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History, Narrative, and Production in the Cheonggyecheon Reconstruction

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Abstract

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As cities become increasingly de-industrialized and place greater emphasis on building a sustainable future, we have seen an increase in the design of large-scale landscapes that are being incorporated into the urban fabric. Unlike historical models of urban renewal which prioritized building and infrastructure as the drivers for change in the pursuit of creating a modern, industrial city, the prominence of landscape as the renewing and transformative medium illustrates the civic desire for the creation of a more humanistic urban condition. The Cheonggyecheon stream and park in Seoul, South Korea, is an example of this phenomenon, and the city of Seoul has promoted the project as a restoration of its history. Through an examination of visual and oral narratives of the Cheonggyecheon project, site, and design, this dissertation posits that Seoul's construction of a stream and park is simultaneously a recovery of and break

with the past, reflecting the tenacity of historical discourse in evoking collective memory and the lingering effects of history of place in determining place identity.

Built on the site of a historic stream that had been buried since the 1970s, the project began with the demolition of a highway overpass and transformed the site into a urban stream park, sharing similar design and operational characteristics of a landscape urbanism project. Yet the Cheonggyecheon carries unique cultural, political, and historical dimensions that makes the project more than a large-scale urban landscape and the central feature of a new urban design for Seoul's city center. Using the ideas of history, memory, and nature in the construction of a new place identity for the park, the Cheonggyecheon reflects Seoul's efforts to redefine itself for the 21st century. The park has provided the city center with a green space, helped the city become more pedestrian-friendly and gain an image of environmental progressiveness, and contributed to the revitalization and rewriting of the city's history and identity. However, despite these transformative attributes, the project sparked controversy and criticism for its speed of construction, negative impacts to existing businesses and residents of the surrounding neighborhood, and the use of pumped water from the Han River to supplement the stream's continuous flow of water. The project reflects the challenges and contradictions for remaking urban and industrial sites into urban landscapes and the use of technology to produce and control natural forces and processes. The Cheonggyecheon ultimately reflects the desire and pursuit of the 21st century city to express new directions for its future through a construction of a new historical narrative of its past and culture.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

I. Turning infrastructure into a park: the transformation of a highway overpass into a stream

Since the end of the 20th century, large-scale urban renewal projects have seen a shift in form and emphasis from architectural works that were symbolic of the age of modernism and rapid urbanization to large-scale green spaces constructed into the urban fabric (Spirn, 2011; Waldheim, 2002; Corner, 2006). This change in the typology of urban civic projects as well as the subsequent changes in the urban fabric is reflective of a transformation of priorities and objectives civic leaders, designers, and public opinion for what constitutes a desirable and worthwhile urban landscape. It illustrates the global desire for sustainable and resilient design practices as responses to climate change and catastrophic weather events. In “Terra Fluxus,” landscape architect and theorist James Corner explains the wide range of reasons for the emergence of landscape as a driving force for changes in an increasingly urbanized world:

The reappearance of landscape in the larger cultural imagination is due, in part, to the remarkable rise of environmentalism and a global ecological awareness, to the growth of tourism and the associated needs of regions to retain a sense of unique identity, and to the impacts upon rural areas by massive urban growth (Corner, 2006).

Large scale urban landscape projects have been called works of landscape urbanism, ecological urbanism, ecological design, sustainable design and planning, among other names (Spirn, 2011). These projects may differ in focus and scale, but they share the characteristics of design that expresses temporality and landscape designed for an urban setting, often with an introduction of visible forms of nature. Their implementation in urban settings have the potential to change the form and culture of urban landscapes.

The future ramifications of the growth of urban landscape projects warrant an exploration of how this may change future cities and what kind of effect it may have on city-dwellers. To understand future consequences, it is essential to understand the historical background of a new urban landscape project's site and evolution to gain an understanding of the full context of the project and its intended design goals. A site's history can reveal recognized conditions as well as the social and cultural processes that may have contributed to its development and its reception. The interaction of temporality and urban processes is a primary strength of landscape urbanism (Waldheim, 2006, Corner, 2006). In describing Bernard Tschumi's Parc de la Villette as a "conceptual leap in the development of landscape urbanism," architect Charles Waldheim writes that Tschumi's design "formulated landscape as the most suitable medium through which to order programmatic and social change over time, especially complex evolving arrangements of urban activities" (Waldheim, 2006). Landscape urbanism projects often carry an inherent sense of the historical, in large part as they originate in rehabilitated and reused spaces that carry the memory of previous spatial incarnations.

The combination of history and visible forms of nature in landscape urbanism projects reflects a stark contrast to the *tabula rasa* impression of the Modernist concept of urban renewal through the building of new architecture. Whereas urban renewal projects resulted in the erasure of history and memory to accentuate the sense of newness and break from the past through the destruction of older buildings in order to construct the new, landscape urbanism projects acknowledge the historical foundations of the site and retain elements or traces of the past with the new design. The differences between urban renewal and landscape urbanism present several questions of their respective consequences when constructed for the purposes of urban revitalization. In a landscape design that exhibits traces of the past, does the project evoke

history and memory, or by the transformation of use, function, and typology, does the project become intrinsically a new space, and another urban renewal project in a different form? Broader implications address the challenges and possible problems of building a landscape in a space that had been long bereft of elements of visible nature, such as, how can a natural form such as a stream be constructed in the post-industrial city, and what can be construed as nature?

The Cheonggyecheon, a linear park with a reconstructed stream in Seoul, South Korea, is an example of a landscape urban renewal project that elicits broad questions about nature, history, and the changing contemporary city. The name Cheonggyecheon, which means “clear stream,” has endured through various transformations of the site. It was originally applied to a historic stream that dates back to the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910), then passed onto the road that was built when the stream was covered beginning in the 1940s, followed by the highway overpass built over the road in the 1970s, and finally to the park, constructed at the same time as the demolition of the overpass and completed in 2005 (Rowe, Kim, Jung, 2010; Marshall, 2016). Each successive space has held the same name, demonstrating both endurance and transformation of the site. The reconstruction project presents a layering of the history of the site from its time as a stream to an infrastructural site to an urban landscape. Given the scale and multiple changes to the site, the project warrants a specific examination of the history of Seoul’s built environment as well as cultural and societal changes experienced by Seoulites from the end of the 20th century to the start of the 21st through impacts from changes in their built environment.

In addition to the transformative and historical dimensions of the project, the Cheonggyecheon has other multifaceted dimensions and purposes that adds to its complexity. It serves utilitarian functions as a stormwater channel during flooding events, provides the city with

a civic space for special events, and has revitalized the area surrounding the space. Although the Cheonggyecheon is not often associated with landscape urbanism and has instead been called an urban design project, a linear park, a daylighting project, a reclaimed river, and a restored stream (Busquets, 2011; Rowe, Youngerman, 2013; Revkin, Marshall), the project manifests key elements of landscape urbanism. These key elements help frame the project as a singular and representative case study for an examination of the topics of this research.

The Cheonggyecheon illustrates each of the four themes of landscape urbanism from James Corner's essay: "processes over time, the staging of surfaces, the operational or working method, and the imaginary" (Corner, 2006). Of these topics, the first and last carry the most relevance to the main topics of this research, and they are expressed together through the design, history, and activation of the site. The Cheonggyecheon has acted as a measure of the changing times in modern South Korean history and its transformation into a park served as a way to reset time, which depends upon the powers of a collective imaginary. The simultaneous operation of Corner's four themes reflect the dialectical dimension of landscape urbanism, and in the case of the Cheonggyecheon, the specific issue of time connects the history of the site and its reflection of the larger history of Seoul with the desired goal of the project as an expression of both the past and future of Seoul. The ways in which the project demonstrates Corner's four themes of landscape urbanism are as follows.

Processes over time

The project began with the demolition of a deteriorating highway overpass that was built over the location of a historic streambed. During South Korea's rapid growth period following the Korean War (1950- 1953), the original Cheonggyecheon stream became increasingly more polluted from human and light industrial waste (Chon, 2003). Corner describes "processes over

time” as the forces that affect a site through time and as systems. He considers ecology an illustration of processed based activity, which might seem to prioritize the forces of nature. However, processes can reflect changes driven by multiple factors such as economics, industry, and nature, working in concert with each other. Corner writes:

The promise of landscape urbanism is the development of a space-time ecology that treats all forces and agents working in the urban field and considers them as continuous networks of inter-relationships. (Corner, 2006)

The site of the Cheonggyecheon underwent a series of transformations, reflecting the growing industrial and infrastructural focus of the time period. As the stream was covered and the space turned into a road and later a highway overpass, the city erased the natural water element from the cityscape. Transforming the site back into a stream evoked the past, yet the city’s goals and vision for the project were grounded in improving the city for the future, or perhaps more precisely as an expression of the city’s futuristic identity and image (Lee, M-b, 2007). Since its completion in 2005, the Cheonggyecheon has become a popular public space and landmark in Seoul’s central business district where it begins, flowing east across the city, merging with the Jungnangcheon stream and ending at the Han River. With this project, the city of Seoul resolved its problem of aging infrastructure and revitalized an economically stagnant part of the city by creating a water landscape feature that has helped give Seoul a new 21st image as a “human-oriented, environment-friendly city” (Park, 2006).

The project highlights the city’s increasing priority for creating public spaces that offer beauty and visual interest, designed to offer city-dwellers and visitors opportunities to commune with nature in the city. As a reflection of the times, the project illustrates South Korea’s embrace of globalization while simultaneously presenting a visual narrative of its history and cultural identity through its built environment. The desire for building urban amenities is not unique to

Seoul, but the development of a number of public landscape projects in the city beginning at the end of the 20th century illustrates processes of change in the culture and image of the city.

The Staging of Surfaces

Corner describes the “staging of surfaces” as “field of action” or “urban infrastructures” (Corner, 2006) and alludes to the multiple systems of a work of landscape urbanism, including impacted populations and community engagement. Corner elaborates that through staging of surfaces, “this is a kind of urbanism that anticipates change, open-endedness, and negotiation.” The Cheonggyecheon Restoration was one of the key campaign promises of Lee Myung-bak’s mayoral campaign. With Lee’s mayoral victory, the Seoul Metropolitan Government oversaw the project from its conception to completion by directing three separate teams of designers, engineers, and contractors that worked in concert to complete the demolition of the highway overpass and construct a linear park that introduced a continually flowing stream into the city center. The top-down approach of the project’s development continues the tradition of the site’s transformations by the governing powers that controlled the city and may by definition make the “staging of surfaces” theme the opposite of the Cheonggyecheon’s creative process. However, its current incarnation as a park suggests that city leaders were at least partially motivated by a contemporary concern for improving Seoul’s public amenities and the quality of life of its inhabitants. The planning process included more than four thousand community meetings to negotiate the project with the members of the surrounding community (Interview 21). The resulting transformation of the Cheonggyecheon site reverberates beyond the park and resulted in multiple changes in Seoul’s urban design, its transportation infrastructure, and more broadly South Korean culture and society. Project opponents warned that removing the highway ramp would result in massive traffic congestion, so the city made coordinated efforts to mitigate and

decrease traffic with new traffic patterns and additional bus and subway lines (Interview 3, 19, 21). The project illustrates the connectivity of the processes of the city and how the construction of an urban park must be supported by improvements to other parts of the city. The Cheonggyecheon restoration involved upgrades to the city's urban design, transportation planning, and has played a part in changes to the cultural and social fabric of the city.

The Imaginary

This research project examines the Cheonggyecheon Restoration as a recovery of and break with the past, reflecting the tenacity of historical discourse in evoking collective memory and the lingering effects of history in determining place identity, and how the Cheonggyecheon has used evocations of history and memory as expressions of the future. It addresses the shift in the identity of Seoul's urban fabric with the recreation of a historic stream and green space. The introduction of a green space and stream in the city carries a nostalgic sensibility by evoking a connection to the land that might have been lost for the urban dweller and may reflect a latent connection to nature that is central to the identity of Seoul. However, this reconstruction is not without complications that raise questions of authenticity, the ethical implications of building a stream through technological means, and the social, cultural, political, economic and historical impacts that might arise as the city changes through the addition of its new urban landscape. French sociologist and philosopher Henri Lefebvre argues that "nature creates and does not produce" (1995). Lefebvre would then argue that the Cheonggyecheon Restoration is not nature but production, yet in the context of an overbuilt city, production might be the only means to restore nature.

The Cheonggyecheon project incorporates elements of memory and history in its conception and design, yet the design of the space blends imagery of the past presented so as to

emphasize the future. This interplay of past and future in the design makes the Cheonggyecheon more than a park and public open space. It reflects the city's presentation of its past and identity as a narrative built into the design and allows the story to unfold through the site. In this way, the Cheonggyecheon epitomizes the last of Corner's four main themes of landscape urbanism: "...it seems landscape urbanism is first and last an imaginative project, a speculative thickening of the world of possibilities" (Corner, 2006). For Corner, the realm of landscape urbanism lies in the imaginary, thus allowing meaning to be written and designed into a project site as well as allowing for open interpretations and evolving meanings. The act of combining the imaginary and history with the design of landscape is a critical element of the Cheonggyecheon project and is the strongest of the project's reflections of Corner's four landscape urbanism themes.

The operational or working method

The completed Cheonggyecheon and the process of its conceptualization to completion illustrate the diverse ways in which this idea of production served as an driving force for the project. Electrical power produces the flowing water in the stream. The three separate design teams achieved a single project under the direction of the city government. Equally significant is the project's emphasis on historical narrative, in the ways in which the city leaders and planners promoted and described the project, and in the appraisal of the project following its completion. I argue that the process of planning and designing the Cheonggyecheon continued the driving goals of continuous progress that was most accelerated and socially dominant during South Korea's rapid growth period from the 1960s to 1980s, yet the completed project reflects the humanistic and cultural sensibilities of a globalized, postmodern South Korean society. The progressive vestiges of South Korea's history of rapid growth were thus employed to introduce a work of landscape architecture that recreates a historic stream landmark in the city center,

imbuing a new project with traces of the past. At the same time, it erased a large part of the surrounding neighborhood's blighted elements. My research aims to show that these apparently divergent processes resulted in a rewriting of the historical narrative of the Cheonggyecheon through a combination of visual and rhetorical narratives and visual cues designed into the new stream park's design. Together they present an amalgamation of the past and future of the city and the Cheonggyecheon site. The larger argument of this dissertation is that the concepts of nature and history in the design of the built environment are social and cultural constructions and reflect the ways in which a city or nation hopes to recast their image and identity to the outside world and to themselves.

The Cheonggyecheon represents one of several large-scale landscape projects of the 21st century in South Korea that have changed the country's built environment and helped change its image from a "hard city," based on industrial progress to a "soft city" (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2009), using applications of technology in the creation of urban landscapes. In response to multiple variables reflected in the project's ambitions and impacts, in what ways has the Cheonggyecheon succeeded in meeting the project goals? And how is the public's reception of the Cheonggyecheon indicative of the project's impact on the city and its people? Finally, in line with the project significance on history and memory, how is it representative of its place in history and how does it fit into the course of Seoul's history of its built environment?

To lay the groundwork for the topics and Korean historical focus for this research project, I begin with an overview of the background of the Cheonggyecheon project, the historical significance of the project site, and its reflection of Seoul's growth as a city and of South Korean society. The project history frames an introduction to the major topics of this research project: the significance of history and memory in the city as expressed through its built environment; the

construction of green spaces and visible forms of nature as a means of urban revitalization; and the evolution of the urban landscape in the post-industrial city. Ancillary issues that are specific to the Cheonggyecheon project and South Korea's built environment history include the political implications and legacies of the project; the importance of nature in Seoul's history and the challenges of restoring landscapes limited by the city's urban condition; and the crystallization of a changing image for Seoul and South Korea through changes in the built environment.

II. The Cheonggyecheon Restoration Project: Seoul's urban revitalization

The Cheonggyecheon Restoration Project began with the Seoul Metropolitan Government's objective of revitalizing an area of Seoul that was dominated by a deteriorated piece of infrastructure. The project was pointedly called a restoration at the start and through its completion. Now it is simply the Cheonggyecheon -- to mark the landmark, its location in the city, and because the project did not result in a full restoration of the stream (Interviews 15,16, 18, 19, 20, 21). City leaders conceived the project as a restoration of the original stream, evoking Seoul's history and the presence of the historic stream that lay buried underground. By attempting to return the stream to the cityscape, the project aimed to change the identity of a space that in its modern history, became defined by industrial and manufacturing processes that had raised the country from poverty and struggle and would later bring about the "Miracle on the Han River" (Cumings, 2005; Clark, 2015). Yet, the industrial city left the city without a sense of identity. In his article "Lacking Seoul? Why South Korea's thriving capital is having an identity crisis," journalist Colin Marshall cites a Seoul Metropolitan Government report that identified the city's lack of cultural identity:

The scramble to outfit Seoul for its post-industrial age has seen the government commission many studies; one of the earliest of which, in 2002, found the city's

“urban spaces in general” – the crisscrossing expressways and grey forests of tower blocks – “not conducive to the cultivation of cultures”. (Marshall, 2017)

Marshall concludes his article that “rather than searching for one, 21st-century Seoul is deep in the process of constructing its identity anew” (Marshall, 2017). The Cheonggyecheon served as one of the city’s efforts to create a new identity by replacing an industrial space with a green space.

When the Cheonggyecheon completed construction in 2005, it was hailed by the city and international press as a restoration project and signaled South Korea’s dedication to environmental improvements and green, sustainable building technology (Bousquets, Rifkin, Kirk, D. Lee, Rowe). It also received praise for its fast-paced construction process, completing both demolition of the highway ramp and construction of the park in 27 months. In order to accelerate the design and construction process, the project was divided into three sections, each with its own design team and design concept (Interview 15, 19). The concepts for each section are History, Culture, and Nature (Fig. 1; Interview 15; Park, 2006). The conceptual and logistical orchestration of combining the work of three design teams (each with its own team of engineers and other consultants) to create one seamless project is another facet of the technological and logistical achievement of the Cheonggyecheon (Interview 19). The project began with the demolition of the deteriorated highway ramp and excavation of the site where the ancient stream had lain buried since the 1960s when South Korea’s rapid modernization period began.



Fig. 1: Conceptual divisions of Cheonggyecheon

The transformation of the Cheonggyecheon area from a center of commerce and urban blight into a green space and space of respite from the city places the urban renewal project in line with several other urban landscape projects in the beginning of the 21st century. Other landscape projects that have transformed spaces of debilitated or unused infrastructure or areas that urban critic Alan Berger calls “drosscape” (Berger, 2006) into large-scale landscape projects include New York City’s High Line Park, Seattle’s Olympic Sculpture Park, and Staten Island’s Fresh Kills Park. Other landscape projects in Seoul built in the late 1990s and early 2000s have also changed utilitarian and underused spaces into parks. These include Seonyudo Park, which was built on the site of a water treatment plant (Park and Hong, 2012); the various parks that encompass the World Cup parks, which were built on Nanjido, once one of South Korea’s biggest landfills (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2015); and the various park spaces built along the Han River, which had heretofore been more utilitarian than public use spaces (Interview 15 and 16). Like these parks, the Cheonggyecheon illustrates the goal of the post-industrial city to reflect a focus on providing better, healthier standard of living in their public spaces than had been possible during the modernization period of the latter part of the 20th century.

By the beginning of the 21st century in Seoul, the area called Gangnam, literally “south of the [Han] river,” was considered the city’s most economically developed, as well as its cultural epicenter with newer developments and a high concentration of middle and upper class apartment towers (Rowe, Kim, Jung, 2010; Kim, M-b, 2011). The area of the Cheonggyecheon, in contrast, had become economically stagnant. It lay in the northern part of the city, called Gangbuk [“north of the river”] and encompassed the central business district, which stood near historic and municipal sites such as city hall and ancient palaces of the Joseon dynasty, and sprawling indoor and outdoor market areas. The uneven distribution of activity and wealth

between the two parts of the city, in addition to the failing infrastructure of the highway ramp built over the space of the buried stream beneath the street, added to the city's momentum to revitalize and re-envision the area (Park, 2006; Interview 19). The Seoul Metropolitan Government's plan to transform the central business district and other parts of the area north of the Han River centered on resurrecting the memory of the original Cheonggyecheon stream. At the time of completion, the project received international attention as part of a worldwide trend of daylighting urban streams (Revkin, 2009), but the Cheonggyecheon Restoration was conceived as the centerpiece of a larger scale urban renewal project that included changes to the transportation planning and urban design of the city center. The restoration site spanned 5.8km, but once the Cheonggyecheon merges with the Jungnangcheon stream, the waterway totals approximately 11 km, connecting the central business district of Seoul with the marketplace districts in the eastern parts of the city. The project inserted a water channel, introducing both newness and a green space, across the northern part of the city in the midst of what had heretofore been an aging cityscape.

The Cheonggyecheon highway overpass first began construction in the late 1960s, ending in the mid-1970s, as one of then president Park Chung-hee's infrastructure projects to showcase South Korean progress. The overpass and the growth of high-rise buildings around the city symbolized South Korea's technological advancement, representative of rapid growth and modernity (Rowe, Kim, Jung, 2010). However, by the late 1990s, the Cheonggyecheon highway ramp was in a state of deterioration that it required continual maintenance and repair and posed a danger of collapse. Thus, government officials had to decide whether they would demolish and rebuild the highway ramp or completely reimagine the space (Lee, M-b, 2007). The re-imagination of the space back to the time when the Cheonggyecheon was actually a stream and

not a large piece of infrastructure began as an idea among South Korean academics (Rowe, Kim, Jung, 2010) and would eventually spark the ambitions of Lee Myung-bak, the aspiring mayoral candidate in 2003, who would make the stream restoration a signature campaign pledge. His opponent insisted that the project was not feasible whereas Lee successfully convinced the citizens of Seoul that the project was not only feasible but also a desirable change to the city (Lee, M-b, 2007). His victory allowed the new mayor to keep his campaign promise and turn the project into a central objective of his administration. Although the project was opposed by the neighboring vendors who worked in the Cheonggyecheon area in a series of protests (Noh, 2009; Interview 18), the Seoul Metropolitan Government established a fast-paced research and design process that culminated in a simultaneous demolition and construction process that saw the project turn the aging highway ramp into a linear promenade and urban stream in 27 months. In October 2005, the Cheonggyecheon restoration project in Seoul, South Korea opened to the public as a linear park set between 2 to 6.5 meters below street level (Lee, I-K, 2008) with a stream at its center.

The site that had been covered by a road and a highway overpass marked the space that was a critical part of the founding of the capital city during the Joseon Dynasty (Park, 2006; Rowe, Kim, Jung, 2011; Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2009). The history of the founding of Seoul represents the idea of nature providing the foundation for the establishment and growth of the city in its particular location and how the specific geography and topography of the city imbued the reigning royal house with a sense of destiny in its own beginning and endurance. According to this historical narrative, told in both tourist and landscape architecture literature describing the modern Cheonggyecheon, descriptions of the significance of the geography of the site and its ties to Korea's ancient past begin with a recollection of the city's founding through

feng-shui and its positive geographical and topographical features. In 1394, the capital city of the Joseon Dynasty was moved to what was then called Hanyang in what is now Seoul (Park, 2006; Choi, 2013; Rowe, Kim, Jung, 2011). The original Cheonggyecheon, as shown on ancient drawings and maps, was the main stream in the city with several tributaries, since Hanyang was smaller than modern Seoul. The city grew around the stream, amidst a burgeoning network of streets, all surrounded by mountain ranges circling the city. The stream and the surrounding mountain ranges were considered auspicious and promised protection for the Yi family who ruled the Joseon Dynasty (Rowe, Kim, Jung, 2011). The royal palace was built in the center of the space between the mountains and the stream, marking the Korean peninsula's capital city of Hanyang and ensuring longevity and prosperity for the kingdom which would last until the beginnings of the 20th century in 1910, with Japan's annexation of Korea. The Japanese changed the name of the capital city to Keijo. The end of the Japanese colonial period resulted in a final name change for the capital city to Seoul (Cumings, Rowe, Henry).

The small stream that was a significant geographic marker of the land would come to be called the Cheonggyecheon, which meant "clear stream" in Japanese, after what Koreans had simply referred to as an open stream, "gaecheon" (Biggs, 2010; Noh, 2009). Unlike the name of the capital city, the name of the stream would not change and remained Cheonggyecheon, even after the stream was covered and turned into a road. With the start of the 20th century, the Korean peninsula began a tumultuous process of fragmentation and rebuilding in the modern era. The events that led to the splintering of the peninsula included colonization by Japan between 1910 to 1945, followed by the Korean War, fought between the Communist North and anti-Communist South from 1950 to 1953, with the North aided by China and the Soviet Union and the South by the United States. The war would leave the peninsula partitioned into two separate countries.

Beginning at the end of the Korean War, North and South Korea would race to modernize, pursuing industrial development as a means to economic prosperity (Cumings, 2005). The endurance of the name of the Cheonggyecheon, later applied to the road and eventually the highway overpass, remained the indelible mark of the site, even as the site itself underwent multiple transformations. By the end of the 20th century, the highway overpass, which had once harkened a period of modernity and progress in the South Korean capital, had degraded with age and was in need of continual repairs or a complete reconstruction. It came to illustrate the city center's passage of time and stagnated fortunes in the post-industrial age. South Korea had by this time become progressively more prosperous since the rapid development years in the latter half of the 20th century.

By reiterating the origin story of the Cheonggyecheon stream and its connection to the founding of Seoul at the start of Korea's final dynasty, the project is more than an urban renewal project or a work of landscape architecture in an urban setting. It connects the future with the past, with the present time and condition of the space, as well as the social mores and concerns also looking towards the future. My research project argues that the new Cheonggyecheon acts as a spatial and temporal conduit to a future that depends upon the erasure and rewriting of the history that gave the project its initial significance, identity, and roots in the locale that had moved on from its industrial past.

The industrialization and modernization period that heavily influenced South Korea's culture, built environment, and the social and economic focus most intensely from the 1960s to the 1980s gave way to the post-industrial period of the early part of the 21st century. Cities in South Korea and the country as a whole turned their attention to ways of improving quality of life to the people and by extension, began the process of designing the built environment in more

accessible and humanistic ways (Park, 2006; Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2009; Rowe, Kim, Jung, 2011; Interview 15, 16). The global attention to sustainability, mitigating the effects of climate change and global warming, and green building initiatives also contributed to efforts to present South Korea as a country of mountains, rivers, and other natural landscapes that would appeal to international tourists as well as the Korean people (Yu, M-J, 2005). Despite the natural and bucolic appearance of the park space, the process of its transformation still makes it an urban renewal project, albeit using a landscape architecture canvas instead of a traditional building project.

Urban studies writers Jane Jacobs and Dolores Hayden have written extensive critiques of modern urban renewal and large scale planning projects and argued for the importance of maintaining history and memory in the built environment. The act of rebuilding and the process of urban renewal are intrinsically bound with the acts of erasure and destruction (Jacobs, 1961; Hayden, 1995). The physical form, image, and use of the space may change and eventually the memory and identity of the space will eventually follow suit (Connerton, 2009). Most modern urban renewal projects have been examples of an extreme and unrepentant modernization process. Once a space or area has been slated for revitalization or renewal, the process of erasure and rebuilding leads to the inevitable change from the old identity of the space to a newly born one. This process is often met with a mixture of high hopes and resistance, and often accompanied by negative impacts such as population displacement, disenfranchisement, and upheaval (Harvey, 1990). The drawbacks of urban renewal projects are often overshadowed by their successes and attention to the newly born space, with project objections becoming a faded memory once construction is completed. In the evolving process of city building, the transformations of spaces is often cyclical, but that does not soften the struggles and upheaval

that may result for the people of the city when the city itself prepares for and manifests changes that are beyond their control.

The top-down process with which the Cheonggyecheon was conceived, designed, and constructed has been described as a precursor to the “authoritarian environmentalism” of the Four Major Rivers Restoration Project that was also initiated and led by Lee Myung-bak during his presidency of South Korea, for the similar top-down structure of its conception, planning, and construction (Han, 2015). Heejin Han, a scholar in comparative politics and public policy, has traced the authoritarian policies of the Four Major Rivers project as both a product of the particular leadership style of Lee Myung-bak and the legacy of authoritarian leadership of South Korean presidents from the beginning of its independence through most of the 20th century (Cumings, Han). The Cheonggyecheon reflects the continued role of the central government in South Korea in changing its built environment and the impact these changes have had on its people. Through this process, the project illustrates the construction of a new image and identity for Seoul as imagined and driven by city leaders. Despite protests against the project by the vendors in the Cheonggyecheon area, the project’s positive reception and popularity by most Seoul residents and visitors upon completion reflect the city’s support for changes to its built environment and its consequences.

III. Nature and urbanization in Asia and Regarding Nature as Process

In recent years, developments in the built environment in Asia have been remarkable for their variety, creativity and vast scale (Rowe, 2005; Rowe, Kim, Jung 2011). Seoul, like other large Asian cities, has grown and modernized at an accelerated pace within the last fifty years and began addressing the detrimental effects of rapid urbanization by pursuing sustainable and

green design practices. Large scale climate and weather-related disasters in the region have reinforced the need for building resilient cities. The Cheonggyecheon restoration attempts to resolve growing environmental problems by using technological means to re-create a stream and revive historical elements of the country's identity. The global attention to sustainability and the contemporary focus on designing for a sustainable and resilient future is indicative of the acknowledgement of environmental degradation of our cities, in fact our whole planet, as a result of massive industrialization and urbanization. Due to the problems of aging infrastructure, pollution and the effects of climate change, the imperative for design solutions that will protect and ameliorate the environment has increasingly become the standard instead of the exception (Waldheim, 2006; Spirn, 2011). In response to the pervasive significance of sustainability in the design of built environments, the discipline and profession of landscape architecture has emerged at the forefront of progressive ways to envision and create a healthy and resilient built environment, in the form of designed landscapes. This signals a paradigm shift within the design disciplines in which architecture had been considered the primary driver of design intervention on the built environment (Waldheim, 2006). Landscape urbanism serves the unique function of bridging the technological advances of the modern city with the environmentally ameliorative effects of nature, with the added potential for reflecting the cultural and historical connections between cities with its people.

The significance of the functional qualities of landscape as an antidote to post-industrial environmental damages is an apparent benefit of the addition of a green space to the urban fabric. Works of landscape architecture can help improve air quality, improve ecological functions, and help protect the city from damage during weather events. The Cheonggyecheon, which also serves as a storm water channel and provides flood protection for the city, and

projects like Seonyudo Park and the World Cup Parks have utilitarian functions of mitigating pollution from the site while serving as park spaces (Park and Hong, 2012). The transformation of industrial or infrastructural sites into parks have produced a sense of renewal for damaged urban spaces and increased the city's public open spaces. The project planners for the Cheonggyecheon had the goal of increasing the city's "quality of life" public amenities. In creating a space that allows people to enjoy being outdoors in a space that had not been available to them before, parks like the Cheonggyecheon, Seonyudo, and the World Cup parks have helped change the actions, values, and consciousness of Seoul's inhabitants and visitors.

The ideas of renewal and transformation are critical aspects of the changes that were made to Seoul's urban fabric with the construction of the Cheonggyecheon restoration (Busquets, 2011). They contribute to the larger process of building or re-creating a national identity through changes in the built environment, in breaking with the legacy of the past. Concepts such as national identity, historical legacy, and the urban and architectural landscape of a city might be considered to have a certain permanence and stability, but they are actually dynamic and unstable, and susceptible to gradual or even sudden transformation. The original Cheonggyecheon's transformations from stream to wastewater channel, to road, to highway ramp reinforced South Korea's teleological historical narrative that Park Chung-hee presents in his book, *Our Nation's Path*, when industrialization was the desired goal of the country. But the goal of turning back time, and restoring the covered stream, complicates the idea of progress, yet in a country where economic growth was based on environmentally damaging "heavy and chemical industrialization" (Cumings, 2005), such as steel manufacturing, turning the site back to a stream to mitigate the environmental damages from modernization reinforces the concept of renewal. The Cheonggyecheon restoration project carries multiple qualities of marking the start

of a new future and a break from the recent past, suggesting a full backlash against modernization; however, landscape urbanism offers the potential for the creation of a better city that combines the advances of modernity by working with nature.

Ultimately, my investigation will attempt to trace how technology, history, and narrative can all work in concert with each other in the planning, design, and promotion of the Cheonggyecheon to restore and revitalize the urban environment and effect a transformation of the city dwellers' subjectivity. Ostensibly, the Cheonggyecheon was planned to revitalize a stagnated area of the city and solve a problem of aging infrastructure by replacing it with a park and a reconstruction of a stream. However, by recalling the ancient history of the space and promoting the new park as part of a larger rebranding of Seoul as a city focused on the environment, and full of green spaces, the Cheonggyecheon is a combination of contradictions about what makes a space natural, a part of history, and what encompasses memory of a site, and how the past can become an expression of the future.

IV. History, memory, and nature as coded ideas

History, memory, and nature play pivotal roles in the Cheonggyecheon's construction of meaning and placemaking. They represent more than their defined concepts but serve as codes for specific ideas that have been applied to, and reinforces, the city of Seoul's changing image. They reflect the city's efforts to form connections between new designs of the built environment with the cultural remnants and narratives of the past. The three ideas illustrate Seoul's process of changing its image from the "hard city" of the 20th century to a new identity for the 21st. They serve as indicators for the Cheonggyecheon project's assertion of a shared past and culture; communal progress as a city and society that has endured and overcome the hardships of the

past; and emergence of a new perspective of the city as a place where the past and future are connected through the creation and cultivation of landscapes.

History is represented in multiple ways in the Cheonggyecheon project, yet the overall effect of the historical representations is an assertion of the project's modernity and the advancement of the city's resources, technology, and global vision. The contradiction suggests that history represents the achievement of distance and advancement away from the past, but the chosen elements that are celebrated as "history" are the parts of the past that should be remembered as cultural symbols of the city and its people.

Memory contributes to the project's construction of a collective memory by grounding the site as a place of layered memories, affirming the site as a place of meaning and cultural production, as well as reinforcing the idea of shared histories. It connects the new project with the historic stream and reimagined markers of memory through nostalgic, abstract evocations of the past. Memory acts as a unifying and spatializing agent for bridging the past with the present and future, and as a means of asserting the changes in the city's built environment as shared experience.

Nature represents the most transformative element to the project's construction of a new place identity and to the broader image of a new Seoul. It connects the history of Seoul with the present through the stream reconstruction and represents the direction in which the city reinforces its progressive growth. Nature serves as the project's indication of the city's technological advances in cleaning the environment, constructing a controlled water way in the center of the city, and in the production of green spaces that have provided the city with spaces for leisure and community within the urban condition. Most significantly, by using the canvas of an urban landscape to express the revitalization of a site, the idea of nature holds the sense of

rebirth and renewal for the city's built environment and thus emphasizes the sense of an end to the past and the start of a new beginning.

The combination of the three ideas of history, memory, and nature illustrate James Corner's four landscape urbanism themes of "processes over time, the staging of surfaces, the operational or working method, and the imaginary" in the construction of a new narrative for the Cheonggyecheon site and to assert the transformation of the identity of Seoul. Within the framework of the four themes, the Cheonggyecheon's expressions of history, memory, and nature reflect Seoul's celebration of its cultural identity from past to the future as well as the assertion of the city's continuous progress. The differences in the presentation of the three ideas are indicative of the highly scripted and purposeful production of the city's narrative of its past.

The presentation of my research begins with an overview with my research methods in chapter two. To examine the multiple questions the Cheonggyecheon project has raised from its conception to its assessment a decade after the project's completion, the third chapter explores the different meanings and functions of nature and how different manifestations of nature have been employed in the development of landscape architecture as a discipline and the rise of landscape urbanism as theory and practice. The chapter also compares the similarities and differences between the significance of nature in Western and Eastern cultures, and ends with an overview of significant works of landscape architecture in South Korea that have demonstrated practical elements of landscape urbanism in the ways in which the projects have reshaped the city.

The fourth chapter begins by examining the effects of history and memory on the built environment, the differences between the two phenomena, and the ways in which the past can be

remembered, reconstructed, or leave traces in the present. Since these two intertwined concepts of the history and memory are integral to the Cheonggyecheon project, I focus on the historical significance of the Cheonggyecheon site and the broader history of the modernization of Seoul and South Korea as a modern nation as told through the dual narratives of two pivotal historical figures of the rapid modernization period: labor activist Chun Tae-il and South Korea president and authoritarian dictator Park Chung-hee. The results of my fieldwork research are presented in chapter five, Visual Narratives, and chapter six, Oral histories. Chapter seven is an analysis of the combined research, and I conclude with a final assessment of the project and my research in chapter eight.

Chapter 2 Research methods

In *Grounding Knowledge*, Christopher J. Preston discusses Plato's concepts of *logos* ("pure reason") and *chora* (what Plato called "a home for all created things") that combined, results in a "sensible world" which is made "intelligible" and thus knowable. For Plato, *chora* is ambiguous and "dreamlike," and reason in its purity is not connected to an earthbound home. However, the disconnect between *logos* and *chora* presents the dilemma of epistemology in that the former is not knowable until it is made knowable in the sensible world. By tracing the history and development of Western epistemology beginning with the ancient Greeks, Preston critiques the resulting foundation of knowledge as purified, unearthly, and residing in the realm of the abstract:

Knowledge was abstract rather than particular, timeless rather than temporally bounded, divine rather than human, and ideal rather than embodied. Knowledge was about grasping universal truths, good for all time (Preston, 2003, p.6)

The universality of knowledge and reason in Greek epistemology is disconnected from the historical and diversity of the earthly world and the people in it. His argument for the importance of "grounding knowledge" contrasts the abstract quality of knowledge in the historical origins of Western thought and provides a strategy and source for the production of knowledge and meaningful connection to the world.

Preston writes, "Places are the result of people pausing for a while in a location and instilling some of their cultural values into the landscape" (Preston, 2003, p.75). As the landscape is given meaning by the cultural values of the people who are connected to the space, and making it a place, Preston posits that there is a mutually meaningful value of place on

people. He argues for the significance of place and the physical world in the generation of knowledge. He writes:

Thought, knowledge, and belief are not products of mind alone but expressions of its integration and participation with the physical world that lies around it. Recognition of this cooperative relationship brings human knowledge firmly back down to earth. (Preston, 2003, p.2)

Preston calls attention to the synergistic forces between place and knowledge production. The significance of place, whether it is a neighborhood, a landscape, or a monument, connects the study of the built environment with narrative, history and memory.

Preston's argument for grounding knowledge presents an immersive research approach for the study of landscapes and the built environment. Grounding knowledge through the act of walking, observing, recording those observations, and encountering interview subjects at the Cheonggyecheon provided the entry into the fieldwork phase of this research. A grounded research approach allowed me to examine the insertion of a park in the center of the city center, record the contrast from the surrounding urban condition, and experience the construction of visible nature in the park. In order to examine the history, memory, and the diversity of narratives of the Cheonggyecheon project and site, and the project's construction of nature as a visible system, this research builds on Preston's argument for grounding knowledge. It used a mixed methods approach to study the Cheonggyecheon as a single case study through the lens of landscape urbanism's key themes of temporality and the imaginary.

The aspiration of this research project was to unveil the narratives designed and embedded into the design of the landscape of the Cheonggyecheon and also what significance the park visitors have imbued onto the landscape through their actions and responses to the space. The goal of this research was to gain an understanding of the multiple narratives and

views of the past, present and future of Seoul, South Korea as reflected in its built environment, and the implications of constructing urban landscapes in the contemporary 21st century city.

The use of Preston's grounding knowledge approach has some similarities with grounded theory in the sense of knowledge being derived through the action of research and data collection. The key component of grounded theory is the emergence of theory during the data collection process (Sustrina and Setiawan, 2013). My research began by identifying key theoretical issues of history, memory, and nature, on which to base interview and research questions before conducting fieldwork so I cannot say that I used grounded theory to simultaneously develop theory in the research process. Additionally, a major part of my research analysis was through translating and transcribing the interview data which was a long process after data collection, so much of my knowledge and deeper understanding of the conversations emerged after the interviews. But my research process benefitted from elements of grounded theory in that I used the material from my interviews and observations to direct the steps in which I proceeded with my research. This allowed me to learn more about the Cheonggyecheon through experiencing the site, following the suggestions of my interview subjects to guide me to various locations and sources for further research. The project designers and Seoul government project team members provided archival materials of the project and gave suggestions for other interview candidates. In this way, the research site and the people I interviewed provided the grounding of knowledge for this research project.

