, the Eastern sense of ikigai is shifting towards a more individualistic one.

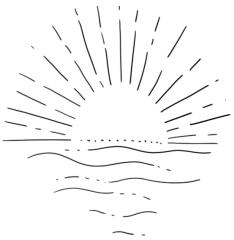
Lastly, we have concluded that a sense of purpose in life is an important term belonging to ikigai, although not fully comprehending ikigai, and that a sense of purpose in life is a more suitable term in this research looking at architecture and the people in the Netherlands.

Discussion

In this essay several views regarding the concept of ikigai have been mentioned. These views were chosen on basis of the high amounts of mentions they received in other researches covering ikigai. Needless to say, there are many more interesting and important views on the concept of ikigai to discover in order to receive a more complete view of the concept.

right outlook

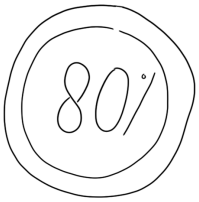
move naturally



purpose

door shift

eat wisely

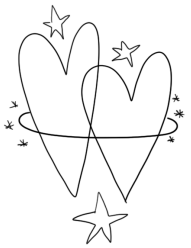


80% rule

plant slant

wine@5

belong



right tribe

community

loved ones first

The Blue Zones

Addendum to essay 1

Introduction

Places where having a purpose in life plays an essential role in daily life have been identified and researched by Dan Buettner in his book '*The Blue Zones*'. In his book he mentions five geographic regions where people live the longest, the so-called 'Blue Zones': Okinawa in Japan, Sardinia in Italy, Loma Linda in California, The Nicoya Peninsula in Costa Rica and Ikiaria in Greece. The lifestyle of the inhabitants of the Blue Zones have shown several interesting facts. Firstly, besides living longer than the rest of the world's population, they suffer from fewer chronic illnesses such as cancer. Their blood tests show fewer free radicals and they enjoy higher levels of vitality and health than people of the same age elsewhere. Lastly, the rate of dementia is well below the global average and healthcare expenses are exceptionally low (García & Miralles, 2017, p.11). A comparison made by Buettner and Skemp (2016) between the similar lifestyles of the inhabitants of the Blue Zones resulted in 'The Power Nine', nine factors key to longevity and beneficial to health (Buettner and Skemp, 2016).

The Blue Zones in the culture and lifestyles of the Dutch

Currently the Netherlands is experiencing a rising healthcare demand and healthcare expenses, of which the expenses are mainly found in care, rather than in cure, and little in prevention. To counteract these demands and expenses, the Blue Zones could offer solutions as it has shown to benefit the health and well-being of its population and the expenditures on healthcare.

In the Netherlands health used to be seen as the state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease. This definition has seen resistance over the last years as it states that (the quickly rising number) in people with chronic disease never will be healthy again, conveying the message that they are of little added value to Dutch society (Jansen, 2017). Rather, the concept of Positive Health is being praised as it views health as the ability to adapt and to self-manage (Huber, 2011). This concept has shown to have a similar approach to the Blue Zones as both stress importance on the lifestyles of people (Jansen, 2017).

To investigate whether the Blue Zones theory could be successfully implemented in the Netherlands Jansen (2017) compared the characteristics of the Blue Zones with the Positive Health concept, and researched the attitude and knowledge of Dutch people towards the concept of the Blue Zones and Positive Health in the Netherlands. She concluded that the characteristics of Positive Health and the Blue Zones were quite comparable, that Dutch people were positive about both concepts and willing to make the necessary lifestyle changes in the philosophy of Positive Health and the Blue Zones, but that awareness of both subjects was still limited. The main difference found was that Positive Health was important in the individual area, while the Blue Zone was of importance in the local area. Therefore, Positive Health should be stressed on the individual level as well as in a certain environment so that the whole environment surrounding the individual positively changes their lifestyle (Jansen, 2017). Interestingly, promoting this change in an environmental setting sounds as something that possibly can be achieved with landscape architectural and architectural interventions.

All in all Jansen concluded that by using the instrument of Positive Health and by making necessary adjustments on environmental scale, a happier and healthier Netherlands can be created, resulting in the development of Blue Zones. The similarities between both concepts will accelerate this development (Jansen, 2017).

A sense of purpose in life, the Blue Zones and Positive Health in the Netherlands

Although a strong sense of community and a healthy diet are just as important as a clearly defined purpose in life - ikigai -, research shows that the Okinawan's focus on ikigai plays a highly important role in their health and longevity (García & Miralles, 2017, 12). To dive deeper within the concept of creating a sense of purpose in life, I wanted to elaborate on the aspect of purpose in life within both concepts of the Blue Zones and Positive Health.

The research by Jansen (2017) comparing the characteristics of the Blue Zones found by Buettner and Skemp (2016), with the Positive Health concept will be used to elaborate on the similarities found by Jansen between the Blue Zones characteristics that fall under having *the right outlook* (number 1 to 3) to the characteristics of Positive Health. The concept of Positive Health is characterised by six dimensions, namely bodily functions, mental functions, spiritual dimension, quality of life, social participation and daily functioning.

The first similarity found was that to the characteristic *move naturally* (1) of the Blue zones the focus of Positive Health on bodily functions can be compared. Positive health focuses on the origin of body complaints, and the degree of physical movement. Secondly, within Positive Health the spiritual dimension focuses on how meaningful a patient rates his life, showing similarity to the Blue zone characteristic of *purpose*. Another important dimension of Positive Health is mental functioning in which it estimates a person's self-management based on their mental state. A negative mental state can reinforce complaints. This aspect of mental functioning relates to all characteristics of the Blue Zones falling under *right outlook*: to move naturally, have a purpose and to down shift. Fourthly, the quality of life dimension of Positive Health focuses on to which extent someone is satisfied with life, experiences happiness and has a life purpose, relating to the Blue Zone aspect *purpose.* Lastly, daily functioning focuses, besides on diet, on having enough natural movement, relating to *move naturally* (Jansen, 2017).

Intermezzo

Interview on the purpose in all phases of life

After writing the first essay several people situated in various phases of life were asked to describe and draw or take a picture of the place or moment they link to having the feeling of a sense of purpose in life during quarantine.

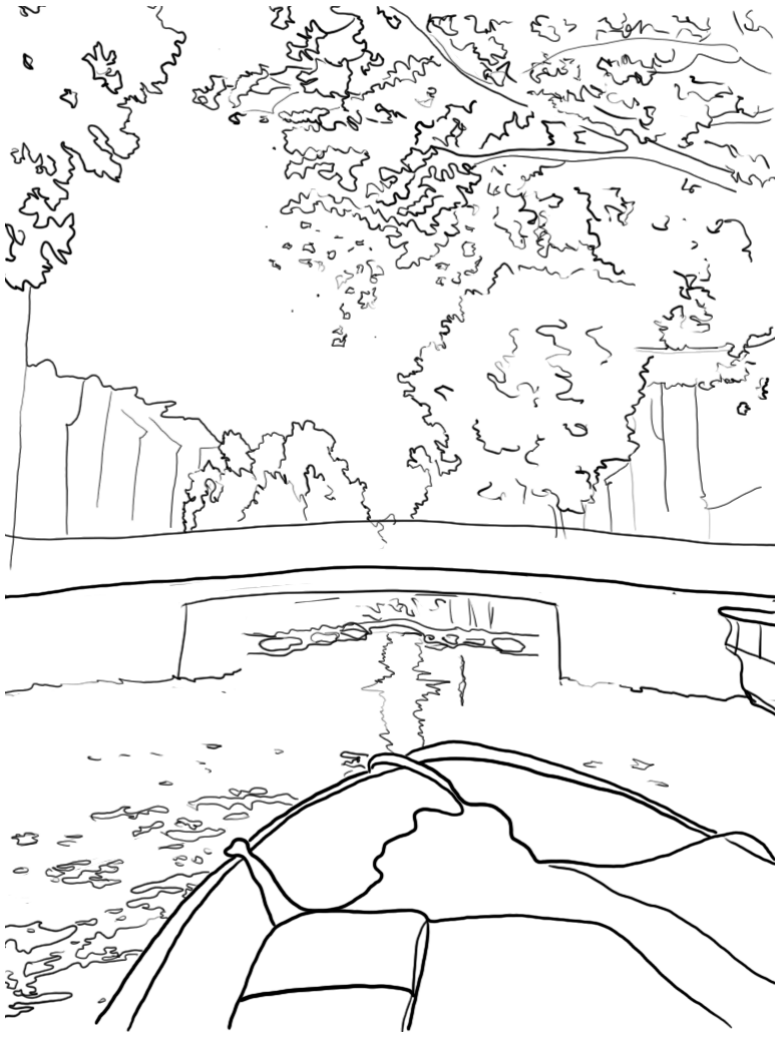
The decision to ask people in several phases of life, not just late life, was made firstly because the homes I will be designing, if it were to be completed in reality, will be the homes for the people who finds themselves now still in earlier phases of life. Secondly, as a result of having experienced a full lockdown in the beginning of 2020, the lives of these people in early phases of life suddenly became closely related to lifestyles considered typical in late life – not being able to go to the office and school, having no direct contact with friends and family, and staying in one room or house most of the time.

The exact question asked was:

'Wat maakte jou blij en zorgde ervoor dat je uit bed kwam tijdens quarantaine? Waar ervaarde je dit blije gevoel?'

01

Woman, 57



'I gladly woke up to boat in a sloop through the canals of Amsterdam. The feeling of freedom and 1,5 meters distance from everything and everyone gave a happy feeling. Wind through my hair and beautiful views.'

02

Woman, 23

'Everything that used to give me joy largely fell apart during quarantine. Before quarantine I liked to try out several drinks and prepare them for customers at a bar. During quarantine this took a different shape as I started to experiment with making drinks for my family in the garden. It was lovely to have a moment with loved ones outdoors in times one is mostly inside, and to enjoy something tasty.'

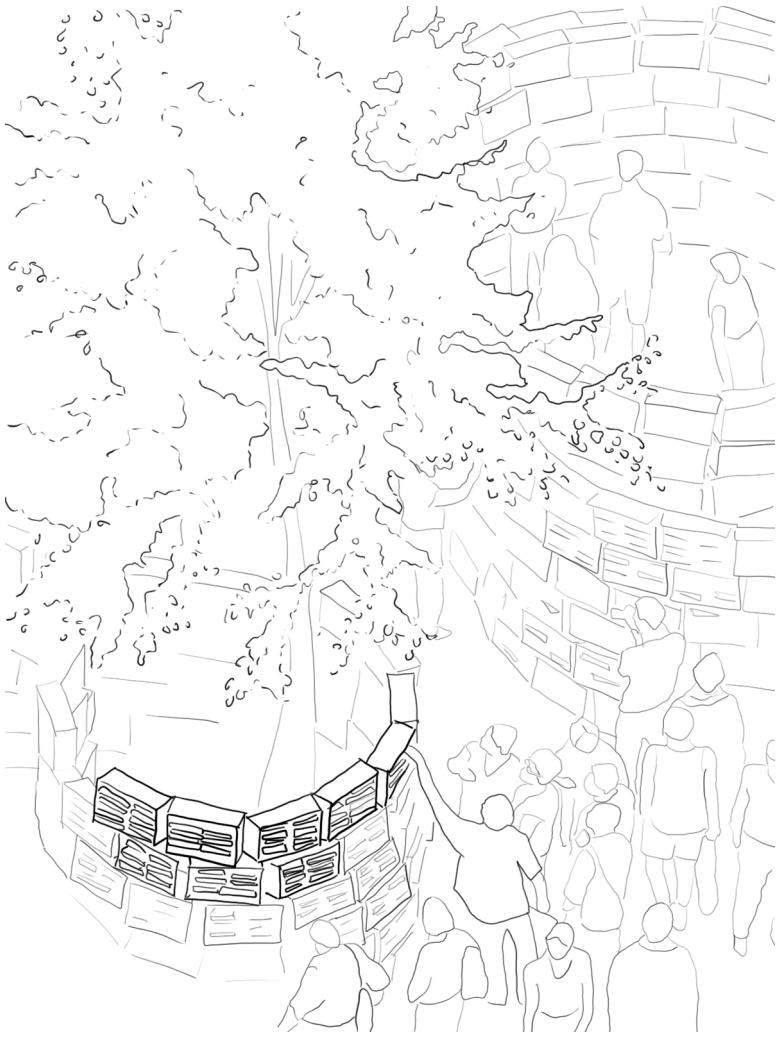
03

Man, 26

'During quarantine I was busy with graduating and made sure to study according to a schedule from Monday to Friday and from 9 till 5. Living by a rhythm made me get out of bed and feel happy. In combination with my daily rhythm, being outdoors a lot made me feel really happy. I spent my free time gardening and working out outdoors. I still feel happy when I work in the vegetable garden.'

04

Man, 60



'I do not suffer a lot from the quarantine measures as I am able to adjust to the new situation as I can still get joy out of reading a good book, the newspaper and watching a movie. I do miss two things: being able to drink coffee at a café, book markets and a 'landscape'.

05

Woman, 20

'I loved to roller-skate in the morning during quarantine. Usually I would roller-skate indoors but as the weather was quite lovely in the early morning I started to skate outdoors. Besides roller-skating, my dog is as well the reason I woke up during quarantine. It always makes me happy to say good morning to my dog in the living room!'

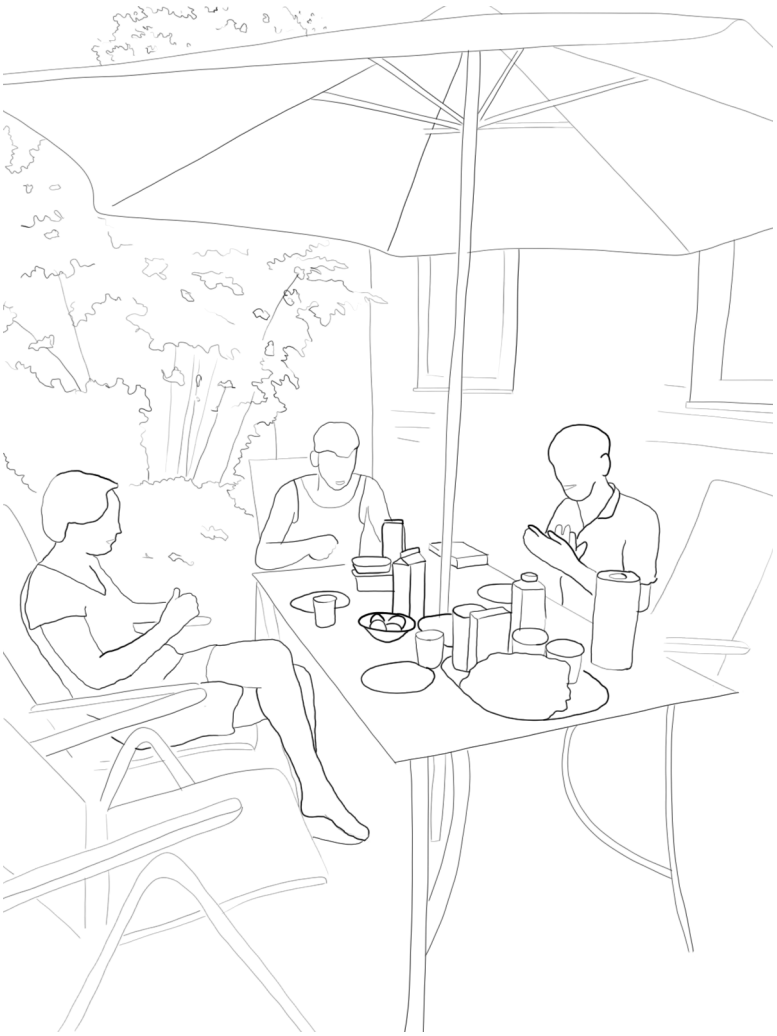
06

Man, 20

'I woke up because I loved to take a walk around the city of Madrid during quarantine. The high buildings and the large layout of the city made me help to put everything that was happening into perspective.'

07

Woman, 58



'The feeling of having every family member suddenly at home made me very happy. I enjoyed eating together and having good conversations.'

08

Woman, 22

'The reason I got out of bed and the thing that made me happy during quarantine was practicing yoga in my room. Through yoga I could loosen my muscles, after which I was ready to study the whole day at my desk. This was the place in my room where I had the most space to move. I think it is pleasant to practice yoga near a window.'

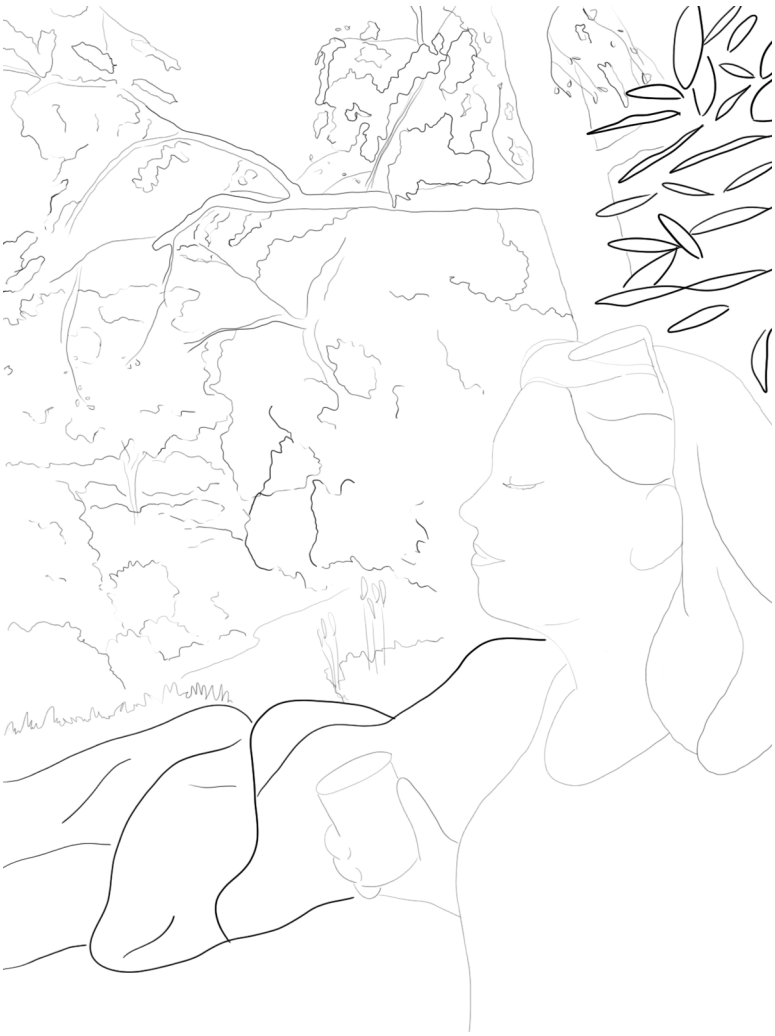
09

Man, 58

'Actually, during quarantining I just continued with what I was doing, only then from home and with less stress, travel time and travels. I used the extra free time I got efficiently for renovating my home. The fact that I have a spacious home made being indoors way easier for me. I found it quite pleasant that the normal societal routine had disappeared and that we had to live more in the moment, on the spot. As well, it felt good that my children visited me more often.'

10

Woman, 23



'I lived in the centre of Antwerp during quarantine. A lovely place but I barely got to go outside as a result of quarantining and studying. The thing that made me want to come out of bed during quarantine was my subscription to the Zoo of Antwerp. Whenever I wanted to I could escape the hectic of the city, forget about my deadlines, and start my day peacefully in the midst of greenery, quietness and animal sounds in a concealed place within the zoo.'

Conclusion

During the interview most interviewees at first had difficulties in describing their source and place creating a purpose in life during quarantine. It appeared to be a very personal question and in order to answer it one needed to really come to themselves, be open and vulnerable. However, after a good moment of thought the interviewees elaborated on their source and place creating purpose. To almost everyone, the relation between the reason of waking up and being outdoors was of great importance. The places creating a sense of purpose in life were shaped by trees and plants framing views from all sides, which sometimes created a concealed spot, water reflecting light, wind flowing through the hair and perspective axes creating a clear spatial overview. Activities that were hindered as a result of quarantine were often reshaped in such a way that they were able to continue, and mostly put outdoors, even though the activities used to be inside.

Frankenstein

“Nothing is so painful to the human mind as a great and sudden change. The sun might shine, or the clouds might lour: but nothing could appear to me as it had done the day before.”

- Mary Shelley, English writer and daughter of feminist Mary Wollstonecraft and philosopher William Godwin, Frankenstein, 1831, Vol. 3, Chap. 6

THE NARRATIVE

A sense of purpose in late life

Ikigai never leaves the body

Introduction

Reflecting and expressing devotedly our inner self at each moment of life, ikigai is deeply personal and different to every one of us as its sources can be found in many areas, such as family, friends, roles and experiences (see figure 3), and its feeling feels different to everyone. Besides ikigai as a personal concept, there is a temporality to ikigai as well. Ikigai might be the direct answer to the question of what makes life worth living but by all means is not a final answer. Its answer is dependent upon changes in life phases we encounter such as changes in daily routine, changes in believes, changes in the lives of our loves ones and so on. Once we will retire, once our infinite dreams will fade as we grow up, once we will die. Ikigai is not the end but the very start of the pursuit of a life worth living (Mathews, 1996).

