'Sustainable' architecture and the 'law' of the fourfold

Bert Olivier

Philosophy, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth.
Email: Bert.Olivier@nmmu.ac.za

There are several senses in which one can understand a constellation that is set up between architecture and the 'law', the most salient of which is the way that the former is influenced, or directed, by laws of different countries or regions (such as urban or building laws which restrict or challenge architects' creativity, or the environmental aesthetics that cities expect architects, by law, to honour). In this paper, however, I would like to focus on a 'law' that is arguably more fundamental – in fact, primordial – as far as architecture is concerned. Just like other laws, this one can, and often is, overlooked, or ignored by many architects, but at their peril (and that of those who occupy these buildings). The 'law' in question is that of what Heidegger evocatively named the 'fourfold' of *earth*, *sky*, *mortals* and *divinities*, which is further intimately connected to and informed by the 'life-giving struggle' that Heidegger perceives in the relationship between the constituent elements of a work of art, or what he terms 'world' and 'earth'. The aim is to draw out the implications of these concepts, considered as a primordial 'law', for architecture, especially in the sense of 'sustainable' architecture, albeit not in the usual sense of 'sustainable'. To enhance understanding of Heidegger's fruitful heuristic, the paper draws on Harries's illuminating elaboration on it, and its resonance with other, compatible concepts – like Lefebvre's tripartite conceptualization of social space – is briefly explored.
 Key words: architecture, art, earth, fourfold, Harries, Heidegger, law, Lefebvre, sustainable, world.

'Onderhoubare' argitektuur en die 'wet' van die Viervoud'
'n Mens kan die konstellasie wat tussen argitektuur en die 'wet' in sig kom, op verskeie maniere interpreteer, die mees opsigtelike waarvan die wyse is waarop eersgenoemde deur die wette van verskillende lande of streke beïnvloed word (soos stedelike of bou-wette wat argitekte se kreatiwiteit beperk, of die omgewingsestetika wat deur stedelike owerhede wetlik aan argitekte voorgehou word). In hierdie artikel word daar egter op 'n 'wet' gefokus wat volgens die argument meer fundamenteel – selfs primordiaal – is ten opsigte van argitektuur. Net soos ander wette, word hierdie 'wet' ook dikwels deur argitekte oor die hoof gesien, weliswaar ten koste van hulself (en van diegene wat die ooreenstemmende geboue moet bewoon of benut). Genoemde 'wet' is wat Heidegger veelseggenderwys die 'viervoud' van *aarde*, *lug*, *sterflikes* en *godhede* noem, wat verder intiem met die 'lewegewende worsteling' verbind is, wat Heidegger in die verhouding tussen die konstitutiewe elemente van 'n kunswerk waarneem, te wete 'wêreld' en 'aarde'. Die oogmerk is hier om die implikasies van hierdie begrippe, as verteenwoordigend van 'n primordiale 'wet' vir 'onderhoubare' argitektuur, uit te werk. Ten einde insig in Heidegger se vrugbare heuristiek te bevorder, word daar op Harries se verhelderende uiteensetting daarvan gesteun, en ander, daarmee versoenbare begrippe – in die besonder Lefebvre se drieledige konseptualisering van sosiale ruimte – word kortliks ondersoek.
 Sleutelwoorde: aarde, argitektuur, Harries, Heidegger, kuns, Lefebvre, onderhoubaar, viervoud, wêreld, wet.

Wﾊhat is sustainable architecture today? In the 19th century, Friedrich Nietzsche (1984: 331-333) exhorted humanity to be true to the earth in a world where the framework of premodern, metaphysical values has collapsed, and where a new humanity must move beyond good and evil to a world where life-enhancing values would be embodied in human action. Martin Heidegger takes this thread of Nietzsche's legacy further in the 20th century, with his critique of technology and the 'age of the world-picture', as well as his thought of the 'fourfold' as a measure of a life worthy of being-human. The 'fourfold', I want to argue, therefore also instantiates a touchstone for an architecture that would be 'sustainable' in a more profound sense than merely complying with the latest so-called 'green' initiatives, which often have more to do with new capitalist marketing ploys than with preserving the earth.

