

Community Space Reflected in Park Taewon's Novel, “*Riverside Landscape*” on Seoul

Hae-yeon Yoo¹

¹*School of Architecture, Soongsil University, South Korea E-mail: zenism@ssu.ac.kr*

Abstract

This study aims to analyze community space depicted in Park Tae-won's fictional works set in Seoul of the 1930s, and thus to understand the common lives of citizens in those days. The analysis of community spaces used by a wide range of people in Seoul, in which modern culture was introduced, helps our understanding of the changed lifestyles and lives of people. The emergence of new types of community space with Western and Japanese influences could also be found. These spaces served as the background to a variety of changes, such as changes in roles and gender discrimination and hierarchical conflicts associated with economic characteristics at that time. To clarify the significance and necessity of the study, this study first examined the trends of previous studies in Korean literary works. Second, it analyzed the “*Riverside Landscape*” related to urban and architectural space. Lastly, it derived a differentiation by analyzing the community aspects and spaces.

Keywords: Community, Modern architecture, Korean modern literature, Taewon Park and 1930s Seoul, Riverside Landscape

Introduction

The backgrounds of novels reflect their era and the daily life of the times in which they are set. This has an important role in maximizing cases or conflicts and the supporting stories of main characters.

Therefore, in this study, Park Tae Won's novel ‘*Riverside Landscape*’ was analyzed to understand the urban community space in the 1930s. *Riverside Landscape* is a full-length novel by Park Tae Won. In Korea, “*A Day in the Life of Kubo the Novelist* (Jo-seon-Jung-ang-il-bo, 01/08/1934~19/09/1937)” has been studied with “*Riverside Landscape*”.

Tabel 1. Kubo's Path and Spaces

<p><i>House of Kubo - Riverside - Jong-ro Street -Hwashin Departmentstore - on the Streetcars - in front of the Bank of Joseon - Teahouse- Street - Kyung-sung Station - in front of the Bank of Joseon - Teahouse - Street - Restaurant - Street - Teahouse(Dabang) - Street - Pub - Cafe - Jongro Street - House of Kubo</i></p>
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Kubo was a promenade (flâneur) during a day and he narrated the urban daily life and urban spaces. Including the novel entitled One day of Mr. Kubo, novelist, a lot of novels which Park Taewon wrote in Kyungsung, spatial background, are meaningful as the text accumulating memory of the citizen

who engage in the actual space of Seoul, while diffusing as media. [1] [2] This novel also described the urban perception and citizen's daily life such as “*Riverside Landscape*”. [3]

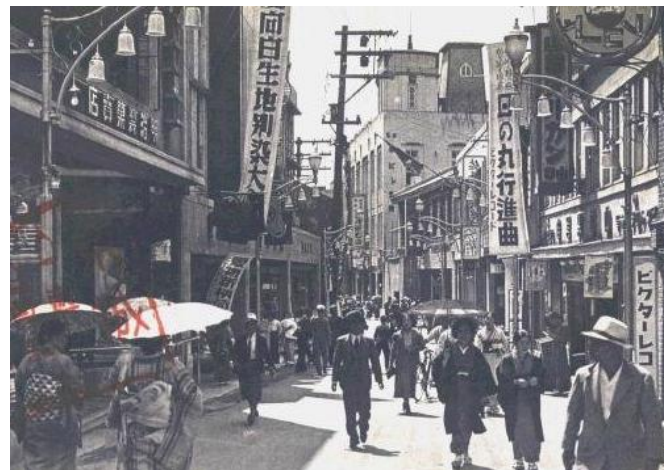


Figure 2. A Day in the Life of Kubo_ Jongro street & Kyeongsung (Source : Left : T. W. Park, Editor_H.S. Choi, 1998, A Day in the Life of Kubo the Novelist, Moonji Publishing Company / Right - <http://blog.daum.net/yoont3/11301678>)

Riverside Landscape is an adapted and expanded version of Jogwang, that was published in 1936 and increased version that was published in nine instalments in the same magazine that year. *Riverside Landscape* describes the lives of various ordinary people living by the riverside of Cheonggyecheon in Seoul over a period of about one year. It is divided into 50 passages and about 70 characters appear. [4]



Figure 3: Cover of “Riverside Landscape” in 1936 and photo (Source : T. W. Park, 1938, “Riverside Landscape”, Parkmunseogwon / Y. M. Kwon, 2001, Korea Contemporary Literature Dictionary, Nuri media / H. K. Hong, 2014, *Riverside Landscape*, Seoul News paper, 25/02/2014)

Related Works

Park Tae Won’s novels set in the 1930s have been researched in various aspects. Various issues such as the changing sense of identity, idea of sex, fascism awareness and correspondence, political nature, the ecosystem and nature were shown in his novels. Especially, most are studies looking into the change of awareness of modern intellectuals, and change by time and space. [5][6][7]

