God made the earth, but the earth had no base and so under the earth he made an angel. But the angel had no base and so under the angel's feet he made a crag of ruby. But the crag had no base and so under the crag he made a bull endowed with four thousand eyes, ears, nostrils, mouths, tongues and feet. But the bull had no base and so under the bull he made a fish named Bahamut, and under the fish he put water, and under the water he put darkness, and beyond this men's knowledge does not reach[1].

The Shadow of God in the Garden of the Philosopher.

Parc de La Villette in Paris in the context of contemporary philosophical concerns

Part I

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[1] J. L. Borges, M. Guerrero, *The Book of Imaginary Beings*, revis. enl., transl. N. T. di Giovanni, Harmondsworth 1974, s. 25 (s.v. *Bahamut*).

[2] See E. W. Lane, *Arabian Society in the Middle Ages: Studies from the Thousand and One Nights* (London 1883, footnote 115: "In Ibn–Esh–Shineh, 'Kuyothán'; the orthography of this word is doubtful, as the vowel–points are not written. As the tradition is related in Ibn-El-Wardee, this bull takes a breath twice in the course of every day (or twenty–four hours): when he exhales, the sea flows; and when he inhales, it ebbs. But it must not be imagined that none of the Arabs has any notion of the true theory of tides: the more learned among them explain this phenomenon by the influence of the moon. Many of the Arabs attribute earthquakes to the shanking of this bull".

[3] See *ibidem*, footnote 116: "In Ibn–El-Wardee, a quantity of sand is introduced between the bull and the fish".

[4] See *ibidem*, footnote 117: "Ed–Dameer-ee, on the authority of Wahb Ibn–Munebbih, quoted El-Ishákee, 1.1". All the additions in the quotation come from Lane.

The above quoted excerpt from *Manual de zoología fantástica* (1957) by Jorge Louis Borges is based on the work of Edward William Lane *Arabian Society in the Middle Ages: Studies from the Thousand and One Nights* (London 1883), of which the relevant excerpt on pages 106–107 reads as follows:

> The earth [under which appellation are here understood the seven earths] was, it is said, originally unstable; „therefore God created an angel of immense size and of the utmost strength, an ordered him to go beneath it [*i.e.* beneath the lowest earth] and place it on his shoulders; and his hands extended beyond the east and west, and grasped the extremities of the earth [or, as related in Ibn-El-Wardee, the seven earths] and held it [or them]. But there was no support for his feet; so God created a rock of ruby, in which were seven thousand perforations, and from each of this perforations issued a sea, the size of which none knoweth but God, whose name be exalted; then he ordered this rock to stand under the feet of the angel. But there was no support for the rock: therefore God created a huge bull, with four thousand eyes and the same number of ears, noses, mouths, and feet; between every two of which was a distance of five hundred years' journey; and God, whose name be exalted, ordered this bull to beneath the rock; and he bore it on his back and his horns. The name of this bull is Kuyootà[2]. But there was no support for the bull: therefore God, whose name be exalted, created an enormous fish, that no one could look upon on account of its vast size, and the flashing of its eyes, and their greatness; for it is said that if all the seas were placed in one of its nostrils, they would appear like a grain of mustard-seed in the midst of a desert: and God, whose name be exalted, commanded the fish to be a support to the feet of the bull[3]. The name of this fish is Bahamoot [Behemoth]. He placed, as its support, water; and under water, darkness; and the knowledge of mankind fails as to what is under the darkness"[4].

Introduction

The basic problem in formulating a diagnosis of the present condition of art, including the presumption of its death, which has been returning since the times of Immanuel Kant and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, is the simultaneous existence of several different traditions of its understanding. However they may be wished to be separated, only together they are able to reflect the diversity of current manifestations of artistic activity. In this situation, the metaphor of art's achievement of the end and its transition to the state of the past is just as justified as they are the claims of its exuberance and

avant-garde character also in the world of pure intellect. Statements about the end of art or, on the contrary, its running into the future, seem to be as worn out as they are inevitable. However, do the artists' current works offer an opportunity to use both ultimate metaphors, those of life and death, and to find the point at which they converge?

Such considerations should begin with a reminding that the seemingly obvious concept of art has changed historically. Władysław Tatarkiewicz described this changeability in a way that can now be considered classic already in the 1970s[5]. However, the richly developed diversity of the concept of art characterised by Tatarkiewicz should be complemented by the divisions suggested by Jacques Rancière[6]. According to them, the most frequently cited tradition of perceiving art is a formula that can be called "Platonic". It assumes that the works of artists should be a visible representation of a higher, invisible world, in Christianized neoplatonism – the divine one. Plato himself was opposed to art imitating reality and valued works that reflected the world of ideas more. Such a concept was at the basis of all religious art, but it also returned in the views of philosophers who were sceptical about religion. An example of the latter can be Arthur Schopenhauer, in whose theory all arts objectified Will by means of ideas occupying a lower level in relation to the supreme category[7]. Music, however, has been attributed with the possibility of imitating the whole of Will as closely as the Ideas themselves which objectify Will. Within the "Platonic" vision of art there are also demands that art should also refer to important ideas created by human, especially to the idea of the nation. Often repeated in the 21st century aggressive statements against art suspected of weakening social integrity, especially in countries where religious or political authoritarianisms are maintained, indicate the permanence of the "Platonic" concept of art.

The second, equally influential theory of art can be linked with the philosophy of Aristotle. In some contrast to "Platonic", it assumes the closeness of art and life, the servitude of the artist and their products to the various needs of life. According to this assumption, works of art are made for human benefit, starting from the almost natural need for decoration, through works visually propagating the content of faith, politics or morality, to the products of craftsmanship (once) or aesthetically sophisticated products of technology (nowadays). Taking into account the eternity of the occurrence of art in this convention, it should be less surprising to see the phenomenon known as the "aestheticization of everyday life", which, combined with the Marx theory of commodity fetishism, is supposed to define the times of postmodernism[8]. The anthropologically oriented history of art, connected with the views of Hans Belting, David Freedberg or Georges Didi-Huberman, emphasizing not only the practical applications of art, but also its relations with the body, also falls within this, probably the oldest of all, view on art[9].

[5] **W. Tatarkiewicz**, *Sztuka. Dzieje pojęcia*, [in:] **idem**, *Dzieje sześciu pojęć. Sztuka, piękno, forma, twórczość, odtwórczość, przeżycie estetyczne*, Warszawa 1975.

[6] **J. Rancière**, *The Aesthetic Revolution and Its Outcomes. Employments of Autonomy and Heteronomy*, "New Left Review" 2002, no. 14, p. 135; the same issue in a broader sense – see **idem**, *Le Partage du sensible. Esthétique et politique*, Paris 2000, pp. 26–32.

[7] **A. Schopenhauer**, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, wyd. 2, Leipzig 1844, § 52, pp. 289–290.

[8] **M. Featherstone**, *Postmodernism and the Aestheticization of Everyday Life*, [in:] **idem**, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, London 1991, pp. 65–66.

[9] **L. Steinberg's** book *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion* (Chicago 1983, 1996), is an example of the persistence of the way of thinking about artistry as an activity closely related to the body in more recent art history, tracking, among others, the erection of the member of Christ on the Cross (*ibidem*, s. 298–300). Carnality and sexuality of architecture was described by **M. Wigley** in his book *White Walls, Designers Dresses: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture*, Cambridge [Massachusetts.] 1995.

[10] E. Cassirer, *An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture*, Garden City [New York] 1944, pp. 176–217.

[11] H.–G. Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode. Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*, Tübingen 2010, pp. 102–103.

[12] Criticism of this position was not taken up until 1960s in the work of L. Dittmann *Stil, Symbol, Struktur. Studien zu Kategorien der Kunstgeschichte* (Aachen 1967) and in the lecture of E. Gombrich *In Search of Cultural History* (Oxford 1969).

[13] See A. C. Danto, *Art and Meaning*, [in:] *idem*, *The Madonna of the Future. Essays in a Pluralistic Art World*, Berkeley 2001, p. xxx: "Contemporary art replaces beauty, everywhere threatened, with meaning". A transition of a work of art into the sphere of thought is completed by its interpretation, which gives it the status of a "theoretical thing" (*res speculativa*); see in this regard: A. C. Danto, *Artworks and Real Things*, "Theoria" 1973, no. 1/3, p. 15: "The moment something is considered an artwork, it becomes subject to an interpretation. It owes its existence as an artwork to this and when its claim is defeated, it loses its interpretation and becomes a mere thing. The interpretation is in some measure a function of the artistic context of the work; it means something different depending upon its art–historical locations, its antecedents and the like".

The third tradition of understanding art is connected with the aesthetics of Immanuel Kant. The philosopher from Königsberg, situating the experience of beauty next to cognitive power and the ability to make moral choices, made art an insoluble problem. For if aesthetic experiences are non-conceptual and disinterested, which can be translated into the belief that art does not enable cognition and has no practical value, then the question arises: what can be said about such a strongly autonomic activity? Are formal art games similar to logical and mathematical ones? Art in the shadow of Kantian thought must have ceased to be a subject, because the question of its status became more important. Turning art towards oneself was as apt as it was questionable, hence since Kant's time the a-cognitiveness and amorality of art has been called into question. Even for neocantists, as in the case of Ernst Cassirer, art was a kind of cognition, interpretation of reality and a form of language of its description[10]. The cognitive aspirations of art and the diversity of its entanglement in the needs of life were also the subject of Hans Georg Gadamer's deliberations[11].

In Hegel's opinion, the neutrality of art noticed by Kant was inscribed in the historical scheme, which led to the statement that artistic activity and its products were not always free from intellectual content, but rather became such in the processes of development of consciousness. Reasonableness, therefore, ceased to be expressed by art only over time and when it found its more appropriate representation in philosophy. Paradoxically, however, it is the Hegelian philosophy that is responsible for the long-term conviction that ideas characteristic for a certain time are reflected in art. A decisive part of the works of traditional art history, including works by Max Dvořák, Aby Warburg and Erwin Panofsky, was based on the assumption that epochally important ideas filled works of art with content[12].

