Naturalizing Landscapes and the Politics of Hybridity
Gwanghwamun to Cheonggyecheon

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Abstract

In this article, I explain how Gwanghwamun and Cheonggyecheon have been consistently "naturalized" as important representative images of the Korean nation. The object of this study is to deconstruct the ideological naturalization of the dominant landscapes and to understand the historical formations of their hybridization in Seoul. Particularly in hybridizing situations, it is crucial to note the ways of life of people who have lived out in those places. Finding traces of hybridity in naturalized landscapes of Seoul's old city centers, I analyze how nature has been culturalized and architectural landscapes naturalized and de-naturalized. The methodology used to analyze the visual phenomenon of naturalization is the theory of hybridization, of which there are two main types: "structural hybridization" and "cultural hybridization." The article presents some findings in the field research: that which blocks the flow of people passing through Gwanghwamun, as well as the drive for a strategy to regenerate or revitalize the cultural power of Cheonggyecheon.

Keywords: naturalization, hybridization, structural hybridity, cultural hybridity, Seoul, Gwanghwamun, Cheonggyecheon

Landscaping Nature and Naturalizing Landscape

Nature has been always mixed with history and culture. Power and capital have produced particular ways of mixing nature with history. Therefore, "nature" does not indicate non-artificiality, but rather a culturalized "naturalness" that forms after an artificial transformation. Our experience of nature becomes an imaginary one when

nature is *pictorialized* and *spatialized*. This pictorialization and spatialization of nature are part of the process of "landscaping nature." This is coupled with a "naturalizing landscape" because of the inherent reciprocity between nature and landscape. We cannot see nature that is not represented by landscapes, which are waiting to be naturalized in order to be familiar to our eyes. Very often, the cultural landscapes of nature look more natural than the natural landscapes themselves.[1] The "naturalizing landscape" of cultural landscapes is based on a process of a "de-naturalizing landscape" (Duncan and Duncan 1988, 117-125).

The naturalization of landscapes makes the political scenery natural and sutures the historically disconnected hybridity of landscape. Therefore the concept of "land-scape" is not just a fixed and harmonious *habitat*, but rather a flexible and irregular *milieu* in which the image of land varies according to various historical, political, and cultural conditions.[2]
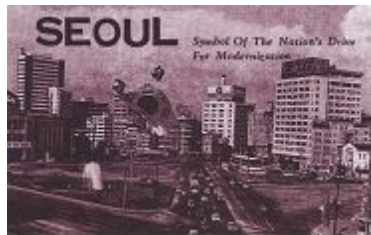
The archetype of Korean landscapes in term of natural scenery can be traced to the 1970s. The dictatorial regime's constructed symbolic buildings and places, the developmentalism showing off the regime's authority and prosperity, as well as President Park's fascist ways—all produced spaces. By taking over the former headquarters of the Japanese government, Park Chung-hee's regime reformed Sejongno into the representative street of the nation. Park's regime needed to show off the results of its modernization project as the political propaganda that helped secure its legitimacy. Progress in the form of the straight lines of motorways, local roads, paddy fields, and buildings was grounded in practical functionalism (Warnke 1992, 34-36).

It was surely no accident that the major of Seoul (1966–1970), Kim Hyun Ok said, "The city is lines." Roads were built through mountains, over rivers, and across the

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[1] "If ants had a language they would, no doubt, call their anthill an artifact and describe the brick wall in its neighborhood as a natural object" (Quoted in Crandell 1993, 2).

[2] Refer to Appadurai (1997, 33-36). Appadurai gives the five levels of landscape as the global

sea to show off modern technological progress, while subjugating nature as a *plastic* thing (Murphy 1994, 3-26). Instead of being treated as an object of reverence, nature became something to overcome, control, and even exploit on behalf of people.

Nature has lost its spontaneous autonomy and degenerated into a visually manipulated plastic thing that requires management. Manipulating nature leads to the landscaping of nature, and their collusion easily sutures hybrid landscapes into a part of nature. This naturalization of landscapes creates problems in public spaces. Korea in the 21st century has a new rhetoric for the production of public space—a "City of Culture and the Environment," one grounded on visual appearances. This new paradigm focuses on the culture and environment leading to a landscaping nature, while attempting its naturalization.

The Seoul Metropolis' strategy of landscape policy is the landscaping of nature and the naturalization of development districts. The discourses about the city possess a good vocabulary of words and images about landscapes, both in the mass media and in public spaces. But just the act of saying the word "environment" and showing "landscapes" does not guarantee a substantial improvement of the actual environment. It rather covers up the real problems and consolidates the existing unequal structure through populist propaganda and events that both create and cater to people's idealized expectations, which the last section of this article will partly argue to be true in the case of Cheonggyecheon. It can be summarized as a so-called "neo-developmentalism" (Deyo 2000), which stands on a similar basis as the concept of "developmentalism" that was deployed between the 1960s and 1970s (Cho 2003, 55-56), but has a new face of the "culture" and "environment."

Seoul Plaza ready to open, April 2004 (ⓒ Ryu Jeh-hong)

cultural flow: ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, ideoscapes.