One can approach the question of a 'constellation' that is set up between architecture and the 'law' in the obvious manner, namely from the angle of the way that the former is influenced, or directed, by laws of different countries or regions. These would include urban or building laws which restrict or challenge architects' creativity, as well as the 'environmental aesthetics' that some cities expect architects, by law, to honour, lest their more recent designs mar the city-skyline or the traditional pattern of existing architecture. Important as these considerations are for architecture as a practice, however, I would like to focus on a 'law' that is arguably more fundamental – in fact, primordial – as far as architecture (as well as the other arts) is concerned. Just like other laws, this one can, and often is, overlooked, or ignored by many architects, but at their peril (and that of those who occupy their buildings). The 'law' in question is embodied in what Heidegger evocatively named the 'fourfold', which is further intimately connected to and informed by the 'life-giving struggle' that Heidegger perceives in the relationship between the constituent elements of a work of art, or what he terms 'world' and 'earth'. My claim here is that any architecture or art that does not circumspectly orient itself, implicitly or explicitly, according to the normatively life-sustaining principles represented by these concepts, would ultimately fail, as art, to impart meaning to human life.

The 'fourfold'

A constellation of four interrelated concepts (or values) – 'earth', 'sky', 'mortals' and 'divinities' – which, together, according to Heidegger, comprise the indispensable means of orientation in the world for human beings, is configured in his concept of the 'fourfold' (1975:149-151).[1] Given their meaning, one could possibly find different names for these, as long as those names resonate, to an equal degree, with the inescapable axiological parameters of human existence indicated by the members of the 'fourfold'. This implies that, if one or more of these are absent as 'markers' to determine one's 'place' in the world, one would not be able to claim that one is living a truly 'human' life, which is why Heidegger remarks that the four together comprise 'a simple oneness'. 'Earth' denotes the bearer of (human) life, but in the most archetypal sense conceivable: the earth as condition of the possibility of life, including human life, but also as that which resolutely resists humans' penetrating, objectifying, controlling (and ultimately violating) scrutiny. It is the 'serving bearer, blossoming and fruiting, spreading out in rock and water, rising up into plant and animal' (Heidegger 1975: 149). The 'sky' is the 'vault' which is the matrix of seasonal blessings as well as inclemency, but it simultaneously marks the limit that reminds humans of their finitude. 'Mortals' are humans whose nature makes them 'capable of death' (1975: 151), and 'divinities' are the 'messengers of the godhead' (1975: 150), who are awaited in hope by mortals, whether they reveal or conceal themselves.

The American Heidegger scholar, Karsten Harries (1997:159-162), provides a lucid, insightful interpretation of Heidegger's 'fourfold'. He reminds one that the 'earth' as the 'given', or as 'material transcendence', is a 'gift' uncreated by human understanding, and which, as such, limits the 'world' or sphere of intelligibility. He further points out that what 'opens' humans to 'earth' in this sense, is the *body*, and urges one to remember that (1997: 159):

> …the embodied self is a caring, desiring self. To be in the presence of the earth is inevitably to be affected, moved, claimed. Earth thus…refers to the elusive affective ground without which all talk of essences, meaning, values, or divinities is ultimately groundless, merely idle talk.

This is to say, that which inescapably limits 'world' – the cultural, linguistic space of a tradition – is the earth or 'ground' which moves humans as affective, caring, desiring beings in the first place to articulate their desires, fears and projects. These articulations belong to the

open cultural space of what Heidegger refers to as 'world'. The 'earth' is therefore that which affects the human, embodied self, and any discourse or language game that does not somehow acknowledge this is, as Harries points out, 'merely idle talk', an expression that carries all the connotations of inauthenticity and empty 'everydayness' that Heidegger gives it in *Being and time* (1978). Seen in this way, 'earth' is, despite its inscrutability, ultimately inscribed *as such* in language (in an encompassing sense, which includes 'discourse', every time desire, affectivity, need, or satisfaction is registered) as that which enables humans to traverse the realm of openness or 'world'. 'Earth', as the inescapable geo-physical context in which every human being finds her or his bearings through the human body, is therefore an inescapable consideration for architecture. If an architectural work does not address the body – through colours and texture, or a sense of light, height and of depth, for instance – it lacks something human.