The Hegelian thesis about the death of art and the taking over of its tasks by philosophy was questioned by Arthur Coleman Danto. In the writings of the American author, the philozophizing the end of art approximates the philozophizing "the end of philosophy" characteristic of philosophy of deconstruction, by which the term should be understood a kind of reflection addressed not so much to the outside world, but to philosophy itself and its metaphysical foundations. In his texts Danto suggested that art after its "death" not only turned into a philosophy of art, but became a philosophy in its purest form[13]. If we assume that this view is correct, it should be stated that art, in a manner worthy of philosophers' competence, began to deal with the same problems that are currently raised by the philosophical avant-garde. After such an assumption, works of art, once merely illustrating philosophical theses, should now become fully-fledged participants of important philosophical discourses. However, a question has to be asked: what specific conditions would a work, potentially belonging to the world of living art after its death, have to ful-

fil? Secondly: is it empirically possible to indicate a work or a class of works confirming the existence of art that are radically different from the previous ones?

The first condition for the existence of art created after its death would be its non-existence in the world of objects. The works described by Danto, such as Andy Warhol's *Brillo Box*, might have been visually unattractive and dependent on philosophical texts written by artists, but they still existed materially. Their value was based only on meaning, but the question should be asked: have they already reached the level of abstract signs of writing and the subtlety of poetry in accordance with the criteria described by Hegel? A kind interpretation would probably confirm their philosophicality, but discursive elements can also be found in works of the most distant epochs. A work of art born after the death of art would have to fulfil more demanding criteria: it would have to non-exist even more than holes in the ground of Dennis Oppenheim or Robert Morris's cardboards, used by Danto as examples, and moreover it would have to function fully in the context of problems of exceeding metaphysics or questions about God posed by the most hardened philosophical atheists of today. To make it more difficult, it should be added that it should be an architectural work, since architecture, in Hegel's opinion, as the most material of the arts, least adequately represents the absolute Spirit. Multiplying the difficulties and requirements one should demand that this purely intellectual work be indistinguishable from everyday life, common like a street pavement and useful as a playground for children and animals.

Increasing the theoretical demands on the resurrected work in the world of pure spirit, demands that are deliberately exaggerated, cannot, however, deny the fact that it is easy to identify contemporary works of this kind and at the same time to argue that they exist necessarily, which in this case means that they exist beyond the beginning and the end, beyond life and death. As an example of a work desired by the outlined theory it was chosen in this study Parc de La Villette in Paris, whose authorship is suspended between a philosophizing architect Bernard Tschumi, and Jacques Derrida who explores the architecture of philosophy. The park as a genre seems to be the most suitable for considerations on the locating that pollutes the purity of non-existence, since this property of it was manifested already in the time of Eden and remained valid in all its later exemplifications.

In the present study, we will therefore consider how the design of a park in a neglected, at that time, area was entangled in deliberations on Plato's extremely vague statements about the *chôra*; a concept that returned in later philosophy in religious, a-religious and anti-religious contexts to cast on the designed area, a specific non-place, **a shadow of the most embarrassing of all beings, the being of God**[14].

[14] The problem of linking intrinsic meaning of the Parc de La Villette with contemporary theological thought was inspired by **J.–L. Cohens's** article *The Architect in the Philosopher's Garden: Eisenman At La Villette*, [in:] *Cities of Artificial Excavation. The Work of Peter Eisenman, 1978–1988*, ed., introd. **F. Bédard**, Montréal 1994, p. 226. Although Cohen only suggested that the discussion between Derrida and Eisenman goes back to the depths of their common Jewish traditions, the question of God was asked during their correspondence accompanying the design of the Parc de La Villette; see **J. Derrida**, *Letter to Peter Eisenman*, "Assemblage" 1990, no. 12, p. 8.

[15] For the topic of "Grand Travaux" see **A. Fierro**, *The Glass State. The Technology of the Spectacle. Paris, 1981–1998*, Cambridge [Massachusetts] 2003, pp. 2–41; for the topic of Parc de La Villlette see *ibidem*, pp. 182–205.

[16] See **A. Tate**, **M. Eaton**, *Great City Parks*, New York 2015, p. 135.

[17] See **D. Voldman**, *Le Parc de La Villette entre Thélème et Disneyland*, "Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'Histoire" 1985, no. 8, p. 21.

[18] See **A. Tate**, **M. Eaton**, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

[19] See *Architecture Competition and the Production of Culture, Quality and Knowledge: An International Inquiry*, ed. **J.–P. Chupin**, **C. Cucuzzella**, **B. Helal**, Montréal 2015, p. 243 (there also criticism of the competition).

[20] See **E. Winterbourne**, *Architecture and the Politics of Culture in Mitterrand's France*, "Architectural Design" 1995, no. 3/4; cf. also **M. Koops**, *Die Konstruktion nationaler und europäischer Identitäten: am Beispiel der französischen Kulturpolitik unter besonderer Berücksichtung des Parc de la Villette*, Osnabrück 2002.

The context of founding the park

The creation of the park was closely related to François Mitterand's coming to power in France in May 1981. The victory of the socialist in those years could be treated as proof of the final victory of the utopia of a liberal and democratic state with a wide range of welfare and universal prosperity. More than as proof of the end of history, Mitterrand's presidency proved to be the beginning of posthistory and postpolitics based on a fierce struggle for pure prestige. Already in 1983, the head of state forced the government to abandon left-wing economic policy and the Socialist Party was transformed into a power group without the ambition to propose radical changes. Perhaps, however, the claim to abandon the ideals of socialism is imprecise and the left has entered a new, less political state?

The belief that Mitterrand was one of the best presidents in the history of post-war France was probably due to his involvement in cultural policy, the most spectacular example of which were the so-called Grand Projects (*Grand Travaux*, officially known as *Grandes Opérations d'Architecture et d'Urbanisme*)[15]. Even before the destruction of the economic visions that were supposed to distinguish this presidency and turned out to be a pipe dream, cultural policy became a tool for creating a common conviction that the new government was unique. On the territory of slaughterhouses closed since the mid-1970s, in the 19th district of Paris, Mitterand appeared already two months after his election as president[16]. With this visit, the concepts of creating a park in this area, already considered for several years, began to take the form of administrative decisions. In March 1982 the Grand Projects programme was announced, including the Parc de La Villette. On 8 April the same year, the Minister of Culture Jacques Lang announced a competition for a park project[17], which in December selected a group of nine winners, and on 25 March 1983 the final winner – Bernard Tschumi[18].

It would be extremely difficult to accuse the lack of objectivity in the choice of an international jury consisting of eminent figures from many different fields, including the excellent Italian architect Vittorio Gregotti and Anglo-American architectural theoretician Joseph Rykwert, but it can be seen that the choice made by judges, though controversial, was surprisingly consistent with the intellectual basis of Mitterrand's endeavours. Tschumi's project also had a political dimension. If the decision to build a park was a state decision, i.e. a decision of an institutionalised community, then a question arises about the characteristic features of this community, whose forward-looking component was to be the area defined as the "park of the 21st century"?

It is now out of the possibility to examine the influence of François Barré[19], representing the political world, on the decisions of the 21-member jury, but the outcome of the competition contained the quintessence of left-wing philosophy[20]. Although the details of the

jury's decision are impossible to reconstruct today, it can undoubtedly be said that Tschumi's concept was the most distinct and its specificity was the lack of application of hierarchical systems, deprivation of an orderly structure and blurring of boundaries, which together gives stimulus to associate it with the ideological tendencies of the modern left. The specific openness or even semantic emptiness, as well as the lack of connections with a specific set of meanings, also bring this idea closer to the modernist avant-garde.

The closeness of views of Tschumi and Mitterrand is confirmed by the content of the relevant *passus* from the interview which Yoshio Futagawa conducted with the architect[21]. Tschumi reported in it on a meeting with the President, during which he presented him with a several-metre-long board showing four different parks: the Baroque foundation from Versailles of Louis XIV, the 19th century Les Buttes-Chaumont in Paris with a landscape character, Parque Ecológico de Águas Claras in Brasilia, which represented the 20th century, and Parc de La Villette foretelling the next century. Although Mitterrand's opinion at the time seemed to the designer to be restrained and enigmatic, further developments already indicated his unequivocal support for the realisation of the work, even when he was opposed by his advisers. Simultaneously with the construction of the individual sectors of the park of La Villette in Paris, Parc André Citroën was also created, supported by the mayor of the city and political competitor of Mitterrand, the Gaullist Jacques Chirac. Although Brigitte Weltman-Aron's study highlights the similarities between these gardens[22], the suspension of work on La Villette after the taking office of president by a representative of the right-wing may indicate a different political orientation of Tschumi's intentions. However, they should not be treated as purely political, because in general they were "not-pure", but rather violating the rules of their own field and displacing the borders of others. In addition, their realization occurred as if outside of visibility, in the sphere of thinking treated as action or experience. What is visible there makes sense only as a form of depraved intellect, an eroticised philosophy.

The problem with Tschumi's work brings to mind the situation with Daniel Libeskind's Jüdisches Museum in Berlin, which aroused horror when shortly after its construction it showed its empty interiors and the vacuum after the murdered which it symbolized, made it extremely poignant. However, when it was filled with didactic exhibitions, it tamed itself and shifted its speech into the area of attractions and pleasure. The Parc de La Villette similarly fulfils its assumptions by activating mainly its philosophical premises; it is an area of becoming of thinking, according to the post-Hellenic Danto's doctrine. The park functions as a conscious intellect, so in the way which Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling assumed for a work of art long before Danto. Giving an advantage its philosophical power, it fulfils the conditions for art to function after the end of its previous formulas.

[21] **Y. Futagawa**, *Interview with Bernard Tschumi*, "GA Dokument Extra" 1997, no. 10, pp. 35–36.

[22] See **B. Weltman-Aron**, *Rhizome and Khôra: Designing Garden with Deleuze and Derrida*, "Bulletin de la Societé Américaine de Philosophie de Langue Française" 2005, no. 2.

[23] **B. Tschumi**, *Cinégram Folie: Le Parc de la Villette. Paris, Nineteenth Arrondisse–ment*, Princeton 1987.

Tschumi's theoretical assumptions

In 1987, when Tschumi's essay on Parc de La Villette was published[23], the political directness of the views of this participant in the Paris events of May 1968 was filtered through the concepts of Roland Barthes, Phillippe Sollers and Jacques Derrida. Instead of explicit calls for political change, Tschumi characterized architecture as such an element of the social structure, that praised stability, is saturated with the violence of old regimes and completely inadequate to the current conditions of collective existences. The changes in architecture suggested in the theses about La Villette, as in aesthetic utopias from the times of Friedrich Schiller to Le Corbusier, were to replace purely political activity. According to Tschumi, it was no coincidence that the previous architects presented themselves as creators of forms that harmoniously correlated forms and functions, structures and meanings, programmes and contexts. Works based on the principles of a consistent composition of the characteristics of a work presented themselves as homogeneous because their coherence was supposed to reflect, but also influence the order and integration of the community. The problem was that modern societies can no longer function well on the basis of the principles of uniformity or clear order. Similarly, an architect can no longer present themselves as a strong, autonomous personality producing works separated from other areas of culture. Nor is it possible to maintain the concept of a work clearly expressing intentional or unintentional content.