The theoretical framework for this research is based on the ideas of nature, history, and memory as social and cultural constructions and builds on the theory and practice of landscape urbanism and scholarship on the meanings of nature as an idea across the disciplines of history, geography, philosophy, and landscape architecture, and theoretical studies of memory and

history. As a single case study project with layered cultural and historical dimensions, my research examines Eastern and Western concepts of nature and elements of Seoul and South Korean history from the modernization period to the construction of the Cheonggyecheon park that directly impacted the evolution of the park's site and surrounding area. As the Cheonggyecheon project uses a narrative of its past in the design of the park and in the ways in which the project has been described and promoted by the city, this research explores the history and memory of the project and site through narrative analysis of the park's design elements, the use of the space during public events, and interviews with the park's visitors, designers, and members of the Seoul Metropolitan Government Cheonggyecheon project team.

To align my research with the Cheonggyecheon project's conceptual framework of narrative and history, my research methods explored ways in which the narrative of the Cheonggyecheon's history was manifested in the project's design and creative process. The significance of narrative grounds the topic of this research and the methods used in doing the fieldwork research in South Korea. The many layers of narratives and meaning in an urban landscape warranted a mixed method research approach in order to combine an experiential, grounded study of the landscape design of the park set amidst the city, with the narratives of the project designers' and planners' perspectives and experiences working on the project. The use of different methods, and interviews with different groups of subjects, allowed for triangulation of research findings. The interview narratives were compared with the visual and historical documentation of the Cheonggyecheon project following the publicity for the project as presented by the city and in international media, presentation material from the city and designers, and historical and artistic narratives of the project site.

To document the visual narrative of the design of the park, I used still and video photography to record direct observations of the site at various times of the day and seasons. Video and still photography allowed me to record the activation of the space during special events, when event organizers would transform parts of the park for multiple functions and different, scripted aesthetics. On these occasions, the designed narrative of the Cheonggyecheon, would become either mingled with or overshadowed by the narrative of the special events, illustrating the mutability of the constructed presentation of the Cheonggyecheon. The use of the Cheonggyecheon for civic events is a significant aspect of the project's function, enlivening the city center with activity and increasing the park's relevance and popularity as a gathering space. Events such as the Seoul Lantern Festival celebrate the park's narrative of history with temporary installations of historic imagery.

The second research method was interviews with park visitors, project designers, and planners, speaking with former city officials who worked on the project and landscape architects who worked on portions of the project. The goal was to compare how the finished design of the Cheonggyecheon and the ways in which it is used and perceived by its visitors appear to reflect the goals and intentions of the project designers and planners, as well as to discover how the project has evolved in the more than ten years since its completion.

I. Visual storytelling

The design of the Cheonggyecheon is comprised of a collection of narratives and histories in form, function, and design features. Additionally, the narrative of its design process bears the influence and challenges of its conceptualization by the distinct characters of the three separate parts that were designed and managed by three separate teams (Rowe, Kim, Jung, 2010; Interviews 15, 16, 19, 21). As a work of landscape architecture and urban design, the project

changes and takes on different characteristics and functions at different times of the year and times of day, depending on the kind of activity that might be taking place at the site, so it carries temporal and situational nuances and uses. Due to the multiplicity of dimensions to the project and the qualitative nature of my research focus, the primary methods for data collection for my research were direct observations and interviews to collect oral narratives of the site and the project. I had the opportunity to do preliminary fieldwork observations during a weeklong visit in July 2015. At this time of year, the Cheonggyecheon had more night time visitors due to the heat and humidity of the summer months. Following the short visit, the bulk of my fieldwork research to observe the site and interview its visitors, designers, and planners was done from late August 2015 to early February 2016. In documenting the site through video and still photography, I walked the length of the Cheonggyecheon in parts—beginning at section one, then the other sections on different days and in different times of the day. I also visited the site during the annual winter lantern festival and for the holiday lighting decorations beginning in late December and early January in the evening and a weekend event for the first Upcycle Festival, which showcased the work of local artists using recycled materials, when the park was used as a space for special exhibitions and activities.

To document the visual narratives of the project site, focusing on the design of the space, I used both video and still photography as I moved through the promenade spaces of the linear park, as well as parts of the street level area surrounding the site. For the video footage, I used a GoPro action camera in order to record my own act of walking through the Cheonggyecheon in an inconspicuous way, both in not drawing attention to myself from the other visitors and in allowing me to film in a naturalistic way that captured my movements. Visual documentation allowed me to capture details of the site that illustrate topical themes of my research and refer

back to them for analysis and to re-watch the site for phenomena or details that I might have missed or could not remember once I left South Korea. Using an action camera had the benefit of capturing the amalgamation and interaction of the site, surrounding city, and the actions of the people using the space as well as the observers at the street level, allowing me to later study the connections and disconnections of the space and its surroundings. It was particularly effective in recording the transitional elements of the design, such as where the design of one part or section would change to the next, as well as the activation of the site during the special events which altered both the use of the space and configuration of its normal promenade design.

The use of any kind of camera, still or film, cannot fully capture all the perspectives and nuances of a large urban space, but for one such as the Cheonggyecheon, which combined elements of an enclosure by its sunken channel form with that of a urban open space, film recording had the advantage of capturing the sounds of the surrounding city as well as the sounds of the space itself, which often included recorded music and announcements during events, and most prominently, the sound of the flowing water, which contrasts and often overpowers the urban noise surrounding the space.

The reduction of ambient, urban noise was one of the benefits of the project as touted by government studies (Kim, Koh, Kwon, 2011), and the action camera proved useful in capturing this atmospheric quality of the space. It also was a means of documenting, by mimicking the kinesthetics of moving through the space, the actual ways in which the form of the space and the surrounding visual stimuli might interact and what impact they would have on the visitor's experience of the space. As cities become increasingly more attuned to issues of livability and providing open space amenities that should increase the quality of life of its inhabitants, the experiential qualities of a public space should be examined beyond its visual and spatial

dimensions. Film as a research tool has the potential to record a holistic record of the built and natural environment and is particularly suited to studying urban settings for its ability to capture both the dynamic and static parts into a connected whole. Using film had the goal of studying the larger vision and scope of the project and its impact and interaction with the rest of the city through the project design and the design of the events and activation of the space, thus the project's visual narratives. The second method aimed to delve deeper into the design intentions and significance as well as the history and memory of the site through an examination of narratives from individuals.

II. Collecting oral narratives

The second method used was the collection of oral narratives of the site and project through semi-structured interviews with three groups of people: visitors to the Cheonggyecheon, whether they were visitors or workers at the site; project designers; and Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) Cheonggyecheon project team members during the planning and construction of the project. The opportunity of collecting individualistic narratives from oral narratives which might have the chance of revealing deeper knowledge and insight than other research methods, such as using questionnaires or surveys was the primary reason for pursuing this method. Since the Cheonggyecheon is a public open space project that was directed by the Seoul Metropolitan Government, using a top-down approach to city planning and design, I hoped that individual oral narratives of the site and project would widen the lenses of perspectives and opinions on the project and possibly offer new insights. Another rationale for this method was that it allowed me to conduct interviews, enabling me to use the strongest of my Korean language skills which are speaking and listening comprehension.

The interview method proved to be both frustrating and limited yet surprisingly revealing

in some instances. Thus, while it did not produce the level of quantity and range as I had hoped, many of the insights offered by those I interviewed offered new perspectives and some unexpected revelations of the project, the history of the site, and the people of Seoul.

The interview subjects were a combination of random and referral sampling. The visitor interviews were randomly sampled from groups of visitors that I encountered sitting at different locations of the park. Focusing on groups of people that were stationary, rather than walking or running through the park, allowed me to approach the subjects and request asking a few questions about their opinions and knowledge of the Cheonggyecheon. I interviewed 15 people at the Cheonggyecheon between September and October, when the warmer weather allowed for me to approach people who were either sitting or standing in the space. I approached many more people, more than double the number who agreed to be interviewed, but the majority of the people I asked either refused to speak at all or refused to be recorded. Outside factors may have contributed to their resistance to offer their opinions. More people were willing to speak during the warmer months, less as the weather cooled, and while the number of visitors during a weekday lunch hour might have been high, their limited time in the park before having to return to work also made them less likely to give up their time to participate in my research. Additionally, there were several public demonstrations against the government and subsequent arrests that might have made people more wary of speaking and being recorded-- there were 3 large citywide demonstrations during my time in Korea. The resulting stalemate meant I was not able to gather as broad and rich a collection of narratives. In response, I turned the focus to meeting with people who worked on the design and planning of the Cheonggyecheon.

Three South Korean academics provided me with introductions to the subjects for the design team and Seoul Metropolitan Government Cheonggyecheon (SMG) project team

interviews: Prof. Kim Ah-Yeon, associate professor and chair of the landscape architecture program at the University of Seoul, and Dr. Lee Sangbaek, professor of chemical engineering at Jeju National University, and Dr. Jeon Sang Hoon, professor of architectural engineering at Jeju National University. I interviewed two people who had significant roles in two of the design teams for the Cheonggyecheon and four former and current Seoul Metropolitan Government employees who worked on the project from its planning to completion stages. After I interviewed two of the SMG subjects, they recommended that I speak with the other two subjects, and Dr. Jeon again helped with introductions. The interviews with the designers and former city workers were conducted in October, and December 2015 and January 2016. The two designers were both landscape architects while of the four former Seoul Metropolitan Government workers, two had architecture backgrounds and two had backgrounds in civil engineering.

| Interview Number | Date | Age range | Gender | visitor - designer - city | Seoul resident? | location of interview |
|-------------------------|-------------|------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | 9/12/2015 | 50s-60s | M | Cheonggyecheon helper | yes | 1 |
| 2 | 9/22/2015 | 20s | F | visitor | unknown | 1 |
| 3 | 9/22/2015 | 20s | F | visitor | unknown | 1 |
| 4 | 9/22/2015 | 40s | F | Seoul city worker | yes | 1 |
| 5 | 9/22/2015 | 20s | M | visitor | unknown | 1 |
| 6 | 9/22/2015 | 70s | M | visitor | yes | 1 |
| 7 | 9/29/2015 | 80s | F | visitor | only recently | 2 |
| 8 | 10/3/2015 | 60s | M | visitor | yes | 2 |
| 9 | 10/3/2015 | 60s | M | Cheonggyecheon helper | yes, but not in past | 3 |
| 10 | 10/3/2015 | 70s | F | visitor | yes | 3 |

| | | | | | | |
|----|------------|---------|---|-----------------------------------|---------------------|---|
| 11 | 10/8/2015 | 70s | M | unknown | yes | 1 |
| 12 | 10/8/2015 | 40s | M | unknown | no, Korean-Canadian | 3 |
| 13 | 10/13/2015 | 30s | F | volunteer for Upcycle Festival | yes | 1 |
| 14 | 10/13/2015 | 20s | F | staff worker for Upcycle Festival | yes | 1 |
| 15 | 10/27/2015 | 50s | M | designer - landscape architecture | no | office |
| 16 | 12/1/2015 | 30s-40s | F | designer - landscape architecture | unknown | food court restaurant then coffeeshop |
| 17 | 12/8/2015 | 50s | F | visitor | unknown | Outside part 2: in the used bookshop area near Peace Market |
| 18 | 12/11/2015 | 40s-50s | M | SMG - architecture | unknown | office |
| 19 | 12/21/2015 | 40s-50s | M | SMG - engineering | unknown | office |
| 20 | 12/21/2015 | 40s-50s | M | SMG - architecture | unknown | office |
| 21 | 1/8/2016 | 50s | M | SMG - engineering | unknown | coffeeshop next to Cheonggye Plaza |

Table 1: List of Interview subjects

Interview Results

The first group of subjects for the oral history portion of my research were visitors of the Cheonggyecheon, or people I encountered at the park. This group also included people who worked for the Cheonggyecheon or were volunteers or workers for festival events that took place at the site. I also attempted to interview vendors and owners of small businesses located along

the street above the Cheonggyecheon. I began interviewing the Cheonggyecheon's visitors during the warm months of September and October, and usually during weekday lunch hours. I concentrated my interviews in the more populated first section but also sought interviews in the other two sections, as well as from the vendors in the Dongdaemun and Pyeongwha market areas on the street level, adjacent to the Cheonggyecheon. The questions I asked of the visitors to the park were as follows, though sometimes in different order, depending on the flow of conversation:

| |
|---|
| 1. Could they describe the site before the reconstruction? |
| 2. Was that their answer to the first question their actual memory of the site before it was turned into a park, or knowledge that they had learned from elsewhere? |
| 3. What was their opinion or impression of the Cheonggyecheon in the current state? |
| 4. Did they have any other comments to add regarding the Cheonggyecheon project? |

The intention of the questions was to be open-ended enough to allow the respondents to tell their narrative of their memory of the site in whatever way they chose, but with some respondents, it was necessary to ask more questions to clarify their answers.

Interviews with the project designers and SMG project team members also began with the same questions, but these longer interviews evolved into more of a dialogue as they wanted to know more about my research project goals for holding the interview. The average length of this group of interviews was an hour. As a result, these interviews provide richer discussions than the short visitor interviews, but they may include elements of co-construction of narratives as part of the dialogic format (Esin, Fathi, Squire, 2013), with some discussions being framed by my research concerns. The discussions were focused on the process and intentions of the work involved in planning and designing the Cheonggyecheon and revealed the challenges and

highlights of their experiences in having been part of the project. The topics of memory and nature were discussed in greater detail than with the park visitors. The memory and history topic touched on both the designers and SMG team's recollections of working on the project, as well as the significance of history as a design concept for the project.

Summary

In researching the Cheonggyecheon's design and impact on the city and its people, and the history of its conceptualization and planning process, the multilayered effect of the park itself and the varied opinions of the project necessitated a combination of research methods. Direct observations of the project and the ways in which visitors engaged with the space were most valuable in learning how the project had become part of the everyday experience of the city center and how it had become part of the city's shared public spaces. Additionally, the project has become a cultural gathering space during special events and seasons, programmed by the city, and functions as an outdoor gallery, backdrop for concerts, a space for pop-up vendors, and has become more than merely an urban stream and park. As a long linear promenade space, most visitors experience the space in a state of motion, walking or running along the water channel, and to record these movements, video photography proved to be helpful in capturing multiple dynamic elements that were happening simultaneously.

To learn about the Cheonggyecheon's design concept and the intentions of the project planners and designers, interviews with the city officials and landscape architects who helped plan, design, and develop the project proved to be the critical for understanding the narrative of the project history. Short interviews with park visitors elicited opinions of the Cheonggyecheon park and their knowledge and opinions of the site, which revealed the widespread publicity that the project garnered and the public's memory of the site before the demolition of the highway

ramp. The benefit of combining these two research methods was the ability to compare the interviews that offered more insight into the process of the design and planning for the project with the visual documentation that showed the actual effects of the design and how the project has evolved in the ten years since its completion. Ultimately, the significance of the narrative of the project in all its forms emerged as multifaceted and layered as the history of the site and the reconstruction project.

III. Analysis

Narrative analysis using a constructionist approach was used to analyze both visual data and the interviews. The constructionist approach to narrative analysis takes into account broader social construction of narratives, “within interpersonal, social and cultural relations” (Esin, Fathi, Squire, 2013) and provided this research project’s foundation for connecting and distilling themes from the stories that emerged from the interviews. It also provided the framework for analyzing the visual narratives in the design of the park and in the representations of the project’s history displayed in the park and in the Cheonggyecheon Museum. This analytical approach aligned with the Cheonggyecheon’s use of narrative in its design concept and equally addressed the combination of visual research data with interviews.

After each visit to the Cheonggyecheon, I noted general descriptions of any interviews that were held with visitors, then watched the recorded video footage for additional impressions of visiting the park, which I might not have noticed during my visit. By focusing on temporality and the imaginary, I categorized topics from the research data materials of images, video, and interviews into the major categories of time and nature. Subcategories that emerged from the larger topic of time were the past, or history for the visual data, and memory, for the interview data; and the future. The topic of nature proved to have multiple applications and meanings and

was often treated as an abstract concept, which contradicted the purpose and intention of grounding knowledge through this research. However, the elusiveness of the emergence of a definition or actual narratives of nature by the interview subjects resulted in my recognition of the importance of another major category, that of progress or advancement, of which the story of the Cheonggyecheon project intertwines with history, memory, and nature.

From the visual documentation, I selected areas in the park and their images that I would include for discussion in the dissertation. By dividing the park into the three sections that were conceived by the project designers, the design of the park provided the first level of categorization of topics of history, culture, and nature. Then, each section was examined in the videos and photographs, as well as during subsequent visits to the park, for dominant features or designed elements that contributed to the sectional concept. These included historical imagery or restored artifacts, or human activity or the design of the landscape. Information on significant areas of the park also emerged during interviews. The emergent themes are presented in the chapters five and discussed in the analysis chapter seven.

After completing all the interviews, I translated and transcribed recordings of each interview from the original Korean to English. I have attempted to translate the interviews with the most clear and precise language; however, since they are my interpretations of words spoken in a language in which I am not completely fluent, there may be some nuances that my translations could not capture. The clarity of my presentation of the oral narratives may have limits due to my understanding of the Korean language and my interpretation of Korean into English. As noted earlier, the translation process took several months, and took place long after I left South Korea. My understanding of the interviews grew deeper as I took multiple turns at listening to the interview recordings, sometimes requiring consultation with native Korean

speakers for vocabulary expertise, and composed the English translations.

Narrative analysis carries the risk and challenge of co-constructing narratives in both the method of inquiry and analysis, such as through the interaction and dialogue between interviewer and interviewee and during the analysis process (Esin, Fathi, Squire, 2013). In presenting my research findings, I privileged interview responses in which the respondents expressed a narrative of their experiences and perceptions, rather than short, factual answers. My hope was that their stories would emerge without much interjection or prompting from questioning from me; however, some interviews were conversational and topics developed through the progression of the interview, so my involvement as an interlocutor may have played some part in the narrative. Yet, all the interviews with the park visitors, designers, and former city officials revealed certain dominant themes and discussions on history, the Cheonggyecheon's presentation of visible nature, and the effect of project on the city and its people.

This research examines the social and cultural construction of history, memory, and nature in the Cheonggyecheon project. By using narrative analysis, this research project has taken part in this construction of meaning and knowledge, and inserted my voice and participation into the narratives, as part of my immersion into experiencing the Cheonggyecheon, during the interviews and due to my translation work. Yet, I have tried to reveal the different narratives of the project and hope that my role as interpreter and participant in its construction has aimed for a faithful rendering of these stories.

Chapter 3 Nature in the City

In many ways, the Cheonggyecheon is a product of globalization and is an expression of both Western and Eastern perspectives of nature, landscape architecture, and sustainability, calling for an examination of both Eastern and Western beliefs. The significance of this aspect of the project is another mark of the project's complexity because it suggests that cultural concepts of nature and its meaning and the ways these ideas are represented in the design of landscapes have perhaps become more hybridized in our contemporary world. This chapter examines the evolving meanings and perspectives of nature in Western and Eastern thought and the influence of nature on the built environment. Following an exploration of the context of nature in Korean historical tradition and in the modern contemporary perspective, the chapter focuses on contemporary ways in which nature is expressed in landscape architecture and design and the implications of technology and urbanization in the how nature exists in an urban setting. The chapter concludes with an examination of notable 21st century landscape projects in Seoul that have reimagined how nature can be restored and constructed in post-industrial and urban settings.

With all its imprecision, and because of that imprecision, the notion of nature designates cosmic reality without implying an ontology or a cosmology.

-Henri Lefebvre, "Nature and Nature Conquered"

I. Transformative definitions of nature in history

In Western civilization, the concept and meaning of nature has undergone a series of transformations that illustrate the progressive trajectory of human life and our awareness and relationship to our surroundings and moment in history. In this sense, the meaning of nature carries spatial, temporal, philosophical and even spiritual dimensions. Our contemporary

conception of nature, particularly in discourse concerning architecture and urbanism, is often synonymously used with landscape, and ranges from nature as the medium for restoring and ameliorating the damages wrought on the environment by the processes of industrialization and urbanization (Lyle, 1994) to what landscape architect James Corner calls the “cultural construction that enables a people to speak of and understand the natural world, and that is so bound into ecological language” (Corner, 1997, p.84). Corner then differentiates the social construct of nature from “the ‘actual’ cosmos, that which always escapes or exceeds human understanding” (Corner, 1997, p.84). When we consider nature in an urban context, the manifestations of nature ranges from certain specific objects, like a tree, or a patch of greenery, but in *The Granite Garden*, landscape architect Ann Whiston Spirn asserts the pervasiveness of nature:

Nature is a continuum, with wilderness at one pole and the city at the other. The same natural processes operate in the wilderness and in the city... The realization that nature is ubiquitous, a whole that embraces the city, has powerful implications for how the city is built and maintained. (Spirn, 1984, p.4-5)

Spirn argues that the traditional dichotomy of separating nature from the city has resulted in environmental problems and damages from the ways in which cities have been built. Her characterization of nature as a force with dynamic and multiple strands of processes highlight the active quality and variability of nature. In another perspective of nature in an urban context, geographer and political ecologist Matthew Gandy’s study of the production and control of nature in the history of New York City as “metropolitan nature” is imbued with “multiple meanings of modern nature, ranging from the preservation of wilderness for the consumption of an idealized natural beauty to the construction of complex networks for the provision of water” (Gandy, 2002, p.2). Reflecting the processes of modernity, the nature of nineteenth-century New York City is so intertwined with culture and human intervention, that it is difficult to separate the

two. Indeed, Gandy asserts the particular uniqueness of nature in the city: “the design, use, and meaning of urban space involves the transformation of nature into a new synthesis” (Gandy, 2002, p.2). The operation and process of this “new synthesis” of nature continues to shift with the passage of time and with our changing awareness and concern for the environment and is indicative of the multiplicity of factors that have an impact on nature in our contemporary world. Current theories and directions of practice in landscape architecture build on Sporn’s idea of nature as a force and the resulting interconnectedness of nature and human interventions by addressing the world as “a hybrid of culture and nature, where old dualisms are being supplanted by transdisciplinary thinking, uneasy synergies, complex networks, and surprising collaborations” (Reed and Lister, 2014, p.17).

How we perceive nature and the resulting relationship, ultimately reflects humankind’s being in the world and determines how we will live and with what aspirations. Our perspective of nature will determine the results and conditions of life on earth that will be left and passed down as markers of our past and present. Yet, the historical journey of nature’s conceptual evolution did not always have such an anthropocentric view of the relationship between humans and nature, and it is uncertain whether this perspective will carry forward into the future. As historian William Cronon notes, because “nature is unlike most other historical subjects in lacking a clear voice of its own” (Cronon, 1992, p.1373), the manifestations and history of nature can only be told through us. If we add to this nebulous idea of nature the dynamic processes of urbanism and the changing concerns of architectural discourse, then the perception of nature becomes further complicated with multiple meanings, so before turning to the contemporary definitions of nature, it would be helpful to understand key historical conceptions of nature that are relevant to this research on the Cheonggyecheon and how these definitions have changed

over time.

Nature's Ambiguity

In *The Social Creation of Nature*, environmental scholar Neil Evernden examines the origins of the term Nature and its subsequent changes and evolution in meaning. He begins with the complex Greek word “*Phusis*” that encompasses the universe and eventually comes to mean “everything” (Evernden, 1992, p.19-20). Subsequently, the meaning is transferred to “nature,” as the “container for the universe” (Evernden, 1992, p.20). The separation of nature from humans is implied but inconsistent when applying the term to describe fundamental characteristics of humans, as in “human nature.” He notes the implications of nature’s duality, but it is an ambiguous and fluctuating characteristic: “From the beginning, there is this sense of fundamental distinction between human and nature, along with a strange ambiguity that permits us to regard nature as the domain of both norms and forms” (Evernden, 1992, p.21). Nature’s ambiguity allows for its multiplicity of meanings and historical transformations in meaning as humankind began the process of defining their place in the world. Similarly, Henri Lefebvre expresses the dual functionality and operations of nature as a confusion in relation to man, who is both agent and production of nature’s manifestations:

It happens that we use the same word to designate nature in man (human nature: instinct, need, desire) and nature without man, before man, outside of man. History splits into two: "nature" and "the human". Man splits into "nature" and "history" (Lefebvre, 1995, p.134).

However, the divisions between nature and the human, and nature and history, come together through man’s production of culture and history. Thus, when Lefebvre writes that “nature is the place and the duration (space and time) from which man is absent,” but also “the place from which man is absent is also the place where man begins, taking shape and moving ahead of

himself” (Lefebvre, 1995, p.138), we see the combination of nature and origins, and the beginnings of the production of history through our relationship with nature.

Western foundations of Nature’s relations to humans

The concept of nature is inextricably linked to historical beliefs of the surrounding world and our human place in it, but the agency and operation of this relationship has fluctuated in broad terms from humans being controlled by nature to humans gaining the intellectual means and technological capabilities to control nature to humans and nature having an intertwined effect and consequence on each other. This represents the evolution of the social construction of the significance of nature and the relationship between humans and nature.

In tracing the beginnings of the influence of nature on humans, geography scholar Clarence Glacken cites the classical Greek treatise *Air, Waters, Places*, which is customarily attributed to the physician Hippocrates and combines elements of medicine, environment and anthropology to explain aspects of nature that would benefit or be detrimental to our health, such as beneficial ways of siting a house in relation to the sun and the causes of diseases (Glacken, 1967, p.82-88). The Greek treatise has had an enduring impact on the explanation of nature’s influence on humans. David Arnold in referring to Glacken’s work writes that “In Greek thought, the human body was often perceived as a microcosm of nature, and thus what agitated nature, like a cold north wind or the change from season to season, was bound to have a corresponding effect upon human physiology” (Arnold, 1996, p.15). For the Greeks, the relationship between humans and nature was symbiotic and had a predetermined and reciprocated effect on each other. However, this influence has political and ideological implications when Hippocrates explains the differences between Europeans and Asiatics in form, temperament, and aspirations by the differences in the respective climates of the regions. Glacken points out the problematic

application of this environmental influence on explaining ethnographic differences between whole groups of peoples and its subsequent historical impact on how people were represented in future literature: “It [*Air, Waters, Places*] is responsible for the fallacy that, if environmental influences on the physical and mental qualities of individuals can be shown, they can by extension be applied to whole peoples” (Glacken, 1967, p.88). In addition to attributing certain characteristics to environment and geography, the treatise also asserted the notion that nature has a causal and unchanging influence on humans and introduced ethnic stereotyping by region and climate. Therefore, nature and humans are connected but there is hierarchical order to this connection, in that nature and humans are separate, with nature having the greater power, a deterministic effect on humans. This belief in the ultimate power of nature grows particularly strong in Europe during the eighteenth century, when nature is considered the “the governing idea of the age of the Enlightenment” (Arnold, quoting J. Ehrard, *L’idée de nature en France dans la première moitié du XVIIIe siècle*, 1963, p.19). Neil Evernden notes the increasingly rational view of nature when he writes that “the significant transformation in the Renaissance was from a nature of symbols and sensibilities to a Nature of certainty and reason” (Evernden, 1992, p.78).

During the Enlightenment, nature’s impact influenced a wide range of cultural developments, ranging from science to philosophy to art and poetry. Along with reiterations of the deterministic aspects of nature on cultural and social characteristics in the writings of Montesquieu in *L’esprit des lois (The Spirit of the Laws)* published in 1748, which echoed the same comparison between Europe and Asia from *Air, Waters, Places*, the publication of Charles Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* in 1859 reinforced ideas of a hierarchical order among peoples and regions as being naturally derived from evolution and geography. This framed the growing

force of Western and breadth of imperialist efforts. In concert with this rise, nature becomes increasingly rationalized, or human knowledge of the processes of nature grows, and it changes from the guiding force of life into what human beings increasingly gain the ability to control and dominate.

From the widespread growth of agricultural production and the relatively fast-paced settlement patterns and the consequent changes to the environmental landscape of the New World with the colonization of the Americas, nature becomes the means of achieving economic growth and expanding civilization. This supported the “belief in the intrinsic abundance of nature, able to meet all human needs – food, clothing, shelter, fuel – and designed expressly by God for that purpose” (Arnold, 1996, p.48). The bountiful image of nature reinforced the expansion of claiming American territory where land was considered free for the taking, but from the European perspective, this had less do with Manifest Destiny than with finding new sources of natural resources—such as its forests of trees that would supply European demand for wood and land that could be cultivated for agricultural production. The environmental history of the beginnings of European expansion in the Americas combined economic growth with moral and religious overtures of a “divinely ordained task” of transforming “wilderness into an orderly, earthly Eden” (Arnold, 1996, p.135).

Divine Nature

In contrast to the Greek and Enlightenment beliefs in nature’s effects on humans, the beginnings of industrialization saw the emergence of the reversal of the relationship between nature and humans. During the environmental movement in the twentieth century, another key moment in the evolution of the perspective of nature was presented by historian Lynn White in 1967. White presented a more challenging and polemical treatment of the perspective of nature

as a bountiful resource. In “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis,” White faulted Western cultural belief in a religious justification for dominating nature. White’s statement that “all forms of life modify their contexts,” may have applications to contemporary discourse on the effects of climate change, but White’s essay was more concerned with the foundations of the man’s perception of nature. Tracing its origins to the Old Testament (“Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it”, from the Book of Genesis), White “argued that Western views of the natural world had been profoundly influenced by a Judeo-Christian tradition, which sees God as entrusting dominion over nature to humankind” (Arnold, 1996, p.131). The relationship between humankind and nature, according to White, reverses the hierarchy established by the ancient Greeks and passed down to the Enlightenment, with humankind taking power over nature. White’s conclusion perhaps reflects the environmentalist ethos of his time and the increasing awareness and alarm for the damaging effects of environmental degradation and pollution caused by industrial processes and urbanization: “despite Darwin, we are not, in our hearts, part of the natural process. We are superior to nature, contemptuous of it, willing to use it for our slightest whim” (Quoted in Arnold, p.132). Although White’s argument has been challenged in its specific condemnation of Christianity for being anti-nature, the idea of divine justification for dominating and controlling nature has had an underlying influence from the medieval ages to the expansion of the United States (Arnold, 1996, p.133-4).

In *The Organic Machine* by historian Richard White, the chronicle of the Columbia River and man’s explorations, utilization, and transformation of the river as a source for food, economic growth and finally as an energy supplier. White applies both Kantian reason and Emersonian reconciliation of nature with American capitalism to illustrate the justification behind the early production of salmon canning industries on the Columbia. From Kant, he

quotes, “Nature is thoroughly mediate. It is made to serve. It receives the dominion of man as meekly as the ass on which the Saviour rode” (R. White, 1995, p.34). This perspective of nature as the source of resources to be used by humankind is echoed by Lefebvre, though without religious connotations: “Nature creates and does not produce; it provides resources for a creative and productive activity on the part of social humanity” (Lefebvre, 1991, p.70). By establishing nature as subordinate to the needs and directives of man, through the processes of modernization, the people who created this new means of controlling nature, created “a new access to nature” (R. White, 1995, p. 35), in this case, by building a mechanized means of canning salmon in the canneries. White explains that Emerson’s view of nature was not of separation or exploitation, but instead, “when humans acted on nature they did not defile it, they purified it” (R. White, 1995, p.35). In addition to the transformation of nature from a position of primacy over humankind to that which is meant to serve humanity, Emerson’s view of nature and the ability of man to work and earn from nature suggests an important argument for deliberately changing nature. Yet, this argument is loaded with problematic and questionable connotations, since acts of hubris might lead to disastrous consequences. At the same time, it suggests possibilities of human innovation and creativity, arguments for the pursuit of modernization and the growth of technology.

Returning to the idea of a “purified” nature, Richard White quotes Emerson to elaborate on the idea of human intervention as a means of uncovering the latent benefits of nature: “Emerson had rejoiced in the ‘magic’ of railroad iron, ‘its power to evoke the sleeping energies of land and water’” (R. White, 1995, p.35). This assertion of nature’s powers and uses needing to be awoken by human intervention at once promotes the transformative energies of the industrial age, and vaguely harkens back to Renaissance ideas of “third nature” and “second nature,”

contrasting “first nature.” However, “first nature” was considered untouched wilderness, whereas “second nature,” originally described by Cicero, was defined by John Dixon Hunt as “cultural landscape: agriculture, urban developments, roads, bridges, ports and other infrastructures” (Beck, 2002, p.330). Hunt’s definition of “third nature” represented nature as most altered by human intervention by combining art and nature, in the form of gardens. It is this last view of nature that has held a strong association for landscape architecture, but like the concept of nature itself, the discipline has multiple areas of application and consequence.

The current concern for sustainability, protecting and healing the environment, and awareness of ecological processes and impacts takes all three natures, as well as, or perhaps especially, the energies or forces of nature that have become known through technology and science, into consideration as the instruments and drivers of landscape design. Through the design of landscapes, landscape architects, designers, and planners address multiple goals or concerns through the design process in the creation of landscape architecture. Because landscape architecture uses as its canvas, set of tools, and finished design, elements of nature, the environmental challenges of the 21st century can perhaps be best resolved applying the discipline’s emphasis on processes and systems- based knowledge. Centuries of building upon theories and opinions about humankind’s relationship to nature has brought us to a moment when technology has given us increased possibility of controlling nature, yet the forces of nature have proved to still lie beyond our control and full understanding of its powers. To address the growing challenges of climate change, prepare for large scale weather events, and repair cities from the residual damages of industrial processes, the discipline of landscape architecture is perhaps one of the strongest means by which we can gain better understanding of the forces of nature and work with nature to protect and repair the planet.

II. Urban ecology and the connectivity of urban natural and technological systems

Nature as Process and Transformation

Following the discussion of the evolution of nature's meaning and its relationship to humans, this section turns to the discipline of landscape architecture and its influence on the design of cities. As discussed in chapter one, the growth of landscape architecture projects in cities for large-scale urban revitalization, or works of landscape urbanism, reflect the environmental concerns of the modern age. These works of urban landscapes reflect the combined influences of nature, science, technology, and culture. In *Projective Ecologies*, landscape architects Chris Reed and Nina-Marie Lister explain the development of an ecological method for landscape architecture:

In science, the field of ecology has moved from classical determinism and a reductionist Newtonian concern with stability, certainty, and order in favor of more contemporary understandings of dynamic systemic change and the related phenomena of adaptability, resilience, and flexibility. Increasingly these concepts of ecological thought are found useful as heuristics for decision-making generally and as models or metaphors for cultural production broadly, and for the design arts in particular. This places landscape architecture in a unique disciplinary and practical space, equally informed by ecological knowledge as an applied science, as a construct for managing change, and, within the context of sustainability - as a conceptual model of cultural production or design. (Reed and Lister, 2014, p.15)

The science of ecology has sought to explain the processes of nature as well as human intervention in small and large scale operations, from small ecosystems such as a pond or garden, to larger ones such as a city. But this knowledge of ecology offers no guarantees or predictions for the future of our environment since by definition, the ecological process resists stability and permanence. Despite the desire to ameliorate environmental damage through ecological knowledge, James Corner writes:

The lesson of ecology has been to show how all life upon the planet is so deeply bound into dynamic, complex, and indeterminate networks of relationships that to speak of nature as a linear mechanism, as if it were a great machine that can be either intrinsically or extrinsically controlled and repaired, is simply erroneous and reductive” (Corner, 1997, p.83).

Corner reinforces the notion of the unpredictability of a dynamic nature, no matter how much ecological knowledge we may amass, because ecosystems have changed from closed to open systems, susceptible to change with an agency of their own. However, landscapes with regenerative and ameliorative properties, have been promoted as a solution to damaged post-industrial sites. In *Regenerative Design for Sustainable Development*, landscape architect John Tilman Lyle explains that “the industrial age replaced the natural processes of the landscape with the global machine..., while regenerative design seeks now to replace the machine with landscape” (Lyle, 1994, p.29). Similarly, In “Landscape as Urbanism,” architect and urbanist Charles Waldheim asserts

Landscape is a medium, it has been recalled by Corner, Allen, and others, uniquely capable of responding to temporal change, transformation, adaptation, and succession. These qualities recommend landscape as an analog to contemporary processes of urbanization and as a medium uniquely suited to the open-endedness, indeterminacy, and change demanded by contemporary urban conditions” (Waldheim, 2012, *The Landscape Urbanism Reader*, Kindle ed.).

However, it is also critical to realize that the aim of achieving sustainability and designing with environmental sensitivity does not entail employing universal solutions or models since by the inherently dynamic qualities of ecological processes, every condition has unique properties that call for a specific study and awareness of their processes and determining a unique solution (Guy and Moore, 2005).

In examining the idea of nature as process, as well as the transformative manifestations of nature, Ann Spirn notes the integrative and holistic dimension of nature in relation to culture, highlighting the long-range impact of the perspective of nature as a system and process and the

intermingling of the different agencies, both human and nonhuman. She writes that “Nature is a mirror of and for culture. Ideas of nature reveal as much about human society as they do about nonhuman processes and features. Even as human cultures describe themselves as reflections of nature, their ideas of nature also mirror their culture” (Spirn, 2002, p.32). Spirn also urges the interconnected perception of nature with the city and its expanded geographies:

The city must be recognized as part of nature and designed accordingly. The city, the suburbs, and the countryside must be viewed as a single, evolving system within nature... The social value of nature must be recognized and its power harnessed, rather than resisted (Spirn, 1984, p.5).

Therefore, the notion of finite, separate systems of space and operations should be replaced by an attention to their connectivity and ways of impacting each other.

The Cheonggyecheon project demonstrates the connection between the city and nature, in its utilitarian use as stormwater channel, by diverting water from the streets which have historically experienced flooding during the monsoon season in the summer months (Bae, 2011; K. Park, 2006; Kal, 2011; Hwang, 2015). The original Cheonggyecheon stream frequently flooded, causing “endless misery” (Biggs, 2010), and one interview respondent reported that after the reconstruction project, there was still flooding of the stream and the Han River, where they join (Interview 10). The park was designed to withstand a 200-year flood. Research has shown that South Korea has experienced increasing numbers of flash flooding events, which the city and researchers attribute to the effects of urbanization and climate change (Bae, 2011; K. Park, 2006).



Figure 2: Cheonggyecheon floodgates under Muhak bridge (“Muhakgyo”)



Figure 3: Emergency ladder

During floods, the Cheonggyecheon is closed to the public, and the park displays signs at

floodgates (Fig. 2), designed into the park's underpasses and along the walls, to alert the public of flooding risk and has installed emergency ladders (Fig. 3) at sixteen locations (K. Park, 2006). When asked what was the most important aspect of the Cheonggyecheon, one of the interview respondents from the Seoul Metropolitan Government project team cited flood control and life safety as the project's biggest priority (Interview 19). This response highlights the underlying challenge of the project. It acts as a civic attraction for the people of the city to enjoy an open green space. However, during a flood event, it serves as a means to divert water out of the city, and especially during flash floods, people must quickly escape the park. It illustrates the unpredictability and force of nature, and the city's response to flooding events. The city has promoted the project as a means to alleviating periodic flooding in the city, but vegetation and other design features can increase flood risk in urban streams (Bae, 2011). The project entailed coordinating all the design components to avoid ensure the project's safety.

The processes of modernization and urbanization have inserted a technological aspect to nature, and this is most prevalent in metropolitan settings. As alluded to at the beginning of this chapter, nature in the city requires transformation into a "new synthesis" (Gandy, 2002, p.2). In describing the city as the space and means of producing this transformation, historian Lewis Mumford writes that "the chief function of the city is to convert power into form, energy into culture, dead matter into the living symbols of art, biological reproduction into social creativity" (Mumford, 1961, p.571). The vast scale of this undertaking suggests that the work of the city is a dynamic process, encompassing both nature and culture. Increasingly, with the prevalence of science, technology, and increased knowledge in our postmodern world, nature in urban and non-urban settings is often the result of some kind of synthetic manipulation. However, the perception of technology as being separate from nature ignores the process-based view of nature,

which is often intertwined with human intervention. In “The Nature of Industrialization,” environmental historians Sara Pritchard and Thomas Zeller argue that, “one of the most influential legacies of industrialization, then, is the way in which industrial technologies have helped to obscure humans connections to, and thus dependency upon, the environment” (Pritchard and Zeller, 2010, p.72). They assert that industrialization did not separate humans from nature through the advent of technology but was instead another development in history of “human interactions with the natural environment and anthropogenic change to the landscape” (Pritchard and Zeller, 2010, p.70). Like the assertions of ecological design and landscape architecture practitioners, this perspective of technology working in concert with the forces of nature is another example of the social construction of nature as process that intermingles the cultural, human and historical impacts with the non-human and environmental.