To elaborate on this through an illuminating digression, Gilbert Germain (2004) enlists Jean Baudrillard, Paul Virilio and Maurice Merleau-Ponty to make a similar point about the urgency of waking up to the consequences of the increasing distance between humanity and the earth being created by cyber-technology. He shows at length that the 'reality' of cyberspace is incompatible with the earthly reality correlative to human embodiment and perception – where distance and mediation via the body are inescapable – and argues persuasively that this technological drive towards a 'reality' that is wholly of human making ignores the paradoxical truth, that the experience of nature, or the earth, as 'other', is a precondition of a meaningful existence. This is also true of architecture, I would contend. The more architecture resembles a realm entirely of human design and manufacture, with hardly any constitutive features acknowledging the 'otherness' of the earth, which is unavoidably co-constitutive of human embodiment, the more it becomes a domain which alienates humans from their ineluctable bond with the earth. The incorporation of design features that employ light and shadow, height and depth, 'earthy' textures (marble, granite, sandstone, red brick) and perceptual vantage points for placing it in a landscape as a humanly accessible, yet, distanced region, simultaneously ensures that such architecture imparts a sense of belonging to the earth, despite its transcendence in relation to us. Paradoxically, humans are both immanent and transcendent to the earth – it is our 'originary' spatio-temporal home, but as such 'different' from us. The more our consciousness coincides with a substitute cyber-world, however, the more we lose our salutary, embodied, 'human' contact with the earth-bound world. A 'sustainable' architecture, reconcilable with the 'law' of the earth (as part of the fourfold), would contribute to humans' 'existential soundness', and already does in many instances of extant architecture the world over. Anyone who has ever set foot in the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, will know intuitively what I mean – in fact, this early-medieval church may be regarded as paradigmatic of an architecture that exists in accordance with the implicit normativity of the 'fourfold'.

To return to Harries's interpretation of the 'fourfold', his (1997:160) elaboration on 'sky' reminds one that, in addition to what Heidegger says about it, it is metaphorically linked to the awareness that humans are able to surpass the 'here and now', that they are always 'ahead of' or 'beyond' themselves. This, says Harries, is partly what the spiritual dimension of being human entails. This is a reminder of Heidegger's contention, in *Being and time* (1978: 458), that humans are not merely characterized by 'thrownness' (the facticity of being-in-the-world), but also by 'projection', even if they further tend to be subject to 'falling' (back into conventional ways of doing things). 'Projection' here means the ineradicable capacity of individuals to appropriate a given situation and transform or elaborate on it creatively, even if the tendency to 'fall' back into the comfort zone of tradition and custom – or, one may add, of valorized discourses such as those of bureaucracy and capitalism – always exercises its gravitational pull

on them. Hence, 'sky' suggests the creative ability to renew or transform cultural traditions or the 'normalizing' discourses surrounding one in the face of their inherent tendency to regulate one's life in a carceral or imprisoning manner. 'Sky' therefore denotes the symbolic limit to everyday experience, and as such challenges humans to go 'beyond' it – literally, to explore outer space, for example, or figuratively, to create novel, hitherto unheard-of literary, artistic, architectural, scientific or philosophical forms and genres.

Harries (1997:160) reminds one of the link between 'mortals' and Heidegger's existential analysis, in *Being and time*, of *Dasein's* resolute acceptance of its death as precondition for an 'authentic' existence. As long as one does not reconcile oneself with ageing and everything that it entails, one is also never free to live a culturally or intellectually creative life. Accepting one's mortality liberates one for 'adding one's verse' to the ongoing drama of the tradition (see Olivier 2002). 'Mortals' is therefore a concept that reminds one that we have only a limited time to live on earth, and that unless we accept our mortality, we may not find a reason or the strength to live a constructive, socially responsible life. Nor would an architecture lacking any markers of finitude – such as building materials that register the passage of time (such as those mentioned in connection with 'earth'), for example stone or red brick – be one which signifies humans' earthly sojourn as a temporary one, in this way refusing its occupants the opportunity to reconcile themselves with their own mortality.