New cultural conditions lead to decisive changes in the concepts of architecture, creator and work. The newly-conceived field of constructing does not seek a clear definition of its features, but rather is based on indecisiveness, disintegration and decay. The architect must be oriented towards resistance to the tradition of their vocation and social expectations. In turn, the work should be produced not so much with regard to the principles of formal composition, but rather as an effect of questioning the structures, orders and procedures used so far in the design of architectural work. Taking into account inspirations and achievements from other areas, such as theories of literature, psychology, film or philosophy, the designer consciously weakens their independence and autonomy of the field. A disintegrated and decentralized society must gain an ally in a product of non-traditional techniques of object emergence devoid of unity and meaning.

The changed modes of architectural creation emphasize, first of all, the conflicting premises of a potential work. The assumed work is to reveal that it is not possible to achieve compatibility between form and function, the space being developed and the activities of those who use it after, and finally between the structure of the work and its commonly understood meaning. Correlations accepted so far as possible to achieve, such as the compatibility between form and

function, belong to the category of social and artistic ideologies forcing passivity and submissiveness of individuals towards past reasons. The architecture envisaged in Tschumi's essays could no longer function as an element of the social norm. Instead of accepting unconscious imperatives, techniques of violating rules and undermining recognized norms were propagated. So it is no coincidence that the most spectacular elements of the Parc de La Villette, i.e. the red pavilions, referred both to small buildings typical of landscape parks, described as *folies*, as well as to the word *folie*, which means madness.

In his comments on the Parc de La Villette, Tschumi discussed many possible strategies for shaping architectural plans. His recommendations stated that instead of striving for synthesis, the designer should have used analysis, disconnection and fragmentation of the components of the work. The isolated elements could then be replicated after highlighting possible differences between the reiterated elements. This procedure can be described as the creation of variants (variations). The transformations of the Parc de La Villette's initial red cube can be an example of the multiplication technique combined with distortion. For this kind of "mechanical operations", Tschumi found inspiration in Gérad Genett's work *Palimpsests. Literature in the Second Degree,* in Georges Perec's novels, and more generally in the milieu of *Tel Quel* magazine and the group of writers from OuLiPo (Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle). Tschumi equated also the multiplication of differences and their juxtaposition with the concept of *différance*, characteristic for the philosophy of Derrida[24].

Tschumi's texts often refer to the notions of dissociation and dysfunction, to which he gave a new understanding. In his opinion, the existing architecture was understood as a static system traditionally based on utility, creating meaningful forms, adjusting its relation to the environment and ensuring structural durability. Instead, he proposed disconnected and even conflictual treatment of the decisive conditions of the emerging work. He defined dysfunction as a formula for shifting assumptions from their established position towards exceeding, violating the rules and abolishing limitations. In this doctrine, work on the edge, border or margin of architecture was mainly reduced to polemics with the traditional treatment of architecture, especially with the emphasis on its autonomy. According to Tschumi, the history of construction is focused on hiding and suppressing possible alternatives in determining the goals of building. The history of the fields emphasizing masterpieces and great artists have the task of paralyzing creation and replacing it with re-creation. Dysfunction, dissociation or crossing borders in Tschumi's system is mainly a polemic with the separation of architecture and philosophy imposed by tradition. Referring to the works of Joyce, Artaud and Bataille, he pointed to the blurring of the division between literature and philosophy. However, increasing the position of philosophy in

[24] **B. Tschumi**, *Parc de la Villette, Paris*, [in:] *Deconstruction in Architecture*, ed. **A. C. Papadakis,** „An Architectural Design Profile" 1988, No. 72, London 1988, p. 35: "The concept of disjunction is incompatible with a static, autonomous, structural view of architecture. But it is not anti–autonomy or anti–structure; it simply implies constant, mechanical operations that systematically produce dissociation (Derrida would call it *différance*) in space and time, where an architectural element only functions by colliding with a programmatic element, with the movement of bodies, or whatever. In this manner, disjunction becomes a systematic and theoretical tool for the making of architecture".

non-philosophical fields cannot be considered the same as the Hegelian doctrine of philosophy taking over the main tasks of the spirit, since philosophy is also now going beyond its tradition. Yet, autonomy is not overthrown, but disrupted. To be crossed, the borders must remain intact.

Tschumi's park project did not show the intention of distributing functions in the predicted area, but presented three independent layers to be superimposed on the area and used to match them with applications suitable for the city garden. The separation of elements of the park, like the already existing articulation of space, were treated as secondary to the abstract system. The most important drawing of the general layout presented a kind of axonometric diagram of three levels, which were to be finally joined at ground level [il. 1]. The upper layer included two main arteries crossing at right angles and supplemented them with an image of a fractured circle, several lines similar to the letter L and two other ones intersecting almost perpendicularly. All elements are connected by a line winding along the terrain like a film tape in a large projection device. The two main axes that intersect the park are the streets defined as Galerie de La Villette and Galerie de l'Ourcq (along the Canal de l'Ourcq) from Allée du Canal on the other side of the watercourse. Within a fragmentary circle planted with trees, a central park meadow called Praire du Cercle is located. A similar meadow, the Praire du Triangle, is also located between the slightly open arms of two intersecting wooded alleys: Allée du Zenith and Allée du Bélvèdere [il. 2]. Along a winding line, twelve thematic gardens were established. Each element of the abstract drawing has therefore been used to connect it in real space with meadows and alleys typical of parks. It may even seem that the lines scattered in the drawing have something in common with a similarly disordered English landscape park.

The second level shown in Tschumi's drawing showed a network made up of intersecting lines, the intersections of which are emphasized by forty-two small red cubes imposed on the sketch. As in the case of the upper layer operating with lines, the designed grid was also used to create a system of small buildings in real space. To a large extent, regardless of the other layers and the landform features, 26 pavilions were erected in the park where, after the grid plan had been imposed on the surface of the garden layout, the intersections of the lines were located randomly. They were not placed in places where other park buildings already stood, although in a few cases the pavilions are connected with the old buildings [il. 3]. Each of the pavilions was a variation of a red cube with ten-metre-long edges [il. 4]. Named after the old tradition of park buildings, the *folies* were used to place cafes, information and ticket points, a belvedere and other functions proper to parks [il. 5]. Although the *folies* evoked associations with buildings such as the red telephone booths in London or the projects of Russian

constructivists, they did not, in principle, symbolise any content and did not inform about their functions. "Le cases sont vides" – as Tschumi stressed.

The next layer was created by planes and, to a greater extent than the other two components of the project, it depended on the actual terrain. Tschumi showed the outlines of already existing buildings, such as Grande Halle and Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie, but at the same time suggested quite free shapes of the surface for other functions [il. 6]. Imposing all three layers on a real surface resulted in a structure that was not very coherent, which, however, was the designer's goal.

The unusual shape of the park's plan resulted from Tschumi's extensive system of theoretical assumptions, which assumed the existence of complex relations between the character of society and architecture. According to Tschumi, traditional values of architecture, not only Vitruvian triada: *utilitas–firmitas–venustas*, but also ordinary aspirations for a unified form, or legible content expressed by appropriate shapes, are an expression of authoritarian systems and survived despite a clear change in cultural conditions. In order to function properly, old political systems needed the existence of values which, although they had a historical metric, were shown as natural, eternal or rooted in the supreme Being. During an in-depth analysis, they usually turned out to be a combination of random and poorly motivated beliefs, which were then even more strongly presented as unchangeable and punishably inviolable. The norms separated in the sphere of religiosity focused on precepts concerning the body and sexuality. Architecture both resulted from such orders and shaped them. The links were manifold in this respect, ranging from the metaphysics of both disciplines to specific, practical solutions in the area of space design. A characteristic example of normativity hidden in architecture are the walls of old cities and control systems at their borders. Although such clear forms of limitations do not exist anymore, other, very numerous ways of controlling the body and imposing certain behaviours on it with hidden violence have survived in the field of space organisation. An example is even a museum building, where the viewer is led under the watchmen's eye through logically arranged rooms and forced to bend his head in order to read a plaque under a painting hanging on the wall. The museum is also a form of a monument and the call "remember!", persuading the visitors to respect the collected set of values. Not only does the visitor's body undergo matrixing and maceration in an unnoticeable way, but also their mind. The system of gestures and behaviours required for touring is reminiscent of the movement of bodies proper to religious rituals. Tschumi pointed out that a similar kind of violence in architecture has so far been an essential component of it. Designing a park in changed conditions required loosening the restrictions on users' freedom.

[25] An author who devoted a lot of attention to this issue was **R. Banham**; see *idem*, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*, London 1960; cf. also **P. Tournikiotis**, *The Historiography of Modern Architecture*, Cambridge [Massachusetts] – London 1999, pp. 145–146.

[26] See **J. Derrida**, *Point de Folie – Maintenant l'Architecture*, [in:] **B. Tschumi**, *La Case Vide: La Villette 1985*, London 1986, s. 8: "l'architecture doit avoir un sens, elle doit le presenter et par là signifier [...] il s'agit toujours de mette l'architecture en service, et au service".

[27] **B. Tschumi**, *Parc de La Villette, Paris*, [in:] *Deconstruction. Omnibus Volume*, ed. **A. Papadakis**, **C. Cooke**, **A. Benjamin**, New York 1989, p. 177: "In its case, the constraints of the built realization both expanded and restricted the research. It expanded it, in so far as the very real economic, political and technical constraints of the operation demanded and ever–increasing sharpening of the theoretical argumentation: the project became better as difficulties increased".

Architecture also maintained violent relations on a deeper, metaphysical level. Its orders were based not only on the so-called architectural orders, but also on causal relations between forms and functions, especially the subordination of shapes to specific applications. Modernist architecture, denying old traditions, only increased the logical relationship between these components of architecture. The problem was also that the rationalization of construction methods was a continuation of the elements of coercion and aiming at a strong social order. It should not be also forgotten that the majority of artistic formulas used by the masters of modernism, such as Walter Gropius, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe or Le Corbusier, was only a simplified version of classicism[25]. For Tschumi, most of the procedures, which could be described as composing, were a variation of integrative or synthesising activities and expressed the idea of order. For this reason, the basic issue was to use design that would apply disconnection, disintegration or, to use the terms of Tschumi, disjunction and dysfunction instead of the principle of order.

