

Jeju Island

The landscape that is visible on the monitor is Cheonjiyeon Falls, the famous Korean tourist spot located on Jeju Island. The people looking back out from the monitor are tourists. These people wander about, in search of various destinations. From a traditional viewpoint, they could be considered pilgrims. However, in contrast to the otherworldly meanings of a pilgrimage, the life of a tourist is a fragmented sequence of sensual experiences with no totalizing aim. Although they may merely appear as drifters lacking a sense of faith because they lack fortitude, it is rather that they place their faith elsewhere. They do not commit the mistake of believing that the truth is out there somewhere, that the true land is located in some distant time and place. This is because having grasped the truth of actual circumstances, they have placed individual values at the center of the world.

The tourist spot is both the site of their dreams and one of fantasy. The tourist spot is the mirror of the tourist. The tourist spot loses an independent value and identity precisely because it must serve as the egotistical mirror of the tourist, and hence the tourist spot gains an alternate, existential meaning in the name of the tourist. However, the tourist spot at the same time remains the location of dreams. Hence, a cyclical process is created at the tourist spot, for the frequent visitations and the particular attitudes struck by tourists allow for it to transform from an actual site into a dream site, which in turn transforms into a surreal site that further generates different meanings. Although this cyclical process ends when tourists no longer frequent the spot and it becomes quiet, this does not mean that it has the virtue of being able to once again return to its former state. The tourists throw the tranquil place aside and—much like pilgrims—crave anew a new world. At some point, Jeju Island will be abandoned by tourists. Tourist spots are becoming emptied and desolate. This kind of solitude might constitute a new trend. For, it could be that this solitude serves as the best means of encountering others.