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Heterotopic Landscapes: From GreenParks to Hybrid Territories

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Abstract. This chapter develops an interest in clarifying the meaning of cyberparks through an interrogation beyond its material preconditions. A cyberpark, as a *fold in space* generated by a hybrid emergent form of co-mediated space, is a disjunctive combination: it presupposes an encounter between open public urban places and the use of ICT tools. Outstretched beyond its physical manifestation as a place of encounter, a «heterotopic» reading might reveal that the subject is displaced in many different ways, from the analogue to the digital landscape, and from the specificity of the local to the universal of the global web. It is in such transferences that several worlds blend, both in its symbolic function and social significance. Impacts of such «Other Spaces» on the nature of human being's behaviours can be critically reflected by the consideration of the social role of ICTs as tools of alienation through reinforced governances. Hence the question of creating «non-places» arouses, affording both a consensual appropriation process and the representative commodity networks, that henceforth includes natural, technical and human aspects and at the same time constitutes hybrid identities at the interfaces of its users, subjects, objects and places.

Keywords: Heterotopia · Non-place · Technology · Experience · Hybrid-place

1 Setting «Other Spaces» as a Place Theory

Heterotopias are considered to be aporetic spaces: open and isolated, universal and particular, juxtaposed and disaggregated, collective and individualized. A heterotopia is a place of otherness inasmuch as it raises a certain ambiguity on similitude and emancipation, alienation and resistance. In this regard Edward Soja said it is «*frustratingly incomplete, inconsistent, incoherent*»¹ in spite of him devoting an entire chapter to it in

¹ Under the influence of Lefebvre Soja also said: «narrowly focused on peculiar micro-geographies, near-sighted and near-sited, deviant and deviously apolitical» (Soja 1996: 162). However, it seems improbable to read them as an alternative space-taking program when after all they are the outline of an analytic. Even though heterotopias are an interruption of space continuity, this doesn't mean an entire intervention program.

«Thirdspace» (Soja 1996). The term arises for the Social Sciences² in «Des espaces autres», a conference given by Michel Foucault in 1967 in the *Cercle d'Études Architecturales*, published only twenty years later³. It is a raw work left in abeyance, perhaps even abandoned by Foucault, but powerful if we confront the public space with the new mediations, plus the so called «Internet Galaxy»⁴. Although the web renders possible the exploration of Foucault's diverse notion *heterotopia*, this chapter works with it to reflect on the potential of the possible engagement of technology with space.

«*Des espaces autres*» is divided in two parts: initially, Foucault sketches some considerations about the mutations that the idea of space suffered in the western experience, dealing with the notion of space in its abstract sense – undifferentiated and absolute. In a second moment, Foucault approaches a heterotopology, focusing on the nature of place, which emerges concretely and *locus* of differentiation⁵.

But why space? If the nineteenth century allowed itself to be hallucinated by time (Foucault 1984: 752), through its *relativity* and how it *revealed* the History⁶, with the experience of *duration* and *simultaneity* – recall Bergson's work – *for the twentieth century the priority is to think of space. In the moment when the Earth is wired and orbited by satellites, the Earth re-emerges as absolute. Foucault realizes it well, seeking to situate space in the Western History, even before the age of networks. Although presenting a somewhat panoramic view, it is evident to perceive how a mutation is operated in the way one is in the space with each technical breakthrough.*

The archaic space, located sometime up to the Medieval Age, corresponded to the hierarchical set of places that differed according to the seminal oppositions between *sacred* and *profane*, *guarded* (known) and *open* (unknown). The paradigm of the *space of localization* was dominant (Foucault 1984: 753). It concerned some kind of a primitive panic about human impotence when facing the brutality of nature, death and void. This space expands with Galileo and with the discovery of an “infinite space and infinitely open one” (753). The *space of localization* is then dissolved giving rise to the *space of expansion*.

Currently, it is the problem of *emplacement* that shatters the preceding spatial orders precisely because the relation of propinquity between points or elements prevails and it can be described as “ramifications”⁷. Foucault reveals the reticulate nature of

² It was already used in medical sciences to characterize, for example, the abnormal location or displacement of a tissue or of an entire anatomical structure.

³ Published in *Architecture, Movement, Continuité*, no. 5, currently compiled in *Dits et écrits: 1954–1988*, vol. IV, Paris, Gallimard, 1994, pp. 752–762. Foucault only authorized the publication of this text in 1984, months before his death.