Throughout the respectively bare amount of life phases I have encountered I can identify changes in the things that gave, or still give, me purpose and joy in life. As a child I remember waking up extra early just to see the Christmas lights in the dark, I had never felt the need to compromise on or felt ashamed about the things that gave me joy. As a teenager I found joy and a relieve of stress in taking dance classes several times a week, while as a young adult I found many excuses not to take dance classes, while knowing that I missed and still loved it as much. I started to generate joy in dancing in another way as I danced with my friends when we were going out. As a new student I felt strength and motivation in studying at a technical university as a female, something I knew my grandmother was not allowed to do when

she was young, purely because of her gender. I found purpose in proving the people who refused my grandmother from even starting high school as a woman wrong. Now I see several purposes in life ahead of me like graduating, finding a place to live and work where I belong and enjoying small things such as making coffee and celebrating Christmas with my family and friends.

A phase of life which I have not experienced yet, but about which I feel negatively biased is our last phase of life. Our last phase of life has a negative connotation in general, one that is usually seen as sad, pessimistic and disabled due to the losses and deficits encountered. This connotation disempowers ideas of having any chance at experiencing joy, pride and happiness when we are at our final stage (Penick & Fallshore, 2005). Personally, I experience this negative connotation as well as a result from: firstly, several experiences in my life such as a small internship at a care centre when I was thirteen in which the elderly to whom I brought coffee and tea often, in my teenage and probably one-sided experience, only had complaints and negative views on everything. Secondly, as I explained in the introduction, I have seen my grandmother in a really sad stage when her husband suffered from dementia and Parkinson. Thirdly, interviews and observations conveyed during fieldwork at the care centre in Loenen showed me how many elderly felt useless and not as happy as they could be as they easily let go of the sources that generated meaning in their life. Loenen showed me that many of its elder residents had not kept in touch with their sources creating purpose. When many of the grand sources creating a purpose in life, like work, social roles and activities, are vanished or threatened due to aging, then why survive? In the previous chapter we have seen that ikigai, discovered as all the reasons why we wake-up, never enters or leaves the body as it has always been and is always carried in every person. So why do we suddenly let go of all our sources generating our purpose in life as if we do not have a purpose?

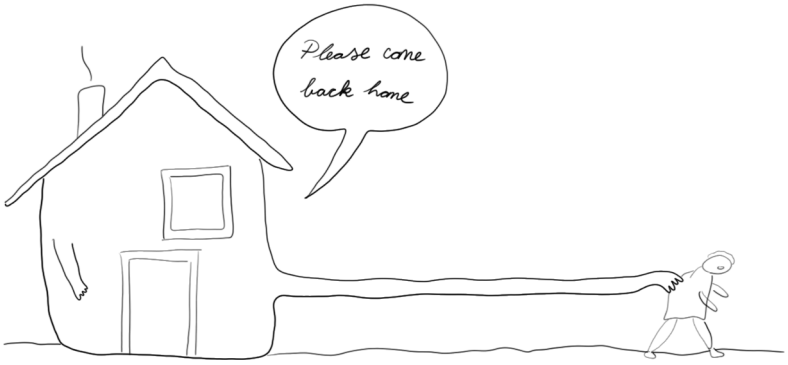
Often the physical, social and economic needs of people in late life are met. Although these are essential, the health and life satisfaction in which a sense of purpose in life plays a big role cannot be forgotten. Continuing life without any sources that generate meaning and purpose does not create a positive outlook to aging. A sense of purpose appears to be a great source of life satisfaction (and a buffer to stress) and is important in being able to successfully adapt to aging (Wong, 1989).

To explore the notion of a sense of purpose in late life, this essay uses several studies elaborating on the value, significance and characteristics of (the creation and discovering of) a sense of purpose in late life, in an attempt to answer the question: "*What is the value of a sense of purpose in life for people in the late life phase, how do they view having a sense of purpose and what are the characteristics of such a life for them?*".

The value and significance of a sense of purpose through the phases of life

Throughout our life phases, including our last phases, the strength and importance of a sense of purpose in life seem to change a little (Steger, Oishi & Kashdan, 2009). This is interesting as in the late life phases one's source of meaning is at the biggest risk because the last phase of life centres around losses (Penick & Fallshore, 2005). Aspects of ageing that can threat a sense of purpose in late life are biological ageing, limited time for realising plans and goals, social structures and stereotypes that deprive older people of social status and respect, loss of a spouse and a life review. Besides, when one really arrives at an old age and approaches death an extra set of threats are faced including losses of social relationships, social roles and psychophysical functions (Jonsn, Norberg and Lundman, 2015). Counter to this disempowering view on aging is the focus on creating meaning and purpose as it provides a positive and optimistic perspective on life. Therefore efforts in maintaining purpose at an old age appear to be of great significance (Penick & Fallshore, 2005).

For people over 75 years old sources of purpose in life may change but the importance and strength of purpose in life do not vanish. In the 'oldest-old', people over 85 years old, experiencing a decrease in functional abilities and the relocation to several care facilities are associated with changes in the range and strength of sources generating purpose in life. These changes stem from the need to create a sense of control over new situations in the lives of these people, and are viewed as an act of changing their self-representation to a different form. These personal changes have been identified as an essential step in the adaptation to transitions of phases of life at an old age. Interestingly there is a significant difference found in the sources and strength of the sense of purpose in life between individuals over 85 years old living in their communities and in care institutions. Having a purpose in life is beneficial for psychological well-being in the last phases of life, and the magnitude of a purposeful life is strongly and negatively correlated with depressive symptoms (Penick & Fallshore, 2005).



Having to change the source of purpose as a result of being relocated

Numerous (recent) studies have been conducted stating the importance of having a sense of purpose in life for the health of old people. Mori et all (2017) researched Japanese people over 70 years and stated that a stronger degree of a sense of purpose in life is greatly associated with a lower risk of incident functional disability. Kimiko (2016) concluded from research with community-dwelling people over 65 years old that having a sense of purpose in life possibly extends longevity and health life expectancy among community-dwelling older people. In a Swedish research with people between 85 and 95 years old Jonsn, Norberg and Lundman (2015) concluded that having a sense of purpose in life in the last phases of life were linked to finding happiness in life, resulting in an overall better well-being. A lack of purpose in life was studied by (Nakanishi, 1999) and found to be associated with poor general health, an autonomous risk factor for intellectual dysfunction, and related to the mortality of older people (Nakanishi, 1999).

Looking at psycho-social conditions in elderly Nakanishi, Tatara, Tatatorige, Murakami & Shinsho (1997) asked elderly about the presence of activities that they considered meaningful or that gave purpose to their life translating the concept of ikigai in the question 'Do you have anything to live for?'. The results showed a clear and univariate relation between the presence of certain meaningful aspects of life with the survival of elderly. It also showed a relation between participation in social activities and the survival of elderly, but this was based on an analysis in which more factors were involved. The research concluded with the evidence that the identification of certain aspects of life giving purpose, as well as less disability and participation in social activities, result in a reduction in the mortality of elderly and in a better adaptation to the environment (Nakanishi, Tatara, Tatatorige, Murakami & Shinsho, 1997).

The characteristics of a sense of purpose in late life

There are several emotional feelings one needs to experience in late life in order to have a sense of purpose. Important in creating a sense of purpose in late life are feelings of competence, control and control of the self. When disabilities become part of daily life interpretive control, meaning being able to accept and understand your fragility, becomes important as it creates a feeling of capability. Another feeling that is of importance in creating a sense of purpose in late life is the experience of coherence in life (comprehensibility), resulting in self-identity. Lastly, the feeling and idea of self-worth, self-respect and acceptation of the self create a sense of purpose in life through being able to understand and face losses and negative experiences. It also helps in feeling happy even though disabilities come into play. This feeling is attached as well to receiving respect from one's surrounding, mutual recognition, attention

for a dynamic interaction between older people and their surroundings is a condition here (Machielse, 2016).

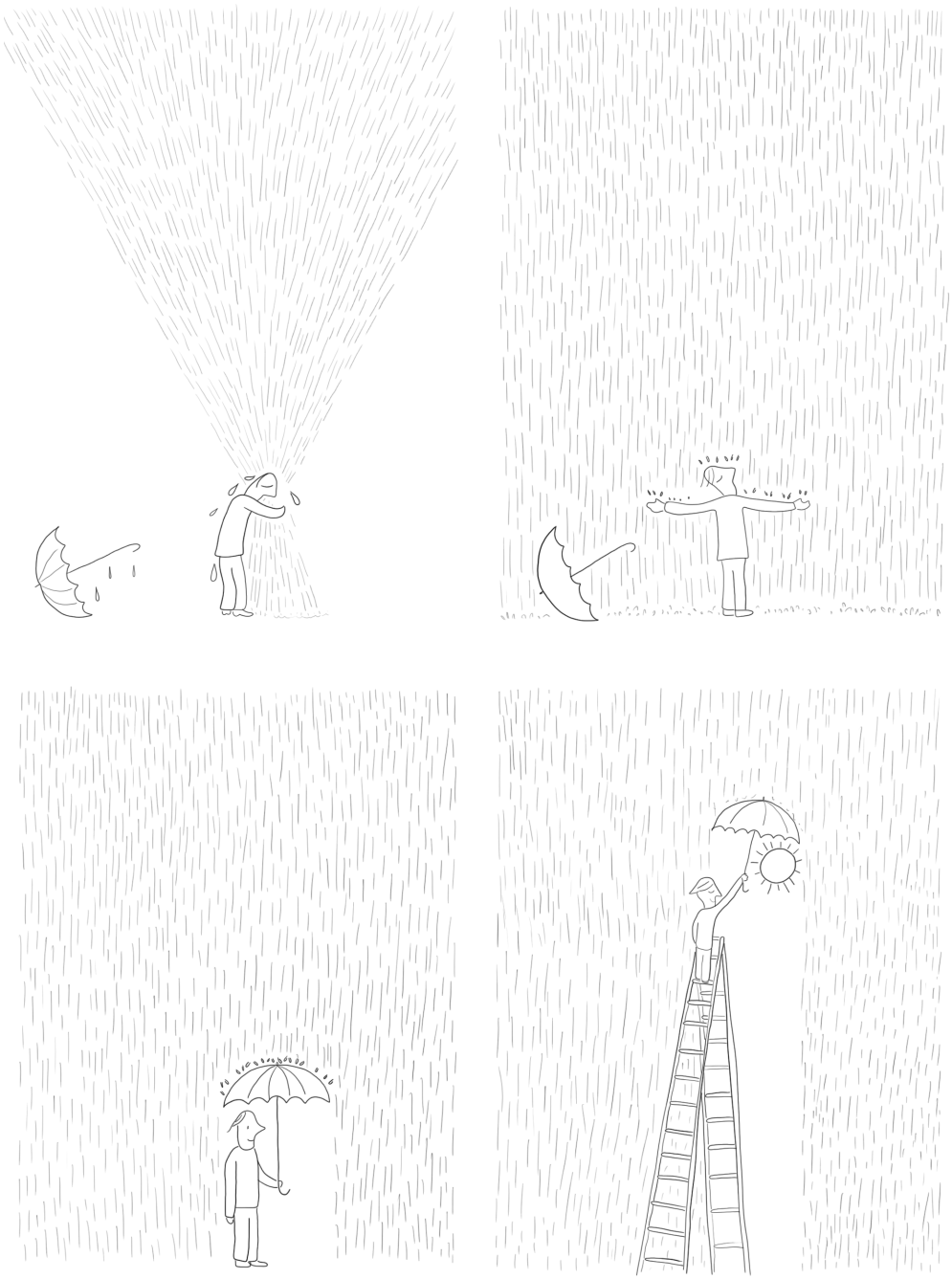
In general, studies mention major sources of purpose in life as personal relationships, personal growth, success, altruism (the act to promote someone else's well-being, even at risk or cost to ourselves), hedonism, creativity, religion, and legacy (Penick & Fallshore, 2005). In a Western study conveyed by Penick and Fallshore (2005) the patterns of purpose in the specific group of aging people was studied, specifically people who seem to age optimally and function well. The participants were retired seniors with a mean age of 76 who were active at a senior centre in a rural city and seniors with a mean age of 80 who participated in a senior education program. The sources that created the strongest sense of purpose in the lives of these active seniors were identified as 'preserving human values and ideas' and 'engaging in personal relationships with family and friends', followed by two other sources 'meeting basic, everyday needs' and 'feeling financially secure'. The active seniors mentioned the least important sources generating purpose were 'taking part in religious activities' and 'being acknowledged for personal achievements'. All in all the active seniors and less active seniors shared the same sources that create the most and least purpose in life. Active seniors experienced more strength of purpose which derived from a broad range of goals and sources. The seniors who were active benefit in terms of strength in personal purpose in life (Penick & Fallshore, 2005).

As the percentage of women relative to men rises with age it is interesting to look at gender differences in having a sense of purpose in life of people in their late life. Specifically in the Netherlands the percentage of people who identify as female between 70-75 years old is 51%, between 80-85 years old 56%, between 90-95 years old 69% and between 95-100 years old 78% (CBS, 2020). Noted should be that gender differences are likely to change as a result of feminist points of view. Research has shown that the strength of purpose in life does not differ between women and men, but the sources that generate purpose in life do differ: women focused more on security, involvement and personal relationships than men did (Penick & Fallshore, 2005). Whereas women in their late life referred to having a purpose in life to maintaining independence and having environmental predictability, men focussed more on an energetic lifestyle versus stability (Rapkin & Fischer, 1992). Besides, women show a broader social orientation resulting in more flexible ways of maintaining a sense of purpose in life (Penick & Fallshore, 2005).

Strategies to maintain or/and create a sense of purpose in late life

The feelings essential in sensing a purpose in life, competence, control, control of the self, coherence in life and self-worth, self-respect and acceptation of the self, are attached to temporal aspects and the intertwining of physical, mental, social and spiritual dimensions (Machielse, 2016; Penick & Fallshore, 2005). The creation of a sense of purpose in life is maybe one of the few areas in which an older person can feel personal growth in a the face of loss, pain and physical decline. It can function as a sources of motivation and life satisfaction transcending psychical constraints for the chronically ill and frail people. A sense of purpose contributes to the promotion of health as well as maintaining a positive spirit in the face of illness and disability (Wong, 1989).

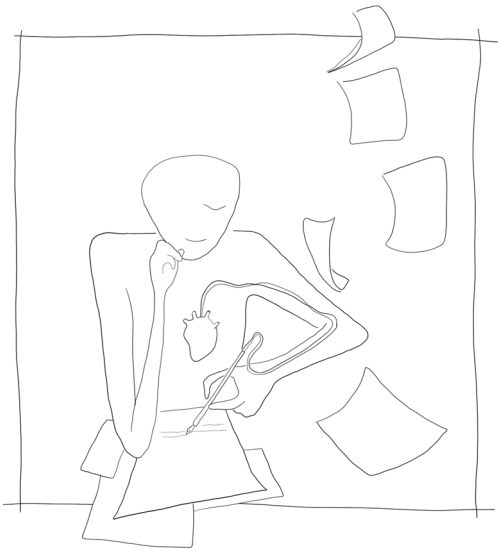
Inner and spiritual resources provide a way to discover and create a sense of purpose in life through personal losses and desperation in late life. Wong (1989) describes four strategies to maintain (the feelings of) a sense of purpose in late life, a time in which illness, pain and person death probably is encountered. These strategies are especially of importance to elderly and entail reminiscence, commitment, personal optimism and spiritual well-being (and religiosity). In the upcoming paragraphs these strategies will be elaborated upon.



The encouter of loss, the acceptation of loss, the refinding of purpose, the feeling of a sense of purpose

Reminiscence

The future lies in the past, a spring of inspiration and signposts



The reviewing of life plays a crucial role in healthy and happy aging as it creates meaning and gives a sense of purpose to one's life, it prepares the individual for personal death and decreases anxiety and fear (Wong, 1989). Reminiscence allows an individual at old age to evaluate the events of life, to solve unsolved conflicts and to integrate these into a purposeful context, all key in achieving good mental health at an old age (Birren & Renner, 1980). There are various types of reminiscence of which three have been found to be associated with successful aging: integrative, instrumental and transmissive reminiscence. Integrative reminiscence entails resolving past conflicts, integrating life events into consistent patterns and finding '*a place for oneself in the sea of humanity*' (Watt & Wong, 1988). Instrumental reminiscence is characterised by remembering experiences from the past in which one solved life problems and creating lessons from the past to solve a current problem. Transmissive reminiscence includes the passing of wisdom achieved from learning throughout the lifetime of an individual to the younger generation. Obsessive reminiscence is a type of reminiscence that should be avoided as it is associated with unhealth and unhappy aging as it involves ponders upon past failures and conflicts. As a result one becomes a prisoner of the past and fails to integrate in the current daily life (Wong, 1989).

The effect of reminiscence on the well-being of Dutch elderly living in senior dwelling between 65 and 80 years old has also been found to positively affect the well-being of people in late life. The reliving of positive memories

in an autobiographic and forced way showed to positively affect the emotional well-being of the seniors. The research concluded with the statement that old people need to be guided in reminisce in order to experience the positive effects and make sure emphasis is put on positive experiences (Westerhof, Lamers & de Vries, 2010).

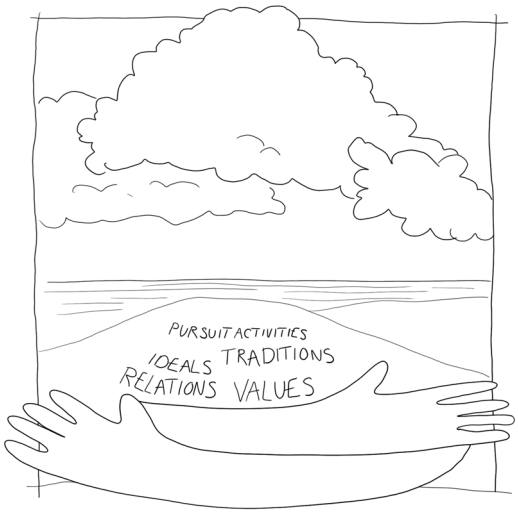
Some methods to facilitate reminiscence at old age are written or taped autobiographies including major themes of one's past and discussing it with other elders, reunions, history of the past and present family members, collected objects connected to a person or event, photo albums, old letters, summation of life work and the preservation of ethnic identity.

Interestingly, creativity has been proven to be a major source of creating a sense of purpose in life (Wong, 1989). Through artistic workshops older people develop their creative sides, achieve new insights and understandings on their own lives, and create a sense of meaning. When involving in an artistic activity an older person focuses on the process of creation itself, rather than on the final product. Also, artistic activity in late life showed to transform inner experiences to a substantial and concrete expression in art. For this transformation motivation, attitude and imagination were of importance and shown to be applied daily life as well when challenged were faced. Through creativity people in late life become more active, curious and open (Dilani & Morelli, 2005). Lastly, research shows that even extremely ill patients experienced meaning in their lives, joy, enthusiasm and hope when they were given the option to create art. Experiences with creative activities have been mostly positive in, and possible to be facilitated in, the functions of hospice, palliative care and for older residents in a care facility (Kennet, 2000).

Concluded could be that both the creative and reflective aspects of writing an autobiography are important to discover and create a sense of purpose in life (Wong, 1989). Reminiscing one's life prepares one for the present and the future, provides a sense of fulfilment through feeling one has survived challenges and difficulties and done one's best, and gives simples pleasures when remembering one's happiest memories (Wong, 1989).

Commitment

One becomes truly alive only when one is committed to living in all its possibilities

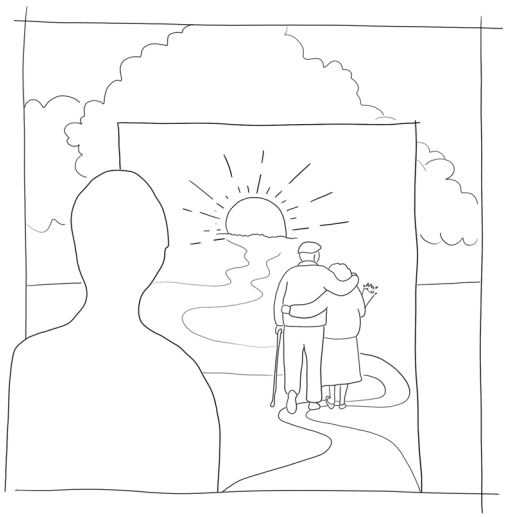


Numerous studies have shown that personal commitment and responsibility play an evident step towards creating a sense of purpose in late life. Commitment entails firstly the dedication to pursuit activities as a task of personal significance and absence of alienation, and secondly the devotion towards significant values, ideals, relationships and traditions. It does not merely involve personal choice and initiative, commitment also means investing time and energy and affirming values.

As commitment is closely attached to the interests and resources of an individual it can be achieved throughout several forms, for example helping others, social cause and the pursuit of pleasurable activities. A sense of purpose is created through the feeling that one is committed to something or someone, to life itself and to personal growth regardless of in which life phase a person is situated (Wong, 1989).

Personal optimism

A future that holds dreams to be achieved, meanings to be realised & joy to be experienced

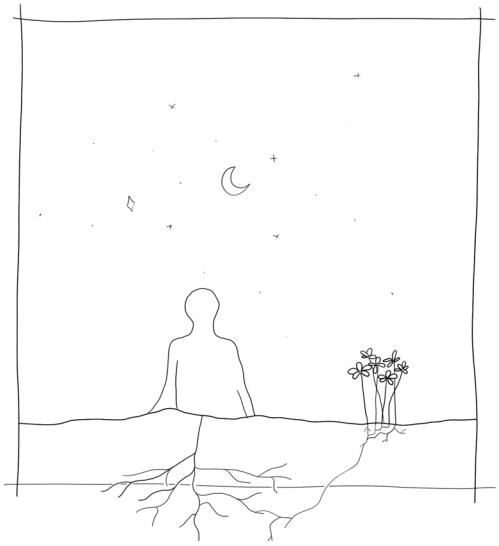


There is a connection between optimism and health. The lack of optimism or hopelessness is linked to depression and suicide. When the next day will be as grim as today the question whether to keep living appears. Disability and illness are often the cause of depression and hopelessness within older people. Therefore the revival of a sense of hope and a sense of purpose plays a significant role in the rehabilitation of older people. This can be achieved within an old person by looking into the future that holds tasks to be accomplished, dreams to be achieved, meanings to be realised and to experience joy in the future (Wong, 1989).