As Harries (1997: 160-161) observes, Heidegger's notion of 'divinities' is the most questionable of the 'fourfold', given the secularism of the present age. Nevertheless it points, for Heidegger, to the deepest source of meaning for humans. Not, to be sure, the god or 'God' of any specific tradition, but precisely the divine as *unknown,* because naming it would violate, for Heidegger, what is essential about '…the many-voiced ground of all meaning and value' (Harries 1997:161). If this is what the term 'divinities' ultimately denotes, it is the most profound, but also most ambiguous (but ubiquitous) source of all cultural activities and practices on the part of humans, including the cultural practice of designing and actualizing architecture. 'Divinities' is therefore a salutary reminder that, whatever one may understand by a deity or deities, everyone (including an atheist) who is able to face the demands of living, has some 'ground' of meaning in their lives – the (often unconscious) source from which they live their lives. It is Heidegger's claim that, together, these four concepts provide the criteria for assessing whether an artwork or a work of architecture (or any other cultural practice, such as education) is capable of being appropriated and understood by individuals in a meaningful, life-enriching manner.

What is the relevance of Heidegger's discourse on the 'fourfold' for this inquiry into the relation between architecture and 'law'? Just this: if architecture were not to be guided by, or evaluated in terms of a fundamental 'law' such as that embodied in Heidegger's discourse on the 'fourfold', it is likely to be as alienating as the infamous Pruitt-Igoe building, large parts of which were demolished in St Louis, Missouri, in 1972 because it had become a site of social 'dysfunctionality' (Jencks 1984: 9). With regard to architecture, it is nothing new that human beings experience space or spaces in qualitatively different ways. As most people know, there is a unique 'feel' to a specific city, and even within the same city, to different locations, buildings, parks, streets, and so on. This phenomenon is intimately related to the fact that, as embodied beings, we are inalienably spatial, as much as we are immersed in time – even the virtual spaces accessible to us today in online games such as World of Warcraft exercise their allure through the simulation of all kinds of spatial modulations, exterior as well as interior. (Which is not to overlook the fundamental differences between 'real' space and cyberspace; humanity needs an occasional reminder that the earth gives us the measure for an architecture that would maintain the salutary spaces separating us from nature, instead of acting as if the world is entirely of human making. Cf. Germain 2004).

'World' and 'earth'

For the sake of a thorough understanding of its relevance for architecture, one should not leave a discussion of Heidegger's 'fourfold' un-amplified by what he wrote in an earlier piece – *The origin of the work of art* (1975a) – on two inseparable concepts, as far as an adequate grasp of artworks is concerned. The two concepts in question are 'world' and 'earth' (which is here cast in a slightly different way compared to its meaning in the 'fourfold'), which Heidegger offers as a replacement of the Aristotelian conceptual pair, 'form' and 'matter', because, he argues, in an artwork the 'material' involved does not 'disappear' into the artwork's 'form' the way that it does in the case of a piece of equipment (like a hammer, where the material has to serve the 'form' so completely that it does 'vanish' into it). With a work of art it is different, hence Heidegger's choice of words for his proposed alternative to Aristotle's principles. He replaces Aristotle's 'form' with 'world', and 'matter' with 'earth' (Heidegger 1975a: 27-29; 41; 44-46; 49).

By 'world' Heidegger names that aspect of a work of art that makes it interpretable – that is, its susceptibility to semiotic or symbolic appropriation. He calls 'world' that element in an artwork which places it in the 'open', and through which one can gain access to the cultural world within which it was made, built, painted or written. So, for instance, the *Iliad* opens up the myth-pervaded world of the pre-philosophical Greeks, and the *Hagia Sophia* in Istanbul (completed in 537 CE), even upon entering it today, fleetingly transports one to the Byzantine world of Justinianus, with its sense of spirituality and otherworldly beliefs – the world, Heidegger intimates, within which the decisions determining the destiny of that specific cultural world were made. Compare Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Bilbao with the Hagia Sophia, and at once Heidegger's meaning becomes clear: Gehry's building, with its titanium 'roof' wrapped around it, strikes one as something simultaneously harking back to the middle ages and yet also something signalling forward in time, reminiscent of the starship Enterprise from Gene Roddenberry's *Star Trek*. In a word, these two magnificent pieces of architecture (re-)present different worlds through those elements constituting them which lend themselves to interpretation.