⁴ Cf. Manuel Castells (2001) *The Internet Galaxy*. Oxford University Press.

⁵ This differentiation between space and place is, however, imprecise. For further information Cf. Edward S. Casey (1997) *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

⁶ Here we recall first Einstein and the Theory of Relativity, then Hegel and Marx.

⁷ Emphasis is given to the priority of space in the age of networks: «In a still more concrete manner, the problem of place or the emplacement arises for mankind in terms of demography. This problem of the human emplacement is not simply the question of knowing what relations of vicinity, elements, should be adopted in this or that situation in order to achieve this or that end. We are in an epoch in which space is given to us in the form of relations between emplacements». (Foucault 1984, 753–4).

space, and how this is offered to us in the form of *emplacement relationships*. Yet, to discover the network is to discover the whole world scrutinized and mapped, thereby perceiving how space is finite and how it is impossible to expand. The limit of extension is the great anxiety of the twenty-first century at a time when the world population is already surpassing the 7 billion people. Thus, smart cities are idealized to manage the urban space in the face of such challenge. Even cloud storage assumes servers, and those are based on the ground. This absolute relay on space also imposed certain sensitivity towards place. No wonder, therefore, that the *site* has become a fetish object – both in the anthropology of the progressive disappearing, taking for instance Augé’s *Non-Lieux* (1992) or Jane Jacobs’ iconic *Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961) and subsequent critiques to the process of gentrification. In contemporary art the same interest arouses – with *Site-Specific* or *Land-Art* usage of place, either in the ethnographic *turn* marked in the 1990s⁸ or even with the current obsession with the archive⁹.

Returning to “Of Other Spaces”, Foucault wants to analyse spaces that have the odd property of being *in connection* with all the others, perhaps even contesting them. They are of two types: utopias and heterotopias. Utopias are *emplacements* by direct or inverted analogy with society, but without real place; “*it is society itself perfected*” (Foucault 1984: 755), or perfected by force as in the case of dystopias. However, they do not exist anywhere. Real spaces *in connection* with other spaces are *heterotopias*.

Foucault unfolds his heterotopology into six principles. The first, *heterotopias of crisis, is found in all cultures, however in its archaic form* (Foucault 1984, 756): *it is reserved for individuals who are in a state of physical crisis – pregnant women, adolescents, menstruating women, elderly. In societies where one lives in the light of modernity, Foucault sees these heterotopias gradually replaced by heterotopias of deviance* (757): specific places where individuals, whose behaviour is not based on normal or healthy behavioural patterns, are targeted.

As a second principle of heterotopias listed by Foucault are those whose meaning suffers mutations through time. The categorization is resumed, and the only example given is the cemetery, which in pre-industrialized societies is located in the heart of the city and in post-industrial societies it is sent to the periphery. The strangest thing is that at the moment when public life is secularized, there is a growing concern with the packing case and the pileup of the individual’s body, whereas previously, when the cemetery was in the centre of the city, bodies were commonly buried in mass graves. From here we can shed some more light in a rather elusive dimension: that heterotopias are in fact in a process of constant becoming; they do not crystallize but rather depict themselves as *snapshots* of a current condition. In fact, there is a general illusion of permanence in space, and that is unverifiable. Any attempt to control and fix it led to conflicts.

⁸ Also manifested in cinema, with Jean Rouch or António Reis’s ethnofictions, to name a few. For the aspiration to fieldwork in contemporary arts see Hal Foster’s “The Artist as Ethnographer”, in which the *novelty of the Art* is based on a *drive* for the cultural context. Cf. H. Foster (1996) «The Artist as Ethnographer» in *The return of the Real: The avant-garde at the end of the century*, The MIT Press.

⁹ Cf. Foster (2004): «An Archival Impulse» in October 110, Fall 2004, pp. 3–22.

