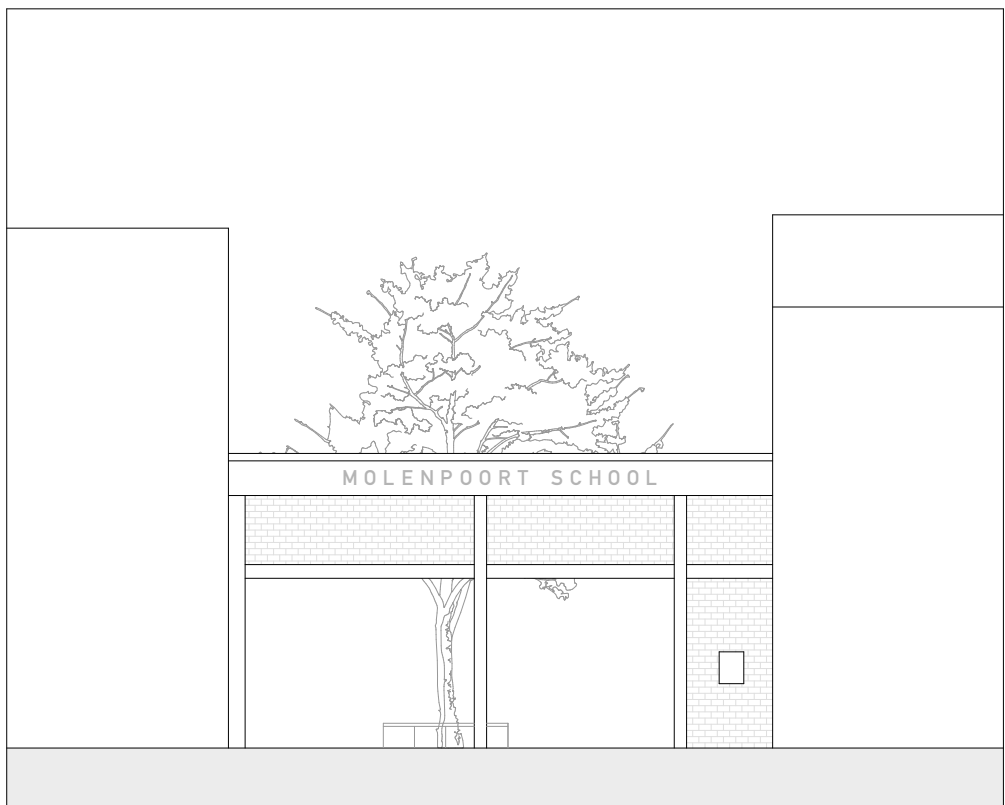




CONNECTING THROUGH RITUALS

How architecture can support social rituals - with a special focus on schools and exemplified
by the proposal to revitalize the Molenpoort Passage in Nijmegen



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Bricolage, Delft University of Technology, 2021

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PREFACE

The Molenpoort Passage has implanted itself like a “beast”¹ in the middle of the old town of Nijmegen. A manifesto of contemporary architecture from the ‘70s, comprising a faceless building complex, merely dedicated to shopping and consumption in an atmosphere of constant overstimulation.

In contrast, when looking back into the history of the place around 350 years ago, a church², which still exists today in a modified form³, but also a guesthouse and farmhouses were located on the site. To take the perspective of these ancient buildings and let them speak, we⁴ made the film „*What time is this place?*“⁵.

What fascinated me most about the look back into history was that the Molenpoort originally has been a place of orderly togetherness, characterised by numerous rituals and prescribed procedures, and then was transformed into something completely opposite, a place of sheer consumption, without social togetherness and no encouragement for human interaction.⁶ Realizing how detrimental this development has been, I came up with the vision of revitalizing the place with a senseful purpose and a human order again, which in my view can convincingly be realised by establishing a centre for spiritual and mental education. To achieve this, I propose – on urban scale – to set up three areas on the site – for the church, for a school and for a place for adult education. Those areas shall basically be separated from each other, but at the same time remain connected: firstly by making joint use of an assembly hall and a canteen, to be set up in the glass covered pavillon in the center of the site, a fragment to remain from the existing Molenpoort Passage, and secondly by ways of communication between each other, through connecting openings in the separating walls and through the joint usage of facilities in

1 The term “beast” was introduced by the P1-group investigating the Shopping Mall.

2 At that point in time the Regulierenkerk.

3 Today the Sint-Petrus Canisius Kerk.

4 Our P1 group consisted of Alma Bouwens, Alex Comanceanu, Alejandra Ferrera, Andrew Kelso, Elisabeth Ihrig, Julie Moraca, Laura Piccinin and Roséane Singotani

5 The film can be seen at <https://vimeo.com/user/83288805/folder/2832981>

6 The official website of Nijmeigens Tourist Information describes it as follows: “*Molenpoort Passage is shopping in more than 50 shops in Beauty, Kids, Fashion, Lifestyle and Food. From your daily shopping to the best in fashion and design. And anything in between! But there is more: you can park your car conveniently in one of the 280 parking spots on the roof of the shopping mall. From there you can walk straight into the shops! Fun events are organised on a regular basis so shopping really becomes fun shopping – for all the family. The public toilets have been voted the best and cleanest in the Netherlands in 2014. If you’re looking for a comfortable and relaxed shopping experience you can even bring your children to Speelwinkel Nannies, because that’s what you’ll find at the Molenpoort too! The liberal shop hours at the Molenpoort Passage (on workdays from 8.30am) give early birds the opportunity to do their shopping or have breakfast here. Ideal for travellers!*”. See <https://en.visitnijmegen.com/locations/3489659260/molenpoort-nijmegen>.

each of the other areas.

As my specific project for building and design, out of these three I have chosen the school area, for which I have planned a basic school with an attached boarding house. The school shall educate children from class one to eight, and the boarding house shall - in the tradition of the guest house formerly on the site - offer in particular pupils with a difficult family-background the opportunity to be accommodated on the site.⁷ Boarders and day pupils shall form a school community, with the aim to learn in a safe framework and to practise a living together in an orderly environment.

In a place like this, dedicated to the upbringing, the education and the socialization of children, I see a great benefit, even importance, of performing rituals. That is why I deal with this topic in my research, trying to shed some light on the question how architecture - both through spatial planning and through the design of the individual building - can support the living of rituals and encourage the inhabitants to perform those.

In the implementation, however, it appeared to be of value not to completely erase the building of the Molenpoort shopping centre, which has shaped the place over the last decades, but to include it in the redesign by using certain grids and parts of the building - not only in order to save resources, but also to honour this part of the history of the place. This is an important element of picking up the idea and the concept of Bricolage and will become visible in more detail below in the design part of this booklet. The theme of Bricolage, in its metaphorical sense, also encouraged me to reflect on the atmosphere and the rituals on the site some 350 years ago, aiming to build on those in my proposal to revitalize the site - both on urban and spatial scale as well as on scale of the school-buildings.

7 Currently, there is only one basic school in the surrounding old part of Nijmegen, with no facilities to accommodate pupils as boarders. However, until 1981, nearby the famous Canisius College, a catholic University under the supervision of Jesuit priests, was accommodating students on site. The impressive College building at the Berg en Dalseweg still exists. See Fig. 6

A. RESEARCH

I. INTRODUCTION

The success of performing and experiencing rituals in a positive sense is highly dependent on our built environment. Architecture, as often wrongly assumed, is not, and by no means should be, only functional. The relation between social interaction and architecture is a highly relevant debate in the time of the modern age.

1. Problem statement and basic question

We are living in a world of uncertainty, today, with the pandemic, even more so than ever. Human beings rely on rituals and routines, in order to give structure to their day, week, year, even life. Those are close-knit with the social functioning of a community. Only those who can fall back on familiar structures, can live happily and satisfied and can feel a sense of belonging. In particular today, in the modern age, rituals should not be abolished⁸, but, to the contrary, be maintained and cultivated - provided that they are not used as a sheer instrument of discipline and subordination.⁹

The success of performing and experiencing rituals in a positive sense is highly dependent on our built environment. Architecture, as often wrongly assumed, is not, and by no means should be, only functional. Traditionally, human architecture is shaped through meaningful, spiritual, social and cultural aspects. And vice versa: architecture does have significant influence on our social behaviours.¹⁰ The relation between social interaction and architecture is a highly relevant debate in the time of the modern age.

The relevance of the built environment for the interaction between human beings is, in particular, visible on sites like the Molenpoort Passage, situated in the center of Nijmegen. There, old structures were buried under a massive shopping centre. Shopping and consumption have taken over public spaces. Continuous overstimulation has replaced a peaceful and shielded enclosure in which, in former times, routines and rituals were conducted in an environment of humanity. Today, the facade of the Molenpoort passage is crumbling and more and more shops become vacant, which gives evidence of the fact that the current concept does no longer meet the needs of the people.

The dominance of consumption and the issue of ongoing overstimulation is part of our everyday's life. Furthermore, our world today has become very rational and scientific. In addition, globalization is erasing and replacing cultural heritage and traditional prac-

⁸ Pickel, G. (2018). *Gesellschaftliche Differenzierung: Ritual; sozialer Wandel*. https://www.soziologie.phil.fau.de/files/2018/01/ritual_0.pdf

⁹ This issue lies in the centre of a debate among expert writers on the value of rituals in schools, see Sec. III. 2. below.

¹⁰ Jones, P. B. (2016). *Architecture and Ritual: How buildings shape society*. Bloomsbury Publishing Plc., p. 2ff.

tices. What industrialization was for mankind at the end of the 18th century, today is for us the digital revolution and with that a vigorous overload of information and permanent distraction.

As *Peter Blundell Jones* rightly points out, consciousness of place and the importance of spatial order to experience a sense of direction is in particular endangered by the fast changing technology: *“A recent extension is satellite navigation, which situates us in abstract space with more precision than ever, but leaves us in terms of bodily space completely lost.”*¹¹

One may add that the constant availability of the internet further boosts this development. In particular, the young generation, children and teenagers, today are absorbed by the internet, constantly being connected by smartphones and the like, living more or less in a virtual world and with that losing the feel of belonging, safety and being at home.

All of this raises the question how to respond to these challenges of our time and in particular: which contribution can architecture provide to that end. More specifically, with regard to the urban site in question: what can be done to breath social life back into an area like the Molenpoort Passage, and with regard to the project of a school and boarding house, which measures can be found and used in the built environment to counteract these trends?

2. Research Focus

Against this background, my research aimed to investigate the following: Based on two hypotheses, (i) that human beings are strongly dependent on rituals and routines on the one hand, and (ii) that we are increasingly in need of a built environment that radiates stability and community on the other hand, the question arises about the connection and interaction between architecture and the performance of rituals. How can we develop an architecture, which encourages daily as well as ceremonial rituals which become an integral part in humans' regular habits, in order to strengthen a sense of belonging and togetherness? The aim has been to investigate this topic not only on the scale of the building, but also on an urban scale.

11 Jones, P. B. (2016) p. 344.

3. Methodology¹²

There is a huge amount of literature and scientific papers on the topic of rituals, and the specific question about the role and the value of rituals in school is broadly discussed. Also the theme of Architecture and rituals is well covered. Digging into these sources has been one important part of my research.

Taking input and evidence from interviews which I conducted with pupils, parents and teachers has been of additional value. Based on a questionnaire, I gathered numerous responses and feedback on how they experienced rituals in school.

Thirdly, studies of reference landmark buildings, inter alia such as Aldo van Eyck's municipal orphanage in Amsterdam¹³ and Hans Scharoun's Gymnasium in the city of Lünen¹⁴, contributed meaningful knowledge.

Finally, a specific source of information for me was "*The flying Classroom*", a novel by Erich Kästner, which opened great insights into the life of all members in a boarding school and introduced, in a very vivid portrayal, important settings for my Design project, such as the classrooms, the dining hall, the dormitories and secret hiding spots.

12 During the P1 our joint research was concerned with historical research as well as empirical research. In a first step we researched in a classical sense, by collecting relevant information through literature and archival work, mapping the evolution of the city and identifying relevant case studies. In a second step and in order to bridge these two different fields of research we made the buildings themselves the centre of the work, weaving a narrative around them. We processed the findings in written stories, a script and eventually a movie, which was told from the perspective of the three characters. By putting ourselves in the situation of the buildings, projecting emotions, relationships and conversations on to them (anthropomorphizing) we could unravel meanings and relate to them. During the second phase the development of the urban planning, we approached the plot through the use of sections. Again the method made the building the protagonist and the section was helpful in the means of identifying relations. The sections were accompanied by observations on site and around the city. I processed the observations in form of short stories and drawings, which depicted the observed situations in sequences. What all these methodologies try to achieve, is to identify relationships between parts and processing the material through narratives. It is about observing and interpreting.

13 Built 1955-1960, in depth analyzed by Zürn, T.(2016), *Bau Körper Bewegung, Prozessuale Raumgestaltung in der Moderne*, Deutscher Kunstverlag, Berlin, p. 91ff.

14 Built 1956 -1962, in depth analyzed by Hoh-Slodczyk, C., Nuse, N., Kühne, G., Tönnemann, A. (1992). Hans Scharoun – Architekt in Deutschland 1893-1972. C.H.Beck München, p. 78 ff.

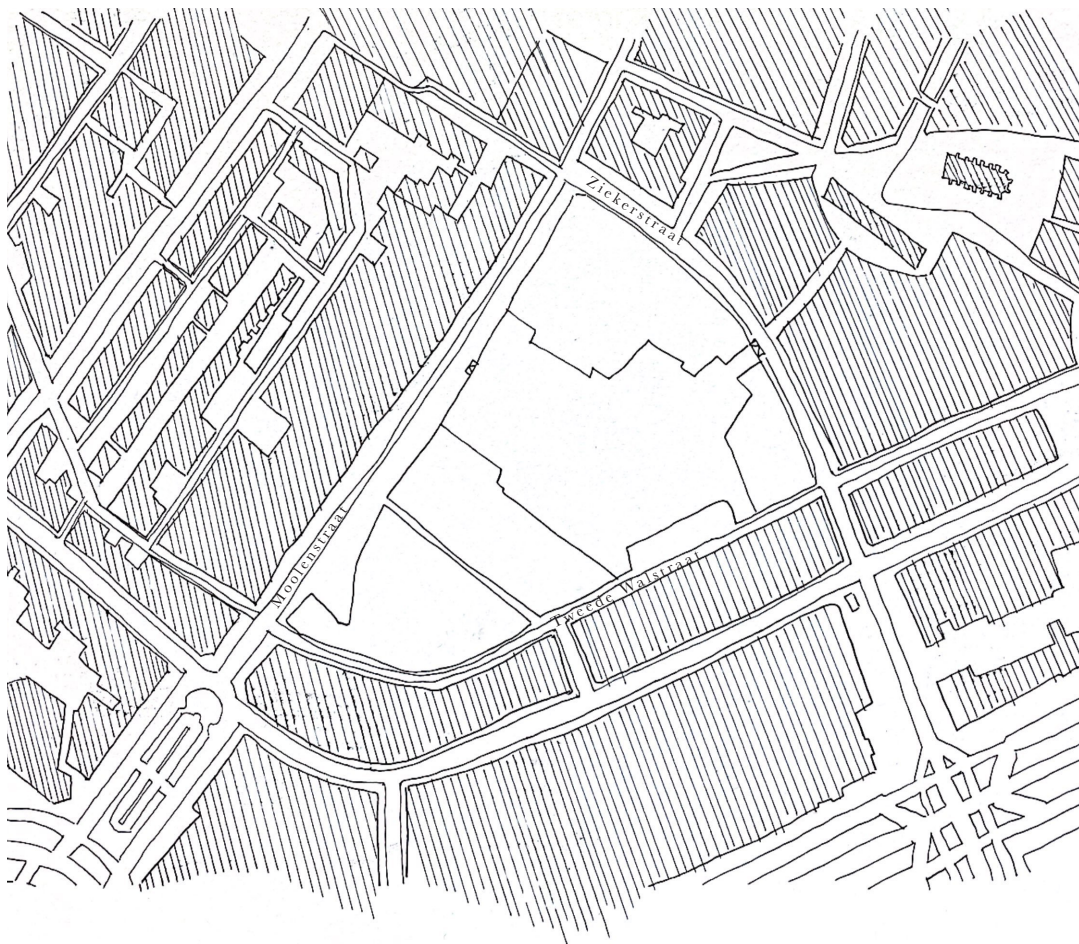


Fig. 1 The site. Own drawing.