Wong (1989) mentions that at an old age optimism can be cultivated by the anticipation of events close in time. These events include reading books, writing about the past, music, painting, gardening, helping another person and learning something new. To plan for the next day or week enables an old person to feel motivated and optimistic. Besides events that are initiated by an individual itself, a positive externally oriented outlook such as the belief that someone else will help you or that something positive will happen to you also aids in feeling optimistic. Self-initiated events, such as painting, allow for confidence in one's own efficacy while other-initiated events, like a visit from a family member, allow for confidence in the kindness of other. Both need to be present and situated in the nearby future allow for optimism in older people (Wong, 1989).

Spiritual well-being

To nurture the idea that everything is connected and thus makes sense



Spiritual well-being can be seen as a confirmation of life in which wholeness, the idea that everything is connected and thus makes sense, is nurtured and celebrated through the relationship with the self, community, the environment and perhaps religion (Jernigan, 2001; Wong, 1989). Moreover, spirituality creates an environment by which most people live their life, create a sense of self and undertake activities (Holloway & Valins, 2002). The confirmation of life becomes increasingly important at old age as much that used to create purpose, such as health, is threatened or lost. Spiritual or religious beliefs show a relation with life satisfaction, death acceptance and meaning in life. Spiritual commitment appears to be essential as well in the understanding of the meaning of life and death as it encourages older people to view themselves on a route towards eternity, instead of towards death, and it creates a stimulus to go with the flow of time rather than against it. Spiritual well-being allows the perception of one's final phase of life to still be of importance (Jernigan, 2001; Wong, 1989).

Over the last years there has been an increase in interest in spirituality in the Netherlands. In the report *'God in Nederland'* religiosity in the Netherlands was studied in a large scale study concluding that there is a big decrease in interest in religiosity, but an increase in interest in spirituality. 79% of the participants confirmed to the statement *'I feel the need to think about the purpose ('zinsgeving'* in Dutch*) in and of my life'*. At the moment there is a rise of the postmodern spirituality in the Netherlands in which spirituality takes the form

of a connection with a higher spirit in which personal and inner experiences are central and can be found in several sources (instead of from one source, which is often the case with religiosity) (Bernts, 2006).

All in all spirituality is of great importance for the quality of life of older people and it helps with dealing with losses and limitations, as well as with seeing possibilities in their own situations. While seeking meaning, purpose, identity and trust that are stable and cannot be taken away by the aging process, spirituality plays a big role in late life (Jernigan, 2001).

To enhance spiritual well-being there are several approaches such as counselling to help accept the value of life and death (Wong, 1989), the creation of 'passive moments' in which one searches for quietness and calmness in which meditation is central, and 'active moments' in which one has an open attitude towards everything that might come her or his way in life (Dijke, 2008). To enhance religiosity prayer and reading religious stories are of use (Wong, 1989).

Dementia and a sense of purpose in life

As one ages towards late life the chance for developing the syndrome of dementia increases. The number of people suffering from dementia are high and in the upcoming 25 years the amount of people suffering from dementia in the Netherlands is expected to double as a result of the ageing of the Dutch population: in 2019 8% of the people above 65 years old, 25% of people above 80 years old and 40% of people of 90 years old suffered from dementia in the Netherlands, accounting for 9,5% of the total costs for Dutch care (Alzheimer Nederland, 2019). Dementia is often wrongly understood as an illness, while in fact it is a syndrome in which there is a disturbed translation of information as information does not get stored in the short term memory. There are several forms of dementia of which each form has different symptoms, the most well-known form is Alzheimer. Besides the damage of memory, symptoms of dementia are behavioural disorders, concentration problems, indecision, passivity, delusions and growing, clumsiness and confusion. People suffering from dementia have difficulty with orientation within the dimensions of time and space. Often the feelings of fear and shame are associated with dementia. Dementia is an insidious disease that people usually in the beginning hold secret from their environment, the environment as well often denies that dementia is present (Dijke, 2008).

The relationship between having a sense of purpose and dementia

is shown in the book '*Ik heb Alzheimer*' in which scientific journalist Stella Braam writes about her experiences with her father Réne who suffered from dementia. In order to cope with dementia Réne views dementia as his purpose in life, dementia has become a new adventure for him. As dementia progressed, he suffers from estrangement from himself and his environment and suffers immensely from losing control over his own life and having to move to a nursing home. The connection that once was so tight between signs and meaning was now broken, creating difficulty in finding a sense of purpose in life and forming an identity:

'Last week, and the week before meanings have changed, but the formulations have stayed the same. I have discovered a reverse side in my hide. As if I am out of my mind.' (Braam, 2009, p.100).

Within the context of dementia, activities creating purpose in life have been proved to be an important parameter of psychosocial health and the quality of life. As well as with healthy people, in people suffering from dementia purposeful activity is associated with the maintenance of activities in daily life. Higher levels of purposeful activities are linked to higher levels of functional independence, lower levels of depression and neuropsychiatric symptoms and better overall physical health status for people suffering from dementia. Activities promoting a sense of purpose in people suffering from dementia are found in leisure-time activities that require a person to physically move, activities that mentally stimulate a person and social engagement. The quality of life for people living with dementia will be raised when there is a change in social attitude towards dementia, and with support for purposeful and enjoyable activities (Tuijt, Leung, Profyri & Orgeta, 2020).

Caregiving and a sense of purpose in life

The search and creation of a sense of purpose in life at old age can be supported by society through two aspects. Firstly, the stigma of the last phases of life and old people surrounding illness and frailty need to be changed to a societal view of old age with dignity and value. Secondly, society can support people of old age in the creation of a sense of purpose through looking after their spiritual well-being, creating meaningful personal relationships and affirming the positive role the last phases of life Wong (1989).

Caregiving could focus on the maintenance of purpose and meaning in late phases of life. An example of an organisation dedicated to changing the culture of care to a culture of maintaining meaning at old life is The Eden Alternative organisation. The Eden Alternative focusses on eliminating loneliness, helplessness and boredom in nursing homes (The Eden Alternative,

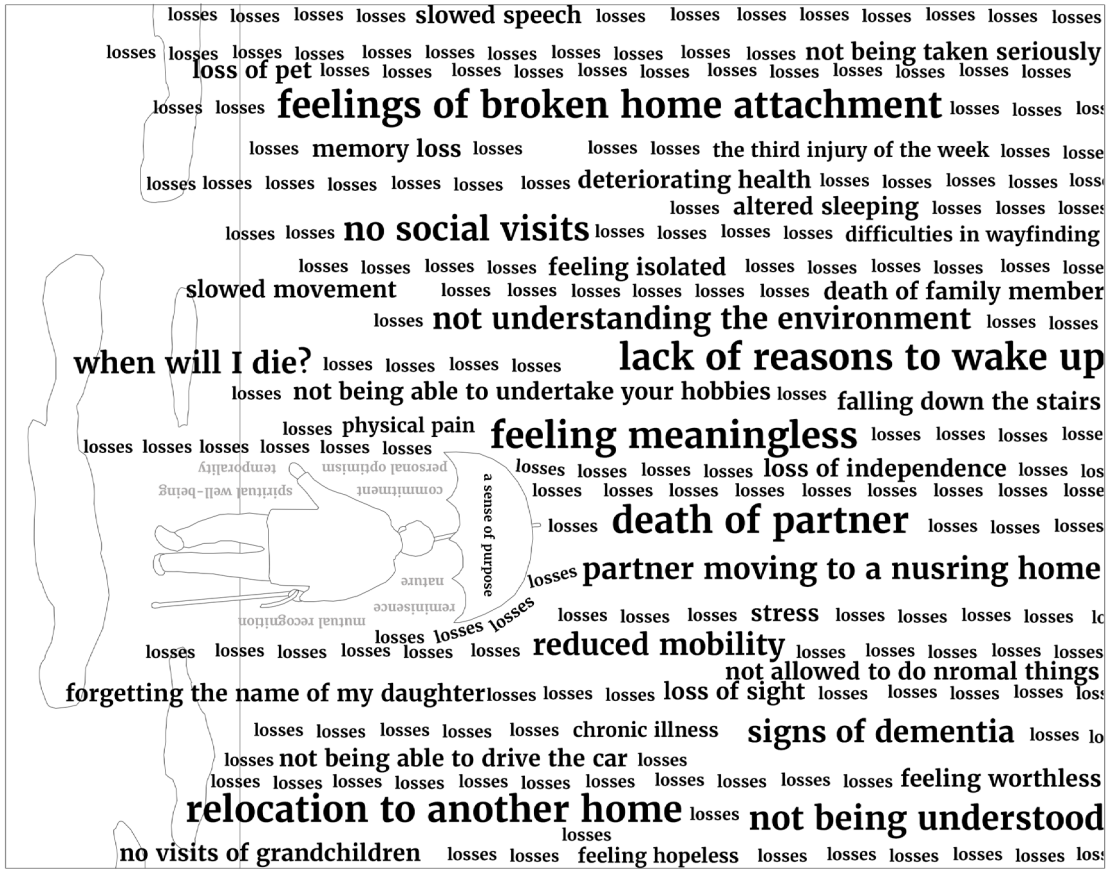
2020). The success shown by The Eden Alternative and other similar initiatives such as education programs for retired people and efforts in nursing homes to facilitate meaningful activities prove the significance of the pursuit of purpose (Penick & Fallshore, 2005).

Conclusion

In this essay, it has become apparent that a sense of purpose in life is of great significance and value in every phase of life, as well as in the last phase of life. During the last phase of life our sense of purpose is at greatest risk as we face losses and disabilities, a time in which a sense of purpose in life is crucial in being able to adapt to these changes and ageing itself. The sense of purpose in late life finds itself between physical, mental, social and spiritual dimensions and is attached to temporal aspects. Through the strategies of reminiscence, commitment, personal optimism and spiritual well-being a sense of purpose can be maintained and promoted in late life. Having a sense of purpose in life is an integral aspect of the well-being and health of older people. It is beneficial for physical health as it lowers risk of incident functional disability, possibly extends longevity and health life expectancy, as well as for, to me personally the most important, psychological well-being as it is a major source of life satisfaction, a buffer against stress, helps to find happiness in life and helps to successfully adapt to the challenging process of aging that brings losses and disabilities with it.

Besides the mentioned strategies, mutual recognition and the recognition of the temporality in life have found to be important as well within the creation of a sense of purpose in late life. The important feeling attached to experiencing a sense of purpose in late life, the feeling of self-respect, is attached to receiving respect from one's surroundings. As well it was concluded that a sense of purpose in late life is attached to temporal aspects. Therefore it is also important to recognise the temporality of a sense of purpose in life, and life itself.

We must acknowledge that people in their last phase of life can also have a sense of purpose in life and experience worthwhile lives. The stability and continuity in the strength of a sense of purpose in life could encourage people to age older and to age happy. A sense of purpose in life forms a protective but sensitive shield around people in late life making them able to adapt to life changing events and to feel positive emotions again. Within care there should be a focus on promoting a sense of purpose in late life, besides the already existing focus on the physical, social and economic needs, as continuing life without any sources that generate meaning and purpose is not a fair option to no one.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personal optimism
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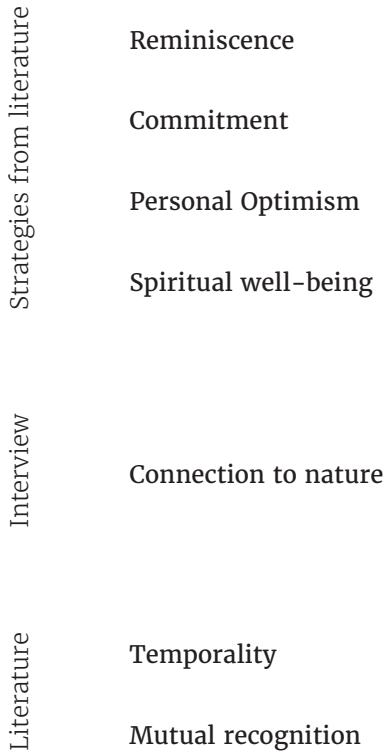
a sense of purpose
nature
reminisence
mutual recognition

The theoretical concept



The concept for architecture and landscape architecture

Architecture and landscape architecture need to play an important role in providing a place that includes all dimensions of sensing a purpose in late life, namely the physical, mental, social and spiritual dimensions. More specifically the design needs to create places that allow for reminiscence, commitment, personal optimism and spiritual well-being in late life. Reminiscence asks for architecture facilitating creativity and artistic activities, commitment asks for architecture allowing and promoting the interests and resources of an individual to flourish, spiritual well-being asks for the creation of passive and active moments, and lastly personal optimism asks for architecture facilitating the anticipation of events in close time. Besides these strategies, architecture needs to address the temporality of life as well, and it needs to create an environment of mutual recognition. Lastly, as a result of the conclusion of the interview with people in all phases of life, architecture needs to connect its residents with nature.

Homecoming

There are still houses with low ceilings,
Window-splays where children climb up
And squatting, chin against knees,
Watch the wet snow falling
Peacefully over dark, narrow courtyards.
There are still rooms that speak of lives,
Of cupboards of clean, heredity linen.
There are quite kitchens where someone sits reading with the book propped against the
loaf of bread.
The light falls there with the voice of a white
blind.
If you shut your eyes you can see
That a morning, however fleeting, awaits
And that its warmth mingles with the warmth
in here
And that each flake's fall
Is a sign of homecoming.

– *Bo Carpelan, Homecoming 1993, p.111*

The home and landscape for a sense of purpose in late life

Ageing in place

Introduction

In this design assignment architecture and landscape architecture need to provide for a home in late life. Home is a personal place as it provides physical, social and biographical meanings of a place specific to a person. Home is a haven in which a person enjoys freedom in doing what they desire, and when and how they want it. Moreover, home is the place where one maintains control over their environment and their daily life (Cerina, Fornara & Manca, 2017). In Dutch as well as in English language the place that is a home and the place creating the feeling of being at home have two separate words – in Dutch '*huis*' and in English '*house*' define the physical place and space of a home while in Dutch '*thuis*' and in English '*home*' refer to a place where one feels at home (Van Dale, 2020).

Feeling at home is experienced and shared in a particular time and place. This place has appeared to play an active role in the promotion and creation of a sense of purpose in life. In Japan this role is defined by the concept of '*ibasho*', the combination of the word '*i*' meaning being or dwelling, and the word '*basho*' meaning place. Ibasho represents an environment in which one feels recognised by others the way she or he is at heart, and in which one feels valued, safe and at peace - a place where one feels belonging or a sense of purpose (Fleming, Bresler and O'Toole, 2014).

In the late life phase the concept of home is challenged by several losses encountered such as loss in mobility, health and social contacts. In our current care and housing system these losses often mean having to relocate the feeling

of being at home to another place. This phenomenon is referred to as 'ageing in place' (Cerina et al., 2017). According to Lawton (1990, p.288) ageing in place means *'a transaction between an aging individual and his or her environment that is characterised by changes in both person and environment over time, with the physical location of the person being the only constant'.* In reaction, Leith (2006) argues that feeling at home could possibly also take place in another place from one's home. This experience is mentioned to be an important condition for the process in which one adapts to a new environment (Cerina et al., 2017). A Western study in which around 1900 people between 75 and 89 years old living in Sweden, Germany, Britain, Hungary and Latvia participated has shown that when a home is perceived as a purposeful place people in late life are more independent in their daily activities and they show a higher level of well-being (Oswald et al., 2007).

This essay looks into architecture and landscape architecture designing a home and landscape for people in late life that maintains and promotes a sense of purpose in life, by building upon findings obtained throughout this research. In the previous essay strategies to maintain and promote a sense of purpose in late life have been identified as reminiscence, commitment, personal optimism and spiritual well-being. Besides these strategies, the essay as well concluded on the importance of respect from society, in other words mutual recognition, and the recognition of the temporality of life itself and thus as well the temporality of a sense of purpose in late life.

Visits to the site for design (see page 128) revealed a major strength of the site that plays an undeniable role in the atmosphere of the site, namely its nature - the trees, leaves, plants, sloping hills and so on. The 'purpose in life' interview (see page 62) with people in several phases of life has resulted in the conclusion of the importance of being in nature and having a view on nature in the creation of a sense of purpose in life. The importance of nature for the well-being of older people is supported by plenty of studies. These studies show preferences of older people for natural environments over built ones (Hartig & Staats, 2003; Kearney and Winterbottom, 2006), positive effects of the view on natural environment on psychological well-being (Ulrich et al., 2004), as well they show that the presence of green spaces in external areas create a positive attitude in older people towards relocation and cause a decrease of the feelings of broken home attachment (Cerina et al., 2017).

In this essay these aspects promoting and maintaining a sense of purpose in late life are translated to architectural and landscape architectural strategies with the use of literature. Thus, this essay aims to answer the question: "*How can architecture and landscape architecture allow, promote and maintain a sense of purpose in late life?*"

a home for reminiscence in late life

Architecture as a place for memorising the past, understanding the present and putting life in a purposeful context

Essential in the creation of a sense of purpose in late life is the reminiscence of life, in other words the reviewing of life. Reminiscing one's life prepares for the present and the future, provides a sense of fulfilment through feeling one has survived challenges and difficulties and done one's best, gives pleasure when remembering one's happiest memories, and integrates past events into purposeful contexts.

Mentioned in the previous essay are the three types of reminiscence helpful in late life to allow for a sense of purpose: *integrative reminiscence* (resolving past conflicts and integrating those in meaningful patterns), *instrumental reminiscence* (remembering problems solves in the past and creating lessons from them) and *transmissive reminiscence* (the passing of wisdom to younger generations). These all entail recalling the past, forming an understanding of the present and recognising the temporality of life (Wong, 1989). Lastly, two methods of facilitating reminiscence in late life were mentioned, reflective and creative activities.

Time and architecture have an intimate relationship – time brings space into place with array of memories and a space influences the perception of time (Kunawong, 2019). As we find ourselves mostly located in indoor environments, the built environment is included in many memories of us. As further explanation of the essential role architecture plays in our memories and idea of time, Nute & Chen (2018) mention an architectural claim of art critic John Ruskin who wrote many, in the Victorian time period, influential essays on art and architecture. In his essay '*The Seven Lamps of Architecture*' Ruskin (1903, p. 224) wrote about the influence of architecture:

'We may live without her, and worship without her, but we cannot remember without her.'

The exploration of architecture as a place for reminiscence in late life is divided into two sections according to the findings of essay 2 and new findings in literature, namely architecture facilitating the reflective side of reminiscing and the creative side of reminiscing in late life, and architecture as a symbol of the temporality of life. In the next paragraphs the research conveyed by Nute and Chen (2018) in '*Temporal Cues in Built Environments*' is elaborately

used as the research as well divides into the past, present and future aspects of memories, and links it to architecture.

Recalling the past through architecture

When recalling the past through architecture the existence of a relation to our unconscious human instincts is of importance. These instincts, the ones we are unaware of, go back to our ancestors who used archetypes for conveying important information. These archetypes are related to environments for successful surviving and have been proved to still vibrate with us today. The importance of sharing memories with the built environment is shown through an art movement that has been argued to lack references to memories, namely Modernism. The Modernist movement lacked a connection to the personal memories and instinct of human beings as it focused on the surpass of history and culture, resulting in estrangement with its visitors. Nute and Chen (2018) have named several archetypes that are deeply linked to our memories and place, and asked a group of people to look at drawings of interior spaces of which each showed specific temporal cues, and asked them tell how much they related it to the allowance of memories of the past, present and future (Nute & Chen, 2018).

The first archetype which stems from our ancestors and still resonates with us today, according to literature, is the hearth – the connection between earth and the heavens. The hearth is an instinctive natural attraction to humans and mentioned by architectural theorist Gottfried Semper as the centre of human shelter. However, within the research of Nute & Chen (2018) the hearth was significantly less associated with the past than the sloping roof (the next archetype), it did not create feelings of nostalgia, and it even reduced memories of the past.

Another archetype is the canopy with a sloping roof. The canopy symbolises shelter as it points to heaven and as it looks like a protective shield protecting the hearth. Nowadays the canopy archetype allowing for easy discard of rain can be found all around the world. Interestingly, an inhabitant of Le Corbusier's modernist house in Pessa, France, adjusted the house by adding a sloping roof, possibly in an attempt to reconnect to memories or the instinct of him/herself. In the assessment of Nute and Chen (2018) the sloping ceiling (space A), compared to flat ceilings, came forward as positively associated with the past and created feelings of nostalgia. However, the sloping ceiling was as well linked with less comfort (Nute & Chen, 2018).

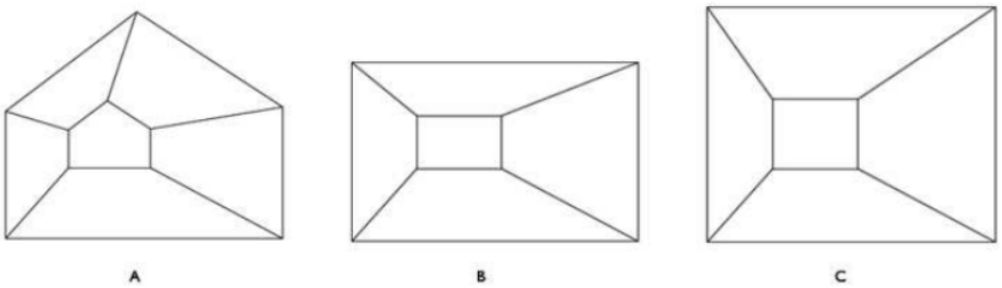


Fig. 4 – The several spaces examined in relation to evoking a sense of the past and nostalgia. (Nute & Chen, 2018).