Also, there were comparative studies of *Riverside Landscape* with other novels for objective investigations of reality between the worldly ego and sharing ego. Especially, modern life was also shown by analyzing the characteristics of various characters in structures of opposition and repetition. [8][9]

Table 2. Related Researches of “Riverside Landscape”

Contents	Author	Title
Urban Issues	K.T.Bang (2003)	(A) Study on Time and Space Korean City Novels in the 1930's
Cultural experience space	D.C.Jang (2005)	A Comparative Study on the ‘Novel of Manners’ of Lao-She & Park-Taewon - On Four Generations Under One Roof (‘Sishitongtang’) & Streamside Scenery (‘Chonbyonpungkyong’)
Modernism/Reality of City	G.H.Lee (1992)	A Study on the aspects of Urbanism as presented in the Korean modernist novels of the 1930's
	J.A.Lee (1998)	A Study on the meaning of spaces in " Riverside Landscape "
	M.H.Lee (1998)	A Study on Park Tae-Won's Novel
Urban novel/Modernism	M.A.Kim (1998)	(A) Study on urban novels in Park Tae Won's
	J.H.Yoo (1995)	Study of Modern Korean Literature and the Meaning of the Urban Space
	J.W.Choi (1981)	Thematic development t of the Urban novel in the 1930s
Urban novel/Modernism/Urban Perception/Everyday life	S.J.Park (1996)	A study on the 1930's Modernism novels
	Y.G.Park (1993)	(A) study on the city novel in the year of 1930's
Living Space/the Periodical Cange	J.H.Kim & T.Y.Kim (2007)	A Study on Living Space of Common People around Cheonggyecheon in Novel <Landscape along the Riverside> of 1930's
Space Characteristics with the stream of times	Y.D.Woon (2001)	A Study on the Urban Space of <Line of discontinuity> & <Riverside Landscape>
	D.W.Yeom (2001)	A Study on the urban spatial structure of <Line of discontinuity> & <Riverside Landscape>
Social Structure/The Colonial Era/Modernism/Urban Life	S.H. Kim (2004)	(A) Study on Park Tae Won's 1930's novel
	H.N.Jeong (2007)	A Meaning Comparison of 'the city' in <A Landscape of the Riverside and Dubliners>
	K.A.Lee (2002)	Cities and Recognition of Cities in the Novels of Park Tae-Won
	C.S.Kim (1994)	The study of the Korean modernist novels during the Japanese Colonialist Rule
Industrialization/Urbanization/Social aspect	Y.M.Jang (2013)	Novel of Manners and Finding the Global Perception - Revolves around Park, Tae-won’s Senery of a riverside and Park, Wan - Seo’s “Senery of a convulsion of nature”

However, there were minor studies that had direct links with architecture or urban space, and most of these studies were analyses focusing on the lives of ordinary people.

Community Space Reflected in *Riverside Landscape*

In Park Tae-won's novels, as government offices, prisons, kindergartens, schools, barber shops, police stations, pharmacies, railways, Gyeongseong Station and tram rods serve as the background of the novel, the emergence of new buildings and changes in urban structures are found to change people's daily lives. [10]

Specially, *Riverside Landscape* vividly describes the various characters and the story began with village women's small talk at washing place of Cheonggyecheon. Following this, there are many episodes in this novel. For example, "Daily life of Jaebong who worked as a servant of Galenic pharmacy", "Story of Hanako & Kimiko who worked as waitress of Cafe", "Jeomryong's Ice cream business", "Riverside Landscape during monsoon season", "A checkered life of Mondol's Mother", "Newly-married life at galenic pharmacy", "Yepheon_ she got married and got deserted", "the fall of the temple house", "Mr. Min's gambling and affair", "Political actions of Owner of a linen shop and Brother-in-law", "A country girl, Gumsoon & Sundong's reunion in Seoul" and so on. [11]

Therefore, this study sought to investigate community space that typically reflects the lives of moderns, department stores, washing place, café and various shops as space for exchange between elites and low income classes.

Community Space in 1930

The Peace Cafe, in the middle of Jongro Street, appears at the start of 'Pitiful People' in the 13th passage of *Riverside Landscape*. It was a place of exchange in those days. Entertainment spaces of the modern era were expressed as bars with young women, late in the evening, and with tables with numbers along with box-type chairs.