II. FIELD

“Those days were the good days, when I relied on the rhythms I could feel in and around me; inhales and exhales, sleeping and waking, the shift of sun and moon and the course of the season’s colours.”, the Farmhouse says.¹⁵

1. Situation found - today and in former times

In the south of the city of Nijmegen lays the triangular plot, which is the subject of this years graduation studio “Bricolage”. The site is enclosed by three streets: Firstly the Molenstraat, which is a wide pedestrian street and main entrance to the city. It is lined by shops, restaurants and bars. Secondly the Ziekerstraat, running orthogonal from the Molenstraat and lined by smaller buildings and shops. And lastly the Tweede Walstraat, which runs along the back of the plot with urban housing on the site opposite the plot. The name of this street refers to the former city wall, that ran in place of this street. This street is clearly perceived as a backside. It is frequented by cars entering the city and it is also a place where many drug users linger. Generally the plot can be described as a motley accumulation of various buildings, from different times, of different styles, with different forms and sizes.

When we go back in time to the year of 1668 and look at the painting in bird’s-eye view from Hendrik Feltman (see Fig. 2) , the historic site of the Molenpoort Passage is clearly recognizable. The distinctive triangular shape, the narrow Vlaamsegras that cuts off the tip of the site and even the small bend in the upper part of the Molenstraat, which forms a small square, are all traits still visible today.

The plot was located in a rather peculiar location. It bordered on one side directly on the city wall, and was framed by two citygates, the Molenpoort and the Ziekerpoort. The most prominent building at that point in time was the Regulierenkerk and the attached monastery, which were surrounded by small farm buildings and a lot of open land. If we go back even further in the past, the sites origin evolved from a small community around the Christian building, outside of the city walls of Nijmegen. The look back at the plot revealed a number of rituals and routines as characteristics of the plot.

15 Line from the script of the movie „*What time is this place?*“

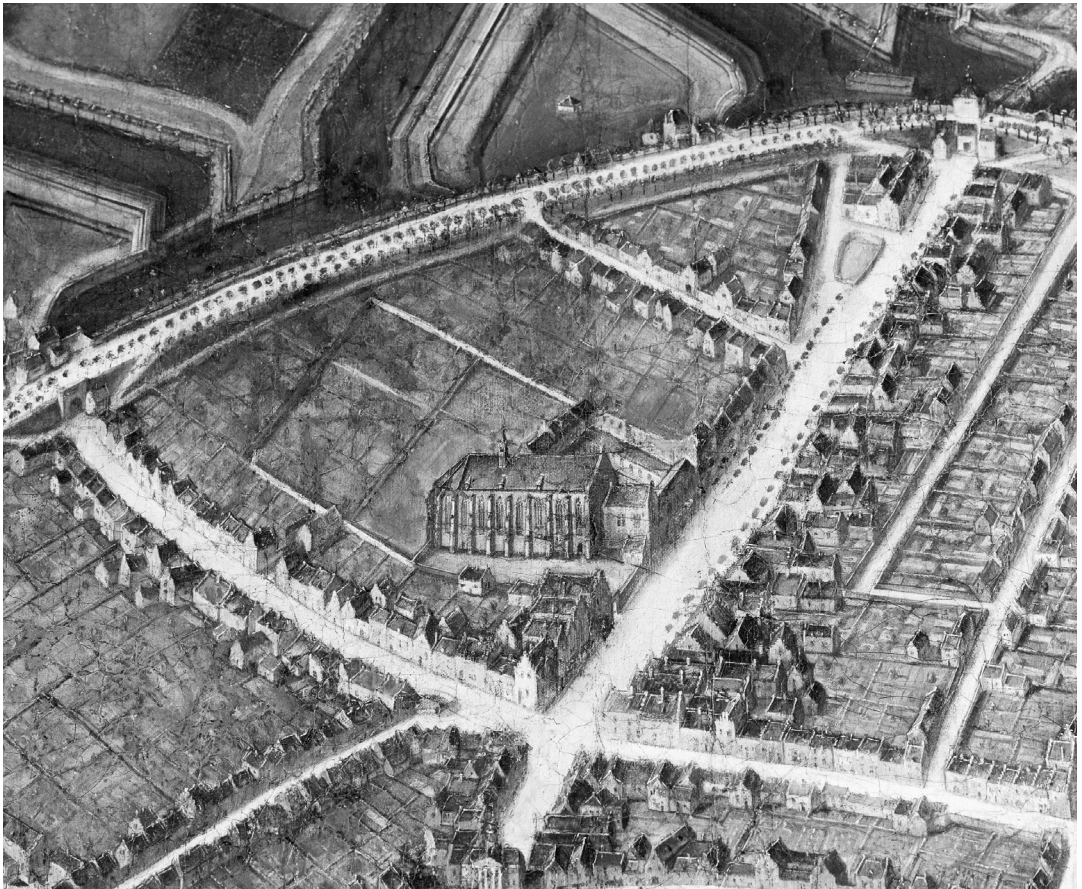


Fig. 2 The site in 1668, by Hendrik Feltman. taken from <https://beeldbank.cultureelerfgoed.nl>, document number: 261.951

2. Understandings of time - what time is this place?

As a first step of the research on the urban scale, we, as a group in P1, tried to get to the bottom of the history of the place. The closer look back at the Molenpoort revealed a number of rituals and routines, performed centuries ago on the site, as characteristics of the plot. This sense of community we felt to discover during that journey through the past caught my specific interest.

The investigation of the history of the plot did not only unravel the formerly strong sense of community on the plot, but also a recurring theme of understanding time. We tried to express the results of our investigation by presenting the story of this small community in the movie “*What time is this place?*”, based on a fictional script. In the movie the narration was told from the perspective of three representative characters: the church, the guest house (the former monastery) and one of the farm buildings. Each of those had different understandings of time.

The farmhouse followed a cyclical time, by relying on the seasons and nature. The farmhouse said: “*Those days were the good days, when I relied on the rhythms I could feel in and around me; inhales and exhales, sleeping and waking, the shift of sun and moon and the course of the season's colours.*”¹⁶

The church on the other hand embraced fragmentary time, by collecting and integrating different building parts from different construction periods. Something, which is still visible today. Furthermore, the church with its church tower was the main contributor in the distribution of standardized time. The church said: “*Lift your head up, look up to me and I will tell you what time it is.*”¹⁷

Lastly the guesthouse, a place of hospitality and charity, ordered the life of its inhabitants by sets of rituals and rules, structuring the day and the year in a strict rhythmic timetable. Everything was prescribed, from the times of the meals, the separation of women and men, the closing of the building at night. Even the yearly periods, during which the stoves were allowed to burn, were fixed.¹⁸ The guest house said: “*My residents were controlled, forced to wear this particular dress. Through time the residents imitated each other. My residents would eat at 6 o'clock during the winter.*”¹⁹

Not only was it interesting to understand that each building had a strong individual character, but also the dependence among each other was striking - how wonderful, we thought, that buildings, just as human beings, can have relationships between each other. And in addition: it appeared that each of the three buildings, by its specific individual purpose, followed and conducted rituals. During those days, such ritualistic patterns were not only to be found in buildings and institutions, but also on the scale of the city. Each night at 9:00 o'clock, the city closed its gates, previously signalled by the ringing of the church bells.

16 Line from the script of the movie „*What time is this place?*“

17 Line from the script of the movie „*What time is this place?*“

18 Keijser, J. (1992). *Het Oud Burgeren Gasthuis te Nijmegen, 1592-1992*. Decapo:Nijmegen. p. 69-70.

19 Line from the script of the movie „*What time is this place?*“

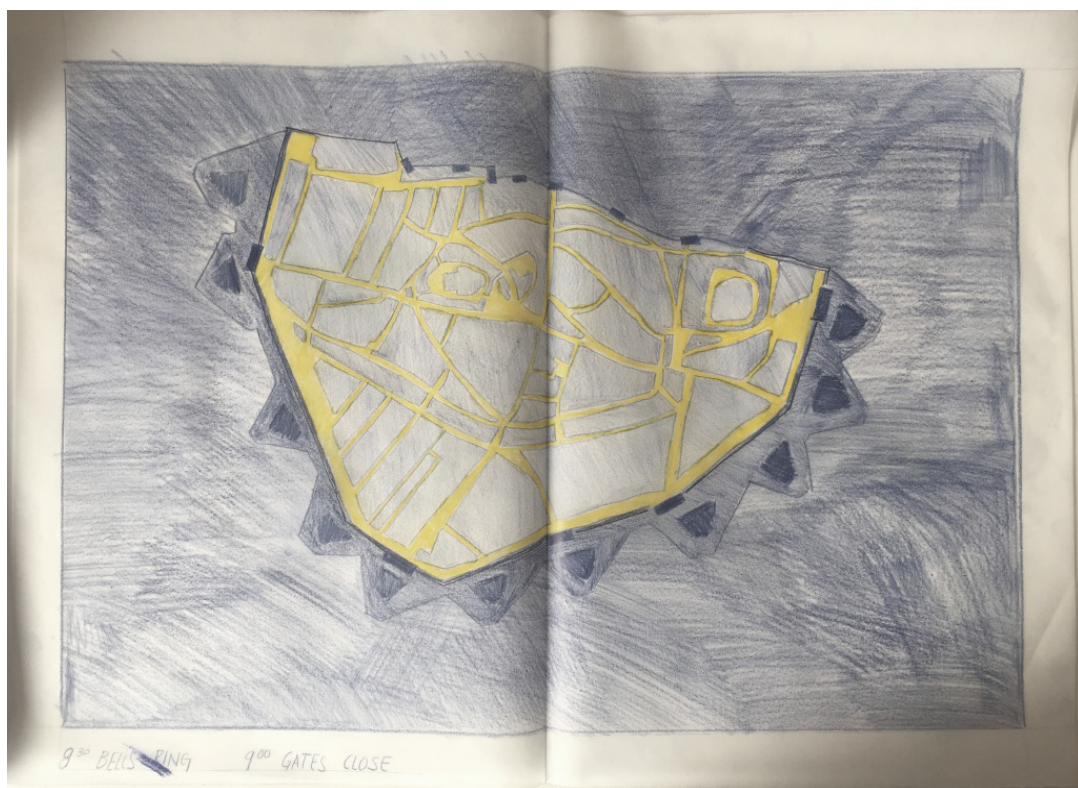
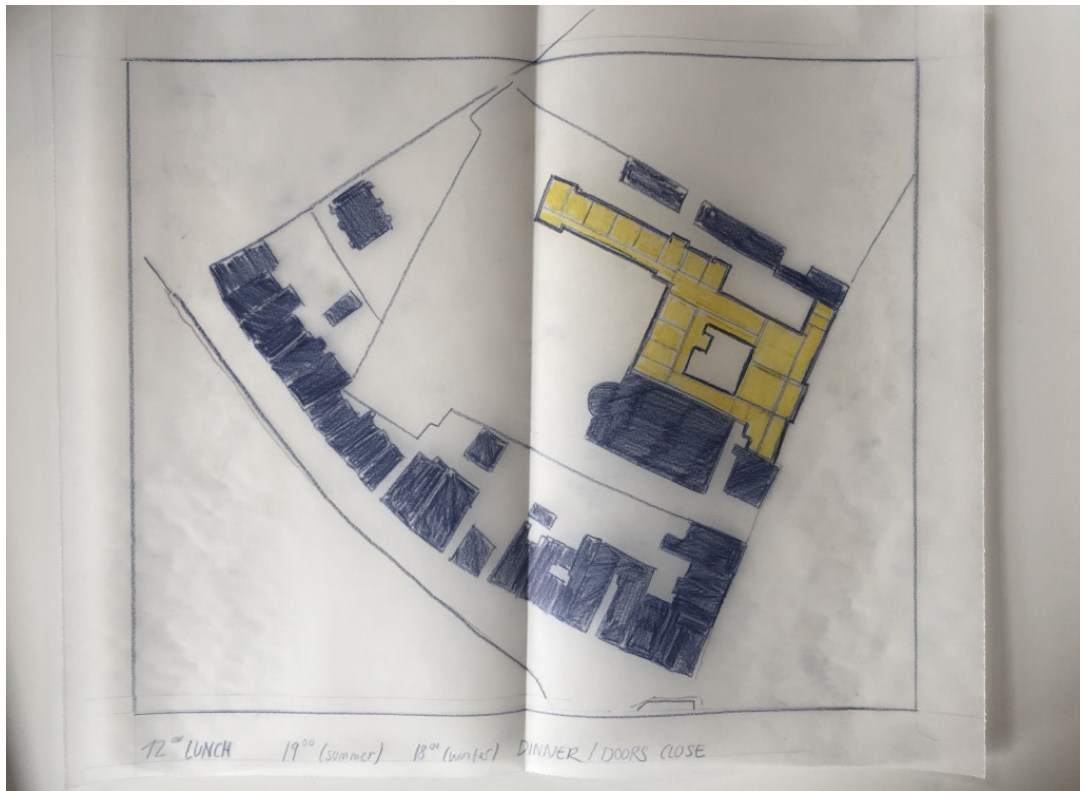


Fig. 3/4 Two maps at night, depicting the ritual of closing the city's gates. For the night, life is encapsulated within the boundary of the city and the respective building. Drawing, Elisabeth Ihrig, 25.09.2020



3. Losses - over time until today

However, as it lays in the nature of time, things have changed. Two characters vanished from the site, and with them their particular characteristics and rituals: The farmer and his close relation to nature as well as the guesthouse and its purpose of offering hospitality and charity. The church, even though in a very altered appearance, is still there today. But not many people go to church anymore. Furthermore, the sacral building is now encircled by the massive expansion of the Molenpoort Passage, which, in contrast to the before mentioned understandings of times, tries to get rid of time completely, aiming to seduce people to forget about their own schedule and to get lost in the world of shopping.

As Professor Paul Vermeulen, after having seen our film, rightfully concluded: “*This play is rather a tragedy than a comedy*”.²⁰ The characters have been driven apart, the plot has lost its intimate identity, its sense for community and its complexity - and yet no reconciliation has been brought about. The plot has grown into a homogeneous mass. Mass in a literal sense, because almost all space is built on and the buildings have no room, standing wall by wall. The tiny inner courtyard, next to the church, is the only remaining open space. Additionally, the site has become a transit space. People move through or pass by, but almost no one is staying.²¹

Alas, what would the farmhouse say, when it would see the sterility in this place, the lack of sensing and experiencing nature in the city? And alas, what would the guest house say, seeing all people so focused on their own time, all synchronization is lost?