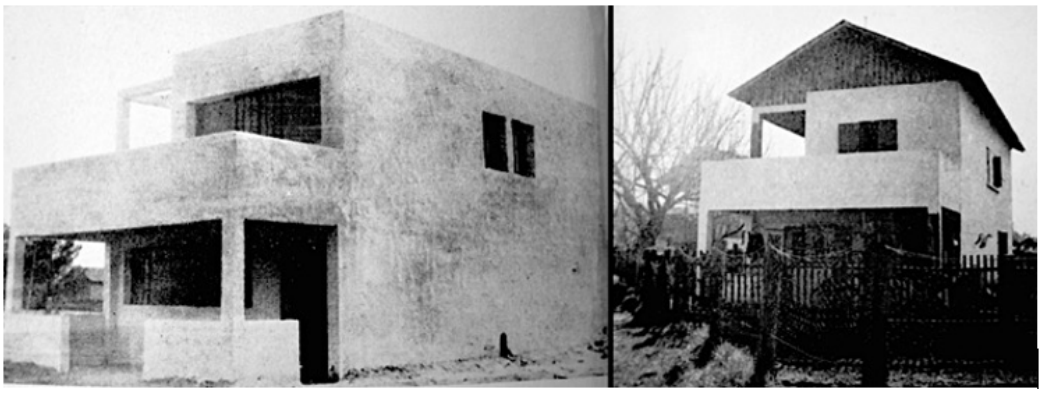


Fig. 5 & 6 – The Quartiers Modernes Frugès by Le Corbusier in Pessac, France, 1924 & The same building, but now modified by its owners, photographed in the late 1960s (Boudon & Lefebvre, 1972).

Recalling the past in the landscape

Our memory is as well linked to our selection of habitat. Our ancestors searched for an environment in which one had a good visual overview but could not be seen by others. Nowadays, when being outdoors, people often still prefer to be around the edges of a large scale outdoor space in which they can evaluate the situation without being in the centre of attention, named by Nute and Chen as refuge and prospect. Our choice for an environment nowadays is based on our instincts on having a sense of familiarity (Nute & Chen, 2018). Therefore, within the landscape benches should be placed around the edge of open outdoor spaces that allow one to feel safe while having a good overview over the situation.

Reflective reminiscing

A space in homes for older people that is attractive for reflection is a space that invites meaningful learning and where people feel safe and experience trust to acknowledge things they do not know yet. Only through a safe environment one will feel safe enough to allow for a personal connection to memories through a space. The space needs to facilitate the chance to reflect in written form individually as well as in a group, to reflect by thinking things through and to engage with one another to learn something new (Howatson-Jones, 2016). The design needs to include a calm place to write by oneself and a place to write in a group. Both places need to be enclosed with a good view, feel safe and allow for feelings of trust.

Within the landscape reflective reminiscing can be facilitated and supported as well as nature stimulates the sense and cognitive abilities of people in late life (Lee et all., 2007). Alongside the mentioned benches within the landscape situated at the edges of open space could be tables placed to facilitate reflective writing.

Creative reminiscing

Creativity has been proven to be a major source of creating a sense of purpose in life as through creative activities an older person more easily looks back on life to process past life events. Reminiscence through artistic workshops aids older people to develop their creative sides and to achieve new insights in and understandings on their own lives, and thus gives new energy (Wong, 1989).

Creative activity is the process in which an individual searches for a solution to a problem or challenge and thus has to be open to new ideas. Creative activities for older people can be musical activities (listening to music, singing, clapping and playing instruments), chorographical activities (dancing and using movement of the whole body), gardening, cooking, writing and

especially painting and drawing (Fisher Specht, 1999; Gębka et all., 2015). An enclosed space that is specifically used for painting and drawing only is recommended in care homes as an enclosed atelier with a specific function allows artistic activity in disoriented and quickly distracted older people, often people suffering from dementia, to flourish as well (Gębka et all., 2015). The atelier must be large enough to host larger paintings and it must include the possibility to make illuminated paintings to allow for people with sight disabilities to paint as well (Dilani & Morelli, 2005).

Thus architecture needs to facilitate an atelier for drawing and painting that is a separate space, enclosed from other spaces, which is large enough to include large painting, and its needs to include a room that allows for creative movement and storing instruments. As well a communal kitchen, a place for writing and an outdoor space for gardening is recommended.

a home for commitment in late life

Architecture as a place for the devotion to values
& dedication to pursuit activities

A sense of purpose in late life is created through the feeling that one is committed to something or someone, to life itself and to personal growth. This feeling is personal and therefore can be created by several different things such as helping others, social cause and the pursuit of pleasurable activities (Wong, 1989). Especially within the concept of commitment in late life having a goal and making a contribution (to society) are important as the thought of doing something from which others are benefitting can make life more meaningful (Fisher & Specht, 1999). Therefore, when creating a home for commitment in late life architecture needs to create a place that hosts hobbies, allows for helping others and for having a social cause. The architecture needs to accept and house people committed to different values, ideals, hobbies etc.

During my stay at the care home in Loenen I interviewed a woman named *Anja* (found in chapter '*People*' in '*The experience*' booklet) who once per month watered the plants in the collective hallway. Although this was only once per month, as every week someone else watered the plants, she enjoyed it and looked forward to it. As it is something she did together with others, others were dependent upon her and she was dependent upon them. The plants were from every inhabitant, and so via this road Anja was able to contribute to the community of the people living in the care homes. Small

things such as plants and gardening can help one to feel committed towards something and to feel of value in a community.

Architecture needs to allow for commitment to oneself and the possibility to commitment to others. This creation of possibilities to commit to a community in late life has for example been put into practice by the housing association '*Knarrenhof*', with the architectural typology of a courtyard inhabitants are made to look after each other, undertake activities together, but as well have some privacy. Another example are the care homes '*Klinkenberg*' in which all buildings are connected to each other via outdoor open spaces, gardens and pathways, stimulating small moments of interaction and participation in a certain community (Witter, 2019).

All in all the home and landscape that allows for commitment in late life needs to be open to and facilitate a wide variety of commitments of its inhabitants in the form of flexible spaces that allow for practicing hobbies. Besides, the home and landscape need to allow an inhabitant to be committed to oneself and to, if wanted, others. This can be stimulated by connecting different housing, spaces and volumes.

a home for optimism in late life

The anticipation of the future through architecture and landscape architecture

In the previous essay we have seen that optimism in older people is derived from self-initiated events – like reading books, listening to music, gardening, helping another and painting - and other-initiated events – like a visit from a family member - in the present and nearby future. Both are essential in maintaining a sense of purpose and hope in late life (Wong, 1989). Therefore the home for people in late life needs to strengthen the feeling of hope with the thought that joy is experienced in the future, allowing one to look into a future that holds tasks to be accomplished, dreams to be achieved and meanings to be realised, and architecture needs to facilitate the self-initiated and other-initiated events. The anticipation of the future entails two temporal phases: the phase before the experience has initiated and the phase of when the experience is going on. Both phases are architectural-centred experiences as we anticipate of going to a place, often an architectural building, and as the experience itself often takes places in a building, confirming to or disappointing towards the expectations formed as a result of the anticipation (Grimm, 2010). In the next

paragraphs architecture as a means of creating and facilitating anticipation and optimism is researched and discussed.

Architecture anticipating the late life future

When we positively anticipate the future we look forward to experiencing something in the future and derive pleasure and hope from this thought. Besides material provisions such as water and food, the potential in useful amenities also allow one to anticipate the future. Within architecture this feeling of potential in useful amenities can be created through the creation of spaces that brings one to an imaginary world in which there is a clear vision of the beneficial amenities. Within modernism this anticipation was said to be facilitated through function as beauty was found in the promise of function. Although we usually do not specifically know why we find some purpose of architectural forms pleasant, humans do derive positive anticipation from imagining beneficial amenities that are clear in our minds (Nute & Chen, 2018).

An architectural element strongly related to the positive anticipation of future events - that includes feelings of optimism and encouragement, the sense of opportunities and being able to look forward - is the window. The size of a window has been found to have a positive relation with the positive anticipation of the future – the bigger the window, the higher the amount of feelings of optimism. Besides, the creation of a view from an interior space to another (interior window) has been found to be important in creating a sense of opportunity and feelings of optimism. The view to another interior space has been found to be more important than combining both spaces and making one large space in creating personal optimism. Moreover, optimistic feelings increase when an image or painting of an external view is added and increased significantly when a window showing the real outdoor environment is present (Nute & Chen, 2018). The creation and facilitation of personal optimism increases when one has a window view on trees, and decreases with a view on parking lots (Kaplan, 1993). This view on the outdoors has as well been found to stimulate older people as a view on an outdoor environment allows an older person, especially when one suffers from functional restrictions, to follow the changes in seasons and the social life outdoors, besides the view itself (Norling, 2002). When designing for older people whom might have or will develop mobility issues it is important to consider the height of window ledges. When window ledges are lower, the window allows for a bed positioned view (Lee, Dilani, Morelli & Byun, 2007). When in a standing position the views of a person is positioned between 1050 and 1950 mm from the floor, when in a seated position 600 and 1450 mm above the floor (Wijk, 2008).

The landscape as a place for the anticipation of the late life future

Within the field of landscape architecture the anticipation of positive events can be as well hosted. Moreover, the appreciation of landscapes has been found to be grounded in the promise of enjoyment rather than functional utility. Appleton (1975) argues that complex landscape scenes are preferred as those offer chances for achievement of events and adventure itself. Nute and Chen (2018, p.11) mention the complex scene in the landscape '*as a combination of concealed spaces and clearly visible physical objectives*'. A landscape painting by Barend Cornelis (figure 7), showing a panoramic summer landscape including traveling people and a castle ruin, creates the anticipation of possible events and achievements through concealed spaces but as well shows clearly visible objectives. This suggests spaces in the landscape in which one is concealed while at the same time having a clear view in the distance (Nute & Chen, 2018).

The home and landscape facilitating late life events

Besides the home and landscape as a means for creating the feelings of optimism, it as well needs to facilitate the activities itself that create anticipation, optimism and meaning. For the facilitation of self-initiated events architecture needs to provide places for reading books, listening to music, creating art, making puzzles, cooking, gardening, helping others and painting (Wong, 1989). Some daily activities of the inhabitants of the nursing home in Loenen were playing games together at the dinner table or in the 'living room', making flower arrangements, reading books in the library and singing (see chapters '*Collective interior spaces'* and '*People*' in *'The experience'* booklet). Flexible spaces in which these several different activities can take place would be beneficial to hosting various events.

Especially the creation of art has shown to create an optimistic view on life for older people as creating art arguably brings a sense of having control over one's own life, rather than being a victim of ageing (Dilani & Morelli, 2005). Therefore the architectural program for homes for people in late life needs to include an artistic atelier, a space with seating to read and listen to music, and a garden with raised garden beds. These spaces all need to be large enough to make sure that the activities can be undertaken in a group when wanted.

Architecture also needs to facilitate other-initiated events like a visit from a family member (Wong, 1989). Spaces in which a variety of social activities can take place should be available at all times to inhabitants. Moreover, contact with family members is an important source of optimism and should be facilitated by rooms that allow for family members to stay overnight (Dilani & Morelli, 2005).

Fig. 7 – A landscape painting by Barend Cornelis Koekkoek of a panoramic summer landscape in 1835 (Wikiwand, 2020)

a home for transcendence in late life

Spiritual well-being, the home and landscape: contemplative spaces for healing

In the previous essay spiritual well-being in late life was defined as a strategy in maintaining a sense of purpose in the lives of older people. The essay described spiritual well-being in late life as the confirmation of life in which the idea that everything is connected, and thus makes sense, is nurtured and celebrated through the relationship with the self, community, the environment and perhaps religion (Jernigan, 2001; Wong, 1989). Spirituality is the need in humans to feel connected to something larger than humans, it gives meaning to one's life at deeper levels as one feels related to something or someone else that surpasses the sense of the self, and is connected to personal growth and self-reflection. As well it is an emotional and intuitive experience. Spirituality can be experienced through certain rituals and practices, as well as through contact with environments (Konijnendijk, 2018). When we think about spirituality and architecture we often think in terms of specific building types allowing for sacredness, timelessness and devotion, namely often religious buildings or spaces created specifically for devotional and religious purposes. However, sacredness, and thus sacredness in architecture does not necessarily need to involve religion (Pallasmaa, 2015), and in the case of designing homes for Dutch people in late life should not just include religion as interest increases in spirituality and decreases in religiosity in the Netherlands (Bernts, 2006). A home and spirituality are closely related to each other as both are not a given in life: both require one to accept the positive and the negative. Grimm (2010) states that when one dwells successfully in a place, the foundation from which spirituality can blossom is solidified. Thus, dwelling and spirituality are closely related (Grimm, 2010).

Important in the creation of architectural spaces for spiritual well-being for older people are firstly the facilitation of passive moments in which one searches for quietness (meditation is central), secondly the facilitation of active moments in which one has an open attitude towards everything that might come her or his way in life (Dijke, 2008), and thirdly the facilitation of possible religious prayer (Wong, 1989). Besides the home and the landscape facilitating these moments, the message that the home and the landscape convey can also contribute to the creation of an atmosphere allowing for contemplation. In the upcoming paragraphs the creation of contemplative spaces, for passive and active moments, is elaborated upon.

Contemplative spaces in late life: light – silence – scale

A contemplative space turns physical characteristics into feelings concerning the nature of reality and the relationship between mind and body and between the potential and actual, allowing for feelings of spiritual meaning and transcendence. Spirituality experienced in a nonreligious space is a different experience than the experience of religious sacredness. Whereas a religiously sacred space entails an encounter of a ritual, space or object that is specifically designed sacred in advance – arising from prescribed intentions –, the sacredness experienced in a space without any religious designation or symbolisation is derived from an individual and personal experience – arising from the nature of the experience – containing its own aura and effects. Architectural aspects contributing to or initiating spiritual experience can, for example, be an unique atmospheric character of a place, the immensity of a space, predominance of illumination, expressive forms or interesting materiality. As well in landscape and nature these aspects of outstanding atmospheres, illumination, scale and beauty can arise a spiritual experience, often referred to as the notion of the sublime. The sublime experience was central in Romantic, European and American landscape paintings during the nineteenth-century, and was later reintroduced through expressionism, minimalism and contemporary Land Art. The paintings often came in huge size, overpowering the viewer and making the viewer an insider of the event (Pallasmaa, 2015).

Although a spiritual experience is a greatly personal experience and a social convention, architectural aspects allowing for spirituality to flourish can be identified. These aspects creating a spiritual experience have their roots in the relation between the subject and the object, not in formal properties of architecture. Therefore spirituality is always related to its context and cannot be understood rationally in architecture. The spiritual value of architecture is rooted in clarifying and emphasizing values that are already present (Grimm, 2010). The architectural aspects allowing for spiritual experience are: light and shadow through translucent (allowing some but not all light to pass through) rather than transparent surfaces – allowing light to be just light –, scale through number and dimension, and silence (Pallasmaa, 2015; Stegers, 2008). In his essay Light, Silence, and Spirituality in Architecture and Art Pallasmaa (2015) beautifully mentions the poem '*Homecoming'* by Finnish poet Bo Carpelan, a poem explaining perfectly how light and silence provide for spiritual and meditative experience in daily life and makes one feel at home, found at the start of this essay.

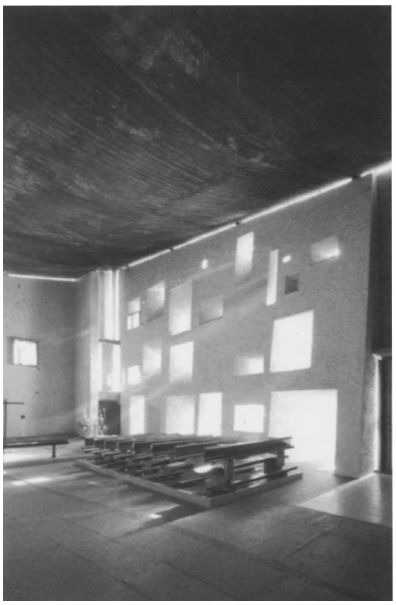
Light

Light is one of the fundaments of a spiritual atmosphere in which the acts of contemplation and composure are facilitated: the play of light and shadow accentuate and guide attention, allow for feelings of connection and are the base for subtly carrying deep emotions like sadness or joy, sometimes linked to a certain event. In this sense, we experience light as a gift (Kreuz, 2008). The design of natural light and artificial light can change an architectural space into a sacred space by the creation of rhythm, sense of scale, hierarchy and intimacy.

Light is as well fundamental in aiding old people, whom often are visually impaired, with orientation in space. Attractive visual environments have the possibility to overcome reduced vision and sensitivity to glaring for people at an old age (Brunnström, et al, 2004). When considering light from the perspective of creating a spiritual space for people in late life correct contrasts, direction of light, levels of light and glare-free light have to be considered. If good lighting is designed, older people will not as quickly distance themselves from undertaking activities and will maintain their independence. Light switches need to be reachable from wheelchairs to create a sense of control and to give old people the ability to adjust the light they desire in a spiritual and sacred space (Dilani & Morelli, 2005). Both daylight and artificial light can be introduced in spiritual spaces (Pallasmaa, 2015).

Daylight connects an architectural space to the physical and natural world, the seasons of the year and hours of the day (Pallasmaa, 2015). The direction and amount of natural light can put strong emphasis on something (sacred) in space or create a soft atmosphere for contemplation. Daylight can be directed through openings to cast sharp shadows or can be diffused to create soft light without any shadows. Light entering through several openings can create layers in space. Diffused light can give the feeling of being weightless while focused light creates significance and holiness. In Le Corbusier's *Chapel of the Pilgrimage Church* in Ronchamp the weight of the architectural space under the concrete curved roof is emphasized with focused natural light coming through the several differently sized deep holes in the wall and entering through a 10 centimetre wide slot under the roof, while in Renzo Piano's museums light is greatly diffused, showing no specific direction, and almost giving the sense of disappearing gravity.

Natural light can enter via windows, skylights or glazed walls. The kind of glazing creates meaning by being open or closed. Deep spaces can be illuminated by light ceilings and flanking walls and spaces lit from both sides allow for the centre of the space to be well lit. Translucent facades separate one from the outside, focus on activities within the space and prevent glare, while transparent or tinted glazing still allow one to connect to the outdoors.



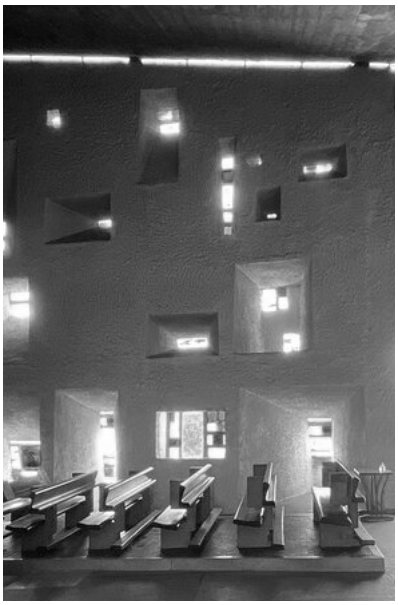


Fig. 8 & 9 – Concentrated light entering the Chapel of the Pilgrimage Church Notre Dame du Haut by Le Corbusier in 1955 (Stegers & Baumann, 2008; TripAdvisor 2020)

Fig. 10 – Diffused light entering expansion of the High Museum of Art designed by Renzo Piano in 2005 (Michel Denancé, n.d.)

Skylights can illuminate a deep space more evenly than light from the sides, cause less glare and distract less than windows do, and they receive the brightest light, from the zenith. They illuminate the space below within a cone with a 30-degree spread. However, skylights cannot orientate one to the time in a year as no view is given to the outdoors, only orientation towards weather and time of the day is given. A sacred space can be lit from the sides and above, or solely from above as with the Pantheon in Rome that has one single opening at the top of the dome (Kreuz, 2008; Pallasmaa, 2015).

Daylight changes through the day and seasons, allowing for different characters, and is free and sustainable. The amount of daylight present in an interior space compared to an outdoors space is expressed in the daylight factor. A daylight factor of 1 per cent in a sacred space will need to be accompanied by artificial light, while a spiritual service between 2 and 4 per cent does not need artificial light. Sacred spaces that are only lit from above need a higher daylight factor than spaces lit with windows, namely a daylight factor of 4 per cent (achieved with a window wall area proportion of 8 per cent). A skylight is evenly diffused when the maximum daylight factor is twice as big than the minimum daylight factor, or larger, while a window lights a space evenly when the maximum daylight factor is six times bigger than the minimum daylight factor (Kreuz, 2008).

Artificial lighting can, similarly to natural light, provide meaning of a space and emphasise aspects in a space. However, it cannot provide the same intensity and colour as daylight provides. A focused artificial light reminds humans of direct sunlight and a diffused artificial light reminds us of the light of the sky. A white light with at least 3000 Kelvin comes close to our experience of daylight. The higher the colour rendering index (R), the better the performance of colour and the better it is for sacred spaces. A high amount of visible artificial light fittings can create a starry sky or a few can characterise rhythm in a space: the fittings should respond to the nature of the sacred space. With the help of natural light a value of 300 to 500 lux is needed, while without natural light 80 to 150 lux is needed to comfortably read books and 150 to 250 lux for other activities (Kreuz, 2008).