Seoul Plaza with artificial lotus, May 2004 (ⓒ Ryu Jeh-hong)

The Seoul city mayor is like an "absolute monarch" governing Seoul's nature. For the mayor, nature is a malleable thing that can be manipulated according to his rapidly changing whim. He has said, "Speed is the most important aspect in administration and management" (*Hankook ilbo*, 28 June 2004). The Seoul city government cancelled the competition-winning plan called the "Plaza of Lights" and instead run a "temporary" plan with lightning speed, completed within a month. The rough-and-ready construction of "Seoul Plaza" was completed in time for the "2004 Hi-Seoul Festival," which began on the first day of May. The Plaza is a thing for the mayor to govern, and a scene for consumers to look at. It was only natural that authorities forbade citizens to walk in the plaza ten days after the opening: "Don't walk, just look!" was the exhortation written next to the roped-off field. Such was the effect of a landscaping nature— it prohibits citizens from participating in any real activities, and eliminates any sort of contextual identity.

Hybridity and Hybridization

While the dismantling of the former Japanese colonial building in the Gwanghwamun marked the final ritual of de-colonization, the Sampung department store building collapsed in June 1995 during the late afternoon shopping hours, with the memory of the Seongsu Bridge collapse a few months earlier still fresh in the memories of Seoulites. "The two simultaneous destructions in 1995 present an inherent paradox in the Korean postcolonial condition: the dismantlement of the former Capitol Building—Office of Joseon Government-General (Shotokufu) during Japanese occupation—as the symbol of colonial Order, and the collapse of a department store building, which problematized the capitalistic Order that had been believed to overcome the former, the colonial Order" (Choi 1997). This contradictory event is immanent in Korean social formation, in which pre-modern/modern/post-modern aspects have been articulated into a hybrid conjuncture.

Modernization should be viewed as globalization accompanied by hybridization in various ways. I am cautious about the "substantialist" developmentalist position that conceptualizes modernity as "an *exclusively European* phenomenon that *expanded from the seventeenth century* on throughout all the 'backward' cultures" (Dussel 1998, 18), Rather, we should consider the process of modernity as "the already indicated rational management of the world-system" (Dussel 1998, 19). Generally speaking, globalization cannot help but produce hybridization, even if its technological, commercial, and cultural modernity looks like a phenomenon of Westernization (Nederveen Pieterse 1997, 45-46). As Michael Watts explains, the constantly crisis-prone phases of capitalist mutation find a significant solution in their spatial re-transformations through specializing the hierarchy of times in the rest of the globe (1992, 10). Moreover, there are different degrees, scopes, or speeds of globalization/modernization/colonialization as a "ready-made package," as well as of the actualizing process of associated globalities/modernities/colonialities. The Western global modernity depends on other multiple modernities throughout the planet, and so, says Octavio Paz, "Each society has its own [modernity]" (1991, 17).

Countries such as Japan and Korea, in their efforts to catch up with Western modernity, had to compress a few hundred years of Western modernization into one century in the Japanese case (refer to Jameson 1994, 9) or in thirty years in the Korean one (refer to Kim J. K. 1997). This compressed modernity exists in the global conditions associated with a "mode of production of capitalist space," particularly in terms of capitalism's perpetual efforts to annihilate space with time via "space-time compression" (Harvey 1997). Yet this annihilation of space and time, as Michael Watts argues, has nothing to do with "post", particularly postmodern "hyperspace"; instead, it is "modernity speeded up, the experience and representation of speed and social elasticity associated with a sort of fast capitalism" (Watts 1992, 12). Unlike Germany in Europe, and Japan in Asia, the distinctiveness of the accelerated Korean modernity can be called a multiple "hybridization of the hybrid," something which appeared in Mexico and Peru (Paz 1990, 9).

The hybridization caused by modernization has two sub-categories: "structural hybridization" and "cultural hybridization" (Nederveen Pieterse 1997, 49-57). While "structural hybridization" is related to the relatively fixed formations of the political

economy, "cultural hybridization" is related to the relatively flexible formations of cultures in which subjects can move their positions around a cultural field. In other words, the former is found in the dominant landscape as the structural base; the latter is found in the received landscape as the sphere of user-experience. Thus, "structural hybridization" may operate by colluding, exploiting, containing, and compressing the pre-modern/modern/post-modern, while "cultural hybridization" may work in ways of colliding, subverting, and dis-identifying the non-modern/ultra-modern/anti-modern/ex-modern.

The first condition for "structural hybridization" is the hybrid temporality of *mixed times* common in East Asia as in the rest of the globe—a compressed temporality of pre-modern/modern/post-modern times. After liberation in 1945, control over Korea was transferred from Japan to the US. Modernity thus began in a mix of Japanese, Western and Korean styles. The modern Korean administration was, in fact, "an amalgam of modern European administration and Japanese appropriation of both Korean and Japanese conventions" (Choi 2002, 111).

The second condition for "structural hybridization" is the existence of *hybrid sites* and spaces: this is hybrid urbanization in the context of "the fusion of pre-capitalist and capitalist modes of production" (Nederveen Pieterse 1997, 51). The uneven moment of social development, or "the coexistence of realities from radically different moments of history" (Jameson 1992, 307) is no longer embarrassing: Pyeonghwa clothing stores in front of Migliore fashion center in Dongdaemun, mom-and-pop stores alongside convenience stores, European restaurants next to Korean folk taverns, and traditional tearooms next to coffee houses. This hybrid coexistence of different pasts is called "the synchronism of the non-synchronous," or the "contemporaneity of the non-contemporaneous" (see Bloch 1997).