Significance of water channels in an urban setting and daylighting buried streambeds and rivers

The final perspective on the evolution of nature’s meaning and value in Western thought actually applies to the global phenomenon of daylighting rivers that have gained increasing popularity in cities around the world. Daylighting refers to uncovering and restoring buried or covered rivers or streams, but there are different levels of restoration through daylighting: natural restoration; architectural restoration, and cultural restoration (Pinkham, 2001; Trice, 2013). The Cheonggyecheon project is often touted as a successful example of a daylighting project (Revkin, 2009; Novotny, Ahern, Brown, 2010). Since it was not a full, natural restoration of the stream, the project would fall under categories of architectural and cultural restoration, but the project’s inability to reach natural restoration has been one of its main criticisms (Lee and Anderson, 2013). Nevertheless, civic interest in daylighting streams stems from more than ecological recovery and highlights perhaps the strongest incentive for adding landscape projects

to urban settings. Urban revitalization with the addition of a landscape feature has imbued nature with financial investment appeal and value, heightening the perception of urban landscapes and streams in particular in today's contemporary city as a means for generating wealth and commerce (Youngerman, 2013). In addition to financial value, many of these daylighting projects have become spaces of leisure activities, where city dwellers can experience pleasure in the city.

The growing attention to daylighting projects around the world has contributed to the appeal and interest in building water channels in urban settings as cities have sought to regenerate their underutilized and blighted neighborhoods. Notable successful daylighting projects in the US date back to the waning decades of the 20th century and continue to today and have become a strategy for revitalizing cities that had become economically and culturally stagnant (Youngerman, 2013). These projects differ in size, scale, and the kinds of urban setting, but they share the intention and characteristic of bringing about a renaissance of their site. The more successful projects also tended to reflect back on the city as a whole, as the daylighting project may have initiated or accompanied a city-wide effort to revitalize its image, brand, and fortunes. Some notable projects include the Van der Donck Park in Yonkers, NY that restored the Saw Mill River near the city's Hudson River waterfront beginning in 2011; the Providence River in Providence, Rhode Island beginning in 1986; Arcadia Creek in Kalamazoo, Michigan, beginning in 1986 (Trice, 2013) and the Kitazawa Stream in Tokyo, Japan, completed in the 1990s (Novotny, Ahern, Brown, 2010). These cities have all experienced new vitality, activity, and growth as a result of daylighting their rivers and developing areas around them and have also gained notice and recognition for the daylighting projects.

Other projects that are not daylighting projects but have focused on ways to revitalize an

urban water channel by turning it into a more naturalistic focal point of the urban landscape include the on-going efforts to “green” the Los Angeles River from its concrete channel (Lonsdorf, 2011) to a more natural and user-friendly design and the transformation of the Kallang River flowing in a concrete channel into the bucolic stream running through Bishan Park in Singapore, completed in 2012. The significance and connection of these projects lie in the ways in which the perception and identity of the site and, by extension, the city have changed after the transformation or addition of the water body. Whether these streams and rivers were unearthed and daylighted, or freed from the confines of a concrete channel and restored into naturalistic surroundings, the re-design of these flowing bodies of water became a distinguishing marker of their site’s connection to urban nature.

The phenomena of urban revitalization stemming from the incorporation of a water-centered landscape feature in a city reflects an economic value for parks and green spaces. Their presence in a city, or in a certain neighborhood has resulted in an economic increase in the surrounding area and because of this, urban landscapes have become a commodity and has the ability to add to the commercial value of an urban space. The area surrounding the Cheonggyecheon has seen a rise in nearby property costs, as well as new building developments, changing the image of the area (Lee and Anderson, 2013). This has resulted in what geographer Allen Scott calls the “aestheticization of urban public spaces” (Scott, 2011). Critics of this phenomenon called eco-gentrification warn of resulting social and economic divisions as residents living near an urban landscape become displaced due to rising property values. (Haffner, 2015; Scott, 2011; Haase et al., 2017). In a sense, given the history of land and property values, this is nothing new. As soon as land was marked as property, it has had a price. However in the case of public landscapes, the question is whether they can become drivers for

economic growth or revitalization. The importance of planning and designing built environments with an emphasis on sustainability and resilience has placed greenspaces, or the access or proximity to them, as a key feature of many developments and urban renewal projects. Cities have built public landscapes to reimagine and transform undesirable or stagnant sites into desirable and lucrative, revenue-generating constructions.

The Seoul Metropolitan Government's reimagining of the Cheonggyecheon stream as an urban park and greenway has contributed to the image of Seoul as a city that is committed to sustainable and environmental design. An example of this image is in Seoul's City of Design profile as part of UNESCO's Creative Cities Network, describing it as "a city where people coexist with nature and modernity harmonizes with tradition" (designcities.net/city/seoul). This description reiterates the city's promotion of the Cheonggyecheon project as "an urban stream in nature" and the project as a step in the city's goal of becoming "a lush, green city where clear waters flow" (Park, Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2006). The next section examines the development of the city in relation to nature, starting with the historical narrative of the founding of Seoul.

III. The pre-modern city and space planning theories and practices

The geomantic city

The founding of Seoul, originally called Hanyang, as the capital of the Joseon Dynasty¹ (1392-1910) by King Taejo, was based on its auspicious geographical and topographical characteristics, "according to Hyongsedo Korean cartographic principles—based on geomancy

¹ Also spelled Choson - sources have spelling variations for the same name. Some also refer to this dynasty as the Yi Dynasty, the clan name of the royal family.

brought to Korea from China in the nineteenth century—whereby the city was conceptualized as an organic body subject to natural forces and flows of the earth’s energies” (Rowe, 2005, p.54). This background information on the significance of the site of the city reveals two important aspects of Seoul’s (and Korea’s) history: China’s influence on the formation of Korean culture and its built environment, and the reference to the city as an “organic body.” The concept of the city as “an organic body” signifies the deep association of nature in the very structure of the layout of the city in relation to its surroundings. Architecture and urban design critic Peter Rowe describes the natural elements of the site as “surrounded by mountains, with walls following the ridge lines for added protection and demarcation, several water courses, generally flowing in an east-west direction, and generous and well-ventilated south-facing slopes as future locations for palaces and shrines” (Rowe, 2005, p.54-55). The description evokes the synergetic forces of nature that would provide protection for the city and well-being for its inhabitants. The characterization of Asian cities generally claims to unite the concept of nature with the city (Kim, 1997). Urban and regional planning scholar and researcher Won Bae Kim explains the contrasting perspectives of nature in England and East Asian countries:

The antithetical relationship between city and the non-city was largely absent in East Asia, particularly in Confucian societies such as China, Japan, and Korea. ... The Romantics in nineteenth-century England reinterpreted the concept of nature, which came to signify not an underlying order of which man was an integral part, but rather a separate order untouched by man. In contrast, East Asian traditions, at least in Taoist and Buddhist societies, assumed a natural order of which man was an integral part (Kim, 1997, p.19).

A closer inspection of the perspectives of nature, whether separate or integrated with humankind, might hold certain distinctions in Western and Asian thought. This description alludes to the differences of culture in the form of spiritual beliefs and practices. Yet, whereas in the Western

tradition, nature may be considered apart from humankind, both Asian and Western concepts of nature still place a type of structure or hierarchy to man's relationship to nature. In the geomantic tradition, of which the siting of Seoul was thought to promise protection and legitimation of the new dynasty, the mountains that surrounded the city also channeled the proper amount of energy (*ki*) to flow (Henry, 2014, p.23). Thus, the structure of the geography and topography of the city carried the sense of the organic all its own, independent of the people, and ascribes a character to the city as a living entity.

The organic formations of the natural landscape laid the foundations for the early plans of the city, thus in a sense, nature had a determining effect on the early Korean city. Later, as the city grew and became more populated, city planning would become more orthogonal and rational, indicative of the primacy of the governing body, meaning that the king was at the center and head of the social structure and that the organization of society was built to protect and maintain the dynasty. The importance of the central government was also prevalent during the colonial period from 1910-1945, when the built environment underwent considerable changes, as well as the changes caused by the beginnings of modernization. However, historian Todd Henry notes that not all parts of Seoul were subject to transformation during this time, and in the smaller spaces of the city, populated by the majority of Koreans, the city retained its organic structure: "Although such forms of excess marked Keijo's [the Japanese name for the capital city] arterial infrastructure, its capillary network of narrow and meandering roads remained largely outside the disciplinary gaze and biopolitical concerns of the colonial state." (Henry, 2014, p.9). The transformation of the city would eventually further erase the naturalistic elements that had been the foundation for the establishment of the capital, but the concept of the "organic" city would not completely die away and would in fact, be used again in a different context during

the colonial period. But before discussing those developments, it is useful to examine the definitions and concepts of nature and technology in the Asian historical context.

IV. Cultural and social implications of urban growth and transformation

Nature and technology in the city

The concepts of nature and of technology in relation to the Asian conceptualization of the city hinges on that of a structured order to society. In describing this order in East Asian cities in general, planning researcher Won Bae Kim writes that “The city, which represents *zuowhei* [“action” in Lao Zi philosophy], emulates the natural order, from its site selection to its spatial arrangement. Thus, the city is more than a political idea; it is a metaphysical, transcendent concept, as demonstrated in the original layout of traditional cities in East and South-East Asia” (Kim, 1997, p.19). In further explaining the interaction between nature and the establishment of a social order, he writes, “In East Asia, the origin of the concept of the city is inseparable from the history of institutions, which is none other than the way of defining human beings and their relationship with nature and other men” (Kim, 1997, p.20). Thus, while nature may provide the early template for the beginnings of the layout of the city, it is made meaningful through its representation of the social hierarchy. Therefore, the design of the city in its reflection of social hierarchy reinforces the idea that the order and institutions created by man has been ordained from a higher, cosmic authority.

The argument that nature and technology and their manifestations in the city were bound by the structures of social order and the resulting obligation or role that people had in supporting that system is presented in different ways in historical studies of Asia. In a study of

Japanese concepts of nature in relation to its political history, historian Julia Adeney Thomas argues that “nature’s implications for society – its prescription for the relations of power among human beings – mattered far more to most Meiji and Taisho writers than its scientific or ecological import” (Thomas, 2001, p.6). Although she does note that the availability and access to natural resources certainly had a significance in the Japanese conceptualization of nature, she argues that nature’s greater impact pertained to social structures and writes that “the dramatic reconfiguration of nature pertained to the structure of government, the position of the individual in society, and the rate of social change” (Thomas, 2001, p.6). Her study offers a fascinating examination of the multiple ways in which Japanese political ideology has often been based on a reconceptualization of nature throughout Japan’s history, ranging from positioning the traditional notion of a “Japanese love for nature” as a “national characteristic” to the rhetorical means of breaking away from Confucian ideology with China at the highest point of the social order in Asia during the Edo period by positing a reconceptualization of the cosmic order of nature with Japanese spiritual origins as being superior (Thomas, 2001).

In an interpretation focusing on ancient imperial Chinese views of technology and nature, historian Peter C. Perdue discusses their intersections primarily as a bureaucratic system that supported the roles people would take on in order to effect efficient means of production and management of the city. In this sense, he defines technology to include civic institutions and processes, such as China’s national examination system to qualify for government and civil service positions. He elaborates on the authority of these government officials in on-going national efforts to control water and land use: “A large official literature focused on water conservancy and land clearance as key issues in ensuring security and social stability. Both issues featured prominently in collections of ‘statecraft essays,’ which all officials read. The

proper control of water and land use, in the Chinese official view, meant directing nature toward the satisfaction of human needs” (Perdue, 2010, p.105). Here we see the view of certain elements of nature as something that can and should be controlled, but Perdue also includes the bureaucratic system that identifies the individuals who will direct and manage this system as part of the larger institutionalized system of control. Interestingly, Won Bae Kim notes that the meritocracy of the examination system in China and Korea allowed a level of fluidity and movement within the constraints of the established social hierarchy. However, a larger break from this social structure came as a result of the end of dynastic rule and the beginnings of modernity. In Korea, the end of the Joseon Dynasty marked the beginning of the annexation period by the Japanese.

The colonial period in Korea (1910-1945) was marked by changes in the built environment as well as the system of social hierarchy, though as a colonized population, the Korean people again found themselves in a subordinate position, this time to colonial authorities. These changes revealed deep tension and confusion as the Japanese instituted policies and encouraged practices, with varying degrees of coercion, that were either not fully accepted or understood by Koreans. Historian Todd Henry’s study of Japanese policies to assimilate Koreans as an extended part of the Japanese empire focuses on how these assimilation policies were manifested in changes to the city planning design of Keijo, obligatory public worship at state Shinto shrines, public entertainment spectacles and exhibitions held on the grounds of former royal palaces, and state-enforced sanitary and hygiene practices that focused on the proper disposal of waste and adopting Western medical practices over traditional medicine (Henry, 2014). The Japanese used rhetoric comparing the reconfiguration of the city as improving the efficiency of the “organic body” of Keijo, illustrating the belief in the merging of nature with technology or modernization

to improve the city. These assimilating policies became increasingly enforced in the years leading up to and during World War II, but Henry notes that efforts for full assimilation were stymied or complicated by the lack of fully implementing infrastructure by the Japanese in order to successfully effect changes in behavior and as well as their unequal treatment of Koreans.

Once Korea became independent, however, as with other countries in Asia, modernization and urbanization happened quickly with the goal of growing the economy. Won Bae Kim writes this was in part a result of the breakdown of the prevailing social hierarchy that had dominated traditional Asian societies: “Freed from the grip of centrality and a suffocating social order, cities in East Asia grew rapidly, largely following the process of concentration accompanied by material accumulation” (Kim, 1997, p.29). At the same time, long-held beliefs and adherence to a rigid social and political hierarchy did not disappear. During the years of rapid development and modernization, the idea of a social order persisted in different ways to advance economies and industrial growth.

V. Advent of modernization

Modernization’s erasures and prevailing social order

During the rapid development period in Asia, the old social order built around serving a king or emperor had ended. Society was no longer connected with the cosmically ordained structure of a centralized power. However, governments in Asia were still highly centralized and expectations made the people work diligently to improve the economy. In *The Making of Urban Japan*, geographer André Sorensen describes the primary concern of the state during the 1950s and 1960s:

The self-appointed role of the government was to promote national strength through economic growth, and the people were expected to do their best to further their growth. The purpose of economic growth was not to improve the welfare of the people, who were expected to save money by living frugally and working long hours, but to increase the strength of the state. The old feudal and Meiji period idea that the people were there to serve the state, and not vice versa, had clearly not lost much of its potency (Sorensen, 2002, p.203).

Another significant aspect of the rapid growth period, which is characteristic of much of urban development in Asia, is the temporally mixed urban landscape, what Peter Rowe describes as an “‘all at once’ pattern of development compared to a sequential unfolding more common in the West” that often resulted in “old and new ways of making cities seem frequently to be blended together” (Rowe, 2005, p.8-9). Thus, the temporal consequences of modernization are represented in both multiple and newly built ways.

During Korea’s rapid growth years which began in the 1960s and 1970s, the emphasis on building and transforming the built environment to express modernization, industry, and manufacturing, was accompanied by political rhetoric from then president Park Chung-hee, who seized power in 1961 in a military coup d’etat, urging the Korean people and nation to work hard to build the country and foster economic growth (Park, 1970). The technological and industrial spirit of the times can be read in the transformations of the Cheonggyecheon stream, which had become a polluted wastewater channel, as it was covered and turned into a road. Later a freeway ramp was built over the site. The nature that had been such a critical foundation to the founding of the city as well as the representative framework for the social order of traditional Korean society, had become degraded by urbanization, illustrating the tenuousness of Seoul’s urban infrastructure (or lack of it) in the years following the Korean War. Its erasure and the accompanying transformation of the built environment of the city in the pursuit of progress and

efficiency were the part of the sacrifices that the goal of modernization entailed (Kal, 2011). Images of nature in South Korea after its independence from the Japanese colonial period and following the Korean War reflect the promotion of nationalism and nationalist identity of the country as it worked to claim elements of its ancient past.

VI. Nature's significance in modern South Korea

National symbols of nature and enduring meaning

During the early years of South Korea's independence following the Japanese colonial period, the national project of building a modern national identity included symbolic images of nature. The prevalent characteristics of the images of nature in modern South Korea are its evocations of emotion, specifically the feelings of longing and endurance. The South Korean national anthem, or "Aegukga" was officially established in 1948², three years after the end of World War II had ended the Japanese colonial rule over the peninsula and its division into North and South Korea by the United States and the Soviet Union but before the start of the Korean War that would set the two Koreas into ongoing state of war that continues today. The national anthem highlights a number of natural landmarks on the Korean Peninsula, in particular mountain ranges and the surrounding seas, and repeatedly denoting the land as full of mountains and rivers in its refrain. The refrain also notes the Rose of Sharon, which is the national flower:

- | |
|---|
| 1. Until that day when the waters of the East Sea run dry and Mount Baekdusan is worn away, God protect and preserve our nation; Hurray to Korea. |
| 2. As the pine atop the near mountain stands firm, unchanged through wind and frost, as if wrapped in armor, so shall our resilient spirit. |
| 3. The autumn sky is void and vast, high and cloudless; the bright moon is our heart, undivided and true. |

² The National Anthem - Aegukga, South Korea Ministry of the Interior. Retrieved June 21, 2017, from https://www.moi.go.kr/eng/sub/a03/nationalSymbol_2/screen.do

| |
|--|
| 4. With this spirit and this mind, give all loyalty, in suffering or in joy, to the love of country. |
|--|

| |
|--|
| Refrain: Three thousand ri ³ of splendid rivers and mountains covered with mugunghwa blossoms. Great Korean people, stay true to the Great Korean way! ⁴ |
|--|

Like all national anthems that are meant to express patriotism by extolling the history, culture, and geographical significance of the the country, the Aegukga roots the people's love of country onto the physical imagery of the natural elements that symbolize their country. It does not directly apply social characteristics of the Korean people onto the geography and topography of the land-- there is not an equivalent of "the land of the free and the home of the brave." The lyrics attest to the endurance of the Korean people, suggesting the struggle and tumult of the country's history and possible future, and referring to the mountains, seas, and rivers are evocative of the Korean spirit. In this national imaginary, nature is not only symbolic of Korean history and people, it also represents ideas of longevity and purity, illustrating the endurance of love of country. The national anthem thus temporal and emotional significance onto nature and applies it to the identity of its people. In addition to the symbolic images of nature in the national anthem, aspects of the geographical conditions of the land also contribute to the building of South Korea's national identity. However, these allusions have temporal dimensions that evoke history, memory, and the imaginary.

The topographical identity of the peninsula is represented as a land of mountains in traditional art and music, and in the contemporary world, in media to promote tourism for both North and South Korea. The significance of the mountain ranges is indicative of the peninsula being 63% mountainous (Park and Hong, 2012). While the major mountains of Seoul such as

³ *Ri* is a measurement of distance.

⁴ The National Anthem - Aegukga, South Korea Ministry of the Interior. Retrieved June 21, 2017, from https://www.moi.go.kr/eng/sub/a03/nationalSymbol_2/screen.do

Namsan and Bukhansan are prominent markers in the capital, the more important mountain ranges of South Korea stand outside the city. These include Sorak San, Jirisan, and Hallasan on Jeju Island.⁵ The most notable and large mountain ranges are symbolic of their situated region, as well as the suggestion of the difficulty of mountain crossings that divide the land. This image of the mountains as a physical barrier and obstacle carries an additional level of significance to Korea's geopolitical relations between the North and South and may be illustrated particularly strongly with two mountain ranges, Baekdu San and Geum Kang San (Yoo, Lee, Jeon, 2008; Yi, 1970).



Fig. 4: Image of Geum Kang San from the Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibit “Diamond Mountains: Travel and Nostalgia in Korean Art”⁶

Geum Kang San, also known as “Diamond Mountains” (Farago, 2018), is situated in North Korea and has held an enduring image as a beloved mountain range in the Korean imaginary-- perhaps illustrated by the ubiquity of reproductions of the mountains in artistic and decorative representations. It was the subject of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's 2018 exhibit

⁵ “*San*” means mountain in Korean, of Chinese origin.

⁶ Retrieved May 12, 2018 from <https://metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2018/diamond-mountains>

“Diamond Mountains: Travel and Nostalgia in Korean Art” (Fig. 4), which featured paintings of the mountains from the 18th century to the 21st (Farago, 2018). Baekdu San is located in the border between China and North Korea and is thought of as the ancestral origin of the Korean people and has been the subject of border disputes between China and the Korean peninsula throughout its history (Yoo, Lee, Jeon, 2008; Yi, 1970). Its importance to modern Korean identity is reflected by the specificity of its allusion in the first line of the South Korean national anthem. In the late 20th and early 21st century, thawing relations between the two Koreas allowed for South Koreans to travel to visit these two mountain ranges as part of the opening of limited travel to key locations in the North (Yoo, Lee, Jeon, 2008). Today both Baekdu San and Geum Kang San may represent the cultural and historical divide of the Korean people, adding to the significance of these mountain ranges as emblems of the loss and division of the people: the phenomena of war-torn, or separated, families throughout the peninsula; and the land: meaning the separation of the people from their hometowns.

The significance of the lost hometown may also be tied to the modern Koreans’ loss or separation from nature. For families who originate from a town in the North, this is particularly poignant for a culture where hometown roots are indicative of clan, surname, or provincial origins where certain foods, accents or dialects, and political history are considered to reveal differences in the Korean people and are markers of identity. For those who have become separated from their hometown, they become what Korean-American novelist Richard E. Kim describes as “people without a country... Displaced peasants driven out of their ancestral land to find new roots in an alien land” (Kim, 1988, Kindle edition). Park Chung-hee’s critical assessment of the dominance of clan relations and provincial culture alludes to the enduring hold that the hometown has on Korean society. It is also suggestive of a symbiotic interweaving of

land, history, and identity that has in some ways managed to survive the ruptures in this legacy caused by modernity, and perhaps for certain individuals, the connective thread may have been long lost, and may only exist as a loss.

Other significant natural features include large river systems, such as the Han River that flows through Seoul and has also undergone redevelopment as the city looked to ways to make the river more than a landmark but more of a space for recreation and leisure. The Han is also part of the Four Major Rivers system that was part of former president Lee Myung-bak's campaign to develop four large South Korean rivers, the Han, Nakdong, Geum, and Yeongsan, as a network of recreation and public amenity spaces which have met with mixed results and criticism in terms of sustainable development, environmental responsibility, and economic costs (Lah, Park, Cho, 2015). A major part of the criticism of the project stemmed from the fast pace of the developments, also one of the criticisms for the Cheonggyecheon, which critics say that did not allow enough time to fully plan for the natural conditions and processes of changing the river systems and the environmental impacts of the projects. The speed of both projects are yet another illustration of the fast pace of change that Seoul has undergone beginning in the late 20th century. However, whereas in the 20th century, the changes were made with the objective of modernization and industrial progress, the contemporary developments have been done with the claim of mitigating the damages from industrialization and building for post-industrial conditions. The similarity of these processes will be discussed in the analysis of fieldwork research in chapter seven.

The redevelopment of the rivers are indicative of the transition of the South Korean landscape and the political goals of reclaiming the natural landscape from the damage or neglect that was wrought during the rapid industrialization of the country's economy. The

redevelopment of the four rivers also looked for ways to promote the path of the rivers in a heretofore unexplored space for tourism combined with the pursuit of health and sports and recreation. The network of rivers, like the streams in the cities, have paths for walking and bicycling, and the South Korean tourism board have organized tours as well as recommended itineraries for visiting the small towns that traverse the rivers' paths.⁷ The new landscapes beyond urban settings have become a means of connecting the people to the geography of the country, drawing visitors to smaller cities and towns that have been overshadowed by the larger metropolitan areas. Whether these smaller cities are developed or still have the rustic characteristics of a place that has not yet benefited from modernization, their connections to the natural landscape has become a new kind of development, one that combines the traditional with the postmodern.

Courtyard spaces as an extension of the traditional Korean home

Whereas mountains and rivers represent national characteristics of the geography of the Korean Peninsula, traditional gardens and designed landscapes in Korean history appear to have been limited to elites. On an intimate and quotidian level, access to nature might be found in gardens in palaces and temples, and ancient records and writings by scholars and former court officials describe private gardens that they designed and built, often in remote locations as part of an exiled retirement. One famous such garden that still exists is the Seyeongjeong Pavilion on Bogil Island, built by Yun Seondo, a former court official and poet in the 17th century during the Joseon Dynasty, and the remote location of this garden also allowed for close proximity to mountains (Heo, 2013). Another is Soswaewon Garden in Damyang, in Cheolla province,

⁷ "Beautiful Riverside Bicycle Routes in Korea," *Korea Tourism Organization*. Retrieved June 21, 2017 from http://english.visitkorea.or.kr/enu/ATR/SI_EN_3_6.jsp?gotoPage=1&cid=1898751&out_service=

another preserved former private garden dating from the Joseon Dynasty. Both Soswaewon and Seyeongjeong are notable for their seclusion, and their remoteness from the capital city made them a refuge from the urban centers and more a part of the greater landscapes of nature (Heo, 2013). However, in the average traditional Korean home, before modernization made the high-rise apartment the more ubiquitous type of home, garden space was often limited to a courtyard (Han, 2013).

The courtyard had several, mostly utilitarian functions, such as an extension of the cooking area: where sauces and condiments could be stored; vegetables, fish, and fruit could be dried; and where some food preparation could be done. The preparation and preservation of certain foods, such as drying certain fruit or vegetables or preparing kimchi, the Korean staple food of fermented cabbage, was a marker of time and the passing of the seasons, which followed the growing season of the available crops. The courtyard could also be the space for family gatherings, such as performing ancestral rites at certain times of the year; or where a small wedding might be held; or simply a space to eat dinner on a wooden platform, which also served as a work table, during the hot summer months. It was an extension of the house, an outdoor room, allowing for indoor and outdoor living as the seasons and activities required. Although courtyards did not host the flora such as trees and flowers as the central purpose or feature of the space, they still functioned as spaces of nature in that the courtyard activities' connections to the natural cyclical order of time and the changing of the seasons grounded the space as the setting in which people could become part of nature and time.

Through modernization, the development of high-rise apartment buildings has replaced the traditional house and courtyard. Lifestyle and societal changes from an agrarian society to an

urban contemporary one has made many of the traditional functions of the courtyard space obsolete in today's culture. Yet, the absence of the outdoor space in each home constitutes a separation from the natural world that had traditionally helped define people's activities. Although some apartments might have balconies or small verandas that allow some outdoor space, the loss of the courtyard space in the typical home touches upon the need for community open spaces in South Korea's densely developed cities. While most apartment developments feature shared outdoor spaces, which might include a playground, or exercise stations for adults, and small manicured gardens, the growth of landscape projects in South Korea starting in the early 21st century are indicative of greater concern and awareness for environmental sustainability; the health and well-being of city dwellers and visitors; and how a city that boasts a diversity of open spaces can be a reflection of its wealth, as well as the driver for future economic growth. The Cheonggyecheon is one example of how Seoul has revitalized its damaged or under-utilized space by investing in nature. The following projects are three significant works of landscape architecture in Seoul, in which the site has undergone a transformation from an industrial, deteriorated, or under-utilized space, into a space of nature, revitalized activity, or more significantly, both.

Redevelopment of Industrial Spaces into Nature

The World Cup Park opened in 2002, to mark the FIFA World Cup, which was jointly hosted by Japan and South Korea that year. The park is located next to Seoul World Cup Stadium and consists of five distinct parks: Pyeongwha ("peace") Park; Nanji Hangang Park; Haneul Park; Noeul Park; and Nanjicheon Park. One of the most prominent among these is Haneul Park (Sky Park) which was built at the park's highest elevation (Fig. 5 and 6).



Fig. 5: At the top of Haneul Park in World Cup Park



Fig. 6: Steps up to Haneul Park

The entire World Cup Park was built on top of a former landfill, called Nanjido (Fig. 7), at one time one of South Korea's largest landfills.⁸

⁸ "Landfill Recovery Project : Transformation of Landfill to Ecological Park," *Seoul Solution*. Retrieved June 21, 2017 from <https://seoulsolution.kr/en/content/landfill-recovery-project-transformation-landfill-ecological-park>



Fig. 7: Nanjido Landfill, a mountain of garbage⁹

The development of the park, like the Cheonggyecheon, was not without controversy and social problems, particularly as it concerned the poor who lived around the site and whose livelihood centered on collecting what they could find in the landfill (Song, 2015). The bucolic design of Haneul Park and its abundance of flora belie the site's original function, and the fact that the landfill remains underneath all the greenery that covers the site. Haneul Park reveals the site's original use in discrete and sometimes hidden ways by the series of large tanks that release methane that is trapped beneath the soil and clay cap upon which vegetation has been planted and cultivated (Fig. 8).

⁹ Image retrieved June 24, 2017 from <https://seoulsolution.kr/en/content/landfill-recovery-project-transformation-landfill-ecological-park>



Fig. 8: Methane gas tank at Haneul Park

The park looks like a large hill, and visitors must climb a series of stairways to ascend. At the top are expansive fields of tall grasses and in certain seasons, wildflowers, that evoke a provincial rural field, far away from the actual surrounding urban setting. The park also has rustic looking wooden platforms, like those in a courtyard of a traditional Korean house, that visiting groups can use as picnic shelters, but unlike modern picnic shelters that feature picnic tables and perhaps a space for barbecue, the platforms are meant to be enjoyed sitting on the floor, shoes removed

and placed on the ground below. The park envisions an idyllic and nostalgic natural aesthetic in a completely rebuilt setting. Signage posted throughout the park retell the history of the site and the successful reimagining of nature in its place. Like the Cheonggyecheon, Haneul Park has also increasingly attracted flora and fauna, which are also tracked and their presence announced in signs throughout the park.

Another prominent park space which retains more of its original use, is Seonyudo Park, which like the first section of the Cheonggyecheon, was designed by SeoAhn Total Landscape Architecture (Fig. 9).



Fig. 9: Seonyudo Park

This park is located next to the Han River and is built on the site of a former water and sewer treatment plant that was built in 1978 (Park and Hong, 2012). Seonyudo keeps the remnants of

the original site's function and has redesigned them as landscape features. The main building now functions as a museum with exhibitions of the original building components and equipment, as well as a showcase for contemporary art. The landscape features diverse flora built onto the existing infrastructure of the grounds and visitors can move through the space on multiple levels and elevations.

The park's location on a small island on the Han River offers many vista points facing the river as visitors move through the space and provides a thematic connection of the redevelopment of industrial landscapes for both the river and the former water treatment plant. It incorporates the landscaped paths along the Han into its design and functions as both a reminder of the Han's industrial past with its more recent redesign efforts of naturalizing the river and its environs.

Together these projects illustrate Seoul's large scale efforts to make what had been inaccessible and undesirable spaces into recreation and leisure spaces, hinging on the appeal of nature as an attraction to redefine their identity and use. Seonyudo park is the more overtly transformative space in that it uses major elements of its industrial past as vessels and channels for flora and flowing water to remake the space.

One recent project, similar to both the Cheonggyecheon and Seonyudo parks, though much smaller in scale, is the Gyeongui Line Forest Park (Fig. 10, also referred to as "Yeontral Park" [a play on New York's Central Park and the neighborhood name in which the park is located] in Yeonnam-dong (neighborhood), a lively university area near Hongik University in

the western part of Seoul, north of the Han River.¹⁰



Fig. 10: Gyeongui Line Forest Park

The project is a promenade through several blocks with a shallow water feature meandering along the length, not always connected and in different widths, but always serving as a unifying conceptual and aesthetic thread. Like New York City's High Line, the Gyeongui Line park is a redeveloped park space at the site of an unused rail line (though not elevated), and the design incorporates the remaining tracks into the design. The water here is dependent on adequate rainfall and when there isn't enough, the water channel stands dry. The park could also be characterized as an allée, though it is surrounded by large scale residential and smaller scale commercial developments, in addition to trees. In a city where smaller streets often lack

¹⁰ "An Urban Respite, the Gyeongui Line Forest Park," *Visit Seoul Net*. Retrieved June 21, 2017 from http://english.visitseoul.net/tours/An-Urban-Respite--the-Gyeongui-Line-Forest-Park_/17514

sidewalks, this pedestrian dedicated space combines nature with commercial spaces, while allowing the pedestrian the freedom to become the central focus.

The Gyeongui Line Forest Park delivers what some designers and planners had originally envisioned for the Cheonggyecheon: a water feature in a promenade space that is lined with shops and eateries where Seoul residents can enjoy nature and community (interview 18). The function of the space combines both the social and commercial amenity of a lively urban streetscape with the natural and aesthetic respite that separates the area and makes it unlike both the typical park and the city street. While the water channel stands dry during the dry season, its changing conditions over the course of the different seasons reflects of the natural process of Seoul's climate, perhaps adding to the visitors' and city residents' perception and awareness of nature. However, this being contemporary Seoul, the area is often most popular as an evening or night destination, when the enjoyment of nature might not be as strong as the enjoyment of the outdoor space as a space for nightlife.

The development of these landscape projects share several characteristics of landscape urbanism, particularly for the themes of temporality, the staging of surfaces, and the imaginary. All three have redesigned areas that were damaged or were underutilized spaces and changed them into large-scale, reimagined landscape parks. Haneul Park's expression of temporality is sometimes hidden by its nostalgic design. By placing methane tanks in areas where they cannot be seen, the park often evokes a natural landscape. However, the description of the park's transformation from landfill to park keeps the narrative of its history as part of its design. Similarly, Seonyudo Park has also included narrative descriptions of the site's history and has included forms of its past use as part of the new design of the landscape. The Gyeongui Line

Forest Park acts as an urban design project as much as a park, and of the three projects, it is the most integrated into the city.

The reimagination of these sites into large-scale landscapes have increased and diversified the numbers of Seoul's public spaces. They reflect the paradigm shift in Seoul's urban landscape with increasing numbers of green spaces, in a city that by its own description had an image as a "hard city" (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2009). Through changes in the city's built environment of public landscape projects, Seoul has pursued its goal of becoming a "soft city," prioritizing public amenities, liveability, and its transformation into a pedestrian-oriented city (SMG, 2009; Biggs, 2010). The influence of the Cheonggyecheon project on urban landscapes is examined in the next section.

VII. The impact of the Cheonggyecheon and the growth of linear parks in the city

Paradigm Shifts

The transformation of the Cheonggyecheon into a restored stream and linear park could only have happened after the country had achieved the economic prosperity that made possible such a large-scale change to the core of the city's built environment. The project is an expression of the Seoul's evolving identity as an advanced and progressive, global city that can now offer more urban amenities to its residents and visitors than had been possible during its developmental period. The top-down approach of the project suggests that the social structure of a centralized government still persists and prevails, but the attention to sustainability and ways of improving the environment and quality of life may indicate a change in the values of the government and Korean society. The motivation to undertake the project, according to then

mayor Lee Myung-bak stemmed from several factors. One was finding a solution to the problems of the aging infrastructure as the highway ramp was verging on collapse and required a full reconstruction rather than piecemeal repair work. The other was the increasing problem of air pollution caused by the rising number of automobile traffic in the city. And finally, the city became concerned about the risks of methane gas explosions and leaks in the Cheonggyecheon area caused by the pollution that was buried with the original stream (Lee, 2007). At the same time, one cannot ignore the transformation of the Cheonggyecheon area from an industrial and decaying urban space to a revitalized and gentrified one and the subsequent growth of real estate development in the area, which could be argued as indicators of a continued attention to economic growth, just through a different operation and with different outcomes.

Whether the insertion of a stream and park space in the urban landscape reflects a return of the historical image and concept of Seoul, or whether the project represents the continued efforts of a central government to produce economic growth and prosperity, the Cheonggyecheon represents multiple levels and kinds of paradigm shifts. In *Emergent Architectural Territories in East Asian Cities*, Peter Rowe sums up the significance of the Cheonggyecheon restoration:

...looking back over the entire Cheonggyecheon experience, historically it has been at the forefront or come to symbolize major paradigm shifts in Korean urbanization. At first, in the Joseon Dynasty, it stood for feudal public improvements and public safety. Then in the post-war era it symbolized, at least in large part, the progressive modernizing impetus of production-oriented development before giving over, in the turn between the 20th and 21st centuries, to matters of amenity and livability. (Rowe, 2011, p.161)

Projects like the Cheonggyecheon are being studied as models of landscape design that combine nature with technology and as a means of instigating changes to the built environment for the

betterment of our futures as well as reconnecting and revitalizing elements of the past.

The re-creation of the Cheonggyecheon has resulted in a different kind of transformation of the subjectivity of the Korean people, perhaps as yet not as obvious as the more aggressive changes that were made in the early years of South Korea's independence. The new project has caused a transformation of not only the area surrounding the park but also to the streams in other parts of the city and beyond. Other streams and rivers around the Seoul area, within and in the expanding suburban reaches of the city and in other South Korea cities, have been redesigned with walking and bicycle paths and areas where exercise machines have been installed so that area residents can enjoy the landscape and take in some exercise for the benefit of their health (S.W. Hwang, 2015; Biggs, 2010; Bae, 2011). The spaces in turn have often become the main identifying landmarks for that town or neighborhood, as in the case of Bundang and Pangyo, which lie south of the city (Fig. 11).



Fig. 11: Stream development in Pangyo, a suburb of Seoul

Neighborhood streams feature more exercise stations and wider paths, often with softer paving material for running and cycling than the Cheonggyecheon's first and second sections and thus attract neighborhood residents who use the space to jog or exercise (Figures 13-15). The designs of these neighborhood stream parks are notable for their similar forms and design markers, like the large stepping stones to cross the stream, qualities that make the design repetitive and uniform but also connect them as part of a larger network of streams. In a sense, they recreate the map of ancient Hanyang showing the Cheonggyecheon and its tributaries, emphasizing the connectivity of the water channels and the work of the local governments that directed their development (Fig. 12).



Fig. 12: Map showing the major streams in Seoul and nearby suburbs, 2017.¹¹

¹¹ Image from Seoul Metropolitan Government tourism website retrieved June 25, 2017 from <http://english.seoul.go.kr/life-information/natural-attractions-parks/stream/>



Fig. 13: Bulgwangcheon, near World Cup Park



Fig. 14: Jungnangcheon stream in the neighborhood of Seongbuk-gu in Seoul



Fig.15: Exercise station under a bridge, Jungnangcheon stream, Seoul

The development of recreational spaces along streams has spread to other cities, such as in the southeastern city of Gwangju in South Jeolla province (Fig.16). Again, the design of these provincial streams features the same submerged stream with walkways, bicycle paths, and exercise stations, even the same design motif of stepping stones at certain intervals where pedestrians can cross the stream.



Fig.16: Gwangju Stream development in Gwangju, in South Jeolla Province, in southwestern South Korea

Seoul's Visionary Future of Nature in the City

In 2015, the city of Seoul unveiled a design proposal completed by the Dutch architectural firm MVRDV (Fig.17). The project was to redesign an elevated road, at the time still in use and in need of repair, and transform it into a pedestrian green space. The proposal to turn an elevated road into a park was evocative of the High Line in New York (Rosenfield, 2015).



Fig. 17: Rendering of MVRDV proposal for Seoul Skygarden¹²

The Skygarden was completed and opened in May 2017. It continues Seoul's efforts to transform aging infrastructural, or damaged space into an urban landscape and displays themes and practices of landscape urbanism (Fig. 18).

¹² Image from Arch20.com. Retrieved June 24, 2017 from <http://www.arch2o.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Arch2O-MVRDV-Seoul-Skygarden-02.jpg>



Fig. 18: Completed Seoul Skygarden, or Seoulo 7017.¹³

Upon completion, the park was named Seoulo 7017, referencing the year the elevated road was originally built, 1970, and the year it was rebuilt as a pedestrian green space. Like the other landscape projects, the project's emphasis on temporality provides a narrative of its history and transformation (Stott, 2017). These efforts to provide spaces for recreation and health, a respite from the heat and pollution of the city, and a counterpart to the megablocks of high-rise apartment complexes evoke a turn away from the growing urbanization of the Seoul region and towards a balanced urban landscape where the fabric of nature and the modern city can intersect and intertwine in unexpected ways.

Like the stream parks, the Skygarden provides a dedicated pedestrian space in the large,

¹³ Image by Ossip van Duivenbode. Retrieved June 24, 2017 from <http://www.archdaily.com/871754/mvrdvs-skygarden-a-transformed-983-meter-former-highway-opens-in-seoul>

sprawling metropolis, allowing people to travel through the city as vehicles speed along the street level, below or above the promenade spaces. The two kinds of linear parks suggest that pedestrian dedicated spaces could have equal prominence as the vehicle-dominated streets in the urban fabric, and that these spaces should be more than mere circulation space and that landscape can become a major part of the city. Additionally, the transformation of these spaces from infrastructure or a buried stream to works of landscape urban design illustrates the city's determination and commitment to remaking its urban form and that the evolution and growth of Seoul in the 21st century has been a process of building different layers to the urban fabric, where nature can be bound with technology and illustrate the city's progress and future.