Rethinking the principles of old architecture led to their depreciation, but without rejection of architecture itself. The problem was difficult, because architecture cannot replace construction with demolition, purposefulness with pointlessness, expression of certain content with meaninglessness. A simple negation would not serve anything, as architecture must – as Derrida wrote – be on duty and must have meaning[26]. The impasse in this respect could have been overcome by the intensification of the theoretical factor[27]. In Tschumi's opinion, the value of the project increased with the strengthening of the role of theory. The existing architecture was characterized by reflectionlessness and recognition of the inviolability of basic principles. This led to a repetition of architecture even when it proclaimed – like modernism – a profound change. In a situation where architecture only strengthened its character, a more serious reform could be achieved only by undermining its doctrinal foundations. The description of "architecture of architecture" was the beginning of its redefinition. The study of the fundamental values of the domain broke the links that make up its traditional image. As a result of analyses of this kind, there was a clutter of fragments requiring ordering in accordance with the disordered nature of contemporary culture. What needed to be recognized as the distinguishing features of architecture was maintained, but functionalised in relation to the needs of societies with less authoritarian inclinations than before. The modeled space maintained the rank of the present state in all its indefiniteness and stood open to the future democracy.

Tschumi's architecture was weakened as architecture, which did not mean that it ceased to be a design of conditions for the behaviour of the community. The series of transformations did not change it mainly in its most indescribable properties. The architect's extraction of architectural possibilities that escaped the name owed

much to Derrida's philosophy and his "other philosophy" proved to be helpful in the creation of "other architecture". The name was replaced in it by an idiom and signature. Making architecture philosophical in the sense of deconstruction was made possible by activating the same features escaping the notions that aroused Derrida's interest. The blurring of borders without losing autonomy meant blurring the transition between philosophy and architecture and, moreover, their politicisation, association with psychoanalytic, literary, film and theological theories. Architecture constituted itself on its peripheries and its blurred borders were widening to the size of new territories.

A separate question was Tschumi's approach to the issue of significance. Both in old and modernist architecture, the content external to the object was signalled by specific forms. The associations were historical and changeable, but some architectural circles considered it necessary indispensable, to maintain relations between certain shapes and the meanings attributed to them. Conservatism, which propagated such behaviour and appeared, among others, in the historizing version of postmodernism, sometimes manifested itself in aggressive statements. In this respect, Tschumi referred to the views of Vincent Scully, who considered the preservation of tradition as the most important task of architecture, and the search for newer principles as a manifestation of stupidity and an act of destruction[28]. These attacks strengthened the image of the differences between the opponents and contributed to emphasizing the position, which in the work of the French architect was occupied (taken, held?) by dismantling the connections between architectural signs and unambiguous content. Tschumi deliberately initiated a conflict with the "obsession with presence", by which he specifically understood the conviction that forms can be permanently correlated with a definable ideological message. He postulated focusing rather on the nature of the signs themselves and combining them with other signs, without taking into account the meaning. Rejection of a fixed resource of messages was a shift of interest to the production of new, uncertain and unstable meanings. When the architectural sign ceases to symbolize what exists and to refer to the allegedly source reality, it begins to perform the task of evoking what does not exist and finally it goes beyond what can be expected. Going beyond existence and being, it opens up politically to the future democracy and theologically to God who does not exist. The park did not mean anything, but it gave room for the appearance of some predecessor of possible meaning to come.

The definition of the values arousing opposition in Tschumi was accompanied by a programme of new procedures. Dysfunctionality, as well as other terms mentioned by the architect, such as dispersion, dissociation or disruption, despite their negative character, turned out to be possible design tools to be used. The first element

28 **Idem**, *Six Concepts*, [in:] **idem**, *Architecture and Disjunction*, Cambridge [Massachusetts] – London 1996, p. 46.

of the proposed set of procedures was "superimposition", which can be treated as a variant of philosophical deconstruction specific to architecture. Thus, for example, the juxtaposition of three abstract drawings with the area already possessing its articulation intensi-fied the incompatibility of the existing parts of the concept and, by the way, the conventionality of earlier architectural notations. In this way the difference was revealed. The three independent layers jux-taposed together in the project were to be perceived as incoherent, conflicting and not bringing the necessary order of functions. One could expect that this kind of plan, used to regulate the alignment of avenues, gardens or the location of buildings, would result in an un-pleasant impression of disorder. A park or a garden for a diverse soci-ety, requiring a space for free play with content, could not, however, reflect the imaginary universal order of the cosmos, allegedly only logical logic or the simplifications imposed by the work of reason.

The second characteristic formula of the layout was the use of a grid, in which the park *folies* were to be placed in the nodal points. Initially, it could be supposed that the introduced grid was a rational form that imposed order. It could be associated with the Mercator grid, but also recalled the preferences that modernist and later archi-tects had for it[29]. However, after being applied in the site, it is noticed that the long distances between the intersections make the network not bring a sense of intense ordering. Situated in nodes one hundred and twenty metres apart, the *folies* combine with a diverse surround-ing and give the impression of being located both regularly and free-ly. Paradoxically, the grid of red dots argues with rationality rather than expressing it. The irregular edges of the park are not disturbed by it and the area of the whole foundation can be seen as a sewn piece of canvas applied to the city tissue. The grid has no beginning, no end, no centre, does not hierarchize and does not impose anything. Tschumi wrote about its earlier applications in his projects that it was sometimes a mediator between heterogeneous components. If the notion of mediation were to be developed in relation to it, it could now be compared to a computer network or other media network that connects dispersed intelligence without the possibility of its integra-tion into an integrated self. The *folies* in this comparison would play the role of small pieces of writing or image.

The films play a key role in the character of the park. They con-sist of red steel cubes with a side of more than ten metres using a grid motif. Sometimes they lack filling walls and then the pattern appears very clearly [il. 7]. Equally often the cube is complemented with additional forms: cylinders, circles, spiral stairs, large ramps or wavy canopies [il. 8]. In a few cases, the *folies* are attached to existing 19th century buildings, such as Folie L8 (Théâtre Paris-Villette) and Folie N8 (Folie Janvier) [il. 9]. What the pavilions have in common is the differences between them. Incompatibility of their components was revealed and maintained.

Tschumi's questioning of the whole or the unity as a compositional principle was connected with the attention paid to the fragment. According to the architect, what is considered to be the form of an architectural work is a combination of elements from a specific dictionary. Architecture, unlike ordinary language, is characterized by a much greater ability to create new word-forms, but at the same time it is strongly associated with its tradition limiting the possibility of such changes. Overcoming this situation can be helped by the inspiration from literature research focused on the study of transformational relations, especially the findings made by the aforementioned Genette. In his book's chapter on combinations, Tschumi extensively summarizes Genette's arguments, but also refers to writers who consciously use transformations and permutations (e.g. Raymond Queneau), masters of film editing (Dziga Vertov and Sergei Eisenstein), as well as variations that can be found in Johann Sebastian Bach's fugues[30]. The *folies* are variations that owe a lot to madmen and the role they play in societies. It is no accident that park pavilions are combinations of incompatible and colliding components, which gives them a chance to renew our assessment of mental illness. What was usually considered to be spiritually healthy was sometimes only a conglomerate of accidental components considered to be the norm in closed societies. In turn, what was considered mentally ill sometimes even, in strong communities, played a positive role, among others in the development of art, science, tolerance and democracy. Nowadays, the healthy and the sick can exchange their positions much more freely. The position of the healthy has also decreased, and its manifestations have been recognized as fossilized rationale for enforcing artificial unity and evoking order.

The variations made with the *folies* showed that basic forms can be combined in a very large number of ways. The transformations and permutations, however, were not a purely formal or asemantic game. Although they did not refer to the previously assumed content, they created "words" that could be used in the future. They were not directly functional, but they could be used for both ordinary and newer or even unpredictable applications. Their aim was to open up to what is unknown or unable to find its own form. The *folies*, different from the formulas used so far, referred to the issue of temporality. Because usually architecture used forms already known from the past and adapted them to current needs. But the *folies* referred not so much to the past, but to certain precedencity, a state preceding the obviousness of a certain form. They were strongly connected with the uncertainty and impermanence of the present, but also went beyond the foreseeable future. Especially their relation to the present became the subject of a commentary written by Derrida.

[30] **B. Tschumi**, *Cinégram Folie...*, s. 26.

³¹ **J. Derrida**, *Point de folie – Mainte-nant l'architecture*, [in:] **B. Tschumi**, *La Case...* ; as quoted in: *Architecture. Theory since 1968*, ed. **K. M. Hays**, Cambridge [Mass.] – London 1998, p. 570: "*Maintenant*: this French word will not be translated. Why? For reasons, a whole series of reasons, which may appear along the way, or even at the end of the road". Cf. also *idem*, *Maintenant l'architecture. Conférence donnée au Palazzo delle Albere, Musée d'art la province de Trente (décembre 1985)*, trad. C. Popovi-ci-Toma, [in:] *idem*, *Les Arts de l'espace. Écrits et intervention sur l'architecture*, ed. **G. Michaud**, **J. Masó**, **C. Popovi-ci-Toma**, Paris 2015.

Derrida's comments

Derrida's considerations used the French word *maintenant* as the leading motif, which in the English version of the essay *Point de folie – maintenant l'architecture* remained untranslated³¹. This raises the question: is the word used appropriate to describe the system of red pavilions or is it just an accidental one? It was the constant Derrida's practice to choose single words and to build extensive analyses with their use. Also, the maintenant, with the development of reflections, loses the properties of an unambiguous term and begins to grow into new and unpredictable meanings. As was the case with other words of Derrida's philosophical language, it turns out to be as accidental as it is not accidental, or perhaps neither accidental nor accidental. By presenting his vision of the essence and history of architecture in general and the position occupied by Tschumi's *folies* in it, Derrida inscribes opposing meanings into the term: the *maintenant* can therefore describe pavilions as well as the maintenance of the contract with regard to what should be considered as architecture, and, in the same way, refer to the situation of breaking the contract and surrendering oneself to madness. But never separately. Preservation of the rules must be treated as an excavation of their historical roots and disorderly character. The rules only hide madness, while Tschumi, by subjecting the dismembered cubes to variations, proves that esteemed systems are only a permutation or combination stopped at a particular time. He then sets in motion what is just stopped, but inevitably belonging to the system of changes.