Modern Korean culture, having long been under the great influence of Chinese culture, was modernized by force under Japanese colonial rule, and is now a mix of Japanese, American, and global cultures. Korea, having been thusly spatially hybridized, underwent significant change during the Japanese occupation. The traditional wall around Seoul had been penetrated by newly constructed roads, while mud huts or *tomak*, which were usually crowded at the foot of mountains, coexisted with Korean, Japanese, Western, and European-style houses and buildings. In the present-day, the traditional

Korean Deoksugung palace has the Seokjojeon, a classical Western stone building constructed in 1910, and there are Romanesque Anglican cathedrals and many American-style buildings in the surrounding area. In front of the palace stands the newly constructed lawn square, the "Seoul Plaza" located between City Hall and the Plaza Hotel, shaped in the perfect hybridity of hyperspace.

The third condition for "structural hybridization" is the hybrid formation making the pre-existing entities more complex, dividing and multiplying their boundaries in an "increase in the available modes of organization" (Nederveen Pieterse 1997, 50). This asynchronous integration might be found in East Asian economic systems as "feudal holdovers," based on "the traditional family structure that provides a basis for organizing industry": pre-war Japanese *zaibatsu* (a giant family trust or the patriarchal master of a conglomerate or group), Korean *jaebeol* (a colonial imitation of the Japanese *zaibatsu*), and the structure of the Taiwanese state (the President being the son of Jiang Jieshi) (Cumings 1987, 73).

Multiple hybrid formation can be found in social formations as a counter-discourse. For example, one must consider the neo-colonial state-monopoly-capitalist model, which had a wider audience with the Korean left during the social formation debate. The 1980s was a montage-like hybrid era, compressed with semi-peripheral, semi-feudal, neo- or post-colonial, state-monopoly capitalism. The neo-colonial state-monopoly-capitalist model clearly shows the collusion between neo-colonialism, state capitalism, and monopolism.

The last example for "structural hybridization" is a forced and exploitative hybridization of the global (new) on the local (old). Due to a shortage of foreign currency at the end of 1997, South Korea had no choice but to accept a full-scale restructuring program in order to save the country. The center of this humiliating experience can be found earlier, particularly beginning in 1988 with the opening of the Korean money market to international financial capital with liberal policies, or from when globalization was accelerated by the Kim Young-sam's regime and Korea joined the OECD in 1996. Very soon after the IMF crisis of 1997, Korean citizens sold their gold items in order to bail out their country on the payment in US dollars. Such was the Korean response to the structural hybridization of global capital. The response was a natural one. Koreans were unable to see the structural hybridization of the IMF because

the government had naturalized an exploitative situation.

Naturalizing Gwanghwamun

The best example for the naturalization of extraneous or heterogeneous landscapes is found in the case of Gyeongbokgung palace as the center of Gwanghwamun. The process of King Taejo's transfer of the capital in Gaeseong to Hanyang (today's Seoul) in 1405 is the process of the landscaping nature and naturalizing landscapes of Gyeongbokgung palace. When Taejo ascended to the throne of the new dynasty (Joseon) via a coup, he took the popular belief in *pungsu* (*fengshui* in Pynin) as a cue for the planning of Seoul, using geomantic principles to determine the placement of his palace, of the distribution of buildings, green zones, open spaces, and the arrangement of their functions within a spatial order. This transformation, before naturalization, de-naturalized the existing naturalized capital of Goryeo dynasty (918-1392), Gaeseong into ruins, and then made use of the already naturalized *pungsu* as an image-text to give great authority to the kingdom. Thus it has got an effect of legitimating Taejo's coup through naturalizing his palace by the help of the geomantic text (*pungsu*). Since then the palace has secured a new placeness for the new government through its de-naturalization and naturalization (see Yoon 2001). The landscaping Seoul has been naturally received as the ideal spot for the royal authority—a new-dignified naturalness.
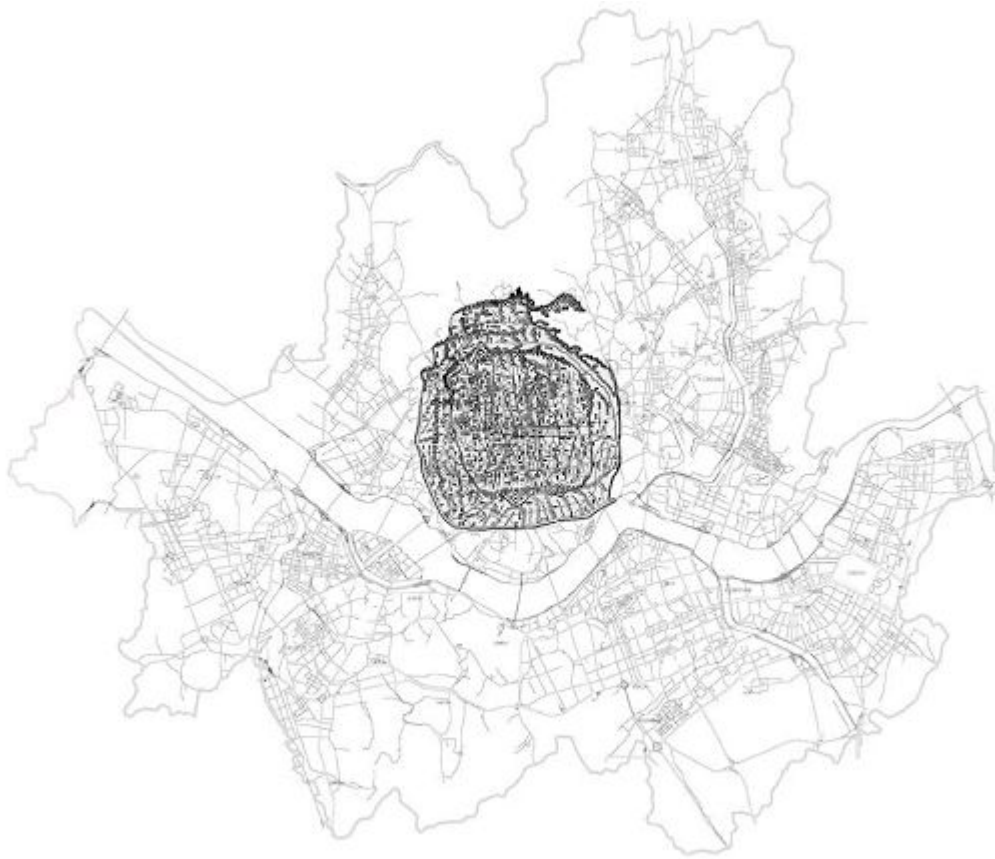
A *pungsu*-based configuration of old Seoul superimposed over a simplified air map of present-day Seoul (© Cultural Action)