The series of landscape architecture projects built in Seoul in the early 21st century that have transformed infrastructure and underused post-industrial sites into green spaces in the city illustrate the evolution of the city and its identity through the construction of landscapes. Through these new park spaces, the city has added leisure and activity spaces for the people of Seoul, brought new commercial value to the surrounding areas near the parks, and given new life to spaces that were damaged and polluted from industrial processes of Seoul's rapid modernization period. The city's creation of green spaces in this way differs from traditional Korean perceptions and symbolic meanings for nature. They represent a reimagining of the city's public spaces, often expressing landscape urbanism's theme of processes over time. The changes to Seoul's built environment reflect the city's rapid growth, increasing knowledge and technology in relation to nature, and changes in the city's cultural values. The next chapter explores the significance of history and memory in the built environment and for the Cheonggyecheon project.

Chapter 4 The historic site

“Urban experience is thus simultaneously mythical and anti-mythical. It is both the intensification and the fragmentation of mechanisms of registering and recording impressions.”

-Max Pensky, “Memory, Catastrophe, Destruction”

“The Cheonggyecheon has historical layers, from a very old one to a very new one... The importance of history in the Cheonggyecheon was a universal idea”

-Interview 15

The reconstruction of the Cheonggyecheon began with the idea of restoring a historical stream in an area where years of modernization and urbanization had turned into an automobile dominated thoroughfare. By the end of the 20th century, it was surrounded by retail and manufacturing businesses of varying sizes and types, devoid of the symbiosis of the organic, humanistic, and cultural mythology of the site’s origins. The project revived memories or, for younger South Koreans, created, nostalgic images of a past when the name Cheonggyecheon referred to a stream and not a highway overpass. The construction of new meaning for the site illustrates geographer David Harvey’s conditions of modernity and modernism’s response:

Modernization entails, after all, the perpetual disruption of temporal and spatial rhythms, and modernism takes as one of its missions the production of new meanings for space and time in a world of ephemerality and fragmentation (Harvey, 1990, p. 216).

The goal of the Cheonggyecheon project suggestively promised project supporters an emotional reconnection to Seoul’s natural past, building upon and ultimately rewriting the historical narrative of Seoul. Whether due to longevity or their perceived permanence or simply the need to connect memory and history with a location for a sense of reality and concreteness, the built and natural environments inherently serve as the backdrops to our memory and history. Like cinematic backdrops, they provide the structure and framework to our memories and history, spatializing the ephemerality and elusiveness of the past (Harvey, Connerton, Lynch, Gaddis).

When the backdrop comes to the fore as the focus of our memory and history, it takes on the additional dimension of action, recollected life in the past, which is best described by a narrative or story, to imbue a location with meaning and identity, and thus humanizing it (Cronon, Hayden). The elusive qualities of past and future, of time in general, may be the reason why we need the stability of the built and natural environments to anchor history and memory in order to understand the present and plan for the future. Historian John Lewis Gaddis writes that “We know the future only by the past we project into it. History, in this sense, is all we have. But, the past, in another sense, is something we can never have. For by the time we’ve become aware of what has happened it’s already inaccessible to us: we cannot relive, retrieve, or rerun it... We can only represent it” (Gaddis, p.130). The objective of reconstructing a historical site then carries the goal of reclaiming the past in both form and significance, which are derived from the shared histories and memories of the people. The humanizing effect of a historical site has two objectives: one is to assert the past as part of a collective identity and shared past for the people, and the other is to give social significance to the location in which this history took place (Pai, Lynch, Ricoeur). The inaccessibility of the past reinforces the desire for historical connections in the present, and the representation of history in the built environment suggests that this desire is a shared social phenomenon.

The evocation of memory and history in the built environment produces similar effects as a scripted space. Expanding on the term defined by cultural critic Norman Klein as “narratized, themed illusions” (Klein, 2011), writer and former academic Richard Hertz and landscape architect Pamela Burton define a scripted space as exhibiting elements of familiarity and fantasy:

A 'scripted space' is a type of pedestrian space which replicates the complexity of urban life within highly staged 'maximum security' compounds. These spaces are refuges from the apparent messiness and dangers of urban life, providing a 'safe' environment in which to indulge in the pleasures of the marketplace. (Hertz and

Burton, 1996)

The scripted spaces that Klein and Hertz and Burton critique as illusionary and built to attract and indulge the desires and demands of the consumer are applied to places of consumption such as shopping centers and urban retail areas. Hertz and Burton summarize their objectives and purpose: “Fantasy, desire and control are at the heart of the commercial exchanges in our scripted spaces” (Hertz and Burton, 1996). Yet, even in a non-retail or commercial space, those same effects could be designed in a public landscape to convey meaning and emotional connections with visitors to the site. The landscape urbanism themes of the imaginary, the operational method, and the staging of surfaces could translate into the three elements of fantasy, desire, and control, depending on the narrative of a scripted space. The basis for a scripted space rests on the strength of the imaginary combined with the willingness on the part of the consumer to take part in the narrative.

In applying the term to the Cheonggyecheon, the scripted space of the park presents a historical narrative as an escape from the urban landscape and as a representation of the larger narrative of Seoul’s historical roots. The construction of a historical narrative in the design of the park and in other landmark sites in Seoul suggests that the narrative of history is a commodity, an idea, image, and experience, to be consumed. However, instead of a consumer product, the object of consumption is the space of the park and the city. The public desire for the revelation and restoration of historical roots provided early support for the Cheonggyecheon project.

For the group of project supporters who originally initiated the idea of restoring the Cheonggyecheon stream in 2000, notably among them was South Korean novelist Park Kyung-

ni¹, the reclamation of a historically significant site held equal importance as the natural restoration of the stream (Rowe, Kim, Jung 2010). Park Kyung-ni's most acclaimed work was a multi-volume novel called *Land*, which was hailed as a historical and environmental literary work and positioned the novelist as an authority figure in Korean cultural and environmental issues. Her initial support for the project, along with those of other academics and historians gave the Cheonggyecheon restoration idea an air of legitimacy and appeal. However, Park would later disavow her earlier support for the project and protest the completed Cheonggyecheon as not being an authentic restoration (Park Kyung-Ni, 2004 and E. Park, 2011).

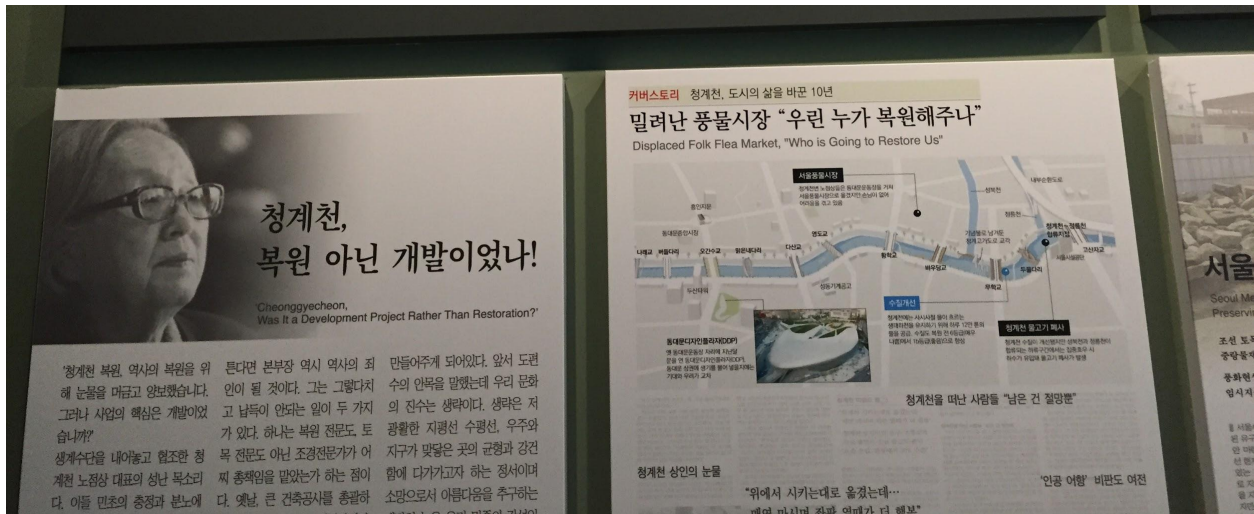


Fig. 19: Exhibit at the Cheonggyecheon Museum showing novelist Park Kyung-ni criticism of Cheonggyecheon

In the years following the completion of the project, project organizers readily admit that they did not fulfill the goals of historical restoration, and records of the opposition to and criticism of the project are on display at the Cheonggyecheon Museum (Fig. 19).

The historical narrative about the founding the capital during the Joseon, the last Korean, dynasty and the significance of the Cheonggyecheon in this origin story of the the capital city

¹ In the Great Footsteps of Park Kyung-ni - : KOREA FOCUS :: (2008, May 6). Retrieved February 06, 2017, from http://www.koreafocus.or.kr/design2/layout/content_print.asp?group_id=102036

anchored this aspect of the project's concept as part of a larger project of reclaiming South Korea's native and nationalist history. It is a narrative that connects nature and the natural forms of the city, to the political and long legacy of royal lineage that united the Korean people during the Joseon period. The evolution of this history into a story that could be reconstructed and retold was done through several different avenues and methods. This agenda for reclaiming and reconstructing significant objects and places of South Korea's historical built and natural environments is in line with the larger project of promoting the country's cultural heritage and historic sites through its heritage management program (Pai, 2013). The vastness of South Korea's heritage management project includes the inventory of cultural artifacts and art displayed in museums, historic sites such as palaces and temples, and whole towns that are listed as heritage sites, most famously the towns of Gyeongju, the ancient capital of the Silla Dynasty (alternatively dated ca. 50 BCE - 935 CE for the Three Kingdoms period or 668 – 935 CE for Unified Silla Dynasty)² and Andong, which is the location of a famous folk village and was the center of Confucianism during the Joseon Dynasty³. The promotion of this history is most clearly displayed in tourist campaigns, which highlights the significance of each place and artifact as part of Korean ancient history that can be experienced, almost re-lived by the visitor in the folk villages and heritage sites, but they also encompass a significant presence in South Korean historical dramas that are broadcast around the world and are part of the “Hallyu wave” or “Korean wave” that began in the 1990s and early 2000s when South Korean entertainment spread across Asia and beyond (Bae, Chang, Park and Kim, 2017) The official Tourism Korea Organization website Visit Korea has a page dedicated to Korean dramas, complete with plot

² 4000 BCE-1000 CE: Classical Korea (ca. 50 BCE-918 CE) | Central Themes and Key Points | Asia for Educators | Columbia University. (n.d.). Retrieved February 06, 2017, from http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/main_pop/kpct/kp_classicalko.htm

³ Andong, the Home of Confucianism and the Noble Class. (n.d.). Retrieved February 6, 2017, from http://www.visitkorea.co.kr/enu/SI/SI_EN_3_6.jsp?cid=256762

synopses, character descriptions, and information about filming locations, including visitor, traveling, and contact information.⁴

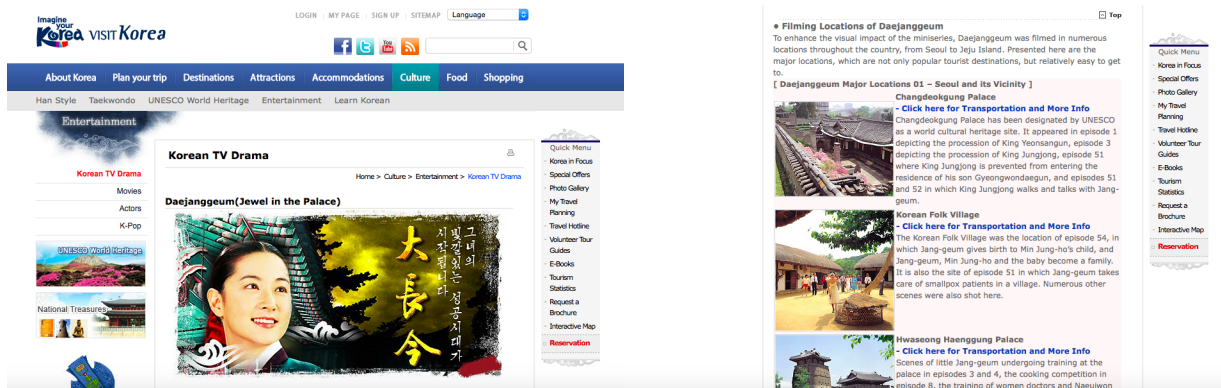


Fig. 20: Screenshots of Visit Korea tourism webpage for Korean drama filming locations

The image of the preserved history coming to life in television shows and films relays the emotional and humanized content that actual history and historic objects and sites may lack. In the reconstruction of the historical narrative in the city's built environment, Harvey notes economic objectives for the process:

Imaging a city through the organization of spectacular urban spaces becomes a means to attract capital and people (of the right sort) in a period (since 1973) of intensified inter-urban competition and urban entrepreneurialism (Harvey, 1990, p.92)

For the reconstruction of Cheonggyecheon stream, the project began by appealing to the sense of nostalgia, a characteristic of memory, for a history that was long past, beyond the actual memory of living people. This disconnect between the actual memory and history of the site with the more ancient history of the project's concept illustrates how social anthropologist Paul Connerton explanation of David Harvey's theory that forgetting, and its manifest partner, erasure, particularly of the built environment, is a condition of modernity:

⁴ Retrieved June 23, 2017 from http://english.visitkorea.or.kr/enu/SI/SI_EN_3_4_2.jsp

“Whenever we talk about places, what is at issue, whether we acknowledge it or not, are competing versions of the histories in the process of which the present of those places came into being. Whenever we speak about the identity of a place, therefore, we run the danger of imputing to that place a false ‘essence’, by abstracting it from the history of the place itself.” (Connerton, 2009, p.50)

The collective perspective of this nostalgic history of the Cheonggyecheon as a stream creates a partial and abstracted history of the site that diminishes the site’s 20th century identity as a road and highway ramp surrounded by a confluence of elements of modernity while elevating its ancient history. In order to unpack the historical narrative of the Cheonggyecheon, which in itself is replete with multiplicity in form and history, containing layers of narratives and memories, this chapter examines the implications of the memory and history in reading the built environment, as well as the narrative device of chronicling history. The second part of this chapter, focusing on South Korea’s modernization period, compares the dual narratives of Seoul’s rapid modernization period as depicted in the writings of labor rights activist Chun Tae-il and in three books attributed to Park Chung-hee, the second South Korean president and military dictator. The combination of their perspectives of this period offers contrasting and, at times, parallel reflections on the difficulties and desperate conditions in South Korea. They also illustrate the nationalist demands for manifesting economic and societal changes and the toll that this effort would take on the South Korean people. It was during this time that the Cheonggyecheon area became the locus for labor rights struggles as the country under the Park Chung-hee regime pursued economic growth through industrialization and Seoul become urban, modern, and a place of rapid change. The chapter concludes with an examination of the representations and studies of the Cheonggyecheon before and after the reconstruction project in order to trace the evolution of the site in the modern and contemporary imaginary.

I. Significance of memory, history, and narrative in the built environment

The storytelling that thrives for a long time in the milieu of work—the rural, the maritime, and the urban—is itself an artisan form of communication, as it were. It does not aim to convey the pure essence of the thing, like information or a report. It sinks the thing into the life of the storyteller, in order to bring it out of him again. —Walter Benjamin, “The Storyteller”

In “Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*,” French historian Pierre Nora writes that “there are *lieux de mémoire*, sites of memory, because there are no longer *milieux de mémoire*, real environments of memory” (Nora, 1989). Nora establishes one of the challenging realities of examining history and its complex companion, memory, from our present position in time when physical, concrete reminders of that past may no longer exist. Philosopher Paul Ricoeur refers to “the past as history’s *absent* partner” (Ricoeur, 1984, p.5). He describes the past as enigmatic and as an abstraction, and this mysterious and intangible quality of the past complicates the construction of history and the endurance of memory. For this reason, giving life or form to history or memory involves a process of reconstruction, tracing a chronicle or a genealogy, storytelling, and perhaps interjections of imagination. The opening lines to LP Hartley’s novel *The Go-Between*—“The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there”—has become an almost clichéd description of our separation from the past, yet its hint of nostalgia combined with resignation also carries a suggestion of explanation, which can only be produced with our imaginative faculties. However, I do not reference this quote to suggest that history is a fiction but to bring attention to the necessary juggling act of fact, fiction and representation that a reconstruction of the past must entail. Thus, the project of history and memory, any encounter with the past, must first find ways to bridge the separation of time. Yet, the two modes of recalling the past, history and memory, have significant distinctions and in certain ways, are the opposite ends and means of grappling with the past.

II. History versus memory: Memory and history as collective and national consciousness

In laying out the differences between history and memory, Pierre Nora argues that “memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past” (Nora, 1989, p.8). According to Nora’s model of memory and history, the former is a dynamic and unstable recollection of the past, whereas the latter possesses constancy, yet as a representation, is no guarantee of truth. For Nora, history seems to harbor elements of fiction, and the authority behind the historical representation lies in the historian. He also gives memory attributes of a living entity, going so far as to call it “life, borne by living societies founded in its name. It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived. History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer” (Nora, 1989, p.8). However, some of these characteristics of memory seem applicable to history as well, since history is often told from multiple perspectives and in different periods of time. In *The Collective Memory*, Maurice Halbwachs’ description of history has some of the same “living” qualities that Nora applies to memory alone: “History is neither the whole nor even all that remains of the past. In addition to written history, there is a living history that perpetuates and renews itself through time and permits the recovery of many old currents that have seemingly disappeared” (Halbwachs, 1980, p.64). Halbwachs suggests that both history and memory display elements of variability and fiction that may change with each re-telling, indicating that an accurate and truthful recollection of the past is ultimately elusive.

In Nora’s further articulations on the differences between history and memory, he gives

attention to the differences in their agencies and spatial operations:

Memory is blind to all but the group it binds – which is to say...that there are as many memories as there are groups, that memory is by nature multiple and yet specific; collective, plural, and yet individual. History, on the other hand, belongs to everyone and to no one, whence its claim to universal authority. Memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects; history binds itself strictly to temporal continuities, to progressions and to relations between things. Memory is absolute, while history can only conceive the relative. (Nora, 1989, p.9)

Yet, the goal of history is to incorporate the material of memory and give order and form to its multiple manifestations so that the past can be understood and revisited by more than just those who possess memories. Thus, instead of acting as counterparts, memory and history can also be regarded as an eventual progression from the former to the latter, a phenomenon that Nora describes later in “Between memory and history”: “the passage from memory to history has required every social group to redefine its identity through the revitalization of its own history” (Nora, 1989, p.15). Here Nora touches upon the greater consequence or possibility that history and memory may have in shaping how a reflection or presentation of the past may change our perceptions of the present and possibly the future. But how does history become “revitalized”?

The problematic aspect of historical reconstruction lies in the necessary act of creating connections between events that might suggest linearity and continuity, when our knowledge of how memory operates, as well as the fragmentation of the past, resists this sense of wholeness. Additionally, Halbwachs stresses the adulterated nature of our access to the past: “...a remembrance is in very large measure a reconstruction of the past achieved with data borrowed from the present, a reconstruction prepared, furthermore, by reconstructions of earlier periods wherein past images had already been altered” (Halbwachs, 1980, p.69). Our access to the past

is only ever achievable by conditions of the present, and the continuities and linearity that we inscribe into the narrative of history requires that we make choices and deductions to link the pieces of the past together.

III. The Past as Narrative: Re-building or re-construction of memory and history in place-making

The abstract quality of time could be attributed to its fragmented nature, and in order to reconstruct the past in a legible way, the process of history involves filling in the gaps. In *The Condition of Postmodernity*, David Harvey addresses our collective desire for historical continuity in the postmodern age: “Postmodernism abandons the modernist search for inner meaning in the midst of present turmoil, and asserts a broader base for the eternal in a constructed vision of historical continuity and collective memory” (Harvey, 1990, p.83). This desire for history and the assurance of a *longue durée* view of the past and future may rise from the abrupt changes caused by the processes of modernity: “The revival of interest in basic institutions (such as the family and community), and the search for historical roots are all signs of a search for more secure moorings and longer-lasting values in a shifting world” (Harvey, 1990, p.292). Thus, our experience of time and our access to the past may lay in fragmented pieces, but the means of making meaning of the pieces is to build a narrative of history.

The act of this construction places the writer of history in a position of power, and the choices of what gets omitted and built into this narrative rests with its author. Thus, although history may seem to hold universal authority, like memory, it may carry the assertions and perspectives of a specific imaginary. William Cronon addresses some of the inherent tricky aspects of the act of constructing a narrative. He writes:

Narrative succeeds to the extent that it hides the discontinuities, ellipses, and

contradictory experiences that would undermine the intended meaning of its story. Whatever its overt purpose, it cannot avoid a covert exercise of power: it inevitably sanctions some voices while silencing others. A powerful narrative reconstructs common sense to make the contingent seem determined and the artificial seem natural. (Cronon, 1992, p.1349-1350)

Then, in addition to power, the exercise of constructing a history and forming a narrative of the past places a heavy sense of responsibility on the historian, the voice and author of history, to make sure that he produces a historical narrative worthy and truly reflective of the past that he is trying to convey. Because in addition to the reconstruction of the past, the narrative of history also posits and asserts a certain sense of ethics and values to the history that has been produced, meanings and beliefs that will connect the past to the present and the future. Particularly in environmental histories or histories of our built environment, the historian is challenged with an undertaking that may one day effect new developments or changes in the ways in which our world gets designed and built. Consequently, the historical narrative is not just a chronicle of the past, symbolic of a finite and dead period of time that no longer survives, but instead, it is possible that it will alter the present and have a determining effect on the future. Therefore, the representation of the past is also the means of assessing and judging the past, to help us make sense of what happened in the past and determine its value or detriment in relation to our present.

Cronon offers this as an assurance for the importance of historical narrative:

Like all historians, we configure the events of the past into causal sequences—stories—that order and simplify those events to give them new meanings. We do so because narrative *is* the chief literary form that tries to find meaning in an overwhelmingly crowded and disordered chronological reality. When we choose a plot to order our environmental histories, we give them a unity that neither nature nor the past possesses so clearly. In so doing, we move well beyond nature into the intensely human realm of value. (Cronon, 1992, p.1349)

He further articulates the beneficial consequences of constructing a historical narrative:

When a narrator honestly makes an audience care about what happens in a story, the story expresses the ties between past and present in a way that lends deeper meaning to both. This process, like everything else in history, is open to criticism, since the rhetorical devices for making an audience care can become all too manipulative and sentimental. At its best, however, historical storytelling helps keep us morally engaged with the world by showing us how to care about it and its origins in ways we had not done before. (Cronon, 1992, p.1375)

In addition to narrative, as suggested by Nora's concept of *lieux de mémoire*, the ways in which we connect our present with the past often needs grounding in a spatial framework.

IV. Spatializing the Past: Combining history and narrative in the design of built environments

*We preserve present signals of the past or control the present to satisfy our images of the future. Our images of past and future are present images, continuously re-created. The heart of our sense of time is the sense of the "now". The spatial environment can strengthen and humanize this present image of time... –Kevin Lynch, *What time is this place?**

The means by which we build this connection from present to past often takes on a spatial dimension, for it is one means of grounding the hazy quality of the past. Halbwachs describes the operations of collective memory and how an ephemeral past figures in this particular form of recollection: “every collective memory unfolds within a spatial framework. Now space is a reality that endures: since our impressions rush by, one after another, and leave nothing behind in the mind, we can understand how we recapture the past only by understanding how it is, in effect, preserved by our physical surroundings” (Halbwachs, 1980, p.140). Pierre Nora similarly notes that “memory attaches itself to sites, whereas history attaches itself to events” (Nora, 1989, p.22). Thus, in the reconstruction of the past, the *lieux de mémoire* have both spatial and temporal components, and it represents an image or present-day version of the past.

In critiquing both the framework of representation and the act of creating a representation, David Harvey extends the definition of space from “physical surroundings” to the

actual form of recreation and warns of its inherent negative repercussions: “Any system of representation, in fact, is a spatialization of sorts which automatically freezes the flow of experience and in so doing distorts what it strives to represent.” (Harvey, 1990, p.206). He specifically addresses the issue of architecture in relation to time, citing the work of philosopher Karsten Harries: “Architecture, he [Harries] maintains, is not only about domesticating space, wresting and shaping a livable place from space. It is also a deep defence against ‘the terror of time.’... “To create a beautiful object ‘is to link time and eternity’ in such a way as to redeem us from time’s tyranny” (Harvey, 1990, p.206). However, Harvey questions the adequacy of such representations: “...how can spatializations in general, and aesthetic practices in particular, represent flux and change, particularly if these latter are held essential truths to be conveyed?” ((Harvey, 1990, p.206). In his critique of postmodernism in architecture and urban design, he makes the pointed remark that “Postmodernism cultivates, instead, a conception of the urban fabric as necessarily fragmented, a ‘palimpsest’ of past forms superimposed upon each other, and a ‘collage’ of current uses, many of which may be ephemeral” (Harvey, 1990, p.66). This is one of the enduring critiques of not just postmodernism, though its proclivity for pastiche and eclecticism makes it an obvious target, but of urban design and architecture in general. How can the temporal be adequately reflected in the built environment, with its intrinsic sense of the static and permanent? And how can the built environment overcome the fragmentation of the urban landscape that automatically results from the fragmented ways in which the building process operates? For Harvey, in the postmodernist city, the palimpsest reflects the jarring juxtaposition of spatial forms that may have no temporal or meaningful connection to each other, instead of a true conveyance of historical succession in the built environment. The palimpsest, when referring to the built environment, has a similar connotation as the original use of the term applied to

written documents, in that it refers to the past uses or the history of a building or space. Despite the passage of time and possible alterations to the original form or use, the older iterations of the space remain, as traces of its earlier incarnation and evidence of its history.

In *Present Pasts*, Andreas Huyssen conveys a less problematic perspective of the palimpsest in application to memorial sites (here not just *lieux de mémoire* for certain groups, but for the collective memory of the city or nation and much more linked to history than memory):

Once embodied in memorial sites as active parts within an urban fabric, remembrance of traumatic events seems less susceptible to the vagaries of memory. Memory thus has a chance to inscribe itself into history, to be codified into national consciousness. Cities, after all, are palimpsests of history, incarnations of time in stone, sites of memory extending both in time and space. (Huyssen, 2003, p.101)

Perhaps due to the book's focus on trauma in the urban landscape, the palimpsest here is imbued with a more stabilizing effect, suggesting possibilities of healing after events that either cannot or must not be forgotten. While certainly a site such as the empty void pools of the 9/11 memorial would qualify as an example of a palimpsest that marks a space that simultaneously evokes trauma and healing, not all palimpsests carry the burden of shocking violence and trauma, though on closer inspection, they may reveal an undercurrent of related connotations.

The restored Cheonggyecheon stream in Seoul, South Korea has properties of both a *lieu de mémoire* as well as a re-envisioned marker of the palimpsest of ancient Seoul.



Fig. 21: Cheonggyecheon Before and After Restoration ⁵

Seoul's original Cheonggyecheon stream is the site of the restored stream and linear park, but in the intervening years since the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910), the stream had been covered over and turned into a road, and eventually, during the rapid modernization period in the 1960s, a highway ramp was built over the site (Rowe, 2011). However, the idea to restore the stream rose out of the problem of how to solve the aging infrastructure of the highway ramp and mitigate the increasing traffic and pollution problems of the city. The completion of the project was promoted with allusions to Korea's ancient past and the stream as a recovery of Seoul's natural history. This project has a complicated relation to history, however, not only due to the technology required to supply the water flowing in the stream. By removing the vestiges of the modern incarnations of the Cheonggye road and highway ramp, it has essentially erased history while at the same time, rebuilding an older history. In this sense, the Cheonggyecheon may have always represented the site of the stream that had lain buried under the city for most of the 20th century, a true *lieu de mémoire*, and the restoration has situated the site as both *lieu de mémoire*, in a

⁵ Image from KCET.com. Retrieved from <http://www.kcet.org/social/departures/columns/la-river/from-freeways-to-waterways-what-los-angeles-can-learn-from-seoul.html>

newly designed form, and as a palimpsest.

But the memory and history presented at the restoration is selective in other ways. One specific area of the Cheonggyecheon restoration makes a reference to the ancient Cheonggyecheon stream's use as a communal gathering place for doing laundry (Fig. 22). One of the literary works that have been cited by the project planners and designers as one of the inspirations for the design of the Cheonggyecheon is a collection of short stories by Park Tae-won, called *Scenes from Chonggye Stream*. Originally published in 1938 in Korean, the book, and all of Park's works, was banned in South Korea until the 1980s because Park moved to North Korea before the Korean War and was considered North Korean. The book was published in English in 2011. One of the stories in the collection is called "Women Washing by the Stream," and it begins with women doing laundry by the Cheonggyecheon. The recreation of this past function presents a visual reminder of the past, grounding the space as a *lieu de mémoire*; however, it is highly unlikely that anyone would be allowed to use the space to wash their clothes today. It has transformed an old, communal activity borne out of necessity into an aesthetic homage to a nostalgic representation of the past. The short story evokes a more realistic impression of the stream and the characters' treatment and relationship with it: as the women wash their clothes, another character tosses a bottle into the stream, illustrating how the stream became polluted.



Fig. 22: Cheonggyecheon laundry site

In discussing the selective exercise in representing the past in the built environment, Kevin Lynch makes the argument for our contemporary privilege for editorial control in order to create the most meaningful linkages between past and present:

Man, Nietzsche said, must have the strength to break up the past... new environments are often sought as escapes from servitude to the past, even if the freedom found thereby is sometimes less complete than it promised to be, and even if many valuable memories are lost in the severing. We prefer to select and create our past and to make it part of the living present. (Lynch, 1972, p.36-7)

In the creation of built environments, the past and present often interact together, as living and changing spaces that reflect both history and the values of the designers and developers, as well as the inhabitants, of the space.

In another example of both palimpsest and *lieu de mémoire*, in the urban setting of Japan, we see the layered operations of history in the building of the elevated expressway system that covers significant historical sites, such as the Nihonbashi Bridge and river, illustrating the accumulated phases of the building history of Tokyo from the Edo period to the modernization period (Fig. 23).



Fig. 23: Nihonbashi, Tokyo, Japan ⁶

Yet, because the spatial markers of time, the river, bridge and expressway ramp, all exist simultaneously, we experience multiple levels of the past and see the historical progression of changes to the built environment, expressing the dynamic qualities of time and transformation from one iteration of the space to another. Conversely, sites like Nihonbashi also express a loss of the traditional culture and history that was erased by the processes of urbanization and modernity. In *The Making of Urban Japan*, André Sorensen expresses the sorrow of that loss: “Even the noble Nihonbashi, traditional centre of Tokyo and the point from which all distance markers in the nation are measured was sacrificed to the needs of expressway construction and now sits in the shadow of the giant steel structure overhead” (Sorensen, 2002, p.193). However, this loss is tempered by the creation of a new perspective of the city from the expressways, which could only have been made possible with the technological advances of modernity.

As a final example of a *lieu de mémoire*, Marilyn Ivy’s discussions of the significance of the hometown, or *furusato*, in Japanese culture and the folk village culture of the town of Tono in Iwate Prefecture, Japan present intriguing manifestations of encountering the past (Ivy, 1995). Perhaps the significance of the hometown is specific to Asia, since Koreans similarly

⁶ Image retrieved June 23, 2017 from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nihonbashi_1114.jpg#file

attach lasting importance of their hometowns to their identities, indicating which provincial region they originate from and sometimes even their clan associations. Similarly, Koreans have also preserved or rebuilt historical sites, such as their palaces and the city of Kyungju, the site of the ancient capital of the Silla dynasty (Pai, 2013). According to Ivy, as a result of modernization and urbanization and the accompanying separation from the hometown, a substitute hometown culture has been created in Japan. She writes that “Through the loss of urban Japan's rural roots (a loss that has led to *furusato* literature and poetry since the Meiji period), however, the ideal of native place has expanded to become a more capacious metaphor, one both multiple and generic. And thus there is now a proliferation of national, generalized *furusato*, of what Kamishima calls substitute homelands (*daiyo furusato*)” (Ivy, 1995). Similarly, the town of “Tono is the self-proclaimed folktale and folklore *furusato*” (Ivy, 1995). Therefore, both Tono and the substitute hometowns have attributes of *lieux de mémoire* but simultaneously, it is a recreation of the past, thereby complicating both the space of history and memory. This collective yearning for a connection to the rural and the hometown and the resulting manufactured, idealized hometowns express the seductive appeal of the past and how imagination and creativity recreate what has been completely lost. The loss of *furusato*, which provoked and inspired the proliferation of maintaining the acts, spaces, and narratives that collectively recall the idea of an origin or home, is an inherent condition of modern life, so as Asian cities become increasingly more modern, the ideas may remain in a collective sense of nostalgia, but the actual concrete manifestations of this longing carries elements of fantasy, idealization, and requires a rewriting and reinterpretation of the past, or of the models upon which the nostalgic wishes of the past are re-inscribed. The construction of these memory sites offers the same connection to the past that we look for and find in spaces like museums. But as active sites of memory, they allow visitors to experience and

live the past, at least temporarily, fulfilling a desire for connection with the past in their present. Yet, the fictional quality of these spaces makes them difficult to characterize as authentic links to the past, as David Harvey expresses:

It is difficult, however, to maintain any sense of historical continuity in the face of all the flux and ephemerality of flexible accumulation. The irony is that tradition is now often preserved by being commodified and marketed as such. The search for roots ends up at worst being produced and marketed as an image, as a simulacrum or pastiche (imitation communities constructed to evoke images of some folksy past, the fabric of traditional working-class communities being taken over by an urban gentry). (Harvey, 1990, p.303)

In contrast to Harvey's critique, Andreas Huyssen proposes a more magnanimous view:

After the waning of modernist fantasies about *creatio ex nihilo* and of the desire for the purity of new beginnings, we have come to read cities and buildings as palimpsests of space, monuments as transformable and transitory, and sculpture as subject to the vicissitudes of time. Of course, the majority of buildings are not palimpsests at all. As Freud once remarked, the same space cannot possibly have two different contents. But an urban imaginary in its temporal reach may well put different things in one place: memories of what there was before, imagined alternatives to what there is. The strong marks of present space merge in the imaginary with traces of the past, erasures, losses, and heterotopias. (Huyssen, 2003, p.7)

Huyssen accepts discontinuities of time in the built environment, indicative of the multiplicity of pasts, presents and spaces of imagination that mark our postmodern world. And ultimately, this may be the only stable condition of the historical narrative in the built environment, that it has multiple viewpoints, often in conflict, and they are bound to change and have further added layers of meaning attached to them, illustrating the ongoing process of history itself.

Huyssen's reference to the heterotopia warrants explanation in light of its connection to both the imaginary and temporality. Philosopher Michel Foucault defines heterotopias as

“counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places” (Foucault, 1986, based on a 1967 lecture). He traces several different principles of heterotopias, most notably in application to this research that “the heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible” (Foucault, 1986). He cites the garden as one of these spaces, where areas of different meanings and functions come together. Additionally, the heterotopia that is linked to time, such as a museum where time is accumulated with the storage of artifacts from other places and times, is contrasted with spaces of fleeting or ephemeral time, as in a festival or fair. As a landscape project and public open space, the Cheonggyecheon represents a heterotopia in many ways, in its contrasting juxtaposition with the rest of the urban landscape and in its representation and evocation of historical traces. In effect, it is a place that at times can serve as a changeable display of history yet remain a timeless space. The next section examines the modernization of Seoul in order to present a deeper investigation of the erased history of the Cheonggyecheon.

V. South Korea’s modernization

After Park Chung Hee came to power after he and members of the military staged a coup d’état in 1961, the focus on Korea’s future turned to economic development as a means of modernizing the country. The growth of Korea’s economy, initially based in light industry, came to be reflected in the Cheonggyecheon area: “From the time the stream was covered up, machine tool shops; electronics and appliance outlets, including those operating at Sewoon Market; retail and wholesale clothing businesses, forerunners of the shops that now form the Dongdaemun and

Pyeonghwa Markets; and the antique and secondhand stores of Hwanghakdong have been the foundation of the Cheonggyecheon market area” (Kim and Choi, 2003). The rapid transformation of the area from an ad-hoc shantytown surrounding a polluted wastewater stream to a bustling, thriving market area illustrates the growth of the Korean economy and its reflection in the urban landscape. While the early years of Korean independence were marked by poverty and economic dependence on foreign (mostly American and Japanese) aid (Woo, 1991), the period of rapid industrialization and modernization can also be seen in the process of erasure and rebuilding the city center in Seoul’s post- liberation built environment: “The urban project to construct a new Seoul, led by the appointed mayor of Seoul, Kim Hyön-ok (1966-1971), nicknamed ‘bulldozer,’ cleared up shanty houses built along the river banks and covered the river with the elevated highway. It turned the area into a symbol of the ‘modernization of fatherland.’ On top of this, a thirty-one storey building, the highest structure at the time, was built in 1970 to mark the entrance to the express highway” (Kal, 2011). The Cheonggyecheon highway overpass exemplified the national efforts of industrial development and progress, reflected in the city’s rapid transformation through its building projects. Much as with any urban renewal project all over the world, the transformation of the built environment involves a process of destruction and rebuilding, a testament to the vision and determination of those who have the power to effect such a violent change in the landscape—in the case of Seoul during this period, led by an appropriately nicknamed mayor for the age of urban renewal. Subsequently, there have been other mayors in South Korea with the same “bulldozer” nickname, notably Lee Myung Bak (Lee, 2011).

This period was marked a turning point in South Korean history, the country rising out of the depths of stagnation, oppression, war and poverty, to a rapidly developing nation that was

now capable of building new infrastructure and modern architecture. As if the highway ramp were not strong enough of a symbol of this change, the new high-rise appears as a functional billboard to draw attention to the burgeoning modern landscape. The aim of growing the economy, as reflected in the new structures in the city, also promoted a new sense of national spirit to match this ambition for growth:

The spectacles of the express highway, the high rise building, and the mega-complex represented the ideas of national productivity, progress and industrialization. These signs of development were promoted as the product of collective national subjects called ‘producers’ (*ilgun*) who worked hard for the national goal of modernization under the guidance of the central system. Throughout the era of rapid growth the state disciplined people to value hard work and frugality as a morality as well as a loyalty to the nation (Kal, 2011).

These values of hard work, frugality, and loyalty to the nation are evocative of Park Chung Hee’s rhetoric in *Our Nation’s Path*, suggesting that his words had steeped the Korean national psyche for much of the latter half of the 20th century. Parallel to the changes in the built environment of Seoul, in the rhetoric of Park Chung Hee’s political discourse, this process of effecting a lasting change in the process of nation building had a similar objective of destroying the past in order to build a better future.

The development and transition of Seoul from agrarian beginnings to a hyper urban space of regional proportion and scale has in recent years focused on issues of sustainability and ways to improve public amenities and increase measures of livability and quality of life (Rowe, 2011). Like other cities in Asia, as well as cities in the West, this paradigm shift is a result of global problems of environmental degradation, not to mention the toll that the processes of urbanization and modernization have taken on human health and well-being. As South Korea pursued rapid modernization in the 1960s and 70s, president Park Chung Hee also urged a transformation of

the people from fragmented, family, and clan-oriented people into a unified body of nation-oriented subjects who would work and sacrifice for the economic growth of the country (Park, 1962, 1970, 1971). Park's writings illustrate the significance of the social transformation of the people that his modernization project entailed as well as the fact that the nation's rapid developmental growth plans depended on the mobilization of the people to turn into workers and producers for the growth of the nation. This rhetoric of extolling the value of sacrifice for the growth of the nation affected not only the people but also the land and the cultural heritage that had imbued meaning into the original founding of the city during the Chosŏn dynasty. The South Korean project of regaining and reconstructing the stream that they lost in the rapid development years of the last century, touch upon issues of origins of the geography of the city of Seoul and the country, as well as the spiritual and psychic links to nature that were no longer available to them in the modern, urban landscape.