In a simple, dictionary translation, "*maintenant*" means "now", but the absence of English translation was supposed to prevent any suggestion that Derrida would like to present the current state of architecture, or that the *folies* belong to postmodernism, poststructuralism or posthumanism. The problem is rather what is happening to us right now in connection with the task posed by the park. "Right now" is nothing more than the assimilated present. Architecture happening "right now" is the constitution of peculiarity and belonging to a single subjectivity. It happens to us, but it also makes us happen. For what happens through architecture is an experience of spatial articulation necessary to reveal oneself. Separation of space precedes the possibility of understanding, as well as gives space for recording the event. In this case, an architectural event is the same as an event of thinking. The architecture of events created by Tschumi is not the creation of places where something is to happen, nor should its construction be considered as an event, but it is a form of spatiality leading to the appearance of meaning. The event in question is the marking, the activation of meaning, so it is also its violation, i.e. its madness. The *folies* (variations, madness) are a form of question about the happening of the sense/meaning. In this context Derrida reminded the opinions of Kant that reason is found-

ed on architecture, which is the art of building systems[32], arrangements hiding their unclear justifications and given as invariable. The *folies* make the meanings are being deprived of their accumulated certainty and questions arise about their status, which equals the rank of those supposedly eternal with those resulting from program permutations and combinations. Meanings begin to happen as accidental, thus opening up spaces for new possibilities. These spaces are initially empty ("*Le cases sont vides*" – it is worth recalling once again the characteristics of the pavilions given by Tschumi), but because of this they adapt all the more easily to the changed needs. The most difficult question becomes the question of what a perfect emptiness of these places can mean and what unusual need can it be filled with? The question about emptiness is not a question about what is, maybe not even a question about what can be, but above all it raises the question of what is not. The problem, therefore, is to fill the void with what is radically unpredictable, but also de-ontologized and non-theological. It is possible, but it needs to be strengthened by extensive philosophical interpretations and experiences, which will be taken up in the further parts of this paper.

The multitude or rather infinity of the pavilions located in the park space indicates that they evoke not so much madness (*la folie*), but madnesses (*les folies*). Their seriality takes away the meaning of a single imitation and draws attention to their mutual relations, it becomes a study of syntax. Deprivation of the red points of essence and meaning and the focus on semantics reveals how meanings arise, but also how they can disperse and lose meaning. The *folies* are, of course, a record of happening of meanings, but it should be added that it takes place in their dispersion and madness. The meanings are subjected to variations and maintained in this state. The *maintenant* of architecture is therefore a strengthening of the position of the present and a retention of the sense in its independent multiplicity. However, this does not exclude the inheritance of a certain invariability. For variability and invariability are inseparable, they function correctly only as connected with each other.

Architecture as a field has its own architecture, sometimes inclined towards durability, in other cases towards change, but always assembling, constructing. This "architecture of architecture" is both by users inherited, as well as ruling and inheriting them. It is historic, but it penetrates users like something natural. Derrida distinguishes several of its fundamental and unchangeable properties. In a more phenomenological way than one characteristic of deconstruction, it describes a group of unchangeable properties that converge in one postulate: "architecture must have meaning, must make them present and thus signify"[33]. The symbolic content of this meaning depends on the function of architecture, which leads to the conclusion that the "*arché*" of architecture (its foundation) is not architectural in itself, but comes from the outside. What forms the basis of

[32] See **I. Kant**, *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*, Hrsg. **Th. Valentiner**, Leipzig 1919, pp. 685–686: "*Ich verstehe unter einer Architektonik die Kunst der Systeme. Weil die systematische Einheit dasjenige ist, was gemeine Erkenntniß allererst zur Wissenschaft, d. i. aus einem bloßen Aggregat derselben ein System, macht, so ist Architektonik die Lehre des Scientifischen in unserer Erkenntniß überhaupt, und sie gehört also nothwendig zur Methodenlehre*" (A 832/B 860).

[33] **J. Derrida**, *Point...*, p. 572.

the domain is a collection of its dependencies on non-architectural values.

The meaning that the philosopher demands from architecture is the location of experience, the form of habitation, the principle of a home for a man or a god. Works of architecture have always been designed for their presences, allowing them to be. Although the house hid and locked the terror, it gave shelter. The dangerous remained suppressed, although the reduced discomfort of deeper understatement was only seeming. Homelessness locked in a traditional home is currently confronted with homelessness of a newer kind. The indigenous abyssiness and uninhabitedness of being confronted with the conditions of modern existence, in which the house has turned into an urban dwelling, which only to a limited extent can be treated as a refuge for stabilization of existence. The very necessity of strengthening invariability was also eroded.

In opposition to Tschumi's views, who even with some exaggeration advocated violations of old customs, Derrida – as if for balance – evoked the deepest, as if archaic principles of architecture. Such a reminding, far from what could be expected from a philosopher considered as a radical innovator, was aimed at bringing out from the architect's attitude the understated acts of restoration, the efforts to renew rather than to overthrow the rules of the discipline. If Tschumi's actions were to be a kind of deconstruction, then his essays show that it cannot function as a mere destruction of heritage. The call to repeat the *arché* of architecture is just as important in the face of a certain obsession with modernity as any violation of it. The foundations are not based on transcendent, absolute reality and are not inviolable, hence they require thoughtful efforts to preserve them.

The structure and hierarchy of architecture must be subject to the ritual of recalling its origin, updating the times of establishing assumptions that precede their connection with religion or politics. History cannot leave architecture and the destiny of architecture is to be the guardian of archaic memory. Such opinions of Derrida cannot come as a surprise if one takes into account his repeated views on the role of affirmation in the philosophy of deconstruction. In such a case, it would be a restoration of even this lignified or fossilized nostalgia, which is a very form of secular sanctity of each of the fields of culture. The aggressive polemic with Tschumi's purposefulness is a certain game and tears off only its outer, deceased layers, while the teleology of the dwelling itself remains intact, or more precisely, it is shaken in order to be perpetuated in an indeterminate and unstable present.

Architecture is inhabited by a variety of needs, so it may not be surprising that it is now adapting to philosophical functions, as it was previously used for religious or political purposes. Although this may be a question, architecture is always „*in service* and *at service*"[34]. Neither can end its dependence on art and its old determi-

nants: beauty, harmony, or organizing the work as a whole. Even if – as Danto described it – the paradigms of what is considered a work of art change, architecture will belong to this area. Included in a series of works of art in a certain period of time, it cannot be excluded anymore. Its internal mechanisms function well only in conjunction with the external ones, which contributes to the fact that it requires interpretation and anchoring in the world of religious, political, aesthetic, economic and nowadays philosophical values. The denials of architecture made by Tschumi undergo a certain collapse, in fact a double collapse, when after one turn, identical to what Martin Heidegger and later Gianni Vattimo described as "*Verwündung*", there followed another, turning it towards the oldest sources of architecture. It is not a return to the source, but a return to the sources (plural), there is no question of a return to an established beginning, but rather to an attempt to restart something, to repeat it for the first time. Coming to this place in his deliberations Derrida clearly senses similarities between what is described as Western culture, architecture and metaphysics, all equally moved by similar mechanisms. Twisting, distorting or collapsing architecture arouses resistance in the collective consciousness, in which it turns out to be the "the last fortress of metaphysics"[35]. It is saved from instability, threatening in a situation where contradictory intentions clash, by a kind of "displacement", a procedure known from psychology of combining broken fragments in a new territory, without creating the fiction of another strongly integrated whole. There is a bond , a certain fusion, but not a strong whole anymore. Disillusionment regarding the idea of unity was perhaps the most serious task that the architect set himself[36]. Instead of building another statement, thought is set aside from its own establishment, yes it turns into a whole, but understood as a set of dispersed fragments [il. 10]. The park is a work, but only as a combination of fragmentation.

Tschumi's texts were sometimes excessively declarative in their denial of tradition, but the park unites its components and creates a specific whole, although it happens on the basis of changed rules. For this reason Derrida defends the architect's actions against suspicions of an "infinite *hybris*"[37]. The *folies* undoubtedly destabilize meaning and generally undermine the meaning of meaning, but they do so without aggression and do not lead to a level where an architectural record would be purely abstract, useless, devoid of aesthetic aura or archaic hierarchies[38]. The language of the discipline is renewed and enables the notation of the particularly elusive features of the present. The *maintenant* is doubled here: it is the maintenance of the present, the preservation of the momentary in timelessness, the retention of the actuality in the abyss of eternity. Derrida defines this activity as the "monumentalization of the moment", which can be understood as the preservation of transitoriness in memory, the transfer of the blink into the sphere of a clearer experience.

35 *Ibidem.*

36 See **B. Tschumi**, *Parc...*, p. 39: "La Villette looks out on new social and historical circumstances: a dispersed and differentiated reality that marks an end to the utopia of unity".

37 **J. Derrida**, *Point...*, p. 574.

38 *Ibidem.*

[39] Derrida quotes after Littre the following etymology of the word "*folie*": "Usually one sees in this the word madness [*folie*]. But this becomes uncertain when one finds in the texts from the Middle Ages: '*foleia quae erat ante domum*', and '*domum foleyae*', and *folia Johannis Morelli*; one suspects that this involves an alteration of the word '*feuillie*' or feuillée [*foliage*]." (*ibidem*, p. 577).

[40] *Ibidem*, pp. 577–578.

An A transient moment becomes an event which the *folies*, due to their multitude, stretch in time and space. Combinatorics transforms a point, a sign of place and time, into a stretched wandering, a long-term experience and a chance to become involved in innovation. Ordinary walking along the paths of the park becomes the beginning of crossing all arrangements, the possibility of entering other, yet unfixed locations.

The seriality of the steel *folies* is complex, because on the one hand it does not disregard traditional *firmitas* through its material (similar in strength even to stone monuments of architecture), on the other hand you can walk by it freely, without the feeling of seriousness and heaviness. A walk in the face of elusive variability retained in a solid substance, however, is not just a transgressing. Once again the *maintenant* appears, this time as stopping the transgressing. The *folies* certainly cannot be counted among the hieratic signs of memory, but they are also not their simple opposite, a purely accidental and pathless dispersion of meditative concentration. Usually the motionless massiveness has been transformed into the *folies* which Derrida associates with the words denoting leaves and sheets of paper[39]. When even the *folies* lose their unambiguity, a wide field for otherness opens up.