Here is an optical exorcism of getting rid of the most conspicuous remaining vestige of Japanese colonialism. The Shotokufu building had started to be demolished on 15th August 1995, which marked the fiftieth anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japanese colonial rule and of the end of the Pacific War.

The symbolic Taegeukgi flag-raising ceremony in front of Central Hall on the anniversary of the restoration of Seoul during the

Korean War in 1950. (© Dong-A Ilbo)

The Shotokufu building was renamed Jungangcheong (Central Hall) after the national liberation in 1945, continuing to provide headquarters for the US military government (1945–1948), the Syngman Rhee regime (1948–1960), and the central government offices for Park Chung-hee's military regime in the 1960s and 1970s.[3] After 1982 the former Capitol Building was used as the National Museum, until it was knocked down in 1995.

Kang Nae-hui considers the demolition of the "final" symbol of Japanese colonization as an accident of "non-event" in terms that it got rid of the vestiges and traces of Japanese colonialism:

> The glittering light of the optical instruments deployed to document the moment of the dismantling, the splendor of the fifteenth anniversary of the *gwangbok* (literally "restoration of light"), and the sunlight of August were such that they have produced a "darkness of light" (2001, 142).

Yet those vestige-signs of Japanese colonialism always reappear in "the power structure controlled by collaborators and their patronage" (Kang 2001, 142). Or, in a "naïve" nationalism to clean up *our* colonial past, or in *our* visual environments haunted by specters of spectacles mediated by the mass media. Korean society has modernity speeded up, so that it needs to make use *and* disuse of modern spectacles to rotate fast. The spectrality of the image would entail the magicality of technology and the volatility of the spectacle. The sensation of glittering spectacles would be forgotten with the eternal return of specters of those spectacles.

The Japanese colonial regime made a reverse use of several Korean cultural symbols of the geomantic system, destroying auspicious spots where influences on good fortune converged, thereby violating the sexual topography (Choi 1997). This symbolic

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[3] About the English name "Capital Hall" for the Korean name "Central Hall," see Choi (1997).

violence replaced parts of our geomantic meanings for European architectural landscapes as representatives of Japan's spatial power. The next step was the naturalization of those landscapes such that the Joseon Government-General building was used as the Korean Central Hall as well as central government offices after the national liberation.

A bird's-eye view of Sejongno, 2004. In 1967 the statue of General Yi Sun-sin was erected in Sejongno at the intersection of Gwanghwamun. (ⓒ Ryu Jeh-hong)

Park Chung-hee's regime (1962–1979) was a thorough expression of colonial modernity, because it was grounded on a "sort of nationalistic culture" (Kwon 2001, 15-16). A statue of General Yi Sun-sin, constructed in 1967, allegedly to re-presented President Park Chung-hee as a loyal soldier facing adversity. The statues, which were a typical sculptural expression of the ideology of the Third Republic, were built all over the country, particularly as concrete statues placed in primary schools. The concrete structures in the traditional shape of a wooden frame with tiled roofs (*giwa*) were widely used to build all sorts of memorial halls, as well as all the so-called "sacred places" throughout the country, defining what has been called a "Park Chung-hee style."

