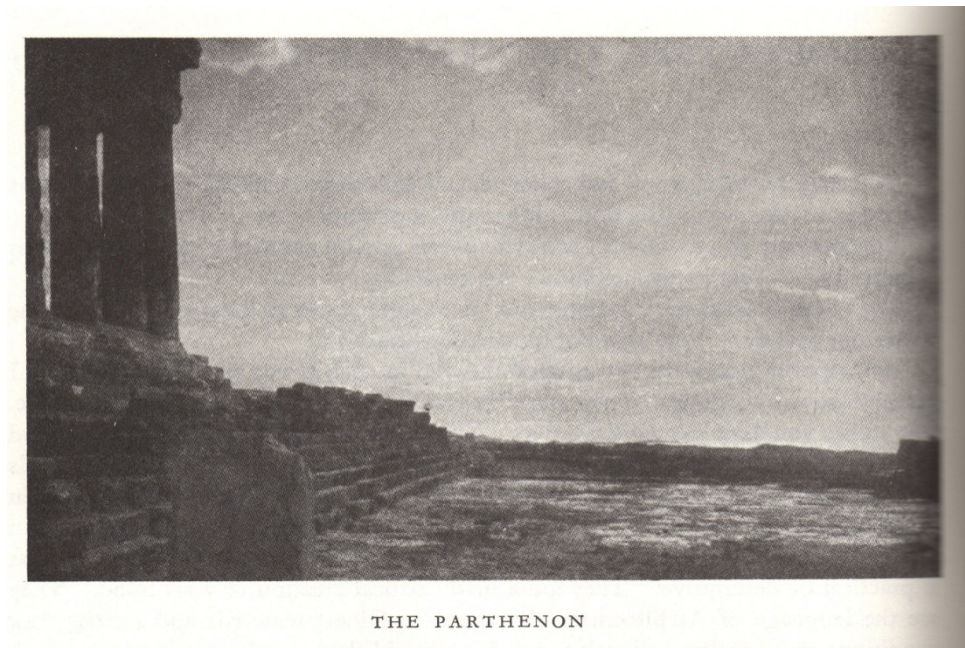


One single thought



*The Greeks on the Acropolis set up temples which are animated by **a single thought**, drawing around them the desolate landscape and gathering it into the composition. Thus, on every point of the horizon, **the thought is single**.*

Towards a new architecture, Le Corbusier, 1923

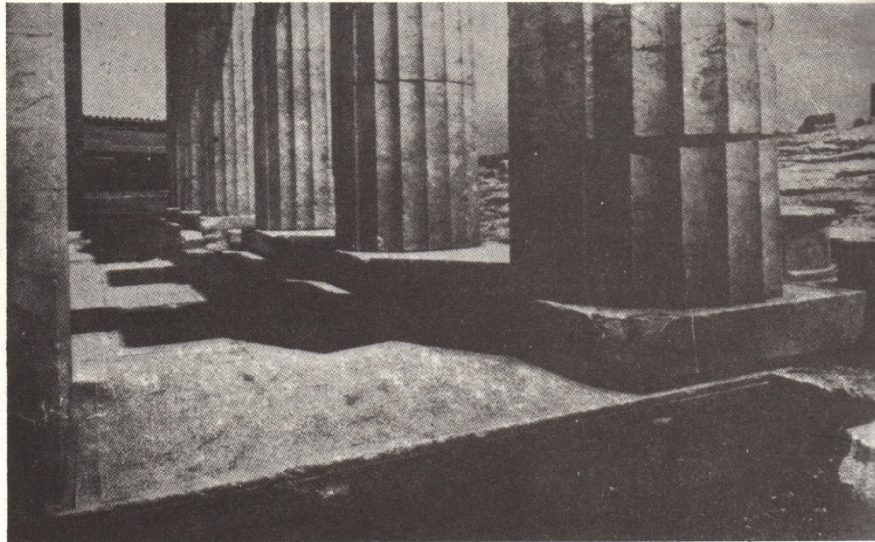
In the essay Architecture, the Pure Creation of the Human Mind, as part of his 1923 book Towards a New Architecture, Le Corbusier makes it clear that the temples of the Greeks on the Acropolis emerged from '**one single thought**'. On the one hand, Le Corbusier refers to the organizing principle of the golden ratio as a harmonious and simple idea but also a mysterious principle. On the other hand, he is concerned with reducing the means used to achieve that single thought. The golden ratio is known as 'the divine ratio,' 'the divine division,' and 'the golden number. It is repeated ad infinitum in nature, art, and science. In addition, Le Corbusier links every point on the horizon to 'a single thought'.