Derrida's analyses required a direct question about the relationship between philosophical deconstruction and Tschumi's strategies. Reflections on the park have brought in this respect statements that the philosophical approach proper for this thinker cannot exist only in a pure, intellectual form. The metaphysical shock must be aligned with the disturbances of less metaphysical disciplines. "Critique of discourses and ideologies, concepts or texts" must have the courage to confront state institutions, civil society, bureaucracy, capital, economic mechanisms, etc.[40] The field of architecture, defined by Kant as the art of systems, is perfectly suited to such a confrontation, especially if one takes into account the thesis that the mechanisms of architecture inevitably are combined with orders external to this discipline. Architecture is also suitable for crossing the threshold of discursivity due to its links with art, especially that one with new paradigms. If, moreover, the notion of otherness, "other writing" and "other architecture", appears in the background of the deliberations, everything that can be covered by the term art becomes very helpful for such reflection.

The study of the overlapping of internal architecture structures with other areas of culture directs the attention to the architect's decision to make his field an area of reflection on differentiation. The study of the very beginnings of differentiation coincided with the concept of spatialization (*espacement*), which is the same as *différance*. At first Derrida was quite reserved about creating analogies beyond philosophy and undermined Tschumi's endeavours, especially vocabulary emphasizing dissociations, dispersions, disrup-

tions and any other breakdowns, disconnections or disjunctions[41]. However, the park has brought what could not be found in the texts: a specific integration of disciplines and, moreover, the affirmation required in the deconstruction, albeit achieved in a new way. Yes, the system of *folies* multiplied the breakdowns or – what is closer to the language of philosophical deconstruction – differentiations, but they were collected into a work of art. The word *maintenant* used in this part of Derrida's text is appropriate to describe such a kind of maintenance of differentiations that does not obscure the idea of emphasizing the infinite divisibility of a point. Usually understood as an indivisible and single node of a network, in the park it manifests itself as each time different. Its otherness and unfinishedness precedes its appearance and position in the network of points. The disintegration of the whole was accepted, even when that disintegration was assembled into a questionable whole. Differentiation achieves dominance over its integration into the network, which is one of the weakest symbols of the set. La Villettte – as Tschumi himself described it – shows disconnection, gives form to disconnection, structures and institutionalizes the singularity of separation[42].

It cannot be denied that the disconnection has been demonstrated, which means that the force of integrating it into a work of art has been used; an architecture has been created that stops madness which distributes and locate it. The red points, *points de folies*, are therefore not just parts, but signals of nostalgia both for the lost forms of wholeness and for its future forms. If this were applied to the state of consciousness of the contemporary individual, it would be easy to find traces of a similar state of schizophrenia and madness. Maintaining oneself in such a state is another architectural *maintenant* transferred outside the field, or maybe conversely: pulled into it. The external and internal mechanisms overlap in this case with great accuracy. The boisterousness, explosiveness and a series of unstable entertainment of this *maintenant* are characteristic for the attractions that the park should bring, but it also has a lot in common with the dangers and fictions that saturate modern existence. The park is a political and moral advertisement of the *maintenant*, the present, which, however, does not exhaust its depicting functions. Although it was not a goal, and even aroused opposition, it cannot be denied that the work has become a story. Despite Tschumi's declaration like "non- sense / no-meaning", an impulse for interpretation has been designed[43]. Although each explanation will be transient, and what it will do first of all, it will draw attention to the instability contained in the *maintenant*, the primordial abyss and the abyssness.

When a given point in La Villette differs from another, then the Otherness itself makes a risky promise. Starting then from the present, the park also provides a place for an unknown future, un upcoming democracy (*la démocratie à venir*)[44], and an upcoming community[45]. According to Derrida, this architecture, open to

[41] *Ibidem*, p. 578.

[42] See **B. Tschumi**, *Madness and combinative*, "Precis" 1984, no. 3: "At La Villette, it is a matter of forming, of acting out dissociation. [...] This is not without difficulty. Putting dissociation into form necessitates that the support structure (the Parc, the institution) be structured as a reassembling system. The red point of folies is the focus of this dissociated space"; as quoted in: **J. Derrida**, *Point...*, p. 579; cf. also **E. S. Casey,** *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*, Berkeley 1997, p. 316.

[43] **B. Tschumi**, *Cinégram...*, pp. VII-VIII.

[44] **J. Derrida**, *Spectres de Marx. L'État de la dette, le travail du deuil et la nouvelle Internationale*, Paris 1993, pp. 110-111; *idem*, *Politics of Friendship*, transl. G. Collins, London 1997, pp. 103-104; *idem*, *Voyous. Deux essais sur la raison*, Paris 2003, pp. 126-127. See also **S. Laoureux**, *L'Impossible plutôt que l'utopie. La structure temporelle aporétique de l'"à venir" dans la pensée de Derrida*, "Klēsis" 2013, no. 28, pp. 47, 55; **G. Bennington**, *La démocratie à Venir*, [in:] *La Démocratie à venir: Autour de Jacques Derrida*, dir. **M.–L. Mallet**, Paris 2004. Cf. also: **H. de Vries**, *Philosophy and the Turn to Religion*, Baltimore 1999, p. 322: "the idea of democracy is seen as that which at every instant and in each single instance remains yet 'to come' (*à venir*). As that which at every given point in time is always yet another step ahead and can never be anticipated as such, it never reaches a full plenitude or presence (to itself) but attains instead the elusive yet no less urgent quality of infinite, albeit also infinitely finite, future (*avenir*)".

[45] The park can be treated as a place of katargesis; see **G. Agamben**, *Tiqqun de la noche*, [in:] *idem*, *La comunitá che viene*, Torino 2001, p. 93: "Inoperosità non significa inerzia, ma katargesis – cioè un'operazione in cui il come si sostituisce integralmente al che, in cui la vita senza forma e le forme senza vita coincidono in una forma di vita".

[46] **J. Derrida**, *Point...*, p. 581.

[47] Reflecting in a mirror or half–dream appearances are terms connected with attempts to describe the functioning of *chôra*. These types of appearances of *chôra* are presented in more detail in the following part.

the risk of an unpredictable future, is a study of the Otherness and, moreover, a consideration of the very process of emerging, of appearing of the future reality[46]. It is not important as a form of something already existing, but it evokes reflection on what may exist, reflecting a looming possibility[47]. Along with this situation, it reveals that the still impossible future belongs to the resource of the pre-existing abyss, so that coming of the unexpected, unveiled with anxiety, is a part of something that already somehow exists, but as non-existence, impossibility, absolute otherness. When among the notions describing the goal of the park concept there appeared terms such as "radical otherness", "absolute otherness", "impossibility" or "primordial abyss", the question of the relationship between these terms and apophatic theology became then an issue that demanded a solution. This subject was additionally justified by the circumstances of religious problems in Derrida's works such as *Circonfession*, the collection of essays *On the Name* or *The Gift of Death*, and the repeated juxtaposition and comparison of faith and deconstruction problems in countless authors. Among the issues characteristic for this group were works on the concept of the *chôra*, which appeared already at the beginning of Derrida's cooperation with Peter Eisenman invited by Tschumi to design one of the gardens in the Parc de La Villette.

**Derrida and Eisenman's cooperation
and the basic issues of the *chôra***

The general plan of the park by Tschumi allowed for a multitude of possible interventions by further authors, including the design of so-called thematic gardens. In such a broad context we should understand Eisenman's invitation to participate in the development of the concept of La Villette. It should be remembered that the layered structure of the park was also envisaged by the competition project of Rem Koolhaas's OMA team. Eisenman was also interested in such "geological" way of land management, which was already manifested in his earlier projects. Therefore, it can be assumed that Eisenman envisaged supplementing the system of layers assumed by Tschumi and imprinting on the whole the assumption of a certain set of elements that create a kind of another level, perhaps with the emphasis of a single fragment. The matter is not obvious, because the documentation of Eisenman's project, in the form of drawings and models, does not reflect the whole of several years of work on it, but only one of its parts. The others stopped at the stage of purely intellectual concepts, which, however, cannot be ignored given that the park from its inception was characterized by an overgrowth of theory over materiality. In the case of Eisenman's participation, this disproportion was intensified to such an extent that none of his ideas were even partially implemented.

To work on possible park components, Eisenaman invited Derrida. Their several years of cooperation was fulfilled in the form of long discussions with the participation of the architect's collaborators and additional people invited by him. Between September 1985 and October 1987, the two main participants of the discussions met seven times in different cities in Europe and North America. In 1989, they still exchanged letters, which eventually ended their close contacts. The effect of the long process of conception was only the book *Chora L Works* containing a transcription of their conversations and a set of essays created additionally in connection with the content of the meetings held.

During each meeting, the participants presented many interesting ideas, but there was an important reason preventing their transition to the real world. The reason for this situation should be considered to include the issue of the *chôra*, which has absorbed both rational achievements and efforts to make them visible. The unclear component of the world, usually elusive, manifested itself in its so far weakly accented aspect: as an archaic nothingness, an emptiness that absorbs what is inscribed in it. Eisenman's and Derrida's park became "*chôric*" when it obscured its creators' achievements with non-existence. *Chora L Works* book is rich in numerous satisfying statements, the value of which, however, has been annihilated not only by the lack of realization, but also by their failure coded already at the level of thought. The *chôra* left its mark on its authors' choral work not as a mediation element between cognitive and sensual, but as a negation of both, the erasure of the inscription that had been made. He was similarly critical of the customary use in architecture of a scale based on human dimensions, moreover, of historically established aesthetic habits, of the principles of reflecting external content by forms of architecture, and of paying great attention to usability issues. The complex of negated traditions, wider than the Vitruvian-Albertinian features of the discipline, indicated that the presence undermined in architecture is not only its overwhelming materiality, but also its general dependence on specific, traditional assumptions or content. Such an observation leads to the conclusion that architecture is each time a realization of a certain set of theories, which indicates that its main components are intellectual values that precede reality. This statement not only blurs the difference between philosophy and physical structure, but also brings the deconstructive thought that examines the fundamentals of philosophy closer to the critical position adopted by Eisenman in relation to the roots of architecture. Derrida's research revealing the instability of historically accepted certainties of philosophy therefore has points in common with the activity of Eisenman violating the *arché* of architecture.

The inclusion of the complex issue of *chóra* in the park design process seems poorly justified, but the analysis of the record of the

[48] **J. Derrida [*et al.*]**, *Transcript One, New York, September 17, 1985*, [in:] *Chora L Works: Jacques Derrida and Peter Eisenman*, ed. **J. Kipnis**, **T. Leeser**, New York 1997.

first conversation, which took place on 17 September 1985 in New York, may change this judgment[48]. At that time, Eisenman clearly declared that his aim was always to culminate the design process with the erection of a specific object. Such a position clearly emphasized his distinctiveness as an architect. Simultaneously, the adverb which together with the pronoun "neither..., nor ...", are exceptionally often used in the language of the philosophy of deconstruction, he has described his more specific position in the field of construction recalling that the traditional and seemingly obvious characteristics of his discipline, including paying too much attention to the material presence of buildings, arouses his resistance.