"Postcolonial Korea, at least in the visual regime, is a pastiche of postwar Japan" (Choi 1997). The Korean government had officially banned the importation of Japanese cultural products until it had to open their doors to the Japanese culture industry in the global age triggered by the IMF crisis in late 1997. Still, South Koreans have already built lives that bear remarkable resemblance to those of the Japanese. This is true not only in the judicial, bureaucratic, educational, economic, military, and police systems, but also in terms of the visual appearance of Japan itself, as is found in modern housing projects, condominium buildings and their contents, the designs of home appliances, animation and television programs, styles of photography and printing,

fashion, and even fancy stationery (Choi 1997).

These colonial specters have haunted subjects, who are harmoniously united and sutured by naturalized landscapes. Rather than destroy the palace wholesale and substituting a Japanese-style palace for the Korean one, which would have de-naturalized the Korean cultural landscapes, the European-style Joseon Government-General building only occupied the front area of the naturalized Gyeongbokgung palace, creating a hybrid landscape (Yoon 2001, 287).

This partial grafting has come to cause more serious problems when we survey the larger area around the Gyeongbokgung palace, which is now devoid of the Shotokufu building. In that the distinctive feature of Korean traditional architecture could be called the "culturalization of nature" and the "naturalization of architecture," the present-day spatial disposition of the several functions of the city has lost sight of its principle of landscaping and naturalizing.

After the Japanese colonial period, the cultural colonization of USA after the 1945 Liberation of Korea, the "life-world" colonization by the dictatorship of various military regimes, as well as by the interests of global capital, the important places around the Korean palaces within the old city center have been transformed for new land use. The buildings of palaces have been demolished and sold into private hands, with the green tracts of land now having different modern uses. Around the period of the Japanese occupation, the old organs of the nation and the sites of the old palaces were changed into Japanese apparatuses of domination, modern schools, or designated as private land. After the 1945 Liberation, they were again transformed into American apparatuses, as symbolized by large company and office buildings.

The problem with these changes in land use and ownership lies in the reduction of the traditional landscapes into foreign or hybrid landscapes without the context of their grafting. The other problem lies in that the center of the nation has no scopic regime of distributing sites and functions. The only legacy of the hybrid grafting of the areas around Gyeongbokgung palace would be found in the blockage that dams up the old passages of streams and the flows around the organs of the nation. Thus the spatial problem does not lie in the fact that there are no modern institutions such as schools with which to (re)produce modern subjects, but rather in that hybrid spaces occupied the open spaces around these apparatuses, isolated the big buildings with fences and

parking lots, and eventually blocked the entry of the people.
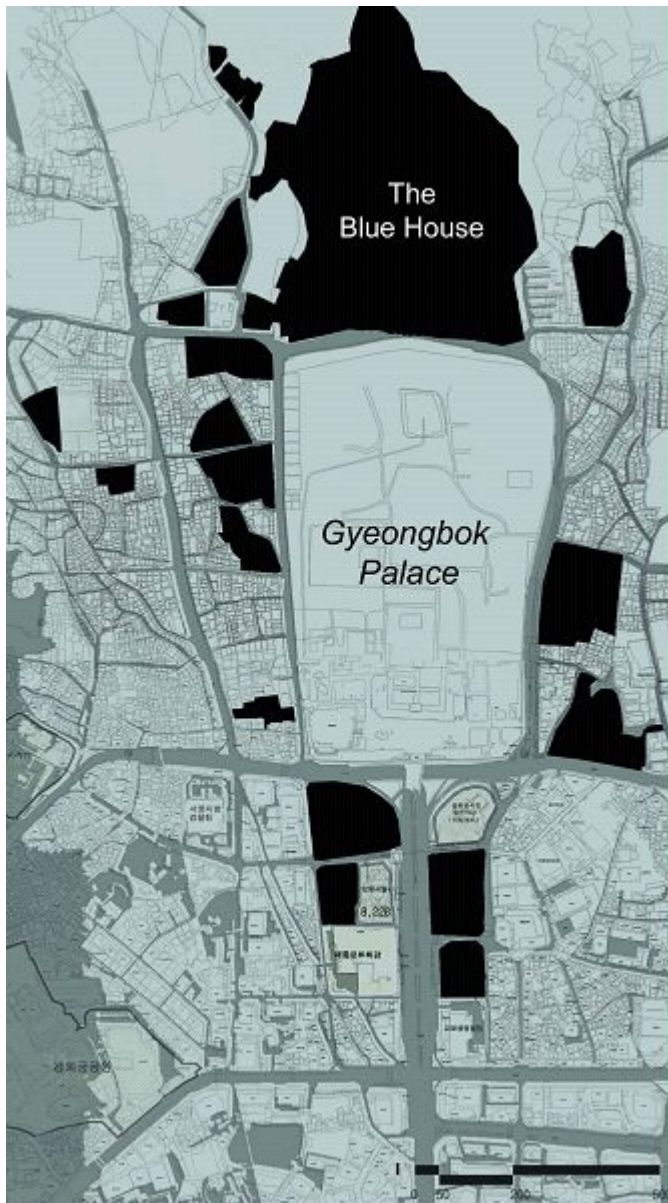
A simplified air map of the Gwanghwamun area, 2004. There are many isolated islands around Gyeongbokgung Palace, marked in black: government offices with affiliated organizations and incidental buildings, and several public institutions. (ⓒ Ryu Jeh-hong)

The Gwanghwamun district around Gyeongbokgung palace and Sejongno street appears a hybrid naturalization. The traditional landscapes of palaces remain political landscapes that legitimate every Korean regime with their orthodoxy, while the naturalization of Japanese colonial hybrids haunt us like specters through their architectures in the Westernized style, and global architectures around Gwanghwamun imposing a "high-living standard" of high-storied towers upon their viewers. The

residual traditions, dominant landscapes, and emergent post-modern buildings construe a collusive hybrid of political domination, economic exploitation, and cultural colonization. It is necessary to solve the existing problems of the symbolic places of the nation rather than merely graft new ideal spaces upon them. And the most important aspect of remodeling these places revolves around people's ways of making a life in them.