Interestingly, the effect of light on architecture is different than on landscape architecture as architecture usually receives light on regular surfaces, while trees and plants have many several textures and often absorb more light and therefore appear with darker tones. Besides, the transparent characters of plants and leaves allows the sun to shine through from behind at certain times of the day, creating a contrast with the non-transparent tree trunks and walls of architecture (Birksted, 1999).

Silence

One experiences architecture not only by looking at its shape, materials and spaces, but also by listening to its silences. When allowing for spiritual well-being the elimination of noise can create a very powerful experience in an architectural space as it reminds us to return to ourselves – with nothing else to hear one needs to listen to oneself. The role of architecture here is to maintain and guard this silence and to turn it into matter as to concretise our existence. For example, in Peter Zumthor's Thermal Baths at Vals the noise from the outdoors is completely held off from entering the bath as it lets one focus on the mystery of our existence and ensures time to reside in the silence of constructed walls (Pallasmaa, 2015). Baumann and Niederstätter (2008) go as far to say that the acoustics of a sacred space play a fundamental role in the acoustic experience of people in society in general.

The type of acoustics in a space allowing for spirituality differs as the activities differs from meditation in which silence is key to active moments in which one may read something out loud. In the interaction of acoustics the position of the source of the sound, the amount of people in the space, materiality and the form of the space are key. Spiritual spaces designated as meditation spaces can be more strongly sound insulated with certain materials, when designated as a place for singing a dome can serve as an acoustic amplifier. Lastly, the experience of a transcendent experience also entails having a sense of the world, and thus does not need to be completely need to be turned off from any possible sound (Baumann and Niederstätter, 2008).

Light and silence belong together as they both are at the core of architecture as well as at the core of human soul. Pallasmaa (2015) mentiones that without inner and architectural silence we are deaf, without inner and architectural light we are blind (Pallasmaa, 2015).

Scale

Scale impacts the spiritual atmosphere of a space through number and dimension (Pallasmaa, 2015). Scale is always experienced from a human perspective, things are perceived and related from a human's point of view. Whereas small scale architecture allows for an intimate, warm and personal experience of a space and its building details, large and tall spaces convey a more cold and impersonal experience (Gehl, 2011). When looking at the creation of passive moments small scale architecture could be useful to create a warm atmosphere, while when looking at the creation of active moments a bigger scale could be used.

The contemplative landscape: the forest and spirituality

Once reading upon the site analysis booklet belonging to this research, one will find out that the chosen site is located right next to a forest. The forest is in a sense a spiritual landscape and has been deeply connected to humans over the years. The forest was important in the spirituality of the first humans, as it functioned as a source of inspiration in religion and was a place of worship with many symbolism of trees and the forest itself. The ties between the people and elements of the forest are individual and take shape in various forms that change over time. The forest can function as a tool to allow for spirituality and to bring a community together (Konijnendijk, 2018). On the spirituality of a forest in relation to one of the mentioned aspects of spiritual atmospheres, that of silence, philosopher Max Picard (1952, p.139) writes '*the forest is a great reservoir of silence out of which the silence trickles in a thin, slow stream and fills the air with its brightness.*'.

a home for mutual recognition in late life

Architecture to feel seen, heard and appreciated

Self-respect is an important feeling in creating a sense of purpose in late life. This feeling is closely attached to perceiving respect from others in one's surrounding. According to De Dijn (1999) respect from others is divided into two forms. Firstly, respect takes shape in the recognition of the independence of another human being. This entails taking ones feelings and believes seriously. Secondly, respect as well means the recognition of the dignity of a human being who is dependent upon someone, upon care etc, and who cannot take part (independently) in the usual daily life anymore. This can take shape in keeping memories alive of the person, the calling of the person's name and taking care of the body of another (Dijn, 1999). Through this one can feel appreciated, heard and seen.

According to Gehl (2011) being heard and hearing, and being seen and seeing are the two senses that are the most attached to the understanding of outdoor social activity. Both allow for contact at modest level, provide a point from which contact at other levels can be initiated, maintain relationships that are already existent, function as a source of information about the outdoors social world and as a source of inspiration. Both mediate between low and high

intensity of contact; passive contact and close friendships (Gehl, 2011).

Being heard and hearing

Within a distance of up to 7 meters it is possible to engage in a conversation. Loud noise from more than 1 kilometre apart is as well detectable. Aging is one of the leading cause of hearing loss, approximately between 25% and 40% of the people aged above 65 years suffer from bad hearing ability (Lamoré, 2020). Therefore places need to be created in which one has the chance to have a conversation with others at a reasonable distance, less than 7 meters, with not too much noise in the background.

Being seen and seeing

The sense of sight is horizontally and frontally oriented within a horizontal circle of 90 degrees to both sides. When walking a person only sees the pavement, ground floor and the space directly in front. Therefore to be seen one must be in front of the viewer at the same level in higher speed environments. From a distance of around 100 meters one can see an individual instead of just a silhouette, between 70 and 100 meters one can identify a human's age and its action, within 30 meters human individuals can be recognised, within 20 to 25 meters the feelings of a person can be identified, and lastly within 1 to 3 meters enough detail can be seen to have meaningful social contact. Of course, when designing for people in late life, the loss of sight needs to be kept in mind, making the distances shorter.

All in all being seen takes place at many different levels: close contact within 1 meter and far away visuals within 100 meters. Architecture needs to hosts these mentioned several distances. This visibility can be created by the creation of sightlines and openings in private and public space (Gehl, 2011).

Being appreciated and appreciating

To allow for one to feel appreciated the integration into a community is of high importance. This integration into a community does not necessarily mean integration into the entire neighbourhood as a whole, it can also entail integration into smaller scale communities such as the community living in the same building, or just the direct neighbours, or a small group of people in the same activity class. It does not necessarily mean a high level of social interaction, it can also entail a small moment of just waving to someone. Architecture can allow for a more easy integration into a certain community

by creating community services such as public spaces and day-care centres nearby, or literally next to, the dwelling itself. Especially in low population areas this can enhance community integration for people in late life (Lee et all., 2007).

In general Gehl (2011) mentions architectural aspects promoting contact via visibility and sound as the removal of walls, the creation of short distances, the use of low speed, placing elements at the same level and creating face-to-face orientation. However, it is as well important to remember that being seen from a distance is sometimes enough for one to feel respected, and maybe therefore, for example, allowing for a high speed environment instead.

Privacy versus inclusion

The position one feels to take place in in relation to others – to be seen, to be heard or to be appreciated – can range from a very private to a very public space. According to Hertzberger (2016) the architect has full control here in the creation of open or closed spaces compared to other spaces. Spaces can allow for privacy while at the same time allowing a clear vision on others. The balance between the open and the closed is important to create a space that will be used (Hertzberger, 2016). This requires architecture to look at transitions between the public and private, between the open and closed, between privacy and inclusion, and to allow a person to take in different positions in relation to the community.

a home for recognising the temporality of late life

Architecture that allows itself be changed through use and that is open to several interpretations of time

A sense of purpose in late life has been, in essay 2, examined to be tightly attached to temporal aspects – like life itself it is fragile and not infinite. This fragility, but also beauty of the changes in life and its purpose can be addressed through architecture and help with the acceptance of the fact that life is indeed fragile and not everlasting.

The symbolisation of temporality in architecture is expressed not through a certain type of building, but through a space that allows itself to be

changed through use and that is open to several interpretations of time. The space is open to new perspectives and embraces rather than resists forces of change (Judson, 2011). This openness to new perspectives while at the same time addressing the temporality of life can be symbolised through materiality. Through materiality the natural flow of time, degradation, decay and the perception of beauty as something short-lived can be addressed, allowing for acceptance of transience (temporality) and imperfection. Materials speak the philosophy of the beauty of the imperfect and show respect for the passage of time in human life through natural objects and their processes. Building materials like copper, brick, soapstone and charred wood will age over the years and take in character of the users and surroundings of the building. Materials used in their most honest, real and pure version tell the story of life: aged stonework tells the story of what was, has been and is now, teak wood silvers with age, corten steel changes in colour from orange, to red to brown or black, pine wood ages gracefully with a greyish sheen, and bronze oxidises to a green patina (Matute, 2020; Morris, 2020; Thorns, 2020).

Materiality as well plays a role in bringing up memories from the past, especially natural materials as they show time quite explicitly through their structure and are physical signs of the past. Through the texture of a material a sense of nostalgia is brought up, even though one may have not experienced the event that shaped the material themselves. The weathering of materials indicate time as well and remind us that nothing is eternal, creating a powerful feeling (Nute & Chen, 2018).

Fig. 11 – The weathering of steel over time (The Nippon Steel Corporation, n.d.)

Fig. 12 – A natural timber species showing varying rates of weathering over 7 months, the final result is a silver-grey nuance (Britton Timbers, 2020)

A landscape for recognising the temporality of life

The recognition of the temporality of life, and therefore possibly as well the temporality of the shape and sources of a sense of purpose in life, is often recognised and defined by gardens as gardens allow one to experience, sense, feel and intuit the passage of time itself. Gardens are able to bring up the past, recognize special associations a plant holds to a person, reflect our present through water and address one's fascination with seasonal changes, etc (Miller, 1999).

There are several notions of time - physicists' time, objective time, subjective time – of which the most important to garden design is subjective time, meaning the time as it feels to us. Subjective time may be different from measured time, differs greatly between individuals and over time, and can include objective time - the experience of time shared by a group of individuals-, as well. Subjective experiences of time are often assigned to as temporality. Temporality is defined by the inner awareness of the passage of time itself. The structuring of time can be made visible by contrasting scales or orders of time such as geological time, historical time, biological time, seasonal time – time of nature – and so on (Miller, 1999).

Throughout the world many gardens emphasize temporality of life and structure time. However, the structure of time distinctively comes forward in Japanese gardens as they convey an intimate interaction with the environment, eliminate the view of humans beings and nature as separate entities, and focus on seasonal changes. In Japanese gardens not only the seasons themselves are of importance, but also the transitions to seasons and an interest in short-lived flowers. For example, the cherry blossom is admired the most the moment just before it dies. Moreover, the admiration of the cherry blossom is a way of perceiving the world and looking at moments one by one, rather focussing on quality of time than on quantity. In Japanese gardens the individual is a crucial component of the garden itself, a part of a series of rhythms. The rocks beneath one's feet allows for awareness of the placement of our bodies and one becomes aware of the specialness of one moment as each surface causes one to balance differently (Miller, 1999).

All in all temporality in the landscape is created with a diversity of perceptions, visual and tactile, and a diversity in movement allowing for rhythm and pace related to perception. Specifically in Japanese gardens time is structured by contrasting experiences of time - individual, social and mathematical - and by the highlight of different scales of times such as the seasonal and biological (Miller, 1999).

a home for connecting with nature in late life

Experiencing a nearness to nature and having a meaningful dialogue between the self, the garden and the surrounding nature

In a lecture at the Milan Polytechnic in 1991 Italian architect Antonio Monestiroli (1940 – 2019) elaborates on the topic of architecture and nature, stating that there are two ways of building a home, *"in direct contact with the ground or suspended in a tower structure"*, and that those two ways indicate *"two ways of establishing a relationship with nature: as a place to take possession of, by fencing it in, or as a landscape to be contemplated from a favourable point of observation"* (Monestiroli, 1991, p.386). From the Scandinavian modernist tradition perspective on nature, outdoor space is carefully detailed from the paving to outdoor lighting, and the building is placed on its site and landscape with a close look towards the existing vegetation and geomorphological forms (Woudstra, 1999).

In the introduction of this essay studies stressing the importance of nature for the well-being of older people have been mentioned. Nature as a significant part of creating a sense of purpose in life for older people has as well been acknowledged by research of a Swedish case study of homes of people between 85 and 95 years old. In the study an essential theme in allowing a sense of purpose in late life was identified, namely to live in connection with nature (Jonsén, Norberg, & Lundman, 2015). With this knowledge and the finding that landscape architecture and gardens have the ability to express intellectual ideas, cultural perspectives and meanings (Birksted, 1999), nature is essential to take into account when designing for care.

Regardless of the age of older people, natural environments with restorative features are preferred as they promote recovery from stress and fatigue, and allow for healing experiences vital in self-regulation, emotional control and the increase of pain tolerance. These healing experiences can be created with green spaces such as parks and gardens, but as well with indoor plants and pictures of natural landscapes (Cerina et al., 2017). In the upcoming paragraphs there will be elaborated upon three aspects important in (re)connecting with nature in late life, namely accessibility to nature and visual accessibility to nature, in which the feelings of trust and safety are of importance. Lastly there will be elaborated upon dementia and nature.

The hindrances of getting outdoors: Accessibility to gardens and nature

An important and valuable aspect for the well-being and health of people in late life in the creation of green spaces is the accessibility to gardens and nature. When the outdoors is difficult to access, the use is restricted, while when it is accessible its daily use is promoted. Obstacles for old people to enter the outdoors are usually tied to feelings of trust and safety. These feelings can be achieved by supportive objects such as the use of benches, arm support and handrails (Lee, Dilani, Morelli & Byun, 2007; Rappe & Topo, 2007).

An architectural concept in care for older people allowing for good accessibility to gardens and nature, and one that is experienced safely is the courtyard. Accessibility to a courtyard can be provided through wheel chair ramps, handrails and the elimination of obstacles such as heavy doors and thresholds. Accessibility to outdoor gardens on higher elevations could be provided through safe roof gardens. Snow, slippery paths, and cold and windy weather are hindrances preventing older people to go outside, and therefore well maintained paths are essential. A big reason preventing outdoor visits by older people is the need to ask for assistance from the staff. When assistance is less needed, one will more often enter the outdoors. When an environment is experienced to be safe and physically and mentally accessible an older person is encouraged to go outside, without putting more stress on care staff (Lee, Dilani, Morelli & Byun, 2007; Rappe & Topo, 2007).

Several architectural aspects that facilitate contact with nature through a courtyard are planting boxes and landscape plantings allowing residents to grow vegetables and plants as part of horticultural therapy.

Architectural elements which provide a (re)connection with nature in late life via facilitating outdoor activities are mentioned by Farmer (1999): the creation of outdoor tables to read and write, places to eat like on a patio garden, places to sit and contemplate, gardening in raised beds, places to watch birds that fly towards a bird feeder and bath, pathways to walk on while looking at water, plants and other people, places for reclining in nature like deck recliner, sheltered outdoor space that is warm, wind-free and has diffused light, and the use of fruit trees and a human-centred sense of scale and proportion (Farmer, 1999).

Older people prefer outdoor spaces that include greenery, flower, birds and water features (Rodiek, 2005). Moveable objects in a garden are of importance as for example moving a plant from place to place can give a person in late life a sense of purpose and sense of control over the environment (Rappe & Topo, 2007).

Visual accessibility to gardens and nature through windows

In order to allow people, especially physically impaired people, in late life to experience close contact with nature from the interior, views of nature and the entering of natural daylight should be integrated in the design. Prominent views of nature have been expressed by older people to be preferred over window views of built structures lacking elements of nature, and result in improvement of mood and a reduced heart rate (Cerina et al., 2017).

The size and placement of windows are of importance - small windows or solid doors should be prevented when aiming for a visual connection with nature. Concerning the placement of windows, low window ledges provide a solution for bed positioned views (Cerina et al., 2017). Alongside the framing of views, through meshing, transparencies and permeability visual access to nature can also be provided (Farmer, 1999).

The integration of nature inside

Besides accessibility to nature and views on nature, nature can as well be brought inside. Some architectural methods for this are a small greenhouse for residents and kitchen staff, plants, flowers, fish tanks, skylights and indoor atria with surrounding loggia. Between the interior and exterior balconies, patios and sheltered outdoor court can be placed accessible from individual homes (Farmer, 1999).

Dementia and nature

The effect of outdoor visits on the well-being of care residents, especially for residents with dementia as well as for depressive residents, is major. The value of nature and gardens and the accessibility to it plays a positive significant role in the quality of life and mood of older people affected by dementia, especially people living in care units. The experience of nature for people suffering from dementia results in three effects. Firstly, being in or seeing nature, and having a short escape to a garden, calms, reduces stress and creates a better sense of control. Secondly, when one is in nature or has a view on nature positive and negative memories are triggered and more easily expressed, associations are created, and activities and social interaction are initiated. Social interaction is experienced to be easier when outdoors than indoors for people with dementia. When socially interacting in an outdoor environment the attention flows towards elements in the environment rather than to the behaviour of an individual. As well being outdoor decreases stress from social events (Rappe & Topo, 2007). These social interactions in the garden do not take place with just

the residents themselves – an increase in visits of relatives was noticed after a garden was made in a Swedish care dementia home. Younger relatives visit their grandparents more often when they can be in fresh air with a view on flowers and drink coffee together (Rappe, 2003). Thirdly, a visit to the outdoors provides people with dementia the feeling of 'being capable' as a natural environment does not ask for an evaluation of space on how to act properly, it provides plenty of information on time, purpose, place and orientation and is thus easy to understand, and lastly it offers purposeful activities in which people suffering from dementia can engage in and derive self-esteem from. Research shows that people with dementia experience pleasure from participating in spontaneous gardening activities such as watering plants. All in all gardens animate and engage people with dementia (Rappe & Topo, 2007).

Aspects of gardens that help older people suffering from dementia (as well as people without dementia) with wayfinding and accessing a garden are sensorial stimulations (particularly plants as they possess characteristics which are multisensory and thus triggering memories and creating associations (Rappe & Topo, 2007) (see figure 13)), physical components (for example benches, planters, paving and plants) and spatial aspects such as a designated place for social interaction and a configuration kept simple (Cerina et al., 2017). Garden elements such as garden furniture, (therapeutic) planting boxes and fountains can function as a landmark and help with wayfinding (Lee, Dilani, Morelli & Byun, 2007). An environment containing trees and flowers was found to enhance social well-being by reducing aggression (Kuo & Sullivan, 2001) and supporting social ties (Kweon et al., 1998).

Concerning the typology of the courtyard mentioned earlier, this typology seems to be beneficial to people with dementia as well as the courtyard can facilitate closed-loop paths and clear views of the courtyard in its entity (Lee, Dilani, Morelli & Byun, 2007).

Lastly, a wander garden has shown to improve the mood and quality of life of people suffering from dementia (but also to increase the number of physical incidents) (Detweiler, Murphy, Myers & Kim, 2008), and residential facilities with a therapeutic garden increased the amount of outdoor walks one would take (Cerina et al., 2017).

All in all to create a home for (re)connecting with nature in late life architecture and landscape architecture need to create, firstly, easy accessibility to the outdoors by the creation of feelings of trust and safety through for example the removal of thresholds. Secondly, architecture needs to bring the outdoors in the indoors by the use of plants and bring the indoors in the outdoors by facilitating activities in the outdoors. Thirdly, architecture needs to provide views on nature by for example framing and using permeability and transparency.