20 Prof.ir. P.E.L.J.C. Vermeulen (29.11.2020). P1 Echoes. Wrap-up rap.

21 See the official website of the mall (Fn. 6 above): “*You can park your car conveniently on the roof of the shopping mall. From there you can walk straight into the shops.... Ideal for travellers!*”



Fig. 5 The site today. Taken from: <https://www.google.de/maps>. Screenshot. (19/05/21)

III. RITUALS

“Rituals are used as markers in time. They serve as separating devices which suggest a pre-ritual and post-ritual state which differ from each other.”²² That is, in fact, quite true for schoolchildren as well, passing through school life day by day – a stepladder from the entry to the exit, from the enrolment ceremony to the graduation party.

1. Rituals in general

Before the specific question of relevance and value of rituals in schools will be discussed below, it should first be briefly clarified in which understanding I make use of the term, as it is by no means uniform in the discussion.

In search of a definition

It is difficult, if not impossible, to find a single holistic definition for the term ritual. It all depends on the observer, because rituals can be interpreted in various ways. Many researchers, anthropologists and theorists have racked their brains on this topic. Well-known names include *Clifford Geertz*, *Victor Turner*, *Mary Douglas* and *Erving Goffman*. Nevertheless, the ambiguity and controversy surrounding the term persists.

In a classical sense, rituals are mostly connected to religious events, such as church services, baptisms and confirmations. A definition given by *Merriam-Webster* is: *“The established form for a ceremony. Specifically: the order of words prescribed for a religious ceremony.”*²³ However, less narrow definitions can be found, for example in the *Random House Dictionary*: *“a prescribed code of behaviour regulating social conduct(...)”*²⁴ and in *Meyers Enzyklopädisches Lexikon* *„Procedure according an established order ..., and in Sociology: term for a particularly expressive and standardised individual or collective form of behaviour. Rituals are determined by tradition and usually have no conscious purpose.”*²⁵

The latter appears to be more appropriate, because obviously rituals appear not only in religious contexts, but in daily life.

22 Quote taken from Joubert, T.A. (2012). *Ritual Space: an Architecture of Connection and Orientation* (Master Dissertation UCT, Cape Town. p. 9.

23 Ritual, (13. Dec. 2020) in: Merriam Webster <https://merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ritual>

24 The Random House Dictionary of the English Language. New York: Random House (1967), p. 1237.

25 MEYERS Enzyklopädisches Lexikon. Bibliographisches Institut AG. Mannheim (1977), p. 206.

However, much more specific are definitions assembling the various elements characterizing rituals, such as, for example, the one given by *Michael Göhlich*, who defines Rituals as “recurring interactive patterns of action that constitute and process the boundaries, orders and norms of a community by means of physical-sensual expression, stylised gestures and scenic arrangements. For me, the necessary characteristics of rituals are the form of repetition, the aspect of the sacred, their symbolism and performativity as well as the generation and processing of collective identity and difference.”²⁶

Characteristics of Rituals

According to *Bell*²⁷, the main attributes characterizing rituals can be summarized by the terms formalism, traditionalism, disciplined invariance, rule-governance, sacral symbolism and performance. Following on from this, one can identify the following characteristics to describe rituals:

Rituals are a set sequence of activities, expressed in words, gestures, actions and the like. This implies some formalism, somehow a kind of “careful choreography”.²⁸

Rituals are performed by one or, more frequently, several specific participants, often by a whole community. However, even if performed by only one person, there is usually a participating audience. Insofar, rituals always carry a performative element, and thus fulfil the function of forming communities.²⁹

This effect is further reinforced by the fact, that Rituals are a form of communication and always express something, be it a social order, a specific, sometimes hierarchical position, an emotion, a behaviour or a point in time that marks a change.

Rituals are repetitive and are performed at a specific point in time. Insofar, rituals support the experience of cyclical rhythm and continuity, and in doing so, the feeling of safety and security.

Quite often, and of importance for the specific topic discussed herein, rituals are held in a particular place. In other words, rituals, as a rule, are linked to the space in which the performance takes place, which in fact is not rarely the specific built environment.

And finally, rituals create identity, because every community, institution, region, religion and culture has its own, specific rituals.

All in all, the performance of rituals can provide a strong base for reliability, togetherness and shared homeliness.

26 Göhlich, M. (2004): *Rituale und Schule*, . In : Wulf, C./Zierfas, J. (Hrsg.): *Innovation, und Ritual, Jugend , Geschlecht und Schule*, (2. Beiheft der Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft 2004) . Wiesbaden, p. 17-28. Same understanding by Schulz-Gade, G., Schulz-Gade, H. (2012) *Rituale in der Ganztageschule - Wege zur Orientierung und Gemeinschaftsidentifikation*. In Appel, S., Rother, U. (2012) *Schulatmosphäre - Lernlandschaft - Lebenswelt*, Wochenschauverlag, Schwalbach, p. 21, who point out the elements of repetition, the collective dimension, that of (Rituals to be performed in action and therefore always connected with sensory experiences), the fixed sequence, and the element of stylisation.

27 Bell, Catherine(1997), *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*. New York: Oxford Press, pp. 138ss.

28 See Bell, Catherine (1997), pp. 150.

29 Schulz-Gade (2012), p. 23.

Types of Rituals

Depending on place, time and expression, rituals can be divided into different types, but mainly into two:

Everyday rituals often serve to divide the day or week into perceptible sections or to regulate social interactions. They are not too strict in the course of action and are often performed unconsciously. Examples are the joint performance of specific meals, be it the coffee break, the afternoon tea or the more festive dinner on Sunday, be it an appropriate way of greeting, such as shaking hands, or be it the disciplined, British styled queuing when waiting at the bus stop.

Extra-ordinary rituals, in contrast, mark special occasions. Such occasions can have many different backgrounds, from the wedding to the funeral, and form highlights or also marking points within longer periods of time, such as the year or even the whole life. These are often rites of passage, e.g. the representation of a social role change like, for example, the day of the first entry of school or the graduation ceremony to mark the successful finish of an academic education.

Rituals and conventions, habits or even routines

The boundary between convention and rituals is vague. With regard to a specific situation, it is not easy to draw clear boundaries. A quote of *Peter Blundell Jones*³⁰ describes this uncertainty well: *“The point here is that with ritual, as with architecture, no hard line can be drawn between the utilitarian and the ceremonial, between the practical and the symbolic, because they exist along a continuous scale in contrast with one another.”*

A plausible distinction in my view is that actions of convention or habits always serve a specific purpose (instrumental action), for example: the fixed actions of preparing a meal following a recipe. Rituals, on the other hand, aim to visualise something or to express a meaning (expressive action). However, a habit or a convention can become a ritual,³¹ once the repeated action is experienced as a ceremony and filled with a specific meaning. And vice versa can a ritual become a habit, e.g. when the actual purpose is forgotten but the action is still carried out.

Even though different in frequency, both rituals and routines have in common that they are regular performed procedures, which help to structure communal life, to reinforce activities and behaviours at certain times and in certain surroundings. They give structure and therefore support an atmosphere of togetherness, reliability, trust and comfort.

To sum it up, both rituals as well as jointly shared habits and routines as mentioned above, are of utmost importance for human interaction. Bearing that in mind, a broad understanding and meaning of rituals appears to be recommendable, extending the theme to the performance of conventions as well.

30 Jones, P. B. (2016) p.9.

31 Eliade, M. (1957), *The Sacred and the Profane, The nature of religion*; Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York: “...even the most habitual act can become a ritual, transforming mundane activity into a ceremony of symbolic or even spiritual significance.”

2. Rituals in school

Schools are “total institutions”, and with that to a large extent ritually organised

Schools are, and always have been, “to a large extent ritually organised institutions”.³² This is not a surprise, because rituals are of particular importance in what *Erving Goffman* calls “total institutions”. Those are, according to Goffman, “places of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life.”³³ Examples given by Goffman comprise homes for the blind or aged, mental hospitals, prisons, army barracks, monasteries and convents, and also Boarding Schools.³⁴

Schools in general are, in my view, also total institutions in that sense. In fact they match the four main characteristics, Goffman assigns to total institutions: Batch living³⁵, binary management³⁶, the specific inmate’s role and an institutional perspective. Formal sets of consecutive actions, which can develop to rituals, are characteristic for the specific inmate’s role in particular. That is, for example, true for the admission procedures, which may be done in a highly ritualised manner.³⁷

Therefore, rituals have always played a major role in school. This is partly due to the fact that the school functions like a small society in which the roles, behaviour and coexistence must be well ordered.

A broad variety of rituals can be encountered in school. Those range from enrolment and graduation ceremonies, summer festivals and Christmas celebrations³⁸ to daily or weekly exercises like the Monday morning circle, rituals of silence and concentration, return rituals for class work etc.³⁹ Besides such, in a way institutional rituals, which are mainly initiated by teachers, one can observe ritual practices developed by the pupils themselves. For example, the doorway to the classroom is marked in a ritualized action of exclusion of pupils from outside the class. It is presented as a boundary line not to be crossed. In such a „performance“ of the doorway as a boundary, the members of the class experience of togetherness, and a class community is built up and strengthened.⁴⁰

32 Wulf, C. (2008). *Rituale im Grundschulalter: Performativität, Mimesis und Interkulturalität*, in: Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft, 11. Jg, Heft 1, p. 67.

33 Goffman, E. (1961), *Asylum*, New York: Doubleday/Anchor, p. xxiii.

34 See Jones, K. and Fowles, (1984) Goffman: the radical, in *Ideas on Institutions*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, p12

35 Batch living describes a situation where “each phase of the member’s daily activity is carried on in the immediate company of a large batch of others, all of whom are treated alike, and required to do the same thing together.” [Jones and Fowles p. 13]

36 With binary management Goffman means that “two different social and cultural worlds [i.e. managers and inmates] develop, jogging alongside each other with points of official contact, but little mutual penetration...”, and “staff [i.e. Teachers...] tend to see all patients or prisoners or pupils as being alike...”.

37 Jones and Fowles, p.14.

38 See Schulz-Gade (2012), p.22, who categorize those as “repetitive macro-rituals”.

39 So called “Micro-Rituals”, see Schulz-Gade (2012) p.22.

40 Example given and discussed by Schulz-Gade (2012) p.24.

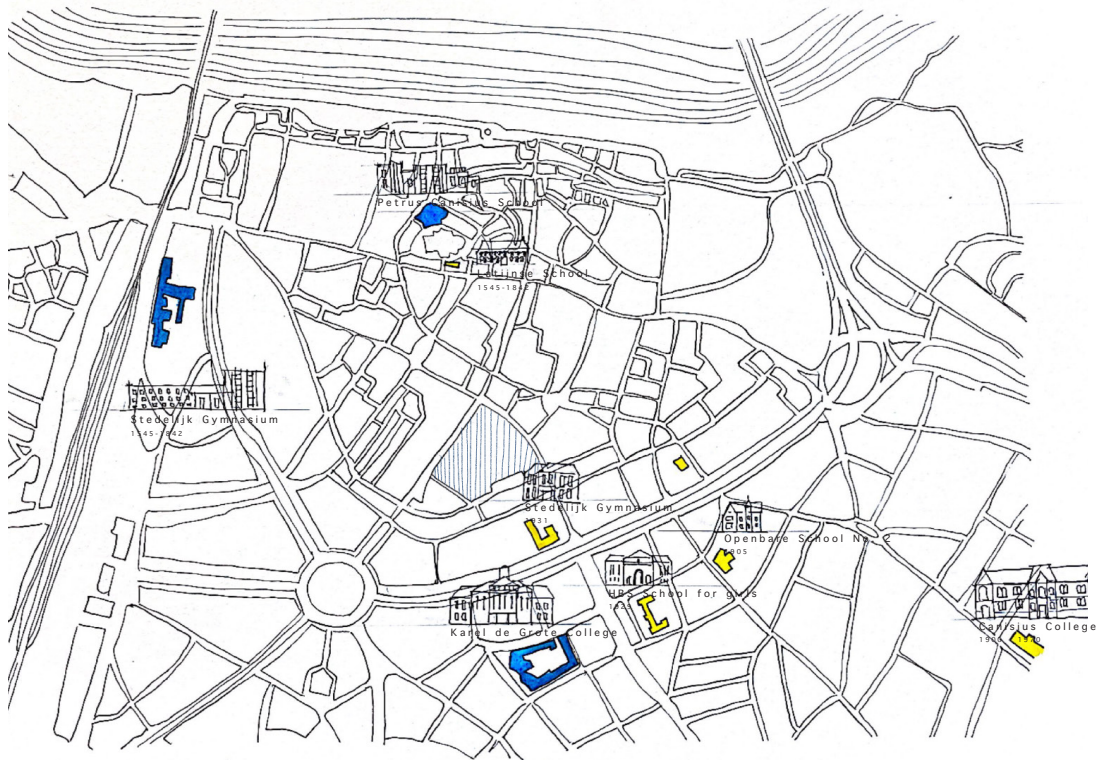


Fig. 6 Schools in Nijmegen. Blue = existing schools, yellow = former schools. Own drawing.

Critical discussion of the role of rituals in schools in Pedagogy

During the '60s and 1970s rituals in schools were broadly rejected as being “*backward and outdated*”.⁴¹ The prevailing view then was that rituals were misused as means of discipline to restrict pupils in their spontaneity, creativity and autonomous actions. Rituals were perceived as instruments of law and order.

By the end of the '80s, however, it became more and more clear that the „*new freedom*“, which was the result of the extensive abolition of rituals in schools, was perceived by many as an oppressive emptiness that offered neither structure nor support. An „*enslavement by rituals*“ was followed by an „*enslavement by formlessness*“, as Steffensky drastically put it.⁴²

With the observation that rituals can provide the experience of safety, in particular in times of confusion and disorder, the value of rituals in schools experienced a renaissance in the pedagogical discussion⁴³ and the shaping power of the ritual for the purpose of cultivating coexistence was increasingly recognized,⁴⁴ especially in everyday's school life. It was felt that „good“ rituals are able to give a reliable orientation to coexistence, to divide the school days and to fill them with tension, and to convey mental support to the individual.⁴⁵

Own position and conclusion

Even though rituals still are quite often seen as being constricting, even manipulative, the desire to revive rituals is undeniably these days. There are good reasons to assume that rituals in school are even more important today because children are growing up increasingly in families where structures are scarce. There are no joint meals, nor does a structured family life give guidance. This indicates that School can increasingly no longer be limited to knowledge transfer, but must take over educational work that was previously done in the families in order to build up community capacity, willingness to perform and orientation among the children.⁴⁶

Against that background, I believe that rituals in school are of value and have an important function. This is due to a number of positive aspects of rituals, one may acknowledge:

- Rituals provide security, because procedures and orders do not have to be invented anew each time. The continuous recurrence indicates reliability.

41 Schulze-Gade (2012) p.19 and Steffensky, F., *Rituale als Lebensinszenierungen*, p. 101-109, in Wermke, M. (Hg.)(2000) *Rituale und Inszenierungen in Schule und Unterricht*, LIT Verlag, Münster - Hamburg, London., p. 101

42 See Steffensky, F. (2000) p. 102.

43 See Steffensky, F. (2000) p. 101

44 Schefer-Vietor, G. (2000). *Rituale in der Schule. Über Differenzen und symbolische Gemeinsamkeiten*. In: Schömerkemper (Hrsg.) *Differenzen über die politische und pädagogische Bedeutung von Ungleichheiten im Bildungswesen*. Weinheim. p. 154

45 Riegel, E. (1994) *Rituale. Oder: Die Kultur des Zusammenlebens*. In: Pädagogik, 46., p. 6.

46 Seydel, O. *Rituale - Feier - Begegnung Das Beispiel der Schule Burg Hohenfels*, in Wermke, M. (Hg.)(2000) *Rituale und Inszenierungen in Schule und Unterricht*, LIT Verlag, Münster - Hamburg, London, p. 141ff.