The third principle is one of the most important parameters to be retained: «The heterotopia has the power to juxtapose in a single real place several places, several emplacements that are in themselves incompatible» (Foucault 1984, 758). In this way works the verticality or the overlapping of several plans, some of them incompatible. It is an important feature when we talk about the new media – as a matter of fact, the example given is the projection rectangle of the cinema (the rectangular screen). But it is also the garden:

«The garden is a rug where the whole world comes to accomplish its symbolic perfection, and the rug is a sort of garden that is mobile across space». (Foucault 1984, 758-9)

The fitted carpet is a portable garden ... just as we now carry the whole world inside a smartphone. That is, what the smartphone performs is a technical achievement of what, once, was already trapped in a carpet: the whole world. And so, floating (surfing the internet), just as when one imaginatively does with the flying carpet – a kind of suspension occurs in time. It is possible for the subject to immerse himself in this mobile *micrography* of the world and to mediate the dialectic between the traditional/physical and the symbolic/augmented. However, this kind of mediation is performed by a succession of displacements: as the four parts of the world were displaced within the territory of the garden that constitutes the microcosm, the subject is similarly displaced within the digital landscape that, in a sense, constitutes a treatise on the future of the man/space/information relationship.

In the fourth principle Foucault presents the *heterochronies*, that is, heterotopias that are related to chunks of time. They are suspensions in the experience of temporality, ideally linear. By introducing temporality here, one that is different from space's constitutive term *permanence*, we can propose a different kind of association with human activity: the possibility of ephemeral, ever-changing and variable meanings and the absence of solid conceptions – a limitation that applies in Foucault's Persian traditional garden. Fairs, thematic festivals, fake environments that condense slices of culture, or in pure accumulation, such as libraries and museums. And what about the internet if we think of the cloud as a mega archive?¹⁰ Being both a pedestrian-in-a-cyberpark and an internet-user renders possible a navigation experience through a mega archive while walking in a green public park.

The fifth principle is on the permeability of its limits. Heterotopias are simultaneously isolated and penetrable. *There*, the inside and outside are not stable categories. It is said that you are in a heterotopia, but maybe you are already out of it. Or to access it, one must go through certain rites of passage—one has to decline a password or your identity to enter a certain circle when navigating in the internet. Edward Soja explanation strengthens the connection between heterotopias and non-places. Following Soja, «[...] *implicit in this heterotopian regulation of opening and closing are working*

¹⁰ Both, a methodological and technical solution for connecting physical and digital archive with on-site objects had been presented during the international conference of the COST Action TU1306 CyberParks in Valletta/Malta in 2016 and is printed in: Bresler, C., Zedlacher, S., Winkler, R. (2017) *The Principle of Geotagging. Cross-linking archival sources with people and the city through digital urban places*. Antoine Zammit and Therese Kenna (Eds): Enhancing Places through Technology. Lisbon: Lusófona University Press, pp. 208–213.

powers, of what Foucault would later describe as “disciplinary technologies” that operate through the social control of space, time, and otherness to produce a certain kind of “normalization”» (Soja 1996: 161). New forms of sensibility and of engagement are shaped and reflected by new media, but they also suppose new and more complex forms of alienation, surveillance and governance.

Finally, Foucault evokes the *heterotopias of compensation*. They have an inclusive function in relation to the space that is left *outside*: sometimes because they *denounce that space itself is also a space of dream and illusion, sometimes because they constitute a progress – which may even be radical. At one extreme, Foucault places the “brothels”, at the other the Jesuit villages in the colonies. Then concludes, inconclusively and abruptly, with the example of the ship, a floating piece of space: «[...] the heterotopia par excellence. In civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage replaces adventure, and the police the pirates»* (Foucault 1984: 762), perhaps because when moving along the signifying chain of heterotopia – and thus floating in a space within space – the production of symbols is also challenged. Heterotopia can thus be seen as a signifying supplement for the product of the enhanced interactions between perception and imagination, a mechanism of displacement from the outside: a “tool” to move from fantasy and hallucination to the underlying order of physical space.

Thus, as shown before, heterotopias are an evanescent and non-static terrain. It is a fold in space. A certain ambiguity leaves it opened precisely because it is a combinatory ground. Heterotopias can be read as marginal sites, but only because they threaten to corrupt the closures and certainties of space as a field of continuous and smooth representation. Foucault said in *Les mots et les choses* (1966) that utopia affords consolation due precisely to its *smoothness*¹¹.

Now, think of the mirror. It is a hybrid terrain, an arch-medium point between utopia and heterotopia – «A placeless place» – hence its utopian characteristics because it «enables me to see myself there where I am not» (Foucault 1984, 754). In addition, it is also a heterotopia because it does present, or practice a counteraction or refusal of the position that I actually occupy (754). The mirror leads us to an ontological inquiry into the nature of the presence, there where the absence is also played. Maybe in the heterotopia of the mirror we can find, radicalizing, the experience of the body in the digital era. Of that hybrid body that sails in *hetero-affection*¹².