Fig. 13 - A therapeutic practice path for walking in the midst of a meadow of flowers in 'vzw Eindelijk te Buggenhout'. It is attractive for its inhabitants, as well as for butterflies (De Schrijver et all, 2020)

a home for a sense of purpose in late life

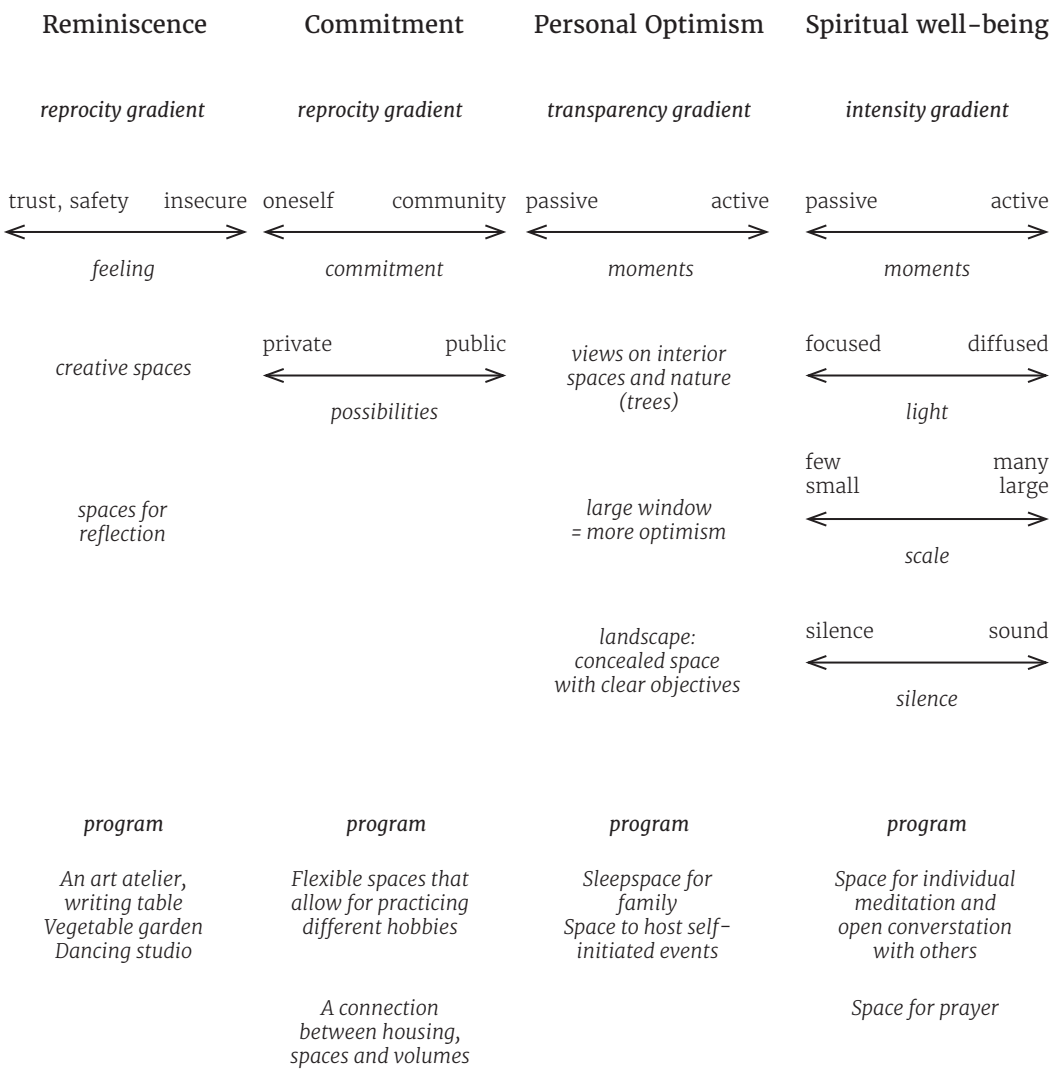
Conclusion on the final essay

The home and landscape for experiencing and maintaining a sense of purpose in late life should be an accepting, inclusive and diverse place that integrates the aspects of reminiscence, commitment, optimism, transcendence, mutual recognition and nature in a balanced way. As a sense of purpose in life is closely attached to temporality, the home and landscape in late life should as well address this temporality and facilitate the transition from one phase or moment in life to another. This temporal transition can be translated into gradients that allow for being in between, for not being ready to make a choice, for having possibilities, for going fully private or public, and for feeling independent. Throughout this essay the specific architectural and landscape architectural elements have been identified in allowing for a sense of purpose in late life. To create a coherent and understandable vision for the home and landscape of a sense of purpose in late life these aspects have been put into the gradients within the context of temporality. The aspects have been divided into three gradients, namely *the intensity gradient, the reciprocity gradient and the home gradient*. The intensity gradient flows from passive to active moments, the reciprocity gradient flows from private to public in which feelings of trust and safety are important, and the home gradient flows from being alone to having over visitors in which feeling at home is important. All in all I hope to create a home and landscape, with the help of the gradients, that stimulates people in late life to hold on to their (changing) sense of purpose in life as small or as big as it is.

a sense of purpose = temporal -> transitions

A visual conclusion

on the home and landscape for a sense of purpose in life



Mutual recognition

reprocity gradient

privacy — inclusion

transition

being heard — hearing

action

being seen — seeing

action

appreciated — appreciating

action

program

Creation of openings & sightlines

Places for community services like a day care centre nearby

Nature

home gradient

indoors — outdoors

transition

trust, safety — insecure

feeling

viewing — being in

action

program

Easy accessibility to outdoors
View on nature courtyards

Temporality

perceptive gradient

visual — tactile

perception

rhytm — pace

movement

social — individual

time scale

materiality

Open to change
Natural, honest & pure materials

SITE ANALYSIS

The site

for a home and landscape of
a sense of purpose in late life

A bench located under the tree canopies in the forest behind the site of Sparrenheide with the current homes for people in late life in the background

A covered by leaves path on the edge of the site and in the forest

The empty institutional like nursing home embraced by the season of autumn

The same building, the existing materials and trees merging in one another

Another nursing home at the site, hidden behind trees that still hold green leaves

Central in the open field is the group of trees, viewed from every sheltered housing

The materials of the existing institution like building: the bricks have natural shapes and are weathered

A typical house of the surrounding neighbourhood: semi-detached housing with gardens all around

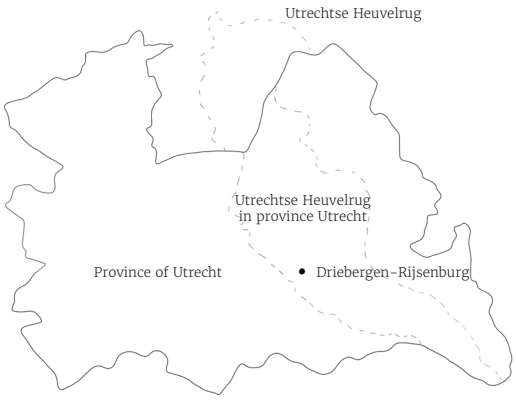
There is no view on the site that is not framed by the canopies of trees

The site

Introduction

Sparrenheide is a mysterious and dynamic but soothing and peaceful landscape. Its landscape slopes from low water flows to suddenly high overview points and is embraced by many tree canopies hugging over the landscape. It is as well a landscape that is embedded into a transitional zone enclosed by a village, a man-made landscaped park and a highway, all on the flank of a hill ridge located in the middle of the Netherlands.

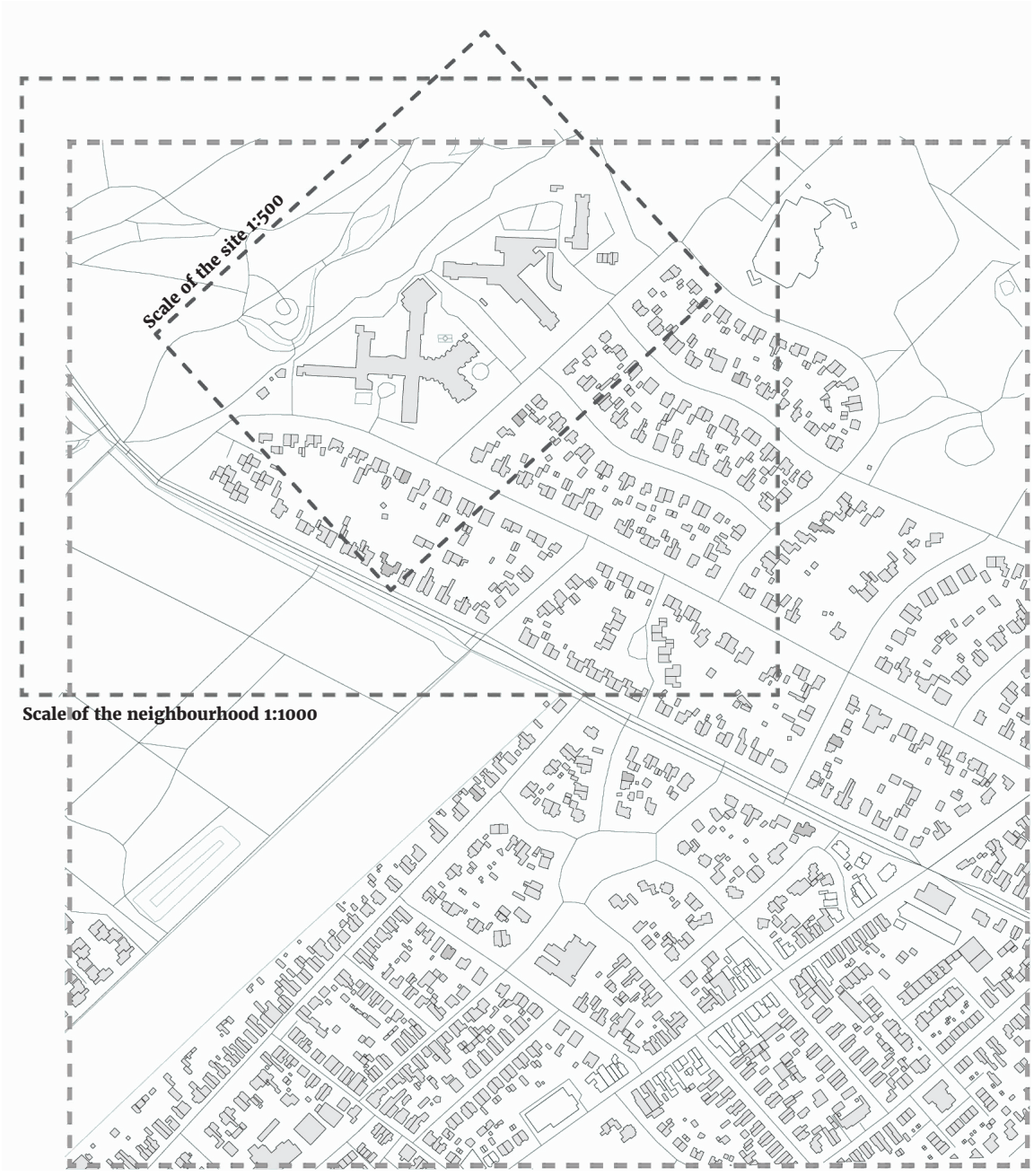
Sparrenheide came to my notice when it was offered by my design tutor along with locations in the city, the suburb and on the edge of the countryside. Sparrenheide is located on the edge of the village of *Driebergen-Rijsenburg* and of a landscaped park that is part of the *Nationale Utrechtse Heuvelrug*. Over the years Peter Boerenfijn, director of housing corporation *Habion* for older people, together with architects explored the possibilities for the already existing care buildings at the site and concluded together that the buildings as a result of very poor quality had to be demolished, leaving a huge area with only trees and pavements left for new ideas and concepts of dwelling in late life. On a sunny autumn day I was introduced to the location of Sparrenheide by Peter with a visit to and walk around the landscape. Although having just finished the first essay, I immediately had a gut feeling that this would be the location where my research on and design for a home for a sense of purpose in late life could flourish.



Reader's guide

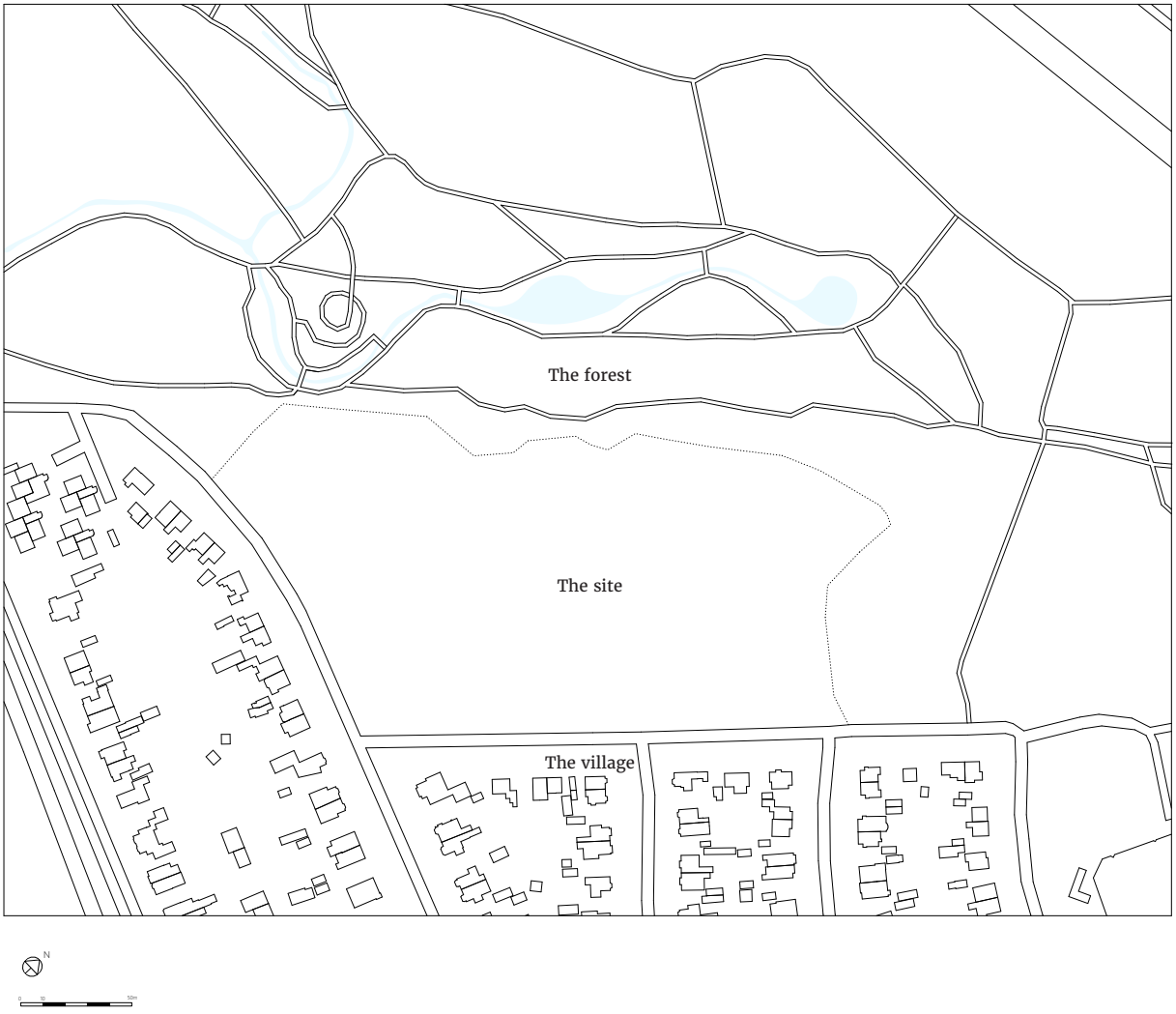
After having chosen Sparrenheide as the landscape for the creation for a home of a sense of purpose in late life I started with analysing the location together with two colleagues who had chosen the site of Sparrenheide as well. The site analysis is bundled in a separate booklet named *'A site analysis of Sparrenheide'* and it covers the topics of Sparrenheide's history, demography, urban aspects, climate and landscape. Lastly, the booklet concludes with an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the site transferred to a vision for the area of Sparrenheide. Within the site of Sparrenheide each colleague chose a certain place to develop further with the communal vision in mind.

In this booklet on the next pages the site location is briefly shown, the site choice is argumented and the key features and core values that I personally concluded from the communal site analysis will be discussed and form the basis for the design of a home and landscape for a sense of purpose in late life.



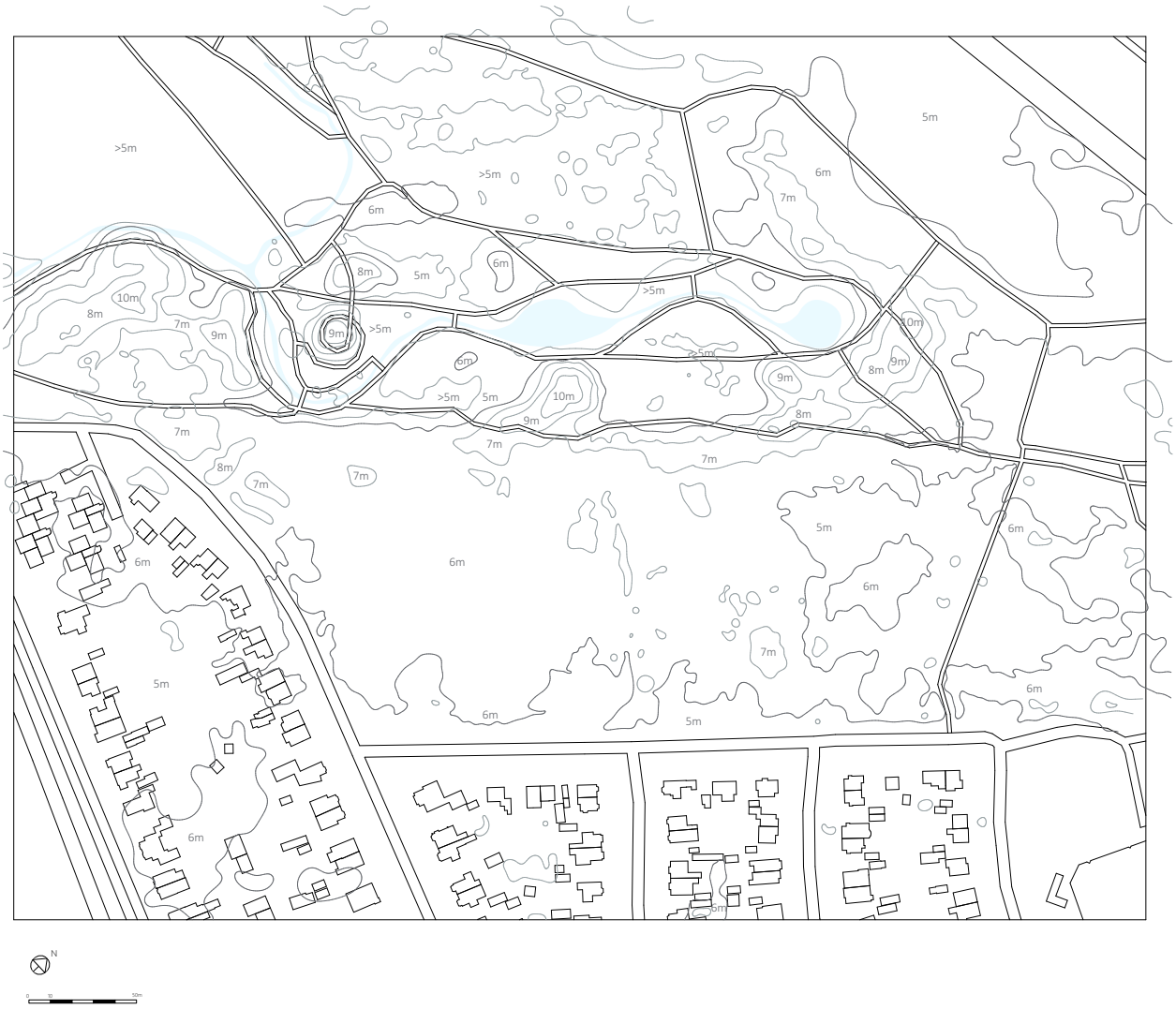
The village

in relation to site and
neighbourhood



The site

located in between forest and
village



The height layers

of the site and forest

The existing trees

at the site

Fig. 14 - The villa 'Sparrenheide' around 1921, a view from the entrance way of the front façade (Het Utrechts Archief, n.d.)

An entrance lane to the existing nursing homes covered by leaves and surrounded by differently coloured trees. As one enters one is subtly forced to lower pace due to the surrounding beauty

Site choice

Sparrenheide

The first reason I chose Sparrenheide as the place for creating a home for a sense of purpose in late life is that the Sparrenheide location offers an environment that feels unique in the sense of being closely attached to nature as well as to humans. Whereas the other locations appeared as sites, this location seemed to present itself as a landscape. Its sometimes subtle or sometimes unexpected height differences and trees that on human level form a nature like pattern on the horizon and on canopy level form a protection from the outside world, allow one to feel connected to our instincts of residing in nature. This nature has been altered by humans throughout the years. Where previously, in the early twenties, the landscape offered itself as a perfect forest pasture between *'sparren'* and *'heide'* for the building of a luxury villa named *'Sparrenheide'*, now the landscape lends itself to care and dwelling in the form of traditional nursing homes and an abandoned institution like building coming mainly from the late sixties.

Although already serving as a home for human beings for hundred years long, Sparrenheide seems to be still closely attached to its origins of being located at the flank of a hill ridge formed in the Ice Age, the *Utrechtse Heuvelrug*. It is the place where nature, people and dwelling have collided in different forms over the years. Now the landscape leaves itself open for a new interpretation of ways of living in late life, one that is in contradiction to its previous interpretations: that in late life one has purpose and is of value to any community.

Secondly, upon entering Sparrenheide one enters a world asking for a different pace, a different way of moving and living. Coming directly from the fast paced high way or train station one is introduced to Sparrenheide with lanes covered by leaves and embraced by trees, surrounded by human scale dwelling of the village and sounds of birds and water clashing. When entered one easily forgets the fast paced world around and is submerged into an environment allowing for reminiscing and contemplation. This slow paced essence of the place feels unique in today's fast accelerating society as well as in its location, it remains located right next to the extremely fast pace of cars on the high way, trains on the rails, and the medium pace in between, that of the surrounding village. The combination of a landscape forcing one to stop, wonder and ponder upon life together with the easy accessibility by car and train provides an unique environment for a place for people in late life to create and maintain a sense of purpose in life through nature and contemplation while as well having the possibility to feel part of a community and invite people over.

Key features

of Sparrenheide

In the site analysis booklet the location of Sparrenheide has been broadly researched on the topics of history, demography, the urban, climate and landscape. Throughout analysing the several topics I kept the topic of creating a sense of purpose in late life in my mind. I found some characteristics of the site that are already there which can be used, softened or exaggerated according to the creation of a sense of purpose in late life landscape. These characteristics are combined into five key features.

1. A landscape of rhythms varying between the high and low, open and enclosed

As a result of being located at the flank of a hill ridge that consist of a rich variety in relief, within a relatively small area, the landscape differentiates from low water creeks to sudden high hill tops, and from dense areas of trees covered in leaves to open fields of grass. This play in density and height differences allows for a varied experience of being in the open or the enclosed.

2. An escape from the fast paced world

The forest in which Sparrenheide is situated seems to embrace one immediately upon entering. As it embraces its visitors it simultaneously protects them from the outside world physically via the creation of a visual barrier formed by trees, and figuratively via the facilitation of moments of calmness and contemplation. The forest forms a safe place for the slow paced, almost feeling like a sacred sanctuary. This transition to a slow paced environment can as well function as a symbol of the slowing down in late life.

3. The history of the colliding of nature, humans and dwelling

Sparrenheide has functioned as a place for dwelling as well as recreation in nature, and as a hill ridge itself over the years. This connection between the forest, the hill ridge, dwelling and humans are now shown via cycle and walking paths running through the forest, benches under the canopies of trees and landscape elements such as open fields and a trail walk directed towards the highest point of the forest.

4. Unique location between village and forest

Especially when considering the loss in mobility of people in late life, the location of Sparrenheide offers an unique access to direct nature as well as to the village of Driebergen-Rijsenburg. In the communal vision explained in the site analysis booklet the connection with the village is strengthened by elongating the existing streets of the neighbourhood into the landscape of Sparrenheide.

5. The existing architecture as a source of inspiration

Within the existing architecture beautifully weathered materials can be found relating to the temporality of life. Brick stones of the institution like building are naturally shaped and texturized by water running over it. Although the existing buildings will be demolished, the reuse of its materials can provide an interesting reference to its past in care and dwelling, and to the temporal aspects of a sense of purpose in late life.