Le Corbusier wants to show architecture as a creation of the human mind. In his essay, he introduces Phidias, whose name we owe the symbol ϕ , the secret code of the golden ratio, as the most significant Greek sculptor. Phidias completed the Parthenon after Ictinos, as engineer/architect, determined the temple's proportions. Le Corbusier does not elaborate further on Ictinos as the engineer/architect but concentrates on the harmonious character of a possible measurement system used by Ictinos. For Le Corbusier, Phidias is the one who 'decorated' the Parthenon with sculptures of the Greek gods (including Athena) and made use of plasticity. In doing so, he gave the building its 'noble spirituality.' According to Le Corbusier, this 'noble spirituality' turns the temple into architecture.

Little by little, The Greek temple was formulated, passing from Construction to Architecture.

The Plastic scheme is expressed in unity.

Combining proportion and size with plasticity, fluting, and sculpture means harmony for Le Corbusier. 'One single thought' in the shape of the Parthenon.



INTERNAL PORTICO OF THE PROPYLEA

The Plastic scheme is expressed in unity.

204

This essay, *Architecture, the pure creation of the human mind*, follows his essay *Eyes Which Do Not See (Towards a New Architecture, 1923)*, in which he calls the Parthenon a machine and compares it to the emerging car of his own epoch. The temple as a structure and metaphor is crucial for Le Corbusier. He thereby tries to clarify his work. However, if he compares the temple with the car, then, of course, something special happens there. After all, the temple is stationary, and the car is there to move it.

In addition, Le Corbusier brings up something else through this comparison. Among the Greeks, the temple was separated from everyday life because of its physical location on the Acropolis, the highest point of the polis. In Le Corbusier's time, architecture became part of daily life due to his equation of a car (movable machine) with a temple (physical place for the gods). For Le Corbusier, the vehicle, which is an example of the new architecture, symbolizes the emerging mass production. Mass production means the product is there for everyone. For architecture, this means mass production houses with facilities that benefit people (sanitary facilities, clean concrete, etc.). Technology serves progress.

I brought back the temple to the family, to the home¹

Le Corbusier sees the machine (the car) and the mind (the temple) coming together in the epoch of new technology.

We must create the mass-production spirit

The spirit of constructing mass-production houses²

An essential part of the new technology is economic calculation as part of the industrialization of the second half of the nineteenth century. This continued at the beginning of the twentieth century and found applications in cars and airplanes. The economic calculation resulting from evolution and progress means using the assembly line in the factory where the worker is employed. According to Le Corbusier, the organizing principle of the assembly line means one thing leads to another. He uses the word 'spirit' in his text (there exists a new spirit) to make it clear that man is included within this order of one thing leading to another. The car has a sophisticated sizing system that combines the production process and an associated new aesthetic. Le Corbusier says this combination

should be an example for future architecture. Architecture must adapt to this new order.
Harmony through **'one single thought'**.

What could harmony through a single thought look like in our time?

This book is based on a positive view of humanity. If people, like ants, learn to convert all the materials they consume into food cycles, then the world's problems of overpopulation and depleted supplies will disappear..³

Cradle to cradle, Braungart & McDonough

The above quote from the booklet Cradle to Cradle is from chemist Michael Braungart & architect William McDonough. It has now become a famous book that has many followers. Architects are inspired by it and use it. Aldermen make good use of it, and the principles from the book are high on the agenda of the environment minister. Although it may have been received with some skepticism here and there, the text of Cradle to Cradle alone offers an opportunity for success. Many sustainability adepts like to copy the ideas of Cradle to Cradle. Entire new business parks, production processes, and environmental strategies are now being adapted according to the principles of sustainability and eco-efficiency. In any case, this ensures commercial success for the gentlemen of Cradle to Cradle. The principle of Cradle to Cradle is:

Waste = Food

What is striking is the assertive marketing-like communication through 'one single thought.' There is a cyclical ordering principle here that makes infinity clear. Compared to Le Corbusier's organizing principle, infinity looks different. With the assembly line, one thing leads to another; it is still being determined what this will ultimately lead to. This has been made clear at Cradle to Cradle. One thing leads to another at Cradle to Cradle, leading back to itself. It works as a feedback system. Waste = food. But while Le Corbusier still discusses and problematizes the 'human' spirit with his organizing principle in his words and writings, it still needs to be included in the entire book of Cradle to Cradle.