So who were the two main participants of the talks? Which disciplines they represented since Derrida said: "I've always been an architect", while Eisenman repeatedly declared his interest in and inspiration from Derrida's concepts? At the same time, each of them declared with conviction: "I'm not an architect". Statements of this kind revealed a lack of original, single understanding of the word "architecture" and a constant tension between its metaphorical value, historical precision and critical approach. Derrida, when claiming that his writing also has an architectural dimension, probably meant the creation of intellectual constructions, and it indicates that he adopted – like Kant – the view that architecture is the art of systems. At the same time, he could say with equal conviction that he is not an architect and has no competence in this area, because in this case architecture was mentioned as the art of erecting specific buildings. So also Eisenman had reason to say that he is not an architect, as his activity was a criticism of the principles of architecture and the buildings he erected constituted themselves in the sphere of theory. Like the philosopher, he built views whose materiality, like the materiality of writing, was largely secondary to the unreality of the concept itself. The statements of both interlocutors opened the problem of translating ideas into the sensual world, which was an important part of the discussion about the *chôra*. Therefore, they talked about the problem of the *chôra* before they started a separate discussion on it. Perhaps they also talked over the problem even before the meeting took place between them. Eisenman was convinced of this and, as an argument, recalled his project *Romeo and Juliet* and the accompanying essay *Moving Arrows, Eros and Other Errors*, where the story, referring to the castles in Montecchio (in the province of Vicenza) and then transferred to Verona, was treated as the basis of an urban plan. In this way fiction dictated the solutions to architecture and became something like "textual architecture", adapted to be read in a certain place. The statements of Eisenman and Derrida suggested that architecture so shifted into unreality, and which can be read as a literary work, is similar to the *chôra*, which may be understood as a dream, but also as a prophetic vision, a poetic dream or the work of a reflective artist.

The direct introduction of the purely philosophical issue of the *chôra* to the discussion was not preceded by any justification. The philosopher stated that he had no ideas related to park designing and when Tschumi proposed cooperation, he was in the course of writing a text, inspired by the writings of Jean-Pierre Vernant, analysing the paragraphs from Timaeus devoted to the *chôra*. During the first conversation he repeatedly returned to characterizing the *chôra*'s historical and philosophical subject matter. He recalled that the Platonic dialogue was devoted to the birth and organization of the world. According to its content, the Cosmos emerged when the Demiurge watched the paradigms, the unchangeable forms that are eternal and preceded his own existence. Looking closely at them, he labelled them with names, which made them real. In their essence, however, they were an imitation, representation or reflection of *eidos*. Plato, said Derrida, introduced however the third element of the world (*triton genos*), which is neither an unchangeable idea, nor a rational imitation of it, but a place where the transition from the perfect world to the real world took place. In order to explain this space, the Greek thinker used metaphors of mother, matrix, or nurse taking care of babies. The shift of the language of description to less accurate forms, comparisons related to human life, aroused distance in Plato's readers and commentators and were usually ignored. Derrida expressed reservations about the possibility of full separation of metaphorical vocabulary and more rationalised descriptions. The problem with the *chôra* was, to some extent, that there was no proper vocabulary to talk about the place where paradigms have been imprinted. It is available to be recognized as if in a dream, because it does not reflect anything, but is a "place" of reflection. It "is" not, however, in any way: it is not a place nor emptiness, nor it is in time. To Derrida's arguments it must be added here that it was Aristotle, contrary to Plato, who simplified the *chôra* and by linking it with matter (*hyle*) made it a comprehensible place (*topos*). In Derrida's opinion, however, the *chôra* is neither comprehensible nor a place.

> *Chôra* is the spacing which is the condition for everything to take place, for everything to be inscribed. […] It is the place where everything is received as at imprint. I insist on the fact on this non-anthropomorphism of *chôra*. Why? Because *chôra* looks as though it were giving something, "giving" place. In French we say *donner lieu*: the place for receiving or for giving. *Chôra* receives everything or gives place to everything, yet Plato insist that in fact it has to be a virgin place, and that it has to be totally foreign, totally exterior to anything that it receives. […] It remains foreign to the imprint it receives; so, in a sense, it does not receive anything – it does not receive what receives nor does it give what it gives. Everything inscribed in it erases itself immediately, while remaining in it. It is thus an impossible surface – it is not even a place, because it has no depth[49].

50 **Plato**, *Timaeus*; as quoted in: **E. Bianchi**, *Receptable/Chôra: Figuring the Errant Feminine in Plato's Timaeus*, "Hypatia" 2006, no. 21, pp. 133–134.

51 **J. Derrida [*et al.*]**, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

Derrida referred to yet another feature of the *chôra*, which is its nonrepresentability. Although the *chôra* could have been brought closer to being comprehended by a set of negations, such a procedure was not, however, similar to a proper negative theology, because the *chôra* does not have theological or sacral significance. A dispute has developed among theologians and religious scholars as to whether it is God or divinity, but for Derrida it was unquestionable that the *chôra* is atheological. The *chôra* lacked everything, including the possibility of being comprehended, grasped in the language or presented, which did not prevent the participants' attempts to transfer the *chôra* to the area of metaphoricity or figurativeness. Contrary to his own assumptions, Derrida proposed that the *chôra*, as something reflected and erased at the same time, should be shown through forms representing paradigms that would cast shadows on the sand or reflect in the water. Jeffrey Kipnis, one of the debaters, considered the visualization of the *chôra* to be a return to anthropocentrism and suggested that the presence of the *chôra*'s absence could be depicted rather. Such a programme turned out to be so demanding that it was impossible to carry out. The work of this shape was supposed to refer to a fragment from Timaeus (52d–53a), where it is said that

> The nurse of becoming was watered and fired and received the shapes [*morpha*] of earth and air, and undergoing [*paschousan*] all the other affections [*pathe*] that accompany them, appeared both manifold, and filled throughout with powers [*dunamia*] neither similar nor balanced, with no part of itself in equilibrium, but every part oscillating unevenly. She/it was shaken by these, and she/it moreover shook them in turn. These was shaken by these, and she/it moreover shook them in turn. These moving things were forever borne this way and that, and dispersed, just like that which is shaken and winnowed by baskets [*plokanon*] and other instruments [*organon*] for cleaning corn: the solid and heavy are borne one way, and the loose and light settle in another place[50].

It was this metaphor of sieve that prompted Derrida to come up with the idea of placing on the designed site a diagonally positioned structure resembling a lyre [il. 11]. The "sieving" of forces inside the *chôra* contributed to their separation and this original articulation was an element of the creation of Cosmos. Nevertheless, what is created does not leave its imprint in the *chôra*, because "[i]t remains foreign to the imprint it receives; so, in a sense, it does not receive anything – it does not receive what receives nor does it give what it gives. Everything inscribed in it erases itself immediately, while remaining in it"[51].

The design process became "chôric" because it accepted and rejected all concepts, leaving their blurred traces in the records of conversations, but not becoming permanent in the area of reasonableness or visibility. The park would have been "choric" even if the

ideas had been put into practice, because, by the nature of the talks about it, became unreal; its space opened up radically to constant acceptance and annihilation. The garden left being a mere architecture or a part of the city and became a state of fiction, which can only be read if you are unconscious of it. "Reading" is, therefore, recording through use – similar to the potential reading of the plan in the *Romeo and Juliet* project.

An extended version of Derrida's statement became a separate part of *Chora L Works*[52]. The essay *Khôra*, before it was included there, in its first version was published in 1987 in the work *Poikilia. Études offertes à Jean-Pierre Vernant*[53] and was a kind of tribute to this outstanding expert on Greek thought. Before handing it over to his interlocutors, Derrida warned that the text "has nothing to do with architecture"[54], but Kipnis considered that seeking incentives for architecture only where the statements clearly refer to it could be a kind of trap[55]. In his opinion, it would be more fruitful to take into account thoughts that say nothing about architecture. Using this assumption, he later prepared an essay entitled *Twisting the Separatrix*, which is a description of Eisenman's and Derrida's cooperation and makes use of the philosopher's considerations contained in *Khôra*. The voice of the French thinker contained a rich set of views on how to describe reality, which can be helpful in further analysis of the park and its status as evasive as the *chôra* itself.

Khôra began with a quote from Vernant's *Raisons du mythe* saying that:

> Thus myth puts in play a form logic which could be called – in contrast to the logic of noncontradiction of the philosophers – a logic of the ambiguous, of the equivocal, of polarity. How can one formulate, or even formalize, these see-saw operations, which flip any term into its opposite whilst at the same time keeping them both apart, from another point of view? The mythologist was left with drawing up, in conclusion, this statement of deficit, and to turn to linguists, logicians, mathematicians, that they might supply him with the tool he lacked: the structural model of a logic which would not be that binarity, of the yes or no, a logic other than the logic of the logos[56].

In Derrida's view, these opinions make a good introduction to the deliberations on the *chôra*, since in all its descriptions it evades the logic of noncontradiction of which Vernant wrote. As he further wrote, the logic that can be applied to the *chôra* is different from the mere logic of logos and in general announces Otherness. The question posed in *Timaeus* allows for the development of Vernant's position because the *chôra* belongs neither to the world of ideas nor to the real world, and through these "neither this nor that", as a *triton genos*, creates a specific logic of exclusion. The problem, however, lies in the fact that this distinctiveness of the *chôra* is nothing more than a fiction, only a view, and not something that can be stated in

[52] *Idem*, *Chora*, transl. I. McCloud, [in:] *Chora L...*

[53] *Idem*, *Khôra*, [in:] *Poikilia. Études offertes à Jean-Pierre Vernant*, ed. Centre de recherches comparées sur les sociétés anciennes, Paris 1987.

[54] **J. Derrida [et al.]**, *op. cit.*, p. 13 (Derrida's statement).

[55] *Ibidem* (Kipnis's statement).

[56] **J.-P. Vernant**, *Raisons du mythe*, [in:] *idem*, *Mythe et société en Grèce ancienne*, Paris 1974, p. 250; as quoted in: **J. Derrida**, *Khôra*, transl. I. McLeod, [w:] *idem*, *On the Name*, ed. **T. Dutoid**, Stanford 1995, p. 88. See also **J.-P. Vernant**, *Du mythe à la raison. La formation de la pensée positive dans la Grèce archaïque*, "Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations" 1957, no. 2.