Core values

of Sparrenheide

Having written the narrative and analysed the location, I wanted to relate the key features of Sparrenheide into values that could flourish the location of Sparrenheide into a landscape and home for a sense of purpose in late life. Along with the observations of the fieldwork and the several essential homes and landscapes derived from the narrative, these core values will form the base from which the design is initiated and developed.

Sparrenheide as a transitional landscape

The landscape of Sparrenheide offers a rich variety in atmospheres separately and together fitting to several purposes such as contemplation or commitment. Its variety in height of land, types of vegetation, far away or up close views, and open and enclosed spaces ask for a program of transitions within the landscape. As well the location of Sparrenheide being in between the forest and the village asks for transitions, this time from the private to public, both in the home and landscape, extending from interior to exterior and exterior to interior.

Tools in guiding this theme to a design are:

- Exaggerating transitions to stress boundaries and clarify
- Smoothen transitions to allow a natural relation between interior and exterior
- Respond to what the landscape already offers, depart from what is there
- Facilitate the transition from beginning to the end: arrival, being and departure
- Use the location between village and forest as a way of creating possibilities to connect with both

Sparrenheide as a symbol of the temporality of the late life phase and its sense of purpose

Life and its purpose is infinite and everchanging, but something one can as well rely on, and so is the landscape of Sparrenheide. Along with the seasons the colours of the landscape, the colours of the leaves of trees, and the amount of sunlight all change. However, this constant renewal and death of life is according to rhythms, the rhythm of the seasons and days. Where some completely change colours from green to red like the platan tree in the area, others such as the pine trees in the area stay consistent through the year and never loose there pine needles. The landscape of Sparrenheide is a reminder

that life is temporal, and can be used in the design as something recognised, soothing and accepted.

Tools in guiding this theme to a design are:

- Respond to all seasons, and in a separate way
- Use the existing trees as a reminder of the past and a recognition of the temporality of life
- Use the existing weathered materials as a reference to its past

Sparrenheide as a reconnective landscape between nature and humans

The, in terms of dwelling unique location, the forest, facilitates a connection between humans and nature. The forest appears to be a place that lends itself to moments of passiveness, contemplation and reminiscence, as well as to moments of activeness, like commitment to taking a daily walk, painting, dancing, cycling, or rolling.

Tools in guiding this theme to a design are:

- Create views from the interior to the exterior and vice versa that highlight different parts of the landscape
- Provide attractive places for active and passive moments accessible for residents and visitors
- Make full use of its location in nature by allowing for easy accessibility for every way of transport

Conclusion

on a home and landscape
for a sense of purpose in late life

Summary

The aim of this research was to define the characteristics of a place that allows for, maintains and promotes a sense of purpose for people in late life at the intersection of architecture and landscape architecture. *'A sense of purpose in life'* entails the feeling of and being able to feel that one has a purpose in life. The meaning of a purpose in life has been identified as all the reasons why one wakes up and why one feels like their life is meaningful. The sources generating purpose in life are different to anyone and ranges from making coffee, to meditating and to taking care of one another.

The experience
The chapter this research initiates with is the stay at a care home. Observations done during this fieldwork resulted in several conclusions and the definition of the problem statement:

- Observed was that the social network of the residents had decreased because of losses encountered and people not finding them interesting or helpful enough, and that the mobility of the residents had reduced and still was reducing making it harder to participate in purposeful activities. As well it was observed that the care givers, although with the best intentions, took over quite some activities that residents could do themselves with some help, and that the Dutch care system is overloaded by older people needing care and under supported by care givers, and thus there is no time and money to focus on the mental well-being of the care needing people.

- In the care home there were certain places that created small moments of joy. Several residents were found each day at that same place at a certain moment. These moments ranged from private to collective places and from daytime to nighttime.
- As a result it was concluded that almost all older people settle for less (‘geen zin meer hebben’), that some older people are simply waiting to die and that often older people feel like they have no sense of purpose in life.

The narrative

The fieldwork conclusions formed the setting for the theoretical framework. The theoretical framework was created through the study of literature grounded in several different fields of study. The most important conclusions of this study are:

- that the concept of ikigai entails the sum of small joys in everyday life that lead to a life worthwhile to live. Ikigai is deeply cultural and social: whereas in Japan it is focused on collectivism, in the Western culture it is a desire from the individual. As well ikigai is very personal and individual. Lastly, it has no religious element to it but it is spiritual;
- that the term ‘ikigai’ had to be redefined to the term ‘a sense of purpose in life’ as it appeared to be a more suitable term in Dutch culture, it triggers personal resistance and thus is fertile matter to work with, it can be more easily transferred to architectural characteristics in Dutch culture, and ‘a sense of’ stresses the importance of feeling like one has purpose;
- that a sense of purpose in late life has shown to be essential for health, human flourishing and maintenance of a positive spirit in the face of illness and disability in late life. The importance of a sense of purpose in life stays the same in all phases of life, as well as in late life. While its importance remains high in late life, in late life a sense of purpose in threatened the most by many losses and disabilities encountered.
- that the feelings related to a sense of purpose in late life, like competence, self-worth and acceptation of the self, are all closely attached to temporal aspects and to the intertwining of physical, mental, social and spiritual dimensions.
- that the strategies to maintain and promote a sense of purpose in late life are reminiscence, commitment, personal optimism and spiritual well-being. The importance of mutual recognition and the recognition of the temporality of life has as well been stressed.
- that a (re)connection with nature is vital in maintaining a sense of purpose in life, literature as well as an interview with people in all phases of life have shown this.
- that the home and landscape for experiencing and maintaining a sense of purpose in late life should be an accepting, inclusive and diverse place

that integrates the aspects of reminiscence, commitment, optimism, transcendence, mutual recognition and nature in a balanced way. As a sense of purpose in life is closely attached to temporality, the home and landscape in late life should as well address this temporality and facilitate the transition from one phase or moment in life to another.

The site

The site of Sparrenheide, a landscape situated between a forest and a small village, was analysed on several aspects. These aspects were then translated into core values of the site in relation to the creation of home and landscape for a sense of purpose in late life:

- *Sparrenheide as a transitional landscape.* The landscape of Sparrenheide offers a rich variety in height of land, types of vegetation, far away or up close views, and open and enclosed spaces. Thus, it asks for a program of transitions within the landscape. As well the location of Sparrenheide being in between the forest and the village asks for transitions, this time from the private to public, both in the home and landscape, extending from interior to exterior and exterior to interior.
- *Sparrenheide as a symbol of the temporality of late life phase and its sense of purpose*. Along with the seasons the colours of the landscape, the colours of the leaves of trees, and the amount of sunlight all change. However, this constant renewal and death of life is according to rhythms, the rhythm of the seasons and days. The landscape of Sparrenheide is a reminder that life is temporal, and can be used in the design as something recognised, soothing and accepted.
- *Sparrenheide as a (re)connective landscape between nature and humans.* The forest of Sparrenheide appears to be a place that lends itself to moments of passiveness, contemplation and reminiscence, as well as to moments of activeness, like commitment to taking a daily walk, painting, dancing, cycling, or rolling. It is a place to dwell and (re)connect with nature.

Conclusions

The main research question of this research is: *"What characterises a place that allows for a sense of purpose in life at the intersection of architecture and landscape architecture for people in late life?"*

Three gradients have been proposed for the creation of a home and landscape for a sense of purpose in late life, namely the gradients of intensity, of reciprocity and of the home. The intensity gradient flows from passive to active moments, the reciprocity gradient flows from the private to the public in which feelings of trust and safety are important, and the home gradient

flows from being alone to having visitors over in which feeling at home is important.

All architectural and landscape architectural aspects identified in this research have been put into the mentioned gradients to put it within the context of temporality, that of changing moments and places, in other words transitions. These temporal transitions translated into the gradients allow for being in between, for not being ready to make a choice, for having possibilities, for going fully private or public, and for feeling independent. Besides, the combining of the aspects into the gradients create a coherent and understandable vision.

All in all the home and landscape for experiencing and maintaining a sense of purpose in late life should be an accepting, inclusive and diverse place that integrate the aspects of reminiscence, commitment, optimism, transcendence, mutual recognition and (re)connection with nature in a balanced way. As a sense of purpose in life is closely attached to temporality, the home and landscape in late life should as well address this temporality and facilitate the transition from one phase or moment in life to another. I hope to create a home and landscape, with the help of the gradients, that stimulate people in late life to hold on to their (changing) sense of purpose in life as small or as big as it is.

Program

Besides a conclusion on the characteristics of a home and landscape for a sense of purpose in late life, the theoretical framework, lessons from the fieldwork and the core values of the site result in a program brief for the design of a home and landscape for a sense of purpose in late life.

In every way it is important that every mentioned program aspect relates to different desires and needs of its inhabitants. As a sense of purpose in life is closely attached to temporal aspects and is, although often shared in main subjects, highly individual, the program has to provide options for passive and active as well as private and collective moments according to the mentioned gradients.

Although a sense of purpose in late life is individual, the residents do share similarities in finding themselves in the phase of late life and in wanting to be in nature. Needless to say, every place of the program needs to be accessible by wheelchair and walker. It cannot exclude any person in late life that is in any way disabled. Lastly, the connection with nature remains important through the whole design process.

The program for the homes and landscapes for a sense of purpose in late life could in general entail:

Dwelling and care

- Private bedrooms, kitchens and living areas
- Functional spaces, like staff lunch area, bathrooms for the staff, storage areas and staff offices.

A home for reminiscence

- Places to undertake creative activities, like an artistic atelier, a dance studio
- Places to reminiscence, such as a place to sit and write alone or in groups

A home for commitment

- Places that are flexible in facilitating several hobbies like painting or playing puzzles
- Places that connect to the other places to stimulate commitment

A home for personal optimism

- Places to invite and receive family and friends, like a collective large living/ dining room
- Places to stay the night for family and friends
- Places to view the landscape, such as places in which the view on the outdoors is central, large and framed

A home for transcendence

- Places to contemplate, such as meditation rooms, places for open conversations and silent prayer rooms
- Places to experience relations between light, silence and scale
- Places in the landscape that are concealed with clear objectives

A home for (re)connecting with nature

- Places to interact with the landscape in an active way, like a vegetable garden and moveable plants pots and seating;
- Places in the landscape that are easily accessible from the interior
- Places in the home that connect visually and physically with the outdoors

A home for recognising the temporality of life

- Places that are open to change, like a changeable lay-out
- Places in the landscape that show diversity in perception, movement and time

A home for mutual recognition

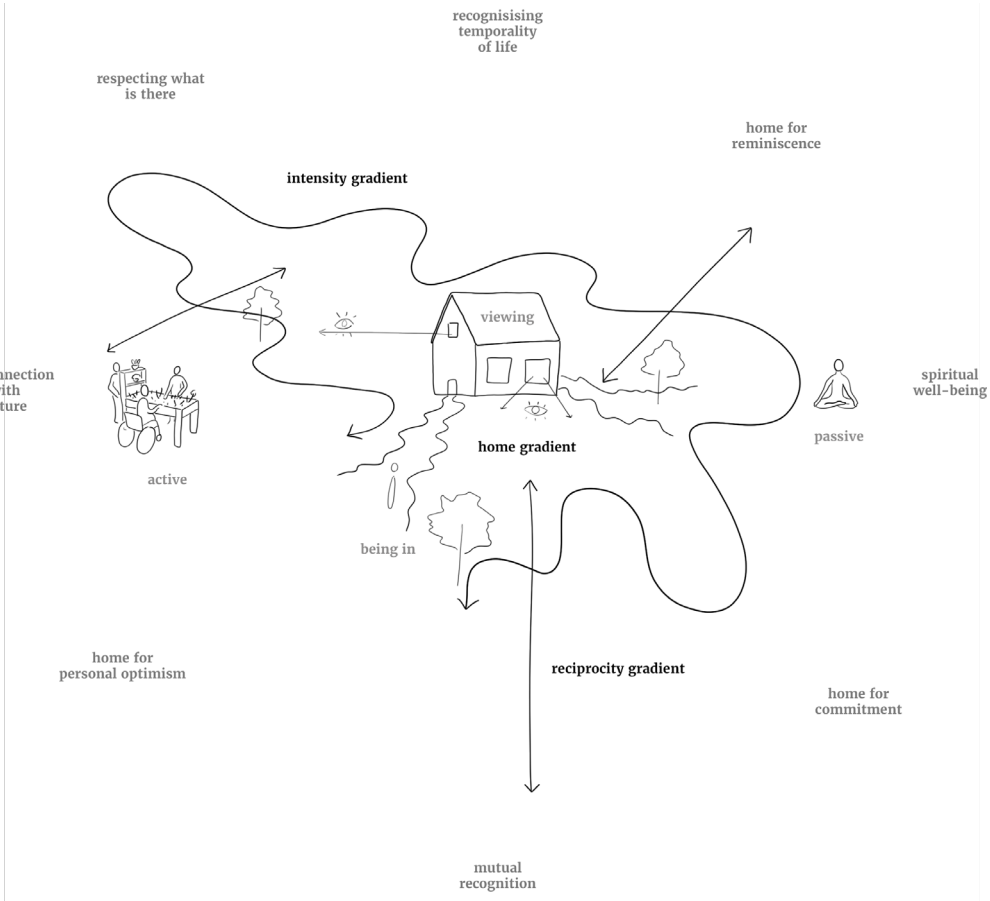
- Places with clear openings and sightlines
- Places for different levels of interaction and privacy or inclusion, like a small seating nook and a collective coffee place
- Places for community services, like day-care centres nearby

Besides the residents themselves, the home and landscape for a sense of purpose in late life as well needs to embrace care givers, family members, friends, forest hikers and cyclers, and visitors from the surrounding neighbourhood. Small collective coffee places with well accessible connections from the forest could integrate these visitors to the inhabitants and nature of the place.

Lastly, in terms of sustainability, the existing care dwelling offers a challenge. As the quality of the existing buildings is too poor to function sustainably in the future, the demolishing of the buildings should be counteracted by looking into other possible chances to not negatively affect the environment. For example, the reuse of materials of the existing buildings and the prevention of the cutting of existing trees could offer ways to respect the existing of the site.

All in all the conclusions and outline of the program will mark the beginning of the design for a home and landscape of a sense of purpose in late life, and will be possibly adjusted and rethought during the design process.

After, for half a year, having fully immersed myself into literary books, essays, research articles and into the writing of the research for a home and landscape for a sense of purpose in late life I realised I had come to a valuable conclusion including guidelines with design tools and lessons, but that this conclusion was only substantiated by words from literature. During this writing process I had already often taken a look into several existing architectural projects to validate certain arguments from literature, and moreover, to see how these guidelines took shape in the language of architecture. Subsequently, I started composing a list of design projects that touched upon important topics within maintaining and encouraging a sense of purpose in late life. Following upon this booklet on the narrative is the booklet 'The architecture of a home and landscape for a sense of purpose in late life' in which the guidelines derived from the narrative are tested with a study of existing design projects. This booklet concludes with drawn architectural guidelines based on the narrative and case studies.



The concept for a home and landscape of a sense of purpose in late life

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Appendix

APPENDIX

The methodology

of searching for a home for a sense of purpose in late life

Upon embarking the journey of researching and designing for environments for people in late life I felt a bit unsure and the start felt a bit ironic: a student in her twenties living on campus away from people in their late life and designing homes for people in their eighties? How was I going to design for a phase in life that I had never experienced and, moreover, that was years away from me? Could I design something for people in late life whom have way more experience in life compared to me, and whom have grown up in a different time and thus a differently shaped culture? These questions all directed to one answer, I had to submerge myself into the lives of the people in late life.

Thus, the initiation of this research started with the study of how the people in late life moved, felt, ate, filled their days, what and when they undertook certain activities and so on. This study of human action and conduct is grounded in the field of praxeology (Berkers, 2020), an episteme in architecture (Havik, 2020), and took shape in the form of fieldwork, a stay at a care home. This fieldwork functioned as a discovery of the problem and was conveyed without having barely done any research in any other fields. As a result this research initiated with a context-led approach that helped in establishing *"the primary importance of the physical, social or historical setting"* (Lucas, 2016, p. 11). As well it functioned as a manner to reveal social relationships that would not have been found within literature study (Wilson & Chaddha, 2009).

During this stay I could position myself in two manners. The first being to present myself as an insider, the emic (Lucas, 2016). This required participation in activities that the people in late life conducted and resulted in me sleeping in the same care home, rolling in a wheelchair, walking to the same grocery store and participating in the daily coffee hour. However, as much as I tried it appeared to be difficult to position myself as one of the people in the late life group. I could sit in a wheelchair but my arms were not as weak as the arms of the 85 years old woman sitting next to me, and I could try to participate in the coffee hour the way they did but they still saw me as an outsider and were interested in the things I did outside the care home. As a result I approached the fieldwork from another position as well and more often, the position of the outsider, namely the etic (Lucas, 2016). This approach took shape in observing and sketching the way the people moved from place to place, the way they behaved in a particular place and in the form of conducting interviews and asking people about their daily lives and activities.

From both approaches quite fruitful observations were made and translated to raw sketches, finalised drawings and written text. The writing about the people in late life has its origins not within praxeology but within ethnography. However, both are branches of anthropology and thus I remained

within the field of participant observation. The conclusions were derived from observations of some people who mentioned in interviews that they were simply waiting to die, of people mentioning settling for less and of people having lost lust in life and they all seemed to lead to one main conclusion, namely that quite some people in late life in the care home had lost a sense of purpose in their lives.

Following the study of human action and conduct and deriving a problem statement and research question from it, I moved to literature research in order to create a theoretical framework for the research topic that would lead to the defining of tools and characteristics of a home and landscape for a sense of purpose in life. The research topic derived from the fieldwork directed the research towards not only fields of architecture and landscape architecture, but as well to fields of philosophy and psychology.

In order to be able to look into the field of architecture and landscape architecture through the fields of philosophy and psychology I translated the theoretical framework into the form of three essays. The essays function as a key chain between social sciences and artistic disciplines flowing from first a full focus on philosophy, to a focus on psychology and philosophy, and lastly to a focus on architecture and landscape architecture. Through this flowing between fields I could dive into the experience of architecture, the field of phenomenology.

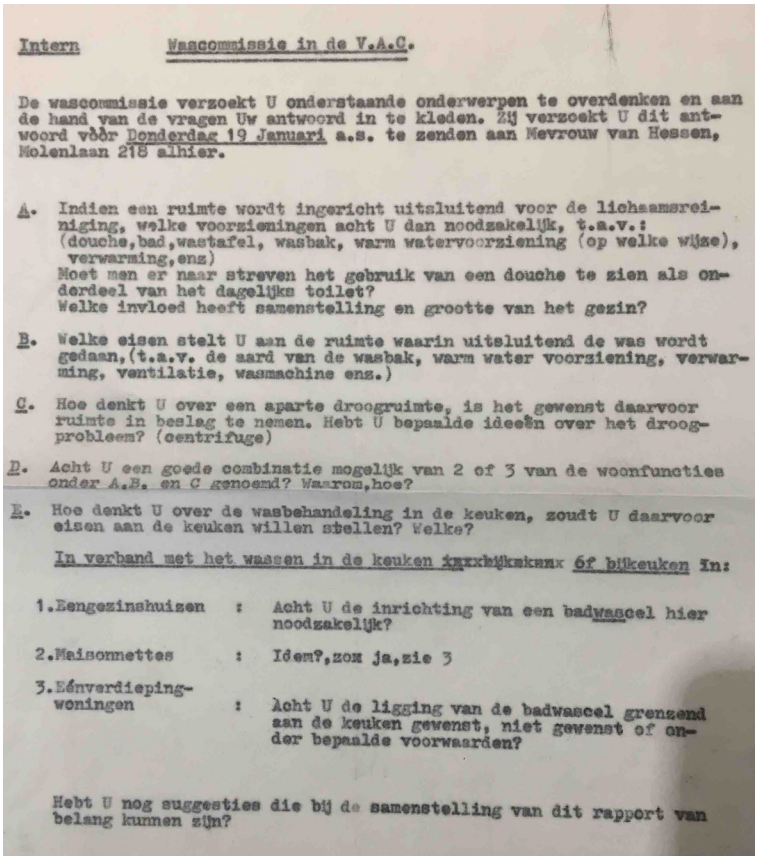
According to Lucas (2016) phenomenology is the study of essences, for example the essence of how one perceives a space. Besides it being a study, it is as well a philosophy that returns the found essence back to existence. Merleau-Ponty describes the basis of perception as sensation itself, not the thing that causes the sensation (Lucas, 2016). However, in my literature research I did not keep it at the experience, sensation, of architecture itself, I as well sought to explain the things in architecture that contributed to a particular sensation, usually that of sensing a purpose in life, and to ground them in literature. This is in contradiction to the statement of Merleau-Ponty of only looking into the sensation itself.

All in all this study in literature in the field of phenomenology formed a theoretical framework with tools and characteristics of the home and landscape of a sense of purpose in late life that could then be translated to a design at the site.

The final field of study was situated in morphology, the study of shapes, by looking at the site where the design would evolve (Havik, 2020). This study was conveyed by a site analysis that looked into, among other things, the existing form and heights of the landscape and the shapes of the trees. Through the site analysis key features of the site were found which then were translated to

core values of the site in relation to the research topic.

All in all this research has seen a transition between several fields of study – philosophy, psychology, architecture and landscape architecture – and between different epistemes in architecture – praxeology, ethnography, phenomenology and morphology – that together resulted in a conclusion on a home and landscape for a sense of purpose in life. The study of human action and conduct functioned as a discovery phase in which the problem statement and research question were formed, the study of the experience of architecture resulted in a connection between psychology and architecture, and the study of the forms of the site resulted in the determination of the site's values in relation to the (just mentioned) connection found.