- Rituals provide structure and order by highlighting important events or regulating social interaction.
- Rituals promote a sense of belonging through the collective participation and the simultaneous exclusion of others, standing outside.
- Rituals help to clarify social processes, make them perceptible and understandable.

However, it is a delicate line to be drawn between rituals being misused versus their engagement for the better.

Ultimately, I very much believe that in school, the atmosphere as a whole and the way in which a ritual is used, is decisive for how it is perceived and what effect it has on those who participate. In the end, as always, the actors themselves make the difference, the way how they initiate and perform rituals. Those are, in schools, in the first place the teachers and other supervising staff, but also the pupils themselves. An excerpt from what I gathered from an interview I did with a former school director, now in his mid-sixties, may illustrate this:

“When thinking about rituals in school, the start of the lesson in Latin in my own schooldays as a pupil comes back to my memory. When the Latin teacher entered the classroom, everybody stood up and he and we were facing each other in an upright, standing position. And we said “Salve Magister”, and he in return said “Salvete Discipulis”, and then we sat down and the lesson started.... I never perceived this as a disciplinary element, but rather an expression of mutual respect and recognition. It marked the end of the break and the start of the lesson, put us all back from play into some kind of concentration on the following. It was in the late sixties, early seventies then, and he was the only teacher who started his lesson with such an exercise. Interestingly, at the same time, he was the only one who invited us right from the first day to call him by his first name, and to replace the formal “Sie” (Hen) by the very personal “Du” (Jou), quite extraordinary in those days. In addition, he spent a lot of his free time organizing hiking tours and expeditions and the like for us – outside and apart the formal school schedule...”

IV. RITUALS AND ARCHITECTURE

*Rituals “occur in space, in fact, they not rarely require a specific location, and the definition and embellishment of that location is arguably among architecture’s primary tasks. When created for or adapted to ritual processes, buildings reinforce their efficacy, carry memories of them in their organization, and both guide and encourage their repetition.”*⁴⁷

1. Examples - to lay the ground

Architecture, the sequence of buildings and rooms, influences people and can therefore underline and support rituals and has also been used in this sense from time immemorial. For example: the staircase in a baroque palace raised the position of the king in contrast to the visitor, who needed to wait at the bottom of the stairs. The more steps the king would come down to greet the visitor, the more important he was. A similar principle can be found in the architectural element of the enfilade. Or one may think about the Palace of Versailles. In its centre the ten-metre-wide and seventy-five-metre-long „*Galerie des Glaces*“ can be found.

This gallery full of mirrors served mainly as a kind of covered promenade where visitors went to show their presence at court and where they hoped to catch the eye of the king.⁴⁸ One of the reasons for the dimensions of this hall of mirrors was so that the ruler could ignore unwelcome supplicants in passing by or show his affection to others through conversation.⁴⁹

The connection between architecture and social life and with it the performance of rituals, is clearly visible in the two following examples, which shall be discussed in more detail:

The Roman Villa

The Roman private house was not only the family’s retreat, but also the setting for important rituals of social life, which was reflected in its architectural design. The reception of guests and clients was an important ritual in the daily life of an important pater familias. The more clients paid their respects to him every morning and the more

47 Jones, P. B. (2016), p. 10.

48 d’Archimbaud, N. (2001). Versailles. Stiebner Verlag GmbH Grünwald. , p. 93

49 Boekhoff, H. (ed.): Paläste, Schlösser, Residenzen - Zentren europäischer Geschichte. Karl Müller Verlag Erlangen, 1993. p. 95 f).

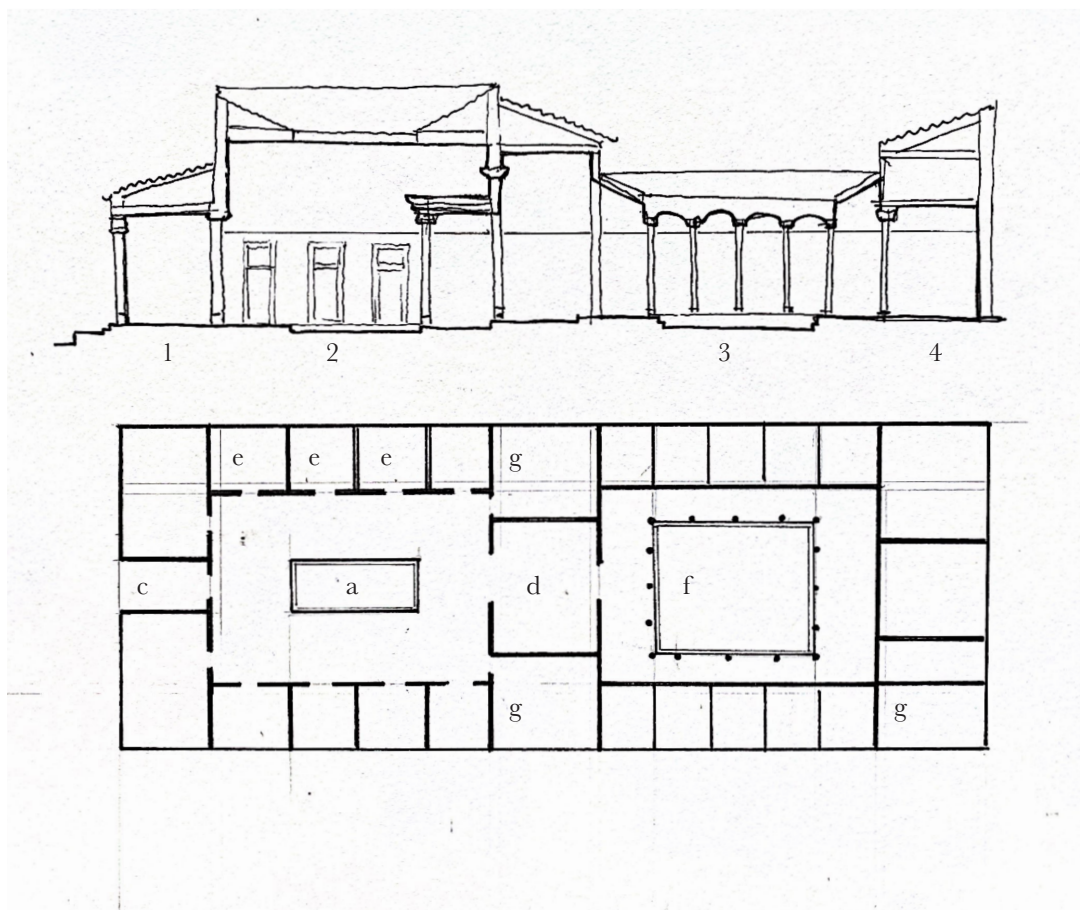


Fig. 7 Example of a roman Villa. 1 Fauces, 2 Atrium, 3 Peristyl, 4 Exedra, a Impulvium (cistern), c Vestibulum (entrance), d Tablinium, e Cubicula, f Piscina, g Triclinia (dining room). Own drawing, partially taken from: http://people.duke.edu/~wj25/UC_Web_Site/pliny/villas/house-conspectus.html (24/05/2021)

guests he lavishly entertained, the more influential and wealthy he appeared to be. Both influence and wealth were essential, because they served to demonstrate and manifest his important position.⁵⁰

Since the architecture of the noble Roman house followed certain clearly defined rules, it gave the viewer and visitor a clear impression of the social role of the master of the house and, vice versa, also the visitor's own position and the behaviour expected from him once he was admitted to the house.

Even the design of the entrance to the noble Roman house had an important function in this sense. Usually there was not only one gate, but a large central arch closed by a double gate and one or two smaller doors next to it. As a rule, only the smaller doors were used, the main entrance was only opened wide at certain times, for example when the master of the house was giving an important reception, or in the morning to indicate that he was now ready to receive the homage of the clients and guests⁵¹. After entering the house, the first room was the vestibulum, which was intended to prepare the visitor for the luxury of the house. It was accordingly generously dimensioned⁵². The vestibulum led into the atrium, the centre of the house. Here the master of the house received his clients every morning, who were admitted in accordance with their hierarchical ranking⁵³. More illustrious guests were received and entertained in the triclinium leading from the atrium.

Particularly noble houses had several dining rooms, which were equipped in different ways. Here, too, the guest's esteem by the master of the house could already be seen from whether he was entertained in a more or less large and luxuriously furnished triclinium⁵⁴. Finally, the private areas of the house were usually at the back of the house. Strangers were not allowed here, which, apart from their location, was also achieved by shielding these rooms with courtyards and corridors in front⁵⁵.

Thus, the arrangement and design of the rooms of the Roman house provided its owner with an architectural framework for living his social role by performing certain rituals.

The Chinese Yamen

Another example of particular evidence of rituals in Architecture is the Chinese Yamen.⁵⁶ Throughout China, the Yamen was the official residence of the provincial magistrate and seat of the government during the 17th century. Important terms that describe the architecture of the Yamen are: hierarchy, centrality, axis and sequence.

50 Ariés, P. und Duby, G. (1985) *Geschichte des privaten Lebens, 1. Band: Vom Römischen Imperium zum Byzantinischen Reich*, S. Fischer, Frankfurt am Main, p. 97

51 Ariés (1985), p. 336

52 Ariés (1985), p. 337

53 Ariés (1985), p. 339

54 Ariés (1985), p. 345

55 Ariés (1985), p. 365

56 An extensive elaboration on the Yamen under the perspective of Rituals is given by Jones, P. B. (2016), p. 67ss. The following is partly based on this valuable source.

To ensure order was one important task of the Chinese magistrate in the 17th century. That ranged from being the judge of the local court, the organizer of the militia, the one collecting taxes to other public works. Every function of the Yamen had its specific locality, following an holistic order and meaning. And also the way one had to move between and within these buildings was set up in linear sequence of spaces, the experience of the visitor heightened by thresholds and gates.

A Yamen had for the most part a very similar and standardized architectural set up: They appeared as a small city within a city, because they had their own wall surrounding the complex as well as a big entrance gate. Buildings which were located within the Yamen typically comprised a granary, an orphanage, a guest house, various offices, a temple, a Confucian school, a police station, the prison and a poor house. In addition, the Magistrate had his private rooms within the Yamen.

These different functions were located along three parallel axes, running vertically from South to North, with the entrance gate in the South. Most emphasis lay on the middle axis, with a raised walkway and a set of gates. *Peiifang* were autonomous gates, which had no other purpose then to enrich the path as an alley of progression. The path was built up as a sequence and each visitor had to pass through alternating spaces of courtyards, gates and buildings.

This was to emphasize a hierarchy and the progression from public in the south towards the most private spaces of the magistrate in the northern end of the Yamen.

The residence of the magistrate, and even more to the extreme, his bed room, were the last spaces of this path and the most private ones. To take this privacy even further, there was no exit and therefor no entrance towards this end of the Yamen.

Along the two outer axes, all other functions were located, but again in a strict order: all positive functions, such as the temple, the guesthouse and the accounting offices, were located along the east axis, while all functions with a negative connotation, such as the prison and the military quarters of stables, were placed on the west axis.

The two key elements one can observe in the set up of a Yamen are hierarchy and privacy. Those are connected with Axis and Centre versus periphery. The central path and the axis, the progression through a series of halls and courts, traversing layer after layer in increasing exclusion and privacy, clearly must have had an enormous influence on the visitor: *“On entering the palace gate he seems to shrink into himself, as though there were not room. If he halts, it must never be in the middle of the gate, nor in going through does he ever tread on the threshold. As he passes the Stance, a look of confusion comes over his face, his legs seem to give way under him and words seem to fail him. While holding up the hem of his skirt, he ascends the Audience Hall, he seems to double up and keeps in his breath, so that you would not think he was breathing at all. On coming out, after descending the first step his expression replaces into one of satisfaction and relief. At the bottom of the steps he quickens his pace, advancing with an air of majestic dignity. On regaining his place he resumes an air of wariness and hesitation.”*⁵⁷

57 Quote taken from Jones, P. B., p. 87 with foot note 62

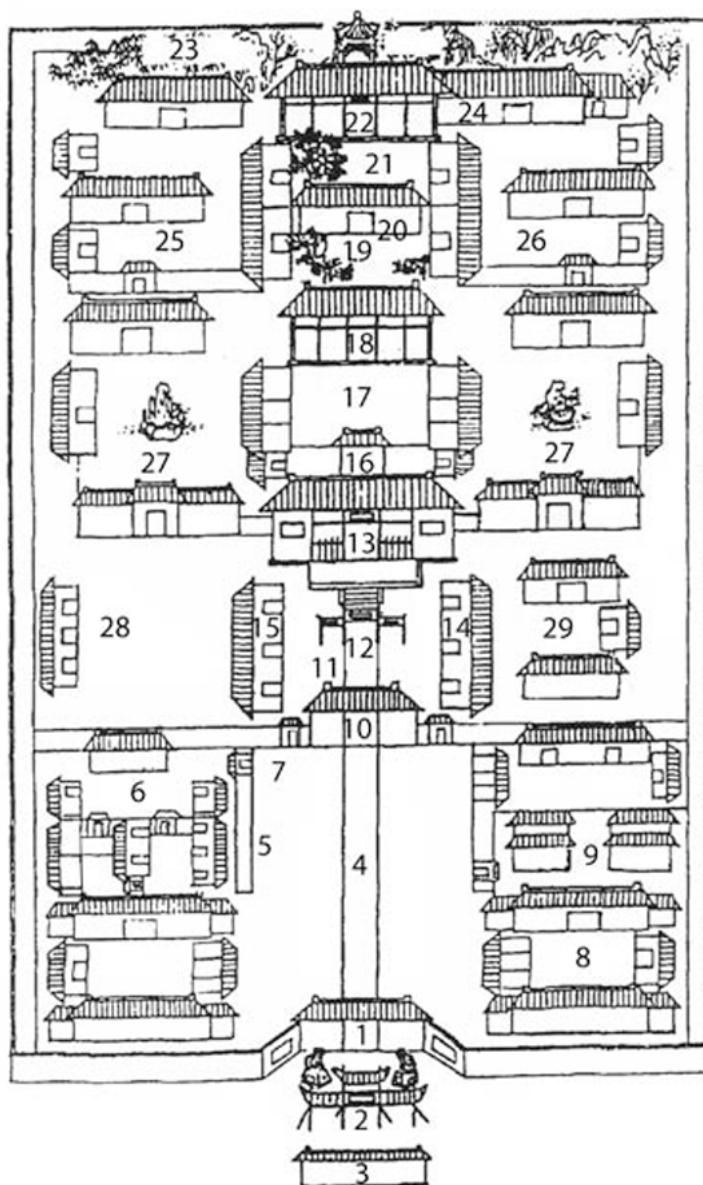


Fig. 8 A plan of a traditional Chinese Yamen from the 17th century. taken from: Jones, P. B. (2016). Architecture and Ritual – How buildings shape society. Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

2. Rituals in school architecture

There is broad agreement that a school building with its design characteristics has an effect on the learners, which is also perceived and processed unconsciously.⁵⁸ Thus, it is clear that rituals that are positively felt for everyday school life, the school year and the entire school time can also be supported by the architecture of the school building or buildings and the design of the school grounds. For the architect *Hans Scharoun*, for example, it was important that a student who over the years became an adult in his school also experienced his own development spatially.⁵⁹ *Hans Scharoun* saw the school as an organism consisting of many small organs that work together. Therefore, the structure of order in his opinion cannot follow any additive principle. The succession of individual spaces, however well technically and functionally solved, is not enough. Rather, it is the school parts of a whole and they work together as organs in the organism and organisms in the whole.