In the age of globalization, the attention to environmental sustainability issues is global and phenomenon in civic and private building projects, but in the Cheonggyecheon restoration, the almost universal use of buzzwords such as green design, resilience, and sustainability manages to bridge the past with the future. Hong Kal describes the use of historical discourse in the restoration project:

The mission to make Seoul a competitive global city employed the discourse of national history. The urban redevelopment project in turn became a restoration of national heritage associated with the stream site. The Cheonggye stream project was fundamentally aimed at reconstructing a sense of collective identity. By evoking a nostalgic idea of the glorious history lost in the buried stream, it lumps together cultural and historical elements and invents tradition for the site, the city and the nation (Kal, 2011).

The evocation of history in the project, the visual cues, as well as the rhetoric used to promote the project combine to form a synchronous sense of the past moving into the future, with a present that is different from all the previous upheavals and renewals of the past. Hong Kal's article quotes Lee Myung-bak's perceptions of the changing tide of history, specifically in the changes in values from Korea's modernization period in the 1960s to the current move towards a renewed future: "In my twenties, I endured the developmentalism symbolized by the paved Cheonggye stream. Believing 'I can make it,' I achieved a miracle of success. For years, however, I remained a producer (*ilgun*) in the shadow of development. However, now that I have become myself, a man of nature, I have discovered the possibility of getting rid of the shadow [of the earlier developmentalism]." Although Lee does not disavow the significance nor successful strides that South Korea achieved during the modernization phase, he calls for a change in collective values, not only because the times have changed and aggressive industrialization and continued growth of the urban landscape are no longer tenable ways to run a city or country. He then alludes to an inner transformation of his own values, into becoming a "man of nature", perhaps even more authentically himself. The cause of this change is not explicitly stated, but having achieved his "miracle of success," like that of his country, he implies that the completion of the drive to succeed has allowed other concerns to emerge. Lee suggests his newly realized interior life as the impetus for wanting to restore the stream and rebuild the country with a different set of values from the recent past. Yet, Kal points out the same tactic of jumping away from the recent past to a newfound future and going back to an older past as a referent includes an erasure or obfuscation of some of the more complex and difficult issues of recent historical memories.

Kal writes that “the evocation of a nostalgic memory of the stream as a site of people’s daily lives reflect the conscious efforts behind the restoration project to create a distance from the earlier discourse of modernization which called up citizens as self-sacrificing subjects working productively for national development.” The reconstruction of the stream has created a physical distance from the modernization period, but that sense of distance is made more starkly through the erasure of the existing structures that were destroyed and the removal of the businesses that had to be displaced in order to make room for the new, essentially a clearing out of the old. More troubling is the erasure of modern, non-traditional historical sites, and its associated collective memory, of worker struggles in the Cheonggyecheon market areas. Although a statue of labor activist Chun Tae-il stands in the area near the market site, it offers little information of the history of workers’ struggles. Thus while some history is purposely evoked for the pleasures and ambitions for the future, elements of historical strife and oppression are left to fade along with the erased parts of the older image of the city, replaced by modern, pristine riparian landscape with a controlled stream flowing at its center.

VI. Two narratives of modern South Korea

The historical narrative of South Korea as a modern nation during the turbulent years after independence from Japanese colonialism reached a turning point during the rapid modernization period led by Park Chung-hee. The rapid growth of manufacturing and industry beginning in the 1960s and 1970s helped lift South Korea’s economy out of decades of poverty and struggle. However, this rapid growth had a heavy toll on both South Korea’s people and its environment. In her article “Authoritarian environmentalism under democracy,” Heejin Han underscores the social and political reality of a nationalist agenda for rapid economic growth and explains the environmental damage wrought by the rise of South Korea’s heavy industrial

manufacturing:

For much of its economic and political development history, authoritarian governments under military dictatorship promoted rapid industrialization as their hegemonic projects. This economic drive, engineered often under nationalistic and anti-communist mottos, helped the authoritarian leaders legitimize their non-democratic control. However, Korea's meteoric economic rise, called the 'Miracle of Han River', relied heavily on the consumption of fossil fuel energy, polluting Korea's air and water. Various large-scale infrastructure development projects undertaken by the state to lay the foundation for rapid industrialization further transformed the country's environmental landscape, straining its ecosystem and biodiversity. (Han, 2015)

Two historical narratives represent the conflicting and at times complementary depiction and perspective of the time period, one attributed to military dictator and President Park Chung-hee, who would lead South Korea's rapid growth project and the other, the collected writings of martyred labor activist Chun Tae-il, as told by his biographer Cho Young-rae in *A Single Spark*. Together, they reflect the hardships and obstacles for changing South Korean society and economy and their desperation to fulfill their goals in the face of political, societal, and economic adversity. Chun Tae-il's narrative gives voice to the human toll of these history-changing efforts.

"If both are equally human why must the poor person be a slave to the rich person? Why must the untainted, the purest of the young be the soil of the tainted rich? Is it the reality of society? The law of the rich and the poor?" (Cho, 2003) *-Chun Tae-il*

"But, I ponder, is there no way for national regeneration? Is there no way to mend our decayed national character and build a sound and democratic welfare state?.... and make a new start as industrious workers, carry our social reform, and build a country without paupers, a country of prosperity and affluence?" (Park, 1970) *-Park Chung Hee*

The writings attributed to South Korean president and military dictator Park Chung Hee and labor activist Chun Tae-il serve as remarkable testaments to the tumultuous times in which

they lived and illustrate the grand scale of the social, economic, and political changes they wished to help manifest in South Korea. For two historical figures whose destinies would lead them in almost opposite ends of the social and power spectrum, they share several similarities in the tone of their writings and of the goals that each of them aspired to achieve. Their writings offer parallel expressions of their respective desire to transform the restrictive social and economic conditions to which they felt trapped and that they hoped to build into a more just and equitable society, yet at the same time, they both address the challenges that their goals would entail, and the sacrifices that they had already experienced and were prepared to endure. The tragedy of their respective deaths-- Park was assassinated by Kim Jae-Kyu, his own security chief and head of the Korea Central Intelligence Agency and Chun died by self-immolation in protest against the poor working conditions in the textile factories and markets-- suggests that the reality of total social, economic, and political transformation would result in a complex mixture of sacrifice, violence, and success and failure that their writings seem to anticipate or foreshadow. Ultimately, the combined effect of their writings highlights the burdens of the historical legacy that they tried to transform. However, at other times, their efforts to find ways of conforming to the status quo illustrate their respect for and deep abiding nationalism and allegiance to their country in spite of their struggles and desire for change, and in this sense, their writings provide parallel insights into the personal imaginaries of the two writers during a pivotal period of social, political, and economic upheaval and development into a modern nation.

Struggle against society's restrictive historical structure

"Our historical legacies, I reflect, are too heavy on our shoulders and only seem to impede our progress."

-Park, *Our Nation's Path*

Much of Park Chung Hee's writings, notably in *Our Nation's Path*, reflect the frustration that Park feels towards the historical legacy of Korea's social and political structure that had not

only impeded the progress of the people and nation but in particular, oppressed the masses in order to maintain the power and social hierarchy of the ancient monarchy. He writes:

Ours is only one among the many peoples of the world which have never tasted real freedom in their history. During the five centuries of the Yi Dynasty, our social relations were strictly those between ruler and ruled. The ruler, because he was absolute, did not have the concept of freedom; and the ruled could not enjoy freedom because only abject servitude and obedience were permitted. The ruler was the captive of power consciousness, and the ruled lived in their own shrunken concerns. There never were human relations as such in any former age, or society. (Park, 1970, p.28)

The frustration, passion, and at times seeming resignation that *Our Nation's Path* expresses towards the enduring cultural legacy of the oppressiveness of the Yi Dynasty and the absolute power of the king give the book the quality of a rallying manifesto against the past, suggestive of a determined promise to pursue the realization of a new future where all people will be able to live with equality and freedom. An interesting note is Park's assertion that even the king himself was restricted to the burdens of his position, suggesting that the power structure itself was what truly limited individual freedoms of both the powerful and powerless. The writings of Chun Tae-il on the oppressive working conditions of the textile factories where the workers were mistreated evoke a more passionate evocation of disgust towards a similarly unjust and inequitable relationship between the workers and the employers:

I hate this era where people have become commodities, where a person's individuality and basic aspirations are scorned, where the branches of hope are lopped off; I hate a humanity that chooses to degrade itself into a commodity in return for existence. (Cho, quoting Chun Tae-il, 2003, p.140)

Chun's, and also his biographer Cho Young-rae's, descriptions of the inhumane harsh conditions of the social structure of the modern world of manufacturing has the additional dehumanizing quality of regarding the workers as part of a machine of production, whereas the people of the Yi

Dynasty in Park's description conveys only their obligation for obedience. At the same time, neither of the oppressed groups of people, the masses during the Yi Dynasty nor the workers in the Peace Market textile factories, was allowed the freedom to have a sense of individual subjectivity. Both Park's and Chun's indictments of the unfairness of the social hierarchies of their respective critiques reflect their aspiration for equality and social welfare:

The world as I see it and my workplace as I see it are definitely anti-human and harm the very essence of the human being. It is not right that one human being treats another human being in an inhumane manner. Even though they are employees and employers they are not different, because they are both human beings of equal value. (Cho, quoting Chun, 2003, p.227)

Similarly, Park's introduction to the legacy of the past is indicative of his argument that Koreans have historically suffered under an unfair and unequal social structure:

The realities faced by our people today are by no means easy or comfortable. Our present circumstances and environment bestow not so much happiness as misfortune, not so much prosperity as penury. It is so both internally and externally. Internally, the ceaseless maladministration and corruption on the part of our former rulers, combined with the ignorance and indifference of the general populace, have aggravated the misfortune of the people...(Park, 1970, p.1)

Despite the long-established lack of social welfare and equity that the Korean people suffered, the harshness of the working condition of the textile factories has a more urgent and concrete reality than the somewhat abstract suffering of the Korean people as evoked in Park's historical critique. Cho Young-rae's description of the physical challenges of working in the textile factory reflects the loss of sense of self that the grueling work entailed:

Deprived of the chance to mobilise their healthy muscles, the surging blood of their youth, their dreams, hopes, desires, emotions, philosophy and youthful vigour, they were turned into mechanised puppets. For "I" did not exist in their everyday life. It was not "I" who slept, ate and went to work. The true "I" had disappeared: only the husk of the body remained, and it was dragged about and controlled by an unknowable something. It was only when "I" was about to finish

the day's work that "I myself dimly revived. Without any conscious will Tae-il worked instinctively to keep his life, like a machine in a frame created by the strong: "where the branches of hope are lopped off. (Cho, 2003, p.148)

The loss of individual self that is expressed here includes not only the existential self of the human psyche but also painfully, the progressively debilitating corporeal self which is turned instead into a "mechanised puppet." In the modern, manufacturing world of the textile factories, the powerlessness of the workers is expressed with greater emphasis on the new process of labor and production, which takes on the centrality that the power of the monarchy had held during the Confucian order of the Yi Dynasty. Like the social hierarchy of the Yi Dynasty that limited and determined the people's lives and futures, the production system of manufacturing and commerce in the modern, industrial world held similarly restrictive roles for each worker, whether they were helpers, cutters, or machinists, in order to maintain the production of goods. Ultimately, Park and Chun urge a transformation and end to the oppressive assault of these social conditions.

Call for a new future with social and economic equality

"The essence of life is the struggle to make tomorrow better than today."

- Chun Tae-il (Cho, quoting Chun, 2003, p.235)

The shared aspiration of transforming society and the social order that oppressed those lacking power and resulted in their unjust continuous suffering fueled the respective goals of Park Chung Hee and Chun Tae-il. Although the former had already become the South Korean leader after successfully staging a military coup, would later get elected president, and then finally transition to the authoritarian Yushin regime, Park's writings express a similar sense of desperation and urgency as Chun Tae-il's. He writes that in the early days of South Korea's independence, the Korean people stand on the precipice of success or failure:

A difficult choice awaits us—whether to use this opportunity to our best advantage or to be dragged back into the maelstrom of national catastrophe. On the one hand there is reconstruction, and on the other, ruin. To make the right choice at this point is the most crucial test of our national destiny. (Park, 1970, p.x)

This sense of urgency is evocative of the tumultuous currents of the time period as South Korea was still newly independent and the trauma of the Korean War was still in the recent past. Yet, despite the fatalistic language that Park uses, there is still a kind of optimism and determination for the future, as Park was speaking from a position of power. Despite his use of rhetoric reiterating his humble background and his shared experiences of suffering, struggle, and poverty with the rest of the Korean people, he had achieved the highest seat of power in South Korea and needed to rally public support for his economic growth campaign that he hoped would transform life in South Korea and lift the country (and by extension, its people) out of the mire of poverty and dependence on foreign aid. Therefore, while his writing may reflect a sense of desperation, the final goal is to effect a national transformation and provoke his readers to believe that this is possible and that South Korea will overcome its present challenges as well as the burdens of the past to reach a new, improved future:

The people's hope will be raised by devoting all our energy to the reconstruction of an independent national economy and by solving the general living difficulties of the people now wandering on the borderline of starvation! (Park, *The Country, the Revolution and I*, 1970, p.60)

The promise of this brighter future acts as a fuel to the collective desires of the Korean people that whatever hardships they may have faced in the past or are facing in the present will ultimately lead to a better life.

Chun would not live to see the realization of his goals, but despite his humble background and high-level skill as a cutter in the Peace Market, a role that might have allowed

him to align with the owners rather than the lower-ranked workers, he would dedicate his short life to helping to improve the working conditions of the textile workers, often at the expense of his own time and against the orders of his employer. The urgency of Chun's work reflects not only the multiple efforts he made to instigate change in the textile factories that resulted in failure but also his deep abiding belief that the exploitation of the workers by the shop owners was a violation of both civic and spiritual laws:

The employers spend 200 won for a single meal, whereas they give the factory workers 50 won for three meals. This is a thoroughly inhumane act. Even if they are young and uneducated, they are still human beings. They are creations of God who know how to think, how to laugh when they see something funny, how to enjoy good things when given the opportunity. If both are equally human why must the poor be slaves to the rich? Why have the poor no right to observe the Sabbath that God has decreed? Religion states that all are equal. The Law states the same. (Cho, quoting Chun, 2003, p.229-230)

His writings reflect his growing frustration and lack of success in making any viable change, and he expresses his desperation by alluding to his religious faith. He suggests that the inequity of labor practices contradict labor laws that he seems to uphold as inviolable as his faith, but his writings express a growing sense of hopelessness. He paints the opposition as a succession of obstacles that he has little hope of truly challenging and overcoming:

Does that mean I have to fight not only with the employers but also with the Labour Inspectors, the Ministry of Labour, or something even bigger? Given this situation how can I possibly hope that the Labour Standards Law will be enforced? How can I possibly fight and win if everyone is against me? Just how thick is the wall of this evil reality? How far does it extend? (Cho, quoting Chun, 2003, p.195-6)

Despite his growing fear in the extent of obstacles that he must break through, within this systemic structure of oppression of the workers, and the possibility of the inevitability of failure, Chun presses forward and finally succumbs to his final solution for effecting change.

Sacrifices, historical legacies, and nationalism

“This is a task I have to do. Regardless of whether or not I can succeed, I will do it to the extent that I am able.”
-Chun Tae-il (Cho, 2003, p.157)

For Chun Tae-il, the goal of improving working conditions in the textile factories became the primary focus of his life, and his writings reflect both unflagging determination coupled with a foreboding sense of doom, suggestive of his decision to end his life in a shocking, unforgettable method to garner attention in support of his cause. Before his writing took on the later extreme and chilling tone of resignation, Chun describes the idea of sacrifice in a more matter-of-fact and abstract manner that does not yet exhibit the later personal and internalized tone:

I am fully aware that what we are about to do is by no means easy. But there is nothing we cannot do when we go for it with full commitment. However, if it seems that it cannot be done, then the sacrifice of a few lives will certainly do it. If that is what we must do, that is what we will do. (Cho, quoting Chun, 2003, p.184)

Somewhat similarly, Park, at one point in the last book *To Build a Nation*, expresses his reluctance for taking on a leadership role: “I was a soldier, and I was disinclined to see soldiers get involved in politics. Nevertheless, there is a point beyond which one cannot simply be an onlooker” (Park, 1971, p.97). This reflects perhaps a suggestion that his role was thrust onto him, that he did not pursue power but instead felt compelled to take on the role in order to help build a nation, which is a sort of sacrifice. Both and Park and Chun then felt compelled by a need to help bring about changes to what they considered untenable situations. The interesting aspect

of the element of sacrifice in both Chun's and Park's writings is that they both express the inevitability or even, necessity for sacrifice in the pursuit of their goal.

Park's dedication at the start of his first book, *Our Nation's Path*, reads: "Dedicated to those who sacrificed their lives for the defense of democracy" (Park, 1970). Park's expression of distance from those who have already given their lives, presumably during the Korean War, suggests that his work is a continuation of the nation building process that had started with South Korea's liberation and subsequent war with the Communist North. In that sense, the struggle and pursuit of economic growth for which his book argues is the next step in the progressive development of South Korea's transformation. Although there is still much work to be done, Park's arguments for changes have already crossed certain larger hurdles and reached partial manifestation by the time of his book's publication. The subsequent success of his modernization and economic growth campaign serve as testament to South Korea's successful overcoming of struggles that had already been endured in the past. His comparison of his economic plans with Germany's Miracle on the Rhine also draws on the connections between overcoming hardships for a better future:

A miracle is obtained from action. The miracle on the Rhine was the product of privations. I believe such a miracle was not the product of wealth or environment, but of a united national spirit and effort. (Park, *The Country, the Revolution and I*, 1970, p.69)

Although Park and Chun were writing at similar time periods, the temporal difference between Park's and Chun's writings and visionary goals highlights the unfortunate fact of the latter as a kind of sacrifice, in and of himself and not just as an action (though it would be his act of self-immolation that would bring about his sacrifice), this time of South Korea's modern economy and the labor force that was required of the manufacturing industries. Chun Tae-il, in his

desperation to be heard amidst the oppressive forces of those in power, even writes a letter to Park Chung Hee, though he does not send it:

Our society is so cruel to these young, pure-hearted workers. I must appeal earnestly to you, Mr. President. Please protect these innocent young people before they are further harmed. Where there are protective regulations in the Labour Standards Law, why aren't these workers protected? What will happen to our society when they grow up? (Cho, quoting Chun, p.232)

The protection of the workers that he sought in this letter was the primary goal of his efforts, and one could argue that Park's plans of economic growth and providing social welfare were also done with the goal of providing protection for the people. Unfortunately for the abused workers, this nationalist project entailed that the people not only make sacrifices but actually sacrificed some of the people. The sacrifices that Park and Chun describe vary in form and scale. Park's idea of sacrifice may have been the struggles of the past and mobilizing the people to work hard to help the nation's economy grow. Yet, for the workers, of which Chun was one and their self-appointed advocate, the idea of sacrifice took on a personal and physical dimension that would represent the tragic, untenable side of Park's modernization project.

"...strive to build the groundwork of a Koreanized form of welfare democracy. A nationwide movement must be begun to train the people in the sound ethics required by democratic citizens."
-Park, *Our Nation's Path* (Park, 1970, p.ix)

The long-range goal of Park Chung Hee's economic growth plans and the creation of a developmental state was the future provision of social welfare, but in order to provide this, the first priority of Park's government was concentrated on economic growth. The experiences of labor activists like Chun Tae-il and the workers he wanted to protect and represented provide the stark contrast to the utopian vision of a future South Korea with a strong economy. Although much of *Our Nation's Path* focuses on the need for the Korean people to transform themselves

into industrious workers, this idea of “train[ing] the people in the sound ethics required by democratic citizens” alludes to another kind of transformation of the people, in order to turn them into a unified community who would care for each other as they would the nation. Chun Tae-il cared for his fellow workers in much the way that Park expressed his hopes for all Korean citizens to transform themselves. But, during the burgeoning years of the economic advancements that South Korea would later reach, it seems that the characteristics that would make Chun an ideal citizen for the future, were what led to his final sacrifice and proved incapable of breaking through the oppressive forces of the modern economic machine that would destroy him. Park himself would also become a victim of other turbulent forces surrounding the later years of his rule, but he maintains an optimistic view towards the future, as well as the past: “... the accomplishments of Korea in the last decade are firmly grounded in our past, and will lead us to complete the task of rebuilding our nation...” (Park, 1971, p.16). Illustrating Park’s persistent emphasis on South Korea’s history of overcoming struggle and moving on to the next challenge, the combined effect of his books act as a declarative statement of South Korean achievement towards the lofty goals for which Park’s plans had aimed. In *The Country, the Revolution, and I*, his assessment of the strengths of his government’s Five-Year Economic Development Plan promises increasing benefits in the future:

Without the completion of this Plan, independence and the construction of a welfare society are nothing but empty mottos. Furthermore, the Five-Year Plan will bear more fruit in the second, third, fourth, and fifth years. (Park, *The Country, the Revolution and I*, 1970, p.69)

However, the existence of testimonies of activists like Chun Tae-il and his biographer Cho Young-rae serve as corollaries to this positive vision of this tumultuous period in South Korean history and reveals the real sacrifices that were made by those who were the actors and producers

of the economic revolution. Their narrative of South Korean history during this period of national economic growth and technological advances paints a portrait of a part of society that struggled and suffered in the wake of industrialization and modernization and perhaps never had a chance to reap its rewards or break out of the confines of the limits of this cruel and all-consuming system.

The next section of this chapter focuses on visual records and reconstructions of Seoul's history, focusing on the rapid growth period and how they have been incorporated into the Cheonggyecheon project. Although the writings of Park Chung-hee and Chun Tae-il both express the challenges of life in modern South Korea, they differ in that Park aims to mobilize South Koreans to rise to the national challenge of economic growth for the country while Chun laments the harsh conditions that will eventually cause him to take his life. The ways in which this difficult history is represented in the Cheonggyecheon illustrates the dilemma of retelling these parallel and divergent histories and ultimately projects what Park wanted to achieve for South Korea: a sense of endurance and overcoming its past.

VII. Vestiges of the modern Cheonggyecheon

The inclusion of the Cheonggyecheon as a part of the origin story of the founding of the capital city of Hanyang (the ancient name for the city that would become Seoul) during the Joseon Dynasty is illustrated in an ancient map (Fig. 24) that depicts the stream and its tributaries coursing through the city center in an area surrounded by mountains (Rowe, Busquets).



Fig. 24: Ancient Hanyang, image from Seoul Metropolitan Government

The stream's position at the foot of the surrounding mountains in the city, as depicted in the ancient drawing of the map, can be seen on the replica of the map displayed on the first part of the Cheonggyecheon, next to the mural depicting King Jeongjo's ceremonial procession.



Fig. 25: Replicas of “Doseongdo” map of Hanyang and mural of King Jeongjo procession

The excavated remains from the original Cheonggyecheon stream, such as parts of bridges and artifacts like parts of bas-relief pieces all date back to the Joseon era, and their restoration was a

combination of actual restoration and the construction of replicas on the site. These and other markers or signifiers of history help bring the narrative of the reconstructed site's rebirth of a buried past into concrete relief. They encompass a combination of the manifested imagery and actual rediscovered remains of the ancient history that had lain buried beneath the street's concrete cover for a half century. The narrative and historical markers of the past that are built into and displayed in the Cheonggyecheon will be explored more in depth in chapter five.

The historical narrative of the Cheonggyecheon is not limited to its depiction during the Joseon period. As a site of advanced infrastructure during the rapid growth period of the 1960s and 1970s, the site represents both the advances and detriments, the hopes and ruins of time and advancing modernization. The first and second portion of the Cheonggyecheon are located in areas of the city that are representative of modern Seoul where their industry and economy were growing. This is where the highway ramp was once the central focus of the space, at once an emblem of modernity and progressive infrastructure, built to accommodate increasing traffic into the city center. It is in the second portion where a partial statue of Chun Tae-il stands on Beodeuldari Bridge, also known as Jeon Tae-il Bridge,⁷ over the Cheonggyecheon, near the entrances of the Pyeongwha (Peace) Markets, and almost overlooked by the traffic and activity of the markets (Fig. 26).

⁷ The bridge was given the additional name Jeon Tae-il Bridge in 2012, by Mayor Park Won-soon. "Jeon Tae-il Bridge," *Seoul Selection*, 2013. Retrieved June 22, 2017 from <http://magazine.seoulselection.com/2013/05/10/jeon-tae-il-bridge/>



Fig. 26: Statue of Chun Tae-il

The statue faces the street-- the back of the statue can be seen partially from the Cheonggyecheon-- so if a visitor to the park wanted to see the statue, they would have to climb to the street level for a better view. The simultaneous removal and juxtaposition of this historical

marker to the Cheonggyecheon is indicative of the peripheral nature of how some histories of the site are addressed or muted in the reconstruction.

In addition to the writings and tragic life and death of laborer and activist Chun Tae-il, one of the most prominent works of photographic memoirs on the Cheonggyecheon's modern history is the work of Rev. Nomura Motoyuki, a Japanese missionary who photographed Seoul's rapid transformation from 1973 to 1985 (*Three Foreigners Reminiscences of Seoul*, 2009). Rev. Nomura's photographs of Seoul during this time period have been the subject of exhibitions and publications in Seoul in the years following the reconstruction of the Cheonggyecheon, offering a wider perspective of the city's past. The Seoul Museum of History held an exhibition of his work in 2007, entitled *Rev. Nomura's Photograph Diary of Cheonggyecheon* and as part of the *Three Foreigners Reminiscences of Seoul* exhibit in 2009 (Fig. 27). After donating his archive collection of photographs to the Seoul Metropolitan Government in 2006, in 2013, he published *Nomura Report*, his memoir of his time in Seoul and particularly in the Cheonggyecheon area during the 1970s and 1980s. Through these exhibits and publications, South Korea has acknowledged the value of Rev. Nomura's photographs as a historical record of these years, but they are even more remarkable for having been the work of a foreign missionary doing volunteer work, documenting the lives of people and conditions that were ignored by the rest of the city.



Fig. 27: Nomura Motoyuki photograph of the Cheonggyecheon, 1970s ⁸

Nomura's photos depict the poverty of life in the crowded shanty areas near the stream, as well as the burgeoning urbanism that was growing in other parts of the city and that would eventually reach and replace the shanties. The images reflect not only the speed of change that the city was undertaking to build and modernize but also the simultaneity of this growth with the struggles of the poor, living and working in tenuous and make-shift conditions that reflect the instability and great disparity of the times. In an article about the publication of the memoir, the Kim Tong-hyung of the *Korea Times* wrote of this tumultuous period in Seoul's development:

During this rapid and compressed course of post-war industrialization, millions of

⁸ From Seoul Museum of History exhibition book of *Rev. Nomura's Photograph Diary of Cheonggyecheon*

farmers and their children were converted to wage workers for urban factories. The nation's growth obviously depended on these workers to maintain paltry wages and gruesome working conditions and Seoul began resembling a massive laboratory experiment of inequality. A large number of low-income earners inhabiting the many slums sprouting near water sources such as Cheonggyecheon, slopes of mountains such as Mt. Bukhan, industrial belts like Guro and big markets like Namdaemun (T. Kim, 2013).

Rev. Nomura's photographs of the Cheonggyecheon depict the harshness of living and working along the stream, in the area further east than where the highway ramp stood, where the shanties were primitive yet also numerous enough to make them congested and urban, though lacking the modern utilities and infrastructure that was being built in the center of the city to match the country's economic progress. The efforts to mobilize workers as South Korea's manufacturing industries grew encompassed all age groups, whole families, as can be seen in Rev. Nomura's photographs. The images of children working in the sweatshops and cramped textile factories in the Dongdaemun market area serve as a visual supplement to Chun Tae-il's desperate and fevered testimony and pleas for workers' rights (Fig. 28).



Fig. 28: Nomura Motoyuki's photograph of workers in a Cheonggyecheon area sweatshop⁹

The area where the shanties stood is now the site of a replica of a shanty structure (Fig. 29), where it stands across the street from the modern Cheonggyecheon Museum (Fig. 30), a stark

⁹ From Seoul Museum of History exhibition book of *Rev. Nomura's Photograph Diary of Cheonggyecheon*

contrast from the simulacrum of the shanty that visitors can enter or stand from the outdoor platform where they can look down on the reconstructed stream, at its most natural third section.



Fig. 29: Replica of shanty



Fig. 30: Cheonggyecheon Museum across the street from replica of shanty structure

Like the statue of Chun Tae-il, this replica of the shanty is also placed outside the Cheonggyecheon, at the street level, so that it is at once part of the site, yet removed from the park, allowing the space below the replica to maintain its continuous promenade. Its situation across from the museum offers a transition space, from the park to the more detailed history that is documented and displayed once the visitor enters the museum, accentuating the heterotopia of the museum exhibitions by spilling into the street. In this sense, the juxtaposition of the replica with the museum provides the Cheonggyecheon visitors the opportunity to move from the natural present of the outdoor space to the historical explanations, models, and animated

vignettes of the past in the museum displays.

The modern Cheonggyecheon as a stream was the site of some of the most neglected and marginalized population in the city. In the newly constructed stream, it is in this third portion of the site that has most fully integrated the technology of the reconstruction of the stream with the natural elements of flowing water and a growing and evolving blend of flora and fauna, strengthening the ecology of the space in the decade since the project's construction. It represents what the designers and planners call "the future of Seoul," where nature and city, with the help of technological skill and stewardship by its government, have come together to produce a space that offers its people a respite away from urban life. It may seem ironic that this third portion of the Cheonggyecheon, with its concept of natural ecology, could be deemed the city's future, representing not only a city that is concerned with global virtues and concerns like the environment, sustainability, and resilience, as well as health for the city and its people, when its history was all that was considered representative of urban blight and neglect. Yet, this stark contrast from its modern past to its post-modern incarnation reiterates the advances of South Korea's economic progress made during and since those years of struggle and hardship. The Cheonggyecheon of the modern period was controlled and buried in the city center area whereas in the eastern portion of the city, the stream still flowed, though it was the center of urban squalor, disease, and deprivation.

The attention that has been paid to Rev. Nomura's photographs is in no doubt part of the resurgence of interest in the Cheonggyecheon after its reconstruction. The Seoul Museum of History exhibition of his work as part of the *Three Foreigners Reminiscences of Seoul* exhibit and the publication of Nomura's memoir took place after the completion of the

Cheonggyecheon, and while the story of Chun Tae-il was first published in English in 2003, as the Cheonggyecheon's construction was already underway, his connection to the Cheonggyecheon is also etched on the space for those visitors who are aware of this history and make the effort to visit it. Perhaps these difficult histories have not been exactly forgotten or erased with the reconstruction project, but the project's design choices reflect the tendency to only revitalize a selective past and to allow the difficult elements and reminders of the past to eventually fade away in order to make way for the new. In *How Modernity Forgets*, social anthropologist Paul Connerton writes:

The cityscape, like the screen, is saturated with images, its physical sense of space decomposed as our eyes are continuously exposed to flooding acoustic and optical impressions, overheard and glimpsed as if in constant flight, and so making it difficult for us to sustain a belief in a reality which might be either stable or permanent (Connerton, 2009, p.93).

Connerton suggests that the accumulation of memories, histories, and narratives of a city's past will eventually lead to the process of forgetting. He asks, "what is the effect of the produced spaces of contemporary culture on the transmission of cultural memory? Its effect, I want to suggest, is to generate a particular kind of cultural amnesia" (Connerton, 2009, p.99). He argues that the three characteristics of modernity that contribute to cultural amnesia are the "scale of human settlement," "the production of speed," and "the repeated intentional destruction of the built environment" (Connerton, 2009, p. 99). The Cheonggyecheon reconstruction project illustrates each of these processes, and reinforces the idea that the elements of the past that gets erased and forgotten and those that endure reflect the version of history built by those in power. The competing histories of the Cheonggyecheon, documented by Nomura Motoyuki or as described by Chun Tae-il, and presented by museum exhibitions and publications, are indicative of interest in these narratives and offer hope that their perspectives will continue to build onto the

history of the Cheonggyecheon's historical significance. At the same time, they represent the kind of modern overload of information, sensations, spectacle, and temporary interest that may eventually be forgotten with the passage of time, and with further changes to the built environment.

Although the Cheonggyecheon project's connection to the historical narrative of Seoul's origin combines elements of natural history, cultural heritage, folklore, and arguably even art and commerce-- its enduring mark on the ancient records and maps of the Joseon capital which have been replicated on posters, postcards, even scarves-- the reconstruction effort created a new landmark with its focus on the future of Seoul. Since creating newness is the role and aim of revitalization, the fact that this effort involved the erasure of the past and redesign of the project site may seem like a moot point. However, as a historical project, we see that the reconstruction's inability to adhere to a true historical restoration and the selective and limited use of historical markers captures the essence of history without letting the past weigh down the sensibilities of the visitors or the design of the space. The image of the stream in the valley, albeit no longer with its tributaries, surrounded by Seoul's mountains have come back to an urban space that continues to evolve, where tightly packed patches of buildings often dwarf or obscure the mountains in the background. The distinction of this reconstruction of a historic stream in the urban landscape is that it recalls the past while standing as an emblem of the future. It represents how far Seoul, and by extension South Korea, has progressed from the early days of the country's independence and the advanced economy, technology, and the accompanying scientific, political, and cultural aspiration that made the project possible.

When examined from a long view of history, the current iteration of the Cheonggyecheon

may represent one more step in an on-going series of transformations in Seoul's evolution. The project's depiction of the passage of time can be interpreted as a process in which the prominence of history's influence has been reconstructed for the future, in the myriad ways that this goal entails-- whether that means erasure, forgetting, and creating a new image of the past. This historical reimagining offers glimpses of the past, yet the reminders of the history of the city and specifically the Cheonggyecheon, keep the past at a distance and never allow it to become a focal point of the design and experience of the linear park. In this way, the project elevates the Cheonggyecheon as a symbol of endurance and growth, where a space of economic and cultural stagnation has given way to a green open space, stimulating commercial growth in its surroundings and the beginnings of a new image of Seoul as a city that offers urbanism intertwined with visible forms of nature. The past can then be considered what was endured and overcome, and its strongest significance is the contrast between that and the present and future.

Chapter 5 Visual Narratives: the design of the site and visual storytelling

The visual narrative of the Cheonggyecheon park is most expressive of the concept of history that frames the concept of the first section and accents areas throughout the rest of the park. The visual historical representations that were the focus of the collection of visual narratives reflect the project's fulfillment of modern Seoul's desire for historical roots, what David Harvey describes as the "a search for more secure moorings and longer-lasting values in a shifting world" (Harvey, 1990, p.292). The reconstruction of the stream and landscape also evokes temporality, but the differences in their design through the park evoke both modernity and history, an illustration of Seoul's progressive advances and an assertion of a scripted historical narrative through the project's design.

During the planning and construction phases of the reconstruction of the Cheonggyecheon, and after its completion and unveiling, the project was hailed as a return to the origins of the city's geography that had been buried and hidden by the processes of modernization (Busquets, 2011; Kal, 2011; Lee, J., 2003; Lee, M-B, 2005; Lee, S., 2006; Rowe, 2011). The narrative of the reconstructed Cheonggyecheon stream intertwines history with nature as intrinsic elements that define the identity of the space as a means of connecting the past with the present and future of Seoul (Kal, 2011). The narratives of the historic stream as a significant geographic marker of the capital city of the Joseon dynasty and as a polluted wastewater channel that was buried during the modernization period are illustrated in the design of the Cheonggyecheon through art and historic replicas and restorations of artifacts unearthed at the site during construction. Yet, the design highlights the former while diminishing the latter history with the division of the park into three sections. The first section highlights images of the Joseon Dynasty, evoking a unified cultural history that predates South Korea as a nation but translates

into nationalism by conveying a sense of unified origins and tradition (Kal, 2011). The second and third sections have a shorter temporal and smaller geographic focus and represents the site's modern history, limited to Seoul and the surrounding neighborhood. The prominence of the first section conveys the desirability for the revival and endurance of Korea's dynastic history over South Korea's modern history. The first section also serves as a backdrop or stage, the space in which the historical narrative of the city is retold and presented in different forms. The layering of historical imagery suggests that the reconstruction project serves as a constructed palimpsest, illustrating David Harvey's critique of postmodernism for its fragmentation of the urban fabric (Harvey, 1990). Fragmentation serves as a central characteristic of the Cheonggyecheon's representation of temporality and in the construction of its historical narrative.

The design of the park is divided thematically and chronologically, emphasizing the importance of the project's representation of the landscape urbanism theme of the "processes over time". The theme is represented in the design but also applies to the design-build process of its construction. The design of the Cheonggyecheon's depiction of processes over time evokes the site's permutations over its history. The project's design and construction process emphasized time in order to accelerate the project timeline, illustrating two of Connerton's critique of modernity: its "production of speed" and "the repeated intentional destruction of the built environment" (Connerton, 2009, p.99). For the city of Seoul, the rapid transformation of the Cheonggyecheon was the goal of the project. The project's demonstration of the speed of the process of change in the city's built environment suggests a continuation of the rapid growth processes of the modernization period that started under Park Chung-hee. However, the city has embraced the production and process of speed as marks of its advancement and transition to a global city.

The length of the site was divided into three parts, each approximately 2 kilometers long with its own design concept, led by distinct design and construction teams. The three separate design teams working simultaneously facilitated the fast-paced 27 month construction schedule. In effect, the Cheonggyecheon Restoration could be considered the unified work of three separate projects. The three concepts are as follows: section one – history of Seoul, or the Past; section two – modernization and culture, or the present; and section three – natural ecology, or the future (Kim, Jung, Rowe, 2010 and Interview 15). Although the concepts are connected by their focus on time, the ways in which the images or ideas of time are represented differ in each part. The contrast reflects the work of different design teams, and the sense that for each time period, the idea or image of that specific time period hold different meanings and memories. At the same time, since it is a green space and park, the stream is the central feature of the space's identity and its main benefit to its visitors and to the urban fabric. However, the riparian landscape is presented in starkly different ways along the length of the park, and its presentation sometimes coalesce with and at other times, contrast the ways in which history is presented. The consistent features of the park, the water and walking paths, provide continuity for visitors, and if they were to walk the entire length of the Cheonggyecheon, they would experience a kind of journey through time as well as space, as well as three design concepts that simultaneously blend together while having distinct qualities. In some sections of the park, the surrounding neighborhood or the adjacent streetscape often have a significant, almost expanding and encroaching connection with the park space, while in other areas, there is a sense of separation. Yet, the most prevalent and consistent aspect of the Cheonggyecheon in relation to the urban landscape is its removal from it, in that it gives the pedestrian a dedicated environment away from the urban fabric within the city, exemplifying Hertz and Burton's definition of a scripted

space as a refuge from urban life and is in a sense, a scripted fantasy.

The discussion of the visual narrative is organized by the three sections of the park, to simulate the experience of moving through the park from west to east and to focus on the separate concepts of each section. While sporting events such as a weekend skateboarding event took place in the third section in separate playing field areas, most special events took place in the first section, so a discussion of the Seoul Lantern Festival is included as additional representation of a historical narrative.

I. Section 1: History and Seoul's Past in a Modern Light

The start of the Cheonggyecheon begins with Cheonggye Plaza at the street level, and the entirety of the first section resides in Seoul's central business district (Fig. 31). The plaza was designed by the Korean-American landscape architect Mikyoung Kim while the first section of the park was designed by South Korean landscape architecture firm, SeoAhn Total Landscape. The entrance is dominated by the water that begins at the plaza and continues as the constructed headwaters of the stream. The water serves as a visual and aural counterpoint to the surrounding cacophony of the urban setting, but the design of the stream in this section emphasizes its modernist artifice. Through its highly stylized, urban form, the design presents the stream as a highly controlled and technologically advanced production, filled with highly treated water that is regularly tested by park workers. The design suggests a modern illustration of historian Peter Perdue's reading of water conservancy in ancient China: "The proper control of water and land use, in the Chinese official view, meant directing nature toward the satisfaction of human needs" (Perdue, 2010). The Cheonggyecheon extends human needs to the urban landscape and expands on the idea of these needs to include environmental amelioration, urban respite, and urban aesthetics.



Fig. 31: View from Cheonggye plaza, into the start of first section

For visitors who enter the park through the sloped ramps, the section blends the urban fabric with the submerged park and continues the hard edges of the plaza design, emphasizing the newness,

cleanliness, and modernity of the project (Fig. 32).



Fig. 32: First section with Cheonggye plaza in the distance

It is the most heavily visited area of the park, in particular on days in which the space is used for festivals or other special events since these events are only staged in the first section. For this reason, much of the publicity and attention on the Cheonggyecheon is often limited to the first

section. As a scripted space (Klein, Hertz and Burton), Cheonggye plaza provides the introduction, functioning as a proscenium stage, and the narrative continues into the Cheonggyecheon. The plaza can accommodate seats and stages or displays while the Cheonggyecheon is the space for installations and activities that visitors can then peruse or experience after watching a performance on the street level. Since it is surrounded by the central business district, during weekday lunch hours, many office workers from the nearby buildings can be found in the park, walking or eating their lunch in warmer months (Interview 1).