Intern Wascommissie in de V.A.C.

De wascommissie verzoekt U onderstaande onderwerpen te overdenken en aan de hand van de vragen Uw antwoord in te kleden. Zij verzoekt U dit antwoord vóór Donderdag 19 Januari a.s. te zenden aan Mevrouw van Hessen, Molenlaan 218 alhier.

A. Indien een ruimte wordt ingericht uitsluitend voor de lichaamsreiniging, welke voorzieningen acht U dan noodzakelijk, t.a.v.: (douche,bad,wastafel, wasbak, warm watervoorziening (op welke wijze), verwarming,enz)
Moet men er naar streven het gebruik van een douche te zien als onderdeel van het dagelijks toilet?
Welke invloed heeft samenstelling en grootte van het gezin?

B. Welke eisen stelt U aan de ruimte waarin uitsluitend de was wordt gedaan,(t.a.v. de aard van de wasbak, warm water voorziening, verwarming, ventilatie, wasmachine ens.)

C. Hoe denkt U over een aparte droogruimte, is het gewenst daarvoor ruimte in beslag te nemen. Hebt U bepaalde ideeën over het droogprobleem? (centrifuge)

D. Acht U een goede combinatie mogelijk van 2 of 3 van de woonfuncties onder A.B. en C genoemd? Waarom,hoe?

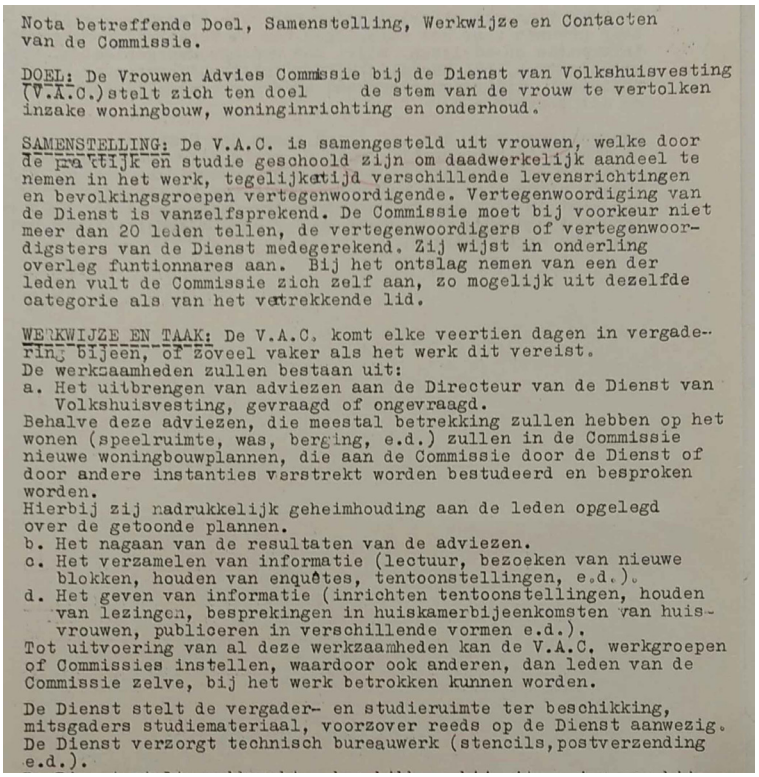
E. Hoe denkt U over de wasbehandeling in de keuken, zoudt U daarvoor eisen aan de keuken willen stellen? Welke?

In verband met het wassen in de keuken ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ óf bijkeuken in:

1. Bengezinshuizen : Acht U de inrichting van een badwascel hier noodzakelijk?
2. Maisonnettes : Idem?,zoo ja,zie 3
3. Éénverdieping-woningen : Acht U de ligging van de badwascel grenzend aan de keuken gewenst, niet gewenst of onder bepaalde voorwaarden?

Hebt U nog suggesties die bij de samenstelling van dit rapport van belang kunnen zijn?

Fig. 15 – Questionnaire from the laundry committee of the VAC, 1956 (GA Schiedam, 1956)



Nota betreffende Doel, Samenstelling, Werkwijze en Contacten van de Commissie.

DOEL: De Vrouwen Advies Commissie bij de Dienst van Volkshuisvesting (V.A.C.)stelt zich ten doel de stem van de vrouw te vertolken inzake woningbouw, woninginrichting en onderhoud.

SAMENSTELLING: De V.A.C. is samengesteld uit vrouwen, welke door de praktijk en studie geschoold zijn om daadwerkelijk aandeel te nemen in het werk, tegelijkertijd verschillende levensrichtingen en bevolkingsgroepen vertegenwoordigende. Vertegenwoordiging van de Dienst is vanzelfsprekend. De Commissie moet bij voorkeur niet meer dan 20 leden tellen, de vertegenwoordigers of vertegenwoordigsters van de Dienst medegerekend. Zij wijst in onderling overleg funtionnares aan. Bij het ontslag nemen van een der leden vult de Commissie zich zelf aan, zo mogelijk uit dezelfde categorie als van het vertrekkende lid.

WERKWIJZE EN TAAK: De V.A.C. komt elke veertien dagen in vergadering bijeen, of zoveel vaker als het werk dit vereist.
De werkzaamheden zullen bestaan uit:
a. Het uitbrengen van adviezen aan de Directeur van de Dienst van Volkshuisvesting, gevraagd of ongevraagd.
Behalve deze adviezen, die meestal betrekking zullen hebben op het wonen (speelruimte, was, berging, e.d.) zullen in de Commissie nieuwe woningbouwplannen, die aan de Commissie door de Dienst of door andere instanties verstrekt worden bestudeerd en besproken worden.
Hierbij zij nadrukkelijk geheimhouding aan de leden opgelegd over de getoonde plannen.
b. Het nagaan van de resultaten van de adviezen.
c. Het verzamelen van informatie (lectuur, bezoeken van nieuwe blokken, houden van enquêtes, tentoonstellingen, e.d.).
d. Het geven van informatie (inrichten tentoonstellingen, houden van lezingen, besprekingen in huiskamerbijeenkomsten van huisvrouwen, publiceren in verschillende vormen e.d.).
Tot uitvoering van al deze werkzaamheden kan de V.A.C. werkgroepen of Commissies instellen, waardoor ook anderen, dan leden van de Commissie zelve, bij het werk betrokken kunnen worden.

De Dienst stelt de vergader- en studieruimte ter beschikking, mitsgaders studiemateriaal, voorzover reeds op de Dienst aanwezig. De Dienst verzorgt technisch bureauwerk (stencils,postverzending e.d.).

Fig. 16 – The goal of the VAC written in a brief by the VAC Rotterdam, 1952 (GA Schiedam, 1952)

APPENDIX

A theoretical reflection

on the conducted research

A leading inspiration for me for ways of conducting research was one of the first Dutch female architects named Wil Jansen who conveyed architectural research in a women's organisation called *The Female Advice Committee* – in Dutch *De Vrouwen Advies Commissie, VAC* – in Rotterdam from 1946 till 1963. In the first year of my master I conveyed archival research in Schiedam in which I dived into materials of Jansen, an important architect who was never published or well-known in the Netherlands simply because of the fact that she was a female architect.

In the field of praxeology in architecture Jansen has been ground-breaking as she was, firstly, a woman conducting research in a, at that time, by men covered field, and secondly as she, along with the VAC, was the first to conduct research in the field of praxeology with a focus on the perspective of the users of Dutch dwelling who spent the most hours at home at that time: women[1]. Methods she conducted were interviewing the women who fulfilled the role of housewives, developing and putting out questionnaires concerning a dwelling matter within the household (figure 15) and tracking activities of women in the household. As well as in the field of phenomenology Jansen conveyed research by asking the women how they perceived the rooms of their homes such as the combined kitchen and bathroom. As a result she started writing reports including a description of the desires, needs and architectural (and personal) problems of the women at home (Heikamp, 2019).

The aim of the VAC was to '*translate the voice of the woman in the fields of dwelling, interior design of dwellings and maintenance*.' (figure 16) (Heikamp, 2019). Using research done by Jansen and the VAC as an example of researching an underrepresented group of people, I interviewed residents of a care facility and observed how the residents, often with mobility issues, moved through the building. This study of human action resulted in findings such as that thresholds to the balcony form a great barrier to go outside and that people in late life at care facilities often feel like that they have no purpose anymore in life. These findings, in my opinion crucial knowledge in the design process later on, would not be found or as accurate through the study of, for example, typologies or material culture - methods that are traditionally used in the research and design of care facilities. The traditional, usually institutionally, designed homes for people in care and late life do not stimulate, even counterpart, the well-being of the older people. One of the crucial problems in care for people in late life is the inadequate residential environment for physically and mentally impaired elderly (Lee, Dilani, Morelli and Byun, 2007).

With the approach coming from praxeology Jansen was able to let the

voice of women be heard in the designing of Dutch dwelling (Heikamp, 2019). Similarly, I think that my approach in the fields of philosophy and architecture throughout praxeology raises the voice of people in their last phase of life who are in need of care, but also who are human, not a product of society who fit purely and perfectly in architectural typologies.

Besides wanting to give an, in my opinion, in architecture unrepresented group a voice in the research and design of my project, and using praxeology conducted by Jansen as an inspirational example, I also wanted to make a bridge between the philosophical findings on well-being and purpose in life from literature to the daily practice of the people living in a care home. Literature on the philosophy of ikigai and on having a purpose in life provided me a deep insight into how a set of values, rituals and believes result in a healthier and happier way of living. With the use of a branch discipline of philosophy named phenomenology I was able to make the connection from philosophy to architecture. Phenomenology opposes the traditional Western understanding of architecture and life which states that there is a sharp distinction present between a person and the world. Instead, phenomenology states that people and their environment mutually define and include each other. Its approach in architecture shapes and directs the relationship between the person and the environment, something I personally find very interesting and important (Bognar, 1985).

Architects of today have also found interest in the intersection of the fields of philosophy and architecture. Architect Ben van Berkel and architect and co-founder of UNStudio Caroline Bos go as far as to stress in their article *Liquid Politic* that utility and philosophy both need to be present at the core of architectural imagination. Bos and Van Berkel (1999) state that architecture reacts to specific situations and needs but that architecture as well needs to respond to the thought on how the people we design for want to live: *'the secret is to unify utility and philosophy and to always let them be mutually enforcing'* (Bos en Van Berkel, 1999). As the increasing interest in a humanistic approach appeared in architecture, architects tried to investigate the meaning of the building throughout semiology. However, this appeared to be insufficient to unify philosophy with architecture. With the works of philosophers in the field of phenomenology such as Martin Heidegger a relation between the natural and human-made environment was possible to achieve within architecture. Architect Christian Norberg-Schulz was greatly influenced by the theories of Martin Heidegger, providing a first step in the phenomenology of landscape and architecture. Norberg-Schulz published a poetic and scientific book *'Intentions in Architecture'* in which he writes how places are experienced and perceived. He states that the perception of places depend upon the description and classification of architectural psychological conditions (Van Nes, 2008).

The history of interactions between the architectural and philosophical field has also seen collaborations between architects and philosophers. In the early 1980s architect Bernard Tschumi collaborated with French philosopher Jacques Derrida on the design of the garden in Paris *Parc de La Villette* (Wocke,2014). Tschumi engaged with Derrida's theoretical ideas on deconstruction that stress the ambiguity of words. This philosophical theory effected Tschumi in creating architecture that accommodates multiple interpretations, in the same way words accommodate multiple meanings. Tschumi realised this in a metaphoric way in architecture through layering contrasting architectural geometry against each other to achieve unforeseen meanings (Glusberg, 1991). Both Tschumi and Derrida worked, along in design methodologies, within the field of ontology, one that has its focus on the nature and structure of things per se and the study of being (Guarino, Oberle, & Staab, 2009) (Wigley, 1995). Eventually the collaboration blurred the separation of the position of the philosopher and the architect (Harries, 2018).

All in all the theoretical framework of this research contributes to the field of dwelling in architecture by providing a new perspective to it with the use of praxeology and phenomenology: one that evolves around the philosophy of life of its current users and the philosophy of purposeful life, rather than traditionally designing with typologies and without the perspective on life of the users.

[1] In that time men usually conveyed research and designed Dutch dwellings, although they spent most of their hours at the office while women spent every hour in their homes as they were traditionally expected to stay at home for the children and household tasks.

APPENDIX

The learning process

of the research

Before starting the research course I expected the course to explain how to construct a well thought research plan as a good and stable basis for a year of researching and designing. As in the previous master and bachelor courses this would entail learning how to cite, write and elaborate on several topics. However, as the research course progressed, I started to see it elaborated on the topic of research on a deeper level as it focussed on the integration of different fields of research. Personally, the research phase started for me as a broad exploration, navigating between the fields of the philosophy of living and well-being, psychology, architecture, landscape architecture and nature. Slightly unaware I was leaning towards writing a psychological research, as its field quite hugely interested me, while simultaneously losing the architectural field.

Struggling to formulate the right questions concerning the theoretical framework the masterclass came right in time. During the masterclass *Disciplinary Mergers* the four-step process of academic disciplinary – *identification, tracing/relating, framing/expressing, speculating and transitioning to design* – was explained, as well as criticised on its focus on the one way process while in reality the process jumps forwards and backwards between the four steps. At the stage of the masterclass I found myself between step one and two. I had identified the problem, but not yet the specific topic and methods for my research, and was trying to relate the several fields of research and topics to each other. With the help of this short masterclass I identified where the problem that was holding me back from continuing the research plan lied.

Having found the 'problem', the masterclass focussed on transdisciplinary encounters during the research process. This part of the masterclass was very useful for me as I learned how to explore artistic disciplines and social sciences at the same time and in the same research. During the final part of the class in which other studios presented their methods and methodologies it became apparent to me how I could put the different disciplines of art and social sciences into one theoretical framework. Whereas I had initiated my research with a humanistic approach, the other studios had begun with the analysis of architecture, its environment and the yet to be designed site. The two contrastingly approaches provided insights in possibilities of finding a midway between the fields of social science and art disciplines, integrating them both into the theoretical framework.

Now I have found a way to integrate architecture and landscape architecture in the theoretical framework: the last of three essays focusses on architecture and its landscape. The final essay will now serve as a bridge

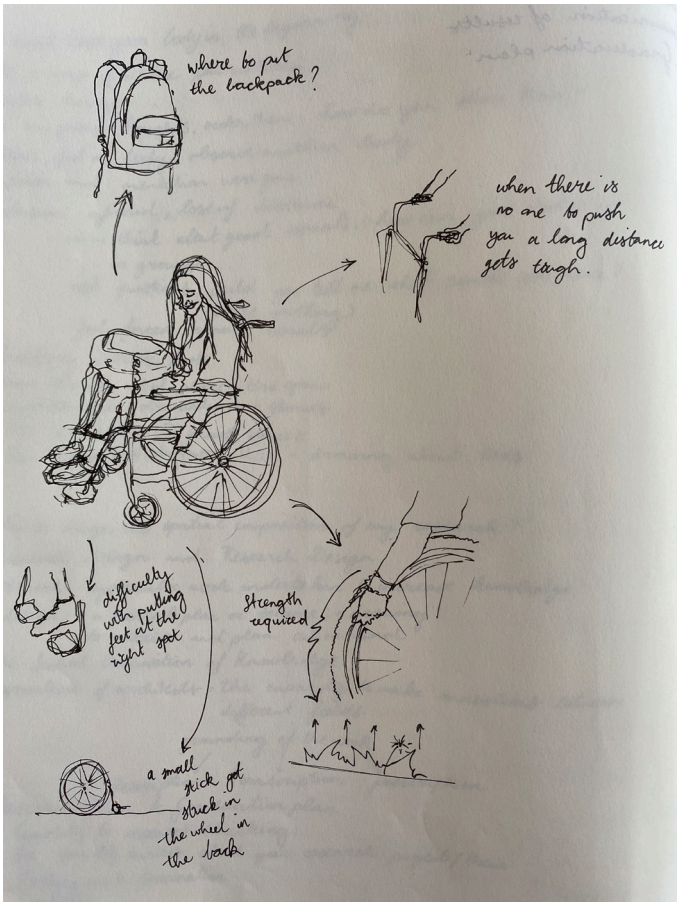
between the theoretical framework and the architectural framework. In this way the reader can smoothly flow to the architectural field without losing its focus of the psychology and philosophy behind the main topic.

All in all the research course has shown me that research in architecture does not merely focus on citing the sources right. It is a sometimes unpredictable, but guidable, interplay between several fields of research in which the academically founding of design choices, and of every decision in the research and design process, is of importance and has meaning.

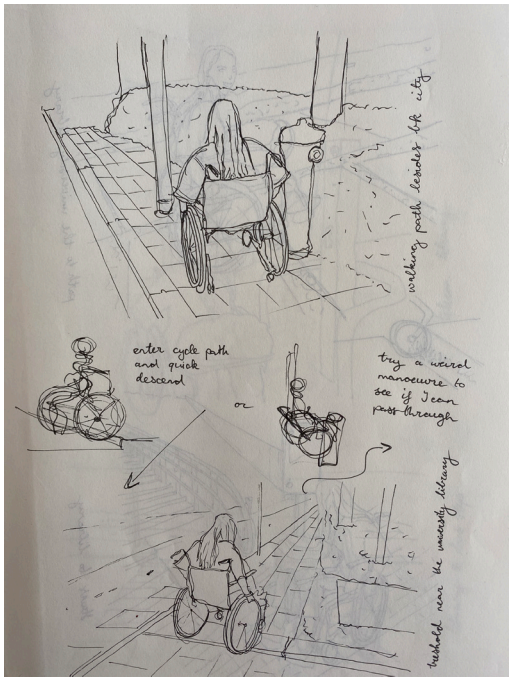
APPENDIX

Stepping into one's shoes

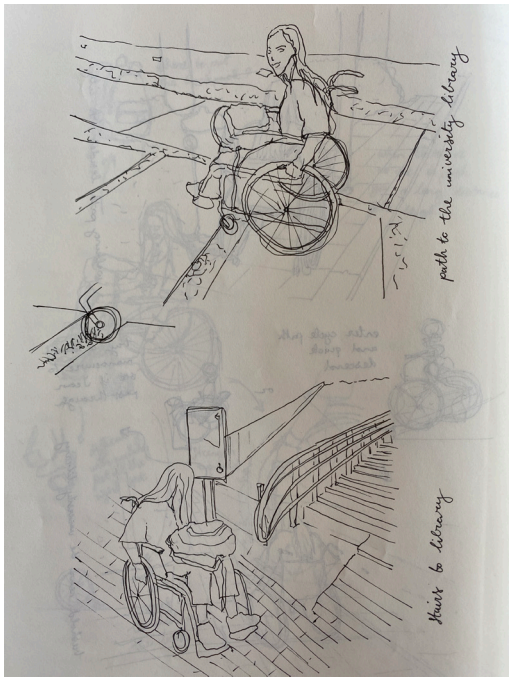
Experiencing living with disabilities



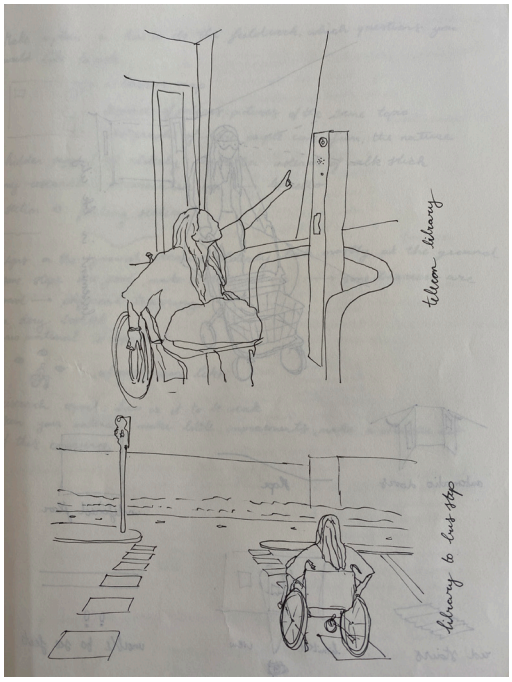
A sketch of the first obstacles encountered while being in a wheelchair



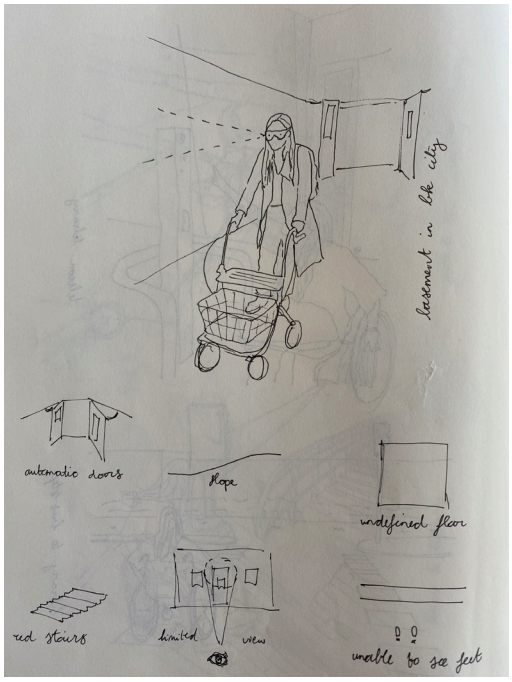
A sketch of the immediate obstacles faced right outside the faculty building of Architecture



A sketch of the wheelchair unfriendly library path



Finally arrived at the library entrance for wheelchair traffic, but the library doorbell appears to be unreachable



A sketch of difficulties faced while walking around the faculty with a walker and while being visually impaired