Using images and text sources, conversations and written interviews, as well as my own experiences, I tried to identify key points and describe their ritual-related statements and effects in order to make these results usable for my project. Those are outlined in the five little leprellos.

58 Schrader, N. (2014). *Waldorfpädagogik und Schulbau. Welcher Zusammenhang besteht in Köln-Chorweiler?*. GRIN Publishing. p. 7.

59 Hoh-Slodczyk, C., Nuse, N., Kühne, G., Tönnemann, A. (1992). p. 78 ff

entering and leaving

Text sources:

- 1 Kästner, E. (1933) *Das fliegende Klassenzimmer*. Atrium Verlag (Zürich), p. 57.
2 Jones, P. B. (2016). *Architecture and Ritual – How buildings shape society*. Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. p 71

Image sources:

- Fig. 1 from: Kästner, E. (1933) *Das fliegende Klassenzimmer*. Atrium Verlag (Zürich), p. 57. With own notations
Fig. 2 from: Guttman, E., Kaiser, G., Mazanek, C. (Eds.) (2017). *Shifting patterns – Christopher Alexander und der Eishin Campus*. Park Books Zürich.
Fig. 3 from: Jones, P. B. (2016). *Architecture and Ritual – How buildings shape society*. Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. p 76
Fig. 4 from: Djahanschah, S. (Ed.) (2017). *Zukunftsfähiger Schulbau – 12 Schulen im Vergleich*. DETAIL Business Information GmbH München.

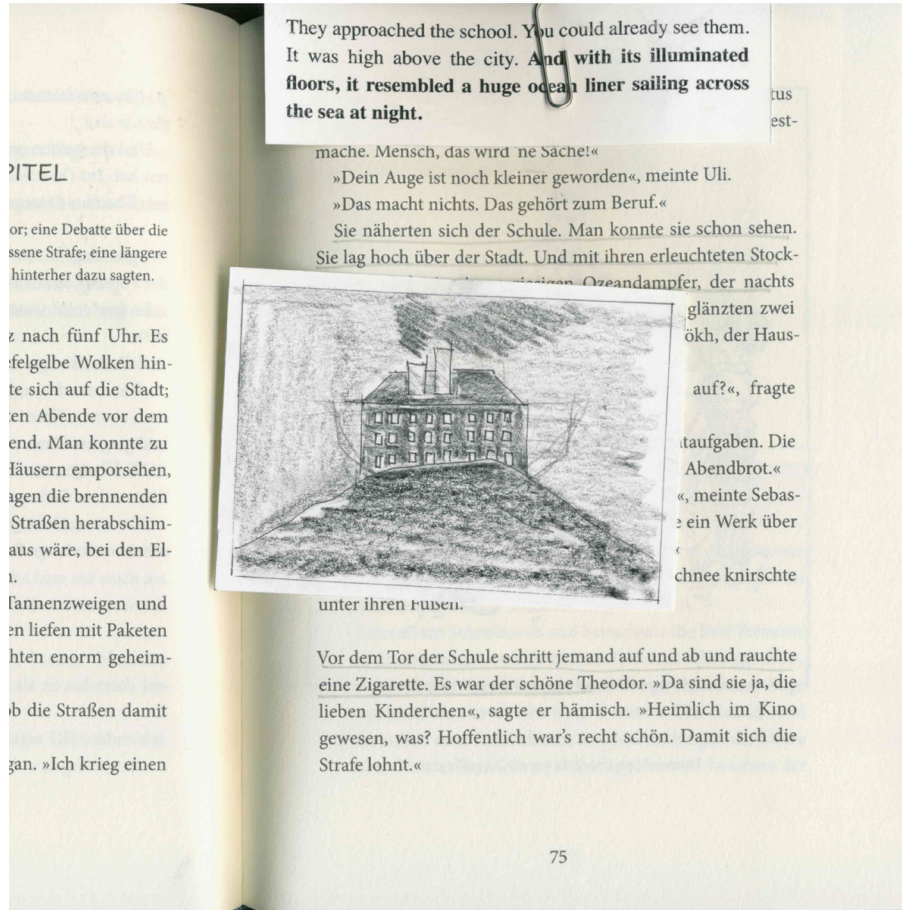


Fig. 1 Das fliegende Klassenzimmer, Erich Kästner, p. 75, with own notation

„They approached the school, you could already see it (...) with its illuminated floors, sailing across the sea at night.“¹

Just as a ship embodies its own world, the school is also a closed unit. The change into another world is also and especially underlined by the architectural design of the entrance. Entering and leaving the school becomes an important ritual that marks the transition to the other world.



Fig. 2 Entrance, Eishin Campus, Christopher Alexander

Maya said: „in the morning for me the schoolday really starts, when I walk through the big entrance gate of my school“²



Fig. 3 A chinese Paifang

An entrance can be friendly, it can be authoritative, sometimes even scary. Or like the traditional Chinese Paifang, the entrance can be reduced to the statement of entering. The so called Paifang is common in Chinese architecture in the Yamen of the 17th century. It had an exclusively ceremonially function without practical meaning, by dramatizing the experience of entering. Often the visitor had to pass through several Paifangs on the way to the magistrate, which made its importance and the process of approach tangible. ²

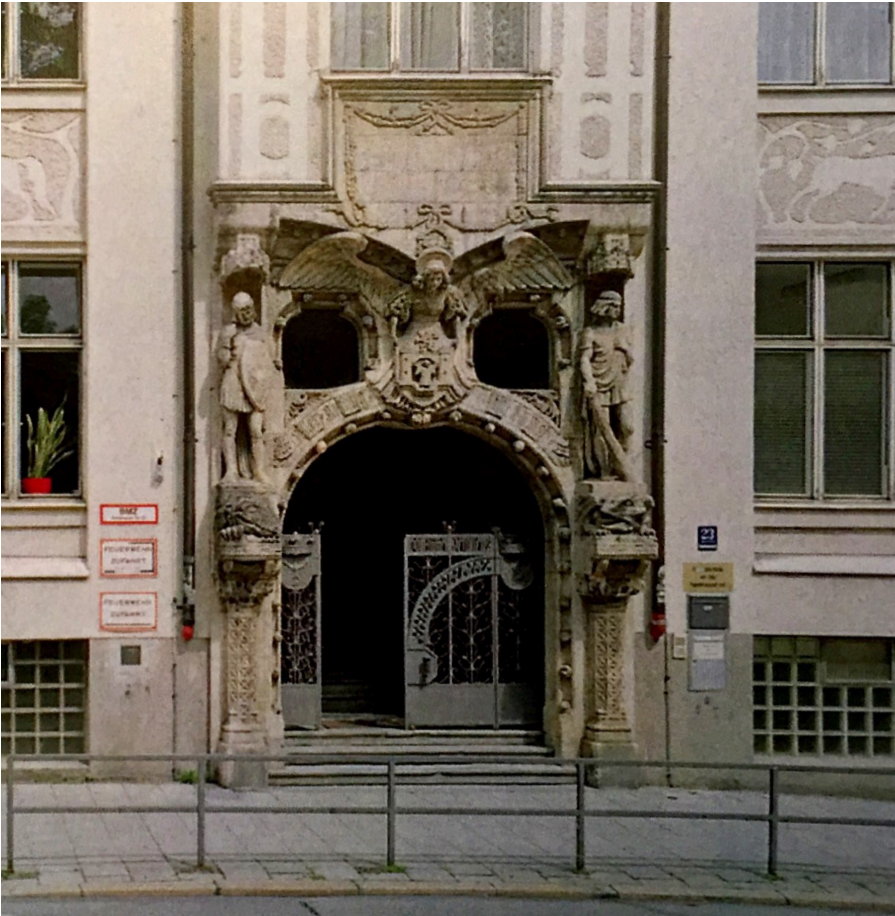


Fig. 4 Main entrance, Primary School Haimhauserstraße in Munich, sculptor Joseph Floßmann

In former times, schools were places of discipline and hierarchies. This was often already symbolized in the entrance. How would you feel when you would have walk through the entrance of the Primary School in the Haimhauserstraße in Munich? The entrance looks like a monster, it's mouth wide open and eyes on you. It has teeth and angry eyebrows. The monster makes sure, that the students get to their classrooms quickly. There is no invitation to linger at the entrance, dreading to start the school day. No one wants to be eaten by these sharp teeth.

insight for outsiders

Text sources:
1 Dyer, E. (2016, February 3). *Interview with Herman Hertzberger* (2016). <https://architectureandeducation.org/2016/02/03/interview-with-herman-hertzberger/>

Image sources:
Fig. 1 Own photography
Fig. 2 Unknown Author. (2019, June). *City schools as meeting places*. <https://architectureandeducation.org/2019/06/10/city-schools-as-meeting-places/>.
Fig. 3 Krb, Valerie (2015, September). https://www.meinbezirk.at/neubau/c-lokales/vorplatz-der-schule-neustiftgasse-umgestaltet_a1472219



Fig. 1 A school in Germany with opening hours.

*"I remember when I was in the Montessori school as a young child and my farther, who was a medical doctor, came to school. He had been watching me through the windows, although I didn't know and afterwards he said to me "you did nothing the whole morning"."*¹

As the school is an autonomous institution, many are denied access to the school building, at least on a normal day.

At a school entrance a board with house rules dictates who is allowed to enter and at what times:
„Dogs are not allowed“. *The school yard is open outside of school hours as a play yard until 20:00 o'clock.*“



Fig. 2 Apollo School, Amsterdam, Herman Hertzberger

However especially parents are curious how their children behave during the schooldays. Is it not possible to catch a glimpse through the window?

The Apollo school in Amsterdam by Herman Herzberger:
The window suggests a gesture: you are allowed to have a peak inside. The difference in hight in the window allows for this inviting gesture. It is about separation and connection at the same time. Only in the proximity of both it becomes graspable.

Most pupils on the other hand enjoy their freedom and don't like to be disturbed by the gaze of outsiders.

Tim complained: "Our classroom is basically in the cellar. I do not like this so much, because everyone can look inside."



Fig. 3 New Forecourt of a school in Vienna

The school is a protected space that should not be accessible to outsiders at all or only to a limited extent. When bringing their children to school or picking them up, parents usually only come as far as the school entrance. The morning farewell and the pick-up at the end of the school day therefore are also rituals which cannot take place on the cramped sidewalk in front of the school, but should have its own place, ideally with seating that allows waiting parents to get into conversation.

dreaming and escaping

Text sources:

1 Kästner, E. (1933) *Das fliegende Klassenzimmer*. Atrium Verlag (Zürich), p. 37.

2 Deyer, E. (2016, March 22). *Schools should feel more like home: an interview with Lina Iordanaki*.
<https://architectureandeducation.org/2016/03/22/interview-with-lina-iordanaki/>

3 Kästner, E. (1933) *Das fliegende Klassenzimmer*. Atrium Verlag (Zürich), p. 99.

Image sources:

Fig. 1 from: Kästner, E. (1933) *Das fliegende Klassenzimmer*. Atrium Verlag (Zürich), p. 37. With own notations

Fig2 from: Van der Keuken, J. and Hertzberger, H. <https://www.ahh.nl/index.php/en/projects2/9-onderwijs/114-montessori-school-delft>

Fig. 3 from: Interview with Paula

Fig. 4 from: Kästner, E. (1933) *Das fliegende Klassenzimmer*. Atrium Verlag (Zürich), p. 99. With own notations

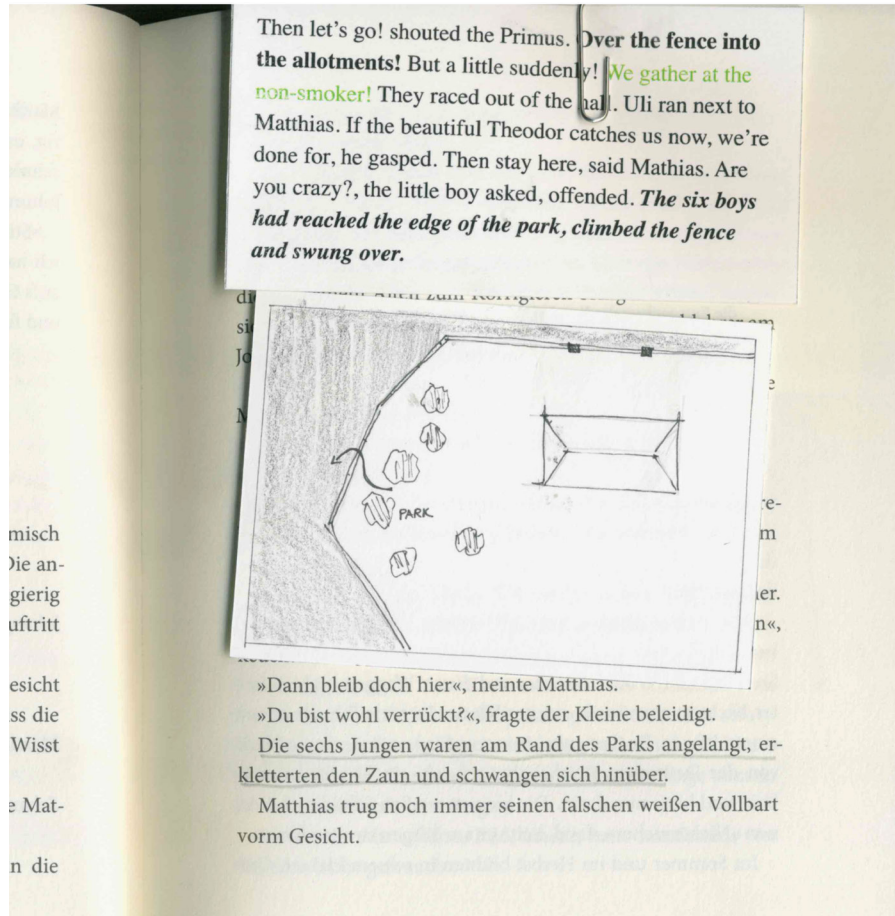


Fig. 1 Das fliegende Klassenzimmer, Erich Kästner, p. 37, with own notation

“Then let’s go! shouted the Primus. “Over the fence into the allotments!” (...) They raced out of the hall. Uli ran next to Mathias. “If they catch us now, we are done for” he gasped. (...) The six boys had reached the edge of the park, climbed the fence and swung over.”¹

In the story the six friends embark on an adventure, to rescue their captive friend. Secretly they leave the school grounds and climb over a fence.

Schools are relatively closed institutions, the school ground most of the time shielded by a fence, the entrance closed by a gate and strict rules, which are to be followed by all members. Yet important processes happen in the shadow, in the background, in secret spots. These are the places where pacts are made, friendships are formed, where students as well as teachers can let their social roles fall, dream and be free.



Fig. 2 Hiding Spot, Montessori School, Delft, Herman Hertzberger

Escaping sometimes means breaking the rules or at least to hide from the teachers gaze.

Max confides: „My favourite spot in the school: There is a small corner of the school yard, which the teachers do not overlook. It is a kind of school garden, but nothing has been grown there. It is behind the school building”

Friendships and peer groups with their very own rituals and rules develop in such hiding places.