Possessing a heightened level of social and cultural activity, and a greater number of access points, the first section serves as the central focus of the Cheonggyecheon. It is the main entrance to the park, but through its location and the surrounding high-rise office towers, the section reflects Harvey's critique of the commercial and possibly discriminative goal of urban revitalization through the construction of aesthetic spectacles: "Imaging a city through the organization of spectacular urban spaces becomes a means to attract capital and people (of the right sort)" (Harvey, 1990, p.92). The section thus reflects the post-industrial aesthetic of modern Seoul and the professional office workers who represent the prosperity of the contemporary city.

The concept of the section is history and culture, and in certain design elements and in the spectacles staged in the space, the first section illustrates selective highlights of Korean history, emphasizing the Joseon dynasty (1392-1910) which was the last Korean dynasty before Korea's annexation by Japan. The most prominent example is the replicated image of the map of ancient Hanyang, (the ancient name of the capital city) called "Doseongdo," (Fig. 33) during the Joseon Dynasty, and the prominence of the Cheonggyecheon and its tributaries at its center, like a connective central core and its branches across the city, illustrating the natural foundations of

the capital city's geography and topography.



Fig. 33: Replica of Doseongdo at the Cheonggyecheon

The Doseongdo connects the history of the Joseon with the reconstruction of the

Cheonggyecheon project and reinforces the idea of the site as one of Seoul's "*lieux de mémoire*." The design of the section, however, offers a sharp contrast to the historical and cultural elements that are represented.

Although other parts of the Cheonggyecheon may also have a hard edge next to the promenade, the start of the Cheonggyecheon's pristine stylized headwaters accentuates a vision of newness, modernity, and cleanliness. The space welcomes visitors with a coin toss area to commence their promenade, much as they would at a fountain, such as those found inside shopping malls or outside on civic plazas. In fact, much of this fountain area has the stark, abstract quality of the post-modern city that Rem Koolhaas describes in "Generic Cities": "Is the contemporary city like the contemporary airport—'all the same'?... What if this seemingly accidental—and usually regretted—homogenization were an intentional process, a conscious movement away from difference toward similarity?" (Koolhaas, 1995). Despite the abstract quality of the design, the designer Mikyong Kim's concept for the design of the plaza carries a subtle undercurrent of political meaning and cites "a symbolic representation of the imagined future reunification of North and South Korea" (*The Sourcebook of Contemporary Urban Design*, 2012) by incorporating stones from provinces in both North and South Korea.

As visitors pass beneath the restored Gwangtonggyo Bridge (Fig. 34) and emerge on the other side, the water edge takes on a softer edge and a naturalistic appearance through the addition of naturalistic stones and small touches of vegetation. The discovery of the buried Gwangtonggyo during project planning in 2003 provided popular support for the stream restoration and as Hong Kal described, its "discovery gave life to the stream and brought back the past needed for the national imagination" (Kal, 2011).



Fig. 34: Restored Gwangtonggyo Bridge to the right

Kal's description of the effect that the discovery of the Gwangtonggyo had on the public imagination suggests that the public had a desire for the revitalization of history and the formation of a new national identity. In the Cheonggyecheon's design, the bridge serves as a temporal portal between modernity and the beginnings of a riparian landscape.

The modernity and austerity of the plaza gives way to a green space once visitors cross the threshold into the more naturalistic space, and they are greeted with the continually looping audio reenactment of the sounds of King Jeongjo's procession to visit his father's grave, as depicted in the long tile painting that anchors the next part of the first section (Fig. 35).



Fig. 35: Replica of painting of King Jeongjo's procession

Thus, the hyper modern space gives way to an aural and visual space of history and culture. The tile painting depicts a popular historical image which gives this section of the park the atmospheric quality of an outdoor museum exhibit and connects it to other cultural spaces such as museums, palaces, and other heritage sites that displays historical representations. The otherness of the space through the media presentation accentuates the heterotopic dimensions of the park (Foucault, 1986). In this sense, certain parts of the Cheonggyecheon are a part of the larger South Korean project of displaying its history in different media and venues or spaces, and the open, centralized space of the Cheonggyecheon serves as a popular event space.

The multimedia presentation of a historical narrative is most prevalent during certain special events at the site, and highlights the city's efforts to provide spectacles and activities to the park, reinforcing the space as a heterotopia. During festivals and performances, much of the first section acts as a stage, not just the street level plaza. One of these, the Seoul Lantern Festival, is an annual event which begins with a performance filled opening ceremony on the plaza in the evening (Fig. 36), and the first part of the Cheonggyecheon is closed until nightfall, when visitors can enter the space to view the lantern installations filling the waterway. The festival acts as a civic and community event and a promotional opportunity for South Korean commercial brands, tourism, history, and a vision of its place in a globalized world. Although it is called a lantern festival, with the name recalling the idea of small, hand-made objects to display light, the actual lanterns are large installations made of LED lights with corporate, civic, and global sponsorship. Like the Cheonggyecheon itself, the festival illustrates the modern and new interpretation of the old and traditional.



Fig. 36: Performance at the street level of Cheonggye Plaza with Claes Oldenburg sculpture *Spring* in the background

In addition to the spectacle of the lantern installations and performances, the festival acts as a community building civic event. The public activity space, located in the area underneath Gwangyo Bridge, combined lighting installations with smaller displays and crafts tables (Fig. 37). The atmosphere of the space was dominated by the spectacle of the lighting displays, and like the whole lantern festival, it emphasized a modern and electronic aesthetic. The festival as a whole presents a combination of a modern and stylized reconstruction of historical images and motifs.



Fig. 37: Underneath Gwangyo Bridge

The lantern installations were grouped into four themes: classical images of the historical narrative of the Joseon Dynasty, folkloric scenes of Korean everyday traditions, international lanterns from neighboring countries and cities, and modern images of South Korean commercial brands. The combination of the historical narrative of South Korea and its contemporary focus on global and commercial pursuits reinforces the identity of the city and country as places of modernity and historical roots. The festival, like the park, provides a journey in time and space. The first lantern was a LED replica of a Ilwol-o-akdo Painting (Fig. 38) which depicts the sun, moon, five mountains, and water, all the elements meant to protect the dynasty, and providing an introduction to the festival as a modernized interpretation of the past as mythology.



Fig. 38: Ilwol-o-akdo Painting display near Cheonggyecheon waterfall

This classical image illustrates the geomantic natural elements for which the specific location of the ancient capital of Joseon was chosen, and it was used as the backdrop for the Joseon royal throne (Yoo, M-J, 2005). The major displays in the first section of installations had signs in Korean and English explaining their historical significance, making them also much like museum displays and asserting Seoul's image as a global city.

The first part of the historical lanterns showed replicas of palace and shrine architecture and later folk and traditional scenes (Figures 39 and 40).



Fig. 39: Lantern installations showing traditional shrine and palace architecture



Fig. 40: Folk culture lantern installations

These latter scenes incorporated parts of Korean culture that continues today, such as local foods and arts and crafts. While the pictorial elements like the palaces and the Ilwol painting had a precision and stylized aesthetic that lend their subjects gravitas and a sense of high art

historicism, the second group of displays depicting actions of folk and cultural traditions, as re-enacted by the lantern figures of Koreans dressed in traditional costumes, had childlike qualities of an animation or a manga drawing, but this is again similar to many museum displays in South Korea. The display of these cultural traditions, particularly those depicting Korean foods and cooking, link the past with the present, part of South Korea's continuing historical legacy. Both the first and second types of the lantern displays promote the elements of Korean culture and traditions that are presented as being unique to Korea.

The last portion of the displays combined commercial and international sponsorship for the individual displays, including representations of international lantern installations from several Asian countries and the United States, and global South Korean brands. Thus, the historical narrative of Korea's independent history eventually culminates with its recent history of economic gains, with lanterns depicting the brands and corporations that have become global symbols of South Korean prosperity, such as all the Amore Pacific cosmetic brands (Fig. 41) and SK Telecom.



Fig. 41: Cosmetics brand, Amore Pacific’s extensive display of products

The celebration of national economic and commercial emergence then coalesces with images of globalization as lantern installations sponsored by neighboring and faraway countries filled the rest of the festival site, including those from Japan, Singapore, Thailand, China, and the United States (Fig. 42).



Fig. 42: Mount Rushmore lantern

The lantern festival not only provides a seasonal festive event and spectacle for Seoulites and its visitors, it also combines a celebration of the nation's history while seamlessly acting as a promotional vehicle for its global brands and positions the city and by extension, the country, as part of a larger cosmopolitan community. Much like the narrative of the Cheonggyecheon itself, the lantern festival reiterates the narrative of the historical journey of South Korea from the founding of the Joseon dynasty to the globalized world, with South Korea asserting its global economic growth and strength.

It should be noted that not all the art and imagery that is built into the first part of the Cheonggyecheon carry a historical or even a Korean cultural theme. Some works are modern and reflect the contemporary aesthetic and trends of the city, illustrating the multiplicity and simultaneity of the narratives built into the project, most notably the Claes Oldenborg sculpture that sits at the start of Cheonggye Plaza. However, none of the park's visitors mentioned noticing these parts of the Cheonggyecheon. For the most part, the visitors' perceptions of the space were about the whole project and reiterated the notion that most people only notice architecture and the design of space, in distraction and never with full attention to such details, unless they happen to work or study one of the design and building professions. The main feature of the park that everyone mentions is the riparian landscape, in particular the stream, in the middle of the city. As visitors move further into the Cheonggyecheon, the visible natural features of the space, though introduced first by just the water, then suddenly with the addition of vegetation, quickly becomes the primary focus throughout the park.

II. Section 2: Modernization and its fissures in the urban landscape

While the first section of the Cheonggyecheon is located in the central business district and has become one of the central features of the area, the middle section of the park is

ensconced in the bustling commercial area dominated by the Dongdaemun and Pyeongwha markets. In contrast to the market and traffic activity on the street level, the second section of the Cheonggyecheon offers a respite from the urban landscape, while the park's visitors can gaze up towards the market buildings surrounding the stream. Designed by South Korean landscape architecture firm SYNWHA, the second section's concept was the modern era and Seoul's present. The historical markers displayed on the walls of this section include black and white photographs of the site that begins with the beginning of the 20th century, as in the photograph of women washing clothes in the original stream, to the end of the 20th century, when the Cheonggyecheon site was dominated by the rushing cars on the highway ramp over the site (Figures 43-47).



Fig. 43: Embedded historical image embedded in wall at left; market building at right at looming over the Cheonggyecheon



Fig. 44: Image of women doing laundry, dated 1890, embedded into walls of second section



Fig. 45: Image of shanty houses, dated 1961



Fig. 46: Undated image of the market areas next to the highway overpass



Fig. 47: Image of the highway overpass, dated 2003

Although the images of the highway ramp are comparatively recent history, the collective imagery harken to a bygone era by their presentation in black and white on small tiles that are built into the walls. The muted quality of the images, the small size of the displays recessed into the walls, and the brief, small captions in lieu of explanatory information displays give the section a more utilitarian and less formal quality than the first section. The historical markers seem less about recalling history and more about subtly and quietly evoking memory, but they are done in ways that do not distract from the main channel of the promenade, making the entirety of the space the main focal point, rather than any one particular display or installation.

The subtleness of the displays hence diminishes this period in Seoul's history.

Similarly, another historical motif that is built into the space, which evokes the time when the Cheonggyecheon was used to do laundry is the area of the park in this section where stylized concrete slabs, built to look like laundry washboards, lay on the water's edge (Fig. 48).



Fig. 48: Laundry area

The proximity of the water here allows small children to dip their hands into the water, making

it one of the areas that is popular for families to stop and play. The abstract design of the concrete laundry slabs gives the area a distinctive appearance from the rest of the water edge of the park, and more than evoking images of a laundry space, they give the space a playful edge that allows the water to merge and intersect more with the promenade. Apart from these few discreet displays, the majority of the spaces in the second section is full of lush vegetation, and there are certain areas where the walking path is only on one side of the stream, allowing for the greenery to dominate one half of the space. Thus, whereas the first section of the Cheonggyecheon varies the attention and focus between the art and displays with the flora, the second section puts more emphasis on the riparian landscape and stream for the most part, and the displays alluding to the past are either not noticeable, or made to not take away attention from the natural elements (Fig. 49).



Fig. 49: Second section, with more vegetation on south side at right, surrounded by market buildings on the street

This section offers a strong contrast to the urbanism found on the street level, and at times, it seems to offer the most removed space from the surrounding urban fabric, both in the contrast with the upper street level and because the Cheonggyecheon's grade difference with the street level increases as it moves further east.

One significant feature of this section is the statue of textile worker and labor activist Chun Tae-il, who died of self-immolation in 1970 during textile workers labor protests (Cho, 2003), which stands is at the street level on the Beodeuldari Bridge, also called Chun Tae-il Bridge (Figures 50 and 51).



Fig. 50: Chun Tae-il Bridge/ Beodeuldari Bridge



Fig. 51: Statue of Chun Tae-il, near Pyeongwha (Peace) Markets

The statue is a reminder of the turbulent history of the markets and their workers. Visitors who

are unfamiliar with this history might not venture onto the street level to look at the statue since it is located outside the Cheonggyecheon, which suggests that this painful chapter of the modernization period may still be a source of shame and horror. The statue's installation outside the park suggests that the city found this reminder of the site's past was undesirable as a focus of attention and better left to be eventually forgotten, demonstrating Connerton's notion of competing histories and that in the process of forgetting, "the first thing to be forgotten is the labour process" (Connerton, 2009, p. 40). It is also significant that all the vendors I tried to interview for my collection of oral histories, which will be discussed further in the next section, flatly refused to speak to me when I asked about their impressions and memories of the Cheonggyecheon. When I was asking a vendor at one of the used book stalls about their thoughts on the Cheonggyecheon, a customer instead answered that everyone likes the Cheonggyecheon, but the bookseller turned to her and said quietly that none of the vendors like the Cheonggyecheon (Attempted interview, Dec. 8, 2015). Their reticence may reflect the business owners opposition to the Cheonggyecheon during the planning and construction of the project, which still seems to reverberate ten years after the project was completed. The second section's street level activity still reflects the tension that the reconstruction project had for the people and businesses that were forced to relocate (Fig. 52).



Fig. 52: Retail spaces spilling onto the sidewalk and street in the second section

In contrast to the central business district which has predominantly surrounded by office towers

and retail spaces like cafes, restaurants, and clothing and cosmetic shops, the second section has a mixture of businesses ranging from wholesale vendors and light industrial manufacturing, many with their inventory and discarded packaging filling the sidewalks and even onto the street. They reflect the limited space for these businesses and are suggestive of the congested atmosphere of the urban conditions when the Cheonggyecheon was a highway ramp. Both the design of the space and the busy commercial activity above the space illustrate the ongoing disconnect between the Cheonggyecheon of the modern period and reconstructed version that has been built in its place.

III. Section 3: Urban ecology and Seoul's Future

The final section is towards the eastern part of Seoul, which includes the part of the Cheonggyecheon where it converges with the Jungnangcheon stream and then eventually flows into the Han River. The design concept of the section integrates the concept of natural ecology with the future of Seoul. The third section, designed by South Korean landscape architecture firm CA Landscape Design, incorporates the surrounding area to form a series of outdoor activity spaces adjacent to the Cheonggyecheon. The stream becomes much wider in this section, and the surrounding vegetation also covers a larger expanse than in the first and section parts. The third section's conception as a natural ecological space is anchored by the Cheonggyecheon Estuary Migratory Birds Protection Area in the middle of the section (Figures 53 and 54).



Fig. 53: Signage indicating the migratory birds protection area



Fig. 54: Stream crossing at migratory birds protection area

The protection area is one of several areas in the section where visitors can engage with the natural setting. For example, there are larger playing field areas, as well as dedicated bicycle lanes, separate from the pedestrian lanes, and vehicular lanes used by park maintenance vehicles (Figure 55 and 56).



Fig. 55: Bicyclists in the third section



Fig. 56: Bicycle trail near the Salgoji-dari Bridge, near the Han River convergence at the end of the Cheonggyecheon and Jungnangcheon convergence

Visitors to this section were more often engaged in some kind of moving activity such as cycling, walking, running, or playing volleyball or skateboarding on one of the adjacent fields. Although there are tables for picnicking or playing chess interspersed throughout the section, they were not in use on the three occasions I visited, and most visitors were moving through the space.

The design of the section contrasts the pristine and stylized design of the first section, evoking a natural setting especially in the section where the Cheonggyecheon merges with the Jungnangcheon. Viewed from this section of the park, visitors might be led to believe that the park, in particular its stream, was not the product of a scripted design and stream engineering. There is more fauna activity in this section, not only the migratory birds, but also more fish that have migrated to the Cheonggyecheon from the other stream and the Han River. As for the flora, they are more in abundance in this section and have a more “wild” and in some places, unruly presence, which gives the plantings the feeling of actual wilderness. However, some park visitors expressed dismay at the naturalness and expressed a preference for a more manicured landscape.

The striking feature of this section, conceived as Seoul’s future and emphasizing the diverse ecology, is the uncultivated look of a long established riparian landscape. It makes one consider whether the reinsertion of the stream and fields of vegetation in the city could be thought of as a process. The section most strongly demonstrates Ann Whiston Spirn’s assertion for cities to design with nature and Matthew Gandy’s argument for the “transformation of nature into a new synthesis” (Gandy, 2002, p.2). The sleek stream channel that begins the Cheonggyecheon has help from technology and starts with a design of modernism, clean lines, controlled flow of water and space, but it ends with a merging with the natural, giving the impression that the park space and the water coursing into the other tributaries before they all

meet the Han River have always been there, as a physical, partial reconstruction of the Doseongdo depicted in the first section. This impression provides the strongest expression of the imaginary in the Cheonggyecheon's design.

The idea that the future of Seoul being illustrated by a natural ecological landscape might seem unrealistic, yet it is more indicative of the grand vision for the project, the stark contrast between the modernity that had been accomplished and the envisioned natural landscape of the city's long term ambitions. The landscape design of the third section could arguably represent the most fantastical level of a scripted space, harkening to a past that had could not have existed before the 21st century. The reconstruction completely contrasts and erases the memory of the reality of the site's shanty house-filled 20th century past. Instead it presents a diverse ecological space intertwined with areas for sports and athletics, evoking the image of Seoul as having preserved large areas for a green space and dedicated to leisure activity.

Another comparison and contrast of the idealized constructed nature would be the uncontrollable historic stream that had been controlled and eradicated during the modernization period. The section presents an integration of both ecology and modernity in its urban form, symbolic of the idea of nature under control and how the city wants to present itself, as a city where both natural and urban forms can simultaneously coexist in stark contrast and in large, infrastructural scale.

Despite the emphasis on a natural stream and landscape in this section, there is still a strong urban presence, with the looming Naebu expressway which passes over the site, as well as the modern Cheonggyecheon Museum which stands across the street at the beginning of the section. Additionally, as reminders of the Cheonggye highway ramp that was demolished to create the new project, three partial columns from the old highway stand in the middle of the

water, serving as ruins to keep the memory of the former infrastructure of the highway ramp partially preserved in the new space (Fig. 57).



Fig. 57: Remains of the columns of the highway ramp

The remaining columns give an indication of the large scale of the demolished highway ramp and how it may have once dominated the space. Its authenticity as a marker of modern memory and history stands in contrast to most of the other historical and memorial displays at the site which are mostly replicas or excavations of ancient remains that have been reconstructed or restored. Yet, as ruins, they represent the erasure of the past and the creation of a new identity for the site. As memories of the highway overpass increasingly recede, one might wonder what meaning the columns might maintain in the future.

One final marker of history is the replica of a shanty house that is built over the Cheonggyecheon, directly across from the gleaming glass structure of the Cheonggyecheon Museum (Fig. 58).



Fig. 58: Replica of a Cheonggyecheon shanty

The replica is depicted as a store, complete with posters and signs, and functions as a life-size museum display, which visitors can enter, walk under and see from both the street level and below in the park. Like the remains of the highway ramp, they serve as reminders of the site and the stark contrast with its current incarnation, but unlike the remaining columns, the replica is a simulacrum: clean, albeit with grime and age as part of its design, and sturdily built, unlike the actual shanties that filled the space. They represent a part of the history of the site in a overtly simulated form, which might harken back to the past but with a sense of distance and removal from the actual hardship and unsightliness of the past. The simulacrum of the recreated shanty house juxtaposed with the modern museum reflects Andreas Huyssen's assertion that "an urban imaginary in its temporal reach may well put different things in one place: memories of what there was before, imagined alternatives to what there is" (2003, p.7). The Cheonggyecheon reinforces the layering of multiple histories to diminish the reality of what has been overcome and to magnify the achievements of the present.

The reconstruction of the Cheonggyecheon as whole could be characterized in this way, in that it was built on the site of an ancient stream, which in the modern period had become ruined by pollution and then covered over by a road. In its rebuilt form, it serves as a public amenity for recreation and leisure, and not as a space to wash clothes or throw away waste. Although the central focus of the linear park is a water channel like the original stream, it reflects the advances in technology and wealth of South Korea and the social and environmental concerns of the 21st century urban landscape that the city of Seoul aimed to ameliorate. Through its goal of environmental, social, and urban improvement, the city produced an image of an improved past to represent its renewal and to redefine its identity.

Chapter 6 Collection of oral narratives

Like the visual narratives, the oral narratives are divided into three parts, with each part focusing on a different interview group. A total number of 21 interviews were conducted, in the order of the discussions, starting with 15 park visitors, followed by two design team members, and concluding with four members of the Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) Cheonggyecheon project team. Interviews were conducted from September 2015 to December 2015, starting with the park visitor interviews, followed by the designers and SMG team members. Interviews with the designers and SMG team members provided the most robust insights. Their backgrounds and professional connections to the project would explain their willingness to participate in this research, while the comparative lack of in-depth interviews with park visitors presents a lack of balance to the oral narratives. However, memories and insights about the city and the site from the designer and SMG team interviews offset some of the imbalance and helped provide this research with a more humanistic perspective through individualistic impressions of the Cheonggyecheon project's history.

I. Visitors' impressions

For the most part, my attempts to collect oral histories from visitors and vendors proved to be unsuccessful because most of my interview requests were refused, though I was fortunate enough to get a few remarkably insightful and forthcoming stories from those who agreed to speak with me. The fifteen people who agreed to be interviewed also allowed me to record what they said, but more than double that number refused to speak with me, notably all the vendors I approached in the Dongdaemun and Pyeongwha market area. From the interviews I did manage to record, each of the Cheonggyecheon's visitors remarked that they appreciated the Cheonggyecheon and that it was a positive addition to the city center. The overall message of

their remarks was that they felt the Cheonggyecheon was a unique spot in the city, allowing them to enjoy nature, have a place to spend outdoors, and walk around in the Jongno area.

When asked about their memories or knowledge of the site before its transformation, roughly a third of the respondents were in their twenties and reported that they had no memory of the site before the reconstruction of the Cheonggyecheon. For these visitors, their only memory and knowledge of the site as the Cheonggyecheon was as a park, and they described it as a place to take walks or spend time while on dates, while one respondent expressed enthusiasm for the future possibilities for the park as a space for special events and activities (Interview 14). In contrast to the present and future perspective of the younger respondents, older respondents with memories of the old site spoke about the transformation of the city after the construction of the park and compared it favorably against the old site. They described the site that was dominated by the highway ramp as having been dark, congested, polluted, and often difficult to access and walk around due to the car traffic. Although some people expressed misgivings about the cost of the project as well as the cost for its continued maintenance, all of those interviewed praised the new Cheonggyecheon for its cleanliness, its access to nature, and the space to spend outdoors and take walks in the middle of Seoul.

When comparing the old Cheonggyecheon with its current state as a park, one respondent gave the following response: “It’s very nice. It’s natural looking, and it’s a place to rest. In the old Cheonggyecheon, we couldn’t see inside [*the water*], but in the area where we could see the ground, it wasn’t clean, it was dirty” (Interview 8). The main differences that were noted by all the park visitors I spoke with was that the new park was clean, whereas the old area of the space beneath the highway ramp was old and dirty. Another respondent also noted about the old site that, “It was very congested and there was a lot of traffic because of the highway ramp and the

cars below. It was very dirty and dark below... The highway ramp was old, it looked dirty and dangerous. Below the ramp, how do I say it? The merchandise (or the goods?) were piled high, and discarded items were also strewn about so it was dark” (Interview 4). The comparison between the old and new spaces with the old area with the highway ramp being described as dark, dirty, and congested, and the new space being clean, developed, and a respite from the city, aligns with the language used to describe the reasons for pursuing the project, as well as the resulting changes to the neighborhoods surrounding the park after it was completed. The positive feedback was representative of most of the visitors who gave responses, as well as the general opinion for the project. However, since the Cheonggyecheon has a complex operational system and controversial planning and construction history, there were notable criticisms for the project by the people enjoying the space as well.

Some respondents gave pointed criticism for the project, often referring to the project cost, though others cited concerns over the environmental sustainability of the project. When asked about his current impression of the Cheonggyecheon reconstruction, a young professional interviewed in the central business district in the first section of the park, offered a measured response that combined both positive and negative views:

What do I think about the Cheonggyecheon? Overall, I don't think the restoration was a bad idea. It's a place to sit and rest, it's a landmark in the center of the city where tourists can visit. There's two things that makes me uncomfortable. First, regarding the restoration, it's not friendly to nature. Second, during the time of the restoration, the mayor Lee Myung-Bak, seems to have done it for political purposes. But overall, I enjoy coming to the Cheonggyecheon often. (Interview 5)

His response captures the contradictory feelings that people have about the project and the general criticism and observations about the project's history. The way in which the respondent framed his response by expressing the project's positive aspects first and last

and two of the major criticisms in between seemed indicative of the ambivalence and inherent tension that the project may evoke. However, his last statement being a positive expression of his experience with the park gave the impression that he appreciates the space as both a landmark and an outdoor amenity, perhaps despite his misgivings about the project's intentions and sustainability. He revealed that he worked nearby and came to the Cheonggyecheon during lunch breaks often, so for people who worked nearby, the park offered a regular respite from their workplace, as well as the busy street activity above the park.

Another respondent was a man in his 70s who had lived in Seoul for over 50 years and expressed the changes in the city, and in particular in the Cheonggyecheon, in the times that he recalled. When asked if he had any memory of the Cheonggyecheon before the reconstruction, he replied, "Yes, I do. The Cheonggyecheon had shacks [houses on stilts]. The stream water was very dirty and there's no way to describe how bad it was. It was dirty and smelled bad. That's my memory" (Interview 6). When asked about his impression of the current Cheonggyecheon, he gave a more critical assessment of the project's cost:

It's very developed now. Before the restoration, it was a highway ramp with cars on top. They demolished that and re-made the Cheonggyecheon. But it cost a lot of money, a lot of money. Lee Myung-Bak made this when he was mayor and later became president because the Cheonggyecheon was well-done... There's this water here, clean water, there's trees, the air is clean. There's a lot of good aspects, but it cost a lot of money. It still costs a lot of money. There's always maintenance costs... Of course it's a good impression, but there are priorities. There is always a sense of priority. What comes first, our country's economic development. Is that the priority? It's good, but it cost a lot. Lots of money. I'm not sure whether this should have been a priority or not. (Interview 6)

He also noted that he is a human being, implying that as a person, he could not help but appreciate the park. This respondent's criticism of the project is an ongoing one from the project's beginning, and it is often cited as one of the main reasons for questioning the sustainability of the project. Both this respondent and the respondent in Interview 5 allude to Lee Myung-Bak's political aspiration and achievement as another part of the project's criticism, and the issues of sustainability and political goals are intertwined with the project from its beginning. The project was conceived and promoted as a means of improving the sustainability and environmental problems in Seoul, but despite the ameliorative functions of the project, it is also a carbon producer and costs over \$7 million to cover all maintenance costs per year.¹ The differences in South Korean public opinion of Lee Myung-Bak's presidency many have had some bearing on the responses, and the responses of Lee's supporters tended to be more positive towards the Cheonggyecheon project. Others had positive comments for the project regardless of political allegiance and instead focused on the creation of a worthwhile public space. One man in his 70s noted, "My impression, they spent a large sum of money to make this, and it's a good thing that they did" (Interview 11). He also noted that before the reconstruction, "There was no place to come to then. It was just pavement. There were street vendors all lining the street" (Interview 11), which he contrasted with the natural space of a park where people could sit and chat. Most of the respondents characterized the old Cheonggyecheon area as being a congested space with the highway ramp overhead and vendors and their wares underneath and spilling into the street. However, like the man from Interview 6, the following respondent also described the area of the Cheonggyecheon that was filled with shanty structures along the water.

¹ "Cheonggyecheon costs taxpayers too much," *The Korea Herald*, 2013-10-16; Retrieved online on 2017-05-08 at <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20131016000821>

The respondent was a woman in her 70s, accompanied by her friend, also in her 70s, in the third section of the park, and together, they offered several unexpected revelations about the history of the site and the harshness of the conditions during the rapid growth period following the end of the Korean War:

Q: Do you have a memory of the old Cheonggyecheon?

A: Yes, it's been over 10 years since they made this, so they have a marathon here. If you go over there you'll hear the news, it's enormous, the large field.

Q: Before it was turned into a park, do you remember the old Cheonggyecheon?

A: Back then, there was no water like this, it was split up, the smell! It smelled bad! Fifty years ago, there were shacks.

Q: There wasn't a highway ramp here?

A: No, not here.

Q: Then there were shacks in this area? Really?

A: Shacks. Here, after Lee Myung-Bak became president, this highway ramp was built [*pointing to the Naebu expressway ramp above*]. It was so dirty, it was called "Sseogeun-dong" [썩은동 "rotten, rancid neighborhood"], not Sageun-dong, Sseogeun-dong. Even taxis wouldn't come here 50 years ago. Now it's so nice here.

Q: Then, now if you think about the Cheonggyecheon, what impression do you have?

A: It's so nice, it doesn't smell, it looks beautiful, and the air is clean. You can take walks.

Q: Do you come here often?

A: Yes, once a day.

[*after a pause*]

A: It was all shacks here. There was no running water [*in the house*]. We had to collect water from a public water faucet.

Her friend: President Lee Myung-Bak nowadays...

A: Yes, they did a great job. They made all this so the water comes out.

Friend: Other people say... Lee Myung-Bak...

A: The Han River water floods here, it doesn't stop, when it rains, it floods up to here during the monsoons, it's over.

Q: Really? When it rains a lot?

A: If it rains, that water comes to here, it's over. Even now.

Friend: When Lee Myung-Bak came, they didn't leave these weeds overgrown like this. It was clean.

Q: Oh, is all this [green overgrowth] all new?

A: Here, there, if you walk up there, they planted flowers, but only over here, there's always weeds.

Friend: It wasn't like that kind of work before.

A: Here, from Yi-myungmoon Bridge [??], they haven't cut the weeds. Long ago, compared to 50 years before, it's so much better, the air is nice, the water is good, clean, taxis wouldn't come here to Sageun-dong, because it was foul, the road too, where were roads like this, it was dirt roads. It's really developed now, I can't say enough.

Q: It must have been difficult.

A: It's been, since I moved here, our son was 3 years old, now he's 51 years old. Fifty years ago this place was where, it was a total sewer.

Q: Your son is over 50? How old are you?

A: I'm already 80.

Q: Really? You must be very healthy. You look really young.

A: I'm already 80. I'm 79.

Q: I can't tell. Do you have anything else to add about the Cheonggyecheon?

A: I've lived here for 50 years. 50 years in this neighborhood. In the old days, this place was a cliff [or precipice], and very dangerous, it smelled bad and it was dirty. But...

Friend: When we first came here to Hyundai apartment (??), there were shacks here.

A: Yes, shacks.

Friend: Even over there, they lived there and it was swarming with thieves...

A: And gangs. There were also lots of lepers. But..

Q: I don't know what that is.

A: Leprosy patients.

Q: Here?

A: Not here, the city markets, go to Namdaemun market, they spit on us, so we were afraid of getting infected so we gave them money and quickly got away. Now you can't see people like that.

Friend: Then soon after we moved here, they demolished all that.

A: Now, that over there, some island, where all the leprosy patients are... Sorok-do.² They all went to Sorok-do. I went there. You can't look at the patients. There are buildings, close the curtains. On the second floor, the people who aren't ill, they work in the fields. And they give out medicine, they ship the medicine on a boat and in the middle of the water, they exchange the medicine and turn back and go separate ways.

Friend: At Sorok-do, I went there to buy medicine, where people live, at about 3 in the afternoon.

A: I went on a tour.

Friend: There aren't regular people there.

A: Of course there aren't.

Friend: But they treat you nicely. They say come in, so I went in. There's a school there and a church.

A: There's everything there.

Friend: So I went inside and waited, and the medicine person came.

A: So you went to buy leprosy medicine?

Friend: Yeah.

A: Medicine for the skin.

This interview was one of the most revealing and generous, for its breadth and content. The women's responses revealed differences in the ways in which the project is perceived, while their memories of the modern era offered more details about the Cheonggyecheon area and Seoul's past during that period. The brief conversation touched about issues of health, lack of infrastructure, social and economic divisions and isolation, and the uncontrollable strength of nature. Until this conversation, I had not been aware of Sorok Island ["-do" means island] as a still existing site of a leper colony in South Korea, nor that leprosy had been one of the health problems in Seoul during its rapid growth period during the second half of the 20th century. The history of the site that this interview revealed was that the area of the third section of the

² Sorok Island is South Korea's surviving leper colony: "Sorok Island: the last leper colony." *Independent.co.uk*. August 19, 2007. Retrieved May 12, 2017 from <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/sorok-island-the-last-leper-colony-5334621.html>

Cheonggyecheon and beyond, to where it merges with the Jungnangcheon, in the 1960s to 1980s, was that it was very far, in both progress and society, from the developing and modernizing area of the first section which is now the central business district and was back then the city center. The outskirts of the city, which is what the women here were describing, lacked modern conveniences such as running water and the means of getting out of the area. The comments about taxis refusing to drive to the area and the derogatory name for the neighborhood indicate not only the lack of connection between there to the more developed city center but also the social and economic disparity between the people who lived in that area and elsewhere, since the residents of the shanty houses were most likely newcomers to the capital city in the decades after the end of the Korean War. It brought to life the images of the Cheonggyecheon area that had been documented in the photographs of Rev. Motoyuki Nomura in the modernization period. It also allowed me to better imagine the range of changes and progress Seoul has undergone in the past fifty years, as recounted by two individuals, underlining the human experience of civic and social changes, in relationship to the built environment but also by improvements in health and social well-being.

The essence of their reminiscences of the area was that it had been a place of neglected and desperately poor conditions, sometimes full of natural and uncontrollable dangers as well as those caused by people living on the fringes of society. Even with the growth of apartment building developments, like the Hyundai apartments that were mentioned, crime seems to have persisted in the area. Their overall impression throughout the conversation seemed to indicate their belief that the area had been greatly improved, as had their own lives, and in having lived through such difficult and harsh conditions, they were content to enjoy the redesigned space. As opposed to the past when the natural stream flooded uncontrollably, they remarked on how much

they liked the plantings, which in this space are all examples of controlled and deliberately designed presentation of nature, as well as the opportunities to view public events such as marathons and a past appearance by the former president. The reconstruction of the Cheonggyecheon as a park had created a public space that could bring together city dwellers for events that celebrated their city and its people. The area that had once been shunned by taxis could now attract visitors from other parts of the city and be the site of an inclusive event that shared the space with the rest of the city.

The women's comment about flowers having been planted along the park when Lee Myung-bak visited and now "there are always weeds" suggests that both women preferred the manicured look of new plantings instead of the naturalness of the current flora in the space. This sentiment echoed the general impression of most visitors that one of the aspects of the project that they appreciated most was its newness and aestheticizing of public space from what had been an unsightly and decaying infrastructure and the surrounding congestion caused by vendors and the under-developed and isolated areas of the eastern portion of the park. The rehabilitation of the site and its surrounding area removed urban blight, and although the project has weathered since its unveiling in 2005, the project still evokes the impression of cleanliness and has the polished appearance of an urban space in an advanced and prosperous country. It is one of several outdoor spaces in Seoul dedicated to leisure activity, providing both beauty and respite through nature in the cityscape, whereas in the modernization period, there were few places, time, or even opportunities to have such a dedicated space, according to several interview respondents. Thus, in certain design motifs, presentation of certain city events, and in its historical place identity, it may act as a space that celebrates aspects of the history and memory of that particular site and its larger relationship to the history of Seoul, it asserts its modernity

through the different ways in which people use and interpret the space according to their generational and cultural identity.

For those visitors who were too young to remember the old Cheonggyecheon, the park represented a space of leisure and socializing, where people could meet or take walks with friends or have a date. Activities like dating and socializing were not cited by any of the older generation of visitors and might illustrate one of the cultural gaps between the old and young in South Korea, the former who may not place such an attribute to a place as younger people might. More common amongst the older respondents was the point that people could take walks in the Cheonggyecheon as a way to maintain their health. One Cheonggyecheon worker, interviewed in the first section of the park, described the activities of park visitors as follows:

They don't do anything special. But it's 8.2km long so people walk here and it's good for their health. There's nothing else like this in the middle of the city so it's good for relaxation and a respite from the city...People are very concerned for their health. They eat their lunch fast and come here to walk during their lunch break. There are lots of offices around here. Further down the stream are more apartments so there are older people walking there, people in their 60s, 70s, 80s. Here, there's more office workers. (Interview 1)

The significance of this response is that it touches upon part of the promotion of health and active lifestyles that the project was meant to encourage in its visitors and that have been built into the design of the Cheonggyecheon and other similar promenade spaces around the city. Given that the respondent works for the Cheonggyecheon, perhaps it might be part of his work duties to promote the project in this way, but it reiterates the popularity of city residents in pursuing physical activity and the use of the park as a space for outdoor exercise. The project also includes exercise station areas in the third section of the park though not as many as can be found in the stream promenades in other neighborhood stream parks around the city. As a site for pursuing healthy, outdoor activities and lifestyles, the Cheonggyecheon is just one of a larger

network of parks and public spaces in South Korea that offer this public amenity for both younger and older city dwellers. They mark a difference in the kind of amenities that public spaces in Seoul offer from the city's public spaces of the past, and they represent both the active lifestyle that people aim to pursue and what the city can offer their residents in their public spaces.

Aside from providing public spaces for health and physical activity, the Cheonggyecheon is regarded as a cultural site, though not just as a space that is immersed in the display of history but also for contemporary cultural exhibitions. One younger respondent who was interviewed while working at the Cheonggyecheon during a weekend Upcycle Festival remarked on the future possibilities of the site:

Can I talk about the event happening now? The Cheonggyecheon has beautiful greenery and beautiful flowing water so I can help exhibit upcycle, recycled goods [the Upcycle Festival] in the perfect place, in the perfect surroundings. It's ideal for the exhibition, to have a perfect, beautiful match for the goods with its surroundings. This is the first time for the festival, so it would be nice to have it continue into the future. It was a good opportunity. And also the Cheonggyecheon is a place to relax, and I think the Cheonggyecheon can become [or change into] a place to display art and have people experience it firsthand. I think it'll be great if we can have more events like this in the future. (Interview 14)

The respondent's emphasis on the beauty of the space and the beauty of the upcycled works of art, which included sculptural pieces and furniture created using recycled materials, point to one of the goals of the Cheonggyecheon itself, in that it was created to bring natural beauty to an urban landscape. But the beauty of the space during events such as the Upcycle Festival or the larger, more popular annual lantern festival, is that the Cheonggyecheon becomes a stage, or backdrop, for people to gather, and share a collective experience that breaks away from the everyday experience of the park, as well as the city. This is flexibility to the space and project is significant in several ways.

The Cheonggyecheon has multi-functional uses that people do not notice, but the impressions that were prevalent in all the interviews was the description of the space as different and a respite, or a break, a change from the rest of the city and the rest of their day. Much as office workers can get a few minutes of a break from their daily work lives, the festivals and events in the Cheonggyecheon offer city residents and visitors a chance to experience a break from the regular spaces and experiences of the urban form without disturbing the flow and continuity of the urban landscape and its dominant circulation networks for automobiles on the street level.