2 The Non-place Theory

The attempt to set the «Thirdspace» (Soja 1996) and «Other Spaces» (Foucault 1984) as a Place-Theory regarding *cyberparks* so far, needs – as a counterargument – further the confrontation with the negation of place by itself, as a result of an exponential increase of using technology and human’s introversion at the same time. When Marc Augé published his *non-place* theory in 1992, yet at this time the Smartphone had not

¹¹ Heterotopias disturb because «they secretly undermine language»: they *break, entangle, desiccate, hold, contest and undo*, «they dissolve our myths and sterilize the lyricism of our sentences» (Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. XIX).

¹² CF. Jacques Derrida (2000) *Le Toucher, Jean-Luc Nancy*, Paris Galilée.

been invented and the Internet had not been opened to commercial use.¹³ The conceptual background of this theory could not have been influenced so by these two basic developments for today's use of ICTs. His theory has been recently mentioned in several discussions, but so why is it also important for our reflection on the concepts of cyberparks and the use of ICTs?

One interesting aspect of this theory deals with individualization and introversion as a kind of social change, long before we have got used to our mobile devices and long before a discussion of their impacts on our lives have been critically started. The social roles of such medial apparatuses as well as the question about how they changed our behaviours have to be discussed therefore exhaustively as a next step of a deeper understanding for Augé's theory and for the quality of a cyberpark. The term «supermodernity» (Augé: 1994, 39ff.) arouses to characterize the second half of the 20th century—the increasing excess of objects information and events in time and space. Industrial mass productions led to an ever-growing consuming world, while new mass transport infrastructures changed experience of extension. Non-places, such as highways, supermarkets, airports, etc., are logistical platforms that assist the circulation of subjects and objects. The definition of a non-place however bases mostly on anthropological studies of human behaviours in a network of practices or moving elements in space – mainly based on Michel de Certeau's definition of space (1980). Augé's theory is largely influenced by a delineation of the anthropological term of place, thus its *identity, relations* and *history*. A non-place refers to the absence of these aspects, but mostly by missing recognition of human interactions; there relations are constantly being constituted newly and managed by its «instructions of use»: directions, advices, instructions and prohibitions.

3 Cyberparks as *Non-places*?

The last decades, in a digital landscape in which the materiality and physicality of things give place to the impression drawn from protocol-based representations (computational images, animations or texts), we impose upon space a topological dislocation technique that has, quite literally, a reversible logic. In an interesting way, and from Arnheim's perception-and-response to the analogue stimuli evolving conception, the digital dimension brings in a significant effect on this traditional process retaining at the same time its humanist terms – that is the active and personal aspects found within. The heterotopic displacement, reacting to the loss of the analogue materiality, seems to inaugurate a reversed way: from the observer's responses to data elements, the mind is challenged to construct a posteriori perceptual content in the imaginary register, or better a trace to use a rather influential laconic term for this theoretic study. As mentioned earlier, this content is not as deterministic as its precedent analogous one, but can constantly resurface in alternative versions based on an exchange of conscious and

¹³ In 1992 the Internet has just been introduced as the *World Wide Web* the Swiss *Tim Berners-Lee*, for one year, but has been finally opened to commercial use by the *U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF)* only in 1995. The first Smartphone '*Simon Personal Communicator*' has been invented in 1994 by *BellSouth* and *IBM*.

unconscious thought. However, the questions to be asked evenly concerning cyberparks are the following: Are Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) able to transform non-places into places by enhancing the quality of *identity*, *relations* and *history*, or inversely do they promote parks becoming non-places? Which roles do ICTs play in the eyes of Augé's 'supermodernity'—do we speak about tools of alienation through reinforced governances or are these tools made for liberating their users through the support of their individualisation as well as their emancipation?

The question of cyberparks becoming a non-place through ICTs leads firstly to a reflection on the conceptual background of Augé's theory. His pre-smartphone and pre-internet understanding of 'supermodernity', obviously seems to be a further step, a superlative of modernity, that is historically influenced by a futuristic understanding of modernity – but with a different connotation. When he speaks about 'supermodernity' as excesses of information, time and space his historical understanding of modernity partially seems to follow the idea of Filippo Tommaso Marinetti – but in a negatively way. In the '*manifesto del futurismo*' of 1909 Marinetti glorifies speed and technologies, and refuses history, moral and any institutional knowledge¹⁴. Regarding the many different movements of the beginning 20th century, Augé's 'supermodernity' bases just on a reduced and basically negative connoted sight on some social phenomena of what modernity is seen today – as well as just on some (anthropological) aspects of places too.