'Earth', on the other hand, for Heidegger, unlike Aristotle's 'matter', denotes precisely that which stubbornly resists any attempt at interpretation in artworks – that which, paradoxically, shows itself, yes, *but as something that refuses to yield to humans' prying, interpretive or analytical scrutiny*. In painting, for instance, the sheer givenness of pigmentation, of colours, certainly contributes to the decipherable meaning of the painting, but the colours or the pigments themselves remain inexplicable – they simply *are*. Hence, the relationship between 'world' and 'earth' is not a dialectical one in the Hegelian sense, where a 'higher' meaning emerges from their 'synthesis' or reconciliation, but one where they are, as Heidegger (1975: 49) says, engaged in a mutually 'life-giving struggle', one that will remain for as long as the artwork retains its integrity (instead of being destroyed).

These two principles, which are inseparably, but 'tensionally' conjoined in every work of art, amplify the meaning of 'fourfold' in so far as it enhances one's comprehension of 'sustainable' architecture in the sense that I understand it here. 'Earth' here adds a new dimension to what it means in the fourfold, reminding us that an architecture – or literature, for that matter – which attempts to reduce 'earth' to 'world' through hyper-transparency, must fail (explaining every word in a novel, instead of allowing their musicality and metaphoric density to work their 'earth'-magic; trying to let every material, like wood or steel, in a building, 'vanish' into functionality, instead of letting them manifest their inalienable attachment to the 'earth').

'World', on the other hand, amplifies what Heidegger subsumes under 'sky', 'mortals' and 'divinities' in the 'fourfold'[2], to the extent that these three notions comprise different aspects of everything that is interpretable in a novel, a painting, a symphony or an architectural work. The 'world'-aspect of the Hagia Sophia can be comprehended in terms of spiritual, limit-transgressing striving ('sky'), the fears and supplications of people who know they must die, and are preparing for that day ('mortals'), and its variously (in murals, mosaics and architectural fixtures-) embodied conception of the deity ('divinities').

'Perceived space', 'lived space' and 'conceived space'

To be able to grasp fully what is at stake here, and simultaneously enhance one's understanding of the dimensions of meaning opened up by the 'fourfold', and by the conceptual pair – 'world' and 'earth' – a brief reconstruction of Henri Lefebvre's equally fecund tripartite typology of historically and socially 'produced' space is called for. In his book, *The production of space* (1991: 26-27), Lefebvre claims that a particular social organization happens via a distinctive 'production of (social) space', and remarks further that such space '...is constituted neither by a collection of things or an aggregate of (sensory) data, nor by a void packed like a parcel with various contents...' It is therefore '...irreducible to a "form" imposed upon phenomena, upon things, upon physical materiality'. This is to say that space, for Lefebvre, is never homogeneously and self-identically 'there' throughout history, but is instead 'produced' through the actions of human beings. Moreover, the modality of these actions changes over time, so that space must be understood as being fundamentally historical. Instead of conceiving of space as a fixed construct – the way the Enlightenment did, according to Lefebvre (which does not really do justice to Kant's account of space and time, in my view) – we should regard it as an incomplete, tension-filled process, always subject to the effects of the (political) actions of humans.

From this it should already be clear that space, for Lefebvre, is nothing homogeneous – in fact, he argues (Lefebvre 1991: 33) that such historically and socially produced space may be understood as comprising three interwoven, qualitatively different kinds of spatial production, namely 'spatial practices', 'representations of space', and 'representational spaces' (perhaps better indicated as the obverse of the former, namely 'spaces of representation'). To be able to explain human beings' epistemic-theoretical access to these different spatial modes, Lefebvre names three cognitive modes, correlative to the three types of produced space, namely 'perceived' space, 'conceived' space, and 'lived' space (Lefebvre 1991: 38-39). The first – *'perceived'* space – corresponds to *'spatial practices'* and marks the abstract spatial counterpart of the actual process of social production (and reproduction), whether this is characterized by disintegration or by cohesion and 'structure'. *'Conceived space'* – the second kind – corresponds to *'representations of space'*, or what most people would probably intuitively regard as 'space' in the true sense. It refers to the way in which space is conceptualized (whether it is in life-world terms, Aristotelian, Newtonian, Kantian or Einsteinian relativity theory-terms) and it stands to reason that it is via such conceptualization ('conceived space') that one has cognitive access to the other two spatial modes, the 'perceived' and the 'lived'. The last cognitive category – that of *'lived space'* – correlates with *'representational spaces'*, which denotes not only space in the sense in which it is passively 'lived' by inhabitants of space through non-verbal symbols and images, but also as it is 'described' by philosophers and imaginatively appropriated by artists and architects.