57 J. Derrida, *Khôra*, s. 10.

58 *Ibidem*, p. 89.

59 *Ibidem*, p. 96.

an obvious way. Although Derrida would refrain from emphasizing this issue, one could be under the illusion that the *chôra* is somehow "ideological" (since we accept the idea of the *chôra*) and at the same time perhaps also "real" (since we can see imitations of itself recorded in its unreality). As he put it: "One cannot even say of it that it is *neither* this *nor* that or that it is *both* this *and* that"[57]. It is not enough to recall that *khora* name neither this nor that, or, that *khora* says this and that[58]. It would thus belong to another specific reasoning – the logic of participation, of being "both this and that" at the same time. Revealing itself in two ways, it would take part in both the logic of exclusion and the logic of participation, or rather, it would participate neither in one nor in the other and, as a stubbornly belonging to the "third type", it would once again occupy a place between one scheme and the other? Perhaps, being "in-between", it would not evenly distribute it and even disturb the very oscillation of "being in-between". *Triton genos* would therefore not exhaust the number of genera.

The separation between the two logics seems to result from the historically shaped custom of separation, from the limitations created by rhetoric and from the inability to create expressions beyond a certain metaphysical tradition. Is it only the *chôra* that baffles our ability to name? Could we not admit that the skill to create names has adopted certain customs and does not want to open up to others, or to Other? This is very possible. Practical and everyday reasons prefer simple logic, which fails in every more difficult matter. The open structure of the Parc de La Villette, suspended between the ideological values of its theoretical planning and the real skeleton grown into practical components, can be described endlessly, without the possibility of closing it into the usual logic of being only this, or only that one.

Derrida's thought on the *chôra* initially focused on emphasizing its distinct status between the eidos and the created being, which opened the question of the *chôra*'s specific way of being. For the *chôra* "is" in a very special way, because, being neither a being nor something, it is nothing neither. It "is" not, because it does not belong to any of the two recognizable types of being. "*Khora* is neither sensibile nor intelligibile. But what *there is* (*il y a*), there, is not"[59]. Nor "is" it in the manner in which negative theology describes God, because this kind of thought speaks of a being of negative qualities, while *chôra* is not a being, is not a thing and is not a place (in the sense of Aristotle). It is therefore clear that the problem of the *chôra* is a problem of description. When interpreting the *chôra*, certain properties are attributed to it, such as amorphism, but these are properties of a being, so they are acceptable in the real world, but cannot be accepted by it as its property. They belong to a world of thoughts that can be recorded somewhere, but are not the same as that "somewhere", a place/non-place of recording. The *chôra* accepts what it receives

with the definition of a certain its property, but it is still not itself, so it does not keep what has been attributed to it. This situation of attempting to describe the *chôra*, indicates that its characteristic is to force us to interpret it, and its interpretations are always accepted, then rejected, and again lead us to further explanations. They force us to return to a certain starting point, which precedes every possible beginning of reflection on it. The *chôra* precedes every beginning. "The *khōra* is anachronistic; it "is" the anachrony within being, or better: the anachrony of being. It anachronizes being"[60]. Anachronizes the beginning of every being and its description. It goes beyond description and intelligibility.

For the first time the situation of preceding the beginning was described by Plato himself, who long after he characterized the origin of the real world, unexpectedly in the middle of the dialogue *Timaeus* returned to the history of the reflection of ideas by the Demiurge and wrote the history of this activity again, but now including the place (*chôra*) where the cosmos was recorded[61]. The *chôra*, being neither eternal as ideas, nor historical as their imitations, was as if earlier, before time and before history. It must be taken into account, but only after time has come with the transition from *eidos* to imitation. It is only thanks to that what is created, like the language which reflects the ideal being, that can be activated what is preceding even in relation to the un-created being. The *chôra* has its own history in its interpretations, but their character, which has something of the *chôra* itself, contributes to the fact that not only they are created endlessly, but they do not have their beginning. The beginning is incomparably younger, later and secondary to the *chôra*.

Is the *chôra* completely indescribable, then? Or is it the opposite: the chôra is a mere tendency to describe? In this respect Plato presents a very convincing interpretation assuming that since eternal and created being, reasonableness and sensuality, logos and mythos are alien to the *chôra*, it can only be understood in short-lived euphorias, through dreams (*oneiropoloumen*, *Timaeus*, 52b), or prophecies. Thinking that leads to it is complex, of bastard origin, with no logic, with no beginning (father), but also with no closing. *Logismo notho* (*Timaeus*, 52b[62]) leading to the *chôra* is a hybrid of intuition and reasoning (*raisonnement hybride*[63]), bastard reasoning[64], that defies all logic, unlawful usurpations of commentators and nowadays also deconstructive thinking or so-called "misreading" as well.

The *Chôra* in *Timaeus* was described with the help of numerous metaphors. Derrida put forward the thesis that the figure of Socrates plays an analogous role in the dialogue. The political character of the cycle of dialogues, of which *Timaeus* was a part, also escaped the attention of the previous interpreters. Consequently, it can be assumed that deliberations on the *chôra* are combined with views on *polis* – a political place. Socrates' place in the "architecture of dialogues"

[60] *Ibidem*, p. 94.

[61] The topic of returning to another beginning was also the subject of **J. Sallis's** interest; see ***idem***, *Chorology: On Beginning in Plato's „Timaeus"*, Bloomington 1999, pp. 13, 91–97.

[62] See http://www.ellopos.net/elpenor/physis/plato-timaeus/space.asp?pg=4 (access date: 2 XII 2018): **Plato**, *Timaeus*, 52b: „ἕδραν δὲ παρέχον ὅσα ἔχει γένεσιν πᾶσιν, αὐτὸ δὲ μετ᾽ ἀναισθησίας ἁπτὸν λογισμῷ τινι νόθῳ, μόγις πιστόν, πρὸς ὃ δὴ καὶ ὀνειροπολοῦμεν βλέποντες καί φαμεν ἀναγκαῖον εἶναί που τὸ ὂν ἅπαν ἔν τινι τόπῳ καὶ κατέχον χώραν τινά, τὸ δὲ μήτ᾽ ἐν γῇ μήτε που κατ᾽ οὐρανὸν οὐδὲν εἶναι".

[63] See **Platon**, *Timée – Critias*, transl. A. Rivaud, Paris 1985, p. 171: "*Enfin il y a toujours un troisiême genre, celu idu lieu: il ne peut mouirir et fournit un emplacement à tous les objets qui naissent. Lui-même, il n'est percitable que grâce â une sorte de raisonnement hybride que n'accompagne point la sensation: â peine peut-on y croire*".

[64] See ***idem***, *The Timaeus of Plato*, ed. **R. D. Archer-Hind**, London – New York 1888, pp. 183–185 (with commentary): "And the third kind is space everlasting, admitting not destruction, but affording place for all things that come into being, itself apprehensible without sensation by a sort bastard reasoning, hardly master of belief".

65 **J. Derrida**, *Khôra...*, pp. 107–108.

66 *Ibidem*, s. 111.

is related to the demand (necessity) that an ideally performed city should become a living, warlike, conflicting one. The transition from one form of policies to another requires a "vessel" (*dechomenon*) or a place that takes the desired form of community. This vessel is undoubtedly Socrates, a fictitious figure who, in dialogue, makes himself even more unreal.

There are two types of people wandering through *polis*. On the one hand there are philosophers and politicians. They create the *logos* that give meaning to the place, shape the community and organize the city. On the other hand, a kind of sophists and poets are also a part of the city. They, apart from people of word and deed, can be characterized as people of image and appearances, or as people not bound by the order of the place, who occupy it, but without adopting the rights and obligations that create it. Their disconnection with the area of community creates a contrast between what is controlled and what is not included in the law.

For the adopted logic of dialogue and an attempt to revive the city, it was necessary for its formulas to be reflected somewhere. To begin with, at least in speech. To make this happen, someone had to become a kind, well-disposed listener. Such a role in the conversation was taken on by Socrates. He could not be an active speaker, but it was also not advisable that he received the words of others indifferently. Since the city could consist only of those who created it and those who created images of life, Socrates had to occupy a separate position. Although he stated that when it came to the development of certain theoretical problems of *polis*, he felt a little like poets, yet he did not completely equate himself with them[65]. He took the position of a person of a "third genus". Reflections on the *polis* have reached the point where it has become necessary for the interlocutors to be able to describe only a purely intellectual city in practical situations. Someone, however, should give a place to this semi-animated city. This is what Socrates was needed for. The position adopted by him deprived him of the role of a man of a word or deed, but also did not make him just a cunning imitator.

"Socrates is not *khōra*, but he would look a lot like it/her if it/she were someone or something"[66]. The sage withdrew from the circle of active interlocutors, gave a vote to the other participants of the exchange of views, made room for broadening the field of reflection, but surprisingly he was still the ruler of the dialogue. It was only by listening that he forced himself to express himself, and he did so somehow inexorably or even commandingly. Socrates made himself an all-encompassing vessel, which did not prevent this vessel from being more than an empty place to be filled. An infinitely open container of words and events organized them as valuable gifts or received them as an inn receives important visitors. Perhaps it was thanks to him they not only became valuable and important, but also became at all. Socrates, by giving the place, became someone nec-

essary and irreplaceable. The obligation to speak to which he has contributed can be defined in many ways, but it will always hide the ultimate necessity (ἀνάγκη) going beyond any name and revealing that the chôra that precedes any beginning is only its agnomen.

The topic of the *chôra* apparently accidentally entered into the discussion on the shape of the Parc de La Villette. There were, however, numerous reasons why its introduction by Derrida did not raise objections in the group of people gathered by Eisenman. The main one was the fact that the initial structure adopted by Tschumi was unprecedentedly "open" or "socrato-chôric"[67]. It was not made up of components such as a system of perpendicularly intersecting avenues along which park buildings would be situated, and did not present any predetermined content, but rather made room for freely scattered objects of various purposes. Not being a place of production of ethnos or genos, it did much to bring together all random users into an unusual community. Such a programme of the park prompts one to notice that, just like the *chôra* (or Socrates, who was analogous to it), it was a "non-place", it was atopic. It was not apolitical, however, although the *polis* he referred to was far from the Platonic ideals of far-reaching order and rationality. Its characteristic logos was not true or even probable, because instead of the truth appropriate for a traditional political community, it was shifted towards unreality, a phantom or a dream of a paradoxical dispersed community.

Słowa kluczowe

projekt Parku de La Villette, koncepcja *chôry*, filozofia Jacques'a Derridy, architektura i teoria Bernarda Tschumiego

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Keywords

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