If people, like ants, learn to convert all the materials they consume into food cycles, then the problems of overpopulation and depleted supplies will disappear...

The feedback system is there thanks to the equalization. The boundary between people and animals (ants) is abolished here. The 'human' spirit of Le Corbusier has disappeared. To reinforce this infinite principle of Cradle to Cradle, something else is needed:

This book is based on a positive view of humanity.

Why is this mentioned? Does this contribute to the harmony that has already been achieved? And can an image of humanity be philosophically positive or negative? What is the meaning of this 'human' image?

Le Corbusier's 'human' spirit has disappeared and been absorbed into his marketing with a hidden agenda: the struggle for success.

Waste = food

Then, the problems of overpopulation and depleted supplies will be solved.

The cradle-to: Cradle organizing principle emerged from the sustainability issue.

Sustainability is currently the breakthrough trend among architects. What do the youngest generation of architects think about sustainability, and can they say something about a possible new order within their field?

.....Specialized in interdisciplinary design. We see no borders between the landscape, the urban and the architectural discipline. From the smallest object to the largest scale developments we seek to find the opportunities. Living and working in and on the Dutch Metropolis we are confronted with the sprawl metropolis build by various generations. Now we meet the challenge of sustainability. The problem for our generation is to handle shrinkage of population, decreasing life standards and climate change. In the LapLab we intensify the local with the knowledge of history and the global. We believe that sustainability starts by organizing people's life on the scale of their neighbourhood. Pragmatically thinking combined with the inspiration of the new sustainable thinking marks our generation of design.The future task of urban planning is lifestyle....⁴

The above quote shows which words the younger generation of spatial designers consider essential for the future of landscape, urban planning, and architecture. The quote belongs to the design agency Lablap, which is currently making several refreshing urban planning and landscape architecture plans. First of all, the writer indicates the specialty of his field. Interdisciplinary design. On the one hand, there is the focus. On the other hand, there is the expansion of the field. The trend follows what is going on. There are no boundaries between landscape, the urban, and the architectural discipline. The consequence is stated. The field covers all scale levels. It's about the possibilities. The stated principles clarify the position of landscape architects, urban planners, and architects. This side of the coin is limitless.

What about the other side of the coin, the opposite of limitlessness? The limitation?

The problem for our generation is to handle shrinkage of population, decreasing life standards and climate change.

A limitation is made clear here. Not only are people confronted with the climate issue, but the decline in population growth and the decline in living standards are also issues that frame the discipline of the entire spatial field.

In addition, there is a remarkable statement: the future task for urban planning is lifestyle. This statement is preceded by a vital draft communication:

Sustainability starts by organizing people's life.

How does organizing and selecting as part of design work?

Sustainability is linked to lifestyle. **"One single thought"**?

Although the shrinking population, decline in living standards, and climate change briefly came to light as significant limitations, they have disappeared again. Lifestyle is the trend.

How do the boundaries relate to *lifestyle*?

Is *lifestyle* the same as sustainability?

The term Lifestyle comes from English and is widely used in marketing. The word means style of life and is a way of segmenting based on behavioral characteristics. But the reverse is also possible. Individuals adopt a particular lifestyle. The general trend is that *lifestyle* is how we measure ourselves.

The Arbo-unie website uses the word *lifestyle* as the basis for a specific model. This so-called lifestyle program aims to gain more benefits from certain people's behavior. This program shows that the noses should all point in the same direction. Organizing people's lives means the following:

But lifestyle is also about combating absenteeism and investing in the future so people do not drop out. It provides good health at the same time. In addition, lifestyle also improves productivity because employees do more at the same time. But lifestyle is also fun; if your staff feels better about themselves, they perform better. In addition, lifestyle also means measuring to take measures. All this is to free people from their ingrained lifestyles.