Emma told me: “My best day at school was when I was lying with my friends on the sloping lawn of the schoolyard and the sun was shining on us.”

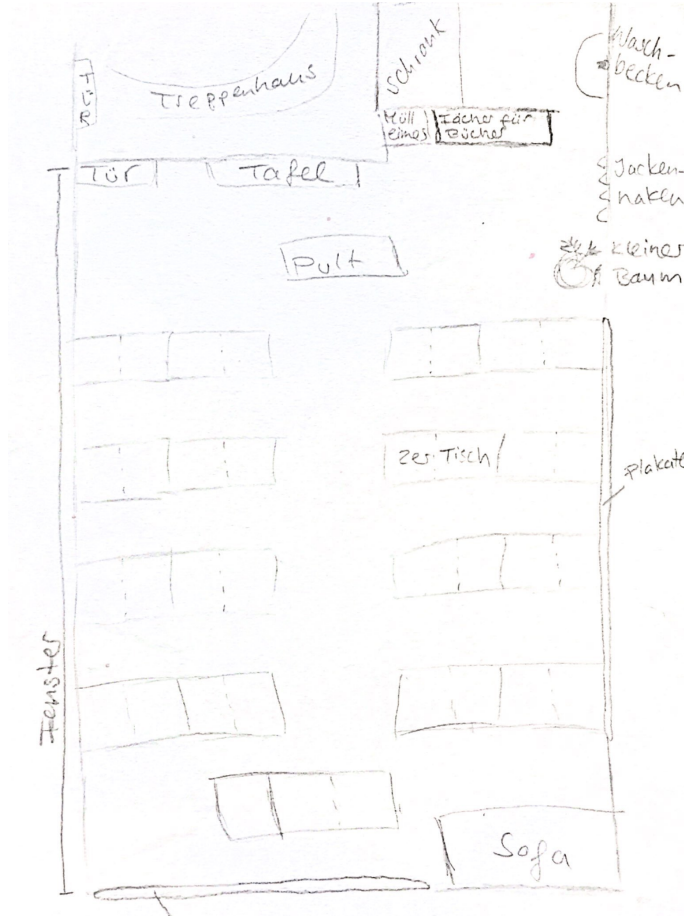


Fig. 3 Sketch of classroom, by Paula, with a niche for the bin, sink and shelves

The hiding spots can be anywhere from secret places on the schoolyard, to small niches within the building.

„It sounds funny but most students were happy to spend time sharpening their pencils over the bin in the classroom. The bin was placed close to the door, away from the teacher’s desk. Therefore, the excuse of sharpening was very popular for many reasons: first, to escape for a few minutes from the teacher’s gaze; second, to take a peek outside; and third, to join someone else who was also sharpening a pencil.”²

Detailed sketch of a classroom from Paula. The bin is drawn and marked as an integral component of the classroom in the upper right corner.

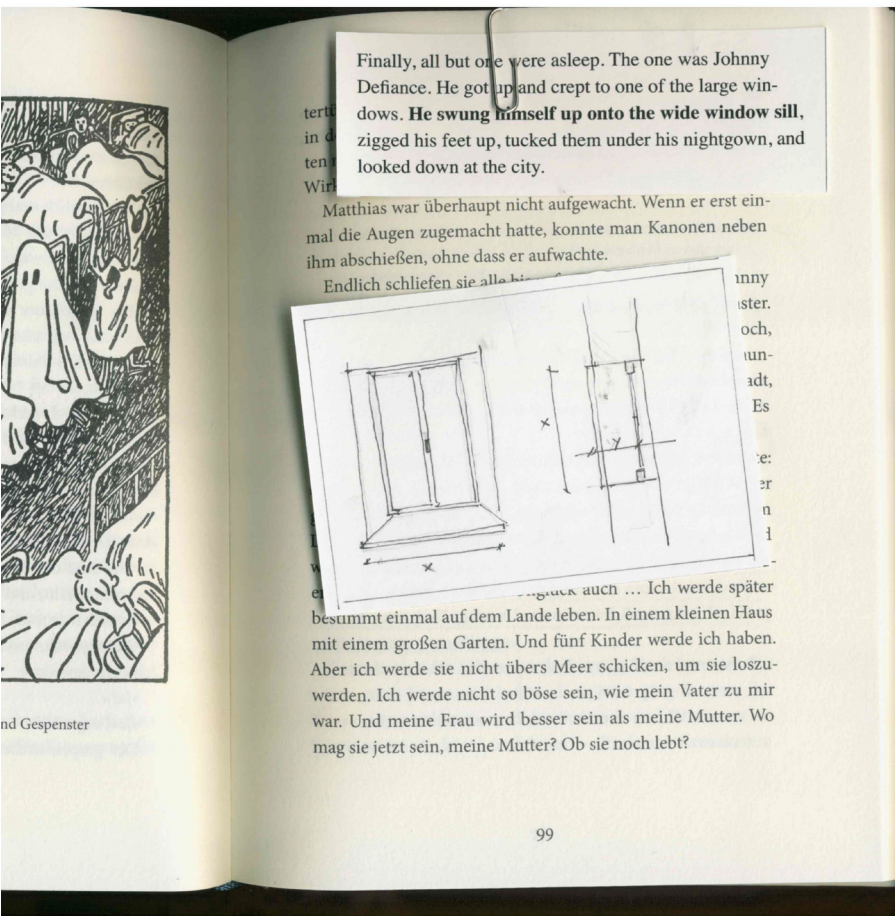


Fig. 4 Window niche. Das fliegende Klassenzimmer, Erich Kästner, p. 99, with own notation

Escaping sometimes also means to find a spot to hide from everyone, even your friends, in order to have time to think and reflect. Especially when you live in a boarding school and you are constantly surrounded by your peers and teachers. Jonnys ritual is to climb on to the window sill and look out on to the city.

„Finally all but one were asleep. The one was Jonny. He got up and crept on one of the large windows. He swung himself up onto the wide window sill, pulled up his feet, tucked them under his nightgown, and looked down at the city.”³

making the course of the school day visible

Text sources:

1 Kästner, E. (1933) *Das fliegende Klassenzimmer*. Atrium Verlag (Zürich), p. 23.

Image sources:

Fig. 1 from: Kästner, E. (1933) *Das fliegende Klassenzimmer*. Atrium Verlag (Zürich), p. 23. With

own notations

Fig. 2 from: Jormakka, K. (1995). *Heimlich Maneuvers – Ritual in Architectural Form*.

Verso, p. 121.

Fig. 3 a from Interview with Jannis

Fig. 4 from: Interview with Bela

Fig. 5 from: Heidenfelder, C. (2020 August) *Internat Summerhill*. https://www.planet-wissen.de/gesellschaft/lernen/geschichte_der_erziehung/pwieinternatsummerhill100.html

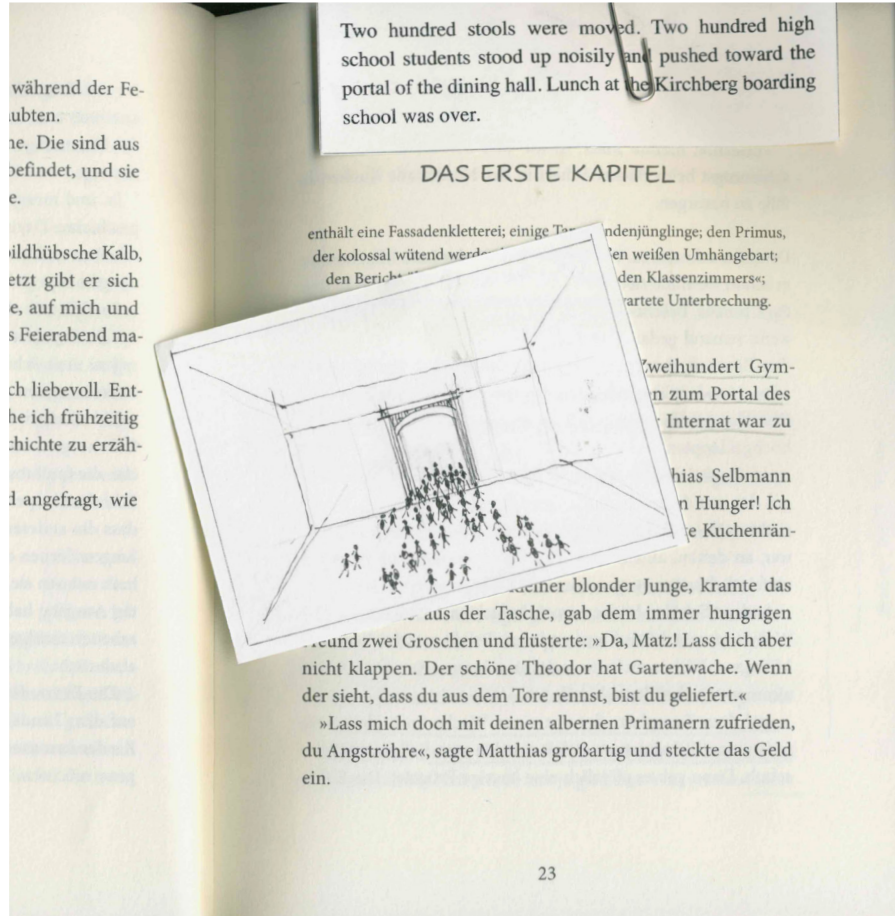


Fig. 1 Das fliegende Klassenzimmer, Erich Kästner, p. 23, with own notation

„Two hundred stools were moved. Two hundred high school students stood up noisily and pushed towards the portal of the dining hall. Lunch at the Kirchberg boarding house school was over.“¹

Schooldays are strictly timed, divided into equal sized time segments and alternated by smaller and larger break times. Time often plays an important role in the architecture of the school building. Is it for example a coincidence that the classic floor plan of a school with a straight hallway and rooms of equal size looks confusingly like a timetable?

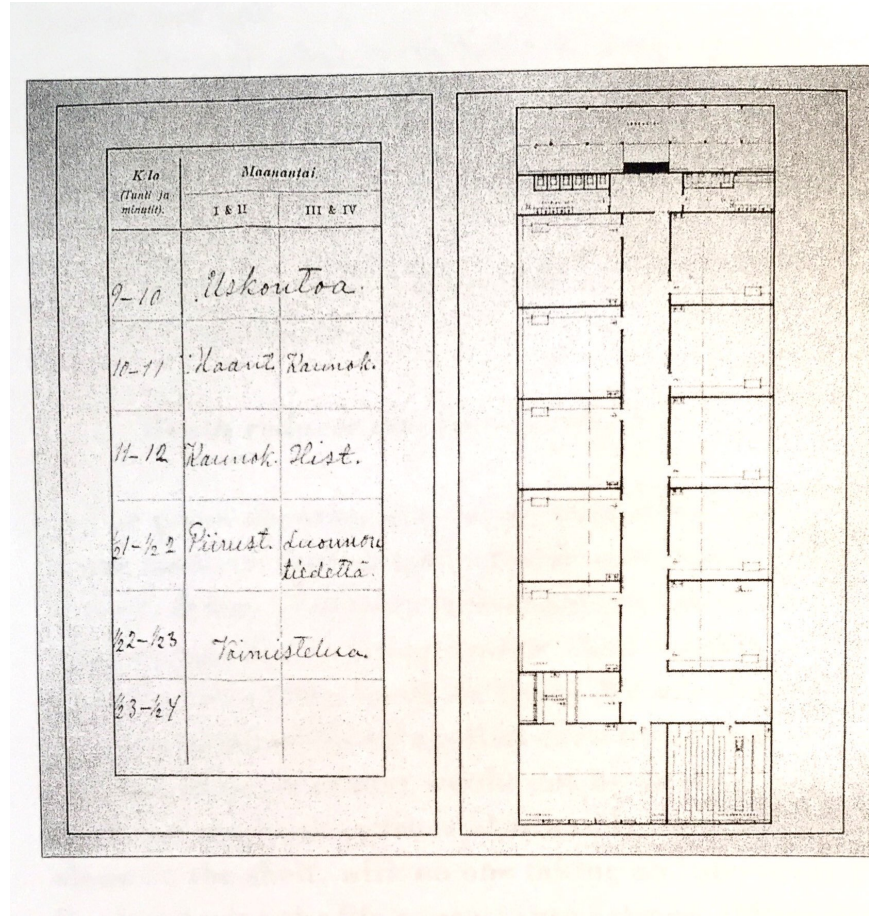


Fig. 2 A daily timetable and a partial ground plan for the Aarnivalkea school by Sirén, 1957, in Tipola

“The analogization of space and time is not limited to vocabulary but is evident on an architectural level as well. For example, the spatial configuration of the school mirrors its temporal functioning: both the space and the time of the disciplines tends to be cellular. The most conventional type of schools is the physical incarnation of linear and discrete time.”²

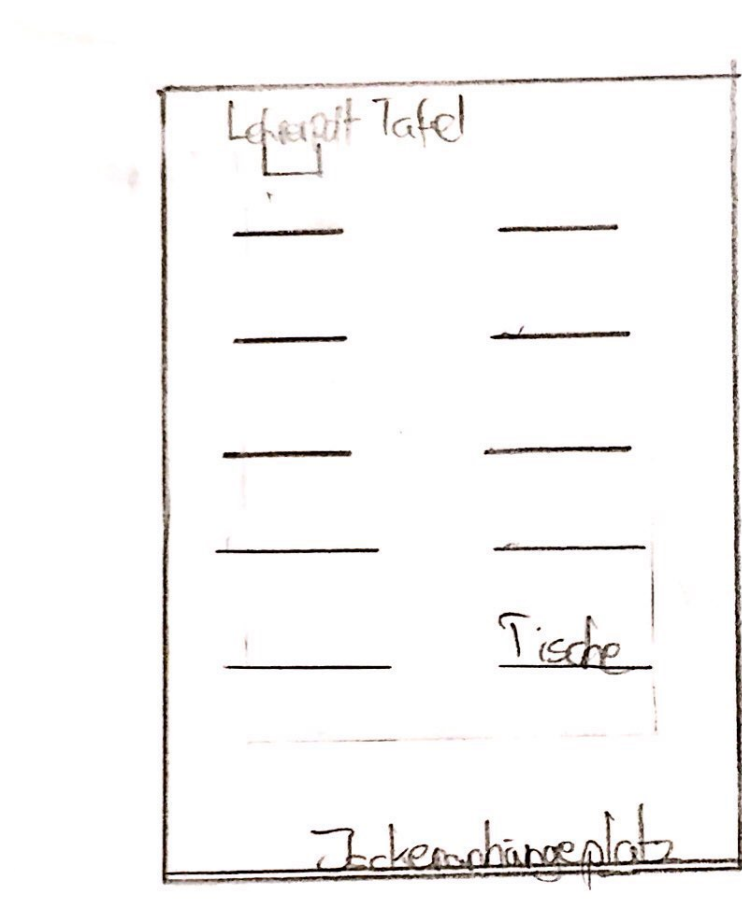


Fig. 3 Sketch of classroom, by Jannis



Fig. 4 Sketch of classroom, by Bela, with different areas for different activities

Many different rituals and activities through out the day give the pupils security and help them to understand the daily routine. The school architecture can support this by designating certain areas for certain times of the day.