How does Lefebvre's highly suggestive contemplation of historically and socially produced modes of space relate to Heidegger's own reflections on the 'fourfold', as well as

on 'world' and 'earth' with their distinctive implications for space and for architecture? While *conceived space* and *lived space* appear to flesh out, specifically in terms of social production, Heidegger's notion of 'world' and what is subsumed under it of the 'fourfold' ('sky', 'mortals' and 'divinities'; see note 2 regarding the latter, though), *perceived space* strikes one as the socially 'produced' counterpart of Heidegger's 'earth', given its implication of social practices that are always taking place 'in full view', and are yet, somehow, 'under the radar' of conceptual or imagined (and imaginary) appropriations of space in cognitive terms. In this respect, as in the case of Heidegger's 'earth' (and related to what Lacan calls the 'real', or that which surpasses linguistic symbolization; cf. Lee 1990: 82), the *perceived space* of 'social practices' shows itself only to the extent that it resists scrutiny aimed at complete transparency.

Just as I would claim that Heidegger's *fourfold*, together with 'world' and 'earth' (in the amplified sense) represents a 'law' or touchstone for 'sustainability' against which architecture may be judged, I believe that Lefebvre's tripartite conceptualization of socially produced spaces further amplifies such a set of criteria. Unless architecture heeds the normative implications of these 'legislative criteria', it would fail to be truly 'sustainable', in so far as there are certain ways of 'producing' space through social action which pervert the very notion of the 'social' in the encompassing, normatively 'human' sense. These include the perverse spaces that have been produced through social and political practices such as German and apartheid-fascism – think of the '(anti-) social' spaces of German death camps like Auschwitz and Dachau, and the 'ethnically cleansed' spaces of apartheid, in both of which architecture played a major role.

Architecture and the 'law' of the (amplified) 'fourfold'

But what are examples of architecture that meets the requirements of this fundamental 'law'? A brief, broadly spatio-architectural excursion to the American city of Philadelphia[3] is instructive in this regard. I believe that one can relate the concepts discussed earlier illuminatingly to Philadelphia's 'places', that is, to its buildings, its streets and the spaces that are given shape between them. Looking down from the monument of George Washington towards the Benjamin Franklin Parkway (Philadelphia's very own *Champs Élysées*), I always – in the course of one of my frequent visits – *know* in my 'world'- and 'earth'-oriented body that I am back in one of my favourite American cities. Before going down to this specific area, with the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Boathouse Row, the Rodin Museum, the Franklin Institute, the Swann Memorial Fountain, Logan Square, the Free Library of Philadelphia and the Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul all within easy walking distance from one another, that feeling of being back here is not yet tangible, not yet in my bones, as it were. When I have sipped my coffee at Starbucks on Market to prepare for my visit to the museum district, and started walking down the Parkway, I start getting that feeling of having at last arrived on American soil again, and the feeling culminates in the satisfaction derived from turning around at Washington's statue to look back the way I have come. I have often wondered why this is the case, and concluded that it is not simply the proximity of these wonderful buildings to one another, but especially the manner in which they modulate this part of the city's space into a configuration of interconnected places with a very distinctive spatial quality, one that imparts to it the character of a 'region' with what Christian Norberg-Shulz (1980) called its own special *genius loci* (spirit of place).