For those interviews that I attempted that did not produce willing responses, the Cheonggyecheon may be summed up by another visitor who spoke in their stead:

...at the time, “lifestyle is very difficult.” At the time, it was hard because the vendors needed to sell in order to eat and live. Now that those people all organized, sorted out, that’s how this place has become this way. If you look at it one way, for the citizens and the tourists, this is very nice, but for the vendors at the time, because they were forced, it must have been hard, they all left,... and it was like that. But for me now, a person like me, I’m satisfied. It’s a park, they also do the lantern festival, lots of foreigners come... For me, I like this better. In any case, culture has to change and evolve. (Interview 17)

She is describing the difficulty faced by the vendors as the location of their livelihood was taken away once the Cheonggyecheon began preparing for demolition and construction. Her statement that “culture has to change and evolve” encapsulates the the reasons behind the project that resulted in the forced relocation and displacement of the businesses and residents of the Cheonggyecheon area. The importance of the area during the rapid growth phase of South Korea’s early years of independence had waned in the closing years of the 20th century, but the remaining infrastructure, businesses, and people had not been able to control this evolution and could only protest the changes. The

culture of Seoul and South Korea had by then already started to move away from the practices and economic demand for many of the kinds of businesses that had been located in the Cheonggyecheon area.

II. Designers' intentions and lessons

The Cheonggyecheon project differs from other landscape and urban design projects in that the Seoul Metropolitan Government, specifically Lee Myung-bak, the mayoral candidate who won the election with the goal of restoring the stream as one of his main campaign promises, is most often considered the creators of the project. As a top-down municipal project, and because the project had three different design, engineering, and construction teams (Rowe, 2010; Interviews 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21), the identification of the city government as the project lead is a result of the many different people and organizations involved in the project. The designers involved in the Cheonggyecheon project may not have had the main control and power to direct all the changes that were made to the area, but as landscape architects, they were responsible for turning a visionary idea into a buildable reality. In this sense, they had the role of interpreting the conceptualization for the restoration of an ancient stream and creating a design that would bring together the past and future, nature and technology, and the city and its people. To learn how the design of the Cheonggyecheon, in particular its theme of history and memory, was conceived and the experience of working on the Cheonggyecheon reconstruction, I interviewed two landscape architects who worked on the design teams. One worked on the first section of the park as part of the SeoAhn Total Landscape team (designated as Interview 16), while the other had a role in the overall design and management of the entire site as well as the design of the third section as part of the CA Landscape Design team (designated as Interview 15). This landscape architect noted that the most difficult aspect of working on the

Cheonggyecheon was the coordination effort with which he was tasked in combining the works of three separate design teams to create a work that would give the impression of a singular and cohesive project. On the topic of history he noted that it was important to illustrate the layers of history of the Cheonggyecheon site, mentioning the leftover highway columns as a way to keep traces of the site's history so that visitors would be aware of the transformation of the space. In a slightly different perspective, the former PM from SeoAhn Total Landscape noted that the designers were cognizant that certain aspects of the site's history were not represented or illustrated, noting that during the modernization period, when South Korea was struggling economically, there was no natural landscape that could be replicated in the new project. Thus, for the designers, the concept of history provided both challenges and material for representation and re-imagination in the reconstruction of the Cheonggyecheon. The other topics that emerged from both conversations touched upon the project's conceptualization, the challenges that each design team faced working on the project, what they consider to be the "Cheonggyecheon effect" and how the project has influenced the design of landscape architecture in South Korea and impacted its people. The first part of both interviews revolved around the project's presentation and conceptualization of history, the historical significance of the site, and the challenges and obstacles presented by attempting true historical restoration.

When asked about the issue of history and memory and how the design of the Cheonggyecheon was aimed at illustrating the concept of history, both landscape architects described the design concept as being an "ongoing trend" (Interview 15) and part of an organic process that was shared with other landscape projects in South Korea. They explained that the idea of engaging the history of Seoul and South Korea as design motifs and touchstones were part of a larger framework for other design projects in recent years, where new buildings might

be built with elements of their site's historical significance left as a memento or featured area of the design. They noted that for the Cheonggyecheon project, the significance of its history was combined with its ancient identity as a stream, and in reconstructing the site as a stream would entail reconstructing the historical identity of the site. However, as intertwined were the two ideas of nature and history, one of the main challenges posed by the project was how to build and maintain a natural landscape in an urban site. The following response from one of the designers conveys the merging of nature and history in the conceptualization of the project's design:

Really, it is the same for both the first section and the second section. Because the Cheonggyecheon is being made in the city, it was wasn't about how to recover nature, but *instead the main issue was about how to make nature come into the city, and how to make nature and the city come together*. There seemed to be people who thought a lot about this. Because of this, especially the first section, what we call the Four Gates of Seoul, long ago, inside the East Gate was the [구관] [old town or old governor]. Also, from Sejong-ro, the big street in front of Gyeongbokgung, is Sejong-ro, it's very close. So because of that, we looked at historical artifacts/ things and considered doing the restoration that way, like Supyogyo or Gwangkyo [bridges], things like that exist there. Because there are historical items like that, so let's do it that way, let's show these [items]. So I think there was a lot of thought, from the beginning, to do that. (Interview 16, emphasis mine).

The designer's response conveys the historical significance of the larger area of the central business district as the site of the old capital, when the ancient capital was much more compact and not as spread out as the current metropolitan area. It also explains the larger implication of the revival of historical places in Seoul as being a larger plan than just the Cheonggyecheon restoration. This corresponds to the efforts that the city and the country have made since the beginning of the 21st century in new building and landscape projects that have incorporated elements of site history and tourism campaigns that have presented an image of South Korea and Seoul as destinations that combine the ancient with the new (Pai, 2013 ; Yoo, M-J, 2005).

When addressing nature, the comment that “the main issue was about how to make nature come into the city, and how to make nature and the city come together” reflects the primary challenge of the design problem that the designers of the reconstruction faced. The removal of the highway ramp and uncovering the buried stream bed alone would not allow the water to flow once more automatically, so in order to rebuild the space as a streambed, it would need technological intervention and continued maintenance. The end goal of the project as reflected in the quote also alludes to the chasm that had grown in the urban space where nature and the city had become separated and perhaps cut off from each other in the process towards modernization. The restoration project’s immediate impact would be to overcome the barrier that had been put in place by the continuous buildup of modern Seoul. When asked about the importance of nature for Seoul and for South Koreans, the landscape architect described efforts that had already been underway and which grew as a result of the Cheonggyecheon project, for restoring buried streams and creating public landscapes that allowed greater access to water, which also resulted in environmental improvements:

Truthfully, in 2003 we built the Cheonggyecheon, after that period, there was already a lot of effort to take the covered streams and open them, to bring back nature, before that they were all covered with concrete, including the Han River. In that way, the Cheonggyecheon has the look of nature and appears natural, so afterwards, a lot of streams changed, and that change reflected an ecological (생태적), environmental (환경적), and positive (긍정적) impact. The air became clean, the wind actually started blowing, the temperature got lower, and then I just, people just, after staying in a rigid old place, walking next to nature, it’s good for their emotions. So related to that importance, after just thinking about economic development and rushing forward in the past, like blocking the road, they thought was absolute/ natural, after it opened, they awoke to the importance of things like that and thought, that’s something that we need. People came to recognize [that need]. (Interview 16)

According to this characterization of the impact of the reconstruction, and the subsequent

appreciation for nature, life and society in Seoul had become free and allowed to breathe. She describes it as an awakening of sorts to the environmental improvements which resulted in an improvement for the senses and emotions. But perhaps it also offered a similar kind of freedom from the confines of the social structure that had been Park Chung-hee's criticism of the Confucianism that was the foundation for the Joseon Dynasty. In the context of a modern city in which industrialization was ending as the main economic and social force, the addition of nature in the city perhaps presented the added value of a widening the scope of people's and the city's collective consciousness for desiring more from their city than just efficient urban planning based on infrastructure and development.

The flip side of this assertion is that the modern, progressive country and city which Park Chung-hee had promised to build for future prosperity had become as restrictive and confining as the social structures of dynastic rule. The significance of this effect does not only apply to Korean society, ancient or modern, since the idea of nature in the city as an urban respite has a rich urban and landscape history (Spirn, 1998; Gandy, 2002). The science that is used to explain the benefits of nature on the environment and human health could be one kind of measure of such an effect, but what gives the science a sense of the human dimension are the changing lifestyles and concerns of city dwellers, as well as the growth of changing urban patterns. She further elaborated that the public recognition for the value of adding nature in the cityscape resulted in spreading daylighting projects in other cities in South Korea and in other neighborhoods in Seoul as well as growing advances in technology and skill to achieve that goal:

After that, a lot of things, the old streams that were restored and opened, even with small streams in the provinces, there was a boom, and we, about the streams, how to make them natural, we didn't have many technical skill for restoring the streams, so what we could learn, we learned from Japan, so we learned at a lot of those materials and went on excursions to see them. So after that, ecological

restoration engineering became very developed, so this all happened because of the Cheonggyecheon. (Interview 16)

The significance of this quote is the mention of how South Korean landscape architects expanded their technical knowledge by studying Japanese stream restoration technology and other international sources in the design of the Cheonggyecheon. The fact that the landmark Seoul project looked outward globally to reconstruct a water channel on the site of an ancient stream reflects the globalized worldview of the project planners, their ambitions to learn from works outside their country, and openness to outside sources of knowledge to learn technology that had yet to be used in South Korea at that time. This outward projection may illustrate the globalization of the design field and the pursuit of sustainable design strategies in architecture and urban design, but it also signifies international influences in the creation of a landmark public space meant to evoke national history and origins. It may also be another expression of freedom in the project's intention to improve the livability of Seoul's public spaces and in its worldwide perspective and international focus. Yet, this would conflict with some of the cultural markers of the design that depict images from the Joseon dynasty.

When asked whether the project deliberately chose to focus on elements of the Joseon Dynasty rather than the modern history of the site, one of the designers gave the following response:

All time, all time is history-- not just Joseon-- from the Joseon to the modernization period-- is the history of Seoul, of the Cheonggyecheon... Many people only go to the first section and think that it is Joseon Dynasty, but that's not it. (Interview 15)

He explained that the historical traces that were found in the first section of the park dated from the Joseon Dynasty, so the motifs that were exaggerated in that part of the park illustrated and highlighted that history, but he also noted that the other sections of the part represented more

recent history and that the designers aimed to produce a balanced representation of the historical phases that the city has undergone since its independence in the modern era. The other landscape architect gave a more elaborate response that touched upon the different phases of Korean history:

No, it wasn't like that. It wasn't like the city had a masterplan beforehand and pushed that agenda. It was more like, all the people involved had the same idea. Like, the Four Gates, because we're inside the Four Gates, historically, so the Joseon period was more important, before the Korean War, during the Japanese occupation period, how they did things in the modern period, there's a book called *천변풍경* ["*Riverside scenery/ landscape*"], to the degree of what is depicted in that book, we didn't want to emphasize to that level. Because those days weren't that good. Even if you look at it from here [now], following time, and we showed how the city has changed, if you look at that time, Hanyang's stream, what's the specialty of the little stream, we understood that, then during the war, during the Japanese occupation period, we understood in what way the stream was repaired and managed [back then], and after that, after independence, the dream of independence, during the Park Chung-hee period, that kind of big city, when the big street was made, during that period, then in the downtown area, what became of the role of roadways. We tried to read about things like that. But, if you look at it another way, during that time, we think it was also a dark time, war, (as well as/ representation) modern period, and after independence, it was very... shanty houses...it was very... there were no houses, those kind of people, they just came to settle in Seoul, there wasn't much of a way to live, it was a very poor period. We do understand that about that time about this place, it wasn't like we could reminisce and make it into a landscape, I think that would have been a bit difficult. So instead of that time being the focus, the Joseon period, we said let's try imagining that period's historical traces. I think there was more thinking that way. (Interview 16)

The response emphasizes the general accord of those involved in the project for pursuing a design using the concept of history, but it also reflects the general knowledge of the layers of historical change that the project site had undergone. Most importantly, the response addresses the underlying struggle during the intervening years since the Joseon dynasty. At its core, there is

the understanding that images of struggle and hardship could not be re-interpreted as a beautiful landscape, especially for a project that is meant to evoke a celebratory view of history in having overcome those difficult years. The book that is mentioned in the response, *Riverside scenery/landscapes* (also known as *Scenes from Chonggye Stream*), written by Park Taewon is often cited as one of the literary works that depict the significance of the Cheonggyecheon during the beginning of the 20th century during the Japanese colonial period (Cheonggyecheon Museum display and description of *Scenes from Chonggye Stream*). One of the short stories from Park's book provided inspiration for the laundry slab area of the park. The idea of reimagining historical traces suggests that the project's intention was to weave a narrative that combined elements of the past into a new story for the site. This reimagining of the site as a new landmark with historical traces had at its core the element of nature, and the reconstruction of the historical image of the Cheonggyecheon would have to be a reconstruction of nature.

One of the landscape architects discussed the lack of nature in the city and the challenges that the project posed in overcoming the potential problems that the project would have to address in order to construct nature in the urban space:

Actually, in the beginning, there was a lot of talk, it's a concrete drainage channel, there were a lot of people who talked that way. The first thing they asked was is it really nature? The second was, in this city, can it really protect the city from a 100-year, 200-year flood, will we be able to block heavy flooding, there were those kinds of questions. They were angry (*or were opposed*). But apart from all that, but the most important thing, was that whether this was true nature or not, how could we reanimate nature's function, whether that was the most important thing. And with that, the people, the citizens, could feel/ experience how good nature in the city is. Because before, especially Seoul didn't have lots of parks in the city at the time, even large scale parks, Seoul Forest, at that time for a long time, lots of parks were being made, those events all happened at once. So, in this large scale, in this busy, congested Seoul, more and more, nature was coming into the city, the important thing is that the people started to acknowledge that, and it was a time period when people thought it was important. (Interview 16)

By emphasizing nature's functions, the project designers intended to awaken the people to the benefits of nature in the city, and this effort seems to have been part of the city's larger plan for building parks throughout the city. The landscape architect's remarks note that the public's initial hesitation or opposition to the project stemmed from the possibility of the reconstructed Cheonggyecheon's failure in the event of a large flood. This fear of nature's unpredictability and overwhelming strength aligns with the perception of nature in the pre-modern era as being more than the city's infrastructure could manage. The frequent flooding of the original Cheonggyecheon, its degradation and pollution, and the city's eventual decision to cover the stream trace the historical means by which the stream was controlled through modernization. Reconstructing the stream illustrated the technological progress and economic development of South Korea since the end of the 20th century, as well as the limits of this progress. Yet, the project designers and planners expressed optimism, to the point of certainty, that technology would grow and that whatever limitations the project had in its current state, it would continue to change and further develop as knowledge and technology continued to improve.

When asked whether she thought the project could be called a work of true nature, one of the landscape architects explained the difficulties of fully restoring the Cheonggyecheon in the current urban setting:

I think it's hard for us to call it real nature. If the water used were to flow down from Bukhaksan (highest mountains in Seoul, to the north), with just that much volume, then the water would not have been enough, because of that, we had to put an exorbitant amount of money to pump the water [from the Han], then bring it [to the Cheonggyecheon], that kind of situation, if we didn't do that, then there would be times when there wouldn't be water... (Interview 16)

The abundance of flowing water in the stream only during the rainy season would have left a dry

streambed for much of the rest of the year, so the project planners had to consider different ways of supplementing the water volume. The controversial decision to use water pumped from the Han River is one of the main criticisms of the project; however, the planners decided that the benefits of having a continual flow of water outweighed the cost of supplementing the water:

...but substantially, through that method, we received other benefits, really, we have to continue thinking about it, economic effects are there, environmental effects are there, and for the people, really, friendliness with water, the opportunity to get friendly/ close with the water, those kinds of effects are being very well done. (Interview 16)

The comment that “we have to continue thinking about it [supplementing the water]” was echoed by the other landscape architect, who said that “I can say that our rehabilitation is not fully completed, it’s on-going process, later” (Interview 15), pointing out that the variable conditions of the water levels, depending on the season and rainfall, made the project an ongoing subject of monitoring, study, and improvement. This assertion of continuing to research ways to improve technology for supplying the water in the stream was also noted by the former government officials who worked on the project. The emphasis for both the designers and city officials, however, was placed on the benefits of having the water flowing in the stream, which resulted in environmental improvements to the surrounding area, which resulted in making the park a popular destination for Seoul residents and visitors, which then contributed to stimulating the economic development of the northern part of the city, which had been one of the central goals of the project. The progressive impact of the addition of water in the urban setting made a step by step transformation of the neighboring area, but in terms of construction timelines, the project was completed extraordinarily quickly, perhaps too quickly to resolve the challenges of historical restoration and providing a natural solution for supplying the water. Thus, the water supply problem was discussed by the designers and city planners as a challenge that would eventually

improve, and the current condition was explained as having been the best means of resolving the issue with current available technology.

The landscape architects and former city officials placed the greatest emphasis on the significance of the project as having been initiated and led by the city. Although the political ambitions of the project was another criticism, the designers reiterated the views of some of the park visitors that they were impressed that the city had decided to invest in an expensive project that led to other projects and resulted in city-wide improvements:

First of all, I think it has a very great influence. Like I said before, because of that, the cars were blocked, the stream was re-made, that's actually, that was something that the city had to put in a great sum of money to produce, that water, things like that, instead of spending money on other things, but to spend money on that, that's a big deal. Also, really, the people, with nature, to make a place where they can access it [nature] a little more easily, to get people to realize how important that is in the everyday life of the city, more and more because of the existence of things like that, Seoul Forest was built, those large scale parks were started to be built too. (Interview 16)

The implication here is that the city's decision to make a dramatic transformation of the city center which involved great cost as well as physical and technical challenges yielded multiple returns for the benefit of the city and its people. The construction of the Cheonggyecheon coincided with other notable landscape projects in Seoul and directly influenced the development of other stream projects in neighborhoods and towns outside the capital. Even more than ten years after the completion of the project, landscape projects, or architectural projects with a landscape component, in South Korea continue to grow, and the interest and concern of the general public for having access to open spaces and spending time in them has also increased.

III. Seoul Metropolitan Government team members' goals and impacts

The official in charge of planning and design explained the structure of the project

delivery and how the Seoul Metropolitan Government was able to minimize the project time frame by first producing the feasibility study and basic design for the project. After a design competition, three landscape architecture firms were chosen to complete the detailed design phase before the project went into construction. The city used a schedule which the official in charge of planning and design compared to design/ build, which resulted in the 27 month project schedule (Interview 19). The former city workers all remarked on the extraordinarily fast project delivery and marveled at the achievement, noting the mayor's determination and direction that allowed the speedy process. They also noted the controversy and public criticism that the project garnered, which apparently was the most challenging aspect of the project for all the subjects I spoke with. Some also expressed a wish to have been able to address some of the criticism of the project since in the pre-design phases, the city had already addressed and researched the same issues and the resulting construction had been chosen as the best possible solution to address the following challenges: traffic congestion, re-design of the urban plan and public transportation systems, displacement of merchants and businesses, historical preservation, environmental sustainability, flood control, and water supply.

Much of the conversations revolved around the challenges that the city officials faced in addressing the protests and opposition from the business owners and tenants from the site who faced removal and displacement with the completion of the project, which remained the main problem that the city continually faced throughout the project. All four former city officials spoke about the difficulty of trying to appease the protesters and noted that aspect of the project as the most challenging. They also remarked that the project schedule and delivery were smooth and that there were no project delays from the work of the city, the design teams, and during the construction process. They also remarked on the importance of having strong leadership to help

push the project forward, especially in the face of civil opposition.

The conversations I had with the former director general of the restoration project and the official in charge of planning and design reiterated the point that the project began as a means to revitalize the central business district and the areas north of the Han River, in a way to balance the high rate of development in the Gangnam areas, but as the project developed and in its aftermath, the importance of the project turned out to be its environmental function and advancement of the values of creating a green and sustainable city. This may contradict some of the environmental criticisms of the project, but they were quick to note the data that has been collected noting the environmental improvements that were directly linked to the Cheonggyecheon (Busquets, 2011).

The overall impression from these conversations was that the Seoul Metropolitan Government invested a great deal of research and worked to anticipate all the difficulties that the project would entail. However, the former city workers all felt they had addressed the challenges with the best possible solution, perhaps with the exception of the continuing objections of the merchants. They also asserted that the technology to improve the sustainability of the project was an ongoing effort and may change in the future if more environmentally friendlier ways of maintaining the Cheonggyecheon were to be achieved.

The city officials stressed the amount of preparation and research that had been done before work commenced on the Cheonggyecheon, before the design teams were selected. The work they described was in many ways similar to most comprehensive city plans; however, it was done specifically for the city center and involved a redesign of the area surrounding the Cheonggyecheon and anticipated new growth in the area. This preliminary groundwork, which also included the feasibility study for the project, was done for two years before the project

(Interview 19). In describing the city's preparations and research to prepare for the Cheonggyecheon, the city officials discussed the preliminary planning work that was done specifically for the downtown city center in addition to the comprehensive plan for Seoul:

...As we were working on the Cheonggyecheon restoration, we realized Seoul was going to go through many changes, so at that time, in the Seoul city government, every 5-10 years we make a city development plan, but specially for the Cheonggyecheon restoration, we made a city center redevelopment plan, so following the Cheonggyecheon restoration, how to develop the surrounding area, and because of the project, what effects it will have on the rest of Seoul, and how to make the city center beautiful, improve its appearance. We considered up to this point at that time. But after 10 years, now that it's changed already, at that time, what this is, how to develop this and how high these [structures] should be, etc, this was all organized, planned out. (Interview 18)

As the described in the above passage, the preliminary groundwork involved rezoning the Cheonggyecheon area and focusing on ways to improve the appearance of the city center. The officials noted that they did many planning studies of the city center, as well as the larger metropolitan region, in anticipation of the changes to the whole city as a result of the Cheonggyecheon. The main issues that these preliminary planning studies focused on were growth and redevelopment of the Cheonggyecheon area and the anticipated traffic circulation changes that the project would require. According to the city's vision of the project, they planned to have the Cheonggyecheon as the center of the city center's growth:

... if the Cheonggyecheon restoration is done, before and after, how will the city planning be different. When the restoration is done, where the city center follows the stream, how that will change, and for the surrounding area, how to manage that, and departing from that, the whole city, how to manage that... (Interview 20)

The city's understanding that the Cheonggyecheon project would result in changes to the city's urban fabric beyond the city center area was not discussed in detail during my interviews, but

they seem to have realized that the project would have an impact into other parts of the city. This idea aligns with the notion that the whole city is an organic whole, or a interconnected network or machine and that large changes in one area would inevitably impact the whole system.****

The anticipated growth of the city center was among the issues for rezoning studies according to this same official:

While planning on that side, the second thing was, how to first, since the city of Seoul is high-rise city, it would be necessary to impose height limits/ restrictions. Calling it Cheonggyecheon surroundings, it can't all be high-rises, we thought about height limits first, then after that, all those streets, there's all sorts of things, height restrictions, FAR [floor area ratio], city-wide, things like that we made a large framework/ plan, and then, with the Cheonggyecheon surrounding area, one was, by each zone, in detail, either a main street or in the back, secondary street, when they construct a building, in the front, how much setback to build, the reason being, currently, the Cheonggyecheon has been built but the street is narrow, because of that, so later, when they build a building, they have to have a setback, to some extent, so going forward, thinking about the future form/ appearance of the Cheonggyecheon, we made a framework, its district measure/ zoning measure. (Interview 20)

The importance of the city preparing new zoning standards for the city center is that it reflects the anticipated changes to the urban fabric and the kinds of buildings that would start being developed once the Cheonggyecheon was completed. The central business district may have had high-rise buildings before the project was completed, but the second and third portions of the park are still undergoing changes where newer high-rise buildings compete with low story, older buildings that have housed indoor market spaces and manufacturing businesses. City planning and creating new development plans are typical practices of city governments in order to anticipate change and growth; however, in the case of the Cheonggyecheon, it illustrates the concentrated renewal efforts that the project was envisioned to achieve and the projected transformation of the city center area. The initial purpose of the Cheonggyecheon Restoration

project was in large done to stimulate economic growth of the region north of the Han River, and in preparing studies and planning policies, the city looked at the project as an urban planning project that would re-make the area economically and aesthetically. At the same time, their planning studies seem to look for ways to accommodate development while containing too much growth. The efforts to set the setbacks and height limits may also illustrate the ways in which the city could preserve the Cheonggyecheon's surroundings from being too overly encroached upon by large scale buildings which could overwhelm the site.

The Cheonggyecheon was built on a site that had space constraints before it was turned into a park, in a particularly congested part of a congested city. The former city officials discussed the space constraints of the site, and of the tightness of Seoul streets in general:

They are old streets so the street widths are not wide. Long ago, there were only carriages running on them, it isn't a new city, it's an existing city, so there were buildings next to the streets so they couldn't expand. They started from a narrow place, a new city would start from a wide condition, but the city is generally not wide. (Interview 20)

His description of modern Seoul having been built on the framework of an already tightly built city echoed in part, another city official's reference to the history of the ancient capital:

... 500 years ago, Seoul was small. In that area there is some historical bridges and some walls like this, this is one. In the past, urban life was, occurs in the, in 2 km there. It's very close to the palace. Maybe some rich people and some government buildings were there, but after 2 km, some ordinary people live around there, so many activities, cultural activities were there...(Interview 19)

This allusion to the ancient capital during the Joseon Dynasty was in response to a question about the significance of designing the first portion of the park with a concept of history and explains the geographical importance of the site and its archaeological connections to the project concept. It also offers insight into the massive growth of the modern capital in relation to its

ancient geography and how much the city has changed in size and geography since the founding of the Joseon capital. Yet, the modern city has grown from this ancient blueprint, albeit both by spreading out to make the city larger but also within the existing framework that had been established when the capital's borders existed only north of the Han River.

The spatial constraints of the site contributed to the project's inability to be a true historical restoration of the ancient stream and to its reliance on using pumped water from the Han River:

... even these days, what's surprising is that, our city hall, they feel this way, the environment or society, there are some people who say that it wasn't done naturally. There's still this kind of talk, surprisingly. But that, truthfully, in the city, this place where it's become urban, we couldn't have done the restoration naturally. If we tried, all these surrounding buildings would have to be removed. So according to our ability, to the extent that it was possible, so we removed what we could, but can we call it a natural or complete restoration, it's hard to say that. (Interview 18)

In addition to the problem of supplementing the water for the stream, historical restoration efforts posed other challenges to the project. All the city officials and landscape architects I interviewed mentioned their inability to restore the Supyogyo, one of the ancient bridges that had been excavated from the site:

What still gets talked about today is Supyogyo. With the case of Supyogyo, it's not here [at the Cheonggyecheon], it's at Jangchundang Park, but at first, we were going to install here. But Supyogyo has several problems, like the stones are corroded, but the main problem is that Supyogyo, the bridge is longer than the stream channel width. It's so long that we would have had to buy more of the surrounding land and demolish the buildings, since it doesn't fit the stream width. So it would cost a lot of money, so we moved it to the Jangchundang Park, and built a replica with wood here. (Interview 18)

These remarks about the solution of building a replica of the bridge that had been one of the historical markers of the original Cheonggyecheon and moving the actual restored bridge to a

different location illustrate the complication that the reconstruction posed in not being a true restoration yet pursuing historical authenticity of parts of the restoration process and of the completed park space. The resolution of creating a wooden replica of a stone bridge that was restored but could not fit the span of the newly made park illustrates how the project planners were forced to find an alternative way to display the real history found at the Cheonggyecheon by installing it in a different location while recreating the object at the site, at a smaller scale in order to fit the available space. The city officials and designers all recalled the controversy that arose from this decision, as have academics I spoke with in South Korea. It is one of the major examples of ways in which critics charge that the Cheonggyecheon could not fulfill its goals of historical restoration.

The documentation of the process and the research that was done by the city during the planning of the project, as well as the interviews for this research indicate that a true historical restoration of the stream was not the main goal nor a feasible possibility for the project. However, the name of the project from the start was Cheonggyecheon Restoration, which one of the landscape architects clarified that at the time, the project planners did not realize that it was an incorrect term (Interview 16). However, because the project started with an aim towards restoration, with studies and advocacy led by South Korean academics and intellectuals, the issue became a point of contention between early advocates and the city government when restoration efforts were not fully achieved (Rowe, 2010). Although the project may never achieve true natural restoration, both the city officials and landscape architects asserted that they studied and considered every means of supplying the water naturally:

All those problems were all already considered once and gone over while we doing it [the work]. We thought about this and we thought about that, with reason, we thought about all those things, but I did a review of everything, but it wouldn't work any other way, so we picked the way it was done. The people take what

couldn't be done in the past, ecological restoration, they're saying all over again. So for whatever undertaking, there will probably be opponents, but if there is opposition, it would be good to take a close look at the existing condition/previous work done... After that, what it is is, now, what people say, we took the water and make it flow backwards [recirculate it backwards], so we know that it isn't a natural process. Actually, as the water flows into the city center, there are the mountains, Bukhansan and several other mountains, we took the water that flowed down from the mountains and made something like a reservoir, there's a plan for all that, the volume of water is not enough, with that volume, the water cannot flow, the water has to have enough volume for purification, it doesn't work if there isn't enough, it isn't 100% but we did plans for all these things, it's not the whole water volume, but even if it's too little, we made a reservoir [catchment or drainage basin] and made the water flow. Things like that, people with that opinion are saying we should do it over again naturally. Things that we already examined, investigated, I'd like to say that. (Interview 20)

Additionally, this same city official, like the landscape architects, indicated that the problem of the water supply and ecological restoration may one day include supplementing the water supply with natural water from the mountains, though he thought it would still not be enough to produce continuous flow in the Cheonggyecheon:

...In the present time, at Namsan and next to Inwangsan, they are in the process of planning to build water supply reservoirs..., so that they can store the water and it can flow down from there... The volume is too small, so it cannot be changed. Just a portion, it's fulfilling a portion, the quantity as a whole is too small. (Interview 20)

The reconstruction of the Cheonggyecheon could not revive the natural water flow from the once buried streambed. The original stream's water volume had depended on rainfall to replenish the watershed, but the modern Seoul was filled with buildings that impeded a means of carrying water from the surrounding mountains down to the city center. In order to maintain a constant flow of water in the stream, the design of the stream had to supplement the water supply from alternative sources.

The project planners decided between using tap water or pumped water from the Han River and chose the latter option because tap water resulted in unsightly bubbles and an odor, while the river water did not. The water supply is also supplemented by recycled water from the subway system. The plan that the official described using stored water from the mountains, if it were to be implemented, would partially bring credence to the original claim of restoration. However, while the project planners and designers all mentioned future plans and investigations for improving the project, there seemed to be a level of uncertainty about ongoing improvements to the project since the leadership of the Seoul Metropolitan Government had changed in the years since the project began.

Because the reconstruction efforts were led by the former mayor of Seoul, who had won the mayoral election based in part on the promise of rebuilding the Cheonggyecheon, the project progressed efficiently and with great speed. However, a different administration might not give the same level of investment or interest in continuing improvements on a former administration's landmark project. One of the former city officials described the unfinished elements of the project; the infrastructural limits of the city's sewer, wastewater, and stormwater systems; the range of challenges of deciding on the water supply and the issues of safety, aesthetic and emotional appeal of the finished project; and limited time that was available for them to complete the project within the timeframe of the mayor's term limits:

...what we left as long-range plans were three things: the water supply that we are now bringing over from the Han River, we should try to find a means of doing it through natural circulation, what's necessary to do; ...the historical restoration; then, while doing the setbacks, right now, it's restored up to here, but it can't be done at once since it'll take too much time, so for the time being, we'll do it like this, and in the master plan, it says that we will do this [*meaning additional work that wasn't done as mentioned*] with a long-term project plan. But a master plan isn't something that one mayor can do in 5 years, it's something that would take 10-20 years to fulfill. This is something political, that the mayor always changes

from ruling party to the opposition party, this is, issues of consistency were not understood. If we talk about the water first, actually, it's just Seoul, but in any city, it's impossible to supply the water naturally. First of all, the pavement, the pavement rate has become so high, it [the water] doesn't seep underground, when it rains, it just flows out. Even if you say it will, when it rains, it's brief. If we were to do that, after storing rainwater, and continuously making it flow, would it naturally flow; that's been, with a lot of newly constructed buildings, they all store rainwater and use it when they can, and also, it [the water] has to come from the mountains, and right now, currently, in our city of Seoul, the wastewater, sewer, and storm water are in a combined system, they need to be separated, but this isn't easy to do, it takes time. So in the beginning, because this is an environmental project so instead of bringing water from the Han River, there's a waste treatment facility, from there, we planned to supply it by pumping treated wastewater, that was the plan, so the facility is also done, then that is also, there's also effectiveness of education for the people, and it would be a little less costly than pumping from the Han River, but the problem is, right now, the level of technology for treating the water, the smell and bubbles, endocrine disruptors (환경 호르몬), things like this cannot be removed, so we said when the treatment technology becomes a little better, let's utilize it then. So with the Han River water, there's a standard of abandoned pipes/ containers, they take those and use it, there was debate of what method/process to use, about how many million rates of electricity would be needed, things like that. What would we do with a fountain? This is supplying water, if we can soothe the emotions of the people, then there's meaning (it's meaningful), [we said that]. Also, [while doing that] in the surrounding area, if there is plant life/ vegetation growing, it's worth it/ it has value. That kind of overall, anyway, we went through that kind of dispute and decided to do that. Moreover, you cannot swim here, that's been indicated, you cannot really swim of course, but children just go into the water, how can we control/ regulate that? Since they've gone in, we can say what can do about it, since we can't totally control it, instead of that, even if it's small, even if you don't let them go in, for the person who does go in, there won't be a problem because of the dirty water or something like that. So, ultimately, the Han River water, with just treatment done for sediment/ impurities, the grade is about good enough to swim in, was made to flow there. (Interview 19)

His response indicated the multitude of considerations for health, feasibility, and time constraints that the project planners had to resolve in order to bring the project into a state of constructability. However, by introducing these issues as unfinished work, the conclusion of the

interview had an element of a combination of regret and hopefulness that the Cheonggyecheon would continue to change and evolve and improve once the incomplete elements get addressed by future city administrations. But since he was no longer working for the city, he could not give concrete indication that this work was being pursued. Given the range of difficulties that the project planners faced in determining the best solution within limited space and available technology, all the city officials stressed the impact and importance of the mayor's leadership and support for the project as the most significant factor in the project's conclusion.

Each of the city officials I interviewed cited the efficiency of the work process and the strong leadership support from the mayor as being the most easy part of working on the project. As one of the mayor's central campaign promises, the completion of the Cheonggyecheon was a priority project for the mayor and the city, and according to the city officials, the mayor had direct involvement throughout the process, facilitating decision-making when conflicts or multiple opinions among team members arose, and directing city resources and personnel to speed the progression of the project:

After the real work started taking place, the conditions of the actual work was very good. The reason for that was that the mayor gave us his full support, almost all the departments gave us their cooperation, they all collaborated, they very much cooperated. The work itself was very easy, so while doing that work, I learned anew/ afresh what kind of outcome would result from leadership.
(interview 19)

The landscape architects also cited the mayor's participation in the project as a large factor in the smooth workflow, despite the project having a complicated multi-team format. For example, according to one of the landscape architects, design issues concerning the height of the promenade area in relation to the water channel, created conflicts between the civil engineers and landscape architects and resulted in an impasse and tension between the two disciplines. The

landscape architects proposed a lower promenade height so that visitors could walk closer to the stream while the engineers wanted greater height for the promenade. The impasses was resolved by the mayor, who agreed with the landscape architects' proposed design. One of the city officials described the mayor's level of dedication to the project and work ethic:

It's leadership. Leadership is great. So the mayor, for example, we had weekly progress meeting every Saturday morning, for example, in America nobody will turn up, but we had from 8 in the morning to 10, at least, every Saturday morning, and he checked the progress and he redeveloped issues every week, and once on the table, he finalized, within one week or two weeks' time. (Interview 21)

In contrast to the smooth work process during the planning and construction of the Cheonggyecheon, provided by the mayor's leadership, all the city officials said that the most difficult part of the work was the opposition and protests of the businesses and vendors who faced displacement as a result of the transformation of the space.

The former city officials recalled the tensions with the protestors with varying degrees of shock and uncertainty over whether the project might not have been completed. They noted that some of the tension still remained ten years after the completion of the project. The opposition to the project, as described by one of the city officials, seems to have been particularly violent, even for a country like South Korea where demonstrations and protest marches have long been part of the country's political culture:

Truthfully, what was hardest thing was the neighboring merchants who complained that they couldn't do business, it was really... they even used [propane] gas tanks during the demonstrations, the opposition at the initial stage was very strong. [*he says "분쟁", which could be translated as angry merchants??*]. So because of that, at that time, they said there were about 60,000 merchants in the Cheonggyecheon area... So with the street vendors, they were gathered in/ moved to the old Dongdaemun stadium, then with these people, they built Pungmul Market [풍물시장 Seoul Folk Flea Market] and moved them there, but even now, if you go to near Jongmyo [the national shrine], there's another area for street vendors. With the storefront vendors/ store owners near

Cheonggyecheon 3-ga, not the street vendors, in Moonjungdong, they were going to build a facility called Garden-Five, and move them there, but at the present time, it failed. They couldn't move, they had no intention of moving, even now, they're still saying, "Garden-Five, Garden-Five," there's still a lot of problems. (Interview 18)

The displacement of the vendors was another controversy that complicated the reception to the project and has been considered a negative impact of the way the city addressed the problem. For a project that was meant to revitalize, economically and culturally, the Cheonggyecheon area, and considered multiple ways to supplement the water flow and researched and planned for ways to mitigate potential traffic congestion impacts, all with a future-oriented vision, proposing a relocation solution for the vendors and businesses seems to have held less forward-thinking and wide-ranging options. Although I could not get any responses from the current vendors along the Cheonggyecheon during my fieldwork, I had conversations with other Seoul residents and academics and the former city officials who worked on the Cheonggyecheon, who all suggested that the businesses had been in decline, not only as a result of the reconstruction of the park, but from economic and cultural changes in the late 20th century and early 2000s that changed the way South Koreans shopped. One of the main reasons for the change was the increasing numbers of online shopping that became available and that now dominates South Korea. One of the academics I spoke with used the example of book vendors at the Cheonggyecheon. He said that in years past, he would look for books at the book stalls, but in recent years, it had become easier and faster to purchase books online, even used ones. Other reasons cited for the decline were the creation of other places to shop, including indoor markets near the Cheonggyecheon where some vendors were relocated, and declining interest in the kind of products that were found the Cheonggyecheon area. Changes in shopping habits reflect changes in society, but when considering the variety of research that was done to create the Cheonggyecheon and improve the

urban design of the surrounding area, could the city not have invested a similar level of research and support into ways in which the Cheonggyecheon business owners, vendors, and owners could take part in the changes, or learn to adapt their skills and businesses to a different kind of economic culture? The Cheonggyecheon was built to bring about a human-centered city center in a neighborhood that had been dominated by industry. Part of those anticipated changes could have looked for ways in which the city could help the people who would be negatively impacted by the changes to the city and develop ways to transform their livelihoods as well. Yet, the project was a large scale undertaking that extended beyond the redesign of the project site, and perhaps no urban design project can fully encompass and prepare for every future impact.

When asked what they considered their final assessment of the project and its most significant impact to the city ten years after completion, the city officials had different responses which ranged from changes to city processes, the subsequent effect on the people, and the influence of the project on other urban design projects. Specifically, they cited the transformation of the city center from an automobile dominant place to one that became more pedestrian oriented; the environmental benefits that were initiated by the construction of the project; the increase in Seoul residents' awareness for the environment and quality of life issues; and the development of neighborhood streams across the city and in the smaller cities around the country, influenced by the popularity of the Cheonggyecheon. Lauding the environmental benefits of the project had some limitations, however, due to the environmental complexities caused by the energy used for supplementing the water. The range of their responses is indicative of the dynamic changes in South Korea's society, culture, and built environment since the beginning of this century, and the project planners seemed aware that the Cheonggyecheon

project was both supported by these changes that were taking place and also helped influence and realize the changes.