One appearing character manages 'Jungi Store in the entrance of Chungjin-dong,' another character is the 'Jongro Eunbang' owner, and another character is described as a 'person who started a tea shop renting the second floor of Eunbang which is in the corner of Gwangkyo'. The images of the Chungjin-dong and Jongro of that time could be recalled. [12]



Figure 2: Hansung Electricity company & Hwangsung YMCA, JongRo street, Seoul Station & Namdaemoon (source : <http://blog.daum.net/ysriver21/6044481>)

Moreover, the landscape of urban streets along Gwangkyo Bridge and Jangkkyo Bridge, and the appearance of a friend who attends the Supokyo Chapel, implies the development of

church facilities. At that time, churches were developing as a representative space of community for those who lived in the cities.



Figure 3: 1930's Ocheon Church (Source : <http://arch.goeia.go.kr/archmain>), Sanagsuri Church, Hamhung(Source : [Http://christianreview.com.au/](http://christianreview.com.au/))

The coffee shop appears in contemporary novels, and is similar to a cafe. This can be seen as a Japanese modification of the salon and facade shown in 17th and 18th-century Europe. The main character of *Pyro* (1933) witnesses a scene of discussion between young writers in a coffee shop called the Nakrang Parlour, during the daytime, and the female lead character listens to Caruso's Elogy and thinks about the manuscript. If cafes at that time were close in their function to bars, coffee shops were places to drink tea and coffee, and where lethargic intellectuals gathered for productive exchanges of culture and discussion.



Figure 4: Exterior & Interior of 'NakLang Parlour' (Source : IncheonIlbo, 2011.11.18 Article 'Passing by Rapid Change Period, Going to Romantic Period' / Yoo, H., Park, Y., Yoon, C., 2015, " Daily Living Space Reflected in Modern Novels of the 1930s in Seoul, South Korea", NRF 2nd Report, Seoul)

If the cafe was a place for exchange between men and modern women, the washing place at the riverside could be seen as a place of exchange for wives.

The washing place which is the main background of *Riverside Landscape* provided a meeting place for women who were in charge of housework. In the passing conversations, a new commercial facility called the Oriental Pharmacy was mentioned, and the 'Gisaeng house', seen as a cafe space, and the daily 'alley'.

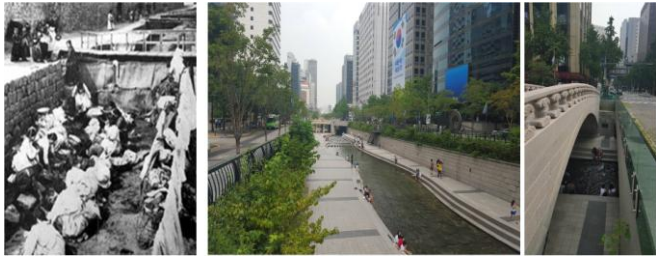


Figure 5: A laundry near the Cheonggyecheon, Gwanggy in 1930, They must pay for the use of this wash place (Source : <http://news.chosun.com>) / Cheonggyecheon in 2015 by author(03/08/2015)

Department store appears as another place for exchange. There is a limit to considering the department store as a normal commercial space like a barbershop, linen shop, bathhouse, laundry, oriental pharmacy, pawnshop or grocery store, as referred to in the second passage of *Riverside Landscape*, 'Boy from the Barbershop.'

There is mention of a restaurant in the 'Hwasin Store', which is a former department store. An elevator makes an appearance.

The Mitsukoshi department store already had exhibition space and roof gardens, in which Hwasin Store was newly built as a six-story building after a big fire, and there was a restaurant on the fifth floor. The department store was not a place that simply sold goods at that time; it was a space where exchange took place.



Figure 6. Whashin Department Store, since 1937 (Source:70th Anniversary Commemorative Photo book of Sinsegye Department Store, p.29), Miscoshi Department Store (Source : <http://blog.daum.net/ysriver21/6044481>)



Figure 7. Left_Miscoshi Department Store in 1930 (Donghwa Department Store; change the company name in 1945) (Source : I.H. Kim, 2006, Cultural History of Department store, Salimbooks), Right_Shinsegae Department Store in 2015 (change the company name, in 1963) (Source : photo by author)

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to look into the community space of modern city people in the 1930s through Park Tae Won's novel *Riverside Landscape*.

Unlike other contemporary novels, Park Tae Won's novel does not describe long scenes in one single place like a room or a bar or a hospital, but rather describes the images of that era in the city. Also, the lives of city people are shown through various spaces where community takes place with various characters. This helps in understanding the lives of people living in modern cities in the 1930s.

Especially, the forthcoming changes to the leisurely lives of the elite class could be predicted through the department store in the Japanese colonial era, and changes of worldly culture could be looked into through the scenes in coffee shops and cafes. Also, relations between women and men, and between the elite and working class, could be compared through the washing place. As a cornerstone, this study will give guidance in analysis of various spaces shown in other work by Park Tae Won and in comparative analysis of modern architecture space and cities described in the work of contemporary writers.

Acknowledgments

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