Moreover, this 'region' gathers together places where the (amplified) 'fourfold' described earlier may be encountered at every level – in the physical exhilaration of walking the distance, which accompanies the visual experiences, in the time it takes to walk and to stand still while taking in the changing scene, and finally in the experience of satisfaction and edification in

the face of so much creativity. Nor is this experience restricted to the area described in its entirety, either; it repeats itself in proximity to individual buildings. Take the Philadelphia Museum of Art, for instance, where it majestically presides over the space projected by the Benjamin Franklin Parkway at its far end. To most movie-going people in the world it may be recognizable as merely being the magnificent building that provided a grand staircase for Sylvester Stallone's character in the film, Rocky, to train; to anyone truly familiar with this space, however, it marks the point of arrival after the exhilarating walk down the Parkway, and the gateway to a variegated aesthetic experience afforded by one of the finest collections of art in the world. While still outside, walking towards the main entrance, one may admire the colourful north pediment of the Museum, with its Olympian figures reinforcing the symbolic presence of ancient Greece already intimated by the Museum's Parthenon-like appearance; once inside, the statue of the huntress, Diana, at the top of the stairs, uncompromisingly signals the neoclassical provenance of the building, with all that this entails regarding the cultural tradition represented by it. Only someone who is completely insensitive to such a transformation of space into a 'place' where one may discover variegated artistic 'worlds', as it were, would not feel welcome to explore the various artistic traditions preserved here. On the other hand, if anyone has become as accustomed as I have to the Museum's various domains, he or she would probably experience the same tranquillity and edifying viewing as I have, visually as well as existentially – at the level of Heidegger's 'fourfold' – exploring the unique works preserved there, such as the (Marcel) Duchamp collection, to mention one of my personal favourites.

The experience briefly described here is pervaded by the normatively structuring function of the 'fourfold', in the sense that what 'sky', 'divinities' and 'mortals' (subsumed under 'world') and 'earth' signify, as explained earlier, is demonstrably at work in these buildings as well as in the spatial interrelationship between them. The exhibits in the museum(s), together with the buildings themselves, testify with rich multivocality to everything that 'world' stands for, albeit in a way that still requires interpretation on the part of visitors. Every building and artwork also embodies the element of 'earth', which reminds visitors of art's guardianship over the sanctity of the 'earth'. Moreover, a familiarity with Lefebvre's fecund socio-spatial conceptual threesome – 'perceived space', 'conceived space' and 'lived space' – enables one to see the architecture and the artworks in question as themselves issuing from the multifarious spatially productive engagement of people through social action at different levels.

These considerations also apply to Boathouse Row along the Schuylkill River in irreplaceable Fairmount Park, the biggest municipal park in America, where one could easily forget that one is in close proximity to the city of Philadelphia. These rowing club homes, some of which date back more than a century, conjure up a distinctive sense of witnessing generations of people traversing a specific time and space by engaging in shared social activities which impart to them a sense of belonging. Walking, skating or cycling along the walkway parallel to the river, one is invariably struck by the civic congeniality of a space configured, once again, into a distinctive place susceptible to interpretation along the hermeneutic axes of Heidegger's 'fourfold' and Lefebvre's typology of socially produced spaces, not least in the case of the many sculptures encountered along the way – including Lipchitz's The Spirit of Enterprise, with its paradigmatic connotations of America's pioneering role in history. Even the thought of Star Trek's imaginary starship, the Enterprise (which can hardly be avoided), is consonant with this pioneering spirit, and it is not difficult to see in this sculptural work (as indeed in much of the architecture in this proximity) – within its setting – an instantiation of the combined presence of 'earth' (physical desire and striving, as well as resistance to complete transparency), 'mortals' (the meaning of limited human time), 'sky' (the challenge to live creatively beyond existing

boundaries), and 'divinities' (giving meaning to life through constructive, self-transcending activity, drawing on the 'deepest' source of meaning in one's life, personally and collectively).

