

# Total Landscape, Theme Parks, Public Space

*Miodrag Mitrasinovic*

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## TOTAL LANDSCAPE, THEME PARKS, PUBLIC SPACE



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**Miodrag Mitrasinovic : Total Landscape, Theme Parks, Public Space** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Total Landscape, Theme Parks, Public Space:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The Evolution of Total LandscapesBy Susan SouthworthIllusion, entertainment and control have been key ingredients in some of the most celebrated manmade environments throughout history. Miodrag Mitrasinovic's "Total Landscape" is much more than an analysis of theme parks on several continents. The author places the modern commercial amusement parks in the context of a broad history of pleasure spaces for the public with a private component. Mitrasinovic examines the purpose, method and effect of examples ranging from the Roman era through medieval country fairs, pleasure gardens, reform parks, gated communities, shopping malls, and mega-resorts to New York's "New" 42nd street and programmed atriums in office towers. Like Bryant Park. hybrid public spaces in international cities have increasingly acquired private funding and behavior control.Many of the themed landscapes represent models of an ideal world or organized flora elements in sequential settings with framed or forced vistas to architectural elements that delight and beguile walkers as they circle a manmade lake, fountains or try to find their way through a maze--a perfect metaphor for total landscapes that control and entertain crowds of people.Some amusements were constructed at the outer ends of trams or horse car routes to encourage weekend fares and keep transit running all week, producing income for the street railways when they

were't carrying commuting workers. The seventeenth century Vauxhall Gardens combined real landscape and lanes with faux structures suggesting faraway places or historical eras. A Chinese Pagoda fashioned out of lath, canvas and plaster stood in front of a panorama painting of a Chinese landscape with Chinese plants and artifacts placed in the foreground to complete the illusion. These constructed environments were temporary and easily changed to a new concept when the admission receipts dropped off, indicating the saturation level of a particular theme. Mitrasinovic's methods of analysis include recorded observations via video, photographs, archival document searches and interviews with a range of participants. There is no dialogue between the designers of theme parks and those who visit them except the market study and the ultimate cash receipts after the design phase is over. The artificial universe that theme parks create entertains visitors who know they are unreal but remain fascinated by the illusion. One can label these environments fake or faux or, less politely, fascist. Theme parks control every aspect to a single effect and the population that inhabits them cannot modify, improve or act on the environment. Visitors are only permitted to look, move through and then depart. They leave no footprints, no evidence they were ever in the theme park, except for the currency they left behind. Increasingly, we spend free time away from home in spaces that attract crowds but are not public in the traditional sense of open and free to all, a part of the common and shared environment belonging equally to all citizens. This book provides a thorough understanding of themed public spaces.

Placing theme parks from the United States, Europe and Asia in a comparative, multidisciplinary framework, this fascinating book argues that these fantasy environments are an extreme example of the totalization of public space. By illuminating the relationship between theme parks and public space, this book offers critical insights into the ethos of total landscape. Illuminating the relationship between theme parks and public space, the book offers an insight into the ethos, design and expectations of public space in the twenty-first century.

'...an in-depth summary into the historical context and current issues surrounding PROPAS - privately-owned publicly accessible space...the in-depth exploration of themeing is especially fascinating...' Geography 'The book takes the reader on a fascinating journey...a book that provides meticulous empirical information while challenging readers to think critically about the social and spatial dimensions of global change is worth leaving on one's coffee table, or one's desk - it is a book I will pick up again!' New Zealand Geographer 'Total landscape, theme parks, public space presents a highly original and refreshingly provocative take on the rise of landscapes of leisure in particular, and the fate of public space in general. The author, Miodrag Mitrasinovic, comes at his subject as a trained architect, a skilled navigator of postmodern critique, a writer with a strongly poetic vision of landscape, but also a father of a young child fascinated by all things Disney. This latter predicament infuses his work with a spirit of adventure, and a willingness to engage ideas that in some postmodern circles might be considered virtually heretical.' Cultural Geographies, About the Author Miodrag Mitrasinovic, PhD, is an architect, author and educator. He teaches at the University of Texas at Austin and at Parsons School of Design in New York City. He is also the co-editor of *Travel, Space, Architecture* (with J. Traganou and S. Akkach) forthcoming from Ashgate in 2007.