In the view of the writers of Cradle to Cradle, this would be a positive view of humanity. The program focuses on the functioning of people with a view to 'improved' productivity. It takes away the hiccups.

Combating absenteeism,

Don't fall out,

Take action,

-Stuck lifestyle patterns.

Het voordeel van deze tendens is een optimistisch perspectief:

A good health,

Nice to do,

Feels better in his own skin,

To be redeemed.

A lifestyle or sustainability selection is underway, but this still needs to be discussed.

In Cradle to Cradle, it is death that remains undiscussed. Cradle to cradle means in Dutch: from the cradle to the cradle. This was before: from the cradle to the grave. Death has said goodbye with the words of Cradle to Cradle.

An article from Volkskrant newspaper dated April 2, 2009, stated that more and more Dutch people wish to be scattered or buried in the woods. Unfortunately, this is not always beneficial for nature. The headline of the article read:

The clean, sparse heathland suffers from the scattering of the ash.

The 'Back to Nature' study that Minister Verburg had commissioned showed that the scattering of human ashes is particularly harmful to flora and, to a lesser extent, to fauna. Above all, this harmfulness is the result of 'eutrophication.'

Waste = Food.

Human ashes as eutrophication?

"One single thought." *Reincarnation within the production process*

A large part of the precious nutrients that we should return to the technical or biological cycles are lost in the incinerators. Let us instead take an example from the US, where 'Design for Reincarnation' is gaining more and more ground.

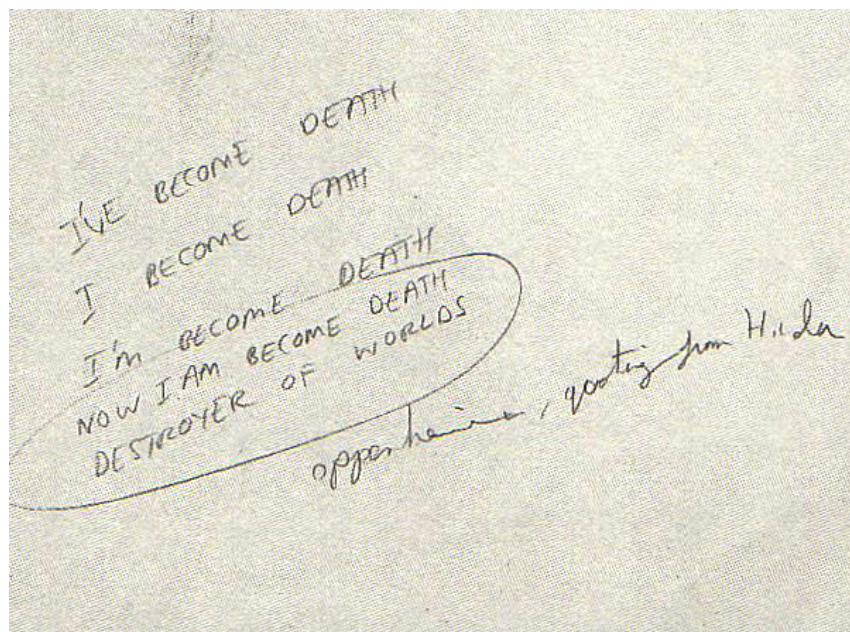
Fortunately, the damage does not have to be the same everywhere. The most vulnerable are heathlands, barren, herb-rich, and nutrient-poor areas, and old natural deciduous forests with varied 'undergrowth.' It is these natural monuments that need to be protected from human ashes. The report also mentioned the visitor pressure and the effects of digging the grave as disruptive to nature.

In a production forest or on former agricultural land, these 'activities' have little effect.

Death disappears within the production process.

They are the 'nature' monuments that cannot tolerate human ashes.

“One single thought.”



Schets Damien Hirst t.b.v het kunstwerk 'For the love of god'⁵

- ¹ I. Zaknic, The final testament of Père Corbu, Yale University Press. Connecticut, 1997
- ² Le Corbusier, Towards a new architecture, 1923 engelse vertaling, Dover Publications, inc.1986
- ³ Cradle to Cradle, Braungart en Mcdonough, 2002
- ⁴ Bureau Laplab, website www.laplab.nl
- ⁵ Damien Hirst, For the love of god, the making of the diamond skull, Other Criteria/White cube 2007