Sketches of their classrooms from Bela and Jannis in comparison. Jannis drawing shows a classical classrom, rectangular shaped with rows of tables and a teachers pult. Belas classroom on the other hand offers the pupils different areas for different studies during the day. There is a room dedicated to group works and a room for quiet work with individual seating. A third room has many little niches, a morning circle, a reading corner, a music area and a drink bar.

celebrating the school year

Text sources:

- 1 Kästner, E. (1933) *Das fliegende Klassenzimmer*. Atrium Verlag (Zürich). p. 147.
2 Deyer, E. (2016, March 22). *Schools should feel more like home: an interview with Lina Iordanaki*.
<https://architectureandeducation.org/2016/03/22/interview-with-lina-iordanaki/>
3 Schmidt, M., Schuster, R. (Eds.) (2014). *Schulgesellschaft – Vom Dazwischen zum Lernraum*, 30 Schulgebäude im Vergleich. Jovis Verlag Berlin.

Image sources:

- Fig. 1 from: Van Leeuwen, W., Joosten, J. (2019). *Het Canisius College – Monument van katholieke emancipatie*. Uitgeverij Vantilt. p. 39
Fig. 2 from: Schmidt, M., Schuster, R. (Eds.) (2014). *Schulgesellschaft – Vom Dazwischen zum Lernraum*, 30 Schulgebäude im Vergleich. Jovis Verlag Berlin.
Fig. 3 from: Screenshot from the ZDF contribution. (Juöy 2017). *Eine Schule zum Wohlfühlen*.
<https://www.zdf.de/nachrichten/heute-in-deutschland/heute---in-deutschland-eine-schule-zum-wohlfuehlen-100.html>

„The Christmas party exceeded all expectations. At the beginning, two primaries played the piano. Then the headmaster Doctor B. Grünkern gave a short speech. It was similar to all the Christmas speeches he had given throughout his life. (...) Then followed the first performance of the Flying Classroom. The performance went very well.“¹

Special celebrations are markers in the school year and allow for a short period of time to break out of the daily school routine. They arise emotions and bring the whole school community - pupils, teachers, staff, parents and related family - together.

Paul wrote “The best day of school for me every year is the enrollment of the new students, because there I play the opening with the orchestra and then represent the school paramedics before I go to my normal classes.”

Special celebrations ask for special locations. A formal hall creates a festive atmosphere.



Fig. 1 Formal Hall, Canisius College, Nijmegen



Fig. 3 School designed as a school village according to the model of Hans Scharoun, Prof. Peter Hübner, Plus Bauplanung

End-of-year celebrations also emphasize the transition to the next school year and at the end the farewell to school and school days and the beginning of a new phase of life. Year for year the pupils grow physically and mentally and the yearly transition is an important ritual that makes it possible to experience growing up and evokes a feeling of pride.

“I liked my secondary school because I felt that I was growing up and I needed this change”²

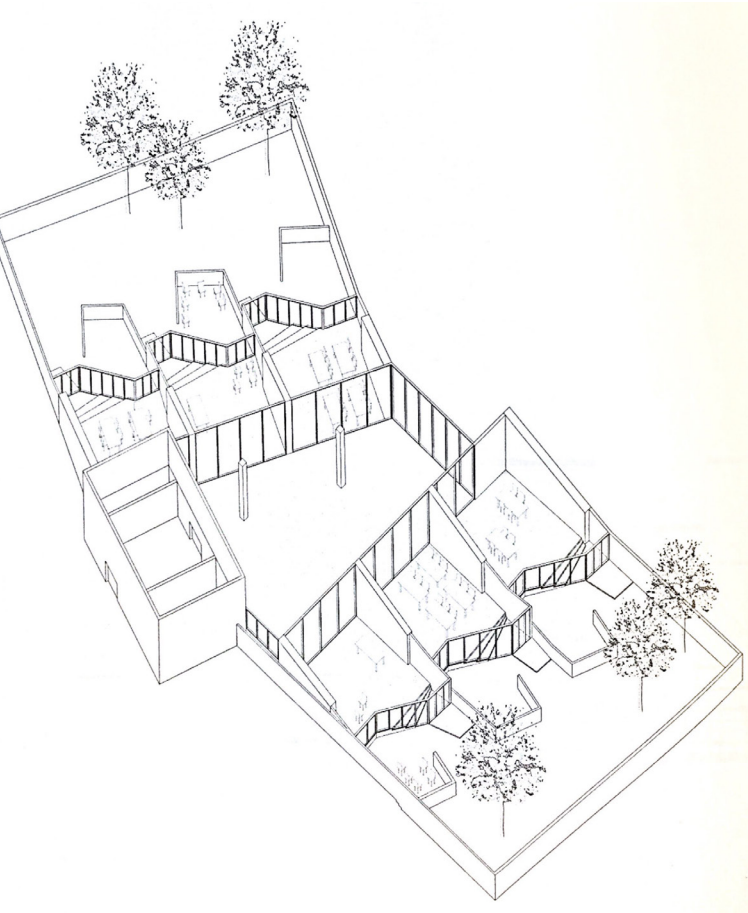
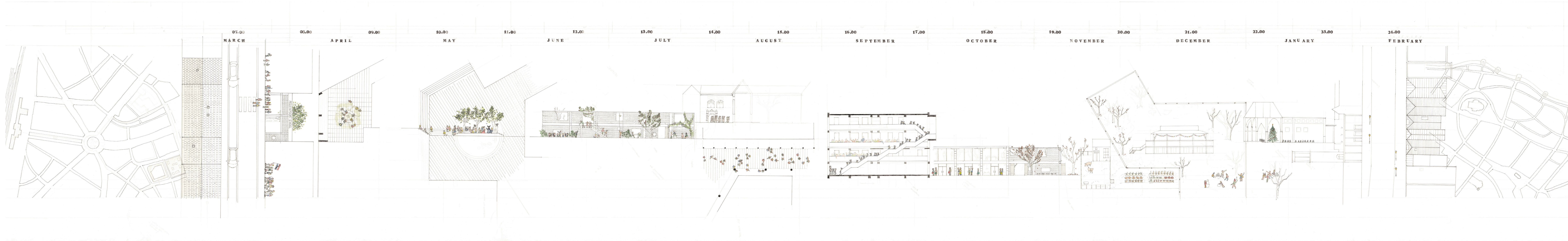


Fig. 2 One of the Secret Districts, Volksschule Darmstadt, 1951, Hans Scharoun, drawn by Sina Gatzmeier

Such transition is not only marked by yearly celebrations. The change from one class and/or grade level to the next can also become physically experientiable in the school building. For example when moving position in the building and receiving a new classroom for the coming school year. A building can reflect this change in several ways.

In the Volksschule Darmstadt Hans Scharoun had designed classrooms for different age groups, which he called secret districts. Adapted to the age group the classrooms differed in spatial imprint, light exposure and colouring.³

B. DESIGN



I. INTRODUCTION

1. History

As already mentioned above, the theme of this year's graduation project is the redevelopment of the site of the so-called Moolenport shopping centre in the centre of Nijmegen. On an area of approximately 11000 m², a two-storey shopping centre with a parking deck on the top floor was built in 1971. Originally, there was a church, a guest house to accommodate elderly and sick people and a farmhouse on what was then the outskirts of Nijmegen, which has retained its characteristic triangular shape to this day. For the rest, the area was used for agriculture. The church has survived to this day - in a modified form, although at present it is been pushed to the edge by the shopping center. The name „Moolenport“ goes back to 1470, when the city wall expanded and this was the main gate to the city from the south.

As mentioned in the introduction, I was fascinated by the stark contrast of the original and current uses; in considering what new use the site could be put to, I was guided by the idea of reviving the themes of education and hospitality. Observing the current lack of structure and overstimulation led me to the research topic „Rituals“. My project in the narrower sense is dedicated to the design of the primary school and attached boarding house, whereby I have been guided in the design - as will be explained in the following - by the themes of „bricolage“ and „rituals“.

2. Reallocation of the Moolenport site

The idea of leaving the area as a unified structure that does not merge into the surrounding buildings and cease to exist independently led us as a group to design a cul-de-sac. In doing so, the analysis of the current structure of the building complex suggested the preservation of the current glass house as the centre of the site with three adjoining departments. As already explained in the introduction, the recollection of the historical use gave rise to the idea of giving space back to the church on the site and also giving back a piece of the site to the local residents as living space, as well as creating space for adult education, but above all for a primary school with an adjoining boarding school, in which especially children from problem families are to be given access to social orientation and education. Thus, using already existing structures, I divided the site into three zones (church, adult education, school), which are connected by the building and grounds in the middle, which serve for common use as a canteen and function room. Since the middle section of the site can only be accessed through the adjoining areas, it was clear that they should be interconnected. A visitor from the city therefore passes through a sequence of spaces and gets in touch with the people around.

Since the middle section of the site can only be accessed through the adjoining areas, it is clear that it is not arbitrarily open to everyone, but is primarily and first and foremost intended for the users of the adjoining areas. The zones are separated by walls built on the basis of the existing beams. The walls are permeable at certain points, whereby - as will be shown with the example of the school grounds - various passages and vistas are provided that make the wall an exciting design element.

II. THE SCHOOL GROUNDS

1. Basic plan

My project in the narrower sense is the design of the school grounds with a boarding house, a school building for the 4 to 5 year-old pupils, the school building for the pupils up to the final year, a building for workshops, a sports hall and a sports field. When arranging the buildings and usable areas on the planned site, I tried to use and repurpose the existing buildings as much as possible in the sense of the guiding theme of „Bricolage“. On the other hand, in the sense of my research theme, the arrangement of the buildings should reflect the journey of the pupils from starting school to graduation in the sense of the ritual of the school career described above and make it possible to experience it through the architecture.

„They approached the school, you could already see it (...) with its illuminated floors, sailing across the see at night.“⁶⁰

Just as a ship embodies its own world, the school is also a closed unit. Inspired by this passage from the novel „*The flying Classroom*“ by Erich Kästner the idea was to give the large school building echoes of an ocean liner. As Nijmegen used to be a Hanseatic city, it was not far-fetched to turn the school career into a sea voyage with the stations of the boarding house as a safe harbour with the connection to the city, via the pavilion for the little ones as a launch to the actual ocean liner, being the steamer heading towards this destination. Like the boys in the „Flying Classroom“ the pupils entering the school grounds should already have the steamer and thus their destination in view (visual axis). The school career, the passing through the different levels and classes with the associated individual developments should thus already be experienced through the arrangement of the buildings. It should be made clear, that this is not meant in a dreadful sense, but rather as something for the pupils to look forward to and be proud of.

2. Entrance area

The school ground lies hidden within the intimate space of the plot and away from the bustling city life. Therefore the entrance and transition from one world into the other is an important part of the design, also because in everyday school life the entry and exit in the morning and afternoon is an important ritual, which marks the beginning and end of the schoolday. As shown in the research, the design of the entrance should already clearly express that the border to another society is being crossed here. Therefore, the entrance gate is not an arbitrary entrance, but has the character of a gatehouse. Echoes

60 Kästner, E. (1933). p. 57.

of the historic Molenpoort or a city gate in general are intentional. Just as it is clear to the visitor of a classical opera house that here they are entering an area where special rules of conduct apply, the pupils should immediately recognise that they are now entering the school society. Due to its depth, the entrance frames the view into the school grounds behind it and thus emphasises the change into a new area. At the same time, it signals to outsiders that the public space is being left behind here and that a space reserved for members of the school society is beginning.

3. Space for farewell

Apart from this another important ritual takes place at the school entrance, namely the goodbyes in the morning and pick-ups after school by the parents. If these rituals had to take place in the street or on the pavement, they could not really be lived. Communication would also be lost. A separate area with the possibility of lingering and thus also of exchange between picking up or dropping off family members promotes a functioning connection between the school and the outside world. On the benches available, one can wait and engage in conversation. And the little corner within the gate turns into a safe bus station. Sometimes it is not the parents but the children who have to wait for their pick up. Then they can sit in this nook, with a small window for watch out to the street, yet still being within the safe school grounds.

However, it is also important that this area does not merge countlessly into the school grounds, because the various societies and their members should remain tangible. Inside, the school belongs to the pupils and the teachers; family members are only admitted here as an exception. This is immediately recognisable to everyone through the stairs leading down to the actual school grounds and the different flooring, without the need for an (unfriendly) barrier.

4. School grounds, place for breaks, retreats, special events

Everyday school life is characterised by rituals, that give structure to the day. One of these rituals is the interruption of lessons by the regular smaller or larger breaks. The small breaks are mostly spent in or near the classrooms, the big breaks take place in the schoolyard or - if available - in the canteen. Through the interviews conducted in the course of my research, I learned that private, very personal and special retreat spaces are of high importance to the students during the big breaks. That's why the planning of the outdoor areas includes various places, niches and secret corners that enable the students to withdraw into their private sphere during the breaks.

An important design element is also the wall, which is intended to be more of a shelter than a barrier. Therefore, in addition to the passageways, there are also vistas and views over the wall and features that enable the younger pupils in particular to include the wall in their play. The passage to the canteen, as well as the assembly hall, is located in the middle of the area. It is not permanently open, but only at lunchtime or when special school events are scheduled. This takes away the arbitrariness of the passageway and gives a clear signal for structuring the school day and the school year.

The possibility of reusing the roof of the remaining part of the adjacent shopping centre was a welcome gift to accommodate the sports field, as a place above the roofs of the

city, something very special. The centre of the schoolgrounds however is the rotunda, which turns the middle section of the schoolyard into a kind of marketplace. The rotunda has steps where pupils can sit alone or in groups. This is where all the pupils from both school buildings come together. The pool is filled with water - to make it lively - but only a few centimetres high, which is enough to create a surface enlivened by wind and light and to have a cooling effect in summer. The water can be drained in order to create a stage that allows performances in the open air season and thus creates another space for special events. As will be explained in the description of the individual buildings, in addition to the communal areas, each house has its own outdoor areas that allow the respective peer group to be among themselves.

III. THE BOARDING HOUSE

The boarding house, in the tradition of the guest house formerly on the site, is intended to offer in particular pupils with a difficult family-background a safe accommodation and at the same time the opportunity to relearn or experience social life with its structures for the first time. The boarding house is deliberately located at the beginning of the school grounds facing the city because it provides a connection to the outside world. Just as the children who are not accommodated in the school come to school from the city in the morning and go back there after school, the boarders come from the boarding house and go back to it after school hours.

A part of the old building was reused for the boarding house, which has a special roof pitch due to the ramp on the roof. This old part is connected to a new building, which faces the street. The new building with a gabled roof resembles and follows the look of the residential buildings along the street and therefore does not stand out immediately. In the form of a classical house it should also reflect a feeling of what is generally perceived as homely architecture. The reused part generally is a part of the former shopping centre which in its structure is relatively chaotic, build up of different columns (steel as well as concrete) and with a small staircase. In a way it predefines a relatively intricate floorplan. However, this was the full intention anyway and the existing structure complemented this well. The intention was to make the boarding house feel like a home. This feeling is for a great part created in the differentiation of the inhabitant and a visitor. Whilst the inhabitant feels at home, because he is aware of all the passages through the house, all the corners, turns and hidden spots, the visitor might feel lost at first.

Generally the design of the rooms in the building was mainly determined by the rituals of family life. In the entrance area is the daily workplace of the house mother/father, so that a farewell or greeting of the children is guaranteed when they enter and leave. At the same time, this area separates the public from the private. In the private area, it is not about hierarchies. That is why the paths are intricate and there are different ways to reach certain rooms. The needs of the various users of the house are also taken into account: the side entrance, which provides direct access to the utility rooms, is primarily intended for employees and suppliers. However, this access may also be attractive for students if they want to get to their own room quickly and undetected (in the evening, the side entrance is of course locked). The common rooms are all interconnected, but not immediately accessible from the entrance and therefore intimate and safe.