It is impossible to enumerate, let alone do justice to, all the spaces in Philadelphia – appropriately, the city of 'brotherly love' or friendship – which have been transformed into 'places' that instantiate the sway of the 'fourfold' in various ways, usually by a combination of the architectural design of buildings and the spatial interrelationships between different buildings of such distinctive design. As the example of the Philadelphia Art Museum illustrates, the architectural design of a building determines both the quality of its interior space(s) and the space immediately exterior to it, but in both cases the design of other buildings in proximity to it, as well as the modulation of the spaces connecting them, interacts with, and modifies the space(s) of the building in question. Hence, looking down Broad Street from inside Philadelphia's City Hall, one is aware of the effect of this dialogue between the exterior 'Avenue of the Arts' and the interior civic space, namely to allow the spectator a vivid experience of the city as a place where creative cultural pursuits are intimately connected with municipal policy and functions – something that confirms the interpretive pertinence of the 'fourfold' and of understanding space as socially 'produced'.

As for the buildings and places encountered on Broad Street, suffice it to say that Philadelphia would not have had such a strong association with the arts if the latter were not enshrined in these buildings and the manner in which they interconnect spatially. Architecturally speaking, for instance, the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts surpasses its pragmatic function as art school and repository of a fine collection of early American art: both its exterior and its interior testify to its being an artwork itself, in which a variety of stylistic influences converge. But more than being an artwork, in its role as the oldest art school in the United States it also demonstrates – as does the new Kimmel Center – what Karsten Harries has described as the 'ethical function of architecture' (a notion compatible with Heidegger's 'fourfold') in a book with that title. The fact that the Academy has provided students of art with a congenial space for pursuing artistic studies for a long time is witness to the success with which it has transformed ordinary space into a 'place' ethically oriented towards the arts, and a place, moreover, that embodies the 'fourfold' in a tangible manner.

Conclusion

This extended reflection on some aspects of architecture in Philadelphia could easily be extended to any city in the world, including South Africa, but with the *caveat* in mind, that not every city would yield as rich a harvest of 'fourfold'-compatible architectural experience as the 'city'-part of Philadelphia (some of its suburbs would surely fail in this respect) or of Istanbul. There are parts of Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth that would satisfy the touchstone found in Heidegger's and Lefebvre's work with regard to architecture, but other parts would fail dismally. The mere fact that one does come across architecture imbued with the qualities demanded by these normative notions, however, is sufficient to evoke a kind of existential astonishment on the part of anyone who is susceptible to the varied voices in which the 'fourfold' addresses us. Astonished at what? At the sheer miracle of being, and of being able to discover, not only in the most architecturally breathtaking of buildings, but even in the ostensibly most ordinary of experiences or places, a world, or 'fourfold', of meaning, an easily forgotten ethos by which to find orientation in what often seems to be a world lacking all sense of direction. And such discoveries affirm that there is indeed a (perhaps primordially spatial) 'law' by the acknowledgement of which truly 'sustainable' architecture may be recognized.

Notes

1　On previous occasions (see Olivier 1998, 2003 and 2009) I elaborated on the 'fourfold' in the context of the pertinence of Heidegger's thought for art and architecture, and for a specific instance of installation art, respectively. On two of these occasions, I also looked at Heidegger's earlier introduction of the concept of 'earth' in a somewhat different sense than it bears within the context of the 'fourfold', as well as its counterpart, namely 'world'.

2　Although it could be argued that 'divinities' may be linked to 'earth', as it marks the pluriform manifestation of something that is essentially inscrutable.

3　What follows here regarding Philadelphia is an abridged and modified part of an essay that was previously published in *The Schuylkill Valley Journal of the Arts* (Olivier 2005).

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Bert Olivier is Professor of Philosophy at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. He holds an M.A. and D.Phil. in Philosophy, has held Postdoctoral Fellowships in Philosophy at Yale University in the USA on more than one occasion, and has held a Research Fellowship at The University of Wales, Cardiff. At NMMU he teaches various sub-disciplines of philosophy, as well as film studies, media and architectural theory, and psychoanalytic theory. He has published widely in the philosophy of culture, of art and architecture, of cinema, music and literature, as well as the philosophy of science, epistemology, psychoanalytic, social, media and discourse-theory. In 2004 he was awarded the Stals Prize for Philosophy by the South African Academy for Arts and Sciences, in 2005 he received the award of Top Researcher at NMMU for the period 1999 to 2004, in 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 he received the award for Faculty Researcher of the Year in the Faculty of Arts, and in 2008 and 2009 also that of Top Researcher at NMMU.