It is unarguable that industrial progresses have enormously been determining social changes since the 19th century and the digital turn now offers even more by influencing people's behaviours. But what Augé actually does not consider is the existence of neither hybrid nor heterotopic places (Reisinger 2013) and history. So, it might be a difference of understanding for identity-based attributions that could be seen as a consensual appropriation process by the users (Fade: 2008) that were always related to each other what makes it difficult to define such non-places at all. This way of interpretation leads us further to see ICTs not as tools of a supermodern concept any more, that speed up cognitive processes and enlarge extent spatial experiences as an expense of remaining qualities and human interactions. But in this context ICTs serve as intermediaries that do not have any functional role, but constitute within new identities, such as a hybrid identity in a network between users and subjects in place.

4 ICTs as Intermediaries of Hybrid Spaces

Like in physical public open spaces, the space of the CyberParks combines an image or spatial layout with its overlapped information layering into a hybrid construct. However, reminding the anthropological definition of place, that must enclose *identity*, *relation* or *history*, are ICTs dealing with one of these aspects? Such a dualistic concept of place or non-place tempts us to see technical progresses proportional opposite to

¹⁴ Le Figaro, 20th February 1909, pp. 6–8. "*Noi siamo sul promontorio estremo dei secoli[!]. Perché dovremmo guardarci alle spalle, se vogliamo sfondare le misteriose porte dell'Impossibile? Il Tempo e lo Spazio morirono ieri. Noi viviamo già nell'assoluto, poiché abbiamo già creata l'eterna velocità onnipresente.*"

interpersonal progresses, as the following statements: *The use of ICTs prevents us to speak with each other*, or: *The excess amount of virtual offers interferes our social life*. By seeing ICTs as part of an intermediary network, communication has just been shifted to another space, which yet could not be considered by Augé. Ignoring moral assessments of personal interacting - that by the way would be an aspect of a non-place - it should be noticed that ICTs transform a place not into a non-place but into a Hybrid-Space, in which elevated forms of interactions still take place. This alternative understanding for the relation between the technical and the social does not recognise them separately any more. But is this construct an oxymoron?

5 The Possibility of an *Experienced* Hybrid-place

Hybrid places as described above have become part of the cultural development not only of our public open spaces' heritage but also of our own elevated mechanisms of thinking and understanding space and place. The rising number of online cutting-edge technologies that undertake the task of dislocating place from the analogue of coordinate relations to the digital landscape and virtual reality of categorical relations¹⁵ is a demonstration of this mode of hybrid terrain. The analogue of space, being a park or a square, is a timeless patrimony. It is a constitutive dimension that seems to deeply preserve itself to heterotopia as an *engenderment* of the materiality and physicality of its form. It is the traditional medium, Foucault's Persian garden in other words, by which the logic of space's symbolic systems in the poetic world of Gaston Bachelard, are transformed into material variations, allowing thus the reasoning human mind be attached to the sensible world. The analogue is the forefather; that necessary element which social aspects are tied up with in order to lend themselves to further dialectical investigations that extend beyond the practical function of space's form. It is the common starting point from which we are infused in even more complex conceptions of either geometric or symbolic order - to mention one example, Rudolf Arnheim's symbolic readings of forms seized upon the field of the analogue and its visual qualities as a way to project them "as images of the human condition" instead. The relation between the technical and the human seems an oxymoron. But a more careful approach can remove this arbitrary viewpoint. The question about the oxymoron blending and the roles of ICTs in cyberparks as tools of alienation through reinforced governances or for liberating people through the support of their individualisation and emancipation can be answered shortly by defining those medial apparatuses as intermediaries that change our identities to hybrid identities in place for which we cannot speak about non-places any more. But we can talk about places neither! In a 'modern' way of thinking - that might refer to futuristic concepts too - we would have seen ICTs influencing our behaviours and enhancing the quality of places. (Super)modernity as increasing excesses of information, time and space has become suitable for the separation of time

¹⁵ Support for the workings of the coordinate and categorical relations as well as their correspondences to the analogue and digital can be found in studies on the representation of the visual information in subject's mind. See Hugdahl and Westerhausen. (2010). *The Two Halves of the Brain: Information Processing in the Cerebral Hemispheres*: MIT Press.