The Cheonggyecheon project encompassed more than just the demolition of a highway ramp and building a water channel and linear park in its place. It reconfigured the urban design of the city center and provided a broader network of public transportation options to enter into and travel through the city. One of the city officials focused on the impact of the project on the changes to the urban design of the city center, and the transformation of the circulation in the city from being dominated by vehicular traffic to pedestrian circulation. He also pointed out the accessibility and increased level of same-grade connections for pedestrians:

If you look at the Urban Development Plan, the first thing that's most important is that, it's changed from a focus on automobile traffic to where people can live, a pedestrian-oriented [city], I'd like to say. The reason is that, before, from Seoul Station to Gyeongbukung, people could not cross the street, [*meaning at the street level*], there was no way to cross, either they had to go by an elevated ramp, or underground, or they used cars. Now, they've built all crossing areas, it's become people-oriented generally. (Interview 20)

The resulting change to the urban fabric helped in decreasing the numbers of private vehicles that entered and traveled daily into the city, which resulted in improving the air quality of the area. The additional public transportation options with closer transfer connections between subways and bus networks increased ridership for both modes, also contributing to the transformation of the city center as a pedestrian-friendly area. By designing the city to be more easily traversable on foot and inviting people to experience the city outside the confines of a vehicle may have helped bring about a collective awakening of an appreciation and desire for public spaces that gave them access to nature. One of the city official emphasized the change in the people's consciousness about the quality of life of the city:

There is that, the Cheonggyecheon did spark that kind of thinking. As I looked at Seoul as a government official/ administrator, when it was hard to making a living, during the industrial age, it was busy [people were busy], there was no time to think about the environment, so things like forests or trees, especially pollution, related to that, air/ atmosphere or water quality, things like that, we weren't able to have interest [in those issues], but as that sad society/ world passed, once incomes rose to a certain level, the atmosphere became one where people could think about quality of life, I think. Due to this atmosphere, doing this kind of project like the Cheonggyecheon was able to receive support, I think. That is what, since the Cheonggyecheon was done well, its widespread effect in other places was very large, the Cheonggyecheon effect was that other streams were all restored, that was the widespread effect... Seoul also, other streams, all, in many other places too. That is, a country's citizen's level/ standard, when their standard of life reaches a certain level ["when the people's problem of how to eat and live becomes resolved"], from that point on, it seems that they start to become interested in the environment, the quality of it [environment]. At that time, it became a good political issue, that was [*meaning improving the environment*]. (Interview 19)

Following the popularity of the Cheonggyecheon project, the development of neighborhood streams in Seoul and in other cities South Korea emerged as a new kind of central public space and landmark for different neighborhoods and towns. Some of these streams connected with other streams, while others are separate spaces, but as a whole, they have created a network of stream promenades where residents can take walks along the water, amongst flora and fauna; stop and use exercise stations; and in some cases, ride bicycles in a dedicated path that is separate from vehicular traffic. Another city official remarked upon the historical changes that the Cheonggyecheon and other similar urban streams underwent as part of the process of industrialization and modernization and the reversal of those processes with the passage of time and change in culture. He also cited the impact of the project on other daylighting and stream development projects and alluded to the wider scope of the trend:

The thoughts/ thinking of the people has changed a lot...The environment, or that kind of thought/ thinking/ consideration of/ about revision/ correction restoration increased a lot, and it became visible, and also the covering of stream, it was another culture, it was a culture, probably developed in Japan first, and we introduced, Cheonggyecheon was one of the first river-covering projects in Korea, and everybody followed, lots of streams were covered after Cheonggyecheon. But when you restore this Cheonggyecheon stream, we had lots of followers home and abroad, and our local cities, they tried and they actually restored their rivers as well. They removed the covers, concrete...(Interview 21)

The implication here is that in the past, with the covering of the original Cheonggyecheon stream, city planners were following a trend that was developed outside Korea, but the reconstruction project gave them the opportunity to become one of the pioneers of a new technology and process of bringing river systems back into the urban core. The importance of the Cheonggyecheon in the growth of similar stream developments in the neighborhood streams around Seoul was also cited by the landscape architects.

For the project planners and designers, the social, cultural, economic, and environmental benefits of the Cheonggyecheon outweighed any difficulties and limitations of the project, even with the challenges of supplementing the water. The positive reception to the project and the range of impacts that the project has engendered both for the city of Seoul and for the reputation of South Korea seem to have made all the remaining challenges worth the risk and effort that the project entailed. It also reflects the ambition of post-industrial city leaders to find ways to bring nature into the cityscape, diversifying public spaces and providing a natural respite for their residents. The belief and assertion that a project such as the Cheonggyecheon will bring about environmental benefits for its surroundings in some ways hinges on hope that the project will continue to evolve and become more natural, although some positive changes to the environment have manifested quickly.

The project has helped transform the physical built environment of Seoul's city center and perhaps even the emotions, desires, and consciousness of Seoul's residents for what kind of place their city can be. Most significantly for this research project focused on memory and history, it has revealed the possibility that a city's perspective of itself can be rewritten and made anew while harking back to the past and investing resources and energies in the creation of a new kind of public space.

IV. Layers of history, layers of narratives

The combination of two research methods, interviews and filming, built a foundation for a multifaceted perspective of the Cheonggyecheon, its history, the process of its planning, design, and construction, and its present, though limited in views of the neighboring vendors' perspectives. However, resistance of some to speak to me about the project has given me some further insight into the project, beyond the accolades the project has garnered and the hard work and grand vision of those involved in its creation. From the surface, the project may represent just an aesthetic change to the urban landscape of Seoul's downtown area. However, upon deeper examination, the project's complexity and scale, and the changes that followed in other areas of the city and country, are indicative of what a transformation of a city's built environment can do to change a region's infrastructure, way of life, the common values of its people, as well as the identity and image of the city. Not all of these changes have been entirely positive nor equitable for some city residents and business owners.

The drawbacks to the project in this way is true of any urban renewal project, and city governments and the people must learn to address and account for these concerns and negative outcomes with as much effort and, if possible collaboration, as they put into devising safety protocols and meaningful aesthetics to any changes in the built environment of an urban

landscape.

The reconstruction of the Cheonggyecheon and the narrative of its history and future reflect a far-ranging, coordinated plan to transform the downtown area of Seoul, and this transformation has expanded to re-designs of other streams in the city and beyond. However, a city is more than just places, it is the people who live and work in them that give the spaces life and meaning. Just as the science and technology behind the Cheonggyecheon's water control and efforts for the park to become more environmentally friendly in the future are said to be a continuing effort, so must the efforts to help those people and their businesses that were displaced by the project. The Cheonggyecheon is a project that suggests that the mechanical production of flowing water can eventually become a site of nature. Just as this is a transformation in progress, the idea of on-going transformation should expand to the rest of those people, places, and processes that were also impacted by the project, and we might hope that the transformative efforts of re-creating a natural landscape in the city might have an equally transformative effect on the lives and consciousness of its people.

Chapter 7 Analysis and synthesis of research: The Cheonggyecheon's constructed narrative of history, memory, and nature

This dissertation began with an examination of four conceptual themes of landscape urbanism in James Corner's "Tera Fluxus" as a framework for open space projects that have transformed underused or damaged urban sites into urban landscapes. Using the four themes of "processes over time, the staging of surfaces, the operational or working method, and the imaginary" (Corner, 2006) to determine the theoretical frame of inquiry to address the design and urban transformations of the Cheonggyecheon, two topics emerged: temporality and the imaginary, in the project's construction of a historical narrative on an urban landscape canvas.

Fieldwork research used a mixed methods approach to study the intentions and impacts of the reconstructed Cheonggyecheon project. The combined research data of visual and interview narratives yielded three major themes of history and memory, nature, and the formation of a new place identity, that highlight how the project has changed Seoul and acts as a social and cultural construction of the city's history, memory, and evolving perspective of nature. This chapter discusses the three topics using a constructionist approach to narrative analysis to show how each of the topics illustrate the significance of the storytelling model in the Cheonggyecheon reconstruction.

I. The Cheonggyecheon's History and Memory

"All time, all time is history - not just Joseon, from the Joseon to the modernization period - is the history of Seoul, of the Cheonggyecheon."

- Cheonggyecheon design team member (Interview 15)

"The Cheonggyecheon had shacks. The stream water was very dirty and there's no way to describe how bad it was. It was dirty and smelled bad. That's my memory."

- Seoul resident describing the Cheonggyecheon fifty years ago (Interview 6)

The narrative of the Cheongyecheon's and Seoul's history is presented in different ways through the design of the park. During special events such as the annual winter Seoul Lantern festival, the park becomes activated with additional historic imagery with lantern installations retelling the history of ancient Korea. Through a combination of media, community and municipal events, and specific conceptual timeframes for the design of the park, the Cheonggyecheon exhibits a variety of functions, atmospheres, and visual and experiential conditions, depending on the time of day, season, or location within the park. The activation of the park illustrates the project's adherence to the theme of the imaginary and imbues its evocation of history with creativity and beauty for the purpose of entertainment and celebration. The park's spectacle of historical representations in abstracted and layered forms gives dynamic expression to Halbwach's assertion that "there is a living history that perpetuates and renews itself through time" (Halbwachs, 1980, p.64). The historical narrative of the design of the park presents a complex blend of chronological order and reordering that is made more intermingled with the addition of installations and other media. The park's designers describe the three sections of the park as history, or the past; culture, or modern period; and nature, or the future (Interview 15). However, within these conceptual sections, the past, contemporary culture, and the future are intertwined and constructed and activated in layers, suggesting that temporality, or the processes of time, extends the entire length of the park and serves as one of the major narrative devices of the project.

The space for special events is usually limited to the first section of the park, with its concept of history. However, the design of the section is modern and partially clear of the riparian landscape that extends the majority of the park. With the addition of artistic and folkloric representations of history, the historical narratives of the ancient Joseon Dynasty evoke a sense

of newness and abstraction. This quality to historical representation aligns with the designers' assertion that the project was not meant to be a historic restoration (Interview 15, 16). Instead, the project's presentation of history is most often aesthetic, with artistic representations that beautify the park, or provide visual and auditory interest. Through the aesthetic representations of historic motifs such as the replicas of the mural depicting King Jeongjo's procession and the Doseongdo map of ancient Hanyang, the Cheonggyecheon presents the city's redefined identity "through the revitalization of its own history" (Nora, 1989). In this way, the project asserts the ancient history of the Joseon Dynasty as a key narrative of the Korean identity, but as presented in the modern surroundings of the park's first section, it suggests a new and revitalized history and the assertion of a modernized national identity built on a selective idealization of the past. The lantern festival installations of ancient architecture and paintings from the Joseon period likewise evoke a sense of newness to the representations of the past.

The opposing perspective of this reading of the park as an imaginative representation of history is the lack of historical continuity and in its place a fictional construction, of which David Harvey laments, "the search for roots ends up at worst being produced and marketed as an image, as a simulacrum or pastiche" (Harvey, 1990). The combined effect of the historical traces in the park's design serve as unrelated heterotopias of time and place, suggestive of Korean-ness, instead of Korean history. However, the designers and SMG project team interviews state that despite the original intention of recovering its 600-year old history (Park, 2006), historical restoration was not the goal of the project, because it was both not possible nor desirable (Interview 15, 16). This assertion was in response to questions of the project's authenticity in not reaching a natural restoration of the stream and the decision to incorporate replicas of certain archaeological landmarks from the original stream, particularly the Supyogyo bridge. These

decisions were made due to the infeasibility of full restoration due to the urban condition of Seoul, space limitations, and degradation of some of the artifacts (Interview 18). Adding to the infeasibility of the past as a design precedent was the reality of the history of the stream and Seoul.

In contrast to the stylized representation of dynastic history displayed in the first section, interviews with park visitors described the modern past of the Cheonggyecheon site. Respondents described the desperate and harsh conditions of the area surrounding the stream, which one of the designers interviewed summed up as “a very poor period,... it wasn’t like we could reminisce and make it into a landscape” (Interview 16). The designer also described the concept of incorporating historical traces as a work of the imagination. The imaginary functions as both interpreter and editor of the project’s representation of history. In this way, the Cheonggyecheon’s representation of history illustrates Connerton’s assertion that collective forgetting is a condition of modernity. He references 19th century French theorist Ernst Renan’s assertion that “forgetting... is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation” (Connerton, 2009). The Cheonggyecheon operationalizes this idea in a series of erasures and reconstructions of the past that either diminishes or acknowledges the site’s modern past in discrete, almost unobtrusive ways. Thus, the narrative of the modern history of the site is not exactly eliminated, but it is not made the focus of any part of the park.

The design of the second and third sections of the park illustrate how memorial elements of the site are represented as abstractions, as in the laundry site, the remaining columns of the highway ramp that stand as partial ruins, and the replica of a shanty house. They stand apart, removed from the context of their actual history, and as time passes, they become more distanced from the temporality of the project’s design scheme, becoming a distortion and “necessarily

fragmented” (Harvey, 1990). Nora distinguishes “memory.. [as] a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past” (Nora, 1989). Instead of signifying the memory of the site, Nora would argue that all historic markers evoke the frozen representational element of history. Other memorial devices installed on the project are either removed from the park space and placed on the street level, or framed as small, almost unnoticeable, photographs inserted into the wall of the promenade. In addition to the replica of the shanty structure, the statue of Peace Market labor activist Chun Tae-il sits on one of the vehicular bridges that cross the Cheonggyecheon. The inclusion of Chun at the site reflects its painful history, but, like the shanty house, they represent the parts of the past that the Cheonggyecheon project does not want to revitalize and highlight. Lynch asserts the necessity for the selective representation of history, as “escapes from the servitude of the past” (1972). By arguing that “we prefer to select and create our past and to make it part of the living present” (1972), Lynch argues that having editorial control over the past allows for moving forward, especially in response to a history that is marked by strife and struggle. A major example of this selective editing of history in the Cheonggyecheon’s historical narrative is the glaring omission of the Japanese colonial period. The deliberate erasure of this significant timeframe from the design illustrates the project’s nationalist assertion by removing the period from the broad timeline of historic markers. Yet, the prominent inclusion of the Japanese lantern installation during the Lantern Festival is indicative of the city’s focus on promoting globalization and cultivating a cosmopolitan image and outlook. The Cheonggyecheon reflects divergent and imaginative representations of history and memory. The chosen representations ultimately give the project a sense of history from which the city has moved past the memories of hardships and struggle. In this sense, the project reflects Halbwachs’ assertion of the incompleteness of a

historical project when he writes that “history is neither the whole nor even all that remains of the past” (Halbwachs, 1980, p.64). For the Cheonggyecheon’s representations of history, its incompleteness strengthens the positive outlook of the historical narrative by the exclusion of difficult chapters of South Korea’s past.

Despite this truncated and selective chronological presentation of the historical concept, park visitors praised the progress and development of the park. For those respondents who could remember the highway ramp and the polluted stream, the transformation into a park and new stream represented an overall advancement for the city. By comparing the old Cheonggyecheon with the new, they read the project as part of a larger chronology of Seoul, alluding to a perception of the whole city and its built environment as pieces of that chronicle. In this regard, the older Seoul residents who witnessed and described the site’s past demonstrate the “permanent evolution” (Nora, 1989) of memory. Their contrasting memories of the site from the memories and knowledge of the site recounted by younger respondents highlight the different ways in which respondents wanted to discuss the park. One younger respondent focused only on the future potential of the park as an exhibition space: “I think the Cheonggyecheon can become [or change into] a place to display art and have people experience it firsthand” (Interview 14). The respondent’s hope of using the park as a space to display and view art suggests that for her, the historic art and artifacts that are part of the park’s design serve as background to the physical form of the stream and park, allowing the timelessness of the space to express other narratives. The perception of the park as a setting for artistic, civic events, bringing visual arts into a larger, more open forum than in a gallery or even a museum, illustrates another heterotopic dimension of the Cheonggyecheon as a public space. More significantly, the respondent’s remark expresses the city’s desired goals of the project: to reflect the evolution of the future-oriented vision of the

city. The next section examines how the narrative of Seoul's vision of the future in the Cheonggyecheon project is expressed through its temporality and in the form of an urban landscape, creating what Gandy might call a "transformation of nature into a new synthesis" (Gandy, 2002). This new synthesis combines natural systems with technological interventions and in the process altering the public perception of nature in the city.

II. A newly made nature

"It wasn't about how to recover nature, but instead the main issue was about how to make nature come into the city, and how to make nature and the city come together."

-Cheonggyecheon design team member (Interview 16)

Similar to the Cheonggyecheon's presentation of historical narrative, the project's narrative of the synthesis of nature and the city in the Cheonggyecheon takes different levels of meaning and form, from atmospheric and aesthetic to the functional and the ability to trigger human responses. The designers and planners of the park's landscape design focused on two significant attributes to the landscape features of the stream and green space: cleanliness and the idea of rebirth. These two characteristics highlight the project's social and cultural construction of nature in the city as simultaneously an evocation of the new and a recovery of the buried stream, with an emphasis on the contrasts between the old and new streams. The new Cheonggyecheon flows with water that is clean enough for people to safely touch, whereas the historic stream is remembered for its pollution. The new stream's cleanliness is the result of the water having gone through a treatment process to make it safe to touch (Interview 19), but the idea of rebirth suggests that the current post-industrial city has removed the causes that had led to the original stream's pollution. The combination of Seoul's improved urban condition and the

city's efforts to provide a clean flow of water in the Cheonggyecheon reinforces the image of the new stream as a representation of cleanliness and newness. The idea of rebirth also alludes to the awakening of an emotional connection to nature through experiencing the park, as park visitors expressed appreciation for the park for offering a stream, greenery, fresh air, and cooler temperatures than the surrounding city. Lastly, the park's infrastructural function of the space as a stormwater channel during flooding events reflects the unpredictable qualities of natural forces.

In the visual narrative of the Cheonggyecheon's conceptual design, the final, third section of the park represents "nature" or "Seoul's future" (Interview 15). However, the stream courses through the entire length of the park, and the riparian landscape features align the stream for most of the park with the exception of the first part of the first section. The three different designs of the stream and surrounding landscape in each section reflect temporal and aesthetic distinctions as an element of the imaginary connections between the stream and the city. As discussed in chapter 5, the visual narrative of the stream illustrates the city's vision of the urban stream as a representation of or, in certain ways, a contrast to the culture of the adjacent neighborhoods. These range from the first section's modern and sleek concrete plaza to increasing levels of vegetation as the stream flows further east. The design of the stream reinforces or reimagines the image of each part of the city it flows through, and casts the subterranean space of the park as a subtle mirror or contrast to the neighborhood above, illustrating the shifting dynamics between the city and the park. Despite these differences in the design of the stream from one section of the park to another, the stream has one consistent characteristic throughout the park: flowing water.

The most radical departure from the original Cheonggyecheon stream is the idea of the new stream carrying clean and clear water. The narrative of the original stream, repeated in most

of the fieldwork interviews, describe the water as dirty, foul, and dangerous. The original stream was a place that people did not want to go near and during floods, caused damage and risk to the city, especially to those people living in shanty structures along its banks (Park, Biggs, Hwang, Rowe, Kal, Nomura, Interview 6, 10, 15, 19, 21). The pollution was caused by people using the stream as a wastewater channel and its dangers due to the city not having the infrastructure to protect the city against flooding during heavy rain. As one SMG project team member said, in the past, “we need[ed] roads, infrastructure, and we had not maintained this river...due to [a] lack of money or lack of resources” (Interview 21). The decision to cover the stream illustrates a twist in the old binary of nature versus humans (Evernden, Lefebvre, Glacken), in which the natural state of the stream was damaged by humans and made more uncontrollable due to the country’s underdeveloped state (Chon, T. Kim, Nomura). The perception of the stream in the past was not of an urban amenity but a public and safety liability, which South Korea at the time could not control. The transformation of this view into one in which the urban stream is a desirable resource rests on South Korea’s increased wealth and competitive economic, cultural, and technological position in the 21st century. The social construction of this new narrative of the stream requires care and changed civic priorities, and perhaps more importantly economic and technological advancement. For the Cheonggyecheon, that includes constantly monitoring and treating the water sources to make it safe for visitors while the design of the park must also provide life safety provisions in the event of flooding.

Whether surrounded only by concrete walkways, a sliver of vegetation or an expansive riparian landscape, the constructed stream and its surroundings evoke a sense of cleanliness, where visitors can escape the urban pollution and congestion at the street level of the surrounding city. However, water in the stream remains a source of controversy, not only for

being mostly supplied from the Han River. Despite reports such as one in 2011 that the stream was polluted with high bacteria levels (Yonhap News Agency; Korea Herald, 2011), at the time apparently caused by heavy rainfall, visitors often touch or wade into the shallow areas of the water, illustrating the ways in which visitors connect with the water on a haptic and experiential level. People may have the same response to water in large fountains, but the level of responsibility for the project designers would be the same, in that the water in the stream needs to be safe for human contact. For the members of the SMG team, during project planning, there were concerns for the inadequate level of water treatment as well as odor problems when alternative water sources were tested. The treatment process to make the water safe for visitor interaction is not the only way the park presents a landscape that evokes cleanliness. Cheonggyecheon workers clear trash from the park, maintain the landscaping, and routinely monitor the water quality, as well as public activity along the park, illustrating the work and care required to maintain the park.

The design challenges of maintaining the flowing water, providing the necessary connections between the separate sections, and creating a landscape design that would “make nature and the city come together” (Interview 16) illustrate landscape urbanism themes of the staging of surfaces and the operational or working method. They reflect the multiple sources of project challenges, in its conception, implementation, and maintenance. Interviews with the design and Seoul Metropolitan Government project teams revealed the intertwined and interdependent processes of designing and constructing the stream and green space and the required coordination of different project teams.

The designers described the project as part of a larger trend in South Korea of daylighting streams, suggesting that the project, for all its singularity, was part of a growing focus on

restoring waterways (Interview 15, 16). One of the SMG team members explained that when South Korea began its modernization process that led to covering its streams, it was the best solution at the time for resolving the health and hygiene problems caused by having open, polluted streams that frequently flooded (Interview 21). But the current reversal of this history illustrates advanced stream engineering skills and technology to construct a stream that has clean enough water to touch and a space that could withstand flooding that would keep flood waters out of city streets. The outcome of the new Cheonggyecheon is reflective of Spirn's assertion that the city should be designed with nature, and that "the social value of nature must be recognized and its power harnessed, rather than resisted" (Spirn, 1984). Rather than letting the forces of nature disrupt the city as the original stream had done in the past, the Cheonggyecheon project was designed to improve the city's and its people's connection and experience with nature.

The project planners reported that the project was a result of the people of the city becoming more concerned with environmental protection and increasing public amenities. In the 21st century, these are global concerns, but as one designer reflected, for the people of Seoul, the goal for the design of the Cheonggyecheon was to heighten the people's awareness and appreciation of nature:

...the most important thing, was that whether this was true nature or not, how could we reanimate nature's function, whether that was the most important thing. And with that, the people, the citizens, could feel/ experience how good nature in the city is (Interview 16).

For the last section of the park, this goal is reflected in the wider expanse of the stream than in the previous sections, heightening the vision of the section as a naturalistic space. The stream joins the Jungnangcheon stream before flowing into the Han River, connecting the man-made

stream with the source of much of its water. Other elements that accentuate the Nature theme of the section are the migratory bird protection area and the more naturalistic growth of vegetation along the stream bed. One of the visitor interviews revealed that the area often flooded, now as it had with the original stream (Interview 10). For this visitor, the reconstructed Cheonggyecheon did bring about a “rebirth” of the stream, yet the imaginative reconstruction of the stream results in the same recurring level of uncontrollability that had plagued the original stream. However, the visitor expressed a sense of appreciation for the new stream and park, even with its occasional flooding. Despite the strength of the imaginary of the park as a safe and controlled stream, representative of the city’s advanced technology and knowledge, flash flooding events suggest that no amount of planning and engineering advances can produce a completely predictable and controlled stream. The best that the city can do is prepare the city to withstand and recover from weather events. Part of the city’s resilience is the new urban design of the site: there are no longer structures built along the streambank that would become inundated with flood waters, and nearby buildings are mostly high-rise structures built on a higher grade than the park. For this visitor and others, the Cheonggyecheon represents part of the larger changes in the city’s evolution, which leads to the final topic of the formation of a new place identity.

III. A new place identity

“It’s showing us the great success of this restoration project. The environment improved, ecological improvement, and they provide new open space and also boost urban regeneration of inner-city.”

-Cheonggyecheon project team member (Interview 21)

“After that, ecological engineering became very developed, so all this happened because of the Cheonggyecheon.”

-Cheonggyecheon design team member (Interview 16)

“It’s very developed now. Before the restoration, it was a highway ramp with cars on top... but

it cost a lot of money... what comes first, our country's economic development. Is that the priority?

-Cheonggyecheon visitor (Interview 6)

In presenting the Seoul Metropolitan Government's goals and basis for the Cheonggyecheon Restoration project, Park Kil-dong states the final project objective as "Seoul will be reborn as 'A City of Culture and Environment in the 21st Century'" (Park, 2006). In Seoul's application to join UNESCO's Creative Cities network, the city's image is described as in transition from being a "hard city" to becoming a "soft city" (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2009). The Cheonggyecheon's construction of a new place identity was immediate in its transformation from a highway ramp to an urban stream park, but for Seoul, the new park was part of an ongoing project of greening its public spaces (Bae, 2011; Hwang, 2015; Han, 2015; Kang, 2009). The construction of a new place identity reflects Harvey's assertion that "modernism takes as one of its missions the production of new meanings for space and time in a world of ephemerality and fragmentation" (Harvey, 1990, p.216). The Seoul Metropolitan Government's description of Seoul in the rapid growth era was that it was "an urban environment that had no identity" (SMG, 2009). The concerted effort to change the city's identity reflects part of Seoul's, and in a larger scale, the country's, efforts to overcome the lingering impact of the developmental period that started with Park Chung-hee's presidency (Kal, 2011; Lee, 2011; Interview 15). However, the transformation of the city's underused and aging spaces into large public landscapes reflect the changes to the built environment that growing prosperity that started in that time period made possible.

The narratives of Chun Tae-il and Park Chung-hee and Nomura Motoyuki's images of the Cheonggyecheon and Seoul serve as reminders of the difficulties and the human toll of the

time period, but these reminders may eventually be forgotten as the city continues to change and recede away from the past (Connerton, Lynch). Yet, these reminders echo the contemporary challenges and difficulties of the vendors who faced displacement or the end of their livelihoods caused by the reconstruction project, indicative of existing economic and social gaps that the revitalization project could not improve or resolve.

John Lyle summarizes the differences between the time periods as “the industrial age replaced the natural processes of the landscape with the global machine..., while regenerative design seeks now to replace the machine with landscape” (Lyle, 1994). In Seoul’s modern history, the natural processes of the landscape could only emerge after industrialization, when the city and its people had gained the means to envision a different city. As one member of the Seoul Metropolitan Government Cheonggyecheon project team described the city and the people’s consciousness in the past : “...when it was hard to making a living, during the industrial age, it was busy [people were busy], there was no time to think about the environment, so things like forests or trees, especially pollution, related to that, air/ atmosphere or water quality, ... we weren’t able to have interest [in those issues]” (Interview 19). However, “once incomes rose to a certain level, the atmosphere became one where people could think about quality of life” (Interview 19). The narrative of the country’s progressive wealth and subsequent pursuit of improvements to quality of life issues was not the only driver for making changes to the built environment.

In large part, this change in civic awareness of the need for environmental improvements stemmed from the continuous growth of traffic congestion that was overburdening the aging infrastructure of the highway ramp (M-B Lee, 2009; Interview 21). As a SMG Cheonggyecheon project team member explained, the focus for the city’s urban management focused on vehicles

when the number of vehicles that crossed the Cheonggyecheon overpass daily was 100,000. When that number increased to “over three million cars, we focus on human beings” (Interview 21). The shift to focusing on people suggests that the increased numbers of automobiles entering the city had become an untenable situation and that the city’s modernization project had to evolve. Turning attention to the human being meant not just developing a wider public transportation network, although that was part of the process, but it also required constructing a new social and cultural identity of the park and by extension to the whole city.

The Cheonggyecheon’s construction of a pedestrian space in the site of a highway ramp illustrates the project’s most stark break from the vestiges of the auto-centric city center. Increasing the city’s public transportation networks, discouraging and at times limiting cars from entering the city center during the construction process, and creating more walkable sidewalks illustrate the multi-modal integration of the transportation part of urban systems. One SMG interview respondent noted that the Urban Development Plan reflects the city’s focus on making Seoul a pedestrian-oriented city. The coordination of these efforts is another illustration of the two landscape urbanism themes of staging the surfaces and the operational method, expressive of the connectivity of urban forces. However, these efforts comprise only part of the project’s construction of a new place identity. The landscape urbanism themes of the imaginary and the processes of time represent the stronger connection to the development of a new place identity by an altered contemporary perception of the idea of progress.

Interviews with both visitors and the project designers offered several examples of how the Cheonggyecheon resulted in “progress” and the “development” of the site into the reconstruction of a stream and green space. The implication of this description is that the highway ramp was no longer a sign of progress, that the days of thinking that highway ramps

indicated technological and civic advances were over. The passage of time, as well as the aging state of the highway ramp and surrounding neighborhood most likely explains the allusion to the park reconstruction as a sign of progress. The idea of parks and urban landscapes being added to the city as a representation of progress, however, suggests an expanded perception of what progress and development can mean for the evolution of the city.

The designers and SMG team noted that the project resulted in learning new stream engineering technology and expanding on their knowledge and skills. The idea of progress then could be applied to the city's built environment and to the accumulation of knowledge that the designers and the SMG team acquired through working on the project. For the park visitors, the construction of a new park represented an advancement for the city's built environment, a new vision that reflects the altered economic, social, and cultural conditions of the city and its people. As one visitor to the park noted, in the past, "lifestyle was difficult... but culture has to change and evolve" (Interview 17). The visitor's acceptance of the changes to the city's built environment reflects her ability to enjoy the change and not experience it as a loss or trauma. The people who opposed the reconstruction project, the displaced vendors and historic preservationists, might not be able to fully share these sentiments, so the process of Seoul's reinvention was not a universally welcomed or equitable process, and critics such as one of the interview respondents might ask, "what is the [city's] priority?" (Interview 6). The project exemplifies Connerton's critique of modernity in its fast-paced replacement of one built environment for another. However, these same processes have been an ongoing process of the Cheonggyecheon's evolution through its modern history (Park, 2006; Rowe, 2011), but despite criticism, the city has embraced these aspects of its modernity. The Cheonggyecheon has helped in the city's project of changing its identity and image and has remained a popular public

gathering and civic space since its completion. Its past legacy of evolution suggests that the project could further change, a development for which the project designers and former members of the city's project team expressed hope, although they also expressed resignation that the park's future would ultimately be dependent on politics. The Cheonggyecheon's expression of landscape urbanism's themes of the imaginary and the processes of time hold distinctive connections to Seoul's and South Korea's history, memory, and sensibility in response to the visible forms of nature. The project has served as one of ways in which the city has claimed a place identity for the Cheonggyecheon site and as part of the ongoing construction and strengthening of Seoul's identity.

Chapter 8 Conclusion: The Cheonggyecheon's transformation from past to the future

By using specific and distilled ideas of history, memory, and nature in the place-making project of the Cheonggyecheon, the city of Seoul has demonstrated how a new landscape project can be designed to re-formulate and retell the narrative of the city's history, bridge the past with the city's future, and build upon a new conception of the city as an environmentally and pedestrian-friendly city that offers a variety of public green spaces. The project's removal of the highway overpass resulted in the transformation of the perception of the Cheonggyecheon site from a place dominated by hardscapes and oriented for vehicular traffic into a stream and pedestrian promenade, illustrating the process of erasure and the creation of a new place identity. While the park is located at the site of a historic stream, the new stream is a stark contrast to the old stream and is instead an expression of the city's progress. As the centerpiece of the project's expression of progress, the reconstructed stream highlights key points for the articulation of Seoul as a progressive and advanced city. The technologically supplemented flowing water, the treatment process that cleans it and makes it safe for human contact, and the control of stormwaters during floods illustrate how the new stream has been designed and maintained to produce desired effects and impacts in the city and as public landscape. The rhetorical description of the Cheonggyecheon as a rebuilt historic stream serves to highlight the contrast between the old and the present stream and city.

The major questions posed by this research began by asking whether a landscape design that exhibits traces of the past evokes history and memory. Or, through the transformation of use, function, and typology, does the project become intrinsically a new space, and another urban renewal project in a different form? The design of the Cheonggyecheon landscape was a reconstruction of a stream that deliberately did not evoke history and memory due to the

negativity and difficulty of Seoul's and South Korea's past (Interview 16), so the representation of history is notable for its celebration of cultural heritage. Despite the challenges posed by depicting images of the past, the design constructs a refined and pointed historical narrative. The modern aesthetic of the new space, especially its clean water, imbued a new meaning and identity to the park, thereby illustrating the process and goals of modernity (Harvey, Connerton, Lynch). However, this transformation was the goal of the city as it planned the project and after completion, appreciated by park visitors as an improvement to the city's built environment.

In the thematic History section with its replicas of historic imagery and iconographic representations of ancient Seoul, the project displays visual and spatial cues to city's and dynastic past. Through the modern and sanitized reconstruction of a historic stream, the project achieved cultural, though not full, restoration of the site, emphasizing the narrative of Seoul's ancient history as a revival of the city's cultural heritage. Restoration of historic artifacts from the site, what the designers have called the historical traces that laid buried with the original stream, serve as the project's tangible connections to the city's heritage. The representation of history reveals a narrative of Seoul that celebrates modernized fragments of the past and the passage of time that has brought about the reconstruction project. Through the fragmented representation, the project erases the difficult and challenging parts of South Korea's more recent history. The selectivity of historical representations highlights the parts of history that the city chooses to celebrate and retells for its endurance, a process that Kevin Lynch argues is a necessary part of the process of building the present as distinct from the past (Lynch, 1972). Instead the project emphasizes positive reinterpretations of historic imagery, partial restorations, and reconstructions of the past. As for the evocation of memory, interviews with park visitors elicited some knowledge of the site's past, but most regarded the park as a completely new place,

an opinion echoed by the project designers and members of the Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) team. Those who reflected on the site's past could only remark on the negative aspects, reinforcing the design decision not to evoke the site's past, and expressing appreciation for the present condition of the park as a sign of progress.

The second broad question addressed the challenges and possible problems of building a landscape in a space that had been long bereft of elements of visible nature, specifically, how can a natural forms such as a stream be constructed in the post-industrial city, and what can be construed as nature? Interviews with project designers and members of the SMG described the challenges posed by the project's major landscape feature of a reconstructed stream. They asserted that in an urban environment, a full natural restoration would have been impossible due to space constraints and the need to remove more of the city's buildings in order to connect the stream to its original source in the mountains. However, because the original stream was historically dry in the dry season, a full restoration would not have resolved the problem of the continual water supply. The project team argued that the decision to supplement water pumped from the Han River was the best solution for the available current technology (Interview 15, 19, 21) and expressed hope that the project will evolve and one day find a more sustainable solution for the water supply. The decision to use treated water from the Han River instead of tap water was based on the odor that the latter produced, indicating the importance of making the stream a feature that would attract visitors to approach and be near, and unlike the historic stream.

Another main challenge for the landscape design was designing life-safety provisions in case of flooding events. The SMG team remarked that safety and protecting the city was the highest priority for the project. The design of the riparian landscape also had to withstand

flooding and not increase flood risk, while also providing an aesthetically pleasing, native landscape.

One of the designers answered the question of what could be construed as nature in a constructed landscape in an urban environment as not what was or was not nature, but how the project might bring nature and the city together. In reply to the question of whether the Cheonggyecheon could be considered natural, the response was that it could not. However, the more important issue for the city and the designers was for the project to produce environmental benefits that would improve the urban condition. The designer emphasized the project planners' desire to increase the visitors' awareness and appreciation for public landscapes and to provide opportunities to feel connected to nature by allowing people to interact with the stream and vegetation (Interview 16). This goal was reiterated by members of the city's project team. They focused on the timeliness of the project, with team members suggesting that during the rapid growth period, the city and its people did not have time nor the resources to turn their attention to improving the environment (Interview 19 and 21). Instead, that time period resulted in environmental damage with certain sites such as the original Cheonggyecheon stream becoming one of the city's focal points of pollution and misery, furthering the disconnection between the people from visible forms of nature. The transformation of these damaged sites illustrates the process by which Seoul's goal of environmental restoration also builds on the task of forging human connections with the city.

Specific questions about the project asked in what ways has the Cheonggyecheon succeeded in meeting the project goals and how is the public's reception of the Cheonggyecheon indicative of the project's impact on the city and its people? The Cheonggyecheon was part of the city's larger project of creating more public green spaces thereby increasing the city's public

amenities to address issues of quality of life and livability in the city (Park, 2006; Interview 15, 16, 19, 21). To address these topics, interviews with park visitors indicated an overall positive response to the park, and many visitors said they often visited the park. Observations of visitor activities and events that were held at the park showed a high level of activity and appreciation for the project's addition to the city and promoted the image of Seoul as a culturally vibrant city. The Cheonggyecheon figures prominently among the city's promoted tourist destinations and balances historic tourist sites with a modern addition. The city's and outside research on the Cheonggyecheon have addressed the project's impact on urban revitalization, and they have reported both positive and negative impacts (Lee and Anderson, 2013; K. Hwang, 2004; Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2006). One notable impact of the project was the growth of stream restorations and the construction of similar stream parks in other parts of the city and other cities in South Korea (Interview 15, 16, 21), spreading the changing image of Seoul to the rest of the country.

The last question asked how the new Cheonggyecheon project is representative of its place in history and how it fits into the course of Seoul's built environment. The Cheonggyecheon is a site that has undergone many changes over the course of its history (Park, 2006; Rowe, Kim, Jung, 2011). Members of the project team reflected that the project has increased the level of public interest in environmental projects and expressed predictions and hopes that it may continue to evolve, particularly in resolving the aspects of the project that were left unfinished, especially the challenge of the water supply. Despite its lack of fulfillment of its sustainability goals, it has helped promote the changing identity of Seoul as an environmentally-focused city, although the project has been criticized as being unfriendly to the environment (Interview 5; Noh, 2009).

The contradictory nature of this statement reflects the most striking characteristic of the Cheonggyecheon and the rewriting of its history through the change to the city's built environment. It is a project that highlights a contradictory use of signifiers to produce their opposite meaning and effect. It features a stream with treated water that circulates by electrical power from another river source, yet has helped promote the image of the park as a project that showcases Seoul's dedication to sustainable design through the construction of green spaces and mayor Lee Myung-bak as a "hero of the environment" (Walsh, 2008). It represents the ongoing goal of the city's continuous improvement and development of a 21st century identity as a global city, yet it continues to reconnect and revitalize its history. The project shows that in the city's efforts to construct dramatic changes to its built environment, the overall project of the city's improvement, as well as the formation of a new identity, is still a work in progress.

In future developments to Seoul's urban design and building projects, one hopes that lessons learned from the Cheonggyecheon project will help the city pursue increased equitable planning processes and goals that will lessen the negative impacts, such as those that caused opposition to the project from the neighboring vendors. As one park visitor declared of the new Cheonggyecheon, it was, "compared to 50 years before, it's so much better, the air is nice, the water is good, clean," whereas in the past, the area was isolated from the rest of the city "because it was foul, the road too, where were roads like this, it was dirt roads..." (Interview 10). The description of the old stream highlights the area's historical marginalization of the population that lived near the stream. As a public park, the Cheonggyecheon has turned into a community space and a city attraction, so the transformation has successfully overturned the old image of the site. The opportunities and challenges posed by a large-scale urban design project like the Cheonggyecheon cannot satisfy all parties affected by the work. However, if Seoul has the goal

of improving its identity by turning into a soft city, in addition to pursuing green building projects to improve the environment and increase the city's public amenities, it should strengthen ways to plan for and construct more equitable and socially just outcomes for all. Much of the negative history of Seoul that the Cheonggyecheon markedly did not include in its design were contentious and struggling periods in South Korea's past. Its project to reconstruct and rewrite the city's image and identity for a globalized world has culled the desirable elements of its history and memory and represented them as celebrations. In order to make the city's public spaces truly celebratory for its people, the city needs to find ways to expand on the ideas of rebuilding its past for the advancement for its whole society, and not risk undermining the progressive campaign of improving the city's built environment by repeating the marginalization of affected populations.

The main lesson that has emerged through this research project is that the process of constructing the built environment is an ever-evolving process that includes not just the actual planning, design, and construction. The evolution of the Cheonggyecheon through its use, maintenance, especially its hoped-for eventual resolution of devising a more sustainable water supply, and the construction of its narrative, reflects the city's efforts to keep its built environment a vital and relevant component of its past, present, and future. Conversely, the project reflects the city's efforts to strengthen aspects of its historical narrative to rebuild and reify its image while simultaneously diminishing negative memories and history that it wishes to overcome and move past. The gradual erasure of the undesirable past reinforces the city's project to demonstrate its ongoing progressiveness and underscores its ability to reinvent itself. The Cheonggyecheon may again change in the future and redefine its history and identity, and through this process illustrate the dynamic qualities of the city and its built environment.

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