Hybridizing Cheoggyecheon

It was 1966 when a former military man, the "bulldozer mayor," took over Seoul city. Often quoting the modern statement that "the city is lines," he made a great number of road lines that run throughout Seoul. On the other hand, low-income people in rural areas could not withstand the economic hardships of life, so a rural population that had come to Seoul in search of jobs started to concentrate in the metropolitan area with advent of the economic development plan launched under the banner of "the modernization of our fatherland" in the early 1960s. Newcomers from the countryside could not enter any building around the "lines"; they instead occupied hilly districts or riverbeds in Seoul (Chang 2003, 82-85).

 A simulated view of a restored Cheonggyecehon stream (www.metro.seoul.kr/kor2000/chungaehome/seoul/main.htm)

One of the riverbeds to which they resorted as a living space was the Cheonggyecheon stream. The idea of restoring Cheonggyecheon stream was brought up as one of the election promises made by a candidate for the Mayor of Seoul in June 2002. This author had the chance to take part in the program called the "Exploration of Cheonggyecheon,"

managed by an NGO called Cultural Action, along with urban research groups such as City Architecture Network and Flying City. This took place in May 2003, when the restoration plan for the Cheonggyecheon stream was officially confirmed by the elected mayor as being planned to be implemented in reality.

Sometime in July 2003, when the Samil elevated expressway had been prepared for demolition, Cheonggyecheon merchants conducting anti-restoration demonstrations embodied the anti-restoration discourses raised by NGOs. Many acknowledged the legitimacy of the Cheonggyecheon stream restoration project in principle, but asserted the need to slow down the speed of the restoration; the environmentalist discourse preferred the restoration of the upper reaches of Cheonggyecheon to reusing available water to flow in the watercourse. There were other discourses as well: that of restoring cultural relics buried under the Cheonggyecheon street in their original form; that of a procedural democratism that respected the opinions of merchants and citizens. There was also a discourse asserting the need to work out alternatives to high-rise and unsystematic development, as well as one around the displacement of merchants and the traffic problems that would be created by the restoration. But these alternative discourses failed to halt or slow down the project, as they all ran counter to the Seoul council's arbitrary desires to complete their Project.

It is within this confusing situation that I have thought over what did disappear and what was valuable in the Cheonggyecheon. What has disappeared from Cheonggyecheon is not positively visible in the extant landscape, but is defined in what is now noticeably absent (refer to Abbas 2002, 6-7). That intangible something is defined in terms of the technology of life and the power of space in Cheonggyecheon.


Flying City, Cheonggyecheon, 2003.

I have found several intangible technologies of living in Cheonggyecheon. There are three areas there: the Seun Arcade area in the upper stream, the Dongdaemun (East Gate) area that lies about the middle, and the Hwanghak-dong area in the lower reaches

of the stream. These three areas are famous for the metal and apparel industries.
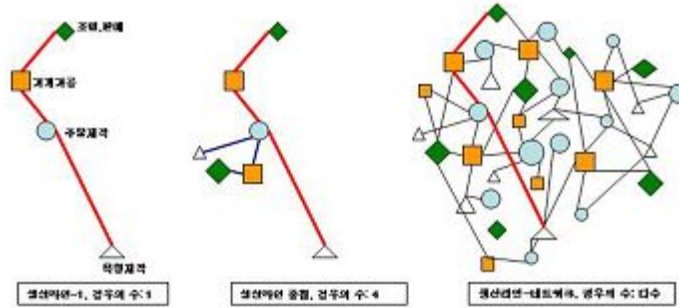
City architecture network and the network structure of the metal workshops, 2003/

In the city blocks specializing in metalworking instruments and machinery, there is a network system that encompasses the various processes of design, production, circulation, and merchandising. "The machinery and molding industries work in conjunction with one another. The process of receiving an order, getting the materials, manufacturing the item, and supplying it to the dealer operates perfectly in this area. Each workshop is part of a connected network" says Yi Yong-jin, the owner of the Daejin Precision Company. The network is the physiology of symbiotic human networks and the processes of high-tech production based on multi-kind items and small quantities that colluded to constitute the system.
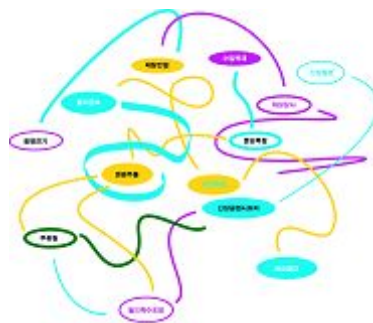
Flying City, a network of metal workshops, 2003.