The children should experience a normal family life, which is mainly characterised by preparing and taking meals together at certain times. For this reason, the kitchen is not separate, but - as in the classic family home - right next to the dining area, so that the children are immediately called upon to help there with cooking and tidying up afterwards. The most central room is the common room, which has the purpose for daily

gatherings and weekly house parliament meetings. Because it is located underneath the former car ramp, it is higher than the other rooms and has a certain formality to it. Through small windows it is connected to the upper floor, where the children rooms are located, to create a connection and possible communication across the floors.

The sleeping rooms are kept simple and furnished with a bed, a cupboard and table. Two children share one room, to create close relations between the children.

IV. THE PAVILION

The form of the pavilion, which houses the first two classes of the school, resulted from the reuse of the old structures; in this, the form is very fitting because it has a triangular shape and with a new roof has a reminiscence of a tent and thus emphasises the playfulness that is still in the foreground at this phase of the school career. At the same time, the canopy signals that this is a sheltered space. The structure inside is conceivably simple and thus quickly comprehensible for small children. There are two classes to the right and left of an entrance area, the building is single-storey. The entrance area is not heated, so that the seasons can also be experienced in the school building. In winter, a curtain helps against the penetrating cold and the ceremony of closing the curtain thus once again makes the change of seasons clear. The incidence of light through the skylights of the entrance hall, which are open in all directions, also varies according to the time of year and the time of day. There are benches under the windows as places of retreat in a small circle.

Each classroom has windows also facing the entrance hall, which allow communication from within the classroom. Each classroom also has a direct exit to an outdoor area assigned to that class, which can be used as an outdoor classroom. The wall gives the possibility to implement a permanent blackboard that can also be used as a painting surface by the children outside of class.

Generally the pavilion focuses on the needs of the young age group, which is strongly connected to the senses, of feeling, seeing, experiencing and moving. Therefore the pavilion is more open to nature, of experiencing the seasons and the large entrance hall for example gives extra space for movement and for gymnastic breaks in-between the classes.

V. THE MAIN SCHOOL HOUSE

The main school building, which houses grades 3 to 8, is deliberately located at the end of the school grounds, as already mentioned at the beginning, so that every pupil who enters the grounds already has the destination in view and the path to be taken is also architecturally marked out. The form of the school building is given by the reused beams of the old building. The rear wall connects without openings to the part left as a shopping arcade and clearly demarcates it from this and the pedestrian zone behind it. As in the other two buildings, the existing structure complemented the function of the building, this is not different in the school building. Here the clear grid of columns and beams resembles the structured school day. The facade takes up this grid as well. The different width of the columns give the facade its rhythm. Furthermore the design of the facade was inspired by the look of an ocean liner - newly dressed in aluminium panels and with visible screws.

The staircase - as it is - has an important meaning: it makes the progress in the school career visible and tangible, because the classrooms are distributed on the floors according to year from the youngest on the first floor to the oldest on the top floor. So when one walks up the stairs, he or she already has the destination in mind and a clear idea of where the journey is going. The staircase forms the backbone of the building and is located between the existing shopping center and the school. The stairs are connected to open galleries on each floor, through which the pupils can communicate with each other. They are also a space for showcasing the work of the class to the whole school.

The room that follows the gallery is the entrance hall or group room. To the group room two classrooms with a cloakroom connect on each floor. The gradient from “public” to “private” from the schoolcommunity to the classfamily through the sequence of spaces (staircase, gallery, grouproom, cloakroom, classroom) is intentional. While it is important to give space for the whole school community, it is just as important to form smaller peer groups within the whole community. The gallery, as a semi-public area, is the space of intersection between the two. It is mostly reserved for the pupils on each floor, yet because it is open to the staircase it also welcomes visitors from other classes and provides perfect settings for the performance of encounters. The classrooms on the other hand are the most private areas, which are only reached after having passed several spaces. The two classrooms located on each floor are connected by a small hidden hallway. From there a round ship’s hatch gives a view down on to the schoolground. This gives the pupils the chance to spy out, without any one being able to see them.

C. LETTER

The following is a fictional piece of writing – it is not science fiction, but ventures to take a look back into the past from a point in time which lays in the future:

It is the 7th of July 2046, the day of the 25th anniversary of celebrating the topping-out of the Molenpoort School in Nijmegen. The very first headmaster of the school has been invited to give the keynote speech to this very special event. Invited are not only current and former pupils and teachers and other staff of the Molenpoort School, but the entire community around it as well: all, who go to church on the site, all, who make use of the educational program for adults offered on site, and parents, siblings and relatives of former and current pupils. Not surprisingly, the City of Nijmegen is well represented as well, as is the province of Gelderland.

When the former headmaster enters the stage in the assembly hall of Molenpoort, the huge screen behind him is activated, presenting the film “*What time is this place*”:

**Speech of the former headmaster of Molenpoort School
at the 25th Anniversary of celebrating the topping-out of the School**

“A very warm welcome to all of you! It is an honour to be invited to this special event and to give a speech – in celebration of 25 years of the Molenpoort School.

All of you know this school very well, but only a few may have knowledge about what this site has been some 25 years ago, and what the school building has to do with the weirdly sounding term “Bricolage”, what the driving ideas have been when this school was built and which elements of architecture were key for the result that was achieved. I had the privilege of being closely involved in the overall process, at those days being a teacher of a basic school nearby, who was asked to contribute his thoughts and practical experience of life in school in the entire process of planning and realization. Ultimately, I received the offer to become the first headmaster of the Molenpoort School. I never regretted to take on this position which, for around 15 years to follow, gave me a huge satisfaction.

Let me get back to those days, when actually this site, the Molenpoort, looked quite differently:

Where we are sitting right now was the centre of a huge shopping mall, the Molenpoort Passage, that stretched over a whopping 1100 m² and housed more than 50 shops. From the windows around us, we would have been looking out onto a car park with 280 parking spaces that extended right up to the church and the adjacent residential houses. The facade was crumbling and one shop after the other was closed. At first glance one might think that the fast success of online shopping – which in 2020 received a tremendous push by the Corona

pandemic raging around the world at the time – was the main reason why large shopping centres - formerly celebrated as a new achievement in the 1970s and 1980s - were increasingly losing their appeal and became more and more deserted. I believe that the decisive reason, however, was that people were more and more striving for values, human interaction and orderly togetherness, and the Molenpoort Passage did not meet these desires. Be it as it is, the Molenpoort Passage experienced a dramatic decline and it was decided to put the area to a new use.

In the search for a new purpose for the area, those responsible decided to build a school - our Moolenport School - and an adult education centre - now the Moolenport Centre of Education. One requirement of the project, however, was to reuse the existing structures of the shopping centre as much as possible. Today we take it for granted that everything we no longer need is given a new purpose in order to conserve the scarce resources we have left. But back in the two-thousand-twenties, people first had to learn this. They were used to the idea from the past that everything was available in unlimited quantities, and they treated things with corresponding carelessness. If a building was no longer to one's liking or in need of renovation, it was simply demolished and replaced by a new one. At the time of the redesign of the Molenpoort Passage, however, a rethinking began - not at least because of the then clearly noticeable climate change - and people increasingly shifted to being more careful with materials and energy and to using existing materials as much as possible when planning a new building. Furthermore, in this way the designers were forced to be more creative, which resulted in a greater variety of architecture than the uniform mush that had been common in the past, in correspondence with the respective "Zeitgeist". And this is where I come back to the term of Bricolage, which I mentioned in the very beginning. Now, you may raise the question, what a Bricoleur is, and what Bricolage means, a term derived from the French word „*bricoleur*“, which means „*to tinker*“. In the highly modern and globalized world we live in today, Bricolage provides an approach which touches upon relevant themes, like the reuse of materials and the valuing of our immediate surroundings, history and traditions.

Bricolage describes the idea and the concept of solving problems with the resources at hand. A typical Bricoleur has been *Robinson Crusoe*, the main character in the famous novel written by Daniel Defoe. You might have read the book in school? Crusoe, a castaway, stranded alone on an island, where he had to survive with quite a limited collection of things and materials at hand, either saved from his ship wreck or provided by the island. Such restriction forced him to observe his resources available very closely, to improvise and to come up with new solutions. For example, he built himself a shelter, a boat, a calendar and other things that he needed to live, out of what he had at hand.

Now you might wonder what does Bricolage or Robinson Crusoe have to do with our school. If you did not already know, I will tell you now, that even though the shopping mall in its large extend from 25 years ago is gone, its remnants are what this school is built up from. Foundations, columns, pillars, which were formerly interconnected as one whole, were fragmented and now live on in each of the buildings. Reused and reordered, each fragment has turned into an individual building, with its own character, freed from the constraints of the whole and exposing what was previously hidden.

I dare to say that Bricolage gives the chance for buildings to change personality. When we look closely, we can spot that we are surrounded by Bricolage. Just look out of the window.

You see the St. Canisius kerk, where we celebrate the christmas ceremonial each year. Have you ever wondered why its back looks so different from its front facade? Let me tell you. This church has had a moving past. A long time ago it was the most outstanding building in the whole Molenstraat, with not one but two very high towers and a highly decorated facade. Very sadly, during the 2nd worldwar it was seriously damaged. But instead of building a completely new church, the undamaged part was kept and repaired with a new facade. We would refer to this as Bricolage, because in the given situation use was made of what was already there. This not only gave the church a completely new look but also a renewed identity. Did you hear what it said in the movie, that I showed in the beginning? With its new dress it proudly concluded: *"They must think I am a roman temple"*. Old and new were combined and became something new. Bricolage gives the chance to redefine personality.

Let me try to explain this in an other way. You as pupils grow up and learn many new things year by year. But you always build on the experiences you have already made. From that you can move from one step to the next. During your school years you go through different stages and you go from being a preschool child to a primary school pupil to a graduate. You are constantly moving on and changing your identity. And basically it's no difference with buildings and Bricolage. The shopping centre has become a school.

But it is not only the physical material, which can be reused to create something new. A place has more to offer than that. Memories, stories, feelings, emotions, atmospheres, dreams and signs, everything the Bricoleur finds and values, can be useful to him. The school is not only made up using parts of the former shopping center, it also contains pieces that date back much longer and lay in the history of the plot. It was discovered that on the site with its characteristic triangular shape, which was then still on the outskirts of the city some 350 years ago, there were farmhouses, a guesthouse and already - albeit in a different form - the church. This is how the little film I showed you in the introduction came about, in which an attempt was made to let the buildings speak in order to approach the redefinition of the site. These buildings had formed a strong community around the church, the guesthouse offered hospitality and the farmhouse had a strong connection to nature. The voices of these buildings had been lost for some time, but when you walk through the gardens today, through the boarding house, the school, the church and the assembly hall, and if you listen closely, you might hear them again.

For architecture and urban planning, Bricolage, and this was fascinating for me to learn, carries at least two elements: On the more practical level the question of reusing the material and elements of buildings already on site; in its more metaphorical sense the challenge to reflect on the spirit and atmosphere of the site in question, today and in former times, in order to build on that when developing a proposal.

The result was a concept for the Molenpoort that made „education“ the overarching theme of the revitalisation of the site. This is how the three areas became reality, which you can see today when you look out of the windows. The church has been given more space. It is now intensively used by the congregation. Next door, a place for adult education was created. The Molenpoort Centre of Education is attractive to people far beyond the immediate neighbourhood and the city. Today, the city is proud to be able to offer more than 120 courses there with a wide variety of topics throughout the year. Finally, the third area saw the creation of the Molenpoort School, whose 25th anniversary we are celebrating today.

The building we are currently sitting in, which we now only know as the „Kas“ (Dutch for greenhouse), already existed when the shopping centre was built. However, two floors had no windows and no access to the outside because they were enclosed by the centre. Only the top floor already had the characteristic glass dome that let daylight into certain areas of the shopping centre. At that time, it was decided to preserve this part of the Molenpoort Passage and to give the building a new purpose. As you know, it now houses a canteen and an assembly hall, which are regularly used by the municipality, by the Centre of Education and also by the school. For me, it has been especially nice to see how the shared use has helped to bring people together. Outstanding examples for me are the annual Advent baking for young and old, the long table at the end of the Vierdaagse or the discussion and singing circles organised by the Church congregation. Later we will hear a contribution from the „*Zingende Molenaars*“ on the subject of school.

Perhaps some of you have already asked themselves what the wall between the individual departments is all about. Why doesn't it run differently or straighter? The answer lies in the history of the place. This wall was created by recycling the old structures of the shopping centre, which in a way also here lives on.

But it was not only these walls that were reused. I have already mentioned that the „Kas“ was given a new purpose, but the main school building, the pavilion and the boarding house also convert old structures. The façade of the main school building is as it is because the old structures used were left visible. Incidentally, the building is called the „*Steamer*“ among the students for a reason. The association with an ocean liner was intentional and was deliberately encouraged by the large metal plates, the rivets and the round windows. The steamer is meant to symbolise the journey that the students take on their way to graduation. The fact that the progress of the journey through the school years can also be experienced through the move from the pavilion for the younger pupils to the large school building accommodating the older ones and within the school building through the ascent from the lower to the higher floor did not remain hidden from the students for long. The pupils of the final year class were called „*those from the upper deck*“ from the very beginning.

Dear pupils and parents, dear all of you, at the school's fiftieth anniversary, I will, with some likelihood, not be invited again to give a speech reflecting the further development of the school. Therefore, please allow me to venture a look into the future today, before I close:

As the last years, decades and centuries have shown, the world is changing in an almost adventurous way and at an even faster pace. But one thing has also become clear: education will always accompany humanity. The experiences of history have shown that this is essential for a prosperous life and a prosperous coexistence of mankind and thus a prerequisite for our continued existence on planet Earth.

At least the last twenty-five years have also shown that mankind is capable of learning after all, so I am hopeful that the school will also celebrate its fiftieth anniversary as a living place of education and promotion in the best sense of the term.

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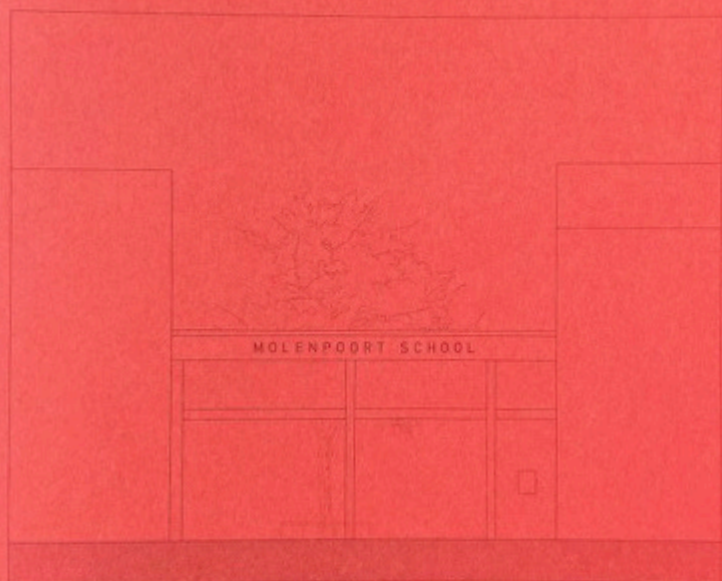
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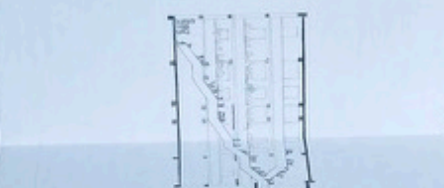
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