and space, the separation of nature and technology, the social and the non-social. In a non-modern way (Latour 1997) that ontologically does not distinguish between human beings and non-human beings, between natures and technologies we see them constantly creating new, hybrid identities. In exclusion of a (super-)modern understanding that differences between the social, technology and nature it is difficult not to overcome the awareness of being governed through one of those actors. When Latour speaks about the missing possibility of controlling ‘the other’, such as the other (virtual) space, the other culture or even the changing climate as a common challenge (Latour 1997, p. 192), we are asked to reassemble what modernity divided. Then we definitely cannot see ICTs as separate tools with a mandate for directions, advices, instructions and prohibitions too, but as parts of new common identities that are not governed nor by the user neither by technology.

In this way a cyberpark is neither a place nor non-Place but a *hybrid-place*, where *relations, history* or *identity* are constantly being constituted newly by a consensual appropriation process between all the actors – humans and non-humans. This emerging form of appropriation can be seen as the human’s dateless quest for meaning and reason – within the hybrid form itself this time. It does not matter if there is Internet or a smart phone available. Neither technology nor nature enhance the quality of place nor increase possibilities for human interactions so. Interactions and thus the assessment for increasing the quality of places can accordingly start with a differentiated understanding for the roles of nature and technology, that see them not as parts of a common space but as parts of a common identity that create non-dualistic networks including hybrid or even heterotopic places too.

Nowadays, ICT mediated formations are useful dimensions to outdoor experience. They can certainly be seen, on one hand, as “decorative follies” for the public open space, but, on the other, they work in the field of emerging and new forms of topos’ sense. From the previous, it became noticed that the distinction between the *Euclidean* space and the *Hetero* topos was critically touched by Foucault. From this starting line and point of view, technologically mediated spaces as hybrid terrains function differently from Euclidean spaces. A critical approach beyond the utilitarian features of outdoor digitally accessed and retrieved information and an exploration on the influence of such features on *what remains after* the end of the experience – that is, the memory of hybrid spaces – seems to become a necessary tool in understanding the range of a cyberpark as mediated spaces *beyond* their Euclidean discipline and as relevant to the meanings constructed and apprehended during their spatial experience.

6 Conclusion

Here, we have to admit that the above question made already a valuable contribution to the previous discourse on non-place; and now will continue to preserve its immense value within this last one. It somehow shows that meaning-ascription, being an intrinsic part of the mnemonic function of human experience, retains a significant role to hybrid spaces as well. A cyberpark, as all other similar immaterial artefacts that feed from virtuality and the digital dimension, cannot escape from it. Moreover, a cyberpark will use meaning ascription regularly.

While from 2014 to 2018 the TU1306 CyberParks Network envisioned the future of open green spaces, the possibility of introducing their heterotopic dimension has been considered either through the Euclidean perspective (in which it makes little sense) or simply taken at the word of ICT developers and programmers. The possibility of a cyberpark to carry and construct different kinds of meanings as compared, at least, to the analogue space itself contains a plethora of heterotopic undertones, or as it is sometimes argued, *supermodern potential*, that needs to be further explored. The Network suggested that human, space and digital environment can perfectly co-exist; and that the contact between them can extend far beyond the narrow field of “seeing” and “perceiving”. This is a phenomenological plane initially sketched out by the TU1306 Network acknowledging that many of the aspects out of CyberParks intermediary network are issues submerged to a mneme/meaning dialectic. They are interpretative entities of the lived, perceived and conceived hybrid reality. We thus claim that cyberparks are, in a sense, symbol-systems themselves giving “*concrete expression to concepts of values, meanings and the like*” (Rapoport 1977: 192) through technology.

The COST Action CyberParks attempted to explore further the argument that the intermediary dimension of such systems has practical applications in the design strategy for experiencing non-places pertaining to questions like “can mediated places deliver up a meaning?” or “can digital landscapes conciliate symbolic signs with peculiar urbanistic issues?” Questions whose answers are not useful to be presented dogmatically here, but at least were implied by the structural technique of the *apparatus* itself. Resorting to Ricoeur (2004), cyberparks are, after all, nothing but symbols in a fundamental level, which are systems of relationships that relate the human condition with space and elements of the digital and immaterial world.

The digital moment has passed. Roy Ascott

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