This metalworking network produces various items in small quantities in such a way as to make it resemble a postmodern, or at least late-modern, production system. How is it

possible to form a postmodern system of production out of a premodern way of applying technology within a modernized space? The condition for this hybridization of the premodern, the modern, and the postmodern illustrates the historical situation of Seoul. There had not been any means of production in Cheonggyecheon except for the parts of machinery left behind in Japanese factories after the 1945 Liberation, parts of machinery that flowed out of US military bases, and of the pieces of malfunctioned machinery produced by large Korean companies. These machine parts, combined with people's eagerness to live well, have been resources in forming this flexible system of production, which was fit for a small quantity of prototypical goods, and then for higher-scale, higher-quality production when Cheonggyecheon became the base of support for the manufacturing industry in the industrial export-led era that began in the mid 1960s.

Rooted in premodern ways, the intangible technology of life in Cheonggyecheon has come to be tinged with a decidedly postmodern color through the process of having come into being within a modernized space. This hybridization of the premodern and postmodern was enabled by the fact that both have "nonmodern" aspects, and the technology mimicking that of advanced capitalism acted as a mediator between the two of them. The hybrid is thus both premodern and postmodern.

The Seun Arcade area of Cheonggyecheon exists as very accumulation of the technological know-how—particularly the computer—made possible by the process of deconstructing and constructing imported electronic products. The technology of mimicking and deconstructing is grounded on a quick eye for learning things and dexterous hand skills, which combined to spontaneously create a system of high-quality, varied production.

The apparel industry in the Pyeonghwa shopping apartment stores in the Dongdaemun district has developed designs through imitation, and has increased the number of items sold by quickly circulating the speed of manufacturing and fashion styles. A high-quality, small-scale production system of various items has taken shape as shops integrated into compact cells within the enormous body of an apartment shopping building; in turn, this cellularization of each square shop has intensified the differentiation of items. It is the technology of the Pyeonghwa apparel industry that forms the base for the numerous designer shops serving their surrounding famous

high-rise shopping apartments. In the process of trying to catch up with modern Western technology, the premodern technology of Cheonggyecheon life has generated a postmodern application of space and a complex network of production.

It is the hybrid modernity of the Cheonggyecheon that the Seoul Metropolitan Government failed to recognize, an oversight that informed the decision to rebuild the premodern Cheonggyecheon in the name of restoration, as well as for the aesthetic sake of the postmodern spaces of international finance and the IT and fashion industries surrounding the area. It is nothing more than a political display that takes place within the rhetoric that surrounds new economic development. It is Cheonggyecheon modernity that is a target of de-naturalization, and the pre- and postmodern Cheonggyecheon that is to be naturalized. I would say that Cheonggyecheon is a modern space in which Cheonggyecheon people have lived in the shadows for the past 30 or 40 years. It is Cheonggyecheon modernity that hybridizes the premodern knowledge of technology, as well as the modern space and the postmodern system of production that has nurtured it.
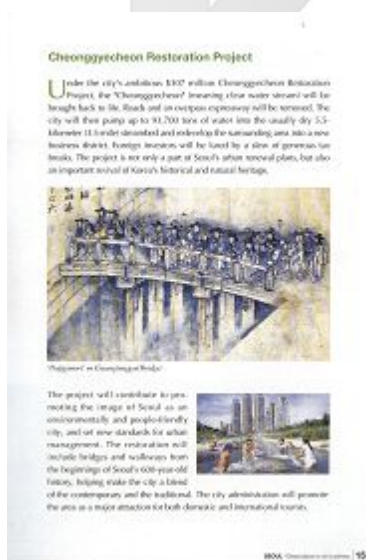
Seoul Metropolitan Government, Seoul: A Great Place to Do Business, 2003, p. 15. Promoting the image of the Cheonggyecheon as environmentally and socially friendly, the Seoul Metropolitan Government represents the area as a blend of the traditional and pre-modern ('Dapgyonori' on Gwangtong Bridge), as well as contemporary and post-industrial (Restored Yangjecheon with the background of Tower Palace buildings and the foreground of children).

The history of Cheonggyecheon has been naturalized and de-naturalized in turn, a process that defines a "natural history."[4] The nature of Cheonggyecheon is not limited

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[4] The "Natural History," meaning the history of nature and the naturalized history, is an image sphere displayed in the Walter Benjamin's Arcades Project (see Susan Buck-Morss 1993, 210-212). As Paris is the capital of the nineteenth-century capitalism is so the Cheonggyecheon is the capital of the modern Korean capitalism for me.

to the Cheonggyecheon stream, but includes the side districts around it. The birth, aging, and death of buildings and spaces take place according to the laws of nature. Yet the natural history of space does not resemble spatial evolution; it is rather best described as the hybridization of the hybrid. Cheonggyecheon is an archetype of postmodern landscapes. The Seun Arcade and the Samil Apartments are the predecessors of multipurpose buildings for residence and commerce; the Pyeonghwa apparel buildings are the predecessors of the numerous designer shops of the famous high-rise shopping complexes in the Dongdaemun shopping area; and the Samil elevated expressway is the predecessor of many of the elevated roads newly constructed in the nation.

