

Summary

CEZARY WAS (University of Wrocław) / The Shadow of God in the Garden of the Philosopher. The Parc de La Villette in Paris in the context of philosophy of *chôra*

In the period from the Antiquity to the Renaissance, the dialogue *Timaeus* was the most frequently commented work of Plato. At present, the most frequently discussed is the issue of the *chôra* included in it, which aroused fascination among philosophers, researchers of rhetoric, religion, feminism, and moreover, architecture. The work on the *chôra* also influenced the development of the interpretation of the Parc de La Villette, among which the topics related to the beginning and the change were highlighted. In early uses of the word “*chôra*” in Greek, as in Homer’s XVIII book of *Iliad*, it meant both dancing and a place to dance. On this occasion, it can be seen that it is not possible to determine which phenomenon took precedence in the creation of the name. It cannot be denied, however, that the word concerned a specific movement, as if circular and returning to an indefinable beginning. Despite the gaining more and more general meanings, the word *chôra* has retained its connection with the dance of people on the threshing floor, the dance of bees (*choros melton*) or the dance of stars (*choros astron*). In *Timaeus*, the *chôra* is a space filled with movement with an effect similar to shaking the sieve to husk the grain: it separates similar elements from the dissimilar ones. The juxtaposition of the Parc de La Villette and the *chôra* already at this stage leads to the suggestion that the park was treated by the architect as a place of dynamic changes leading to the establishment of new social solutions. In his statements, the architect confirmed that the park was to be a space of new politics and ethics. The book by Julia Kristeva *La Révolution du langage poétique* contributed to the spread of the belief that works of art can play a role as factors of political revolution. In this work, the author put forward the thesis that the *chôra* is a kind of space, the character of which has a destructive influence on attempts to conclude language games. The *chôra* gives beginning to words, but at the same time, by leaving a trace of this beginning it forces us to renew their meanings. The *chôra* understood in this way, turns out to be an irremovable beginning, to which one has to return all the time. Kristeva found manifestations of the *chôra*’s activity in avant-garde French poetry, to which she attributed the role of a mediator between criticism of metaphysics and aspirations for social change. The *chôra*, violating the language, introduces some voids into it, as if traces of the abyss, which direct the consciousness towards understanding the necessity of political changes. The Parc de La Villette was to pursue similar objectives in the city space. In his essays, Bernard Tschumi considered the problems of creating spaces that would give rise to a radical democracy. The proposed rebellious spaces should have the characteristics of a void, in which contradictory forces would occur as forms of pure activity. The means of achieving this goal was to concentrate contradictions and make them visible. The Parc de La Villette was supposed to collect differences as indelible and at the same time by showing them it was supposed to raise awareness of the social world as a conglomerate of differences. Saturation of the space of the park with subversive values results from the character of this space suppressed in the consciousness, as well as from the social diversity which has not been taken into account so far.

The main contradictions contained in space relate to the division that exists between its presentation as a mental problem and a sensual one. The park was the deliberate creation of a place that transcends such a division and creates

a separate space for negotiation between architectural theories and its practical applications. The purpose of the park was to become a place of future events, which would not hide their conflicting character coming from diversity of both space and society. The method of composition usually aimed at achieving a harmonious whole has been replaced by Tschumi with a system of juxtapositions of non-coherent elements or those resulting from variations and transformations. Tschumi did not seek direct influence on politics in the Parc de La Villette, but made room for thinking about the possibilities of the future. He introduced problems rather than showed solutions to them. The task of the park was to put the principles of architecture into a kind of vibration that would inspire users to participate in the new community.