

# Aria

## K H O R A

### N I A L L L U C Y O N P L A T O ' S A N D D E R R I D A ' S D E F I N I T I O N S O F K H O R A

#### DEFINITION OF THE WEEK

Derrida defines **khora** by what it isn't, **khora** is that which defies the logic of noncontradiction, the logic of either/or.

**khora** is the pre-philosophical, pre-originary non-locatable non-space that existed without existing before the cosmos.

Where is the place of the *khora* in the philosophical scheme of things? What is its definition? Any attempt to fix or locate answers to these questions would have to ignore that what is precisely and at the same time paradoxically essential to the *khora* is its 'textual drift'. Where is the place of what is always on the move? As Derrida sees it, then, *khora* is that third thing (between the intelligible and the sensible) that makes it possible to think anything like the difference between pure being and pure nothingness (or between my autonomous selfhood and your autonomous otherness); it is what makes it possible to think the difference between I and 'you'.

To be brief, *khora* is the pre-philosophical, pre-originary non-locatable non-space that existed without existing before the cosmos. Something like that. Derrida refers to it as 'a necessity which is neither generative nor engendered'. **Its singularity - and this is the point - is its very resistance to being identified; it is what philosophy cannot name.** But since philosophy can't quite face up to being powerless to name something (what would it mean for philosophy to know that there are things it cannot know, but which could be known intuitively, say, or imaginatively?), the '*khoral*' section of the *Ti-maeus* has always been

treated as a literary trifle and not as serious philosophy. Among Derrida's points is that Plato was being most serious of all, he was doing the hardest philosophy, when he was thinking the *khora*: in his not knowing how to name or identify what is proper to the *khora*, Plato had to confront the structural necessity of this 'not knowing' in the 'being' of every 'identity'. In the end Plato, and afterwards philosophy, shunned the confrontation, but for a moment there, albeit only for a split second, one might say that deconstruction was right at the centre of philosophy, almost but not quite right from the start.

#### S T R I P O F T H E W E E K