"Samil-Flowers," 2003 (ⓒ Lee Ho Kyong)

The interior of an apartment in the Samil Apartment Complex, Hwanghak-dong, 2003 (ⓒ Ryu Jeh-hong)

It is generally true that in Cheonggyecheon, new technology takes the image of the premodern. The construction of the Samil Apartment buildings, the first residential apartment building in Seoul, imitated the structure of traditional Korean-style houses in 1969. There are two or three doorsteps at the entrance leading to a wooden floor, a stand-up kitchen with a loft, and a briquette-fired water-tube boiler. The hybrid relations of the surviving objects to their predecessors are often more complicated, embodying the compression of historical eras. For instance, a traditional, urban-style house in Changsin-dong, having had its interior transformed into a needle workshop factory, houses foreign workers from Southeast Asia. This could be called "the hybridization of the hybrid."

In the outside of the old city center surrounded by the Four Big Gates, there is

another landscape that is very different from the other metal manufacturing and fashion areas that occupy the upper and middle part of the Cheonggyecheon stream. This area has been the poorest one among the areas alongside the Cheonggyecheon stream due to the fact of its distance from the Gyeongbokgung palace. The Hwanghak-dong area in the lower reaches of the Cheonggyecheon stream has been famous for its regenerative industry, which specializes in remaking out-of-use objects. Hwanghak-dong people who find a way of making a living in the Cheonggyecheon waste stream possess only a quick eye for learning things and the hand skills required for refashioning various kinds of abandoned objects. As a result, they deal with many types of regenerated goods in the Hwanghak-dong area: machinery, small electronics, discarded objects, and even actual trash.

It is a different hybrid culture, one quite different from the other areas of the Cheonggyecheon. The hybrid culture of the Hwanghak-dong area contains all things, both tangible and not, as a consciousness that is a thing apart from the entire areas of Cheonggyecheon.

"The Shadow of the Samil Elevated Expressway," 2003 (ⓒ An Hyun Sook)

Samil Apartment complex, 2002 (ⓒ Lee Ho Kyong)

There are the myths of the "modernization project," with much of its ruins strewn about the Hwanghak-dong area. The Samil elevated expressway and Samil Apartment buildings were represented as splendid flowers of modernization even as they brought catastrophe down upon people at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder, who were expelled by force from Cheonggyecheon; now, they are rapidly emerging from the

hell-ruins (See Benjamin 1985, 41; 1999, 22). Hwanghak-dong people have endured and lived out the catastrophes of that modernization.

A section of the Samil elevated expressway under deconstruction, 2003 (ⓒ Ryu Jeh-hong)

How have Hwanghak-dong people lived in the Cheonggyecheon that has been forcibly and ostentatiously constructed by the military regime? My answer would be that they have preserved themselves through reproducing, regenerating, or remaking goods such as the machinery, electronics, used items, and refuse that have flowed out of Japanese factories, US military bases, and large Korean conglomerates, as well as those discarded by households across the city.

The front passage of a curio shop, Sungbodang in Hwanghak-dong, 2003 (ⓒ Ryu Jeh-hong)

Hwanghak-dong people all exist in the same status, with refused, wasted, abandoned, or discarded junk—the very embodiment of the modern drifting subject. They are all creations of Cheonggyecheon. Everything, including people, has been called *manmul* (all things) in Korean—they are things awaiting regeneration. Old things are also referred to as *manmul,* instead of "antiques." They have not just repaired the malfunctioned parts of machines, but transformed them into other creations altogether. In this way, Han Un-yong, the owner of the Cheonggye Company, has created "wind-generating machine" by constructing a machine with a malfunctioning motor, fans, and legs. "This is not an electric fan!" he says. It returns to a new life—a hybrid one.

Flying City, " This is not an electric fan!'" 2003.

Conclusion

In this article, I have compared the concept of "hybridization" with that of "naturalization." To analyze the visual phenomenon of naturalization is to find some traces of hybridity in the naturalized landscapes of Seoul's old city center, and to deconstruct the ideological naturalization of dominant landscapes while trying to understand the historical formations of their hybridization in Seoul. Naturalized and hybrid landscapes can be found roughly in two very important spaces: Gwanghwamun as a naturalized dominant landscape of politics and Cheonggyecheon as a hybridized regenerative landscape of the economy.

To make landscapes "natural" is the strategy of the dominant regime to legitimate its *raison d'être*, a covering up of the possibilities of hybrid spaces. The landscapes naturalized by the words and pictures have "interpellated" their viewers as citizens of Korea, and "territorialized" their viewers' land in Korea. I found an alternative in the Cheonggyecheon people's ways of life and in their ways of using, transforming, and hybridizing their spaces, which all come together to form a new network of production. It can be called a culture of space, a hybrid politics of space. The important thing is not hybridization in itself, but the *ways* old and new are hybridized, the *ways* local and global are integrated, as well as the *ways* of connecting or disconnecting people and spaces. Cheonggyecheon is like a huge hybrid "machine" that operates through flexibly dis/connecting the various parts. Regenerated objects, spaces, and relations, by way of dexterous hands and quick eyes, can easily fuse into unexpected hybrids of items, places, and networks. This is the cultural power of the living Cheonggyecheon.